

*Be Still and Know: Zen and the Bible.* By Ruben L. F. Habito. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017. xiv + 194 pages. \$24.00 (paper).

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In the introduction and conclusion to *Be Still and Know: Zen and the Bible*, Ruben L. F. Habito recalls the charge given him by his teacher in the Sanbo lineage, Yamada Kōun Rōshi: not only to know Zen “from the inside out,” but also, in teaching about Zen, to “use language that your Christian audience may readily understand,” in particular the language of the Bible (ix, cf. 170). This particular book by Habito, professor at Perkins School of Theology and Guiding Teacher at Maria Kannon Zen Center in Dallas, fulfills that charge by “taking Zen practice ... as a way to ‘taste and see’ the core message of the Bible” (169). In an engaging appendix—a previously published interview with his former student Jane Lancaster Patterson—Habito articulates two points that provide a helpful key to the rest of the text: his concern not to “compromise the two traditions [of Buddhism and Christianity], to suggest that they can just be mixed” (176), and his interest in turning to biblical texts “to see how they might also be material for koans that can provoke an experience in the practitioner right here and now” (182).

The book’s main chapters, which explore four familiar biblical texts (Ps 46, Ps 23, the parable of the buried treasure in Matt 13, and the beatitudes in Matt 5), are based on Zen retreat talks Habito has offered in the past. They fully retain that style: intimate, energetic, somewhat repetitive, and unfailingly affirming as they encourage readers toward “the realization of the kin-dom of God on this earth, as we all come to realize that we are kin to one another, in a most intimate kind of way, and live our lives accordingly” (105). Habito intends the book for spiritual seekers (xi), and his goal is practical: “Sitting in stillness prepares us for an encounter of the kind that Moses experienced at the burning bush” (53). But *Be Still and Know* is not a how-to manual for those interested in trying Zen. Habito affirms that “Zen offers a methodical and systematic set of guidelines that allow us to listen from the depths of our being” (82), but his discussions of Zen practice are more often descriptions than directions (e.g., 49–50, 82–83, 124, 171). Thus, in keeping with their origins in a retreat setting, these chapters make the most sense in the context of guided, or already well-informed, practice.

Similarly, despite the possible implications of the subtitle (*Zen and the Bible*), this isn’t a systematic comparative work; indeed, such explaining could go against the grain of a book intended to invite the audience “not to ‘get’ anything, not to ‘achieve’ anything, but simply to allow ourselves to be” (88). There’s ample evidence of Habito’s scholarly prowess, and some passages could be studied for the artful way they introduce fundamental

aspects of Buddhism (for instance, dukkha, the Refuges, and the three characteristics of reality) in non-Buddhist terms, whether drawing on the Bible, other Christian texts, or the familiar anxieties of consumerist, workaholic culture. That said, at times more analysis would be needed to fully support the bridges built between Zen and the Bible, such as when the text identifies the divine “refuge and strength” of the psalms with the Three Refuges of Buddhism (6), or the self with the biblical I Am (e.g., 76, 104). Similarly, the first two chapters rely on Zen Master Norman Fischer’s “Zen Inspired Translations of the Psalms” (187). These translations invite readers to encounter these familiar texts with fresh eyes, but some readers may feel as though they tilt the book too far to the “Zen” side of “Zen and the Bible,” making the interreligious project more seamless than they’d like.

The book will likely be most helpful to spiritual seekers with some background in both Zen and the Bible, and it could be used in courses in spiritual formation or comparative spirituality that provide that background. Those who join Habito in this provocative koan-based approach to biblical spirituality will find him a most congenial companion. Given how helpfully the path is set out in the conclusion and appendix, though, they just might want to put the last first.

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*On Music, Sense, Affect, and Voice.* By Carol Harrison. New York: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2019. 172 pages. \$24.95 (paper).

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Oxford professor and canon Carol Harrison’s masterful study, the latest volume in Bloomsbury’s Reading Augustine series, navigates a familiar dilemma in Augustine’s faith journey and in the history of Christian spirituality. “What can we legitimately enjoy and what should we use? Is there a way of using and enjoying which does not take the object—however delightful—as an end in itself?” (106). Although Augustine is famously wary of the dangers of “sensuous gratification,” Harrison persuasively charts across three key texts—*De Musica*, the *Confessions*, and the *Homilies on the Psalms*—the birthing in Augustine of a profoundly sacramental affirmation of the effects of music on the soul’s journey from and back to God. In Augustine we find an emerging “theology of music,” novel in the ancient church, grounded in God’s own singing speech that gives birth to the material creation (40–44, 136–38).

In three carefully argued chapters—“The Conversion of the Senses,” “The Conversion of the Affections,” and “The Conversion of the Voice”—Harrison