



Awakening on New Years Day, 2015 before anyone else in the house, I grabbed a few books. I sat down with a cup of coffee in the front room overlooking my mother-in-law's farm. The window faced east, but in the morning light the day was proving to be gray. My reading led me to a strange selection to start the new year. With little warning, I landed on a post-Holocaust reflection from Elie Wiesel,

by a speedy death for the boy as his light body weight meant it took longer for him to die. Reading, I felt myself wince. I turned my head slightly as if I could somehow deflect the full force of what I was reading. Wiesel and other prisoners watched. Some wept. Many were broken. One man yelled out, "Where is God?" Then Wiesel was pushed past the gallows. He writes,

the Jewish professor who lived through the horrors of Auschwitz. During his outrageous ordeal, Wiesel, along with the rest of the camp, was forced to witness a hanging. The victims consisted of two adults and a young boy. The inhumane treatment would not be tempered

"Behind me, I heard the same man asking: 'Where is God now?' And I heard a voice within me answer him:

'Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows...'"



Two things stirred in me that morning.

First, there was a visceral response to the horror of the story. I felt sick for the boy, and for the victims watching. I even felt something for the perpetrators for what kind of sickness must come over a man that he would follow such an insane order? I became aware of my uncomfortable place in this story. Here I was, some 70 years later, enjoying the warmth of an easy chair and coffee while reading of this nightmare. I felt unworthy to be reading.

Secondly, the terrible beauty of the internal voice Wiesel spoke of was something I recognized. I do not know how Wiesel reconciled all he experienced. I am unsure of whether he has wrestled with

the notion of a suffering Son of God, but instantly, as a follower of the suffering Son of God I knew the voice to be true. In the midst of absurdity there was only one explanation... it was even more absurd.

Where was God? He was hanging on the gallows... with those men... with that young boy. I shuddered. Truly the only thing more haunting than an innocent young boy being murdered in public is the innocent Son of God being murdered in public.

I felt cold.

I thought, "this is a terrible way to start a new year."