



Storming Fortresses

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh,
but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:4

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Thought Provoker

We know that sin is an attempt on the part of man to cut himself loose from God. But this breaking loose from God could, in the nature of the case, not be metaphysical; if it were, man himself would be destroyed and God's purpose with man would be frustrated. Sin is therefore a breaking loose from God ethically and not metaphysically. Sin is the creature's enmity and rebellion against God but is not an escape from creaturehood.

Cornelius Van Til
Defense of the Faith

Twin Towers, Symbol of Hypocrisy!

Part 2: The Walls Came Tumbling Down

By

Murray McLeod-Boyle

Introduction

In Part 1 of this series we explored a few issues in a very crude manner. There we did little more than produce a skeleton. We would now like to put some flesh on to those bones. Of importance is the concept of "worldview." All people have a worldview, whether they know it or not. The evolutionist begins from

his presupposition as does the theist, agnostic, atheist or humanist. All have a tenet that gives them a starting point or a foundation upon which they build.

When secular science says that, "evolution is true," it does so because it will not admit any information about God into its worldview. They have a closed view. There is only time

and space. If you cannot put it into a test tube, then, basically, it does not exist. Eastern religions hold to an open system. They have their gods, but in their system man is still the maker of his own destiny. The atheist lives in a closed system. He acknowledges only this world. He rules out the possibility of a god as his starting point.

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The agnostic, on the other hand, leaves the possibility of a god open. He says that he *cannot know* whether there is a god or not. His claim is that there is not adequate information for us to be able to know for sure one way or the other, so he leaves the question open (supposedly).¹

This is just a simple overview. We hope it illustrates the point.

The question that we are faced with is: How well do people uphold their world views?

As noted in Part 1, catastrophe can test a worldview to breaking point. A situation like September 11 can 'chew up and spit out' a worldview very quickly. In fact, in the midst of catastrophe one can think their worldview is being established, when, in reality, it is being torn apart.

September 11 proved this to be

true.

Christianity

On that infamous day, as the real information began to dry up, there was time to begin to ask the questions of how and why? At this point the "experts" began to appear on television. Of interest were the supposed theologians who were called in to give their opinions. Disturbing was their lack of an answer.

Larry King interviewed a Jew, a Catholic, and a prominent Protestant on his show. Whilst these three people are very different in their views on many issues, they do have one common denominator. They all believe in the same God.² They have a belief in a sovereign God who has all things within His power. This being the case, we thought that there might be some hope of a decent answer. What we were given instead was nonsense.

After a number of questions, Larry asked the de rigueur, "Was God present" when the planes were flown into the towers? All agreed that He was. However, not one of them could give a genuine and convincing explanation of how. The best answer came from the Jew, who said that God was present and could be seen in the bravery of the police and fire officers who rushed into danger to save the lives of strangers. We could agree with this. All men bear the marks of the Creator. Therefore, it is to be expected that these marks will come to the fore on occasion. However, we still longed for something substantial. We strained our ears in vain to hear this prominent Protestant give some word of substance. A word that would turn Larry inside out. A word that, spoken

in the power of the Spirit, would confound the unbeliever. It never came.

Why were we disappointed? Simple. As a Christian we could place our slant onto the comments made by the Jew. We could agree with the comment once it had been filtered through our system. The pitfall? So could every body else. The humanist simply says, "Ha, god! Never. Those officers running into that catastrophe simply shows the innate goodness of man and his willingness to serve his brother."

You see, while we could agree, generally, with what was said, we had to *add* information to give a fuller explanation of the answer and to validate it in accord with our world view. To put it differently, the answer was so vague that everybody could have gone through the same process as we had and been able to assimilate the answer to their worldview with little problem.

No doubt these three thought that their worldviews were sound. They believed they had credible answers. It would not have occurred to them that in the midst of defending their worldview, their very lack of a substantial answer was actually eroding their foundation. Instead of answers that proved the credibility of their worldview, they were left in a kind of Jericho. The walls had fallen and they were left exposed to all and sundry. The worst aspect of this is that none of them realised what had actually transpired.

Another example of crumbling worldviews may be found in the prayer services that began to take place. Although one could look at

1. The term "atheist" is a combination of the privative ('a,' equalling no/not or without) and the Greek term for "God," theos (Θεός). Therefore, "no god." The term "agnostic" is a combination of the privative and the Greek term for "knowledge," (γνῶσις - gnosis). Therefore, "no knowledge."

2. Certain qualifications do need to be made, but as general statement this will suffice.

many prayers here, we will focus on one only, for it shows a worldview in crisis

If we were to look for one significant difference between America and Australia, we could reduce it to three words—God bless America! Whilst we Aussies have some trimmings and trappings left over from the Christian era, we are far more comfortable with paganism. In short, the secular/sacred divide is more noticeable in Australia. People may be religious, but it is unusual to find any mention of it in public. Not so in the United States.

When the terrorists unleashed their malevolence within the borders of the United States, it began a testing time for that nation. America is known to be religious. America is known as a “Christian” country. Polls continue to show that almost all believe in God and that most go to church. Constantly, we hear the refrain, “God, Bless America!”

What we also hear and see on various news reports, is that people are massacred on a daily basis. Whether it be murders, gang war, or a disgruntled somebody snatching away lives, we are left to ponder some very deep questions.

Our senses were also bombarded with news of a President who seems to be involved in illicit sexual contacts. Not only that, this particular President seems to have redefined the term “lie.” We also note the many scandals caused by powerful secret groups. Cover ups, deceit, chicanery.

All this leads us to wonder why artifice seems to be so much part of the politics of this country? It leads us to ponder some very deep questions.

When our senses are loaded to the point of being numb, they are forced to take in even more. The mighty US spends millions on looking for little green men in outer space; they spend millions on the military; they spend millions on research to develop telescopes to look for asteroids that may hit the earth. Yet the onlooker is left to ponder many deep questions.

Then comes the proverbial camel and the straw is about to be put in place. With all this money, with all this technology, with all this military hardware, the USA appoints herself moralist extraordinaire. She claims nothing less than to be the moral conscience of the world, and, with a false humility, appoints herself as law(wo)man, judge, jury and executioner. As a result, the pondering of the deep questions continues.

What are these deep questions? Let us start with, ‘Why does *not* “God bless America?”’³ ‘Why does America believe that she has something to offer the world when she is in turmoil?’ ‘Why does America state a belief in God and then ban His teaching from schools?’ ‘How does the President talk of “Justice” when the court system rarely delivers anything resembling justice?’ Last of all, Why does this nation exclaim, God Bless America! and then humiliate preachers of the Gospel whilst exalting Islam?

This leads us to the prayer mentioned earlier.

The prayer in question is used because it exemplified many of the themes found in other prayers. It was delivered by a female politician.⁴ As she stood at the microphone delivering her invective, a picture formed in our mind. There stood this woman in front of a maddening crowd. The crowd was in a frenzy and they were being whipped up even further. How was this done? This woman had done the miraculous. She had captured the nation’s god. She held it out to the people. She demanded of this god that it act to do the will of the people. To excite the crowd further, she placed one hand on the back of the god’s neck and forced it to adopt a posture of submission. With her other hand she twisted the god’s arm behind its back. She forced it further and further. With each flinch made by this god, she made more demands. This god was to bless the nation. It was to mandate revenge against the evildoers, but it was to be blind to the transgressions of the nation. If this god would but do this, it would be allowed to remain as the nation’s deity. In the ensuing battle and victory, all the glory would belong to the nation. If they failed, they would once more capture this god and punish it for its second delinquency. After all, should not this god have protected the righteous from the outpouring of the infidel’s wrath?

When this woman spoke, nay, foamed at the mouth, she did not exhibit grace. There was not an ounce of contrition. One looked in vain for

3. We do not have room to expand on this point. Suffice to say that the Biblical concept of God’s blessing is very much associated with peace. It strongly infers rest from all of ones enemies. Strife, internal, external or both, would suggest a lack of blessing. Here, in summary, we simply posit the end of all things. God’s blessing upon His people is peace. No tears, no sickness, no evildoers. The swords will be turned into ploughshares. These themes can be found in any of the covenant documents.

4. Please forgive the lack of specifics. As I sat watching this event unfold I began making mental notes. Unfortunately, what I should have done is tape it or use pen and paper to record specifics.

humility. She did not for one moment countenance the idea that this event may have been a judgement upon her nation, a wake up call or a call to repentance. In short, this was not a person placing themselves before almighty God in a humble prayer. This was not the prayer of the faithful seeking wisdom of the Almighty. It was not the prayer of one who sought justice for the righteous at the hand of God. Rather, it was akin to a letter of final demand.

This prayer sounded very familiar. We remember reading something like it in an old book. We searched and found this ancient prayer. The similarities were striking. This ancient prayer was offered by a public official in a time of national crisis. However, there was an even greater similarity, namely, the attitude involved in offering the prayer. As we read this old book, we were also struck by the commentator's appraisal of the prayer. It makes for interesting reading. The following is an excerpt from the book:

And He [Jesus] also told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. "The Pharisee [public official] stood and was **praying thus to himself**, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax-gatherer. 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' "But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; *for everyone*

who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted."⁵

A worldview in crisis. This woman, as with the Pharisee, prayed to herself. She may have used the jargon of her culture's religion, but she was not praying to the God of the Bible. As she prayed she brought herself under Jesus' denunciation. She thought more highly of herself than she ought. She was not willing to pray, 'Father (intimate and relational) thy will be done (humble submission) and grant wisdom that justice may be done in the earth.' No. We heard, God (impersonal and aloof) we are going to find the people responsible and exact revenge (subversive). She "trusted in herself." She trusted in **the State**. She was one who needed not a physician. Which raises the question, 'Why did this woman even bother to call the doctor?'

On this declining scale, we wish to offer one more example of the quasi-Christian, foot in each camp, worldview.

In the aftermath of September 11, Australia held series of services. One of these was the national service held in Canberra, our nation's capital. Being our nation's capital, it was only natural that a number of politicians were in attendance. Again the general question is to be asked, 'Why did these politicians turn up to an event that was going to give praise to an entity in whom they did not believe?'

In particular, we noted that the leaders of both the major political parties and other prominent politicians were present at this service. Now, 'Blind Freddy' can tell you that many of these people would ordinar-

ily show distaste for the Bible and the God who therein declares Himself.

Yet, here they were, gathered together singing:

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord; He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored; He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword; His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never sound retreat; He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat; O be swift, my soul, to answer Him; be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on.⁶

Now, it would seem to us that it would take a brave man to see the "glory of the coming of the Lord;" to see God trampling out the vintage of His wrath; to see God "loose His terrible swift sword;" to see God sound forth a battle cry; and to see God sifting out the souls of men before His judgement seat," and remain standing with dry pants! A second thought would be, having witnessed this sight, would it not make for a transformed life?

So here we have people who, for the most part, do not consider God to be true. People who certainly do not believe in a God who interacts with this world here and now. People who do not really believe that they will one day be answerable to almighty God for the decisions they have made. In short, people who do not believe in a personal God. Yet here stood the leaders of our nation, dry pants and all, singing songs to the Glory of God and celebrating the fact that He will not let the wicked go unpunished!!

5. Luke 18:9-14. *The New American Standard Bible*, (La Habra, California: The Lockman Foundation) 1977. All Scripture quotations are from this source unless otherwise noted. Emphasis added.

6. Joyful Noise Music Company, *Logos Hymnal*, (Fort Worth, TX: Joyful Noise Music Company) 1994.

Before moving on, we would like to draw these threads together. Not every example given here is *specifically* Christian in the strictest sense. What they all have in common, however, is the theology of the Bible. In some shape or form the individual actions have come into direct contact with a specific aspect of Biblical teaching. Some, believing the Scriptures to be true, could not defend them. Others, not believing the Scriptures, nevertheless, assimilated the language and Deity of the Scriptures into their thought process, and thereby became a living contradiction.

Atheism

Moving on, we must ask, What of the atheists? Did they fare any better? No, they did not.

These guys betrayed themselves in the very questions that they asked. An atheist by definition says that, "God does not exist!" So why would an atheist even bother to ask the question, "Where was God on September 11?" Why would he ask, "If God exists, why is there pain in the world?" To ask such questions places the atheist in a conundrum of immense proportion.

The atheist says, 'God is dead.' If this is so, then why does he so persistently inquire after the activities of this dead God? A dead God is, after all, a nonentity. Does this mean that atheists believe in nonentities that can inflict pain on the world at random?⁷ More importantly, if the atheist is so convinced of God's demise, why does he even entertain the question about God and pain, let alone give it voice?

Better still, why don't we ask the atheist to explain the problem of pain

for himself, according to his worldview. It is fine for the atheist to claim the high moral ground with his innocuous question about the relationship between God and pain. However, to do so he must fire two bullets. This he does believing they will destroy Christianity. What he does not realize is that all he will successfully do is shoot himself in the foot.

The first bullet that returns is the one aimed at God. If God is dead, pray tell the purpose in shooting a corpse? As noted, the atheist has absolutely no justification whatsoever for asking his incongruous question.

The second bullet to return is that aimed at achieving the high moral ground. If God is dead then the atheist has nothing to achieve by firing this shot for there is no such thing as "moral" ground. The death of God rules out any possibility of the absolute. Therefore, everything becomes subjective. It is the survival of the fittest and every man for himself. Ethics and morals cease. Right and wrong have no meaning.

This raises two interesting questions. First, Why is the atheist even interested in finding out who is responsible for the pain? The question of pain implies a wrong. Therefore, it becomes a moral question. Consequently, the atheist argues for an absolute and ethical system. Second, Why is the atheist even concerned that some people died? They were nothing to him. In fact, he should be glad. The death of these people means less competition for food and resources. When the atheist denies God he must of necessity adopt some type of evolutionary explanation for his existence. When he does this the only person of importance is self.

Therefore, the atheist showing any kind of concern is like a lion feeling remorse for the zebra his lioness ate.

Moreover, as a parting shot, the atheist might like to concern himself with the concept of "good." The atheist is willing to attribute blame to God. "Any evil, God is responsible!" says the atheist. "What about 'good?'" we ask. If God is dead, then who takes the credit for the good things in life?

To illustrate this, I would like to use a quote from a movie. "Awakenings" is a film about a doctor who goes to work at a mental health facility. During his mundane days he begins to recognise links between a number of the patients. He finds a group with similar symptoms. Research leads him to an encephalitis epidemic. He experiments with a new drug with some success. However, the main recipient of this drug begins to evidence severe side effects. His mother becomes concerned and wants him taken off the drug. She prefers her catatonic son to this agitated man. In an interview with the Board of the facility his mother says, 'When he was born healthy, I did not ask any questions. When he became ill, you bet I asked questions. I demanded answers.'

This in a nutshell is the response of the atheist. He will accept good things without question. He will neither give God the glory or credit for this. Yet, when something that he finds distasteful happens, he will demand of (a nonexistent) God an answer. He will vehemently attribute blame to God. He will rally the troops in a mutiny against God. For what? To prove that he is more illogical and has less grasp on reality than Don

⁷ The subtlety here is that each aspect betrays the atheist's worldview. Asking about God would imply His existence. Asking about allowing pain, implies that the system is open and not closed. These questions then really require a third to be asked, if God exists and interacts with the world, is He personal?

Quixote.

Think about this for a moment. The atheist believes God to be dead. He has no time for God or any inclination toward Him. Yet when trouble comes, he goes to great lengths to rail against God in order to prove his non-existence!??

His scenario is something like this. A rich man tells his friend that he does not believe in the infamous 'Robin Hood.' This Robin Hood is meant to rob from the rich and give to the poor. Although this man has been the indirect recipient of Robin's generosity he still continues firm in his belief that Robin is dead. He is a myth. One day, he learns that a well to do gent out riding, with a large coin bag strapped to his belt, has been met by a stranger who relieved him of this tiresome burden. Outraged, he rides to his friend's house to ask him to join forces to hunt down this non-existent mythical thief. In his fury he asks his friend for his assistance, stating that, "Once we have caught him we can hold him up to the world and show every one that Robin Hood is a myth, a legend, and that none should believe in him." Impatiently he urges, "Come on man, we can catch this rogue and hold him up to a watching world. We can say to the world, 'Here he is, he does not exist!'"

Just so, the atheist. In his rabid ranting, aimed purely at denying the existence of God, he does the unthinkable, the atheist actually argues for the existence of God.

With a bullet in both feet, the atheist and his worldview will not stand very long.

Humanism

The humanists also have a case to

answer.⁸

In his book, *Let Us Make Man*, Linleigh J. Roberts uses the following illustration. It is one I have used before and I apologise for this repetition. However, the aptness of this illustration justifies its use. Linleigh puts forward a situation in which you go out to find your car will not function properly. As a consequence you call a mechanic. The mechanic arrives and begins to examine the car. He retrieves the maker's manual. After studying the manual and the car, the mechanic pulls a pen from his pocket. Pen in hand, to your horror, he begins to change the manual so that it replicates the faulty vehicle rather than making the car conform to the manual.

This is what the humanists do so very well. The humanists have changed the maker's manual. They have taken out their pens and scrawled away. They have made man the pinnacle. He is rational. He is just, fair, compassionate. He will sacrifice much for his neighbour. 'Away with sin as that only brings guilt', they cry. 'Unshackle us from this burden and we will achieve much, much, more than any other generation.' 'Man is good.' 'Man is righteous.' 'Man does no wrong, unless he is sick!' and so they continue their mantra.

So, how does the humanist worldview show signs of cracking? Very simple. In the midst of the mantras celebrating the autonomy, equality, righteousness and Brotherhood of Man, some of the Brothers, considering themselves more righteous than the rest, used their autonomy to hatch a murderous plan based on equality—they cared not who they killed!

Next, consider the humanist's response to this treachery. The humanist's have their little clichés which they inflict upon us daily in the form of equality and political correctness. In the West we are currently dominated by such pathetic and sickening phrases as "open and affirming", "tolerance", and "open mindedness." All of these phrases, in their place, present little problem. However, in modern humanist parlance these phrases are used to excuse aberrant behaviour of the worst kind. Yet we do not find the humanists excusing September 11 and asking the World to be "tolerant" or "open and affirming". There are no cries from the humanists demanding that the war on terror cease because Osama Bin Laden should be free to express himself as he pleases.

If homosexuals can parade in the streets with the blessing of the humanists, why can't little Osama vent his genetic disposition by blowing up a thing or two? If the humanists were consistent they would be rallying to save Osama. They would be asking the United Nations to pass laws giving terrorists equal rights and protection. Similarly, they would be busy organising a gala event to celebrate the "coming out" of terrorists. After all, are they not the new minority group?

So even the little clichés of the humanists are being proven to be shallow and of little use in the face of catastrophe.

The Philosophical Tsunami

On September 11 the walls of the World Trade Center crashed to the ground. This event could be clearly seen. What was not so obvious were the destructive, silent, ripples or waves that emanated from that point.

⁸ There is little difference between atheism and humanism in terms of result. They both glorify Man. They just take a slightly different road.

This event was the philosophical tsunami.

A tsunami, or tidal wave as it is referred to in the West, is a massive wall of water which can unleash a destructive force equivalent to some of the world's most powerful bombs. The unique aspect of a tsunami is that it is the silent effect of an earthquake. When energy is released by an earthquake on the sea floor, giant waves can radiate from the epicentre. A ship on the ocean may not even notice the small swell of a metre or so. However, as this wave approaches land and the shallows of the continental shelf, it begins to rise up. It stands as a huge wall, getting taller the closer it comes to shore. Eventually it rides onto dry land engulfing, mangling, and destroying all in its path.

What began as a seismic event thousands of miles away, ends the lives of those who had no idea that an earthquake had occurred.

In similar fashion, September 11 unleashed silent killer waves. The events of the day set off waves in the minds of many. As time went on, these waves did not abate. In fact, they grew stronger. They drove hard at people's presuppositions. Eventually they reached the shallows and rose up. Before people could react, they unleashed their devastating force. In the aftermath, people lay crushed and mangled. Their worldview was in tatters. The framework they had built, and all the materials

used to clad and adorn it, were in a twisted and tangled mess.

The similarities with natural disaster do not stop at this point. When lives are claimed by tornado, hurricane, flood, fire or earthquake, investigation usually reveals some common themes. Some simply do not prepare because, in their mind, disaster will never strike. Others believe that disaster will strike—it just will not strike them. Another group believes that disaster will strike, but only in a minimal way. Therefore, their preparations are minimal. Still others read diligently. They learn about warning signs. They take time to learn first aid. They buy survival books and devour them. Despite this they never go out and buy bottled water, a torch, batteries, a first aid kit or a ration pack. Then there are those who do the exact opposite. They stock their homes well. However, they would not know how to treat a person who has a large shard of glass protruding from their arm. They have matches, but would not know how to light a fire and cook by it.

These examples can all be transferred to the realm of worldviews. Some believe for convenience. Some believe because mum and dad held that belief. Others believe because study has lead them to a conviction. Others have a conviction that has lead them to study. In other words, some hold to a worldview because dad did. Others hold to a worldview for pure convenience. Still others

hold to a worldview because they have studied and become convinced.

This last group is by far the rarest. Their study will not guarantee truth. It will not guarantee that their worldview does not crack and crumble. What it will do is make sure that it stands longer than the others.

Conclusion

This leads us to ask, "How long should a worldview stand?" The answer is relatively simple. If the worldview is true, it should stand forever. Being truth, it will not have any defects, chinks, or cracks which can be exploited. In contrast, the fakes will fall apart for they will be riddled with weaknesses.

This brings us to the fundamental difference between Christianity and the "also rans." All humanistic systems are derived by Man for Man and they are, therefore, radically subjective. Christianity is unique in that it stands outside the subjective. What makes Christianity different is that we believe in objective propositional truth spoken by God Himself. We believe in objective historic facts. This one truth sets Christianity *apart* from and *above* all other religions (belief systems) in the world.

These objective facts give Christianity something that no other worldview can boast. Christianity, unlike humanism (and other systems), is 100 per cent defensible. Big statement? Yes, indeed!

