

story gone sour in Israel's capacity for sin but redeemed by God's faithfulness. Rabbinic commentary on the Song of Songs deepens the romance not as allegory but as insight into Torah narrative itself and the passion that binds God with Israel, revealing both the erotic depth of covenant love and the spiritual importance of erotic love. The images of the Song of Songs may be about sex. "But what is sex about? What higher reality does human sexual love disclose?" (141).

Levenson samples the effort of philosophers to retain the practice of loving God at the center of Jewish life in the Jewish-Muslim symbiosis of medieval Spain. Especially for Bahya ibn Paquda in *Duties of the Heart*, the love of God becomes the "consummation of the spiritual life" in a journey of ascent to the One.

It is in the Enlightenment emancipation of Jews and the reduction of religion to voluntary association by citizens of a secular state that the real existential challenge is presented. The command to love of God becomes not duty, but private choice. Here Levenson considers an exchange between Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, offering personal religious experience as key to transformation of external law to the inner power of commandment, to the "primal commandment of the lover: 'Love me'" (196).

There is too much nuance in Levenson's meticulous scholarship for a humble review to do justice. It is a book that holds insights for Christians as well as Jews. How might the love of God change when the relationship is not to superior suzerain or mutual lover or philosophical entity, but to God identified with "the least of these"? The text belongs in libraries to be savored in small sections and shared in graduate conversations, for Levenson does not simply explore the concept of love of God through Bible and tradition. Reading his graceful prose, like performing the deeds commanded by Torah, also evokes and inspires the very love it has so carefully described. Act cannot be separated from affect, as I suspect the rabbi and her Catholic interlocutor really knew after all.

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*Jesus and Buddha: Friends in Conversation.* By Paul Knitter and Roger Haight. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015. xvii + 253 pages. \$26.00.  
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In today's transnational and global world, as peoples of diverse religious backgrounds increasingly live, work, and pray alongside each other, they have to confront the question, "what is the significance of understanding

my neighbor's faith tradition for appreciating my own faith tradition?" Similarly, within the Christian theological tradition, the complexities of religious diversity and pluralism in today's world have raised the overarching question of how theological reflections can be articulated by Christian theologians, not by excluding other religious traditions, but rather by engaging and interacting with those traditions.

In *Jesus and Buddha: Friends in Conversation*, Paul Knitter and Roger Haight seek to show us one way such interactions might take place by engaging in a conversation about Buddhism and Christianity, and how Christians can learn from Buddhists to deepen their faith and spiritual practice. Each chapter consists of Haight presenting the Christian perspective and Knitter speaking on the Buddhist perspective, followed by mutual reflections on each other's presentations, and concluding with a joint summary. It must be pointed out that both Knitter and Haight are working from a post-Vatican II perspective that is shaped by the council's declaration on the relations with other religious traditions, *Nostra Aetate*, which paves the way for openness to interfaith conversations and learning from across religious traditions. On the one hand, Haight speaks definitively as a Catholic systematic theologian in his response to Knitter and in his interpretation of the Buddhist tradition. On the other hand, although Knitter typically presents the Buddhist perspective, there are times when he also discusses the Christian perspective, acknowledging his double-belonging as a Christian and a Buddhist. In this respect, he suggests, using the Chalcedonian analogy that the Christian and Buddhist religious practices remain truly different, that they become one in him as a double-belonger.

While Haight and Knitter are convinced that there are commonalities between Buddhist and Christian positions that could enrich Christian spirituality on a variety of theological topics, including spirituality and spiritual practice, interreligious dialogue, soteriology, ultimate reality, human nature, and peace and justice, drawing a correlation between Buddhist and Christian perspectives is not as easy as it appears, because they are radically different. For example, Haight appears to be overeager to find commonalities between Buddhist and Christian perspectives when he puts forward, among other things, that the Spirit of God could be the "Christian Buddha-nature" or when he says that "the Buddhist idea of a reciprocal relationship between Emptiness and form" reminds him of the "traditional Christian concept of cooperative grace first fashioned by Augustine" (109–10). Likewise, in the spirit of his double-belonging, Knitter moves back and forth between Buddhist and Christian positions, raising the question of whether he could truly articulate the perspective of a "single-belonging" Buddhist. However, this academic question does not matter, as this book is not intended to be

a treatise on Buddhist doctrines and positions, but rather a guidebook aimed at Christians who are interested in exploring and engaging with an interreligious spirituality. In this respect, Knitter's double-belonging does serve the role of articulating that interreligious spirituality more clearly through his ease in moving back and forth between the two religious practices and in explaining Buddhist ideas in terms that Christians can grasp with ease.

Haight and Knitter do not engage so much in a discussion of theoretical theological questions as in a conversation about spiritual practices, meditation, and practices that are oriented toward social transformation and the promotion of justice and peace. The focus of this book is not so much systematic analysis, but an exchange of ideas enabling Christians to learn from Buddhists and to develop a spirituality for addressing the challenges of injustice and inequity in today's world that transcends a narrow Christian parochial framework in favor of an openness to spiritual insights from other religious traditions. Readers who are looking for a substantive academic discussion of the subtleties and nuances of comparative Buddhist and Christian theologies will be disappointed by this book. Those who are interested in discovering how the insights of Jesus and the Buddha can be applied in contemporary society, with its economic, environmental, and other problems, will find this book most helpful and insightful.

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*Modern Art and the Life of a Culture: The Religious Impulses of Modernism.* By Jonathan A. Anderson and William A. Dyrness. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016. 374 pages. \$24.00.  
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In 1970, InterVarsity Press published Dutch Neo-Calvinist H. R. Rookmaaker's now classic theological critique of modernity, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*. For many Protestants, particularly Evangelicals concerned about the arts, this became the touchstone source for cultural engagement. Given this heritage, it is appropriate that IVP Academic opens its new Theology and the Arts series with a reappraisal of Rookmaaker's project. This uniquely coauthored approach offers insights from both artist Jonathan A. Anderson (associate professor of art at Biola University) and theologian William A. Dyrness (professor of theology and culture at Fuller Seminary).

The text is broken into two primary sections: "Critical Contexts" and "Geographies, Histories and Encounters." Section 1 locates the discussion