Starstruck Christians **[1]**

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William Lane Craig's Reasonable Faith 2011 UK Tour [2] drew to a close last week. It was interesting to follow, even if only superficially. With a buildup of months, Christian apologists rallied behind Craig, taunting Richard Dawkins, hoping to tease him out into the spotlight on stage and away from his desk, behind which he commands a slew of New Atheists. But it was not to be, with Dawkins resorting to a rather pathetic *ad hominem* attack on Craig [3] in a last-ditched effort to save some face before the debate. This move was condemned [4] by other skeptics [5]. What I found amazing from all of this, is how the legions of Dawkin's disciples rallied against anyone speaking out against him (see the comments of the various articles)—even those who share their own worldview. Other times they regularly resorted to unsupported arguments which are not much more credible than those Dawkins used himself1. But what I really want to address in this article, is the other side of the coin: the comments of actions of the Christians.

Leading up to the tour, many people—including atheists—urged Dawkins to participate in the debate. When it became apparent that he had no intention to participate, the organisers [6] of the tour took out a bus ad campaign [7] to draw the attention of the public to the fact2. There were also caricature depictions of Dawkins, although I do not know from where these originated.

While I understand that the tour was high profile and had to be marketed, I cannot shake the feeling that some of the self-assured comments from Christians surrounding the tour overstepped somewhat into arrogance. I do not know whether this is necessarily wrong, as the aim was mostly to try and facilitate a debate and discussion around the question of whether God exists—as opposed as to simply being slanderous. But I fear that this was, for the most part, not the case. Rather, it served to further divide two camps: those in the Craig camp, and those in the Dawkins camp. These two people have become "super heroes" for their respective standpoints. I wish to specifically caution Christians about allowing this to happen. Craig is a man and is fallible, as we all are. He does have certain gifts and talents, however. But rather than just admiring them or even hiding behind them, we should study them and learn from them. Also, he is not the only one who has those gifts and talents, and thus we should learn from others as well.

I really like William Lane Craig. I identify the most with him all the issues on which I know his standpoint. With every other Christian "celebrity" that I know of, I disagree with them on some things3. This puts me in a difficult position, because I have to guard myself to not place Craig on a pedestal. I like him, I respect him and I know that I can learn much from him. But in the end we are both brothers in Christ, and we are working towards the same goal: the proclamation and glorification of our Lord, Jesus the Messiah.

I hope that I have not been unfair in my characterisations in this article. I fear that may have been the case, but possibly not for everyone. And those are the people whom I specifically want to address. I know that the people in the apologetics and Christian communities who have been following the events of the past few months ultimately want to see Jesus glorified. And the way for that to happen, is for sinners to turn from their ways and accept Him as Lord. Therefore, rather than revel in the "defeat" of an atheist in a debate, pray earnestly that atheist and the people who listened to the debate who have not yet turned to Christ will seriously consider the gospel, rather than further shrink into their shell. And, similarly, perhaps we as Christians should consider difficult or distasteful arguments and ask God to help us reason through them, rather than just conveniently ignore or sidestep them. As was the aim of the Reasonable Faith tour, we must reason about these difficult things: as God is the ultimate truth, I believe that we shall find our answers in Him.

- 1. Thinking back to one specific comment as an example, one cannot just say that the Kalam Cosmological Argument fails on every premise and leave it at that, as if it is self-evident. You need to provide valid arguments to support your claim; which would be difficult, because

while some premises are contested, it is simply not true that every one fails. It is rather sad that, rather than addressing a difficult issue which challenges your worldview, one would just shout out the contrary and then plug their ears, refusing to engage in discussion.

- 2. It appears as if bethinking.org [8] endorsed [9] some of the gimmicks around the Dawkins debate issue, but I sincerely question whether Craig himself would have put forward such ideas.
- 3. Note that these disagreements do not involve the core doctrines of the Christian faith. They usually concern the Calvinism or eschatology.

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