

What About Tsunami Relief?



On December 26, 2004, a massive earthquake under the Indian Ocean near the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia sent a powerful tsunami, or tidal wave, that ravaged the coasts of thirteen nations, killed over 225,000 people, and left nearly 2,000,000 homeless. In response, America's churches and pagans have donated money and goods to help the survivors recover from the enormous damage. We have not done so. Why have we not done so? We have plenty of funds. Can we defend our position? What is a Christian's duty from the Bible in such situations? Lord, guide us.

Christians know more about love and charity than any others.

- A. Since the Christian religion is based on God's gift of His Son, they emulate that love (I John 4:7-13).
- B. Charity is the greatest grace and the more excellent way of service (I Cor 12:31; 13:1-13; Col 3:14).
- C. An important proof of eternal life is giving to others (Matt 25:31-46; Luke 14:12-14; I Tim 6:17-19).
- D. Pure Christianity is taking care of those unable to care for themselves (Isaiah 58:6-7; James 1:27).
- E. They know selfishness and hatred are depraved instincts of the natural man (Rom 3:9-19; Titus 3:3).
- F. Qualified widows in a true church are to be fully supported by the church (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim 5:3-16).
- G. It is a mark of Christian wisdom to consider and generously care for the poor (Psalm 41:1-2; 112:9; Proverbs 11:24-25; 14:21,31; 19:17; 28:27; Eccl 11:1-2; Acts 20:35; Galatians 2:10; I John 3:16-18).
- H. It is clear that every sincere Christian must soberly determine if God expects tsunami help from him.
- I. Since the Christian religion is based on God's gift of His Son, they emulate that love (I John 4:7-13).
 - 1. But God's love is discriminatory in both eternal and carnal blessings (Mal 1:1-5; Ps 139:21-22).
 - 2. God has chosen for His people to rule over the heritage of the heathen (Deut 28:12-13; Ps 111:6).
 - 3. Under the New Testament, we do not take this into our hands, but neither do we subsidize them.
 - 4. There is not a word in scripture to obligate saints to relieve His acts on pagans in far off places.

A tsunami is an act of God.

- A. The LORD created the waters, seas, and oceans and gathered them together (Gen 1:1-10; Prov 8:29).
- B. He also controls their every movement (Genesis 9:8-17; Job 38:8-11; Ps 93:1-4; 104:5-9; Jer 5:22).
- C. He can send storms to do His will, and He can send calm (Psalm 48:7; Jonah 1:1-17; Matt 8:26-27).
- D. The holy God sends horrible events at times to accomplish His will (Job 2:9-10; Is 45:7; Amos 3:6).
- E. The LORD Jehovah of the Bible is righteous in all His ways and works (Deut 32:4; Ps 33:4; 145:17).
- F. He can use water to bring judgments (Gen 6:1-7; Ex 14:21-31; Job 37:6-13; Ps 107:23-43; 135:5-7).

Tsunamis are to punish wicked men for the glory of God.

- A. All men are wicked and deserve to die miserably (Gen 3:14-19; 6:1-7; Rom 6:23; Rev 20:11-15).
- B. The LORD has made all things for Himself and for His own pleasure (Prov 16:4; Revelation 4:11).
- C. There are no accidents or coincidences of nature – they are God's acts of judgment (Luke 13:4-5).
- D. When a disaster is widespread, bringing God's judgment, saints are to be relieved (Acts 11:27-30).

The nations affected are pagan Christ-rejecters.

- A. The nations affected include Somalia, Sri Lanka, India, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.
 - 1. These nations are not our neighbors; in fact, they are as far from us as this planet will allow.
 - 2. The predominant religions of these nations are manifestly Islam, Hindu, and Buddhist.
 - 3. All of these religions deny Jehovah of the Bible, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Word of God.
 - 4. These nations and religions are positively anti-Christian in their laws and religious practices.
 - 5. These nations and religions are also positively anti-American in their philosophy and ambitions.
- B. The Bible, which reveals Jehovah's will, gives warnings and examples of God's wrath against them.
 - 1. He used His chosen people Israel to annihilate the nations of Canaan (Deut 7:1-11; Josh 10:40).
 - 2. He promised to turn nations that forget Him into hell (Psalm 9:15-20; 79:6; Is 13:1-22; 21:1-17).
 - 3. And the Lord Jesus Christ is no different, for He is Jehovah (Psalm 2:1-12; Rev 2:26-27; 19:15).
- C. A nation is only blessed to the degree that Jehovah and Jesus Christ are God (Psalm 33:12; 144:15).
- D. The religion of Jesus Christ is peaceful, but Jesus Christ is not (Matt 10:34-42; 21:44; I Cor 16:22)!

Pagan nations are without excuse before the LORD Jehovah.

- A. God created a testimony to His eternal power and Godhead that is understood by all (Psalm 19:1-6).
- B. They are without excuse for rejecting it, and their dark ignorance is by His judgment (Rom 1:19-21).
- C. False religion, especially the idolatry of the three religions considered here, is stupid (Is 44:9-20).
- D. The blessed God of heaven by showing some natural kindness gave witness of Himself (Acts 14:17).

God made the poor, and there shall always be poor.

- A. God made the rich and poor; it is His right (Deut 28:13; I Sam 2:7; Job 31:15; 34:19; Pr 16:4; 22:2).
- B. There will always be poor, and it is foolish to think they can be eliminated (Deut 15:11; Mark 14:7).
- C. Many nations, especially in Africa, and notably Hindu, Muslim, or Buddhist nations, are very poor.

Christian financial charity is first to your own family.

- A. A man is bound first to provide financial support to the needy in his own family (I Tim 5:4,8,16).
- B. Parents owe help to their children, and children to their parents (Pr 13:22; Mat 15:4-6; II Cor 12:14).
- C. Since an inheritance is assumed from godly fathers, a priority must be made to save excess funds.
- D. The Lord Jesus even ruled that faith-promise offerings to God cannot relieve family obligations.
- E. The Lord Jesus Christ taught that it is not right to give your children's bread to dogs (Mat 15:24-26).
- F. You may not have any money left over for outside charity after caring for the needy in your family.

Christian financial charity is second to poor saints in your church.

- A. Before you give to the poor in other churches, you owe it to your body (Rom 15:15; I Cor 12:25-27).
- B. Every member, and therefore every need, is in a church by God's choice (Acts 2:47; I Cor 12:18).
- C. There should be an instinctive compassion for those in the same local body with you (Heb 13:3).
- D. The feasts of charity mentioned by Jude were for the saints in a given local church (Jude 1:12).
- E. The true churches of Christ provide full support for qualified widows (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim 5:3-16).
- F. It is a brother or sister short on food or clothes that should provoke charity (Jas 2:15-16; I Jn 3:17).
- G. The "one another" duties of the New Testament are predominantly for the members of your church.

Christian financial charity is third to poor saints in other churches.

- A. Remember when reading Old Testament passages that the church and the nation were the same, so any poor in the nation are one and the same with poor in the church, for they were in the church.
- B. A tithe taken every third year was to support and bless the poor "within thy gates" (Deut 14:28-29).
- C. The poor in the land of Israel were "thy brother," "thy poor," and "thy needy" (Deuteronomy 15:11).
- D. The Lord Jesus Christ will recognize charity done to His brethren on Judgment Day (Matt 25:40).
- E. When Paul brought alms to Jerusalem, he brought them to his nation, not other nations (Acts 24:17).
- F. We are to do good to all men, but especially to those who are in the kingdom of Christ (Gal 6:10).
- G. The true measure of Christian love is giving financially to our brethren, not pagans (I John 3:16-19).
- H. Christians are members of a secret society invisible to men – the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Luke 17:20-21; Rom 14:17; Gal 6:10; Eph 2:19; 3:15; I Pet 2:9-12; Heb 3:6; 12:22-24).
- I. As shown below, the apostolic object for fund raising were the poor saints in other churches.

Christian financial charity is fourth to victims God brings to you.

- A. A lawyer, which should not surprise you, limited the love of neighbor to friends (Luke 10:25-29).
 - 1. **Neighbour.** One who lives in close proximity to another; fellow men one may meet with.
 - 2. Men will attempt to justify themselves by limiting their neighbors to their friends and nation.
 - 3. The story of the Good Samaritan is Jesus Christ's identification of your neighbor in God's sight.
- B. But Jesus expanded it to anyone God brings across your ordinary business in life (Luke 10:30-37).

1. The specific example is a Samaritan befriending a Jew, which were enemies (John 4:9; 8:48).
 2. Therefore, we conclude that charity is due a pagan that God places in need in your path.
 3. The Samaritans and Jews did not live together, so this is a neighbour in a broader sense.
 4. The Samaritan, in the ordinary course of business travel, chanced upon the wounded Jew.
 5. He chanced upon the wounded Jew; he was not looking for wounded Jews in a bad part of town.
 6. The Samaritan did not watch telethons to discover starving children in Ethiopia or Uganda.
 7. The man in this case was in need; he was not pretending a need to get free cigarettes or wine.
 8. The Samaritan did not subsidize the Jew; he only rescued him from his very specific need.
 9. The Samaritan did not give money for building a house, getting a car, or celebrating Christmas.
- C. Your neighbor, in order to fulfill the second commandment, is those God puts directly in your path.
1. The nations affected by the tsunami are not neighbors; they are as far from us as is possible.
 2. In most any other generation, you would not even have known about it for months or years.
 3. The world's anti-God media brought the information to us and promoted the relief, though the same media ignores aborted babies, deprived ministers, suffering saints, and persecuted Baptists.
 4. The Good Samaritan did not inquire at the market about wounded travelers in Egypt and Arabia, of which there would have been many; he was not moved in conscience to give to U.N.I.C.E.F.
 5. The fact we can see them on television is no more obligatory than market info to the Samaritan.
 6. Job speaks of taking care of those poor within his sight or coming to him for help (Job 31:16-22).

Apostolic Christians raised money only for poor saints.

- A. The early church was the most charitable church ever ... toward each other (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37).
- B. Paul was committed to charitable giving by the churches, but it was always for poor saints of Jesus Christ: it is your duty to read and understand this Bible emphasis (Rom 12:13; 15:25-27; I Cor 16:1-3; II Cor 8:4; 9:1-2,12; Gal 2:9-10; Philemon 1:7; Heb 6:10; Jas 2:15-17; I John 3:17).
- C. There is not a single mention of the poor that were in every city; the churches sent their money abroad to poor saints, ignoring the orphanages and hospitals and jails and brothels in their own city.
- D. The bag carried by the apostles of our Lord had to have been for the poor saints in Israel, not starving children in Ethiopia, for He was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, which was the church of God under the Old Covenant (John 12:6; 13:29).
- E. Dorcas and Cornelius did almsdeeds to church widows and God's nation (Acts 9:36-43; 10:2,22,31).
- F. The giving rewarded by God is charity to believers (Matt 10:40-42; 25:40; Mark 9:41; Heb 6:10).

The apostles responded to disasters by caring for poor saints.

- A. When God warned of a famine, the disciples sent money to their brethren in Christ (Acts 11:27-30).
 1. The famine was throughout all the world, but the disciples did not worry about starving pagans.
 2. Here is fundraising and charitable giving identified very clearly for our learning in such cases.
 3. Money was sourced in this passage from Syria to help saints in Judea, ignoring starving Syrians!
 4. Money was raised in this passage from Syria to help saints in Judea, ignoring unbelieving Jews!
 5. Jerusalem was 300 miles south of Antioch, which meant that a lot of opportunities were passed.
 6. Money was sourced in Greece for Jerusalem, ignoring the Greeks (Rom 15:25-28; I Cor 16:3).
 7. Money was sourced in Galatia for Jerusalem, ignoring the Galatians (I Cor 16:1-3; Gal 2:9-10).
 8. Obviously, there were poor orphans and widows at all times in these foreign cities and nations!
 9. Obviously, there were poor orphans and widows at all times in other foreign cities and nations!
- B. The saints of Jesus Christ are strangers and pilgrims in the earth: they are not moved for pagans.
- C. They seek first the kingdom of God, and therefore there is not much left for the kingdom of Satan!
- D. But they would be first in line to help a pagan orphan or widow God put in their ordinary path.

Under neither testament did God's people give charity to pagans.

- A. Remembering that in Israel the church and state were the same, we can learn by studying Israel.
 - 1. Though ten plagues ravaged the nation (Ex 10:7), the people spoiled Egypt further (Ex 12:36).
 - 2. There is not a single precept in all the Law of Moses to send contributions to U.N.I.C.E.F.
- B. The Lord Jesus Christ, though speaking proverbially, denied bread to Gentile dogs (Matt 15:24-26).
- C. God told His people to take interest from pagans for loaning money to make money (Deut 28:12-13).

Charitable giving is not all that it seems to be.

- A. Jesus Christ was not impressed by proportionately small gifts: remember the widow (Luke 21:1-4); which shows that the large public donations out of a man's wealth are pitiful in every respect.
- B. Americans viciously murder 1-1.5 million babies a year, yet they raise funds for pagan enemies.
- C. Genocide has been going on in nations since Cain killed Abel, but the relief givers do not care.
- D. Without faith, all human actions are corrupted and become sin (Pr 21:4; II Thess 3:1-2; Heb 11:6).
- E. When Hollywood and other anti-God elements of society foam about it, we should be extra careful: those parties never give charity to any worthy object like churches, saints, or ministers; they think it far more important to save spotted owls and baby seals than aborted babies or persecuted Baptists.
- F. The worldlings proudly broadcast their charitable giving, just as Jesus condemned (Matthew 6:1-4)?

Further observations about Christian charity for learning wisdom.

- A. Liberal to qualifying widows, Christianity has very strict qualifying rules, which shows that godly giving is very objective, rather than emotional, subjective, or universal (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim 5:3-16).
- B. If men will not work diligently and wisely, they should starve; wisdom does not subsidize folly, which shows that not everything that looks like a need qualifies for Christian charity (Prov 6:6-11; 16:26; 18:9; 19:15; 20:4; 30:25; Matt 25:8-9,24-29; Rom 12:11; I Thess 4:11-12; II Thess 3:6-12).
- C. Christian charity is to be overseen by God's ministers to insure proper qualifying and equitable distribution (Acts 4:32-37; 6:1-6; 11:30; I Cor 16:1-3; II Cor 8:16-24; I Tim 5:3-16).
- D. Christian charity does not try to artificially create equality in income or net worth, as under Communism, for the rich are allowed to remain rich (Job 1:1-3; 42:10-12; I Tim 6:17-19).
- E. Bible charity requires an act of God that renders a person unable to obtain food, clothing, shelter, or life-threatening medical treatment: it does not provide for human foolishness or a shortage of desired things (Job 31:19; Isaiah 58:7; Ezek 18:7; Luke 10:25-37; Acts 11:27-30; Jas 1:27; 2:15-16).
- F. Giving to the poor was not the most important thing for Jesus – His anointing cost many children many meals, but He blessed and recorded the priority of honoring Him (Mark 14:3-8)!
- G. The age of those in need, or extra sentimentality for children, is not found in the Bible, for sin includes the youngest (Gen 6:6-7; Exodus 12:29; Num 16:27; 31:17; Deut 2:34; Josh 7:24; II Sam 12:13-14; Ezek 9:5-6).
- H. To have a pure heart before God applying the guidelines of this study, you had better be generous and liberal with your opportunities to give legitimate charity (Prov 11:24-25; Luke 6:38; II Cor 8:6).
- I. We go to the Bible to determine our practice; we do not take our practice to the Bible for support.

Answers to legitimate questions and objections to the Bible position

- A. What about Galatians 6:10? It mentions doing good to "all men," even though the priority is on the household of faith. If you were to send even 1 cent to every poor person in the world, your net worth could not sustain it. This verse must be understood in light of priority #4 mentioned above, which we can also see in the Holy Spirit's use of "opportunity." He did not loosely say, "Do good to all men."
- B. What about Acts 9:41? It mentions "saints and widows," indicating two distinct groups – believers and pagan widows. There is no reason these must be two distinct groups: Luke chose to emphasize

the appreciative widows by singling them out. Apostles are elders (I Pet 5:1), but we read repeatedly of “apostles and elders,” where apostles were singled out for emphasis (Acts 15:2,4,6,22-23; 16:4).

- C. What about II Corinthians 9:13? It mentions Jewish thanksgiving for Corinthian giving to them and “unto all men.” The all men need to be no broader than believers other than the saints in Jerusalem. There would not have been any money left for the Jews, if the Corinthians had given to all men. There is some obvious limitation. Since the New Testament is silent on pagan giving, so are we. Why would Jewish saints have glorified God for Corinthian giving to their enemies – the Romans?
- D. What about Acts 10:2,4? Cornelius was not yet a believer, so it is highly unlikely he limited his almsgiving to believers, yet his giving was accepted by God. If Cornelius had ignorantly given alms out of faith in God to pagan orphans and widows, the Lord would have accepted them. But he did not: his almsgiving was to the poor of the people of God – the Jewish nation (Acts 10:22).

Conclusion for Christians following the Bible:

- A. God set our priorities for charity: (1) family, (2) church, (3) saints, and (4) providential neighbors; and these priorities ought to be protected and provided for before any giving to other objects.
- B. It is not sin to send money to a relief fund, if you have covered God’s priorities for charitable giving; but have you wisely considered the overhead, integrity, and distribution objectives of the fund?
- C. It is not sin to not send money to a relief fund, if you are cheerful and generous with His priorities.
- D. If you have covered God’s priorities and are ready to help in the future, tsunami relief is a liberty.
- E. God did not set any obligation for pagans on the other side of the earth that are His avowed enemies.
- F. If we knew true Christians that were harmed by the tsunami, they would be part of priority #3 above.
- G. We should be ready to help anyone God providentially brings in our path, especially orphans or widows, but even enemies also (Luke 10:25-37; Rom 12:17-21; Gal 6:10; James 1:27).

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, “Christian Charity,” preached in 1985 and available in printed form at this time.
2. The sermon outline, “[Does God Love Everybody?](#)” which shows the fallacy of the popular notion.
7. [2004 Tsunami](#) – detailed information from Wikipedia about the tsunami of December 26, 2004.
3. [Surviving a Tsunami](#) – a U.S. Government Report based on the Chilean tsunami of May 22, 1960.
8. [United States](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.
4. [Indonesia](#) – the World Factbook - CIA.
9. [Sri Lanka](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.
10. [India](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.
11. [Malaysia](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.
12. [Somalia](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.
13. [Thailand](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.
14. [Burma](#) – the World Factbook – CIA.