John Howard Yoder, a key figure in *On Diaspora*, clearly works in a more 'materialist' mode than many other traditional theologians, but he does not engender the sort of fundamental shift that Barber advocates. In fairness, the latter does not claim that his account is embedded within Yoder's thinking. So the question, again, will be whether Barber's move to immanence is indeed necessary.

Barber is neither friend nor foe of Christianity. He invites readers to think along with him, to consider whether there is another way of thinking better suited to identify and address the destructive forces at work around us. The claim that should linger in the minds of Christians and theologians as they work through his book is whether the logic of immanence may indeed be what best facilitates the call of Jesus towards enemy-love in which no boundary is final and life remains eternally open to re-creation. And if this might be the case, then what does that tell us about orthodox (transcendent) theology?

David Driedger, Associate Minister, First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Tom Long. *What Shall We Say? Evil, Suffering, and the Crisis of Faith.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012.

Tom Long, the Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology, has written a book on the theodicy problem particularly for preachers. It is not a philosophical examination that tries to solve the problem of evil or to defend God with logical formulas. Rather, it is about what preachers can and should say about how faith in God can be plausible in the face of suffering in the world.

In chapter one Long examines how the question of theodicy arose. He begins with the massive earthquake at Lisbon, Portugal on All Saints Day, November 1, 1755 that turned the city to rubble. In an age of reason, this earthquake made no sense. It shook the foundations of both reason and faith, and the old ways of thinking about both. Prior to the Enlightenment

all disasters were viewed as coming directly from the hand of God; Lisbon did not fit divine causality. From the ashes of Lisbon arose philosophical and theological reasoning for natural disasters and human suffering.

Chapter two moves the problem of evil and suffering from philosophers to the questioning person in the pew. Bart Ehrman, a New Testament scholar who wrote *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer*, exemplifies a thoughtful Christian whose has struggled with the issue. Ehrman could no longer hold together four basic truth claims forming the classic theodicy problem: 1) There is a God; 2) God is all powerful; 3) God is loving and good; 4) There is innocent suffering. Long appreciates Ehrman's clarity but critiques the lack of theological imagination keeping him stuck in the wooden box of rational logic. Ehrman represents many in the pew who have experienced tragedy and suffering, and who find making sense of it strains all (theo)logic.

Chapter three proposes that theodicy is neither merely theoretical nor an issue to be avoided. We must speak a wisdom that touches the depth of human suffering; we must address the problem of evil and suffering from a faith perspective. The God of Reason and the Enlightenment, the first cause of existence, is not the God of the Bible, whose existence is not up for grabs or proven at the end of a logical syllogism.

We are introduced to "fellow pilgrims" on the theodicy road in chapter four. We meet J.L. Mackie, an outspoken atheist who dismantles the logic of theodicy and devastated the "free will" argument; Alvin Plantinga, a Christian theologian who critiques Mackie's definition of God's unlimited omnipotence that grounded his argument; Rabbi Harold Kushner, who questions both the very omnipotence of God and the view of suffering as a "teaching tool" for building moral character; process theologians like John Cobb and David Ray Griffin, who redefine God's power in terms of persuasion within a universe of changing processes; and John Hick, who re-examines Irenaeus's free will argument, in which God created not an ideal paradise but a world with risks, challenges, and some creative distance between God and humanity ripe for "soul-making."

In an interlude Long explores the book of Job for what it has to say about evil and suffering. Then, in his final chapter the author uses Jesus' parable of the wheat and weeds as a biblical story that can address three

important questions related to the subject: 1) God, did you cause this?; 2) Can we fix it?; and 3) Will it always be this way? In the end Long describes God as a warrior of love out to defeat evil and suffering in the world.

The author has provided preachers with a helpful resource on dealing with the problem of evil and suffering in a congregational context. Pastors can move beyond providing a "ministry of presence" to facing the challenging questions and helping people hold onto faith in the midst of suffering. Long notes both the strengths and inadequacies with various approaches to theodicy. Yet his own biblical/theological answers (e.g., God is always present, God is not the cause of evil, God will be victorious over evil in the end) can also be found wanting. I would like to see more clearly how he uses "theological imagination" in addressing theodicy. Long will not satisfy those looking for an airtight, (theo)logical approach to theodicy, but he will assist preachers in proclaiming hope in the midst of sometimes overwhelming evil and suffering.

Leo Hartshorn, retired pastor, former Minister of Peace and Justice for Mennonite Church USA, and adjunct professor, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania