

Thai restaurateur overcoming Act of God



I visited [Nim's Kitchen](#) on Saturday evening, a splendid Thai restaurant in Norwood near Crystal Palace - very tasty food, good ambience and buzz, with excellent attentive service.

Nim's Kitchen is a very good dining experience, but the truly *remarkable* thing about Nim's Kitchen is the eponymous Nim herself -what she's been through is shocking. But not as shocking as what religious commentators have to say about it.

More than 10 years ago she met an Englishman (an economist from the Department for International Development) in Thailand while she was a teacher and he was learning to speak Thai. They fell in love, married and had three children. In 2004 her family was visiting Thailand, but on the 26th December that year, the [Indian Ocean Tsunami](#) struck and they were in its path. She clung to a tree for two days and just about hung on to her life. Her husband and three children were less fortunate. They were swept away and after days of searching were eventually found dead. I say her husband and children were "less fortunate", but perhaps there are circumstances of such unimaginable pain and loss that cause the living to envy the dead. To drag herself through this life-shattering catastrophe, in 2006 she established Nim's Kitchen.

I was intending to round this blog off with a discussion of "Acts of God" and the obvious challenge to the concepts of an omnipotent or omniscient supernatural being or, god forbid, an 'intelligent designer' [[see Martin Kettle in the Guardian / Channel 4](#)] whilst examining the immense sophistry and contortions of those that would try to reconcile the mass indiscriminate violence of natural disasters with a benevolent, loving but all-powerful God. Many rationalisations have been made and only a small selection can be shown in the notes below:

- [example](#): a by-product of effective planetary design: "*Ultimately, the design of atheism would preclude the existence of humans altogether.*"

Without earthquakes, the earth would be a waterworld, and the most advanced life form would be fish“

- [example](#): God suffers with us however we die – and disasters are just a different form of death: *“Whether we die of “natural causes” or of “natural disasters” makes little difference in the end“*.
- [example](#): a vengeful god: *“God signed His name in the tsunami that battered Sri Lanka and other countries on December 26, and sent it as punishment because humans have been ignoring His laws“*
- [example](#): God’s doing good on the relief team: *“It is in the long-term projects for rebuilding that we must work toward our best understandings of justice for all involved“*
- [example](#): the moral world and physical world out of kilter: *“The tectonic moves of the earth are part of a totally integrated moral system that has been in place since the earth began to evolve. That moral system, described by the Bible, tells us that the physical world will be unable to function in a peaceful and gentle way until the moral/spiritual dimension manifest in the behavior of God’s creatures coheres with God’s will.“*
- [example](#): God does ‘love’, not civil engineering. *“God’s power is not like our desire to move and shake the world. For Christians, God’s almighty power is the power of love“*. One wonders how the World got made or where the love went on 26/12...
- [example](#): wake-up call on the Kyoto Protocol, *“The tsunami can serve as a warning to listen to nature and respect nature. ... Ecocide is homicide. Not to ratify and implement the Kyoto protocol is the refusal to listen to nature on a political level.“*

But you know, having just written the para about what happened to Nim and her family, I don’t think I can bear dignifying any of the arguments above by taking them seriously.