
THE TEARS OF THE WORLD

BY MICHAEL CARD

There are those who believe that the world has just witnessed the greatest human disaster in human history. By this I mean the recent tsunami that devastated Indochina. Currently the death toll lies somewhere around 150,000, but this will continue to rise as the more remote locations report their losses.

The images provided to us on TV were disturbing. Casual vacationers pointed their video cameras toward the sea just in time to record one of the walls of water crashing into buildings along the coastline. Pictures of the aftermath were far more troubling; mounds of bodies, heaps of wreckage that certainly contain more victims, mothers in tears because they were unable to hold on to their infants who were washed away by the flood, and infants wailing for their mothers who were swept away.

In virtually every image; tears.

Tears are nothing new. Before there were drops of rain there were human tears. They are the defining reality of living in a death-impregnated, fallen world. The Bible says that even the world around us is groaning with the weight of the sorrow.

But can we be honest with each other? If not, then can we at least be honest with God? When I looked at the images from Indochina, though I let out more than one sincere groan, my eyes remained dry. I have not yet found it in me to weep in response to this 'greatest of tragedies.' I find it hard enough to find tears for my own little hurts, but for suffering on this magnitude...

Precisely at this point of my confusion and doubt and guilt, Jesus meets me, meets us. Through Him, both the omniscience of God and the frailty of man exist together. God knows of each and every human sorrow; from the child on some nameless, remote island calling out for her mother who was washed out to sea, to the homeless man living only a couple of miles from me who weeps for the children that slipped through his fingers due to some addiction. As God, Jesus *knows* the depth of each of these bottomless pools of grief. As man, He is able to *experience* the grief bringing up, calling forth, and perhaps not even holding back; tears. Isaiah saw that He would be a Man of Sorrows. His contemporaries heard Him break into weeping more than once. Through the Incarnation, the tear that was poised in the eye of the world found expression as it coursed down the dark cheek of Jesus' face.

Though there will always be that side of me that would rather not weep, would rather not "go there," there is another side, a newer side, which longs to weep these sorts of redemptive, universal tears of and for the world. In the midst of all the confusion and pain, what seems abundantly clear to me is that only by looking to Jesus of Nazareth and walking with Him are we able to connect redemptively with the world's sorrow. Because on the cross, He showed us how sorrow can save the world.

The Tears of the World

Lyrics by Michael Card
(From *A Sacred Sorrow*, NavPress, February 2005)

In any split second
There is enough pain in the world
To overwhelm every gentle heart combined.
The world's pain is as vast as the ocean.
The sorrow of the world is as deep as the sea.
Could the ocean really be the sum of the tears if the world?

Warm

Salty waves of grief

A tidal force of sorrow

That ebbs and flows as inwardly the world groans while outwardly its poor passengers cry out to a God whose eyes are dry.

When Jesus appeared there was a tear in His eye that was as old as the world.

It was not His own. It was the world's tear.

And when even a single one of those tears would course down His unshaven cheek and disappear into His beard, it was as if a black breaker full of the world's tears was exhausting itself upon the clean sands of the shore of His Father's invisible compassion.

Jesus wept the tears of the world.

How is it my eyes are dry?

Or only wet with my own tears?

For the tiniest speck of one of the millions of seconds of my life has there ever been the smallest drop of one of the world's tears in my eyes?

When they see me, does the world see a man of sorrows?

Or do they see a false pretended joy that they could never know because I have never known it myself? Could never know it while holding so dear my own comforts.

Grant me, O Lord an acquaintance with such tears that the world has wept.

Surely the presence of such a great grief in my life would displace my small sadnesses, my petty anger, my selfish sorrows.

O red-eyed Jesus, turn my tears into the world's tears.

And awaken in the deepest part of my falsely satisfied soul

One Vast Loud "Ekah!"

