

SUNFLOWER SEEDS



PIG-OUT Saturday, July 4th

The Fusion Restaurant

1812 W Douglas, Wichita

12:45 PM – 2:30PM

Zoom on-line meetings will be held in lieu of face to face interactions for the remainder of this month and into July. Contact Bill Barnett for details or help.

Topic: Kansas Sunflower Mensa

Time: 12:30 PM CST. Every week on Saturday until Jul 25, 2020. No zoom meeting on July 4th for the posted Pig-Out.

Join the Zoom Meeting:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/72081034487?pwd=aWdKUStzbEVhNktjRzF0VEYxQTISQT09>

Meeting ID: 720 8103 4487

Password: 8T0Jrt

June 2020, Volume – 48, Issue # 6

Kansas Sunflower Mensa Newsletter



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This publication is intended for mature, intelligent audiences and content herein may not be appropriate for some minors.

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As you may know, the 2020 AG in Kansas City has been canceled. This is the first time that an AG has been canceled since American Mensa started having annual gatherings in 1963. The AG in Kansas City has been rescheduled to be in 2024, so we will still have our AG in Kansas City, just four years later. The decision to cancel was no doubt a difficult one, but I think it was the right decision. If it was held, the attendance would probably be unusually low and the event could also have been a financial disaster. If you have registered for the AG, your registration fee will automatically be refunded to you. Also, if you made a hotel reservation through the AG web site, any deposit you have made will also be automatically refunded to you. If you made a hotel reservation through some other means, you will need to enquire about a refund yourself.

The 2021 AG will be in Houston, but it will be called the World Gathering (WG), due in part because it will be the 75th anniversary of Mensa, which was founded in Oxford, England in 1946. Or, if you prefer, the AG will be combined with the WG. Another change for 2021 is that the WG will take place in August, not July.

As of the time of this writing, we are not planning any physical meetings in June. This is a significant disappointment for many of us, but we must abide by the guidelines established by Mensa, the state of Kansas, the CDC and other parts of the federal government. It would be risky and foolish for us to do otherwise. It is important that our events “are prepared to give members and projects the confidence that in-person meetings are safe experiences.” American Mensa recommends the following: “• Follow all local, state, and national regulations and “reopen” plans. (Each state is developing and implementing its own plan, and it’s important to follow those guidelines for each phase and dates as you plan.) • Follow CDC recommendations for safe interactions. • Require all attendees to wear masks and take prevention measures for the safety of all.”

<https://www.us.mensa.org/featured-content/recommendations-for-meetings-in-a-covid-19-world>

There are perhaps some who would like to throw caution to the wind and resume in-person meetings. But at the time of this writing, the death toll due to COVID-19 in the USA is 95,000, and that is over only a two-month time period (plus maybe a few days). And the death toll is increasing at about 1,000 per day. True, the large population centers of the country are being hit hard, and population sparse states such as Kansas are doing much better, but that just reinforces how communicable this virus is. Please be patient, and safe. We will eventually get back to “normal.” Right now it is not quite clear the direction this thing is going.

As I mentioned in the May *SEEDS*, whether you live near or far, we do have other ways to communicate. For example, our Kansas Sunflower Mensa Facebook.

This is a great way for us to interact. Another example is our *Sunflower SEEDS*. If you are interested and have some writing ability, why not submit an article to Klaus, our editor? I would very much like to hear, either on Facebook or in the *SEEDS*, especially from those of you we seldom, if ever, get to see or hear from, near or far. Give it some thought and jump in!

We are considering streaming our Program Meetings in the future, through Zoom (two-way communications). All that is needed to participate is a high-speed internet link, and if we do this, we could welcome perhaps many of you who are not able to participate in person. If you live in a part of Kansas where high-speed internet is difficult to come by, perhaps your local library has such a connection. Before we get deeply into this, it would be helpful to get some feedback from those of you we seldom, if ever, see. Please post something on our Facebook page, or write a letter to the Editor of the *SEEDS* (Klaus). Let’s see if perhaps we can turn this virus disaster into some positive developments for Kansas Sunflower Mensa.

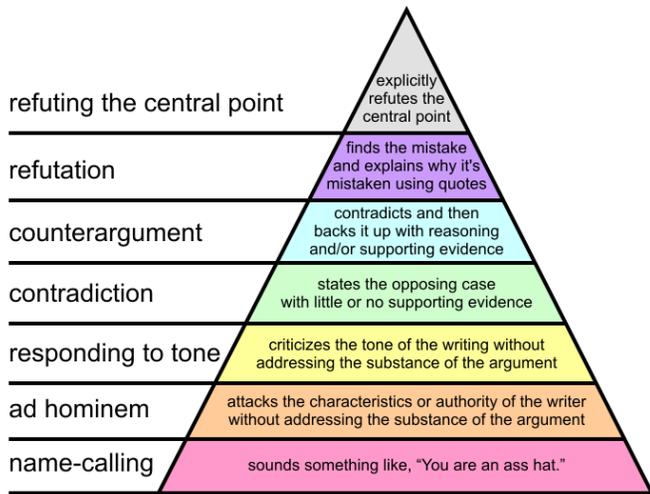
But whether you live near or far, we do have other ways to communicate. For example, our Kansas Sunflower Mensa Facebook. This is a great way for us to interact. Another example is our *Sunflower SEEDS*. If you are interested and have some writing ability, why submit an article to Klaus, our editor? I would very much like to hear, either on Facebook or in the *SEEDS*, especially from those of you we seldom, if ever, get to see or hear from, near or far. Give it some thought and jump in!

Although the 2020 Annual Gathering, in Kansas City this year (for once it is close by!), is in doubt because of COVID-19, as of this writing it is still on, waiting to see how things develop with the virus. Perhaps it will be canceled, or perhaps it will happen but with restrictions. The situation is being carefully monitored. We will let you know if changes are made, probably both on Facebook and in the *SEEDS*.

**The man on the news
said at the end of the day
what’s going to keep you
safe is common sense.**

Some of y’all in trouble..





- Kansas Sunflower Mensa’s Klaus Trenary
- Mid-America Mensa’s Diana and Shawn Dyer
- Missouri Ozark Mensa’s Lorraine Gardner
- Nebraska/Western Iowa’s Tami Whitney
- North Dakota Mensa’s Sheila Christensen
- Plains and Peaks Mensa’s Betsy Ogan
- South Dakota Mensa’s Mike Hamerly
- Wyoming Mountain Mensa’s Bess Carnahan

Beyond paper, there’s electronic media. I know one Mensan who swore a mighty oath when he retired never again to touch a computer. (In the interest of friendship, I declined to ask him about his smart phone.) These days, though, the internet is as essential as electric power. Mensa has an established presence there and your Local Group may have as well.

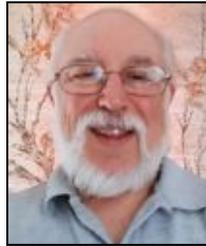
If you haven’t already checked out our online SIGs (see the list at us.mensa.org/connect/sigs/sig-listing) or our plethora of Communities on Mensa Connect (connect.us.mensa.org) or the official and unofficial Mensa gatherings on Facebook, I heartily recommend you do so. There’s a lot of good conversation there, too.

~~ Rich



Heartland Mensa Region 7

“AND what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays;
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;”



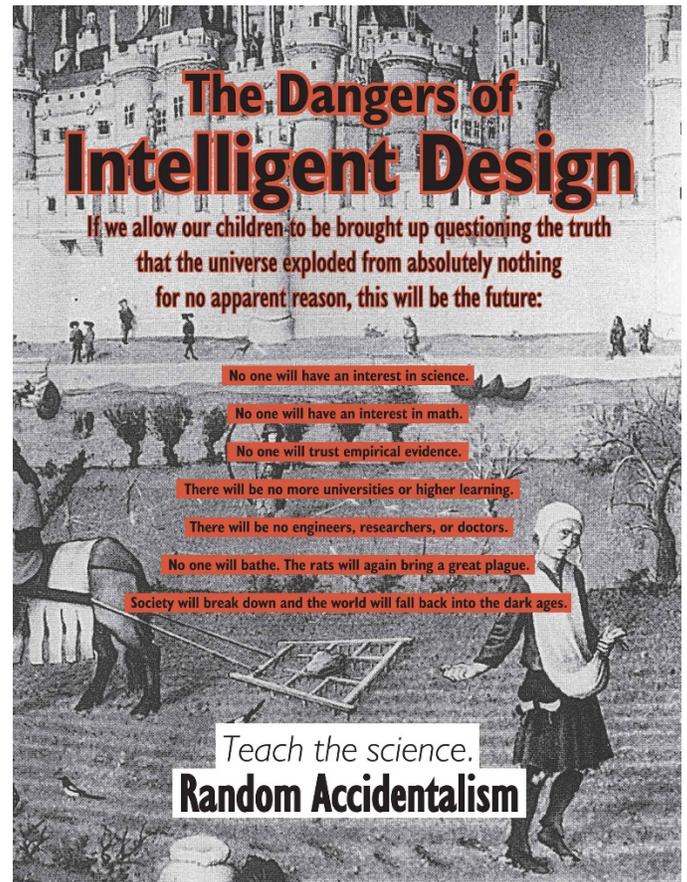
— James Russell Lowell

What is so rare as a day in June 2020? Predictability, for one thing, which makes 2020’s edition a tough month for which to write my usual anodyne column. “Stay at home” and “safer at home” regimes have nullified much of Mensa’s usual busy calendar of Spring- and Summer-time events at both the national and Local Group levels. At this writing, we still don’t know whether the Annual Gathering will happen in real space or in virtual space or at all.

All of which means that Mensa for all of us will be vastly different until the novel coronavirus is under control. We’re used to face-to-face get-togethers that feature grins and good conversation (often together with good food) but that’s not compatible with face masks and six-foot separations. We’re restricted to communicating from a distance – either on paper or electronically.

Now even more than before, our Local Group Editors and the newsletters they faithfully produce are central to your Mensa experience. Many thanks for their hard work to

- Boulder/Front Range Mensa’s Kim Springer
- Central Iowa Mensa’s Gail Elliott
- Denver Mensa’s Sarah Boe and Sara Shepard
- High Mountain Mensa’s Dennis Lenahan



Letters to the Editor:

A response to a letter written by Gordon. You say that “The Christians say their God has changed the rules often.” I’m not sure which “Christians” say that, for it is surely not sound theology. One of the basic attributes of God, according to good theology that to the best of my knowledge all branches of Christianity, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant, adhere to is that He is immutable; that He does not change. While everything around does change, He does not. Here are just a couple of Bible verses: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8), “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” (James 1:17) There are many more. Moral “rules” and the basic plan of salvation have never changed. Perhaps you are referring to the fact that the ceremonial “rules” of the Old Testament temple services have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and therefore they have been set aside. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” (Matthew 5:17) The entire book of Hebrews deals with how Christ fulfilled the Old Testament ceremonial laws.

You say that “In OT times, He only cared about one tribe, the Israelites. Strange. What about the Indians, the Europeans the Africans or the Chinese? Didn't they count?” It is clear in Scripture that God was concerned with more than the Israelites. For example, in Genesis 14:18-20 we learn about Melchizedek, who is called “priest of God Most High.” And what about Job? And others. But God chose the descendants of Abraham to be a special people unto God, and a people through whom He would reveal Himself. But also, as he said to Abraham, “seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Genesis 18:18), and also, “in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:18)

But what I would like to address, as I mentioned last time, is that according to Peter Jones there are only two religions. Jones grew up in England but came to the US for his theological education: Th.M. from Harvard Divinity School, and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has taught at several seminaries, and travels on speaking engagements worldwide. His concern for the past few decades has been the cultural change in the US, particularly in terms of its religious commitments. He has written over ten books on the subject. In his view, the US has dramatically moved away from a nation significantly influenced by Christianity to a new position of neo-paganism. Not quite the paganism of ancient Greece and Rome, but a new synthesis of paganism and postmodernism. The inroads that this new (or really old) religion has made in the US is likely much greater than any of us have realized. Let me mention just three of his titles: *One or Two: Seeing a World of Difference*, Main Entry Editions, 2010, *The Other Worldview: Exposing Christianity's Greatest Threat*, Kirkdale Press, 2015, and *The Pagan Heart of Today's Culture*, co-published by P&R Publishing and

Westminster Seminary Press, 2014. This last title is really a booklet rather than a book, *per se*. It is about 45 pages long. However, it is not like most booklets. It has 121 end notes, it deals with some rather difficult ideas unless you are already familiar with them, it is written by a very talented theologian, and is endorsed by a pair of other talented and well-known theologians: Sinclair Ferguson and John Frame. This past November he spoke at a conference in Australia, where he presented his basic ideas. I’m sure he can only touch on the highlights of his investigations over a long period of time, but he is of the opinion that, looked at from a grand overview to try to make sense out of the religious diversity that we see in the world, there are really only two religions: Christianity and everything else. I recommend it to you. His speech is on youtube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOPNpyAetDA>

Also, let me mention a short video (4 1/2 minutes) by R.C. Sproul which addresses the Creator/creation distinction, what Jones calls Twoism. This short video is on Facebook, and it is an extract from a 23 minute video lesson that is part of a “Defending Your Faith” teaching on the Ligonier web site; it is Lesson 20 in that series. In the longer video, Sproul also addresses the topic that God does not change, and the significance of Moses at the burning bush, topics that we touched on above and in my last email.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=622906305102475>

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/series/defending-your-faith/self-existence>

It seems to me that there is much more involved here than personal faith, but rather the survival of civilization. Western civilization, including science, is based on Christianity. To reject Christianity is nothing less than rejecting rationality, and as Peter Jones and R.C. Sproul, as well as others observe, rejecting Christianity, as our society increasingly appears to be doing, moves us in the direction of neo-paganism and postmodernism, both of which are irrational at best. Moving in this direction moves us away from a rational basis for religion, morality, and science. Larry

The economy is in a shambles but you gotta admit, one dollar for a 10-lb bag of mice is a good deal.



Provide services

11. Provide Postal service.
12. Tax or borrow money.
13. Buy land and build buildings for Federal use.

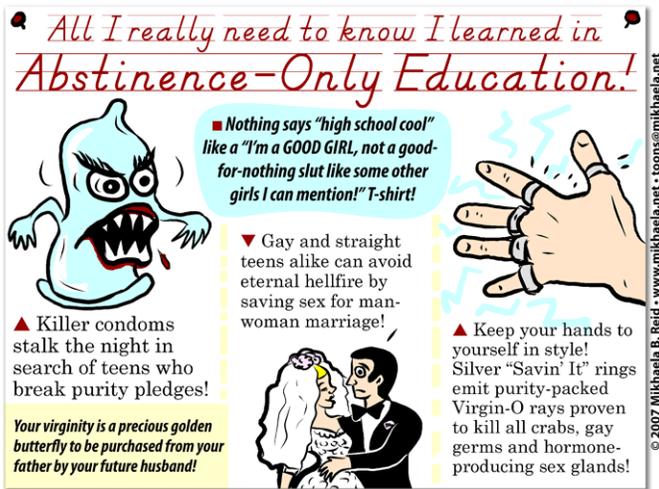
Note that there is nothing here that allows the Federal government to provide insurance. Thus, Social Security, and Obama Care are illegal. There is nothing that allows it to support or regulate education. Laws that do that are invalid, including student loans. No welfare of any kind is on the list. Another thing not on the list is criminal laws. Thus, the Federal Government cannot outlaw murder, abortion, robbery, or drug use. Business regulations are not on the list either.

However, when I talk to people, or read the newspaper, I get the impression that most people, when they think something should be done, think the Federal Government should do it. Is it time to change the Constitution? I say yes.

How could the Constitution be changed? We could do something as simple and extreme as saying, *"The States are hereby dissolved. All power formerly belonging to the States is hereby given to the Federal Government."*

A milder step might be to add something like this: *"Any law passed by the Federal government and approved by half the states becomes the law for all States."* Changes like this are radical, but I think they would make the Constitution more in line with American thinking. It would also make the unconstitutional laws of past, legitimate.

I propose this: *"The United States is a nation. The individual States are not. The Federal government has the right to give gifts to any entity and may regulate action within its borders and in its possessions. If State and national laws conflict, the national law shall prevail."*
Gordon Bakken



NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AMMENDMENT ?

Our constitution has been in effect for over 200 years, now. Most of us think it is one of the most brilliant descriptions of government ever created by man. I think it was extremely well done. However, I question if it accurately reflects modern American's opinion of how our government should work.

For example, the constitution states exactly what the Federal government is allowed to do. There are about 20 things on that list. The Tenth Amendment states that: *"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, ... are reserved to the states..."*. In other words, if an action is not specifically on the list, the Federal Government is prohibited from doing it.

The list is essentially this:

Interface with the States:

1. Standardize weights and measures.
2. Issue money.
3. Issue patents and copyrights.
4. Standardize bankruptcy laws.
5. Regulate trade between the States.

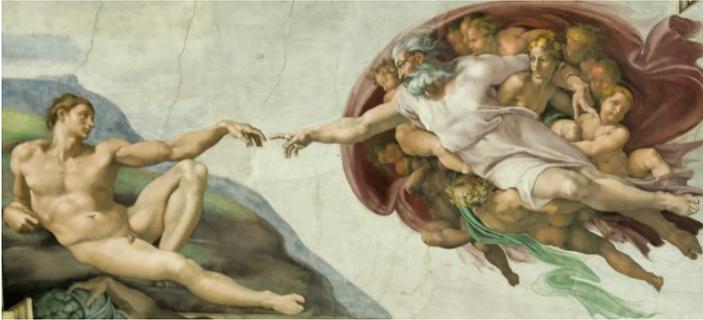
Interface with foreign nations.

6. Have an army and a navy.
7. Make war and treaties with foreign nations.
8. Regulate immigration.
9. Regulate international trade.
10. Punish treason.



Any more of this CoVid-19 BS, and the men in white suits will be taking me away for good.

New meta-analysis checks the correlation between intelligence and faith



Michelangelo may not have intended to make the shape behind the figure of God look like a human brain.

More than 400 years before the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, Greek playwright Euripides [wrote](#) in his play *Bellerophon*, “Doth some one say that there be gods above? There are not; no, there are not. Let no fool, led by the old false fable, thus deceive you.”

[Euripides](#) was not an atheist and only used the word “fool” to provoke his audience. But, if you look at the studies conducted over the past century, you will find that those with religious beliefs will, on the whole, score lower on tests of intelligence. That is the conclusion of psychologists Miron Zuckerman and Jordan Silberman of the University of Rochester and Judith Hall of Northeastern University who have published a meta-analysis in [Personality and Social Psychology Review](#).

This is the first systematic meta-analysis of 63 studies conducted between 1928 and 2012. In such an analysis, the authors look at each study’s sample size, quality of data collection, and analysis methods and then account for biases that may have inadvertently crept into the work. This data is next refracted through the prism of statistical theory to draw an overarching conclusion of what scholars in this field find. “Our conclusion,” as Zuckerman puts it, “is not new.”

“If you count the number of studies which find a positive correlation against those that find a negative correlation, you can draw the same conclusion because most studies find a negative correlation,” added Zuckerman. But that conclusion would be qualitative, because the studies’ methods vary. “What we have done is to draw that conclusion more accurately through statistical analysis.”

Setting the boundaries

Out of 63 studies, 53 showed a negative correlation between intelligence and religiosity, while 10 showed a positive one. Significant negative correlations were seen in 35 studies, whereas only two studies showed significant positive correlations.

The three psychologists have defined intelligence as the “ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience.” In short this is analytic intelligence, not the newly identified forms of creative and emotional intelligence, which are still subjects of dispute. In the various studies being examined, analytic intelligence has been measured in many different ways, including GPA (grade point average), UEE (university entrance exams), Mensa membership, and Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests, among others.

Religiosity is defined as involvement in some (or all) facets of religion, which includes belief in the supernatural, offering gifts to this supernatural, and performing rituals affirming their beliefs. Other signs of religiosity were measured using surveys, church attendance, and membership in religious organizations.

Among the thousands of people involved in these studies, the authors found that gender or education made no difference to the correlation between religiosity and intelligence; however, age mattered. The negative correlation between religiosity and intelligence was found to be the weakest among the pre-college population. That may be because of the uniqueness of the college experience, where most teenagers leave home for the first time, get exposed to new ideas, and are given a higher degree of freedom to act on them. Instead, in pre-college years, religious beliefs may largely reflect those of the family.

The gifted, the atheists

Is there a chance that higher intelligence makes people less religious? Two sets of large-scale studies tried to answer this question.

The first are based on [the Terman cohort of the gifted](#), started in 1921 by Lewis Terman, a psychologist at Stanford University. (The cohort is still being followed.) In the study, Terman recruited more than 1,500 children whose IQ exceeded 135 at the age of 10. Two studies used this data, one conducted by Robin Sears at Columbia University in 1995 and the other by Michael McCullough at the University of Miami in 2005, and they found that “Termites,” as the gifted are called, were less religious when compared to the general public.

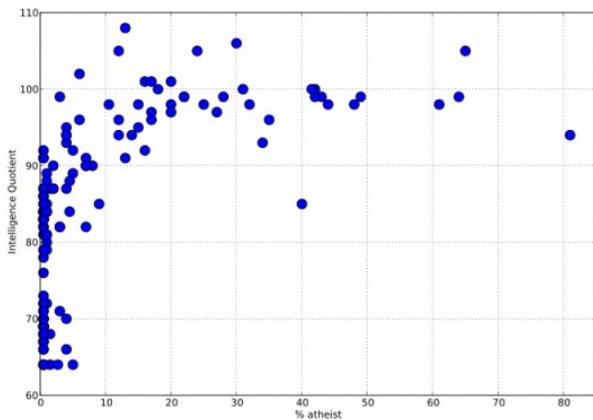
What makes these results remarkable is not just that these gifted folks were less religious, something that is [seen among elite scientists](#) as well, but that 60 percent of the Termites reported receiving “very strict” or “considerable” religious training while 33 percent received little training. Thus, almost all of the gifted Termites grew up to be less religious.

The second set of studies is based on students of New York’s Hunter College Elementary School for the intellectually gifted. This school selects its students based on a test given at a young age. To study their religiosity, graduates of this school were queried when they were between the ages of 38 and 50.

They all had IQs that exceeded 140, and the study found that only 16 percent of them derived personal satisfaction from religion (about the same number as the Termites).

So, while the Hunter study did not control for factors such as socioeconomic status or occupation, it did find that high intelligence at a young age preceded lower belief in religion many years later.

Other studies on the topic have been ambiguous. A 2009 study, led by Richard Lynn of the University of Ulster, compared religious beliefs and average national IQs of 137 countries. In their sample, only 23 countries had more than 20 percent atheists, which constituted, according to Lynn, "virtually all higher IQ countries." The positive correlation between intelligence and atheism was a strong one, but the study came under criticism from Gordon Lynch of Birkbeck College, because it did not account for complex social, economical, and historical factors.



[Enlarge](#) / The relationship between countries' belief in a god and national average IQ.

It's the beliefs, stupid

Overall, Zuckerman, Silberman, and Hall conclude that, according to their meta-analysis, there is little doubt a significant negative correlation exists (i.e. people who are more religious score worse on varying measures of intelligence). The correlation is more negative when religiosity measures beliefs rather than behavior. That may be because religious behavior may be used to help someone appear to be part of a group even though they may not believe in the supernatural.

So why do more intelligent people appear to be less religious? There are three possible explanations. One possibility is that more intelligent people are less likely to conform and, thus, are more likely to resist religious dogma.

A 1992 meta-analysis of seven studies found that intelligent people may be more likely to become atheists when they live in religious societies, because intelligent people tend to be nonconformists.

The most common explanation is that intelligent people don't like to accept any beliefs that are not subject to empirical tests or logical reasoning. Zuckerman writes in the review that intelligent people may think more analytically, which is "controlled, systematic, and slow", as opposed to intuitively, which is "heuristic-based, mostly non-conscious, and fast." That analytical thinking leads to lower religiosity.

The final explanation is that intelligence provides whatever functions religion does for believers. There are four such functions as proposed by Zuckerman, Silberman, and Hall.

First, religion provides people a sense of control. This was demonstrated in a series of studies conducted between 2008 and 2010, which showed that threatening volunteers' sense of personal control increased their belief in God. This may be because people believe that God makes the world more predictable and thus less threatening. Much like believing in God, higher intelligence has been shown to grant people more "self-efficacy," which is the belief in one's ability to achieve goals. So, if intelligent people have more control, then perhaps they don't need religion in the same way that others do.

Second, religion provides self-regulation. In a 2009 study, it was shown that religion was associated with better well-being. This was interpreted as an indication that religious people were more disciplined in pursuing goals and deferring small rewards for large ones. Separately, a 2008 meta-analysis noted that intelligent people were less impulsive. Delayed gratification may require better working memory, which intelligent people have. So, just like before, intelligence is acting as a substitute for religion, helping people delay gratification without needing divine interventions.

Third, religion provides self-enhancement. A 1997 meta-analysis compared the intrinsically religious, who privately believe in the supernatural, to the extrinsically religious, where people are merely part of a religious group without believing in God. The intrinsically religious felt better about themselves than the general public. Similarly, intelligent people have been shown to have a sense of higher self-worth. Again, intelligence may be providing something that religion does.

Last, and possibly the most intriguing, is that religion provides attachment. Religious people often claim to have a personal relationship with God. They use God as an "anchor" when faced with the loss of a loved one or a broken relationship. Turns out intelligent people find their "anchor" in people by building relationships. Studies have found that those who score highly on measures of intelligence are more likely to be married and less likely to get divorced. Thus, intelligent people have less need to seek religion as a substitute for companionship.

Give me the caveats

This meta-analysis only targets analytic intelligence, which surely is not the full measure of human intelligence despite the ongoing debate about how to define the rest of it. Also, although the review encompasses all studies conducted from 1928 to 2012, it only does so for studies written in the English language (two foreign language studies were considered only because a translation was available). The authors believe there are similar studies conducted in Japan and Latin America, but they did not have the time or resources to include them.

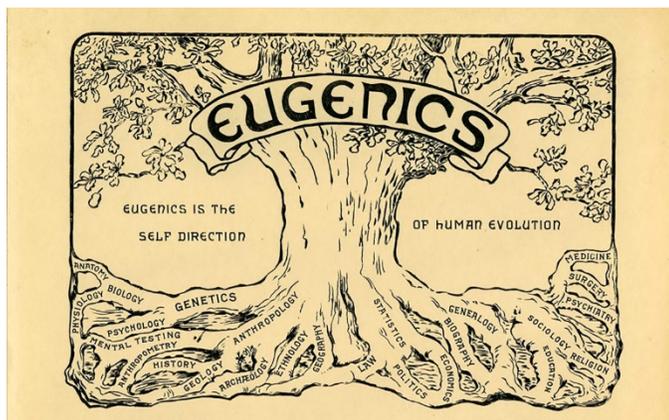
Zuckerman also warns that, despite there being thousands of participants overall, ranging among all ages, almost all of them belong to Western society. More than 87 percent of the participants were from the US, the UK, and Canada. So, after controlling for other factors, they can only confidently show strong negative correlation between intelligence and religiosity among American Protestants. For Catholicism and Judaism, the correlation may be less negative.

There are some complications to the explanations too. For example, the non-conformist theory of atheism cannot apply to societies where the majority are atheists, such as Scandinavian countries. The possible explanations are also currently just that—*possible*. They need to be empirically studied.

Finally, not all studies reviewed are of equal quality, and some of them have been criticized by other researchers. But that is exactly why meta-analyses are performed. They help overcome limitations of sample size, poor data, and questionable analyses of individual studies.

As always, the word “correlation” is important. It hasn’t been shown that higher intelligence causes someone to be less religious. So, it wouldn’t be right to call someone a dimwit just because of their religious beliefs. Unless, of course, you are an ancient playwright looking to provoke your audience.

Personality and Social Psychology Review, 2013.
DOI: [10.1177/1088868313497266](https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868313497266) ([About DOIs](#)).



Maarieda - Expedition to Dianna

2020.02.21

By: Bill Barnett

Maarieda, April 5, 0009



Day four and they were up early to explore more of Dianna.

“Michael, take the ultralight to the Aster Island, the first island east of here. You will have to spend the night there twice. Be back in two days. Plant seeds and take samples.” ordered Amie. “We always need to look for something different. Then take an overnight trip to the second island, and another trip to the third island.”

“Yes, captain.” said Michael as he was loading the plane.

“Sam, take Lisa and a cart and follow the beach to the north. Be back in three days. See how far you can get.” ordered Amie. “James, we will take the boat and cross the straight to the north to get to Irisand, the northern continent. We will be back in three days. Mindy, continue to plant trees in this area where I started. Everyone stays in contact and let me, or Mindy know if anyone needs anything.”

Amie and James headed north across the tranquil waters toward Irisand, the northern. The water was clear and shallow and tall seaweed that looked like trees was growing below them.

“This is new.” said Amie. “We have not seen anything like this.”

“Right.” replied James. “New kind of seaweed. I will dive down to look at it from below. It almost comes to the surface.” He dove in and swam through the seaweed forest. It was every color in the rainbow. Down deeper the branches combined into big trunks attached to the ocean floor. “I would almost expect tropical fish swimming through the forest here.” said James after he surfaced.

“We need to continue.” said Amie.

James got back into the boat with pieces of the seaweed and they headed north.

“It will be dark when we get there said Amie.”

Sam and Lisa were following the northern beach.

“Look, more crystals.” said Lisa. “And every color.”

“Those are quartz.” said Sam. “And that one, I don’t know what it is. Good find. Get a bucket full and we need to go to see how far we can get.”

“This almost seems like a magical place.” exclaimed Lisa. “I can’t wait for what is next.” And they headed along the beach looking for more treasure. “Seaweed!” exclaimed Sam. “Like nothing we have seen here. It looks like a whole tree made of seaweed.”

“Get some.” replied Lisa. Imagine what else is here that we will not get to see.”

“Imagine.” replied Sam.

They headed along the beach and camped near a fern tree forest.

Michael spent the whole day flying across the water. It was shallow and he could see seaweed forests below him. He needed to make it to the island before dark, so he did not slow down or circle to get a better view.

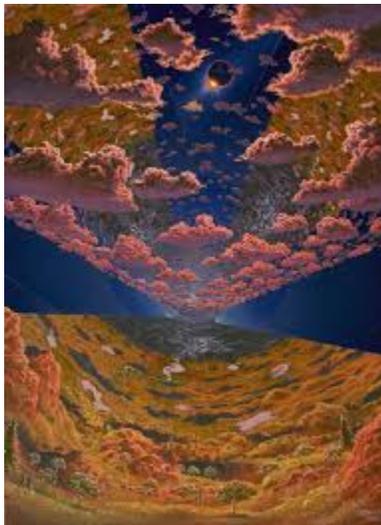
“Nice flat area above the beach.” thought Michael to himself. “Everything has gone well.” He camped by the beach and watched Maarieda rise in an almost full phase.

Mindy spent the day planting trees and documenting the infant forest. When she returned to the shuttle, she set the shuttle atmosphere to 0.74 Barr. “Everyone is adapting well.” she thought to herself. After communicating to everyone and hearing that they were well she went to sleep. It was a hard day’s work.

Maarieda, April 6, 0009

Sam and Lisa were up early and traveling further up the beach. They found more seaweed forests and more quartz and a few other interesting crystals they could not identify.

Michael was exploring Aster Island from the plane. After scattering tree seeds along the coastal plain he headed inland. The pictures from space showed a rock formation with cliffs and canyons. He began to soar through the canyons, studying the rocks.



“This is amazing.” thought Michael. “These perfectly shaped jagged rocks look like they are all crystalline. The sun sparkles off the faces like it went through a prism.”

As he rose up over a buttness and dove into a side canyon a gust of wind hit the plane sideways. The wing tip clipped the rocks and snapped. The plane spun and bounced off the other side of the canyon, struggling to maintain control Michael managed a controlled crash landing on the canyon floor. The floor was about four meters wide and a stream filled the canyon floor.

“%\$#&” said Michael. He was twenty meters from the plane and knee deep in water. Examining himself he was covered in cuts and bruises. His right ulna was broken. His left ankle was displaced. “Now what?” He crawled back to the plane to get the communicator.

“Mindy. Calling Mindy. Answer me.” pleaded Michael.

“What is wrong?” replied Mindy, answering the desperate plea.

“The plane crashed. I am in a canyon stream with a broken foot and broken arm.” replied Michael.

“I am coming. I have the coordinates from the communicator.” said Mindy.

“Don’t fly into the canyons.” demanded Michael. “The winds there are too strong.”

“Stay where you are.” ordered Mindy. “I will be there.”

“I am crawling out of the water.” replied Michael.

Mindy was on her way in the shuttle. Standard procedure was two pilots, it flew well with one pilot and could even fly itself. After circling the area, she landed a quarter klick from the rocks. They suddenly jutted out of the plain soaring three hundred meters into the sky.

“This is stunning.” said Mindy to herself. She loaded a cart and headed up the canyon. The cart could float and had a water drive as well as wheels. She and the cart crawled and swam up the stream. They had two klicks to go. “I hope I can make it by dark. But I guess there is good light from Maarieda if I don’t”

Sam and Lisa heard the news, looked at each other and said in unison: “Michael!” and laughed.

“The best pilot is the worst.” said Lisa.

“If he ever gets the wisdom to match his talent, he will be something.” laughed Sam. They had given up worrying about him. He was always in some fiasco and always turning out okay.

Just after dark Mindy reached Michael. He had crawled up to a semi flat safe spot where he could dry off. And collected rocks from the ledge. The light from the planet let them see well.

“You now have splints on your arm and foot.” said Mindy. “Let’s see if we can drag you into the cart. It would be easy with one more person.” And they were able to drag Michael into the cart. “We will get the ultralight on the way out. I saw it a hundred meters from here as I was coming up the stream.”

They started back down the stream. Michael was trying to pretend the bouncing of the cart did not hurt. Amie disassembled the plane and put it in the cart. And they continued. It was almost dawn when they arrived at the shuttle.

Maarieda, April 7, 0009

Just after dawn the shuttle arrived at base camp. Mindy was able to patch up Michael. She did not have to call any others back to help.

“How do you feel?” asked Mindy.

“Fine.” replied Michael.

“Lier.” retorted Mindy. “You feel like crap and I can see it in your eyes.”

“I’m patched up and will get well.” replied Michael with a laugh. “How is the ultralight?”

“I’m sure they can fix it. Since you are stable, I’m going back out to work. STAY in the chair and call me when you need help. I don’t need to patch the patch.” ordered Mindy.

“Yes ma’am.” retorted Michael as he saluted her.

“How are you?” asked Lisa over the communicator, with concern in her voice. “Are you okay?”

“I am fine.” replied Michael.

“Yea, right, with a broken arm and a broken foot.” insisted Lisa. “Are you doing what the doctor said?”

“Yes ma’am.” sighed Michael. “I am sitting here in a chair watching videos with my foot elevated. I might as well be tied up. I can sit here and eat and drink.”

“Take care of yourself.” ordered Lisa.



Amie and James landed on the northern continent. They went ashore to plant trees and left an agrobot with grass seed to start a patch of grass.

“Look, more crystals.” said James.

“Yes, more. This is crystal land.” replied James. “And more different ones. I do not recognize some of them. Good job.” Amie and James spent the day planting trees and collecting rocks and sand.

Lisa and Sam started back, this time traveling across the land.

“Moss, moss, and more moss. Nothing but green forever.” sighed Lisa. “The beach was better.”

“But we need to know what is here.” replied Sam.

“I know.” sighed Lisa. She was beginning to miss Michael and wondering how he really was. She called Linda and talked for an hour as they traveled. They released shrimp and frogs and insects.

“I hope we find some of them when we come back. They always seem to hide.” said Lisa.

“They are good at that. We put shrimp all over Maarieda, know they are there somewhere from water samples, but can’t find them. It may be the same here.” Said Sam.

They stopped on the beach and Lisa built a campfire and made s’mores. “I miss Michael and I miss Lori and Eric.” sighed Lisa, feeling homesick.

James and Amie watched the planet rise over the ocean. They were at home, living in a strange foreign world. Their grandchildren would only know the new world, except for stories, which would evolve into fables and mythology.

Maarieda, April 8, 0009

Amie and James headed south at first light. They had a boat full of rocks and sand and data from the landing spot.

“It almost seems there should be a dinosaur or something swimming here.” said Amie. “I must have watched too many old movies. There is no sign of animal life on the planet, except us.”

“It does kinda does seem that way.” replied James. “You have been watching too many old movies. Maybe there will be dinosaurs here someday. Those critters will go through a macro evolution and wha la, dinosaurs.”

“Haha, you have been reading too many wild science hypotheses.” replied Amie.

They continued south across the sea.

Sam and Lisa continued across the moss headed back toward base camp.

“More and more of the same.” said Lisa. “We will be back by dark. I have to see Michael.”

“Michael is fine.” replied Sam. Mindy took care of him.”

They continued in silence. Lisa could only think about her family.

As the star was setting, they arrived and Lisa rushed in to see Michael.

“BE CAREFUL WITH HIM!” shouted Mindy. “He is broken.”

With no running wildcat tackle of her husband she gently kissed him on top of the head and gave him a gentle hug. Michael sighed. This was even worse than being broken.

“He will be fine in a few weeks. He gets a walking cast in two weeks, IF he is healing properly.” said Mindy.

They just looked at each other.

“We’re back!” exclaimed Amie and James. “So this is what the wreck looks like.”

Michael was getting too much of the wrong type of attention. “Meeting tomorrow morning.” said Amie.

Maarieda, April 9, 0009

“The meeting is come to order.” said Amie. “Sam what have you found?”

“Lots and lots of minerals. The crystals seem perfect under a microscope. Almost as if they were alive. They even reflect a frequency when they are near any kind of transmitter. The plants are what we see on Maarieda.” replied Sam.

“And you, Lisa?” asked Amie.

“The crystals are amazing. They refract light more than the books say they should. And put it in a pattern, something to study. The quartz crystals make a perfect spectrum of light.” replied Lisa.

“And you, Michael?”

“The canyons on Aster Island have really hard walls.” replied Michael.

Everyone laughed. asked Amie.

“The rock formations are made of giant crystals. It is an area we need to explore more. The winds in the canyon are much stronger than anywhere else. They are not a place for an ultralight.” replied Michael.

“And you, Mindy?” asked Amie.

“The geese seem to have acclimated to the atmospheric pressure well. We have new seaweed to study.

I am looking forward to finding what pharmaceutical or other properties it has. It certainly has different colors that seem to be more than pigment.” replied Mindy.

“And you, James?” Asked Amie.

“More rocks and weeds and a whole new place that is more livable than we thought. No one is sick from the atmosphere so far. We have a lot to do. This place totally works. And we need project Snowball as soon as the Exploration ship arrives.” replied James.

“I saw the same. And everyone is working well.” said Amie. She thought back to when she was chosen Captain. The senior trainer told her: ‘You have the highest score by less than one tenth of a percent. We could roll a dice for captain and anyone would be equally good. But we will go with the numbers.’



Maarieda, April 10, 0009

It was more of the same for the rest of the two weeks. They took turns going to the different places. This side of the planet was mostly land and the crossings were short. The other side was all islands with small straights of water between them.

Maarieda, April 14, 0009

It was the last day on Dianna this trip. They were all sad to leave but missed everyone back home.

“Let the geese go free.” said Amie. There are six hectares of grass, hopefully it will grow faster than they can tear it up. We will see if they can live here.”

Lisa released the geese. They had feeders full of grain and water but were only interested in flying away. So far, they survived the atmosphere.

They all said goodbye to the sister planet and boarded the shuttle. There was one more task before they went home.

The shuttle went into the sky and soon the sky turned dark. The orbited the planet so the cameras could get data on what was below and compare it with what they saw on the surface. And then they were back into the atmosphere.

“The grass we sowed from the shuttle on Arctica back home grew well. It was the only place it could compete with the moss after aerial sowing.” said Amie. “We will try the same here.”

The shuttle flew a pattern over the arctic continent seeding patches of grass then took to space again.

“Now for the Antarctic area.” said Amie. “There is no polar continent, but there is Antarctic climate in a small area on a coast.”

The shuttle entered the atmosphere again and flew over the southern edge of New Australia scattering grass seed.

“Looks good.” said Mindy. “We made a tiny scratch of terraforming on another planet.”

The shuttle was off to Maarieda.

Maarieda, April 15, 0009

Early morning the shuttle landed back home. Everyone was there to meet them.



**Truth is like poetry.
And most people fucking hate poetry.**



Fond memories of better times!

