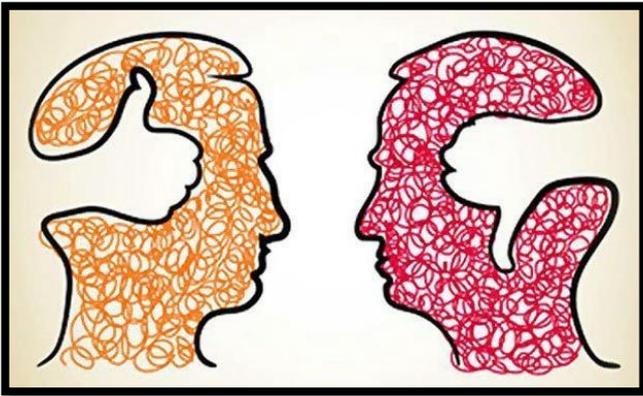


Just a Minute..



Most of our perceptions and assumptions are established, shaped and maintained by the media we choose to be exposed to, and few generations have been as exposed to the scale of intentional media manipulation as the current one. President Ronald Reagan once said of liberals: *“It isn’t so much that liberals are ignorant. It’s just that they know so many things that aren’t so.”* This quote reveals a truth that often applies to well-meaning believers as well – sometimes we believe many things that “aren’t so”, and we tend to place a greater emphasis on learning new ‘truths’ before first challenging old mindsets.

Karl Albrecht writes on *PsychologyToday.com*¹: “Some cognitive researchers claim that the brain has to consume extra energy in the process of changing or rearranging beliefs, and that simple **neurological laziness** – the tendency to conserve glucose and oxygen – predisposes the brain to keep the configurations it already has.” In other words, “Once we decide, we don’t like to re-decide.”

Albrecht continues: “*Wikipedia* lists more than 75 named biases that psychologists find interesting enough to study. One of the most pervasive of these is simple confirmation bias (a.k.a. selective perception bias). This is our tendency to pay closer attention to evidence and arguments that support our own firmly held convictions, and to simply discount contradictory evidence.”

At *INcontext*, we often stand amazed at the “neurological laziness” displayed by some social media posts, and a lack of common sense among those who believe anything without questioning the source, content or legitimacy. It seems far easier to defend one’s own conclusions than it is to explore other opinions.

Christians are often found to be gullible, and I mean this in the purest sense of the word. Christians generally trust others more than is logically or even Biblically necessary. There is a deep sense of innocence – even naivety – present, when Christians are confronted with information that is presented in a ‘Gospel-wrapped parcel’. After all, why would anybody lie in the name of Jesus?

Gullibility – unqualified trusting and naive innocence – can easily lead to ignorance that outbalances ordinary reasoning, creates a “neurological laziness” and results in selective bias. The Bible speaks of “**foolishness**” – not a **lack of intellect**, but rather a **lack of insight** – and even though this is not a popular sermon topic, the Bible actually has a lot to say about foolishness. The word “fool” appears **36 times** in Proverbs, the book of wisdom, and another **seven times** in Ecclesiastes. Jesus, in Matthew 15:16, asks His disciples why they are “without understanding” (if translated from the original Greek, ἀσύνετος, this literally means to be “ignorant” and “foolish”). The NIV phrases it as “*Are you still so dull?*”

Even though the Bible uses different words and descriptions for the same condition, the characteristics are fairly consistent of what is generally observed with “neurological laziness”: a fool hates knowledge (Proverbs 1:22), a fool takes no pleasure in understanding (Proverbs 18:2), a fool enjoys wicked schemes (Proverbs 10:23), a fool proclaims folly (Proverbs 12:23), a fool spurns a parent’s discipline (Proverbs 15:5), a fool speaks perversity (Proverbs 19:1), a fool is quick-tempered (Proverbs 12:16), a fool gets himself in trouble with his proud speech (Proverbs 14:3), a fool mocks at sin (Proverbs 14:9) and a fool is deceitful (Proverbs 14:8).

Many of these Biblical attributes of foolishness are evident with many social media posts today: a disregard for factual and researched knowledge, no pleasure in understanding another point of view, proclaiming folly and fake news with seemingly great knowledge, speaking perversely about other cultures, religions and races, being quick-tempered and possessing proud speech. Sadly, it often seems like foolishness can even be evident in the pursuit of truth when conveying truth as theory takes preference over truth with a Christ-consciousness.

¹ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/za/blog/brainsnacks/201404/the-real-reason-we-believe-what-we-believe?amp>

At *INcontext*, we have made an intentional decision that our communication should in all circumstances be beneficial for all communities. It should always contain elements of hope, upliftment, peace, reconciliation and a Christ-consciousness. We seek wisdom and not foolishness.

We therefore endeavour:

- To report global news in a non-sensational, truthful and verified manner.
- To be reconciliatory in attitude, refraining from bringing division or suspicion amongst believers by spreading false rumours or slander.
- To season our articles with “salt” (especially as an element with the ability to contribute flavour to something that might otherwise be insipid).
- To report news in a Biblical fashion that will give life and not drain life, that will provide hope and not lead to despair.