



"Then the earth reeled and rocked. . .

. . .the foundations also of the mountains trembled
and quaked, because God was angry (Ps 18.7).

Well, call me a heretic, but I can't believe in a
god that is that capricious. And when folks like Pat
Robertson go about attributing the disaster in Haiti
to some early Haitian's supposed pact with the

devil--a somewhat similar perspective, **I** get angry.

Part of the tragedy that has struck Haiti is simply geologic. Tectonic plates move, and that movement isn't always gentle. Having lived for many years in both northern and southern California, I can attest to the shock, and aftershocks, of these kinds of events. I saw how long it took to rebuild parts of Oakland, CA after the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989. And the economy of the United States and California were MUCH better then than they are now -- and certainly better than the economy of Haiti!

And that brings me to the other part of the tragedy that has struck Haiti. Decades, perhaps centuries, of marginalization and exploitation by other countries (including the US) as well as exploitation by its own leaders. If God is angry about anything, I would submit that it is about THAT! The eighth-century Hebrew prophets spoke a LOT about re-establishing a just system (as well as pointing out the hypocrisy of those who lived self-satisfied, self-righteous, lives). Establishing a just order is something over which we have some control and influence.

My way of dealing with tragedies such as the situation in Haiti is so far removed from Pat Robertson's -- which seems to me to be an attempt (1) to place blame on the victims, and (2) to claim some moral high ground. The earthquake happened! That's the way the world literally works. Buildings came down -- we can address that. We can learn. We can rebuild. We can restore.

But we need to do it in a just way, not one that lines the pockets of large multi-national contractors, or simply replicates the pre-earthquake situation. We, as a global people, have an opportunity to make a major difference in the lives of these people and their country.

We can ask "Why" -- especially in the context of the socio-economic situation that has made this natural disaster so much worse. But, I believe, a better question is "What next?" "How do we respond?" "What is OUR responsibility as people of faith and conviction?" "How do we help re-establish a just order?"

The opportunities are there. The task is, and will be, huge. Pray for the strength, and will, to meet the challenge.

With hope!

Gary
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