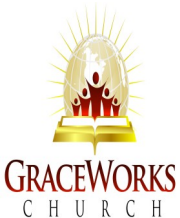


the future life . . . everything is permitted, one can do anything.”

There is built within each of us a God-consciousness which includes a deep-seated grasp of the truth that all people are made in the image and likeness of their Creator. Alas, that consciousness can be suppressed and, as Romans 1 says, the natural man neither *glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

As a result of rejecting God’s revelation of Himself, God has given the natural man over to “the sinful desires of their hearts” (v 24), “to shameful lusts” (v 26), and “to a depraved mind” (v 28). As a result “they do what ought not to be done” (v 28). They “are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, (v 30) slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; (v 31) they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy (v 32). Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”

Christians need to embrace and teach the biblical worldview. The famous unbelieving historian and philosopher Will Durant wrote: “I survive morally because I retain the moral code that was taught me along with the religion, while I discarded the religion.... You and I are living on a shadow.... But what will happen to our children...? They are living on the shadow of a shadow.”



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... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.

—1 Peter 3:15

Our hearts are broken by the recent tragedy in Las Vegas. There are no words to describe the horror, the inhumanity, of Stephen Paddock's actions on Sunday, October 2017. We grieve for the almost 600 families who either lost a loved one or will live the rest of their days with members injured by this man's maniac action.

However, I would like to raise a question which should be on the mind of any thinking American. Imagine that Paddock left a note explaining his intentions. Again, we are simply imagining the possibility that he had thought out what he was going to do.

“To Whom It May Concern:

Life has no meaning. There is no God of any sort. There is no afterlife. There will be no judgment for either my 'good' actions or my upcoming 'evil' actions. 'Evil' and 'good' are socially constructed categories, able to change as society evolves. But — I will be remembered.”

Admittedly, I have no idea what worldview or philosophy (if any) was held by this crazy person. If an investigation shows that he was a member in good standing with, say, a Christian Science community or a Jehovah's Witness congregation or a Baptist church, would that connection then condemn that group or religion? Of course not.

But philosophically, what motivated his murderous rampage? He was obviously not someone who gave no thought to what he was about to do. He meticulously planned his actions, selecting (and modifying) his weapons, choosing his vantage point to reign down as much lethal damage as he possibly could. As one news report said, “The shooter had checked into a hotel room overlooking the music festival, stocked a cache of weapons there and set up cameras inside his hotel suite and hallway.”

Apparently he thought enough of his live-in girlfriend to have her leave the country before his atrocious act. A multi-millionaire, Paddock enjoyed gambling for a few days before the country music concert on Sunday. But he did not gamble with those 58 innocent lives he took. He simply took them. On top of that, there were an additional 500 individuals who his weapons brutally maimed? They

never had a chance to choose their fate. He imposed his will on those strangers like a demigod who haphazardly and whimsically metes out punishment.

No fear of God served as a deterrent to his actions. No fear of man gave him pause. He did not anticipate a trial or imprisonment for what he was about to do. It is a reasonable conclusion that he had already decided to take his own life after he had robbed so many of theirs.

Ideas have consequences and, though we may never know Paddock's worldview, he obviously did not value his life or the lives of others. He gave no thought to the unremitting misery his actions would scar over half a thousand people.

It seems to me that the he question is not, ‘Why do such mass shootings happen?’ Rather the real question is, ‘Why don't they happen more frequently? In an October 2, 2017 article in *Patheos*, the writer (Driscoll) makes the excellent point that “Once we realize that at the root human beings are the problem, it is easy to see that we cannot also be the solution.”

Think about it . . . in a culture that mostly refers to God only as an expletive of surprise (“Oh, My God!”), why are we shocked that godless actions would result?

One news source said, “The mass shooting has raised questions about the gunman, his intentions and his access to weapons.” But why has his act not raised questions about his worldview? What did Paddock believe? After all, beliefs lead to actions.

We find solace in the stories of heroic efforts made by first responders and average citizens to help others. Sacrificing one's own safety for the sake of someone else is not a value logically derived from a Darwinian point of view. Tim Keller (in his book *Making Sense of God: An Invitation to the Skeptical*) makes the point that “If there is no transcendent reality beyond this life, then there is no value or meaning for anything.” Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, “Without God and

