

Twisters not random, says Calvinist preacher Piper

by [Bob Allen](#) in the [April 4, 2012](#) issue

An author and preacher popular in Calvinist circles says it is no accident that recent killer tornadoes followed paths that ravaged some communities while others were spared.

"Why would God reach down his hand and drag his fierce fingers across rural America killing at least 38 people with 90 tornadoes in 12 states and leaving some small towns with scarcely a building standing, including churches?" John Piper of Desiring God Ministries wrote in his blog on March 5.

Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, said it is wrong to ascribe power capable of causing an estimated \$2 billion worth of property damage to Mother Nature or the devil.

"God alone has the last say in where and how the wind blows," Piper said. "If a tornado twists at 175 miles an hour and stays on the ground like a massive lawnmower for 50 miles, God gave the command."

Piper made a similar connection in 2009 when tornado-force winds hit part of downtown Minneapolis just as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America was voting at its national convention there to permit the ordination of gays or lesbians in partnered relationships. Piper described the storm as a "gentle but firm warning to the ELCA and all of us: turn from the approval of sin."

Piper said he doesn't know why, if God has a quarrel with America, he wouldn't show his displeasure in Washington or Hollywood instead of places like Henryville, Indiana, but that "every deadly wind in any town is a divine warning to every town."

"We are not God's counselors, nor can we fathom all his judgments," he said. "That was the lesson of Job. Let us beware, therefore, of reading the hand of providence with too much certainty or specificity. God is always doing a thousand things when he does anything. And we see but a fraction." —ABP