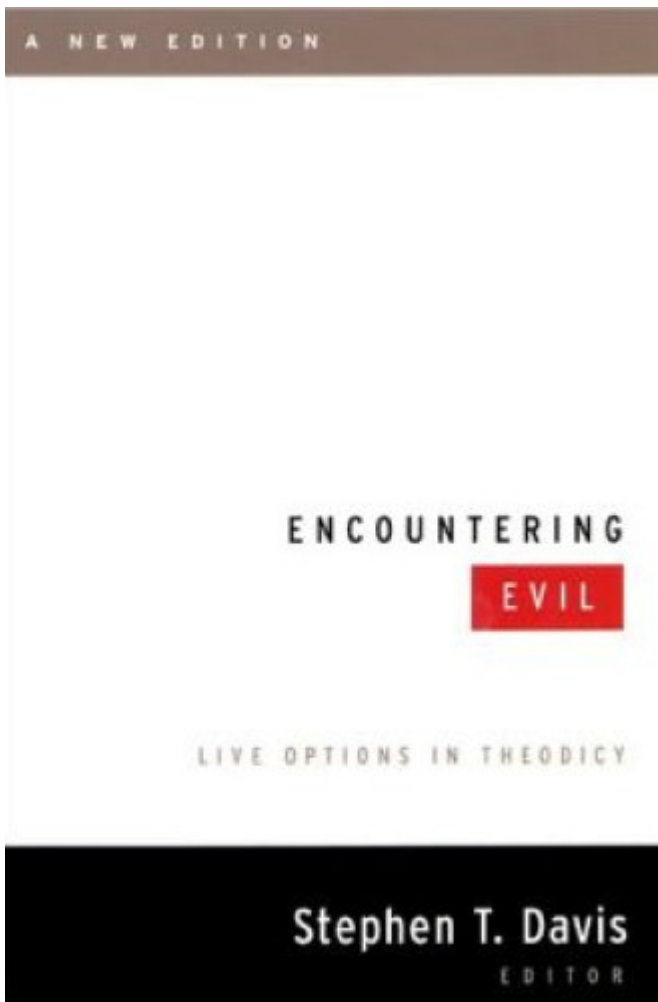


God & suffering (theodicy)

selected by [Thomas G. Long](#) in the [October 16, 2013](#) issue

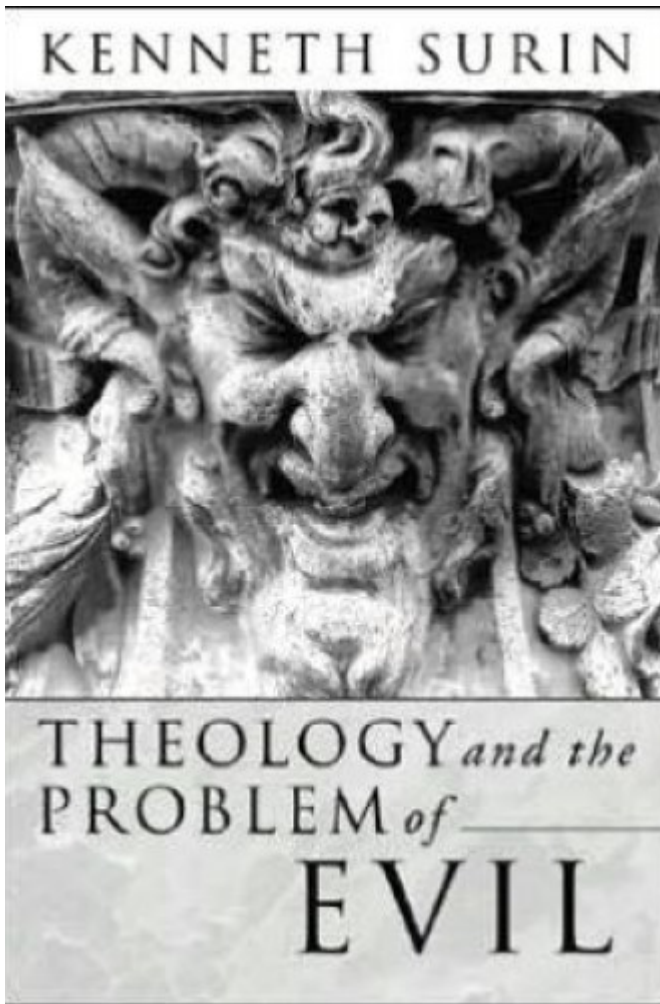
In Review



Encountering Evil, a New Edition

by Stephen T. Davis

Westminster John Knox



Theology and the Problem of Evil

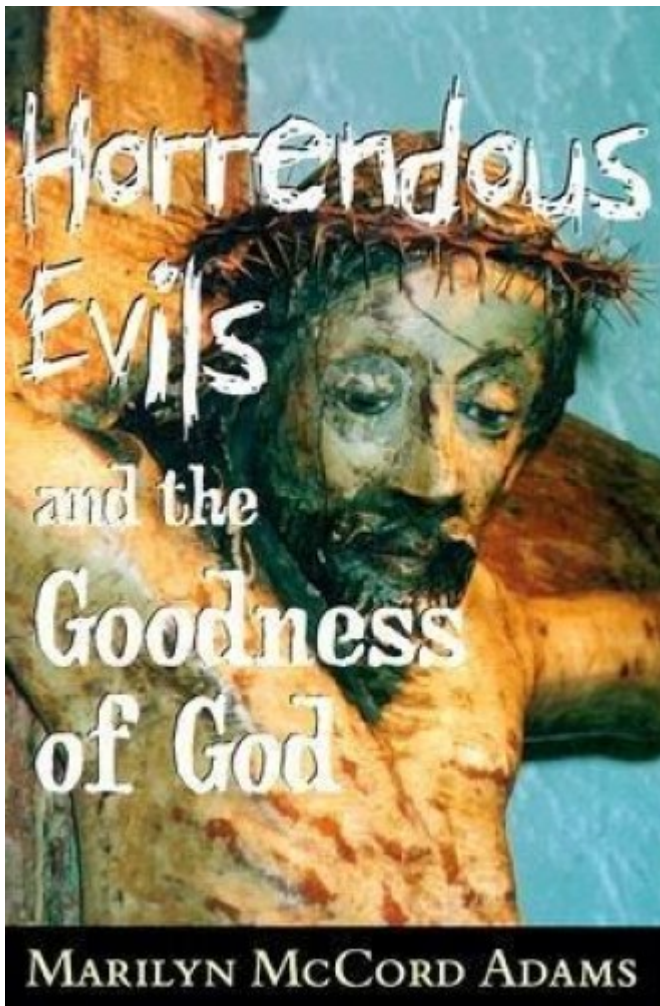
by Kenneth Surin
Wipf and Stock



The Blood of the Lamb

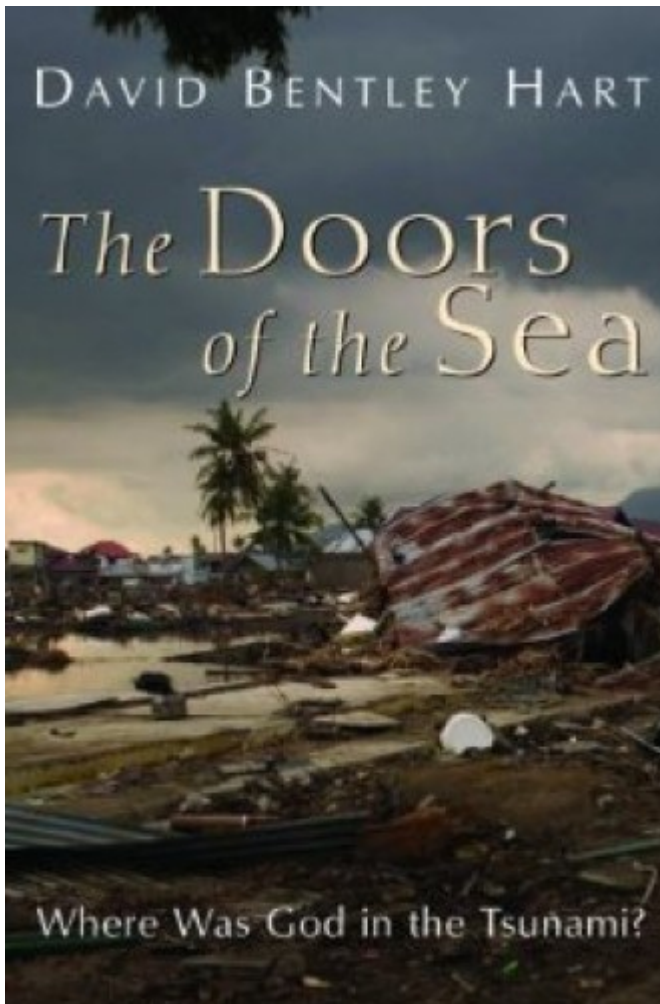
by Peter De Vries

University of Chicago Press



Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God

by Marilyn McCord Adams
Cornell University Press



The Doors of the Sea

by David Bentley Hart
Eerdmans

Encountering Evil, a New Edition: Live Options in Theodicy, by Stephen T. Davis. A stellar ensemble of thinkers, including John Hick, David Ray Griffin and John Cobb Jr., address the problem of how good and evil can coexist. Each chapter is followed by critical responses from the other contributors and then a rejoinder by the author. Sparks fly and issues are sharpened and clarified.

Theology and the Problem of Evil, by Kenneth Surin. Surin rejects the customary framing of theodicy because it inescapably assumes a God defined by 17th- and 18th-century philosophical theism. Challenges to this God can provoke only defenses of that same deity, who is unknown to Christian faith. Instead, argues Surin, Christians have always walked by the light of “practical theodicies,” contextualized

ways of living and speaking that gesture not toward logical explanations for suffering but toward a living, incarnate God who suffers with us and ultimately saves us.

The Blood of the Lamb: A Novel, by Peter De Vries. This powerful autobiographical novel tracks protagonist Don Wanderhope through a series of devastating, Jobian personal losses, most painfully the death of his beloved 11-year-old daughter, Carol, from leukemia. Through the voice of Wanderhope, De Vries cries out in anguish, rages at God and moves not toward serene comfort but toward an experience of the divine “throb of compassion.”

Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God, by Marilyn McCord Adams. One of the chief values of this intellectually demanding book is that Adams never flinches. She doesn't concern herself only with the “easy” cases—the heart attack that gave someone a new zest for life or the death that brought a community closer together. Rather, she tests the goodness of God over against “horrendous evils”—malicious, random, meaningless suffering that offers no wise lessons, promises no silver linings.

The Doors of the Sea: Where Was God in the Tsunami? by David Bentley Hart. Hart has one of the sharpest minds and occasionally one of the tarest tongues among contemporary theologians. Here he thinks provocatively and constructively about theological questions raised by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, in which nearly a quarter of a million people died. Among the many deep currents in this book, his brilliant discussion of the exchange between Ivan and Alexei in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* takes one's breath away.