THE SKEPTIC ARENA

November 28, 2015

Statement of Faith

by Tony Miano of Cross Encounters Ministry

*The 66 books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God.*

Tony, since the books included in the current Bible were chosen by the Council of Nicea from among many books, are you saying that the Holy Ghost inspired all of them? Or just the ones that the Council agreed on?

So God inspired a whole bunch of books to be written about Him, and then had to send this Ghost-Thing down to straighten it all out?

*The Word of God is ... absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God breathed.*

Tony, since not a single original document exists ... how do you know that?

Were you there?

*The interpretation of Scripture ... affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days.*

Tony, Christians are divided on your claim. Tens of millions of Christians do not accept your claim. Why do you hide that fact from your audience?

But most importantly, nearly all scientists reject your claim.

Since the sun wasn't created until day 4, how could you possibly measure a day before then? Did God wear a Rolex?

*The Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice.*

Tony, many religions make that claim, most notably, Islam. Why should we believe you?

I mean other than the fact that your invisible ghost threatens us with eternal torture if we don't. Other than threats, do you have any actual evidence to offer? Or is that threat all you've got?

*The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God’s Word to man without error in the whole or in the part.*

Tony, if you think there are no errors in the Bible, then you seriously need remedial reading lessons. Almost any biblical scholar will be more than happy to point out to you a host of contradictions.

*The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.*

Tony, the problem with that is that no two Christians agree on everything in the Bible. That's why there are hundreds, even thousands, of different Christian denominations (depending on how you define them).

*There is but one living and true God, an infinite, all knowing Spirit,*

Tony, quick question: if God is all-knowing, and therefore knew that Adam would eat the fruit ... why did God tell him not to?

*perfect in all His attributes*

Tony, in Exodus your invisible ghost murders all the firstborn of Egypt. The only way that can be described as "perfect" would be that He pulled off the perfect crime.

*God is the Creator of all things (Genesis 1:1-31; Ephesians 3:9).*

Hey Tony, why did you leave out Isaiah 45:7?

You know, the verse where God confesses to creating evil.

*He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events.*

Tony, if He directs all events, then why are we held accountable?

Shouldn't He be sending Himself to Hell?

*In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin,*

Tony, if He isn't the author of sin, and sin is evil, then I guess you found one of those contradictions for us ... thanks. We should add that one to the list.

*nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures.*

Tony, thanks for finding another contradiction. You just said He directs and governs all creatures, and now you say holds them accountable for actions He directed.

You're finding more contradictions than any Atheist ever could.

*He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own;*

Tony, so what's the point of your ministry if God has already chosen the winners?

*He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as his own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own.*

Yeah Tony, but like you just said, it's already been decided long ago, who will come to Him ... so what's the point of preaching?

*Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellences, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father.*

Tony, apparently Jesus didn't think so. He told His followers to ignore what His Father told them about "an eye for an eye," and instead, to "turn the other cheek."

Sounds like they got in a little bit of a pissing contest, doesn't it?

*The Holy Spirit is the divine Teacher, who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God’s revelation, the Bible.*

Tony, it doesn't sound like that Ghost-Thing did a very good job with Peter - remember him? The guy who lied 3 times?

*Man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness.*

Tony, so is God white, black, brown, or yellow? Is He tall or short? Fat or Skinny? Handsome or ugly?

The reason I ask Tony, is that these are the images that we see in humans, so it makes me wonder: since they all look very different, which one is in God's image?

*Man was created free of sin with a rational nature*

Well Tony, we sure blew that one. Have you seen the statistics?

They are quite depressing: the vast majority of 21st century humans still worship invisible ghosts. That makes us almost ...

an entire planet of nutjobs.

*In Adam’s sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God;*

Tony, earlier you said that God was all-knowing. So He knew Adam would disobey Him. So why did God lose his cookies when Adam did ... exactly what God already knew that Adam was going to do?

That doesn't make any sense Tony. That sounds more like someone who got surprised and disappointed, than someone who knew just what to expect. Are you sure about this "all-knowing" stuff?

*With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost.*

Tony, if God has already chosen the winners long ago, why would it matter?

The winners are going to Heaven and the losers are going to Hell. The game was fixed at the start. So what's the point of anything?

*Salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18-19).*

Tony, how come you ignored all those verses that say otherwise?

Oops - it looks like you just dug up some more contradictions for us. All we have to do is just sit back and let you find them for us.

*Election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies.*

Tony, see, it's like I said - the game is fixed. We never had a chance.

So explain to us again the point of your ministry (other than to soak the suckers out of their money). Your ministry can't possibly affect those whom God has, or has not, selected - so what's the point?

*Sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord.*

Tony, how do you figure that one?

It certainly does contradict and negate man's responsibility. Oh, I see: you DO see the contradiction, but you have no way out of it, so you decided that your best bet would simply be to pronounce it a non-contradiction, and then hope nobody noticed what you did.

Nice try, Tony.

*All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive.*

Tony, you left out billions of people. You didn't say anything about all those who were holding losing lottery tickets.

*Election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty.*

Tony, is this where you desperately try to wiggle out of your bizarre little interpretation in which you have found yourself trapped?

*All the redeemed once saved are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever.*

Tony, that sounds a lot like Islam. Once they have you - they own you forever. Try to leave ... and it's off with your head.

*The local church is autonomous, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations.*

Tony, about that, uh ... no. That's not how reality works. But since you've been out of the loop, in Jesusland, we'll cut you some slack on that one.

*It is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshiped.*

Hey Tony, I'm with you on that one. I knew we would find common ground ... eventually.

*Satan is a created angel and the author of sin.*

Hey Tony, thanks for finding another contradiction. Isaiah 45:7 made it quite clear that God was the author of sin (creator of evil). I know what you're thinking Tony, with that little Ghost Worshiper head of yours: you're thinking you must find a way to argue that "evil" and "sin" are two separate things, and that "create" and "author" are two different verbs, right?

Good luck.

*He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator*

Tony, the Bible is full of dudes who rebel against God. In fact, the whole planet (with the exception of 8 people) once rebelled against God, so it seems like He should be pretty used to it.

God is kind of like the guy at the office Whom everyone hates and disrespects, but He can never quite figure out why, and just assumes that the problem must lie with everyone else.

*introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve.*

Tony, can you name one country on Earth where temptation ... is a crime?

*Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man;*

Tony, I think God is the bigger enemy of man, and I'll prove it:

Let's trade emails. You send me a verse that describes an evil act committed by Satan, and I will respond with a verse that describes an evil act committed by God. We'll trade emails until one of us runs out of verses - fair enough?

(for some reason, no Christian has ever accepted that challenge)

*he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire.*

Tony, so he gets eternal life?

That doesn't seem fair.

*the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ*

Hey Tony, thanks for another contradiction. I know a verse that states that no one has ascended except He who hath descended (Jesus). I think I'll add that contradiction to the list. You sure know a lot of contradictions Tony. Funny how you can't see any of them though - "They have eyes ... but do not see."

*They shall then appear at the Great White Throne judgment and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire, cut off from the life of God forever.*

Tony, that's why people like you, who believe you are going to Heaven, shouldn't expect that you'll be spending very much time with Jesus. Let's face it Tony, with billions upon billions of people to torture every day ... Jesus is going to be one awfully busy Dude.

So don't be too disappointed when He doesn't have time to stop by your cloud to chat.

*I believe that following the release of Satan after the thousand year reign of Christ, Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather them to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven.*

Tony, since everyone already knows what's going to happen (because God spilled the beans when He wrote the Bible), what makes you think Satan will be stupid enough to play along?

*Christ, who is the Judge of all men, will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne judgment.*

Tony, thanks for finding another contradiction. I have a Bible in which Jesus states that He judges no man. I'll add that one to the list.

*they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire.*

See Tony, I told you they would get eternal life.

*the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells.*

Tony, wouldn't it have made a whole lot more sense just to skip over all the bad stuff and go straight to the new Earth?

I mean what kind of screwy plan is that? What was even the purpose of all that needless suffering when all He had to do is create the second Earth ... first?

*Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another.*

Tony, delusional Ghost Worshipers, like you, are to be pitied. Living your entire life, terrorized by the threats of a horrible invisible monster, is a life I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy.

<http://crossencountersmin.com/statement-of-faith/>

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Blocking D1 receptors in the brain blocks alcohol cravings

Scientists say a cure for alcoholism could be on the horizon thanks to the remarkable discovery that neurons in the brain play a role in whether one glass of wine turns into a bottle of wine.

Researchers explain that the part of your brain known as the dorsomedial striatum contains neurons with spiny protrusions, each with two types of dopamine receptors. One type, called D1, encourages action but is structurally altered when large amounts of alcohol are consumed. The alteration causes the neurons to activate with less stimulation and the result is a vicious circle: drinking alcohol causes easier activation and activation tells your brain to keep drinking.

The study explains how mice brains exposed to booze had more mature protrusions in D1 neurons compared to brains that weren't exposed to booze. Mice with more mature protrusions—where long-term memories are stored—downed large amounts of alcohol when given the chance. However, when the mice were given a drug to block the D1 receptor, the cravings diminished. D1 receptors are essential for alcohol consumption, and if this activity is suppressed, alcohol consumption is suppressed.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

FAMOUS QUOTES

Victor Stenger

(no biography - previously quoted)

“Selling eternal life is an unbeatable business,

with no customers ever asking for their money back

after the goods are not delivered.”