Dear Lexie,

"PEACE, NOT WAR!"

If you are like me you have been following developments in Syria and carefully listening to pronouncements by world leaders on those developments. On Tuesday our president gave a considered speech on the need to protect ordinary civilians, especially innocent children, in Syria with the use of American air strikes. At the same time he registered his desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Read more>>

Tea for Scholarships
Sligo Women's Ministry
This Sabbath:
September 14, 2013

Speaker:
Pr. Charles Tapp
“Nevertheless”

Special Musical Guests:
Sligo Sanctuary Choir,
Jon Gilbertson,
Director

As the summer is dwindling down, many ministries are getting ready to start their engines and a new cycle of activities. Sligo's Women's ministries is one of those ministries...

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 object, ..."

Learn 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!

Read more>>

Missed Last Week's Sermon?

Watch Live or OnDemand:
Sligo WebTV>>

Sermon Audio Archive:
Audio Archive>>
Dr. Donald McFarlane – Administrative Pastor

pesposito

If you are like me you have been following developments in Syria and carefully listening to pronouncements by world leaders on those developments. On Tuesday our president gave a considered speech on the need to protect ordinary civilians, especially innocent children, in Syria with the use of American air strikes. At the same time he registered his desire for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

The conflict in Syria has got me reflecting on Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:9, which say, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” Some Bible commentators are of the view that this beatitude was the hardest for many of the Jewish hearers of Jesus to accept. They could easily understand why it was necessary to mourn over their sins, why they should hunger after righteousness and why they should be pure in heart. But being peacemakers took matters to another level, with which they may not have been comfortable.

Making peace with the Romans would take a lot of doing for many Jews, especially the Zealots who sought to incite the Jewish nation to revolt against Rome and drive every Roman from their land. Many Zealots were known to carry daggers on their person so as to be able to kill Romans. The Zealots fighting the Romans was like fighting a super power that had nuclear weapons with shotguns. There wasn’t any way that the Jews could win but I guess some believed they could. They didn’t take kindly to this peacemaker gospel of Jesus, yet Jesus was adamant that the way of peace was superior to the way of war.

In enjoining His followers to be peacemakers, Jesus was basically asking them to be like Him, to be Godlike. He came to earth to make peace between earth and heaven and to remove the hostility that separated man from his Father. It seems to me then that the peace that Jesus is primarily addressing in Matthew 5:9 is peace between God and man. “Blessed are those who strive to bring peace between God and man,” those who are engaged in bringing lost humanity to Jesus. At the same time I also believe that the blessing that Jesus speaks about here extends to those who work for peace in other ways – peace in the family, peace in the community, peace between nations, peace between tribes, peace between ethnic groups.

Most of us will not have the opportunity to influence the foreign policies of governments. We will not be Secretary of State or work in the diplomatic service but God still desires that we be peacemakers. How then can we be peacemakers? We can be peacemakers in our ordinary walks of life – in our homes by seeking to resolve conflicts that could easily break up the family; in our communities by bringing those who are vulnerable and feeling ostracized to the community table; in our workplaces by working for understanding and harmony among colleagues.

Wherever we find ourselves there will be conflict. This is part of sinful human nature. But as people of God’s kingdom our job is to be messengers of peace. We are to do what good we can where we find ourselves and walk through the doors that God opens for us. This week we remember the atrocities of 9/11 twelve years ago and inwardly groan. Something very important was broken in our world on that fateful day. We mourn with those who mourn the loss of loved ones but perhaps one of the most effective ways in which we can mark this tragic event is by working for understanding, reconciliation and peace where we find ourselves.

It is to be noted that the blessing that Jesus promises is not for peace lovers. Nearly everyone I know loves peace, which is a good thing, but the people for whom the blessing is reserved are those who get out of their comfort zones and make peace happen. You and I can be recipients of this blessing.
Mary McFarlane and Megan Conway serving tea.

As the summer is dwindling down, many ministries are getting ready to start their engines and a new cycle of activities. Sligo’s Women’s ministries is one of those ministries. As we get ready for fall think about how you can contribute to this ministry, below is one of the many activities they sponsored so far this year. If you’d like more information please contact Dr. Joan Annette Francis

“This article first appeared on the Columbia Union Conference website (www.columbiaunion.org) June 5, 2013, and is reprinted with permission.”

An evening of drinking tea and eating scones with friends from church may seem like just another fun activity to some, but to a woman in Cambodia, it means a year of tuition to university. At a Monday evening tea, women at Potomac Conference’s Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md., raised more than $800* for college scholarships.

The tea served as a pleasant backdrop for the church’s chapter of the Scholarshipping Our Sisters (SOS) program fundraiser. Calling the event their Spring Tea and Silent Auction, organizers explained that SOS is a program started by the General Conference Women Ministries Department to give women scholarships to Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities. While the women sipped tea and nibbled treats; listened to “I’m a Little Teapot” played on the piano in various genres; and browsed gift baskets, china, floral centerpieces and other auction items, foremost in their minds was the real purpose of the evening.

“We wanted the ladies to think about the people whose lives they are impacting,” shared Carolyn Kujawa, a Sligo church member and the SOS chapter leader.

In their midst that very evening was one of the women impacted by SOS—their very own Debbie Eisele, the church’s associate pastor, who received a scholarship from the group when she was studying religion in Australia in the 1990s.

From the program’s inception in 1991, Women’s Ministries has bestowed a total of 1,980 scholarships to women in over 118 countries amounting to $876,908. This year alone, they have given scholarships to women in Madagascar, Mongolia, the Philippines and Israel. Sligo’s contribution will add to the program goal of raising $85,000 for scholarships this year.

The idea for the tea came about when a Sligo member donated china to the group, which also holds yard sales as fundraisers. Instead of selling the various pieces of ornate china, Eisele suggested hosting the tea. Kujawa took the idea, ran with it and recruited other Sligo women to help prepare for the evening.

One of the ladies, Karen Banner, even brought tea and several boxes of china! She said she likes to follow her mother-in-law’s example of using the best china—not hiding it away for a future use that never comes around! Another participant, Carla Conway, and her mother, Charlotte, made themed baskets to present for auction.

Francia Bissereth, a public university student, doesn’t benefit from the scholarships, but says, “I’m glad to give. It doesn’t matter that I don’t receive. I remember receiving a book scholarship once and how much of a difference it made to my education.”

Heather Dawn Small, General Conference Women’s Ministries director, said she is thrilled to learn of the efforts of the women at Sligo
church. “These scholarships are absolutely vital for so many women globally,” she said. “Without help, many women would not be able to attend any school at all, let alone a Christian school. It’s also vital to our church as many of these women, in turn, give back to the church in many ways.”

The Sligo chapter is a first for SOS, and they are hoping other churches will launch a chapter as well. Click here to learn more about the program.

*As of June 6, 2013, Sligo church’s Scholarshipping Our Sisters Tea and Silent Auction raised $1,200.

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Tagged with → • • • • • • • • • •
“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.” (John W. Montgomery, History and Christianity, p. 29)

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 → • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
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