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Haiti Earthquake

What Was God's Role?

by Paul Mpindi

I know what a place like Haiti is like. I came from a torn place myself: the Congo. I grieve like everyone else over this terrible tragedy. I also ask, as do many others, "What was God's role in this?"

The main biblical question we ask after a terrible tragedy such as the Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti is, "How can a good God allow such a bad thing to happen to his people?"

Some say, "Satan allowed it; not God." But the Bible says disaster cannot come to a city without God allowing it (Amos 3:6). We Christians believe in providence—that everything is within God's control.

We are dealing here with evil. Biblical teaching says that evil disrupts nature. If

evil becomes prevalent, sometimes it brings pain beyond understanding. By the same token, it is foolishness to say that the Haitian people are the most sinful on earth. They are no different from the rest of us. But tragedy can be a time for people to examine themselves, to see if there is a spiritual reason for such pain.

In the Bible, rebellion and belief in the occult are two main sins that always bring disturbance in the lives of people and nations. A situation like this earthquake calls on the whole world to reflect. What are we doing to ourselves to lessen or weaken our well-being?

Was the earthquake a punishment from God? We don't know. We don't know

why it happened. But, whatever it was, as human beings and Christians we must pray for God to put his protective hand over the people of Haiti and the whole world.

It is easy to blame, to say that there is voodoo in Haiti. Voodoo is evil. But abortion is also evil. Injustice is evil. As it says in Psalm 130:3-4, if God counted all of our sins against us, who would be left standing?

Instead of judging Haiti, let us encourage Haiti to work toward what brings God's blessings. Like the rest of us, Haitians should seek justice, stay away from idol worship, and embrace Christ.

Back to God Ministries International had just started to expand its work in

Haiti before the earthquake. Many FM stations carry our broadcasts. Our new follow-up center, where people can go for pastoral counseling, discipleship, and spiritual assistance, is still standing in Port-au-Prince. In the countryside, we have contact people who can help. We have tools to minister to people at this time of their direst need.

In the messages I will be giving to Haitians over the radio, I will talk about voodoo, rebellion, about those who kill others, and how evil things contribute to weaken a nation, not to build it up. But I will do it in a calm way, after people have had a chance to mourn and get settled.

My message to the people of Haiti will be to ask them to reflect on their lives and their spiritual well-being. I will do this without judging. But I will ask people to face reality and ask themselves if they

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Haitians in Port-au-Prince participate in a worship service for survivors of the Jan. 12 earthquake.

have profound spiritual changes to make. If so, they need to make them. Without self-examination, there can be no real healing or growth.

This is the time for us to challenge and encourage the people of Haiti to move to a new place, to a place of shalom, of Christlikeness. My prayer is that this earthquake will be the last of the troubles Haiti has seen over the years. Because the capital of Port-au-Prince was struck, rebuilding will begin from the nation’s

heart. My prayer is also that as the nation rebuilds materially, it will rebuild spiritually as well.

The Haiti situation has highlighted for me how fragile we all are. We really don’t have our own destinies in hand. God is our only refuge of safety and meaning. This situation helps us to fall into God’s hands.

In human terms, the process of rebuilding will give Haitians a chance to get out of the mess of poverty and violence. In the end, though, Christians also have to deal with the spiritual aspect of things. We will need to plant the cross very high in Haiti, so that a new light of God can shine there. ■



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