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Theocracy Alert

In the name of God and Katrina

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September 7, 2005—Throughout history politically motivated religious leaders have used natural disasters and human suffering to validate and advance their own agendas. It didn't take long for today's crop of zealots to begin using the appalling devastation and human tragedy caused by Katrina to further their own social and political agendas "in the name of God."

On August 31, the leader of Philadelphia-based "Repent America" did just that. In his [statement](#) Michael Marcavage claimed Katrina was God's purposeful, justified destruction of "a wicked city." Aside from Mardi Gras, [notorious](#) antigay campaigner Marcavage was certain a pissed-off "God" targeted New Orleans because it was scheduled to host a gay event over Labor Day weekend. But what of the men, women and children killed and injured or left homeless and hopeless by Katrina?

Marcavage's answer: too bad, screw 'em, they deserved it. In his own words...

Although the loss of lives is deeply saddening, this act of God destroyed a wicked city. From "Girls Gone Wild" to "Southern Decadence," New Orleans was a city that had its doors wide open to the public celebration of sin. ...

Let us pray for those ravaged by this disaster. However, we must not forget that the citizens of New Orleans tolerated and welcomed the wickedness in their city for so long.

Sounds like [Jerry Falwell after 9/11](#), doesn't it?

Also on August 31, and in the same city – the "City of Brotherly Love" – Louis Farrakhan claimed Katrina was "God's" targeted, justified wrath, but for a different political purpose:

[Farrakhan: God punishing U.S. for Iraq with storm](#)

Speaking to a large crowd in South Philadelphia last night [August 31], Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan suggested that the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina was divine punishment for the violence America had inflicted on Iraq.

That's what's so nice about the "God's wrath" thing. It fits whatever social or political cause you're advocating.

The lead story and bold headline in the September 1 "news summary" from Christian news service Agape Press read:

Katrina's Devastation – God's Punishment for New Orleans' Wildness?

While relief agencies continue to reach out to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in the Southeast, violence and looting in the areas struck by the storm has National Guardsmen and law enforcement changing their priorities. *Read More*

Clicking on the “read more” brought up an August 2005 nondescript [article](#), entitled “Church at crossroads - competing worldviews,” by American Family Association founder and chairman Rev. Don Wildmon. The article did not mention Katrina *at all*, nor did it have *anything* to do with the disasters in New Orleans, Mississippi or Alabama. Typical Christian Right deception to hype their sociopolitical message: believe and vote as we tell you to or else...

That apocalyptic edict was also the theme of Rev. Bill Shanks, pastor of New Covenant Fellowship of New Orleans. According to another Agape Press [story](#), for years Shanks “has warned people that unless Christians in New Orleans took a strong stand against such things as local abortion clinics, the yearly Mardi Gras celebrations, and the annual event known as ‘Southern Decadence’—an annual six-day ‘gay pride’ event scheduled to be hosted by the city this week—God’s judgment would be felt.”

Shanks seemed pleased by Katrina’s rampage:

New Orleans now is abortion free. New Orleans now is Mardi Gras free. New Orleans now is free of Southern Decadence and the sodomites, the witchcraft workers, false religion—it’s free of all of those things now. ... God simply, I believe, in His mercy purged all of that stuff out of there. ...

Apparently the pastor and his “God” enjoyed the devastation and human suffering. Talk about “false religion” and “witchcraft.” Rev. Shanks represents both quite well, as does Rev. Fred Phelps who used Katrina to further his usual [“biblical” message](#).

Anticipation of even greater devastation and death seemed to excite talk-radio host George Noory. The September 1, World Net Daily [article](#) was headlined “Radio host: No doubt ‘End Times’ here”:

A national talk-radio host believes the severity of Hurricane Katrina is clear evidence that civilization is now in the “End Times” described in the Bible.

“I don’t think there’s any doubt,” George Noory said this morning on his “Coast to Coast AM” program. “I think we’re in it. I really do.”

In true apocalyptic form, Noory cited Revelation to confirm that we are in “the beginning of the end” of humanity’s existence.

There seems no shortage of people who believe “God” gets pissed off and kills hundreds of thousands of innocent people (including clerics) while smiting the few “He” supposedly has a problem with. After the devastating December 2004 earthquake and tsunami in south Asia, Sheik Fawzan Al-Fawzan, a professor at the Al-Imam University in Saudi Arabia, claimed they were Allah’s wrath for multiple “sins.” World Net Daily hyped the [story](#) with the title “Homosexuality, fornication cause of tsunami? Saudi professor says sinful acts at Christmastime caused disaster.”

What did oddly Christmas-conscious Sheik Fawzan Al-Fawzan actually say?

We know that at these resorts ... and especially at Christmas, fornication and sexual perversion of all kinds are rampant. ... The fact that it [earthquake and tsunami] happened at this particular time is a sign from Allah. It happened at Christmas, when fornicators and corrupt people from all over the world come to commit fornication and sexual perversion. ... We must atone for our sins and for the acts of the stupid people among us and improve our condition. We must fight fornication, homosexuality, usury, fight the corruption on the face of the earth, and the disregard of the lives of protected people.

“Homosexuality” was only one of the “sins” enumerated, but it was the one World New Daily wanted to emphasize. As for Sheik Fawzan Al-Fawzan’s comments...

“Stupid people.” Those on vacation and enjoying being human seem far less “stupid” than people whose “thinking” is stuck in the Dark Ages when an anthropomorphic, wrathful, mean-spirited, politically motivated “God” supposedly plagued humanity for what the creators of that “God” and its “religion” decided were “sins.”

“Lives of protected people.” That’s the lethal core of organized religion: the belief that “the right” people are “protected by God.” Those who don’t subscribe to “the right” religious dogma are... damned. Nothing exposed that malignant core of fear and hate more clearly than the words of sanctimonious religious leaders looking to advance their own social and political agendas “in the name of Katrina.”

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