

Sunday, May 13, 2007

## Answering Ecualegacy, Pt. 1

In the comments section of Aaron Kinney's April 26 blog [Pat Tillman and Christian Bigotry](#), an exchange developed between Aaron, myself and a Christian apologist who calls himself Ecualegacy. Ecualegacy devoted some time and effort responding to some of the comments that I directed to him, and now that I am back from a business trip I took earlier this month, I am able to start posting my response to Ecualegacy. Since it is rather long, I have decided to roll it out in a series of installments.

\* \* \*

Aaron asked:

Wouldnt the argument that God didnt create evil only raise the question "who did?"

Ecualegacy responded:

The short answer to this question is, "We did!" (and Satan too).

Ecualegacy's response to a straightforward question about who or what created evil is all too typical. His answer to this question is "We did!" Who's this "we" that he has in mind here? Is he accusing a specific group of individuals for creating evil? No one specific is mentioned, other than "Satan too," who comes along as a parenthetical afterthought. No, the intention here is to accuse all human beings *collectively*. According to this view, all human beings are guilty of creating evil. The implication here is that the evil which the world witnessed 3,000 years ago was just as much Ecualegacy's fault as it was the fault of those men who executed the evil.

So let's get this straight. We are expected to believe that:

- a) God created everything in the universe,
- b) Evil exists in the universe, and
- c) God didn't create evil.

Seriously?

That evil exists in the universe and yet was not created by the Christian god, must mean that it exists independent of the Christian god. So why suppose that the Christian god can control it? We're constantly being told that "God created everything" and that "God controls whatsoever comes to pass." And yet what Christians spout is something like:

"Whoa, there! He didn't create evil! Nope! No, we did that! We created evil!"

And yet we're so impotent that we can't do anything on our own. We can't even think on our own according to many apologists; according to them, we need to "think our thoughts after Him." And yet, we are capable of this stunning feat of creating evil in the perfect creation of a perfect creator? Tell me another one.

Clearly there is contamination present. In a laboratory, a contaminated sample would indicate a failure to observe proper procedures and be discarded. But at the same time we're told that this god is incapable of failing. But a god incapable of failing surely sounds like a robot to me; its successes are guaranteed - they could not be the result of choices, since an inability to fail means that it has no choice in the matter. No failing alternative is available for it to choose. Even more, it wouldn't have to try to succeed, for whatever it does will be deemed a success no matter what. The list of absurdities grows longer and longer as one tries to sort out the original mess.

In response to Ecualegacy's statement above, I had inquired about what responsibility Christians are willing to chalk up to their god, since it allegedly created man (the creation which they say created evil). Writing in the [comments box](#), I said:

I quote from my blog [Christian Reaction to Virginia Tech](#):

Clearly they think their god is calling the shots. But whenever they speak of “responsibility,” they never tell us what responsibility their god has. Indeed, they want to say that their god made everything the way it is and dictated every event that ever occurs in the world.

Ecualegacy responded:

This is a strawman. The Bible claims no such thing about God “dictating every event.”

Now, notice something here. I was making the point that believers never seem willing to lay any responsibility on their god, even though they claim their god created the whole universe in the first place. I am not surprised that Ecualegacy does not want to deal with this issue. Instead of dealing with it, he nitpicks one of my lesser statements, hoping to create a subordinate debate on a more trivial matter so that the original issue is kept safely out of mind. Once he’s started a fire elsewhere, he’ll be able to come back just slightly enough to pretend that a little squirt on his original fire will be sufficient to douse its flames. This is all part of the apologetic game: keep shifting the issue by readjusting the focus of the lens. If the non-believer is not sharp enough to see this, he’ll never detect the apologist’s evasions. But either way, it’s clear: Ecualegacy does not want his god to take responsibility for the mess it created.

So, given Ecualegacy’s response, when Van Til says that “God controls whatsoever comes to pass,” he apparently disagrees with the dearly departed master. So here we uncover an internal dispute. I’m confident that both Ecualegacy and Van Til could cite passages from the bible to “prove” their respective and yet contrary positions.

Ecualegacy:

Nothing happens without God's permission; that is true. This is not the same thing as making sure things happen exactly his way and no other as your statement seems to imply.

So, according to Ecualegacy’s Christianity, there are things that happen in his god’s universe (its “creation”) which it did not plan to happen, did not want to happen, or did not expect to happen. So it does not have total control, which can only mean: its creation has gone out of its control. Okay. Van Til believed in a sovereign god, while Ecualegacy does not. Got it.

I wrote:

but then act as if their god has no responsibility whatsoever. It can do just whatever it wants, but man ends up being “responsible” for all its blunders.

Ecualegacy:

You have it almost right actually.

Of course I have it right. On the Christian view, man, who is not omnipotent and who did not create the universe to begin with, is somehow supposed to be responsible for the blunders of an omnipotent being which does whatever it wants and created the universe ex nihilo. Christianity uses the cover of a fantasy to hide the believer’s hatred of mankind from himself. This hatred for mankind began as hatred of oneself. A poor self-esteem is a ticket to mystical delusion.

Ecualegacy:

God must be true to his good nature.

When “God” is imaginary, how does one test the claim that it must be true to its nature? Even rocks are “true to their nature.” Then again, anything can be claimed about something that remains in one’s imagination.

Ecualegacy:

That responsibility [sic] extends to being a just judge of our choices in life.

Thus the Christian god’s only responsibility is to be a condemner of its own creation. In the beginning, according to the storybook, this same god said of its creation that “[it was good](#).” Later it changed its mind. That’s fine as far as it goes, but it does not address my question. Ecualegacy needs to step back a bit and look at the larger picture.

By trying to refocus the spotlight (again) from his god and from my original question about any responsibility it may have, given the claim that it created everything in the universe to begin with, and trying to shine it back onto man (the creation), Ecualegacy misses the point. The issue does not have to do with "our choices in life" (especially if these were predetermined without our input "before the foundations of the world" - I Pet. 1:20). Ecualegacy seems to think my question has to do with what responsibility his god has *to* its creation, while in fact my question is asking what responsibility Christians are willing to allow their god to have *for creating it in the first place* as well as for *what* it created.

Christians might say their god is free to create what it wants, but again, this does not answer the question, particularly when at the same time they want to say their god is the standard of morality. Moral responsibility involves taking ownership for one's choices and actions. Since, as Christians tell us, their god did not have to create the universe, they apparently believe it did so completely voluntarily. It chose to create the universe, and it chose to create what it allegedly created. The product of its choices and actions is, on their view, precisely what it wanted it to be. Man had no involvement in its choice-making, its act of creation, its assignment of identity to and distribution of the creatures it created. Man cannot be responsible for any of this, for he had no input on the decisions, the planning, the designing, the execution, etc. Since man was not even around to have a say in any of it, there is no way that man could have any ultimate responsibility at all. After all, apologists are constantly telling us that man is not "the ultimate reference point." Nor, given what their religion claims, could man be the ultimate responsible party.

It appears that, like other Christians, Ecualegacy is content to excuse his god from any responsibility for what it created, even though he wants to claim that it created everything that exists, is omniscient (and therefore knows everything about anything that it created, including its future actions), is omnipotent (and therefore has the means and the power to ensure its creation will do what it wants), and is all-good (and therefore would act to ensure that whatever happens in its creation is in fact also good), etc. Christians are always telling us that their god created the universe and that it created man in its own image, giving him his intellect and the capacity to use it. But again we must ask: what responsibility are Christians willing to acknowledge on the part of the deity they said put all of this into reality in the first place? The position that "God is not responsible" constitutes the most egregious of moral evasions that one could possibly conceive, especially given the context informed by their grandiose claims about their god's nature, abilities and talents.

Now don't get me wrong: I don't think the imaginary is responsible for anything in reality. So when Christians affirm, either openly or evasively, that their god is not responsible for the way things are in the world, they in fact agree with my ultimate position on the matter. But they do not agree for the objective reasons which underlie my position. I recognize that their god is not responsible because I recognize that their god is imaginary, and the imaginary is not responsible for anything in reality. But they want to have their cake and to eat it, too, insisting that their god is real, that it created everything that exists and - in some cases, anyway - "controls whatever comes to pass," but also that it does not have any responsibility for its choices and actions.

Ecualegacy:

He doesn't owe us anything beyond this.

My point about the Christian god's responsibility has nothing to do with it "owing" us anything. Someone can be held responsible for his own actions without owing us anything in particular. Ecualegacy is again mixing issues in order to distract us from, rather than deal with, the original issue. Nothing he provides in his response suggests that there's any reason why he does this other than that he has no answer to the original matter.

Ecualegacy:

Despite your visceral revulsion to the notion, God owns us.

This is just another red herring that Ecualegacy hopes will buy him enough time to cover his tracks. But while we're at it, I'll respond to it.

I don't think I would have any "visceral revulsion to the notion" of being owned by Ecualegacy's god, if in my belief in such a being I privately realized or even subconsciously sensed that this being was merely imaginary. But since I openly recognize that Ecualegacy's god is imaginary, I can firmly confess that I am not viscerally repulsed by the idea at all.

However, if I actually believed it were true, that an invisible magic being "owned" me, I would be repulsed. But

that is because I still have an intact spirit. My spirit is not for sale, and I am not willing to sacrifice it for the sake of believing in any invisible magic beings. The idea of being owned, however, would in itself be rather innocuous, if the owner were merely a concoction of my imagination, unless it were taken seriously. In such a case, the imaginer really owns what is being imagined. When taken seriously, it can lead to profound psychosis. Psychologically, this is what is happening, in various degrees, in the mind of a believer: he might claim to be owned by his god, but since his god is a figment of his imagination, he really owns it rather than it owning him. Ecualegacy is comfortable with the notion of being owned by his god, because on a deeper level he implicitly knows that his god is simply something he imagines. But he wants others to be repulsed by this, because he wants them to fear being owned by his god. Their revulsion would be an outward sign of taking it seriously, which is what he wants others to do. So naturally he's frustrated when he encounters individuals who are not afraid of his imaginary deity.

Ecualegacy:

He owes us nothing. Fortunately for us, He's inclined to be merciful and loving. He wants a relationship with us and to give us good things. But we have to obey the laws of justice that are bound up in his nature.

Consider the character of a man who finds that his most important personal relationship is with an imaginary being. He cannot have any real discussion with this being; he can only imagine what its responses might be. He cannot ask its opinion, for either its opinion is attributed to it from some pre-existing, inanimate source (like a storybook), or it's given to it by the imaginer. ("If I want your opinion, I'll give it to you.") For the Christian, it is a combination of both.

Unfortunately for the believer, when this imaginary being is modeled after the imagery we find in the bible, we find that it is not something to be reasoned with in the first place. This is what we discover when we look at the story of Abraham and his instruction to go and sacrifice his beloved son. Does the story model Abraham even wincing at this, asking why he should do this, or trying to protect his values? No, it does not. The story portrays Abraham going right along with the instruction unquestioningly. What would have happened if Abraham simply questioned his god's instructions, let alone defy them? The bible gives us enough cues to imagine what its god's reaction would be. And it is here, in the believer's imagine, that a holy terror starts to grow once its chimeras are taken seriously.

So what kind of character must a man have to want a relationship with such a being? We have already seen indications that a poor self-esteem is a vital pre-requisite. He must have a character which "denies himself" (Mt. 16:24), hates his family members (Lk. 14:26), and presents himself as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1). In essence, he must be a person who does not value himself at all. This is the ideal portrayed in Christ on the cross.

Ecualegacy then wrote:

You could try to argue against this, but that requires a moral framework that presumes to measure God. Good luck finding one outside of Himself. Note that if you should try I will not be accepting whiny 'God should serve my every whim' arguments.

I have no argument for the conclusion that an invisible magic being "should serve my every whim," for I do not expect invisible magic beings to serve my whims in the first place. But various promises in the bible could easily lead someone who takes them seriously to believe that the Christian god will indulge those who present it with their desires. For instance:

"Ask, and it shall be given you" - Mt. 7:7

"For every one that asketh receiveth" - Mt. 7:8

"...if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" - Mt. 18:19

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" - Mt. 21:22

"whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" - Jn. 14:13

"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." - Jn. 14:14

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" - Jn. 15:7

“whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” - Jn. 15:16

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you” - Jn. 16:23

These verses suggest to me that Jesus has the power to grant men’s wishes. What believer would deny that his Jesus has such power? And what believer would deny that his Jesus is faithful to its promises? But there’s always some reason why the omnipotent and faithful god of Christianity never comes through. The typical course of evasion is to somehow put the blame on the non-believer, as if it were his fault for the Christian god’s lack of follow-through.

I wrote:

The believer’s capacity for delusion is seconded only by his ability to compartmentalize.

Ecualegacy responded:

Fortunately, I'm not impressed by opinionated attempts to shame my belief system: as if they could possibly affect me once I've passed into oblivion (assuming the atheist is right about there being nothing after death)!

Nothing’s going to affect the believer once he’s “passed into oblivion.” I’m addressing someone who has not yet made this crossing. So Ecualegacy’s chosen standard - whatever can affect him after he’s “passed into oblivion” - is a safety measure he throws in place in order to evade the shame which he senses in his own belief system, once it’s been exposed.

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Christian god](#), [Christian Psychopathy](#), [Ecualegacy](#), [imagination](#), [problem of evil](#), [the bible](#)

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [12:00 PM](#)

## 2 Comments:

[ecualegacy](#) said...

*BB - Van Til believed in a sovereign god, while Ecualegacy does not. Got it.*

Oh God is definitely sovereign. Just because he's letting things run amok because of our rebellion, don't think for a second there won't be an accounting. Judgment Day is coming.

But what about II Peter 3:9, you'll say? "God is not willing that any should perish but that all should have eternal life."

No, God isn't failing at His goals. His aim, as taught in the Scripture, is for people to love Him. He would like everyone to come to Him. Matt 23:37 says, "How often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gatehrs her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing."

Key phrase there to why this world sucks. "You were not willing."

But then you'll complain, Who would love a god that lets the innocent suffer and little children die horribly? And I think I've addressed that enough. They're fine. They're in heaven. Move along now to examining where you can improve and stop telling God how to run His Universe.

*BB - Christianity uses the cover of a fantasy to hide the believer’s hatred of mankind from himself. This hatred for mankind began as hatred of oneself. A poor self-esteem is a ticket to mystical delusion.*

Hey, if you don't want to take responsibility for your own mistakes, let me know so I can get out of the way. I don't like getting hit by lightning or being swallowed up by the ground.

*BB - Moral responsibility involves taking ownership for one's choices and actions.*

I'm sorry BB, but the hypocrisy of this statement is staggering. God makes the world, and we rebel. He makes a way

in the systems of justice to let us be reconciled...ie he comes down here, suffers and dies as a righteous man, and you complain that God isn't taking responsibility for His Creation?

*BB - Since man was not even around to have a say in any [the creation of the universe], there is no way that man could have any ultimate responsibility at all.*

This is a classic, "I'm not responsible for the world I live in" dodge. The moment you committed your first sin, you proved that you earned this world just as much as Adam and Eve did. I acknowledge my guilt and have been forgiven. I beg you to do the same.

*BB - Psychologically, this is what is happening....*

When failing to deal with issues, psychoanalyze your opponent. And a classic case of projection to boot.

*BB - Does the story model Abraham even wincing at this, asking why he should do this, or trying to protect his values? No, it does not. The story portrays Abraham going right along with the instruction unquestioningly. What would have happened if Abraham simply questioned his god's instructions, let alone defy them? The bible gives us enough cues to imagine what its god's reaction would be. And it is here, in the believer's imagine, that a holy terror starts to grow once its chimeras are taken seriously.*

BB, I'm sorry, but your analysis is full of fundiliteralism, unwarranted character assassination, and a failure to listen to what you're reading. You are \*assuming\* that Abraham didn't question God. He certainly did question God about Sodom! Moses questioned God when he was seconds from toasting Israel in righteous judgment. Job questioned God about his woes. Jonah questioned God about his mercy. Jesus himself questioned God about the whole hanging on a cross bit.

Sometimes God took their suggestions. Other times he said, that's enough, get to work. You really should be ashamed of yourself for distorting the Bible. But you aren't because you don't believe in and think it is imaginary anyway. You've already decided it is of no relevance to reality other than the bothersome Christians it helps create. Why are they bothersome to you? What are they saying that has you so upset?

*BB - The typical course of evasion is to somehow put the blame on the non-believer, as if it were his fault for the Christian god's lack of follow-through.*

Its late and I'm not even finished with Part 1 of your list of post of errors (my I sound snappish!)

Perhaps for some the typical evasion route is as you say. But as Job taught, that isn't always the case.

*BB - So Ecualegacy's chosen standard - whatever can affect him after he's "passed into oblivion" - is a safety measure he throws in place in order to evade the shame which he senses in his own belief system, once it's been exposed.*

BB, I'll be brutally honest with you. This is the only paragraph in your post that I found interesting. Everything else I do believe I have addressed elsewhere on Aaron's blog.

It touches on the question of, if all is going to a big black pot of oblivion, can anything really matter? No. I don't think it can. Why? Just wait till you're dead and you'll find the answer to that question.

[May 16, 2007 7:51 PM](#)

[ecualegacy](#) said...

*BB - The typical course of evasion is to somehow put the blame on the non-believer, as if it were his fault for the Christian god's lack of follow-through.*

Whoops, I misread your line (sorry it was late last night). I don't put the blame on the non-believer. I blame every human being including myself for our own woes. We deserve what we have got and actually deserve worse than we have according to my understanding of the Bible.

[May 17, 2007 4:32 PM](#)

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