

of peacemaking and reconciliation. The book also sensitizes us to how moralistic fundamentalism characterizes some articulations of Anabaptist ethics, in both traditional and progressive circles; it reminds us that rigorous ethics can become an ideology that takes the place of God's self-revelation; and it chastens an activist mentality that assumes that once we know how we are to live we can go about it as though God does not exist.

None of those things, however, is really what the author intends. Despite a need for refinement, McBride's book is valuable for its intended purpose: it provides, in theoretical and practical ways, a vision for non-triumphalist witness in a pluralist context.

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Daniel Colucciello Barber. *On Diaspora: Christianity, Religion, and Secularity*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.

It is tempting to accept the terms of a conversation when it is already in progress. Arguments over the relationship between and dominance of science, philosophy, and theology characterize much of the modern period. Entering these debates has often meant making prior commitments to things like Reason, Nature, or God. Daniel Barber's *On Diaspora* challenges the terms of that debate. The author interprets the tradition of the West, from Christianity to secularism, as being consistently marked by the logic of transcendence. The invitation of *On Diaspora* is to the task of thinking otherwise.

According to Barber the logic of transcendence influences the world through authoritative claims of something *separate* and *unaffected* by the relations *in* the world. This could be a transcendent God, an edenic or utopian vision, pure Reason, Nature, or anything else that defines reality but is not itself put into play with the relations it defines. Transcendence then can be thought of, perhaps simplistically, as fixed content. Immanence, by contrast, "begins as a manner of relation" (1). Nothing is unaffected because

there is no separate plane, only various manners in which things relate.

*On Diaspora* is important in how it mounts a case identifying transcendent logic as a key component in destructive tendencies of the Christian (and secular) West. Barber spends the bulk of his work tracing the way that transcendent logic was articulated through Saint Paul, the rise of orthodox Christianity, and the development of secularism. In all these expressions identity was fixed by an appeal to a transcendent 'other'. This appeal, in turn, fixed the identity of those who did not fit within the claims of the transcendent (supercessionism being a key component of these expressions). In the case of Christianity, this gave rise to determining anything non-Christian as a heresy or false religion. With the development of secularism, the excluded form was unified as the inferior realm of religion in general.

The concern throughout this book is the manner in which expressions of transcendent thinking entrench dominating ideological and social structures. There is no function within transcendent paradigms that allows for overturning what is perceived to be sacred, that is, unaffected on another plane.

Barber's response, then, is not yet another rejection of the current understanding of reality, which will likely extend and employ transcendent logic, but rather a fundamental shift in how to think reality. To think immanence is to accept that nothing remains unaffected, and thus key to his claim is taking seriously our inheritance of Christianity, which includes secularism. Barber denies any notion that there is a pristine form of Christianity to recover; he also denies creation *ex nihilo* under the same logic. But he asserts that the movement of chaos and creation is itself eternal, and he calls for the ongoing (diasporic) work of decomposing sick and destructive forms of thought and life while recomposing or re-staging them in the name of health.

It will be interesting to see what place Barber's work will find in larger theological conversations. To call it 'heresy' or 'unorthodox' will already be to submit to a logic that Barber is trying to think otherwise. There will certainly be pushback as to whether the basic premise of immanence is required to achieve the sort of challenge to (destructive) transcendent authorities that is a chief aim of the book.

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?

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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