

Wednesday, April 18, 2007

## Virginia Tech

Many Christians have expressed outrage over the senseless and bloody massacre that took place at the beginning of this week on the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. But if they are truly faithful to the worldview they preach, why would they feel any outrage at all?

On the Christian worldview, life is eternal. For the 32 victims and the gunman who "died" on Monday, their lives did not really end. They just passed on to the next stage. Biological demise is simply a doorway to a supernatural eternity thereafter. Rather than great loss, "to die is gain," wrote St. Paul (Phil. 1:21). It seems believers should be rejoicing, if they truly believed, for the god of the bible is glorified by such things.

The lesson of Abraham (cf. Genesis chapter 22) is clear: **Be willing to kill.**

The lesson of Jesus (cf. the four gospels) is also clear: **Be willing to die.**

Cho Seung Hui and his victims find their models in the bible, which Christians claim is divinely inspired and fit for us to follow.

And what of Cho Seung Hui and his actions? What about them? "God controls whatsoever comes to pass," says Van Til (*The Defense of the Faith*, p. 160). It's all an inevitable part of God's plan.

Were Cho Seung Hui's actions evil? The question is irrelevant, given what Christianity teaches. Why? Because "God has a morally sufficient reason for the evil which exists," writes Bahnsen (*Always Ready*, p. 172).

The gunman's proper attitude, given what the doctrine of predestination teaches, could only be expressed by one uncompromising statement: "Yes, Lord." He is only carrying out the ruling consciousness' will.

And his victims? On the Christian worldview, the ideal attitude proper for the believer is one of selflessness. The believer is to "deny himself" (Mt. 16:24), to "resist not evil" and "turn the cheek" (Mt. 5:39), and to present his body as "a living sacrifice," which is said to be a "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). And we cannot call Cho's victims "innocent," for - [as one believer puts it](#) - "no human being is completely innocent." Either the Christian god was calling them home, or they were getting their just desserts.

If the Christian believer feels any outrage over this divinely predestined event, he either feels outrage toward his own god for planning this massacre all along, or he countermands his religious teachings by having automatized a non-Christian perspective on the world, most likely without realizing it.

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Christian god](#), [Christian Psychopathy](#)

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [5:00 AM](#)

## 14 Comments:

[Zachary Moore](#) said...

I'm continually stymied by the Christian response to tragedy- as you say, it seems so counterintuitive given Christian theology.

I recall one Christian (was it Gene Cook?) who answered this paradox by claiming that the expression of grief and loss is appropriate because it "is commanded by God." And yet, it seems to me that if one's grief is manifest solely by

divine command, it carries very little meaning.

[April 18, 2007 7:24 AM](#)

[Aaron Kinney](#) said...

Once again Dawson, you bring a cold splash of logic onto the faith-based pitchfork and torch brigade. I even touched on this same issue of eternal life in paradise when I wrote an email to Dinesh D'Souza today. It seems that you and I see these tragedies through a very similar eyepiece. :)

Check this out:

<http://goosetheantithesis.blogspot.com/2007/04/dsouza-uses-vt-tragedy-to-assault.html>

[April 18, 2007 3:56 PM](#)

[Aaron Kinney](#) said...

Dawson, breaking news!!!!

Apparently the VT shooter sent NBC a package on the morning of the shooting, and inside the package was an 1800 word essay and 23 videos, in where the shooter rants against rich kids and "discusses religion."

Now whether the kid was pro or anti religion I could not yet find out... but its been stated that he was definitely talking about religion one way or the other.

Im intensely eager to find out what his religious statements were!

[April 18, 2007 4:36 PM](#)

[Bahnsen Burner](#) said...

Hi Zach & Aaron,

Thanks for stopping by.

Zach: "I recall one Christian (was it Gene Cook?) who answered this paradox by claiming that the expression of grief and loss is appropriate because it 'is commanded by God'."

This just tells us that he does not own himself. As the song goes, his mind is "for rent, to any god or government." Like something he couldn't care less for, he gave it away to the first thing that came along. Now he has no self. Just as you cannot trust someone who "has a morally sufficient reason" to sanction evil, you cannot trust a person who has no self.

Zach: "And yet, it seems to me that if one's grief is manifest solely by divine command, it carries very little meaning."

It carries no meaning whatsoever. No meaning of value anyway. As an attempt to fake moral outrage in a blatantly perfunctory manner, it simply tells us what he's all about: faking reality. This is to be expected in a duty-based conception of morality.

Aaron: "Apparently the VT shooter sent NBC a package on the morning of the shooting, and inside the package was an 1800 word essay and 23 videos, in where the shooter rants against rich kids and 'discusses religion'."

Yes, I checked out some of the news on this, though scantily due to constraints on my time this evening. He was apparently disillusioned with Christianity, but compared himself to Jesus at several points from what I heard. He was a suffering servant in the making, and - like believers - clearly seemed to think Jesus is real, not merely a [mood](#). Of course, if he had anything negative to say about Christianity, Christians are going to use this as a "See what happens when people hate God?" ploy. But by doing so, they're ignoring the pressing questions. This is where they start to lump everyone into the same bucket because they're not Christians. Simple guilt by superficial association fallacy. Had the apologists something more substantial than this, we'd likely have seen it by now.

It is gratifying, however, to see total confirmation of my point above when, in response to J. E. Holman's question

"Where is God when terrible things like this happen?", [Paul Manata answers](#):

"Controlling all the details of His plan. Holman may not like this, *but God ordained that Seung-Hui would do this.*"

Right. On the Christian view, "God controls whatsoever comes to pass." Cho Seung Hui was merely a character in the Immaculate Animation of "God's plan." So what are the Christians all fussing about?

Regards,  
Dawson

[April 18, 2007 6:37 PM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

Dawson,

*"Right. On the Christian view, "God controls whatsoever comes to pass." Cho Seung Hui was merely a character in the Immaculate Animation of "God's plan." So what are the Christians all fussing about?"*

Right, and Dawson is a complete and utter ignoramus, it seems, when it comes to compatibilism.

Further, Seung-Hui was doing, on Dawson's theory, what the laws of Momma Nature determined, billions and billions of years ago, he would do.

Nature doesn't care, why is Dawson raising his fist against nature? Why is he trying to assert subjective meaning in the face of a reality with no meaning?

We are merely characters in the cosmic unfolding of antecedent events which determine the events of today.

So, on the one hand, Dawson's point falls on deaf ears since it rests on ignorance regarding how moral responsibility and freedom are compatible with determinism, and on the other hand, he has the same problem, yet it was an Impersonal who orchestrated the events, not a Person, who will use it for good, and give it meaning.

Typical Dawson. He banks on the stupidity of his atheist readers to offer him laudatory praises, but anyone with any philosophical training, at all, laughs at the poor chap... and his minions.

"Go Dawson! Go Dawson! You are so smart. You da man."

[April 20, 2007 9:29 AM](#)

[Francois Tremblay](#) said...

Excellent article, as usual. I will post a link to it on goosing.

[April 20, 2007 3:24 PM](#)

[JSackey](#) said...

According to his video rantings, Cho hated Christianity but seemed to think Jesus was a good role-model, and thought of himself as a martyr (along with the two Columbine murder-suicides)

[April 20, 2007 5:14 PM](#)

[JET](#) said...

I respectfully submit that your comments have been responded to:

apolojet.otsorry.net

[April 21, 2007 2:56 PM](#)

[Aaron Kinney](#) said...

Paul, you tool!

*Typical Dawson. He banks on the stupidity of his atheist readers to offer him laudatory praises, but anyone with any philosophical training, at all, laughs at the poor chap... and his minions.*

Maybe that's why people with philosophy training are LESS LIKELY to believe in Christianity than those without philosophy training?

*Nature doesn't care, why is Dawson raising his fist against nature?*

Dawson didn't raise his fist against nature.

*Why is he trying to assert subjective meaning in the face of a reality with has no meaning?*

He is not asserting subjective meaning. He is pointing out consequences of the facts of reality. You are begging the question.

Subjective meaning comes from conscious entities, like God, for example. The Euthyphro dilemma only exposes the hopelessness of your silly attempts to put moral meaning to anything in existence, or to this recent shooting.

Your ridiculous boasts, insults, and projections embarrass you so much, and you don't even realize it.

Whether or not "reality" is naturally or consciously created bears not on to whether it has "meaning."

If the universe was godless and always here, why would that make it have no meaning?

On the other end, if a God was always here, why would that make Him have "meaning"? Cause he subjectively and arbitrarily assigns "meaning" to His own existence and that of what He creates?

Give me a break with this non sequitor. You are so fucking desperate to justify your dwindling and shriveling cult, and its plain as day for all to see.

[April 21, 2007 7:01 PM](#)

[Bahnsen Burner](#) said...

Hello Paul,

Still on that fiber-deficient diet I see.

It is good that you admit your worldview's commitment to determinism. Many believers have vehemently denied this to me, so it is good that you've at least learned one thing. After all, it is because Christianity affirms a form of determinism that you would want a theory of compatibilism to rationalize its internal contradictions in the first place. So like the Shinkansen, you're right on schedule.

Tell me, Paul, if I drew a cartoon consisting of two characters - Smith and Jones - and in that cartoon I have Smith kill Jones, is Smith guilty of murder? Should I call the local police department and have Smith arrested? What do you think?

Far from being a precondition for moral responsibility, Christianity's determinism is simply an opportunity for excuses. On Christianity's premises, if Smith takes out a gun and shoot Jones, he could simply say that he did what the Christian god had determined he would do from all eternity. With a god that "controls whatsoever comes to pass" and "has a morally sufficient reason" to sanction evil, there's no need for the old "The devil made me do it" defense. Christianity does one better by putting the "God made me do it!" defense firmly in the believer's hands. Now the policeman arresting Smith could similarly claim that he was determined by the Christian god from all eternity to arrest Smith, and is therefore doing so accordingly. The officer's incarceration of Smith is just as much part of "God's plan" as Smith's murder of Jones is. Smith's defense lawyer could likewise claim that he was determined by the Christian god from all eternity to find the legal technicality needed to acquit Smith. Again, it's all part of "God's plan." So again I ask (and no Christian has answered me yet): Why would a Christian feel outrage over any of this, given what his worldview teaches? Blank out.

As for meaning, this is a property of concepts in my worldview. It is unclear, given your worldview's commitment to the primacy of consciousness, what you might mean by "subjective meaning," how you detect its presence, or what you could possibly have against it (see Aaron's point above). Objective meaning is not a problem for me, for my concepts are formed according to an objective method. Nowhere have you shown that the method by which concepts are formed according to my worldview is not objective, so your accusation that meaning in my worldview is "subjective" is utterly baseless. No wonder you don't even try to argue for it.

Anyway, Paul, in the future, should you decide to post comments on my blog, I welcome this, **SO LONG AS YOU CONTAIN YOURSELF AND BE POLITE**. I have been patient with you more than enough, and I am not going to state this again. Your name-calling is not appreciated, and it only makes you look desperately unprepared for an intellectual exchange. Got it?

Regards,  
Dawson

[April 22, 2007 8:01 AM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

Hi Dawson,

Before I respond on my blog, I was wondering, in light of the comments you just made, how you interpret Aaron Kinney's comments to me? Are you saying his comments "makes him look desperately unprepared for an intellectual exchange?"

As always, thanks for the help in debunking your own side.

Now, if you don't chastise Aaron then your comments to me make you look insincere. If you do respond, then you've said Aaron appears to not be ready for an intellectual fight.

Which is it, Dawson?

Oh, and may I to assume that you are going to affirm libertarianism? Are you going to deny that you obey the laws of nature. That you do what you have been predetermined to do? Shall I cast my response having Dawson debating Dennet, Dawkins, Penboom, Frankfurt, et al?

Oh, and given how much you ridicule Christians and their religion, your statements about how to act are nothing but attempts to get cheap points from your readers. Pretending to take the high road.

[April 23, 2007 8:09 PM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

Oh, btw, Bethrick's post above is riddles with statements like this:

"This is a truly dumb retort,"

And so I'll assume Bethrick is "unprepared for an intellectual exchange."

Got it?

How many times do I need to do things like this to you Dawson?

[April 23, 2007 8:12 PM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

Hi Dawson,

So, is Aaron Kinney "unprepared for an intellectual exchange?"

And, since you resort to "bathroom humor," e.g., "Still on that fiber-deficient diet I see," then are you also

"unprepared for an intellectual exchange?"

Or, are theists just not allowed to employ sarcasm and ridicule?

Did you mean to say above that when \*theists\* "talk mean," then \*that\* is a showing that \*they\* are "unprepared for an intellectual exchange," but when \*atheists\* do so \*they\* are \*not,\* somehow, "unprepared for an intellectual exchange?"

And, btw, you never let me know if you were libertarian about the will or not. And, you never let me know where guys like Dennet, Dawkins, and your friend Dr. Zachary Moore, where wrong (assuming you deny physical determinism). Now, perhaps you \*do not\* deny determinism, but you deny any free will (i.e., you're not a compatibilist). If so, tell us. Please, don't tell me that the above was just more show on Bethrick's end. Certainly you. of all atheisst, are not more bark than bite, right?

[April 25, 2007 9:02 AM](#)

[Paul Manata](#) said...

Hello Dawson,

It's been a few days and I thought I'd pop back in.

I was wondering if you thought Aaron Kinney was "unprepared for an intellectual exchange?"

And since you resort to potty humor, does that mean that you too are "unprepared for an intellectual exchange?"

Or, just when theists resort to those kinds of tactics? That is, is hypocrisy accepted in your rational worldview?

Also, btw, were you going to let me know whether you're a libertarian, think free will is an illusion, or, what? Apparently you don't want to answer me so that you can say I've missed your position. That just means you're a sophist. That you need all sorts of tricks and gimmicks to win. Hey, I understand, I'd need to do that as well if I held to a fantasy (i.e., "once upon a time, a frog turned into a prince," IOW, "billions and billions of years ago, a fish started turning into a man.") universe as well.

[April 29, 2007 7:56 AM](#)