Dear Lexie,

"Motivated Reasoning"

Out of one million high school students surveyed, every one of them said they were “above average” in their ability to get along with others. 60% rated themselves in the top 10% and a quarter of these high school students squeezed themselves into the top 1%, rating themselves with exemplary relational skills.

Read more>>

Cyrus Cylinder: God's press release

Food for Thought

"Modest in scale and appearance, the Cyrus Cylinder is one of the most important and iconic objects in world history. The origins of this baked clay
Amazed at the greatness of God
A reflection by Kathy Roy Johnson

The Gospel of Luke tells the familiar story of a father who sought out Jesus to heal his son. The desperate man explained that his son - an only child - was possessed by an evil spirit.

Read more>>

Sligo By The Sea

Have you attended Sligo By The Sea yet this summer? Our services in Ocean City, Md. are running through Sept. 28!

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Motivated Reasoning

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV)

Out of one million high school students surveyed, every one of them said they were “above average” in their ability to get along with others. 60% rated themselves in the top 10% and a quarter of these high school students squeezed themselves into the top 1%, rating themselves with exemplary relational skills.

Researchers say that if your grades in school were bad, your chances of forgetting just how bad they were, increases in proportion to how low they were. When an athletic team loses a game- circumstances are usually blamed, but if they win, they personally take all the credit for their ability.

Leonard Mlodinow, a physicist (and screenwriter for Star Trek and MacGyver among other accomplishments), lists many examples of such “motivated reasoning” in a book he wrote about how our behavior is influenced by, what Jeremiah called, “a deceitful heart.” Most humans try to protect their self image at all costs. Reality is usually the first victim in this type of reasoning.

Have you ever noticed how much easier it is to forgive a bad driver in front of you if their car is the same make as yours? “It’s a Jeep thing” is a unifying slogan. Speaking of drivers, have you noticed that you’re also more likely to forgive bad driving if you see a political bumper sticker you identify with on their car?

It is sobering that we’re not fooling God. “A person may think their own ways are right, but the LORD weighs the heart.” Proverbs 21:2 (NIV). I am thankful that God continually nudges me to take reality checks and that He also provides the courage to see myself as I truly am. He is gracious about it too – only revealing a little at a time, according to how much I can handle.

Isaiah wrote (1: 18) “Come now, and let us reason together…” (NKJV) He wrote this because he saw firsthand how his fellow citizens with deceitful hearts were taking advantage of others. He pleaded with his people to unite to help the oppressed.

I am excited about the way Sligo members are becoming more and more motivated to reason together in the sense that Isaiah desired. Homes for Hope are providing a network of caring and committed people sharing the Word of God as they share their friendship. Sligo members rallied as a call went out to provide money and goods for residents of the Langley Park community whose homes were damaged by fire last week. This is true motivated reasoning- motivated by the compelling love of God.
Jamie Jean

"Modest in scale and appearance, the Cyrus Cylinder is one of the most important and iconic objects in world history. The origins of this baked clay object, which was buried as a foundation deposit, can be traced to the Persian king Cyrus the Great’s conquest of Babylon in the sixth century B.C. It bears an inscription, written in Babylonian cuneiform, that claims Cyrus’s victory over the last Babylonian ruler, Nabonidus. Also in this text, Cyrus declared religious freedom for his newly conquered people. He encouraged Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the second temple, which earned him the title “shepherd of God” and even the “Lord’s anointed” (Messiah) in the Book of Isaiah.” (Smithsonian, Freer/Sackler Museum of Asian Art)

Working at the Smithsonian has granted me access to an information smorgasbord. Yet instead of challenging my faith, I daily gain knowledge that affirms my trust in the Biblical account of history and therefore God’s word. The key is in the lens used to interpret the knowledge that is presented.

For example, when the cylinder was rediscovered in 1879, many regarded it as proof of events described in the Old Testament: Jews were allowed to end their Babylonian exile, return to Jerusalem, and rebuild their temple. Skeptics argue that because the cylinder portrays Cyrus as having been chosen by the pagan god Marduk to restore peace and order to the Babylonians, it does not actually affirm the Biblical account. But what does the Bible say?

“This is what the Lord says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut: I will go before you and will level the mountains; I will break down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, who summons you by name. For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honor, though you do not acknowledge me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God. I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, so that from the rising of the sun to the place of its setting people may know there is none besides me. I am the Lord, and there is no other. I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.”

(Isaiah 45:1-7)

Secular history is written by the victors of war. As the Bible clearly states, Cyrus did not know the God of Israel, so it is not evidence against the accuracy of the Old Testament that Cyrus credits a pagan god for his victory in his public statement to his newly conquered territory. In fact, it only confirms this Biblical retelling of the story that Cyrus does not credit the Lord. Besides, God can use whomever He chooses to do His will.

Of all the ancient writings, the Bible is considered the most heavily recorded, and by some, the most important historical document ever written—with over 24,000 manuscript copies to back up the creditability of the text.

“The more concrete the historical terms such as events, places, and dates, the more the likelihood of the attached abstract claims—such as the nature of God and truth.” (Subodh Pandit, Cross Examination p. 44)

“In real terms the New Testament is easily the best attested ancient writing in terms of the sheer number of documents, the time span between the events and the document, and the variety of documents available to sustain or contradict it. There is nothing in ancient manuscript evidence to match such textual integrity…” (Ravi Zacharias, Can Man Live Without God? p. 162)

“To be skeptical of the resultant text of the New Testament books is to allow all of classical antiquity to slip into obscurity, for no document of the ancient period [including Herodotus’ History – 8 manuscripts exist] are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament.”
In addition, scholars tell us that 600 predictions in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible have come to pass.

“Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and has brought increased recognition to the value of the Bible as a source of history.” (William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religions of Israel*, pp. 127,128).

“Old Testament archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner filled in historical gaps, adding immeasurably to the knowledge of Biblical backgrounds.” (Merrill Unger’s *Bible Dictionary*, p. 15).

“Archeology is a real help in understanding the Bible. It yields fascinating information which illustrates what might otherwise be obscured, and in some instances confirms what some might otherwise regard as doubtful.” (Paul E. Little, *Know Why You Believe*, p. 88).

Amazingly, in a world full of scoffers, there are very good reasons to believe in the historical accuracy of the Bible. Even though evidence may be buried by the sands of time, undiscovered by archeology, this lack of proof is not evidence of Bible fallacy but rather evidence of our limited knowledge. Being unable to prove something is not the same as disproving. The accuracy of the conclusion all depends on whether the information is interpreted through the lens of a non-believer or that of a Biblical student.

By humbly accepting our ignorance and searching the word of God—seeking his guidance in prayer—we open ourselves to the greatest source of wisdom and knowledge.

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness…” (2 Timothy 3:16)

“God has permitted a flood of light to be poured upon the world in both science and art; but when professedly scientific men treat upon these subjects from a merely human point of view, they will assuredly come to wrong conclusions. It may be innocent to speculate beyond what God’s word has revealed, if our theories do not contradict facts found in the Scriptures; but those who leave the word of God, and seek to account for His created works upon scientific principles, are drifting without chart or compass upon an unknown ocean. The greatest minds, if not guided by the word of God in their research, become bewildered in their attempts to trace the relations of science and revelation. Because the Creator and His works are so far beyond their comprehension that they are unable to explain them by natural laws, they regard Bible history as unreliable. Those who doubt the reliability of the records of the Old and New Testaments, will be led to go a step further, and doubt the existence of God; and then, having lost their anchor, they are left to beat about upon the rocks of infidelity.” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 112-114)

Tagged with → • • • • • • • • • • •
Amazed at The Greatness of God…

The Gospel of Luke tells the familiar story of a father who sought out Jesus to heal his son. The desperate man explained that his son—an only child—was possessed by an evil spirit. This spirit would cause the boy to go into convulsions. We can almost hear the desperation in the father’s voice as he explains, “It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him.” The disciples had tried to heal the boy, but without success. But Jesus rebuked the evil spirit and healed the boy, giving him back to his father. Luke then tells us, “And they were all amazed at the greatness of God!”

You can almost hear the anguish in the father’s voice as he pleads for healing for his son. How many sleepless nights had he spent trying to help this poor boy? How long had his family been shunned by family and friends because their boy “has a problem”? And now—think of the joy that father felt when his son stood before him healed! I’ll bet there was singing and dancing—not to mention tears of joy—as they were all amazed by the greatness of God!

Now fast-forward into our own twenty-first century. Think with me for a moment about those families among us who are touched by some form of mental illness. Perhaps a mother struggles with depression. Maybe a teenaged child has some self-destructive behavior that is difficult to break. Our maybe a young child has recently been diagnosed with a brain disorder, is acting and thinking troubling things and the parents have no idea where to turn.

We have only to turn to the latest headlines to know that as a nation—we have a mental health epidemic of unparalleled proportion. And as Adventists, it seems to me that we need to have a voice in helping to heal those who are impacted by this disease. Like the boy in Luke’s story—the impact of mental illness scarcely ever leaves and is destroying them.

This Fall, Sligo Church is hosting a 12-week series designed to help caregivers understand how to cope when mental illness and brain disorders appear in a child or loved one. This course—which is called Family 2 Family—will be taught by Ken and Brenda Flemmer. Family 2 Family was developed by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and has received national acclaim. This course will meet every Thursday evening beginning on September 12th in Room 008 at the WAU Music Building across from the church on Greenwood Ave. Please contact Stephanie at NAMI Montgomery County to register (301-949-5852). If you are a caregiver of a loved one impacted by mental illness, please attend! If you care about these issue, please attend. In fact, let’s all attend. Attend—and be amazed at the greatness of God!

By Kathy Roy Johnson

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Sligo by the Sea 2013

pesposito
Can We Defeat Despair? DAT Feature: We Have This Hope!!

Going to spend the weekend in Ocean City, MD? Need a place to Worship? Well you’re in luck! From June 29th to September 28th 2013 you can join our Sligo family on your vacation too!

Join us for Sligo by the Sea
Join us for sligo by the sea

St. Peter’s Lutheran Church
10301 Coastal Highway, Ocean City, MD, 410-524-7474

Sabbath School 10 a.m., Worship Service 11 a.m.

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Casual attire is appropriate

www.sligochurch.org

Schedule 2013