

Commentary

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Dr. Fred Craddock tells about a weekly newspaper called “The Kingfisher,” published each Friday in the little town of Kingfisher, Oklahoma. An old Kiawah Indian named Molly Shepherd wrote a column, telling about the customs and news of her people. She wrote in simple, broken English.

On the Friday following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, Molly Shepherd submitted a brief article. She wrote, *Molly has no article today. Molly has no words today. Molly has nothing to say today. All week Molly walks around in the house and says, “Ooooooh...Ooooooh!”*

Since December 26, 2004, most of my private prayers concerning the tsunami and its aftermath have been like Molly’s. *Ooooooh...Ooooooh!* When offering public prayers about the disaster, I have used words. But, like Molly, my personal prayers are often unintelligible moans or heavy sighs.

The Apostle Paul reassures me. He tells me, as he wrote the Roman Church, that when I can’t find words to pray with, the Holy Spirit takes over with sighs too deep for words. Sighs. Moans. *Ooooooh...Ooooooh!* Groans.

In his letter to the Roman Christians, Paul also tells about the earth groaning, as a woman in labor. Such a graphic and poetic image is fitting for what happened on December 26, 2004. I imagine the earth, Mother Earth, heaving and groaning and shuddering as a massive earthquake in her watery deep sent waves of destruction to the innocent seacoasts.

I imagine these huge tectonic plates grinding together—massive arthritic joints in Mother Earth—causing pain and wreaking manifold pain. And I hear myself sighing. *Ooooooh...Ooooooh!*

Would-be believers or the nearly faithful may say this natural disaster is their tipping point toward non belief. A loving, all-powerful God would not allow this. So there must not be such a God. The Grand Architect of the universe would not make such a terribly tragic mistake. So, there must be no Great Designer.

To anyone who feels such unbelief, I would say that I understand. Their questions are expected and natural. However, I would also say that there’s more to consider. I would offer that the great outpourings of compassion, rescue, relief, and giving is a faith tsunami, countering nature’s tsunami. These great waves of love and caring are proof enough that God is and that God is with us.

The ways of Mother Earth are a great mystery. She is fickle and unpredictable. Why God created the universe and set in it in motion with its rhythm and movements is

the question unanswerable this side of the Great Beyond. Belief doesn't depend on the questions being answered or the mysteries being solved. Give me a mustard seed faith, and that's enough. "God is love" is a seed growing in the hearts of those who are giving time, money, prayers, presence, and hope to victims of the great groaning of December 26, 2004. We will find God where we find such outpourings of love.

So, my wordless prayers continue. But now the *Ooooooh...Ooooooh*, the heavy sighs of sorrow, are punctuated with *Aaaaaah...Aaaaaah*, affirmations that God is Love...God is Love. Amen.

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