

## Questions and Doubts

by Winfred Omar Neely

Last week my wife and I attended a student play at the Moody Bible Institute. The name of the play was the trial of god, and Melissa Hawkins one of our adjunct professors directed the play. The words of the play seemed to have an emotional life of their own. As the characters dialogue with one another, they use powerful language to describe the personal response of victims of man's inhumanity to man. They use expressions like "they shed tears of blood. Other shed tears of hate. I howled." The innkeeper talks to his wife about what the experience of evil had done to his daughter, saying, "There is something silent within her." As I listened I thought sometimes people can be hurt or experience pain in such a way that they wrap the memory in grave clothes of silence and try to bury the hurt in a tomb of forgetfulness. The experience moved me deeply, and made me think again about the goodness of God and the problem of evil, pain, and suffering. As Professor Hawkins noted after the play, the experience provided students with an avenue to deal with tuff questions and the struggles of doubt. Eli Wiesel wrote the play. As a Jewish adolescent, Wiesel experienced the unspeakable horror of life in a concentration camp during World War II. He narrates for us his experience in a slim but terrifying volume that he entitled Night. In the following excerpt from Night, Wiesel relives his first night in at Auschwitz:

Never will I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky. Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes. Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God himself. Never.

Wiesel himself says that the slim book Night is the interpretive grind through which we are to understand his subsequent writing. The problem of evil is not an ivory tower discussion for Wiesel, a mere theological difficulty, but a Holocaust that left 6000 Jews dead in its wake! I shed tears about the pain and suffering of Wiesel and others. I find myself indignant at the daily expressions of people's inhumanity to people. The inexplicable suffering and pain of godly Christians leaves me with innumerable questions about God's goodness and the problem of evil, pain, and suffering. Still, I am reminded of a godly man who was dying of brain cancer. Many pondered, why this man? One day, this godly man found strength to attend a board meeting, and when he walked in, his friends asked him how was he doing? He responded, "I do not have all the answers to my questions, but my doubts are settled." God does not answer all of questions about the enigma of evil, pain, and suffering in this world, but in his presence our doubts can be settled. Even with unanswered questions that unspeakable suffering raises, the Lord can settle your doubts. These are some of my thoughts about life in a fallen world and I am Winfred Neely for Prime Time America