

Coming at the high point of Christian missions in the Middle East, the First World War (1914–18) took a tremendous toll, precipitating a regional “nightmare of war, massacres, deportations, economic privation, famine and disease” (170). After the war, mainline Protestant and Catholic missions became more associated with humanitarian NGOs like the American Near East Relief Fund than with explicit religious proselytization. In their place, Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians brought a new missionary zeal, focusing their millennial fervor on Israel in particular. As the twentieth century progressed, Western missionaries developed far more positive relations with the ancient Eastern Christian communities of the Middle East. Christianity has also faced a far more hostile cultural and political climate, buffeted by secular nationalisms and resurgent political Islam alike. The region is perhaps more Muslim and less Christian now than it has ever been.

Tejirian and Simon synthesize a remarkable amount of historical data in just over 200 pages. At times the density of the prose and multiplicity of names, dates, and places can be overwhelming. In this regard, the book would greatly benefit from regional maps as well as chapter subheadings that thematically organize the material. In light of some of these structural challenges, I would not recommend the text for undergraduate students. As an introductory text for graduate students and nonspecialist scholars, however, *Conquest, Conflict, and Conversion* is a rewarding read indeed.

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My Friendship with Martin Buber. By Maurice Friedman. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2013. xix +189 pages. \$24.95 (hardcover).
doi: 10.1017/hor.2014.13

Having read a number of Martin Buber’s books and essays over the years, and even recently published an article on Buber, I was fascinated by Maurice Friedman’s most recent book, *My Friendship with Martin Buber*. Friedman died just before its publication, and the book works as a lovely conclusion to a career devoted to applying Buber’s philosophy to religion, sociology, and psychotherapy. Friedman was a Buber heavyweight and perhaps the most important articulator of Buber’s thought in the United States. As Martin Marty observed, “All subsequent work on Buber must build on Friedman’s foundation” (xiv). Friedman came to know Buber while completing his doctoral dissertation on him in 1950. He wrote to Buber for advice and clarification on some of Buber’s ideas, and from this a friendship grew. Friedman would eventually organize three American lecture tours for Buber.

My Friendship with Martin Buber reviews their relationship from 1950 to 1965, when Buber died. Throughout the book we learn a great deal about Buber's personal opinions regarding such important thinkers as Jung, Freud, Heidegger, Scholem, Camus, Kafka, and many others; these insights come either from Buber's many lectures—seventy-three in his first American tour alone—or from letters and personal conversations.

What is most important about the book is not, however, the opportunity to gain more insights into the ideas and philosophy of Buber. For that, other works by Friedman, such as *Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue*, or analyses by other Buber scholars would do better. Rather, this book gives us a picture of the kind of relationship the two enjoyed, which was one of obvious mentoring, both personal and professional, and a clear friendship. What we see is how Buber's commitment to a life of full presence to the other and the giving of oneself wholly to the moment with the other was instantiated in this relationship. What Buber was interested in was *presence*. Buber writes to Friedman, "Eternal revelation means Presence" (79), and being completely present to oneself and to another in the moment both invited and was predicated on the Eternal *Thou* of God's presence. Being in relationship with Buber was intimidating and exciting for Friedman exactly because Buber gave and demanded such transparent presence. Friedman recalled a conversation he had with Buber when Buber met T. S. Eliot in 1951. Friedman remarked to Buber that he thought they would be far apart on many issues. "When I meet a man," Buber replied, "I am not concerned about his opinions but about the man himself" (36). For many intellectuals like Friedman, encounters with others, particularly those with variant points of view, worked like a chess game. For Buber, any meeting was about the encounter of real persons. This is what mattered.

My Friendship with Martin Buber is filled with gems, mostly coming from personal conversations and the many letters back and forth between Buber and Friedman. In this book we glimpse something of the man behind his philosophy, and indeed authentically representative of it. I enjoyed this book, cover to cover. Yet, even as I was reading it, I wondered about its utility. The book presents, for sure, more than simply the personal relationship between two scholars; it is not a mere dialogical *mémoire*. Yet, it confounds one as to where to place it. For those who know little about Buber, the book could be somewhat confusing. It does not intend any clear presentation of Buber's thought, and I experienced insights into Buber as somewhat scattered throughout the text. In the classroom, and even in a seminar on Buber, it would be difficult to know where to put this book in the syllabus. For a serious student of Buber's thought, however, I recommend *My Friendship with Martin Buber* wholeheartedly. One sees a good deal of the man

behind his voluminous works and his relationship to the existentialism of the day. This book could also be quite useful in imagining how Buber's dense insights might be reinvigorated for the twenty-first century. For those less acquainted with his work, this book might seem a bit opaque.

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The Sacredness of the Person: A New Genealogy of Human Rights. By Hans Joas. Translated by Alex Skinner. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013. ix + 219 pages. \$29.95 (paper).

doi: 10.1017/hor.2014.14

Hans Joas' book is a proposed corrective to our understanding of how human rights have been justified as universally applicable values. His corrective seeks to move beyond what he argues is a false choice, held more by the general public than by academics, concerning our understanding of the genealogy of human rights. On one side are those who claim that human rights originated with the French Enlightenment and, through the French Revolution, liberated people from the oppression of the French crown and its natural ally, the church. On the other side are Christians who claim human rights as their innovation, rooted in the Gospels and receiving their first articulation in medieval philosophy. This development culminated in the twentieth century when the church looked past the anticlerical liberalism behind human rights theory and advocacy and began to champion these rights on Christian terms. Joas' corrective hinges on one key idea: that the history of human rights is a history of the sacralization of the human person. "Sacralization" is not to be understood here as an exclusively religious idea developed by Christians, nor was it an exclusive product of anti-Christian Enlightenment thought. It came about through a cultural dialogue over time that had many players, including those same Christian and Enlightenment actors, who appropriated and reinterpreted a received Judeo-Christian tradition and managed to develop human rights out of it.

Joas' book is not an exercise in the chronological history of the development of human rights, but an "affirmative genealogy" of how human rights came about sociologically, embedded in a complex Western social, political, religious, and historical milieu. History is employed using discreet epochs in which important advances in human sacralization developed (e.g., the evolution of punishment in the eighteenth century) along with a broad analysis of social phenomena. In particular, Joas discusses how "cultural traumas," the varieties of ways human violence gets perpetrated by people individually