Media: Our Self-chosen Self-defense against Self-reflection

We are masters of avoidance. We see someone in Wal-Mart we don't particularly care for and we duck in the first available aisle. We receive an email we don't want to acknowledge and we simply don't respond. We are miffed at our spouse and we turn on the TV or retreat to a remote corner of the house. Masters of avoidance.

And now, thanks to the proliferation of media (Netflix, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Fox News, Roku), modern man has an ever-ready tool to facilitate his avoidance. And it's not only used to avoid other people – simply pull out your phone or put up your tablet to show someone you're not interested in talking – it's increasingly used to avoid ourselves, to avoid our thoughts.

Our constant media drip isn't simply about being informed or entertained, it's about noise. Media functions like noise. And we want it to. Its constant flickering, chattering, updating, and notifying is an attention vortex. It is the enemy of deep, reflective thought. And we know it. And that's why we won't (or can't) turn it off. The dopamine pleasure reward is too great and the questions we might be forced to consider if we darkened the screens are too daunting.

This is why I'm writing. I'm trying desperately to get your attention, trying desperately to be heard over the noise. We've not married our lives to media simply to gain information or even knowledge. We've done it to drown out difficult questions and meaningful thought and it is fragmenting our families, weakening our communities, undermining our schools, and enfeebling our churches. If you care about any of these, read on.

If your screens went dark, if the noise was silenced, what would you do? What thoughts might rise to the surface? What questions might accost you? *Who am I? Why am I here? Does my life have purpose? Am I a good person? How do I know right from wrong? What does God think of me? What's in store for me and creation?* Are these questions on which you're prepared to think deeply? Are these questions that could affect families, communities, schools, and churches?

Our always-on media is our self-chosen self-defense against these self-reflective questions. It is the noise we choose to protect ourselves from hearing ourselves think, from the questions every individual should be asking, the kinds of questions that produce mature people. These are foundational questions, and they are the very questions from which our media noise is distracting us.

And it is affecting our families, our communities, our schools, and our churches. How could it not? If large percentages of people who claim to be Christian can't articulate the answers to the above questions, how could it not affect all of us? How could it not affect our educators and administrators? How could it not affect our legislators and leaders? How could it not affect our youth and families? They don't know how to answer these questions.

Undisciplined private lives affect the whole. Appreciate what was just said: *undisciplined private lives affect the whole*. Your media addiction affects our community. Your classmate's media dependence affects the entire school. Your fellow member's media habits affect Zion and Trinity. Yes, the media may provide a diverse array of information; you may even walk away with

knowledge you didn't have before. What you will not have gained, however, is wisdom. And wisdom is not the same as knowledge. "Knowledge," someone once quipped, "is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad" (in Bernard Bull, *Digitized*, 15). The wisdom that can articulate the answers to the aforementioned questions only comes through deep, careful thought – specifically, deep, careful thought on God's truth.

It's why Scripture insists that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It means meditating on His precepts, delighting in His design, walking in His will. It means internalizing His Word. Fearing the Lord means hearing the Lord in His Word. And that requires the noise to cease.

Don't misunderstand my point; I'm not claiming media is evil. I'm suggesting, in fact, I'm imploring us to silence the noise. It's destroying our ability to think, our patience for deep reading, our ability to ask, let alone answer, life's foundational questions. I'm not suggesting that we become Luddites taking a hammer to our screens. Instead, I'm encouraging, even imploring us to abide by Scripture's wisdom:

> whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, ***think about these things*** (Philippians 4:8).

These are the things we need to be thinking about, but these are the very things our constant media noise is keeping us from thinking about!

Does this mean you have to cut media's cord completely? Maybe. You need to answer that question. What kind of person do you want to be? What kind of family do you want? What kind of community, school, church do you want? How you structure your thought life affects everyone.

If the noise is distracting you, turn it off. Maybe you don't have to do it permanently, but it will probably mean a drastic reduction in media exposure. It will probably mean making a plan and having the discipline to stick to it (yes, I said discipline, the thing required for maturity). At the very least, it means seeing what's standing between you and mature thinking.

And, it means you need to think long and hard about how media's noise is affecting your children, children whose brains are incredibly malleable and are being changed (physically wired) by the media they regularly ingest. Are extended hours with screens and media facilitating wisdom, the ability to think deeply, to understand and answer the fundamental questions of life? Simply judging by the evidence, by the studies done to gauge Biblical literacy and confessing Christians' ability to answer these fundamental questions, the answer is *No*.

What should we do? You already know. Hear the Word. Think deeply on it. Consider what Genesis 1-3 means for our identity as male or female, the impact of the fall on our desires, and the promise of God to evict evil. Think deeply on Romans 1-3 and what it means to be fallen and then reconciled to God. Reflect on 1 Corinthians 15 and what it means for a world languishing in death and loss.

And study your Catechism (see "Daily Drills" article on page 7). Daily recite the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer (free copies are available in Zion's resource center or from Trinity's office). This must become a regular part of our daily thought life. Such thinking will provide the scaffolding of a healthy mind, the skeleton to support robust thought muscles. But before any of this can happen, we have to stop avoiding it. Begin today. Mute the noise; hear the Word. – Pastor Conner

Ministry Apps

Applying the Gospel to Hearts and Homes (November 2018): Zion and Trinity Lutheran

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

The October/November weekday Bible study led a group through the book of Philippians and this familiar text. The Apostle Paul finds his joy and confidence in Christ. In his book *Anxious for Nothing*, Christian author Max Lucado focuses on this section of Scripture and notes the significance of thanksgiving in addressing anxiety. "As you look at your blessings, take note of what happens. Anxiety grabs his bags and slips out the back door. Worry refuses to share the heart with gratitude. One heartfelt thank-you will suck the oxygen out of worry's world. So say it often. Focus more on what you do have and less on what you don't" (p. 95). In God's grace, see God's generosity in the contexts of your life.

Living Thanks in the Community

Thanks to the coordination of the Christian Education Committee and the generosity of Zion (in fellowship and Thrivent donations) Zion hosted two teams in the community "Pack the Pantry" event. The special event coordinated by the Manning Rotary blesses the Food Pantry. Through the month of September over 300 community citizens have received food from the Pantry. Thanks to Zion volunteers who work every 5th Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the Pantry. Food and monetary donations throughout the year are appreciated.

Living Thanks in Vocation

Weekly worship prayers routinely include those who protect us locally and globally. We give thanks for the community servants (police, fire, ambulance) who provide protection. The November Fellowship Club meeting (Monday, November 12; 7 p.m.) will feature Manning police chief, Sam Hansen, sharing the journey to his vocation as well as safety advice for community citizens. Guests welcome! The Fellowship Club continues to support the Orphan Grain Train ministry (more information in this newsletter).

Living Thanks in Worship

As the church year concludes, we see Christ the King on His throne ruling over all creation now and over the church for all eternity. Join us each weekend in worship. Your pastors are already preparing for the Advent season and the new church year. This year's Wednesday Advent worship will feature the theme, "O Come, Let US Adore Him." Watch the December newsletter for specific times and themes. Weekly Advent worship will include an additional service this year. A WEDNESDAY MORNING service (10:30 a.m. at Zion) will provide a convenient worship time for the elderly and others who prefer not to travel in the darkness (and cold) of December evenings. A fellowship time (10 a.m.) will precede the informal service.

Living Thanks in School

We are thankful for the accomplishments of our high school and college students and wish to acknowledge them. The high school student "Connect" has already provided valuable connections. The college "Connect" is still in process, and we welcome addresses, emails, and other connections of these Zion members. Please share the information with the church office.

With Thanksgiving!

Pastor Riggert

Why the Church: Being Church in a Time When it's Difficult – Part 2

Last month we took up the question: when people in the Church fail to live in a way that demonstrates the love of Jesus, what do you do?

So far we have acknowledged two responses. 1) Deny the Church completely – but if Jesus actually rose from the dead then it's dangerous to deny truth. 2) Keep Jesus, cut out the Church – the problem with this reaction is that Jesus exhibits so much love toward the people. One of the underlying storylines of the Bible is that humans are called to withdraw from themselves into a community. So here's a third response if you find that you feel angry with the Church.

3) Become more Christian

Imagine I went to Tiger Woods, and I told him I wanted to learn more about his career. People gravitate toward him, and I want to know why that's the case. But then I tell him I'm going to learn more about him by reading the encyclopedia article on him on Wikipedia.org. He'd probably be shocked and point me toward golf tournament footage where he won. Why? Because an encyclopedia article doesn't fully show the courses he conquered. It can't show all the rough parts of the course he mastered. The article can't manufacture that sense of excitement that watching the game can. To really get in touch with Woods' career or golf in general you have to watch and get to the core of the game.

Friends, many of us get frustrated and read *about* Christianity, but we're just putting our toes in the water without going all in. Some of you have been on the receiving end of painful encounters with Christians. But rather than making a wrong situation right, you've retreated to something that isn't truthful. You've settled for secondary material on the Church, rather than getting to the core of Christianity.

Now when you hear "become more Christian," you might hear me saying you need to become more moral or follow more rules. But the truth is that Christianity or becoming more Christian isn't that. You see, you don't know what *you are to do* until you've figure out *who you are*. The where you've come from always shapes the where you are going or what you will do. So if you're a Cyclone family (where you've come from) that means you will know when they play, gather together as a family to watch them play, and you'll purchase their merchandise to show people who you cheer for. But it would make no sense to buy Cyclone t-shirts, season tickets, or a large TV for games if you weren't already a Cyclone fan.

In your struggle to figure out the Church, the call is to become more Christian, which means get back in touch with God and what He has done for you.

Go back to Exodus 19 again. God says, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself." Then God launches into the 10 Commandments. Look at the order. It's not become more moral to be closer to God, but it's God has brought you to Himself so then you follow what He commands. To become more Christian is to always return to where you've come from – God bringing you out of yourself and your ego; God bringing you out of the power of cosmic powers like the devil; God bringing you out of the curse of death. When that all sinks in, then you are slingshotted back into the world, not as a lone

ranger, but as a radically changed member of the community of Christ.

But what does that God-bringing-you-back stuff look like? Simply, it looks like the most innocent man who ever lived, dying on behalf of His enemies – even begging for their forgiveness with His dying breaths. It looks like a man enduring physical torture and emotional abandonment without the appreciation from the recipients who would benefit from His work. It looks like being hated and not liked among His friends and peers. That's where you've come from, Church. That's your origin story. And for those of you reading who do not find themselves in the Church – this is the story you're being called to.

Self-Correctives

So if the death and resurrection of a man named Jesus from Nazareth is our past, where are we heading or what have we been called to? Well, kind of like the Israelites we're called to communal living – the Church.

The Church is significant because it is not only called to live for the sake of others out of love, but it also has measures to counteract failure and sin in the community. To close this article, here are some themes and Bible passages on what the Church does based on where the body has come from. If we take these seriously we ***will*** make our lives more difficult, but if we want to get back to the core here are some of parts of the picture we're called to take into consideration. – Pastor Johnson

Treatment of the Poor

Exodus 23:9 – Explanation: You know what it's like to be poor and without a home spiritually, but Jesus made Himself poor for you so that you could be rich spiritually.

Confrontation for the sake of Unity

Matthew 18:15-18 – Explanation: Community is more significant than personal safety or self-esteem. We're not called to simmer with our anger with fellow Church people, but to bring it to light in order to regain the bond between our brothers and sisters – just as Jesus re-established the bond between us and God.

No Revenge

Romans 12:17-21 – Explanation: Just because people have it coming…well, you had it coming, but rather than destroying you, Jesus destroyed Himself for you.

Be in the Bible (together)

1 Timothy 4:13 – Explanation: It's easy to say that when you get something you asked for then you will never ask for something amazing ever again. The truth is we forget what we've received, and we usually want more. We will forget where we come from, and as a result *we will forget* what we're to do or why we do what we do. So we come together as a community to relearn our origin and keep one another accountable. – Pastor Johnson

Hayride Pics:

Left: Rachel couldn't wait for the bun!

Below: Luke, Eryn, Timothy, Catherine, Nolan, and Josiah eagerly ancipate their roasted hot dogs.

We are partnering with Lifetouch for this important project. Lifetouch is providing the directory at no cost to our church. Every family photographed receives a complimentary directory and an 8x10 portrait. You can sign up for photography online at our church websites at **www.zionmanning.com** **or** **www.trinitylutheranmanilla.com** **or** look for our signup table at upcoming services **or** call our office **or** call Lifetouch at **1.866.756.0281.**

PHOTOGRAPHY DATES, HOURS and LOCATIONS:

Monday, Nov. 26th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Zion Lutheran**
Tuesday, Nov. 27th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Zion Lutheran**
Wednesday, Nov. 28th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Zion Lutheran**
Tuesday, Dec. 4th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Trinity Lutheran**
Wednesday, Dec. 5th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Trinity Lutheran**
Thursday, Dec. 6th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Zion Lutheran**
Friday, Dec. 7th	**2:00PM to 9:00PM**	**@Zion Lutheran**
Saturday, Dec. 8th	**10:00AM to 5:00PM**	**@Zion Lutheran**

Lifetouch CHURCH DIRECTORIES AND PORTRAITS

All photography and portrait viewing will take place at the church with NO sitting fee. You will have a variety of poses taken. One pose will be selected for the directory. You will receive one complimentary 8x10 and have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits on the day of your portrait session. Lifetouch's portrait price lists are available in the church office for those would like them prior to photography. Your photography session will take about an hour, during which time you will check-in, be photographed and view your portraits.

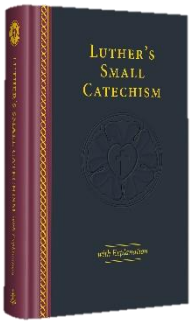
A 1992 mission trip by Rev. Ray Wilke and members of Grace Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Nebraska to Latvia and Russia conceived the ministry of Orphan Grain Train (OGT) which has since provided relief to 68 countries on 5 continents. OGT continues to be recognized for its stewardship by receiving a 4 star Charity Navigator rating with 98.3% of donations directed to its missions. Today 27 branches, including the Iowa District West Branch in Ida Grove, gather items and ship them to needy destinations. Zion Fellowship Club and friends continue to support the local branch. Zion's "5th Sunday of the month" collection will be held the end of December.

Currently OGT is assisting families affected by Hurricane Harvey, Florence, and Michael. These storms and natural disasters are costly and involve long term commitments. Donations to OGT's Disaster Relief Efforts are currently being doubled with donations online at Thrivent.com. The matching opportunity will run through December 31, 2018 or until the $1 million goal is met. Financial gifts can be directed by visiting www.livegenerously.com and noting the OGT organization.

Jacob Puka left Sudan at age 7. He was one of the "Lost Boys of Sudan," children who were orphaned because of the violent civil war in the country. He walked through bush and desert to reach refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia for safety. Puka is now a nuclear medicine technologist in Maryland. Recently Puka assisted in the loading of an OGT shipment of clothing, bikes, school desks, blankets, sheets, and soccer balls bound for his village in South Sudan. God's grace and provision are evident!

Begin to collect your good, clean, clothing and shoes for our next Zion collection. Consider a special Christmas donation of NEW underwear and socks. Monetary donations to the Ida Grove warehouse are also welcomed. Visit www.ogt.org for more information.

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN
Relief for Human Need Worldwide



The Daily Drills of the Faith

In his preface to *The Large Catechism,* Martin Luther wrote,

> Let all Christians drill themselves in the catechism[1] daily, and constantly put it into practice, guarding themselves with the greatest care and diligence against the poisonous infection of… security or arrogance.

But, you say, *Isn't the catechism that little book that we used in confirmation? I could read it in 20 minutes. Is Luther really suggesting I should use it every day?*

Yes.

In fact, Luther knew you'd say that. "Many," Luther writes, "regard the catechism as a simple, trifling teaching, which they can absorb and master at one reading and then toss the book into a corner as if they are ashamed to read it again." But Luther didn't see it as such. He saw its great value in the daily life of the Christian. He understood the place of the thought life for healthy and righteous living. He understood that what you think affects what you feel affects what you do. Our thought life is where everything begins. If this is wrong our lives, just like a house on a faulty foundation, will crack, crumble, and fall.

Although Luther taught theology, wrote prolifically, preached multiple times every week, and would translate the entire Bible into German, he made this his daily discipline:

> Each morning, and whenever else I have time, I do as a child who is being taught the catechism and I read and recite word for word the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the catechism daily, and yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the catechism – and I also do so gladly.

Luther, the great theologian and reformer, was a lifelong student of the catechism. Might we learn something from him? For a moment, let's become students. Answer the following questions:

1. What is the Third Commandment?
2. What is the Sixth Commandment?
3. What is the Eighth Commandment?
4. What is the Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer?
5. What is the Fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer?
6. What is the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed?

Now let's go a little deeper.

1. What does it mean to set apart a day to hear and learn God's Word?
2. What does it mean to live a sexually pure and decent life?
3. What does it mean to defend our neighbor's reputation?

[1] The word *catechism* originates from a Greek word meaning *echo*. As such, the chief parts of the catechism are designed to echo in the lives and homes of confessing Christians. When Luther spoke of the daily drills that should be carried out in Christian homes, he was thinking specifically of The Ten Commandments, The Lord's Prayer, and The Apostles' Creed. The Catechism also includes Scripture's teaching on Baptism, Confession, and the Lord's Supper. These, likewise, were of great importance, but the daily recitations of which Luther spoke were centered in The Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, and Apostles' Creed.

4. What are we praying for when we ask for God's kingdom to come?
5. What does it mean when we ask God to forgive our trespasses *as we forgive those who trespass against us*?
6. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is your Lord?

Perhaps we would do well to admit that we only *think* we know the catechism. And perhaps we would do well to appreciate what benefits would come to those who daily drill themselves in it. Luther writes,

> Even if [people's] knowledge of the catechism were perfect (although that is impossible in this life), yet it is highly profitable and fruitful to read it daily and to make it the subject of meditation and conversation. In such reading, conversation, and meditation the Holy Spirit is present and bestows ever new and greater light and devotion, so that it tastes better and better and is digested…

If the presence and working of the Spirit weren't enough, Luther continues,

> Nothing is so powerfully effective against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and all evil thoughts as to occupy one's self with God's Word,[2] to speak about it and meditate upon it, in the way that Psalm 1 calls those blessed who 'meditate on God's law [teaching/instruction] day and night.'

The Holy Spirit enlightening minds; Satan, the world, the flesh, and evil desires being turned back – these are the benefits awaiting those who are daily drilling themselves in the Catechism. If we willfully neglect or reject these benefits, who have we to blame but ourselves? If we neglect disciplining our thought lives, who have we to blame when everything else disintegrates about us? Luther minced no words on the matter. Writing particularly of pastors who neglect the catechism, but of all Christians, too, Luther reprimanded:

> Should we so flippantly despise such might, benefits, power, and fruit – especially we who want to be pastors and preachers? If so, we deserve to not only to be given no food to eat, but also to have the dogs set upon us and to be pelted with horse manure.

Strong words! Hyperbole, yes, but his point was clear. The catechism gathers the essentials of the faith into one ready resource, essentials that ensure the Spirit's presence and working and Satan's eviction. Why aren't we daily drilling ourselves in its teachings?

Again Luther exhorts us:

> Let them constantly read and teach, learn and meditate and ponder… If they show such diligence, then I promise them – and their experience will bear me out – that they will gain much fruit and God will make excellent people out of them.

Please take Luther's words to heart. He's not speaking theoretically; he's speaking from experience. A thought life grounded in God's Word (as presented in the catechism) will produce fruit: fruit for you personally, but also fruit for your family, your church, your community. Need a copy of the catechism? Pick one up in the resource center or ask one of Zion's and Trinity's pastors. The time to begin the drills is now. – Pastor Conner

[2] This is an important point. Luther exhorts us to read the catechism because it contains (Ten Commandments and Lord's Prayer) and succinctly summarizes (Creed) the Word of God. The catechism is our ready access to the essentials of God's Word.

Remembering Hope

Workshop @ Zion

Thousands of people in Iowa battle Alzheimer's disease. Each year 134,000 people in Iowa provide 152 million hours of unpaid care for a loved one suffering from the disease. Caregivers often underestimate the time and energy required, as well as the impact on their work, social and family commitments. Zion, in partnership with Lutheran Family Service and Perry Lutheran Homes, is here to help!

Caregivers, family, friends, and learners are invited to a special seminar led by experts in Alzheimer's care, including a meaningful simulation experience to build empathy and understanding. Topics addressed include:

- Demystifying dementia & Alzheimer's
- Diagnosis
- Caregiver challenges
- Communicating with your loved one
- Finding hope in Jesus

Attendance is free. RSVP to Zion (655-2352) or sign up at the resource center in the fellowship hall.

Sunday, January 20th from 3:00-4:00

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Equipping Classes @ Zion

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week class designed to provide you, the family caregiver, with the skills you need to take care of yourself as you take care of your loved one. Class leaders will equip you to:

- Identify and reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Find balance
- Better communicate your feelings to others
- Improve your ability to make tough decisions
- Understand local resources

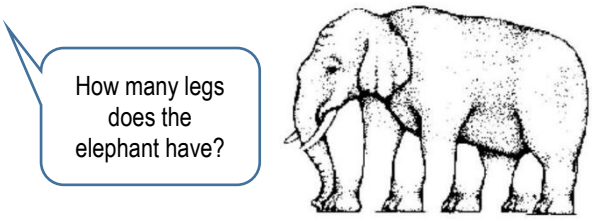
In partnership with Lutheran Family Service and Perry Lutheran Homes

Sessions begin Monday, January 28th
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Perry Lutheran homes

Lutheran Family Service
For Nothing is Impossible with God

Our Media Are Messing with Truth[3]



The above classic illustration is designed to confuse you, to mess with your mind and force you to see more than four legs, while wrestling with the truth that the elephant should only have four legs. The medium (a confusing visual image) messed with Truth. Over the next several paragraphs, I want to help you see how the media of our world is messing with Truth – purposely.

Let me begin, though, by clarifying what I'm not talking about. As indicated in the footnote, I'm not merely referring to the news media, which is what most people in our hyper-politicized culture think of when they hear the word *media*. Yes, news media have biases and slanted worldviews that come out in their reporting, even in what they choose to report or not to report. Yes, the news media is guilty of staging, mis-contexualizing, and cropping images to convey the truth they want to convey. So, yes, the news media is guilty of messing with Truth. And, yes, Christians MUST LEARN to be discerning when they're consuming news. They must learn that the producers of our news media have carefully chosen and framed what is being shown to communicate a specific message.

When I use the word *media* in this article, though, I'm referring to the means through which the message is communicated. So, I'm not focusing so much on the content of the message being communicated (although this is obviously of great importance!); I'm referring to the window through which you're viewing the message. And I'm suggesting that the window is tinted. I'm suggesting that the window is changing how truth is viewed.

So, to be more specific, I'm talking about Facebook, Netflix, You Tube, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram, along with the devices that make these visible to us such as smartphones, televisions, and Roku. These media are messing with Truth. My specific concerns center around the following: 1) The images that distract us from the question of Truth, 2) The assumption that truth arises from the social group, and 3) The fragmentation of thought.

The Images that Distract Us from the Question of Truth

It's no profound insight to observe that much of our media is visual in nature today. Words now serve images. And this affects the way we interact with truth. Consider these insightful (and prescient) words from Neil Postman (writing in the 1980s and 90s before the internet and digital media explosion):

> The words 'true' and 'false' come from the universe of language, and no other. When applied to a photograph, the question, Is it true? Means only, Is this a reproduction of a real slice of space-time? If the answer is 'Yes,' there is no ground for argument, for it makes no sense to disagree with an unfaked photograph. The photograph itself makes no arguable propositions, makes no extended and unambiguous commentary. It offers no assertions to refute, so it is not refutable (*Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 73).

[3] I'm not using the word *media* in a political sense. I'm referring to the medium through which Truth is communicated to us. The medium (plural *media* and thus the plural verb *are*) affects truth.

Then he adds, "The picture forced exposition into the background, and in some instances obliterated it altogether" (74). Make sure you appreciate what he's saying because this is the very thing we're missing. The visual medium has changed the way we think about Truth. Truth, much like an image, is no longer something that requires careful consideration or argument; it has been reduced merely to something we like or don't like, much like a post on Facebook or Instagram.

So Postman observes,

> a major new medium changes the structure of discourse; it does so by encouraging certain uses of the intellect, by favoring certain definitions of intelligence and wisdom, and by demanding a certain kind of content – in a phrase, by creating new forms of truth-telling (27).

The last phrase is the point. Visual media is creating new forms of truth-telling. And most of us aren't paying attention. And this leaves us vulnerable, because as Postman also rightly observes, "Truth does not, and never has, come unadorned." We must learn to discern the Truth claims being made through images. This isn't easy because images don't typically enter the mind through the door labeled "Truth," but through one marked "Pathos." In other words, images evoke feelings before they elicit questions of Truth. We must learn, therefore, to ask what Truth claim is being made by the images flickering through social media or on the evening news. Truth never comes unadorned.

This is not to say that images are bad; they're not. The very image of God, after all, took on flesh in Jesus Christ, Truth adorned in human vesture. This is to say, however, that images can convey Truth (or lies) and we need to know it when we consume media lest we be deceived or manipulated.

The Assumption that Truth Arises from the Social Group

Throughout this article I have used a capital "T" to adorn Truth. This has been intentional. I'm communicating the objective nature of Truth. It transcends us. It's outside of us. It defines us. We don't determine it, we discover it. Social media, however, changes this. Social media assumes that truth (notice the lowercase "t") belongs to the group. It does not transcend us or define us, but arises out of us. It belongs to us. Capital "T" Truth has been Facebooked into lowercase "t" truth. Truth must now bow before thumbs-ups, hearts, emojis, and an endless array of social media criteria.

As with images, this doesn't make the social group evil, but it does make it dangerous. Just like with things like fire, cars, and farm equipment, we need to appreciate the inherent danger. If misused, things can go terribly wrong. Social media may be useful in communicating information or opinions, but be concerned for Truth if it is abducted by the group.

The Fragmentation of Thought

Before the internet and the world of social media, the great enemy of linear thought revealed itself on the evening news in these words "Now this…" A story about social unrest in Iran. Now this: a story of disaster in the wake of hurricane Michael. Now this: football scores. Now this: weather. Now this: the latest in fashion trends. And not one story requiring more than three minutes!

A country in turmoil and we are experts in 2 minutes. A region devastated and we know it all in 75 seconds. And football, the weather, and fashion trends are given comparable time, as if they merit the same coverage. The nature of the medium – visual snapshots forced between commercials – changes the way Truth is told.

Add the internet and social media and "now this" is snowed under the hyperlink, the finger flip, scroll, and tap. As Nicholas Carr argues in his thought provoking book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, we're skipping across an ocean of depth, learning, and thought on a ski-do of distraction.

Worse, we're no longer concerned by discontinuity and contradiction. Consider Postman's observation (and remember, he's writing before Internet was ubiquitous).

> And in the 'Now … this' world of television… The fundamental assumption of that world is not coherence but discontinuity. And in a world of discontinuities, contradiction is useless as a test of truth or merit, because contradiction does not exist (110).

In other words, a medium that presents information in disconnected bits or units isn't concerned when those disconnected bits contradict. The medium is aimed at information dissemination, not Truth examination. Examining Truth requires careful, linear and logical thought. And our media today are not aimed at that.

Again, this doesn't mean our media are evil; it means we need to be discerning. We need to understand that the medium through which a message is communicated affects the message in some way. The very fact that you're reading this article instead of listening to me read it means you're hearing your voice in your head instead of mine and that affects how you interact with the article. The medium affects the message.

Our world adds new media forms every year (sometimes it seems like every day!). As confessing Christians, we need to be discerning people. Truth, as mentioned above, doesn't come unadorned. Media is not neutral; it will mess with Truth. We need to understand this and ensure that our children understand this. We cannot simply hand them a smartphone or some internet connected device and expect their assumptions about Truth not to be affected (to say nothing of the inappropriate images available through a few simple clicks or taps that can never be unseen and threaten to ruin real relationships!).

Now, perhaps more than ever, it is of vital importance for us both to think deeply and carefully about the media in which we're immersed (how is it messing with Truth?) and for us to practice the daily drills of the faith (mentioned in the article on page 7) to ensure we, and our children, stay grounded in and founded on the Truth. There's too much at stake to do nothing. Need help getting started? Talk to me. Email/call/come and visit. Truth is worth it. – Pastor Conner

Hayride Pics:

Left: Easton, Araya, and Kaleal enjoy hot dogs, chips, and hot chocolate.

Below: Chris, Mike, and Neil finally get their turn at roasting hot dogs.

Get your calendar and clear whatever you had on **Saturday, November 10** because family and friends of Zion and Trinity are going on a field trip together to Mission Central! If you've never been before, this is the time to go. It's a missionary triple-header!

And, the Creation Theater will be included in the festivities. AND a fantastic lunch will be served. Presentations begin at 10:17 sharp. If you're planning to attend, add your name to the registration sheet in either congregation's fellowship hall or email Pastor Conner (connerjonathanidw@gmail.com) or Pastor Johnson (johnsonan1445@gmail.com) to RSVP.

TRIZION YOUTH GROUP

We're jumping into the Bible to see how individual Bible stories connect to one another in Jesus.

And, this month we're looking forward to the District youth gathering (November 9-11) in Des Moines. 8 kids will be going on this trip.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
MANILLA, IOWA
PROCLAIMING PEACE IN CHRIST'S CROSS

The ladies of Trinity Lutheran's Priscilla Guild are thankful to everyone who participated in their Salad Lunch last month. They had over 180 in attendance, and raised a little over $2,300, which will be used for various projects throughout 2019. Thank you!

Preschool Praises for October 2018

October is always a fun and very busy month! The first week we talked about apples and made our own applesauce that we then ate for snack! Thank you to Tom and Suzie Ulrickson for lending us their apple peeler, corer and slicer - the kids loved using it! We made a cute letter A apple with Popsicle sticks and cut apples in half to look at their parts, and them made an apple stamp picture with them. We also went to the orchard in town and each child got to pick 2 apples and take them home. What an educational experience as the children got to see what else eats apples and that they don't just come from the store! We talked about the 6th day of creation when God made animals and people and Pastor elaborated on the amazing fact that God made everything from the little worm to the great big bull!

The second week was Fire Prevention and Safety week. We focused on such important topics as stop, drop, and roll, don't hide-go outside, and crawl under smoke. We also worked on the letter F and honing our fine motor skills with tracing lines. The Crawford County Conservation office stopped by and visited the afternoon class and talked about different kinds of teeth with the children. Officer Hansen had spoken to the afternoon class last month and came to visit the morning class this week. The children loved visiting with him and seeing the lights on his truck! The Manning Fire Department came and spoke to us about fire safety and showed us how a Firefighter looks before and after putting on his life-saving gear. They may look a little scary, but they are really just a person under all those clothes and they want to help. Then, they gave us fire truck rides! You can imagine how excited the children were! To top it off, the fire department also gave the children each a helmet and an activity pack! We wrote them a nice card (more like a poster!) from each class. Again, we thank all those who serve on the Fire Department for their service and sacrifice!

The Pancake Breakfast went wonderfully and we had a great turn out even with the snow! The children did their best on the songs and sounded wonderful. Thank you to the preschool parents and confirmation students for their volunteer work that day - you were essential to its success!

The third week was all about fall colors and the letter L. The children gathered different colors of fall from outside (leaves, pine cones, pumpkins, flowers, etc.) and we charted them under either red, green, orange, yellow or brown then counted which category had the most. These charts can be seen in the preschool hallway. We also tried a new art project where we made a leaf rubbing on a paper with a candle then water colored over it. The results are beautifully colored leaves! We cut them out and hung them over the entry way of the preschool. Jesus Time focused on Adam and Eve and how they were created by God differently than other creatures. Pastor spoke of the fall and how sin entered the world.

The fourth week was all about pumpkins, shapes, the letter P and the number 3. We had made Pumpkin Pie Play Dough to use to shape the number 3 and it smelled amazing! The children and the teachers loved it! We ended the week with a pumpkin investigation where each child got to make guesses about out pumpkins - how much they weigh, how many cubes tall they are and if they float or sink. We had some interesting guesses (one million pounds and one hundred cubes) and you can see our investigation papers hanging in the fellowship hall. Thank you to Betty Schroeder for donating little pumpkins for each child to take home! We also enjoyed the Family Fall Festival where all the preschool families are invited to join us for supper and games. Thank you to all those who volunteered that night and made it so much fun for the children! The fall into sin was our focus for Jesus Time and the children were fascinated with how the devil disguised himself and tricked Adam and Eve, but we distinguished that Adam and Eve made their own choice to listen and disobey God. Pastor spoke about Noah and the Ark and God's love for us.

The last week of October we only had one day of classes as we had Parent Teacher Conferences on Wednesday and Thursday. I had been doing assessments on each child for the previous 2 weeks and enjoyed being able to share the results with the parents. It is amazing how much they have picked up on so far in the school year! It was a super busy month and we all had a great time thanks to many people who make it all possible!
Yours in Christ, Mrs. Gore and Mrs. Nemitz

ZION
Lutheran Preschool
Manning, Iowa
Christ Centered... Child Focused... Family Connecting

Preschool Core Values:

1. Christ-centered
2. Child-focused
3. Excellence
4. Safe
5. Family-supporting
6. Community Connecting

Introducing…

A new Zion Partnership

Zion Cares

From members who bless us with music to members who amaze us with creativity, from members who keep our facility beautiful and in working order to members who care for our candles, vessels, and paraments, and from members who teach our young to members who care for those in need, Zion is abundantly blessed with numerous capable, compassionate people. One of these amazing members is licensed therapist, Amy Hull. Amy lovingly serves at Manning Regional Health Care Center in the Senior Life Solutions program, an intensive outpatient group therapy program designed to meet the unique needs of older adults over the age of 65 struggling with depression and anxiety often related to aging. As a licensed therapist, though, Amy is equipped to care for individuals of all ages who might be struggling with one or more of life's stressors.

Zion is happy to announce that Amy is volunteering her time and expertise for the benefit of the Zion family. Each month Amy, in cooperation with her partner Carol Segebart, will highlight help for healthy living. This month they focus on the importance of adequate sleep:

> Psychiatrists are warning that one of the most significant and overlooked public health problems in the United States is chronic sleep deprivation. Only 60% of US adults are getting the recommended eight or more hours of sleep a night. Studies reveal that sleep deprivation dramatically impairs memory and concentration while increasing levels of stress hormones and disrupting the body's normal metabolism. Inadequate sleep puts people at increased risk for motor vehicle accidents and diseases. Hypertension, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity and depression are all serious health conditions linked to poor sleep. With good nutrition, exercise and proper sleep habits our bodies can stay in balance and keep us mentally and physically strong. (American Psychological Association (APA) (2014). *More sleep would make us happier, healthier and safer. Submitted by Manning Regional Healthcare's Senior Life Solutions program*)

One of the things greatly impeding healthy sleep habits is screen time. Screens, especially the blue light they emit, suppress the production of melatonin, a hormone your body produces to help you sleep. Further, interacting with our screens before bed may make it difficult for our minds to relax into sleep, especially if we were watching something exciting, scary, or unresolved, or reading or writing an important email. And, if you keep your phone next to your bed, it may wake you up during the night with its buzzing, beeping, or various noise making. The problem is magnified as devices multiply.

Parents need to take this into consideration when they establish tech rules for their household (and they should establish tech rules!). Do children need their phones next to their beds? Should they be watching TV (or You Tube or Netflix) as bed approaches? And, is it a good idea for schools to assign homework that requires significant interaction with screens, especially if students are doing homework in the evening? Quality sleep, as Amy and Carol point out, has far reaching implications for healthy lives. Want to visit more? Call/email/stop in and let's talk. – Pastor Conner

Blessing Our Future Generations

In 2016, Zion completed a beautiful and practical million dollar capital improvement project – and we did it with no debt! Normal congregations don't do that. We were able to do it because of the generosity of people like you. But that doesn't tell the whole story. We were able to do it because of the generosity of many people who came before you, too.

Part of our Generations campaign was funded by a portion of Zion's Endowment and Legacy Fund. Thanks to the foresight of many members (many of whom are still actively involved in Zion) who gave generously to this endowment, we were able to designate a portion of the principal and earnings to our Generations Campaign. It was a beautiful thing: generations blessing generations! Praise God for their foresight.

Zion's Endowment and Legacy Fund Committee is demonstrating their foresight once again by offering a new way for generous Zion members to give for the wellbeing of future generations. Our current endowment (to which you may still give) may only be used for non-budgetary items. The recently opened avenue for giving will now allow earnings and interest to be designated to budgetary needs.

Why is this necessary?

Consider this simple stat: over the past 20 years Zion has buried over 300 members. 300! Let that number sink in. For the vast majority of Zion members, their support of the ministry at Zion ended upon their death. But it doesn't have to be that way. What if you could give a gift to Zion that would maintain your current level of giving into perpetuity? Now you can. Your Endowment and Legacy Fund Committee has established *The Leaving a Legacy for Future Generations Endowment* to provide this opportunity for you. This is a beautiful opportunity for you to ensure the Gospel of the Kingdom continues to be proclaimed at Zion for generations and to generations to come.

In addition, the Endowment and Legacy Committee has established *The Zion Lutheran Church Preschool Endowment*. Now you can endow gifts to Zion preschool to ensure we continue to be able to share Christ with children and families for generations and to generations to come.

And, thanks to our proactive committee, we are privileged to have Christian Estate Gift Planning Counselor, Jim Schroeder, serving as a staff member of Zion to help you make plans for your estate when Christ calls you to rest with the saints in Heaven in anticipation of the resurrection of the body and the renewal of the earth.

If you'd like to learn more, you can call/email/visit with Pastor Conner or Mr. Drew Puck. If you'd like to schedule a visit with Jim to make plans for your estate, you may call him at 515-490-7371. Together we can ensure that Christ continues to be proclaimed at Zion for generations and to generations to come! – Pastor Conner

Ladies Guild of Zion
October 10, 2018

Pastor Conner opened with prayer, had us open our Bibles to the book of Romans 1:16-17: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes... For in [the gospel] the righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith…for the righteous shall live by faith." And 3:22: "this righteousness from God comes through faith in Christ Jesus…all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ."

President Buhr led the group in the LWML pledge. Christian Life Chairman, Margaret Backhaus, read "Pray for a Bountiful Harvest." The harvest she spoke of is the harvest of souls for which we pray and the mission fields we support. The mite box prayer was recited as the mite box was passed. President Buhr called the business meeting to order in the name of the Triune God. Roll call was answered with what is special about small town living. The secretary read the minutes of the previous meeting which were approved as read. Correspondence included thank you notes from Judy Bald and Joan Noelck, and Pastor Ferry in Taiwan. Treasurer Mary Grimm and kitchen treasurer Darlene Vollstedt gave their reports. Human Care Chairman, Audrey Roe, reported on crocheted hats donated and on places that quilts are being distributed.

President Buhr reported on the Fall Rally held in Glidden. The afternoon centered on creation. She also announced that Day of Prayer will be held in Audubon on March 1st. An invitation to a dinner at Trinity Lutheran in Jefferson on Saturday, November 3rd was read. Ellie Menz will tell about IOWAY. Registration is at 4:30 and the meal will be served at 5:00. LCEF will provide the meal.

Old Business: Advent by Candlelight planning continues. Bev Grundmeier has tickets ready to sell and signup sheets for decorators and dessert providers. Darlene Vollstedt will serve as kitchen chairman. Margaret Backhaus passed out scripts for a sketch entitled "Christmas Wrappings". Mary Grimm, Connie Ahrehdsen, and Sue Puck will decorated the fellowship hall. New Business: In 2019 the 3 circles will serve the first two Sundays of every month. The last two Sundays will be hosted by other groups.

Plaza bingo will be held on October 26th. Cheral Buhr will chair with Mary Grimm, Janet Gruhn and Monica Christensen assisting. Saturday November 10th, the congregational field trip to mission central will take place. RSVP to Pastor Conner at connerjonathanidw@gmail.com if you wish to go. The next Guild meeting will be on November 14th with elections of a president and vice-president taking place. Hostesses will be Monica Christianson and Cynthia Genzen. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer and the table prayer. Refreshments were served by Mary Grimm and Sue Puck.
Sue Puck, secretary

S'MORES

UPCOMING EVENTS @ ZION & TRINITY

November 4

All Saints' Day

Join the Zion family on this meaningful day as we give thanks to God for the grace He has shown to the saints who have gone before us. The names of our loved ones who have died in the faith over the past years will be read and remembered in worship.

November 8

Thursday morning worship at Trinity, Manilla @ 11:00 a.m.

Light refreshments to follow

November 10

Fieldtrip to Mission Central

Join family and friends from Zion and Trinity for a special Mission Central Field Trip on Saturday, November 10th. Carpools will leave from Zion at 9:00 and Trinity at 9:10. The program begins at 10:17 and will feature three missionaries, a tour of the Creation Theater, and lunch! If you've never been, this is your opportunity! Call Zion (655-2352) or Trinity (654-3031) to register or with questions.

November 11

Iowa District Mission Banquet at Zion; 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

A free evening of food, networking and hearing about how God's people in Iowa District West are moving into the local mission field. Promises to be inspirational, encouraging and uplifting!

November 21

Joint Thanksgiving Eve Service; 7:00 pm. at Historic Trinity in Manning

Gather with the Zion and Trinity families to give thanks for His blessings of body and soul.

December 2

Advent by Candlelight (at Zion)

Experience the Christmas story through narration and song in the enchanting candlelight setting of Advent by Candlelight.

Tickets available Nov. 4th; table and hostess signups in fellowship hall.

December 16

Children's Christmas Programs

6:00 p.m. student musicians; 6:30 programs begin

November Birthdays and Anniversaries @ Zion & Trinity

Birthdays (T = Trinity)

1 Joy Umland
2 Derek Hodne
Dillon Mohr
Donna Holdsworth (T)
Dawn Lorenzen (T)
3 Taylor Beckendorf
Wade Janssen
Duane Boell (T)
Doug Grage (T)
4 Caleb Alexander
Kori Beckendorf
Mason Benton
Lueka Feller
Charles Hickman
Carol Kahl
5 Joe Riesberg
6 Albert Vahl
Nicholas Birks (T)
Virginia Mundt (T)
7 Barbara Anderson
Samantha Doyel
Fred Gruhn
Levi Lapel
8 Ken Grimm
Travis Mohr
Alexander Thelen
9 Rick Lohrmann
Kenneth Stripling
10 Jean Kusel
Jeanette Lerssen
11 Debbie Musfeldt
Tammy Winter
Kysen Folk (T)
12 Kyle Vetter
13 Jacob Dreier
Jordan Edgington
Rodney Frank
14 Bridget Gore
Steve Renze
15 Jesse Johnson
16. Sam Musfeldt
Rachel Nulle
Paula Vogel
17. Macie Doyel
Shelly Gruhn
Sandra Vahl
18. Beverly Grundmeier
19. Ryan Doyel
Mark Kucik
Garrett Renze
Martin (Marty) Bornhoft (T)
Vera Vollstedt (T)
20. Becky Eischeid
Barbara Gore
21. Margaret Backhaus
Dustin Bruch
Daniel Mohr
22. Tyler Heaton
Matthew Rosener
Thomas Walters
24. Allen Ehlers
Kelly Page
25. Luann Langel
Amber Neumann
26. Nancy Baack
Amy Borkowski
Nicholas Diersen
Mark Schroeder (T)
27. Ryan Willison
Sandy Grage (T)
Sheila Simonsen (T)
28. Diane Genzen
29. Daniel Behrens
Larry Farley (T)
30. Alberta Dreier

Anniversaries

11. Ken & Rhonda Grimm
14. Elissa & Joe Riesberg
16. Allen & Becky Ehlers
19. Brett & Diana Eddy
20. Timothy & Amanda Rosener
24. John & Nancy Opperman
Harold & Marjorie Jurgensen (T)
26. Ken & Becky Eischeid
Stacie & Nels Nelson
29. David & Kelli Page

If we missed or misspelled your name, please inform the church office.

Zion and Trinity fielded three teams for the Rotary Club's Pack the Pantry Event contributing over $700 worth of food and supplies to Manning's Food Pantry!

Official Acts

Baptism:
Reid Carl Neumann, son of Tavis and Cassi Neumann; October 20, 2018; Pastor Jonathan Conner

In Our Prayers

Dave Grundmeier, Heather Kusel, Sherri Steffes, Jim Deevers, Rick Spack, Susan Lamb, JoAnn Karsten (Georgia Lohrmann's sister), Natalie Mason (Bruce and Mary Grimm's daughter), Bob Henkelman, Judy Reinke, Gage Carlson