

Book Reviews

Animal Graves and Memorials by Jan Toms. Buckinghamshire: Shire Publications Ltd, 2006. ISBN 074-7806-438. Pbk. 88pp. £6.99.

‘... Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth ...’

(Lord Byron, p. 5).

‘Is there a country, Lord, where though [*sic*] dost keep a place for
dogs that fall asleep?’

(Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, p. 7).

Animal Graves and Memorials by Jan Toms is a delightfully eccentric slim volume that provides a catalogue of animal graves and memorials within the United Kingdom and Ireland (though mostly in England). Such animal graves and memorials recount faithful companions, local heroes, renowned racehorses, military mascots, and buried pets, and range from memorials to the terrier *Greyfriars Bobby* and the Duke of Wellington’s horse *Copenhagen* to the modest stones commemorating *Giro*, the dog of the pre-war German ambassador, and *Goldie*—*God Bless our Bunny* in a pet cemetery. These graves and memorials cover a variety of animals from the traditional cat and dog, to alligator, camel, cow, horse, marmoset, otter, pigeon, rabbit, seal, and sheep.

The design of the graves and memorials vary according to their *importance* or the *regard* in which the owner or some community held the animal, with very modest designs often found in the back gardens of owners of family pets, for example, *Herbie*, *Lucky*, and *Mardi* in a garden at Middleton, Freshwater, whilst others take on more elaborate designs, for example, the Civil Defence memorials at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, and, finally, ornate carved monuments placed in the grounds of stately homes.

The Introduction to this book does not provide an historical introduction to animal graves and memorials in the British Isles, but rather presents an expanded account of a number of *causes célèbres* that appear within the main section of the book. For example, the book begins with Lord Byron’s epitaph for his Newfoundland dog, *Boatswain*, and continues with accounts of the loyalty and courage of animals like *Greyfriars Bobby*, a Skye terrier who stayed at his master’s graveside in Edinburgh for fourteen years; the Alsatian, *Rifleman Khan*, who saved his handler from drowning; and *Faith*, a cat who endured a bombing on a church in London and showed exceptional courage in protecting

her kitten. Other stories include the tribute in Battersea Park to the unnamed *Brown Dog*, who became the focus of the antivivisectionists and was the stimulus for the Brown Dog riots, the Labrador *Nigger*, who was owned by Guy Gibson, a World War II fighter pilot, and *Turpitz*, a pig rescued from the sinking ship Dresden.

The main part of the book is entitled *Gazetteer*, and lists each memorial in the county or country in which it can be found. There are coloured photographs on most pages with descriptions, histories, and explanations of the reasoning behind the graves and memorials. Interestingly, the first picture in the book is of the Animals in War memorial in Park Lane, London, acknowledging man's exploitation of many creatures from elephants to pigeons and glow-worms during the course of armed struggle. A selection of other graves and memorials include that of *Red Rum*, the winner of three Grand Nationals, who is buried under the finishing post at Aintree; a donkey, owned by John S. Kirkpatrick, who continued to work under fire during World War I; a dog *Bruce*, a St Bernard who was used to collect donations for the local hospital; a cat *Tom*, who is one of the few cats interred in a churchyard; and a guinea-pig called *Happy*, who was a family pet. The placing of these graves and memorials reflects the role that the animal holds in society. For example, pets or companion animals are frequently found in the gardens of owners, whereas those animals with a more public persona can be found in public places.

The book will be of obvious interest and importance to those who value and are interested in animals and their historical role in society. It highlights the social importance that animals have, be it in terms of human companionship, their role within social activity, or employment by the military. What are consistent on many of the animal graves and memorials are words expressing the loss of a close and valued relationship by an individual or community. What is especially noticeable is the obvious similarity of a large number of memorial designs to those in human cemeteries and grave-yards. For example, the graves, made of stone, marble, or granite, have flat, round, arched, or pointed tops, but normally are proportionally smaller than human grave-stones. The memorials, often of equivalent size to those dedicated to humans, are square, round, or pyramid shape, and have sculptures of animals or urns mounted on top. However, on closer analysis, when compared with human cemeteries and grave-yards, there are also some obvious differences. For instance, few make overt reference to religious or theological concepts, and there are no stone crosses or open stone 'Bibles' portrayed in the book. Yet the reader and observer are drawn into making a favourable comparison with human grave-yards, by association and similarity.

Another feature of note is in the placing of these memorials. The Christian Church does not accept that an animal has a soul. This therefore means that animals cannot be buried in consecrated ground. Although the Bible makes

reference to all God's creatures, which are to be acknowledged and respected as part of God's creation, this stance can overshadow the bereavements of some individuals. For example, Lord Byron had difficulty with this and expressed his anger in the words 'Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth' (p. 5). However, there are examples of the presence of animal graves in cemeteries (p. 85), possibly implying that the animal in question had more importance than being just an animal. An example of the involvement of the Church is in the exceptional story of *Tiddles*, a cat befriended by the verger of St Mary the Virgin, Fairford. This cat stayed for seventeen years, attended services, sitting on the knees of members of the congregation. On her death a local stonemason carved a likeness of the cat with the words *Tiddles, the church cat, 1963–1980*, which is to be found opposite the church porch. Furthermore, many of the memorials are treated as shrines to be visited, tended, and maintained, as would be those of dead relatives.

This book attests to the long established phenomena of animal graves and memorials. It is clear from the present volume, and the large number of *virtual memorials* on the world-wide-web, that this practice is deeply entrenched in the human psyche. For those interested in the subject matter, this book is an excellent point of departure.

Douglas W. Turton and Christopher Alan Lewis

*School of Psychology, University of Ulster at Magee College, Northern Ireland
BT48 7JL, UK*

Email: ca.lewis@ulster.ac.uk

Evolution as a Religion: Strange Hopes and Stranger Fears, by Mary Midgley. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0415-278-333. 220pp. £7.99.

Science as Salvation: A Modern Myth and its Meaning, by Mary Midgley. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. ISBN 0415-107-733. 240pp. £14.99.

Evolution as a Religion was first published in 1985 and appears revised with a very brief introduction by the author that reasserts its relevance, its companion piece, *Science as Salvation* remains unrevised, for the approach of both still strikes Midgley as 'reasonable'. A moral philosopher, Midgley describes evolution as the 'creation myth of our age' (*ER*, p. 33), and science in its scientific form has become a reconstituted religious form of salvation-promise based on an irrational faith in humanity's limitless potential. Midgley is not so much *anti-science* as she is opposed to the false and destructive antagonism that exists in many scientific quarters between science and religion. In fact, she

tells us, science and religion are not that far apart. Thus they need not be competitors, but rather are most beneficial when they are understood as providing differing aspects or perspectives on humanity's quest for meaning. For Midgley, meaning involves finding order that underlies reality, and that order can only be understood in terms of contexts and relationships. The problem with 'scientism' is its 'veneration for the idea of science' that is 'detached from any real understanding of its methods' (p. 31), although she doesn't tell us what those methods are. The reader can only surmise from Midgley's numerous references to a variety of scientists that there is some debate about what science means, or how it should be proceeding, among scientists themselves.

One of Midgley's main objections in *Evolution as a Religion* is to the 'escalator fallacy' or myth of evolution invented by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, where evolution is interpreted in progressive linear terms, with humankind marching onward and upward to a utopian ideal that was clearly contrary to Darwin's understanding of evolution as arranging species in the form of a radiating bush rather than a ladder that accounts for development as well as non-change and regression (*ER*, p. 38). Midgley's irritation with this view of evolution carries over to *Science as Salvation*, where she is highly critical of what in her view are extreme, grandiose claims made by science for human potential. As part of this critique she cites scientists such as Stephen Hawking, and his belief that human reason may one day come to penetrate 'the mind of God' (*SS*, p. 8), which she clearly thinks constitutes an inflated belief in the power of knowledge. Even more astonishing and disturbing for Midgley is the 'anthropic principle,' advocated by writers such as John Wheeler who state that the reality of the universe is dependent upon the observational activity of human beings, which gives scientists inordinate power: 'Scientists, having made the world real, will also fulfil its ultimate purpose' (p. 199).

Those scientific theories that advocate the hard division of science from the humanities, such as Jacques Monod, or those that proclaim that complete knowledge is within our grasp, such as Peter Atkins, or scientists like Richard Dawkins who isolate one power in the physical world over others (the selfish gene theory), are constructing theories that for Midgley are both cognitively and morally dubious. In her view, 'scientific visions' of anthropic supremacy and scientific grandiosity are not very different from religious quests (*SS*, p. 220). To claim that science is by definition irreligious is naïve thinking, because it refuses to see that science, no less than religion, is based on faith that the world makes sense, that there is an underlying order to reality, and that there is a pattern to that reality. Science represents a part of our efforts to understand our world, and can never be the whole story; for Midgley, science 'opens into metaphysics' (*ER*, p. 121).

Midgley objects to the way that some scientists, at least, proclaim themselves and their work to be beyond religion and, implicitly, morality. In her view it is

the height of human hubris and foolishness to suggest that there is such a thing as direct experience from which 'objective truth' may be derived. Theories depend on faith, and faith in turn is based upon choices individuals make as to how to regard the universe; faith is 'something to be rightly directed' (ER, 125). While she is heavily critical of scientists such as Monod, Dawkins, Wheeler, Atkins and William Day, Midgley is quite partial to those writers who hold the universe and all of physical reality in awe and reverence, such as Bertrand Russell, Julian Huxley and Theodosius Dobzhansky. These writers see, in Midgley's view rightly, 'the inevitable slightness of the whole scientific achievement and its absurd disproportion to the vastness of what there is to be known' (ER, p. 128). What Midgley seems to be calling for in both books is for balance, where scientists can learn from 'good writers' that all the elements of experience must be brought into a 'harmony, so as eventually to convey a new and complex message' (SS, p. 214), although she never really tells us what this message is. Scientists are not supermen, although Midgley implies that some of those she holds up for critical scrutiny think of their kind as new gods, and salvation is not a 'technical fix' (SS, p. 221). For her, science has lost its moorings by imagining itself to be superior to and isolated from other modes of human inquiry and feeling, and has thereby become distorted and distorting. What Midgley wants is for science to right itself morally by acknowledging its implicit faith and basic trust that there is meaning in physical reality, and by acknowledging that myths of omega man are no more than that, and that we may not be the only intelligent life forms in the vast universe. '[W]e have not the slightest idea about the possibility of intelligent beings unlike ourselves, and [we] had better not make fools of ourselves by dogmatizing about it' (SS, p. 203).

Evolution as a Religion and *Science as Salvation* are interesting, lively polemical books that do not repudiate science, but only its grandiosity and ignorance of its own faith-based structures. Midgley optimistically conceives of a universe where religion and science may co-exist in peace and harmony, and this is the underlying and overarching theme of both books. It is a wish that is more asserted than argued, but none the less interesting for that.

Marsha Aileen Hewitt

Trinity College, 6 Hoskin Avenue, Toronto, Canada M5S 1H6

Email: marshahe Witt@hotmail.com

Towards the Origins of Christmas by Susan K. Roll. Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1995. ISBN-90-390-0531-1. 296pp.

This book is the result of a doctoral dissertation on the subject matter and is therefore a serious book for scholars, containing extensive footnotes and resources.

Susan K. Roll plunges into the complex depths of the entire Christian season and festivals, peeling back layers of meaning and ancient religious practice. The first section, for example, deals with notions of religious, and specifically festal time, linking this to liturgical expression generally, 'why' as well as 'how' we celebrate divine events and make present that which is past. She is therefore able to compare notions of festal time with the kind of commercial season we experience today, and which becomes normative for many people. So she prompts us to think beyond her own material to implicit religious questions about how 'Christmas' for people outside the Church is signalled by when Christmas cards appear in shops, Christmas presents are advertised on TV and lights start going up in windows. What does Christmas 'time' mean to such people? This material is then continued in a discussion about calendars, natural cycles and questions about dates. When exactly was Jesus born, and why does it matter?

She lays out in exhaustive detail the pre-Christmas parallels with winter solstice festivals and celebrations. Again, this prompts the reader to think about how deeply the pre-Christian hope in an unconquered sun with its promise of redemption and new life informs the mythic elements of the winter season and again makes us think about the implicit religious manifestations of this in other times and places. For example, how weird is it to go to the southern hemisphere in December and look at snow scenes and winter imagery in shop windows on a boiling hot summer's day (see e.g. p. 248)? Yet all the paraphernalia of the winter season attends Christmas—snow, cold, darkness and night, shot through and forever penetrated by the Incarnation of divine light. No matter how counter-intuitive that might seem in various places, its hold on the psyche has depths which Susan K. Roll exposes with meticulous research and analysis.

From this opening, she examines the rhetorical function of Christmas and its spread into other places and cultures, showing how the Church used the folk-myth power of Jesus, as well as its theological imperatives, to perpetrate power and influence through the festivities. This is still a mission question for the Church—how does the sentimental, schmaltzy and often avowedly anti-religious presentation of the Christmas story still awaken desire and hope in people beyond the margins of Church? This examination is then fed into the question of what Christmas is like in contemporary situations and what this means to the Church in terms of historical fact, theological significance, and festal practice.

While I found this book fascinating, I can't pretend it's an easy read, since it is an unashamedly academic examination of a complex phenomenon. It will be of interest to people with the time and patience to explore the depth of the material and will appeal to people with an interest in myth-making and ancient religious practice. The reader will be helped by familiarity with anthropology and mythopoeia as well as theology. For me it was helpful to have useful analysis of little known texts and to delve into the fascinating material on calendars and religious time. So it is a good book suggestion for the serious student and the inquisitive scholar, but not really a Christmas stocking present. As Susan K. Roll says in her introduction '... if anyone had asked me about Christmas cookies I could have cited some references purporting to locate the origin of the Christmas cookie in ancient pre-Christian fertility rites. But no one asked'.

Anne Richards

Board of Mission, Church House, Westminster, London SW1P 3NZ

Email: anne.richards@c-of-e.org.uk

Exploration in Art, Theology and Imagination, by Michael Austin. London: Equinox. ISBN 1-84553-027-6. 178pp. Hbk. \$85/£50. Pbk. \$22.95/£13.99.

This book is very dense and diverse in its detail, especially in its amassing of wonderful quotes, from artists, philosophers and theologians alike. But it is united by recurring themes. In it the guiding conviction of Michael Austin (a retired canon of the Anglican Church, and one time theology teacher) is that the faculty of the imagination has become eclipsed in Christian theology by over-rationalization, and that the church can re-awaken this dormant faculty through art.

In the first four chapters Canon Michael describes what a selection of artists, theologians and philosophers have said about the relationship of art and religion. Among the theologians whom he surveys are Paul Tillich, Karl Barth, Hans Urs von Balthazar, Hans Rookmaaker, and Hans Kung. Among the philosophers covered are Immanuel Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard. The following seven chapters are more speculative in nature, exploring ways in which Christian theology can be revitalized through a deeper involvement with the arts.

'Through the imagination we recognize connections and form unities', writes Canon Austin. 'It uses the material provided by our experience of life and of the world in creative ways that pre-date our rational attempts to explain the connections and unities that ... our soul intuitively sees.' One way to remedy this imbalance, the author asserts, is for theology to recognize the prophetic role of art. For too long Christians have critiqued art from the standpoint of a

cerebral dogmatism, from a position of assumed supremacy. But precisely because the great artists have kept alive the spiritual capacity of imagination, he says, theology can revitalize this faculty within itself by humbly drawing on the insights and inspiration that these artists offer.

And Canon Austin includes not just those artists who are consciously religious.

The experience of art—both the process of its making and our encounter with it—is in some mysterious way implicitly religious. Albeit tentatively, the author suggests that the content of religious and artistic experience is the same; it is only their methods of initiation that differ.

But first let us survey how Austin sees the remedial and prophetic role of art. ‘... [I]ntellectualism ... so often substitutes the narrow perspective of reason for the rounded vision, the 360 degree panorama, of the imagination.’ The author is keen to point out that imagination is not to be opposed to the rational faculty, but that it works in different ways. Whereas rationalization looks at the parts, the imagination when properly functioning sees the whole. Referring to John McIntyre’s book *Faith, Theology and Imagination* he affirms that our imagination is our mind

working in ways that lead to perception, selection, and integration;
in ways that are creative and constructive, cognitive and interpretive;
that are empathetic and sustaining and truly communicative; that
make the absent present and distance of little consequence.

He later pleads:

... we need to release the word “imagination” from its connection
with make-believe and restore it as the basic instrument of our true
understanding. The principle tool and weapon of reason is *argument*.
The paint brush of the imagination is *intuition*’.

This recognition of imagination as a high spiritual faculty is found in other thinkers of our time, such as the poet William Blake and scholar Kathleen Raine.

Another reason Austin gives for Christianity taking art more seriously is the incarnation. Because the incarnation is God uniting himself to human nature, it is also a uniting of himself to the whole material world. As such, this affirms the goodness of matter, and the stuff of visual art is, of course, matter. If theology remains in the realm of ideas and rationalization, it is disembodiment of the faith. Profound art witnesses in itself to the unity of the visible and invisible worlds.

Mainstream modern art has undeniably asserted its autonomy from the sacred. But on the other hand Christianity has, Austin asserts, rested too much on written expressions, and ignored or even feared visual forms of expression.

Imagination. Incarnation. To these two foundations of Austin's thinking on art can be added initiation. It is too easy for Christians to settle into comfortable dogmas, he says, especially if these do not reflect the mystery of life. Art can counterbalance this, since it uses the imagination to open up vistas, to introduce us into deeper, more insightful states. Austin says that real Biblical Christianity is above all to do with revelation and initiation. So the parallel between authentic art, which is also initiatory, and a healthy Christianity, is very close.

Both art and religion are debased when they merely describe or narrate without actually imparting something of the fragrance and power of their subject. Austin believes that when a religion is failing in this respect it can rediscover its revelatory role through contact with art.

I know that Michelangelo's David or his prisoners wrestling with the stone or his Palestrina connect me to the sublime ... The question for religious believers is: Does our Religion do this? ... if religion is allowed to function as art and not as a scheme does this not mean that, primordially (as Heidegger uses the word), religion *is* art. Probably yes.'

Revelation is also to do with union, the overcoming of a perceived gulf between subject and object. Herein lies another profound correspondence between true religious experience and the union of object and subject out of which art is born. This theme is dwelt on by Austin, especially in chapter five, in which he analyses the Impressionists. Its title, 'As the Bird Sings', distils the chapter's theme. It is a quote from Monet, who said that he wanted to paint as the bird sings. Monet wanted not merely to record what he saw, as though the scene were an entity separate from himself. He wished rather to enter the life and energy of that scene and then paint with something of that same energy.

As a natural consequence of this way of painting Monet knew that those people who were untrammelled by preconceived dogma would experience his paintings as they would have experienced the scene that he had painted. This is precisely how Christianity should operate, Austin suggests.

The chapter is subtitled: 'Theologians need to do theology Impressionistically'. Paradoxically it is through a vision of the *is-ness* of each thing and of the present that we also discover ourselves, discover the eternal, discover the boundless. It is the artist's dispassionate attention to detail that allows the essence of the subject to reveal itself, to energise him or her in the making of the artwork, and in turn penetrate the viewer of the artwork. Austin says that theology must be done in the same way:

... we need to free ourselves to believe the truth in what we see in the Christian story and not in what we are told that we must or should or

ought to see. We need to restore image, story, picture and metaphor as the central focus of our believing ...

Following his own advice to theologize from art, Canon Austin suggests key aspects of such twenty-first century theology. It would:

- give faith an expression understandable to the twenty-first century
- seek the principle of things, rather than suggest future directions
- retain a wholeness by not emphasizing one element over another
- engage the stuff of everyday life as its raw material
- be rooted in what exists and thus not be illusory
- be initiatory, offering keys rather than systems
- reflect the strangeness of this world
- extend us
- emphasize relationship rather than individual entities
- engage our senses as the path to ideas

I found Austin's assessment of modern art refreshing in its desire to learn rather than merely criticize. Christian commentators have tended to dismiss modern art as decadent. But through quotations Austin argues that the motivation of many leading modernists—even those who were not religious—has so often been transcendent. For example he quotes Brawque, who, speaking of his *Nude*, said, 'I wanted to express the Absolute, and not merely the factitious woman'. And Cézanne (although he was in fact a devout Roman Catholic): 'Art is a religion; its goal is the elevation of truth'.

Austin also refers to the defender of the early modernists, Apollinaire, who said that in discarding the mathematical forms of optical illusion and proportion, these artists were seeking to express 'the grandeurs of metaphysical forms'.

There are just two caveats I have concerning this book. First, while reading it I couldn't help thinking that the dogma it criticizes is really a parody of dogma rather than the authentic thing. If we are to understand doctrine only in its pejorative sense as a rationalistic system enforced by an authority, and unrelated to the mystery of life, then of course the book is correct in debunking it. But is this a true understanding of the foundational dogmas of the Christian Church? I believe not.

The early doctrinal statements of the undivided Church, especially those of the first seven ecumenical councils, were in fact an antidote to the very rationalism by which the heretics, wittingly or unwittingly, would have robbed Christianity of its mystery, paradox, and transforming power. Coming from a cerebral rather than a spiritual world view, these heresies refused to accept suprarational paradoxes such as the Incarnation and the Trinitarian nature of God. That the Church Councils' doctrinal statements were not 'prisons of rational dogma' is borne out by the fact that they are characterized as much by saying what God

and the Incarnation are not, as by what they are. (In theological parlance, the first is called apophatic or negative theology and the other kataphatic or positive theology.)

My second caveat is that the book would have been a more balanced survey of Christianity's relationship with the arts had it included an assessment of the Orthodox Church's theology and iconography. The understanding of dogma's role to protect us from rationalism is very much alive in the Eastern Church, and as a result sacred art remains a central part of her life and worship. So much so that it considers the Council that defended icons (the Seventh Ecumenical Council) as the summation of everything—namely God's union with us and our union with him. This council of bishops, celebrated yearly as The Sunday of Orthodoxy, defended the making and veneration of icons on the basis of the Incarnation and the subsequent transfiguration of the human person and the whole material universe. This and previous councils' dogmas can hardly be criticized for imprisoning believers in rationalistic systems. On the contrary: the realities that their doctrines describe are so profound that they have inspired countless painters, architects, poets and composers. To this day the visual arts, in the form of icons, wall-paintings and mosaics, form an integral part of Orthodox worship and life.

This book is a thought-provoking contribution to a much needed deeper and more intelligent relationship between the arts and Christian community. May it inspire others to continue the work.

Aidan Hart

4 Station Rd, Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 0QY, UK

Email: mail@aidanharticons.com

Do Christians Know How To Be Spiritual?, by John Drane. Darton, Longman & Todd, 2005. ISBN 232-52632-X. 186pp. £12.95.

In the Preface, John Drane explains that the contents of this book were delivered as the 'London Lectures in Contemporary Christianity' in 2004. The opening chapter, 'From "Religion" to "Spirituality"' begins by highlighting the difficulties in attempting to define spirituality, because it is used in so many diffuse contexts, including advertising, alternative therapies, concern for the environment, and organizations claiming to keep people in touch with loved ones who have died. He does not offer his own definition, but it emerges in the first two chapters as he uses the term 'New Spirituality' to describe those aspects of human behaviour which are concerned from a secular perspective with meaning, purpose, identity and fulfilment. He says it affirms 'the element of serious search for meaning and purpose that has always been at the heart of

(the) mystical strand of human culture' (p. 8). He sees the rise of this 'New Spirituality', and the inevitable decline of organized religion, as a consequence of cultural changes which have come about through such influences as existentialism, psychoanalysis, the new 'holistic' science, and consumerism, all of which, he says, promote or support the individual's autonomous search for self-understanding, gratification and fulfilment.

When reflecting in the second chapter on 'Spirituality in Everyday Life', John Drane says he wants to understand how 'what motivates us to search for spiritual meaning in life ... might connect with what it means to be Christian in the twenty-first century' (p. 41). He considers three value-free elements in the definitional spectrum of contemporary spirituality: 'lifestyle', predominantly secular and rooted in a personal search for self-esteem and fulfilment; 'personal discipline', giving meaning to life by undergoing acts of obligation, alone or in community, e.g. sport, physical fitness, meditation and charismatic worship; and 'enthusiasm', involving awareness, and/or experience, of visions, dreams, miracles and supernatural interventions.

There follows a consideration of the 'biology of belief' (neurotheology) from Andrew Newberg's research into the brain activity of Buddhist and Franciscan meditators, Dean Hamer's investigation into commonality in the genes of subjects on a spectrum from the least to the most spiritually inclined, and Rick Strassman's work on 'the spirit molecule' (DMT) that initiates or supports mystical and other naturally occurring altered states of consciousness. From these references, John Drane deduces that being spiritual is not exclusively a Christian, or even a religious, activity; it is a human activity.

He ends this chapter on 'Spirituality in Everyday Life' by commenting that there are many forms of intentional spiritual search being practised today which are impoverished because they have no foundational principles, such as those contained in the stories of most faith traditions. He claims that people's contemporary spiritual experiences are entirely consistent with the Christian story and suggests that Christians may have much to offer by making the Christian story 'a resource that will not only shed light on many understandings held by today's spiritual searchers, but will also create an opportunity for people to journey with Jesus in the sort of experimental discipleship to which he invited his earliest followers' (p. 88).

The third section of the book explores 'New Spirituality and Christian Mission'. It begins by castigating Christians who maintain an antagonistic bunker mentality towards New Spirituality. John Drane argues that Christians ought to dialogue with people who are searching for identity and meaning. This should be done, not by confronting them with propositions of belief, but by sharing experiences of the spiritual and contributing insights from the way their lives have been transformed by 'the Good News'. He wonders if there are any 'no go' areas for God, and suggests that people may experience God through

the media of Tarot, crystals, colours, healing and angels, all of which can, and in his experience, have, become 'avenues for invitation to follow Jesus' (p. 118). He asserts that in the mission of the Church 'there is a need to listen before we speak'. He uses Paul's encounter with the people of Athens as the model for a mission dialogue, affirming Paul for doing his homework on the events which brought people to worship at the 'altar to the unknown god' and listening to what was going on in 'the supermarket of faiths', before he shared his story of God at the heart of creation and the story of Jesus. He also says that, in mission, Christians must respond to 'a call to journey with people' over the medium and longer term, like Paul and Jesus, who were 'realistic' in not expecting quick results or large numbers of converts. This chapter ends by asserting that as today's spiritual searchers wrestle with the realities of life in the twenty-first century, and see the relationship between life, death, rebirth and personal empowerment, they are close to the heart of the Christian story.

In the final chapter of the book, entitled 'Creating Churches for Spiritual Searchers', John Drane argues that the church needs to offer 'spiritual searchers' a model of community in which they are nurtured to share, emotionally as well as rationally, their journey of spiritual growth; a theology that is more comfortable with the mystical, numinous and supernatural; a willingness to be open about doubts and vulnerabilities; a more profound sense of original blessing rather than original sin; and an understanding of God, who is not aloof, but shares the suffering of the world, and offers empowering experiences of self-worth and healing towards wholeness. Not surprisingly, he says these are all to be found at the heart of the Christian Gospel.

The author describes his experience (pp. 162–63) of a church which grew significantly by using secular outlets for publicity to invite people who were 'intentionally looking for spiritual ways of living' to come together to share their self-determined journey of spiritual discovery. Apart from this example, it is disappointing that he does not explore other practical ways in which churches might be more open to journey with secular spiritual searchers. Instead, he says he is making this the subject of his next book!

For me, the greatest interest in this book lies in the way it seeks to understand contemporary Western expressions of spirituality, as people beyond the church take part in the universal search for meaning, purpose, identity, belonging and fulfilment. In my view, John Drane is right to challenge Christians not to dismiss or condemn these expressions, but to appreciate that a genuine spiritual search is being undertaken when people participate in football clubs, blog sites, chat rooms, health clubs, visits to the cinema, restaurants, the club culture, single-issue pressure groups and music festivals. I look forward to reading in his next book how he thinks Christians might initiate or take part in opportunities to journey in community with secular spiritual searchers towards an

affective, rational and experiential understanding of wholeness in relation to fundamental questions of life and death.

Michael Beesley

24 Charmouth Grove, Poole, Dorset, BH14 0LP, UK

Email: MichaelBeesley@compuserve.com

Dealing with the Psychological and Spiritual Aspects of Menopause: Finding Hope in Midlife, by Dana King, Melissa Hunter and Jerri Harris. New York: The Haworth Press Inc., 2005. ISBN 0-7890-2304-0. Pbk. 106pp.

This book is rare in the literature on menopause. Most books on the subject deal with the physiological aspects of this challenging life transition, factors such as hormones, oestrogen, osteoporosis, supplements, vitamins, and alternative therapies. The authors of this book acknowledge the important physical changes that occur during menopause, but they focus mainly on the psychological and spiritual dimensions of this experience. They bring a variety of backgrounds and perspectives to their collaborative effort. Dana King is a family physician, Melissa Hunter an Associate Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Kentucky, and Jerri Harris is a medical writer and educator. In this book, they address insightfully the emotional toll of menopause in the midlife transition.

From the outset, the authors emphasize that menopause is essentially a rite of passage and not a disease. The medical profession has traditionally labelled menopause as an illness, focusing on physical and psychological symptoms such as hot flushes, the end of the menstrual cycle, sleep disturbances, mood swings, feelings of grief, anxiety, and depression. The authors believe that this traditional attitude toward menopause overlooks the fact that many women find this transition to be a time of reflection, reassessment, personal growth, and renewal of purpose. They show how this inevitable transition can be an opportunity for personal transformation leading to a more meaningful life.

This book situates menopause as a developmental stage in the life cycle. The authors cite studies that indicate the majority of women view menopause as the beginning of positive changes in their health and their lives generally. The life-cycle context helps to recognize the interrelationship of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual changes occurring at midlife. As with physical changes, significant social changes may accompany menopause, such as changing relationships with children who are leaving the nest for college, jobs, or marriage, and redefining relationship with a spouse once children have left

home. Menopause may also coincide with the serious illness or loss of one's parents. The authors point out that cultural attitudes greatly influence how women react to all of these changes; in cultures where menopause is viewed as a normal life stage and where women are given more status when they are beyond child-bearing years, they have fewer physical, psychological, and social problems at menopause.

The vital contribution of this book is showing how spirituality influences the experience of menopause. The authors maintain that whatever the woman's cultural background, her spirituality will determine to a large degree how she adapts to menopause. They define spirituality as 'beliefs that give transcendent meaning to one's life' (p. 23). This broad definition of spirituality highlights the elements of transcendence and meaning that have traditionally been considered central to spirituality. They hold that such fundamental beliefs affect a woman's view of herself and the world around her; such beliefs help her deal with the changes in perspective brought on by menopause. They view spirituality in terms of the basic existential questions women ask as they attempt to integrate the various and often conflicting experiences surrounding menopause.

The authors maintain that the spiritual dimension of midlife and menopause is frequently even more important than the physical and interpersonal aspects of this transitional time. Finding a personal identity beyond traditional roles of mother, wife, and daughter, can become a major concern. At menopause and midlife, women may redefine their priorities and reflect on their own mortality and on the person they want to be. The authors call attention to the role spirituality plays in combating the depression and anxiety associated with menopause. They emphasize that spirituality provides hope, long after secular hope is gone, and new perspectives that cannot be provided by non-religious or non-spiritual systems.

In an effort to identify the kind of spirituality that proves helpful to women at menopause, the authors differentiate between extrinsic and intrinsic spirituality, adapting Gordon Allport's styles of religious orientation. Intrinsic spirituality seeks a connection with God and spiritual answers to life's questions, while the extrinsic orientation primarily seeks earthly benefits, social connections, and better health. In the authors' view, women must pursue spirituality for its own sake (intrinsic spirituality) if it is to be an effective aid in dealing with menopause. The numerous studies that associate religion and spirituality with better health refer only to the intrinsic type of spiritual/religious commitment, according to the authors.

Students of religion may wonder how implicit religion relates to the role of spirituality in menopause. When the authors speak of the key spiritual issues as 'meaning, priorities, and a long-term perspective' (p. 74), they come very close to the central psychological structures of implicit religion, which are

meaning, values, identity, and worldview. As women wrestle with the physical, psychological, and social changes experienced during menopause, they confront directly their identity as sexual beings, and they search for new meaning in their lives as relationships to children, spouse, and their own parents change. This book underscores the positive potential of menopause, seeing it as an opportunity to develop a new perspective on life. This new outlook on life frequently involves reassessing personal values and attitudes. Women regularly come to terms with these core aspects of spirituality, whether or not they adopt an explicitly religious or spiritual framework. For those who are not affiliated with traditional religion, the concept of implicit religion may serve to emphasize the importance of reassessing personal identity, values, worldview, and the meaning of life at menopause. Some reference to implicit religion in the discussion of spiritual development during menopause would have likely made the important insights of this book available to an even wider, more secular, audience.

James Gollnick

Spirituality & Personal Development Program, St Paul's College, University of Waterloo, Western Ontario, Canada N2L 3G5
Email: jgollnic@uwaterloo.ca

Spirituality in Pastoral Counselling and the Community Helping Profession, by C. Topper. New York: Haworth Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7890-1848-9. 181pp.

This is a very thoughtful and thought-provoking book which has grown out of the author's considerable experience in pastoral counselling and spiritual care, much of which has been within the Roman Catholic tradition.

His aim in writing the book is to help religious and secular people—work professionals, 'from hospice workers to social workers'—to integrate spirituality into the practice of their caring work (p. ix). He echoes '... the frequent complaint of students training in clinical pastoral education programmes ... that their preparation is mostly psychological, and that a stronger focus on spirituality is needed' (p. ix).

He begins his book with an important discussion about spirituality, drawing together what he describes as the dual nature of spirituality: the Human, created dimension, and the Religious, uncreated dimension. The first is the spiritual dimension of what it means to be human; the second is our response to God's action (p. 6)—we might want to explore this in terms of immanent and transcendent spirituality. He poses the question as to whether there are

specific spiritual needs; and if there are, 'are there specific spiritual terms to describe spiritual needs?' (p. 12).

The importance of discovering an appropriate language, especially for the secular discussion about spirituality, is highlighted. He draws heavily on Highfield and Cason's work ('Spiritual Needs of Patients: Are They Recognised?', *Cancer Nursing* [June 1983]: 187–92), in which they identify four spiritual needs that all people share:

1. the need for meaning and purpose in life
2. the need to give love
3. the need to receive love
4. the need for forgiveness, hope and creativity.

Around these four key themes much of the rest of the book is centred, with chapters on Spiritual Assessment; the Process of Spiritual Care; Tools for Spiritual Assessment; Basic Aptitudes and Skills of Spiritual Care; and the Broader Skills of Spiritual Care.

His final chapter explores a Community Model of Spiritual care in the

exciting times ... where spiritual care is emerging from its traditional place in hospital chaplaincy into broader healthcare networks. For example, we can now find it in home care, long term care, hospice, preventive care, support groups and counselling centres. Spiritual care is emerging from churches and parishes to work place, the shopping mall, court houses, and detention centres ... [It] is truly becoming interdisciplinary as an integrating process in counselling, social systems, health care, business and beyond (p. 140).

His discussion on six standards for an organization which seeks to meet a person's spiritual need is particularly helpful and insightful (pp. 142–45).

Throughout the book there are a series of Reflective Questions designed to help the reader explore the issues further. His use of diagrams (e.g. pp. 19; 135) is helpful as a way of drawing together in a visual way some of the key concepts he is exploring.

His bibliography and references are thorough, although from a social work perspective it is disappointing not to see the seminal work of Canda and Furman being acknowledged and used to enrich the discussion. His work is clearly rooted in a Christian tradition, and although he makes some mention of other religious traditions (pp. 123–25) the book would be enhanced by a deeper exploration, such as has been achieved by Canda and Furman over many years.

Students of Implicit Religion will find much in this book to enrich their understanding, especially if they feel drawn to Topper's comment that 'spiritual

care is not primarily learning a new technology of skills and techniques. Rather it is a way of being ... [and] a lived philosophy' (p. 91).

Bernard Moss

Centre for Health and Spirituality, Staffordshire University, UK

Email: sheilaann34@btinternet.com

From Sacred Servant to Profane Prostitute: A History of the Changing Legal Status of the Devadasis in India, 1857–1947, by Kay K. Jordan. New Delhi: Manohar, 2003. ISBN 81-7304-468-6. 195pp.

This book represents a most thoroughgoing account of the system and practice of Devadasi in India and of the process of banning it through legal debates and legislation. The story is set in the overall context of the manner in which Indian women were treated. This was perceived as one of the major components of the 'uncivilized India' at the time of British colonial rule, as perceived by the utilitarian historian J. S. Mill and others who advocated reform. The sensitivity of the system lay in its connection with the Brahmanic Hinduism which perpetuated, if not created, it. The British in principle did not want to interfere in religious customs and manners but wanted to reform practices that degraded a section of women in society. The custodians of Hindu orthodoxy exploited this sensitivity and argued for safeguarding an ancient system sanctioned in their sacred law. Lone voices at the beginning were ignored, but in due course the westernised Indian elite with reformist values played a vital role in taking through the path of legislation that finally found a solution to get rid of it. Since the author quotes from authentic sources within a historical sequence no one can easily blame her for any bias against the present Hindutva claim for the pristine glory of the culture that existed around the Indus river more than three millennia ago. The name 'Hinduism' was derived most probably by westerners from the name of this river, and this fact continues to keep the poly-paradigmatic religion of the sub-continent so complex, making it difficult to define clearly or understand easily.

The Devadasi system operated with subtle differences from region to region, and names also were varied. What was common, however, is the following, as stated in descriptions presented in sessions of the Legislative Council. It was an ancient custom of dedicating young girls to Hindu temples or shrines as maids, variously called *Arahins*, *Baoris*, *Bhawanis*, *Devadasis*, *Jogins* or *Murlis*. In English they were called *maids* and *dancing girls*. They were dedicated to service in the temples as wives or concubines of deities by the performance of certain ceremonies, after which they could not marry but led the lives of life

long prostitutes mainly used by the priests or the wealthy patrons of the temples. Their right to adopt children and own property were some of the issues mentioned in the debates. However, by custom they claimed a right to vote on or to veto the admission by dedication of new candidates who would go through a period of novitiate during which they learned singing and dancing. All the devadasis were registered as belonging to a particular temple and living in its quarters. Although theirs was defined as a sacred vocation, critics described it as a license, acquired in the name of religion, to involve the immoral practice of prostitution, thus contributing to the spread of venereal diseases, violating the human rights of children, and damaging the social ethos of the Indian society.

The book traces the changes in the social, religious, and legal status of the devadasis, with particular reference to changes in government policy toward those temple maids that exemplify the trends toward modernization and secularization from the start of direct British rule in 1857. At the same time, to keep the study comprehensive, the author, with the help of medieval records of kingly patronage, descriptions by foreign travellers and contemporary traces, starts with the pre-colonial era, in which there was a striking interaction between kings and devadasis as both of them had derived their social position and cultural importance from their relationship to the sacred. The awareness of the sacred motivated the parents of young girls who were dedicated at their behest, as well as involving negotiating for money and guarantees of protection. But when the secular colonial government took the reins there was tension between those guardians of traditional customs and the authorities of British rule.

While customary laws in different regions continued, the 1861 Indian Penal Code was decisive in initiating a legal control. But the wordings were done wisely so that religious sensibilities were not hurt. For example, it stated:

Whoever sells, lets to hire, or otherwise disposed of any minor under the age of sixteen years, with intent that such minor shall be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or for any unlawful and immoral purpose, or knowing it to be likely that such minor will be employed or used for any such purpose shall be punished (p. 103).

In 1908 it was amended to penalise any person who

disposes of a minor under the age of *eighteen* years with intent that such person shall *at any age* be employed or used for the purpose of prostitution or illicit intercourse with any person or for any unlawful and immoral purpose, or knowing it likely that such person will at any age be [prostituted] (p. 103).

There were some remarkable Indian leaders and thinkers, both men and women, who played a key role in continuing the process of further amendments

and new legislation until the Hindu religious connection with the Devadasi system was openly stated. The end of the process was as follows:

The provincial legislation passed in Bombay in 1934 and in Madras in 1947 effectively banned the further dedication of devadasis. Both these bills were proposed and passed by Indian Westernised elite. They presented the view that this reform was necessary since the devadasis no longer represented the original ideal of chaste and pure women devotedly serving the gods. In other words, the original sacred servants had now become profane prostitutes. These bills reflected the evolution of a modern Indian worldview that was justified by appeals to the ascetic elements in the Indian tradition and a desire to purge the Hindu religion of any practice associated with promiscuous sexuality condemned by modern civilised nations (p. 147).

In a sort of postscript the book gives some hints about some recent statistics of the prevalence of Devadasi and actions of certain state governments until 1997 and noting some recent studies as late as 2001.

Like many other studies of this type, one puzzling aspect is the lack of a clear understanding of scriptural sanctions or prohibitions. This study relies on what others have stated. For example, there is a difference of opinion whether the Devadasi system was Vedic or not. If the later *Dharma Sutras* and *Dharma Shastras*, the main sources of the Hindu law codes, mention this clearly, then it should be established with texts and references. Still later was the medieval period when the *Agama* literature came into being but, except for mentioning them, no one has provided details. There is a passing reference to the Devadasis being inspired by the Saiva and Vaishnava devotional literature in Tamil, but no particular details are given. Of course there are hints in this literature of what is known as bridal mysticism, but treating God as the bride or beloved is exceptional. In Hindu discourse often the scriptures are named and even falsely claimed, but most of them are in Sanskrit and the contents of some translations are not accessible to ordinary Hindus, let alone the illiterate masses. The above might be an interesting and significant area for further studies.

Apart from presenting a dynamic period in Indian history with reference to the notable problem of the Devadasi system, the book supplies a few hints of a better understanding of the dynamics of Indian cultural history and the globalized culture of neo-colonialism today. First, because of the attachment of dancing to prostitution, dancers in Indian society have been looked down on, but this attitude has been changing particularly through films, although it has not died out. Second, it is undeniable that many of the Hindu religious traditions attach a sacred dimension to sex and this is projected openly in temple sculpture. However, third, the desire of purging the tradition of all excesses and deviations arose not only by interaction with the West but also by some

thinking Hindus looking at their traditions critically, and this is applicable to all religious communities. Fourth, the Hindutva movement's propaganda through influential members of the Hindu Diaspora, that they want to recover a glorious past, is questionable. Fifth, in interfaith dialogue one fundamental quality is the humility to admit the facts. Anyone who knows Hindu traditions with their phenomenal variety cannot be convinced by someone saying that there is no more untouchability, and no more sediments of such practices as child-marriage and devadasi (particularly among the 'untouchable' or Dalit community) in India. Even a heinous practice like widow-burning is justified and one finds it very difficult to appreciate this 'difference'. Sixth, one of the positive side-effects of colonialism was that many among the colonized were conscientised to the extent of standing against the excesses of the colonial rulers. By way of contrast, today's neo-colonialism has lost that patience and wisdom, wanting to reform cultures and nations by invasion and war, even when it is clearly illegal and immoral.

Israel Selvanayagam

42 Coleshill Rd, Birmingham, B36 8AA, UK

Email: israelselvanayagam@hotmail.com

God Is Dead, by Steve Bruce. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002. ISBN 0-631-23275-3. Pbk. 269pp. £17.99.

This book has two main aims: to reassert the 'secularisation paradigm' in as convincing a way as possible—which it does very efficiently—and to answer its cultured despisers, particularly the ones who regard religion as a commodity, subject to economic laws of supply and demand, and so explain falling church membership by saying that there has been a shift in the market, and that folk are busy searching for a new way of accessing religion, without having found one yet. (The situation in the USA, where large congregations appear to exist within a highly secularized environment, is usually cited as evidence. Bruce, however, is convincingly unconvinced ...)

According to Bruce, arguments for the survival of religion on a large scale are all examples of either special pleading or unsociological thinking. Particularly unsociological, he says, is the suggestion that mankind's interest in religion is a characteristic of the species, and may be observed emerging in new forms when the old ones have decayed. When it comes to it, the secularization paradigm clearly and unmistakably demonstrates that such a thing cannot happen; which is why a comparison of the numbers of people leaving 'old' churches with those joining 'new' ones shows that, wherever the paradigm

applies and religion is no longer imposed by 'deep socialization and constant reaffirmation' (p. 148), the number of those creeping in through the crypt of the echoing cathedral of European religion is only just enough to fill a fraction of the pews left empty by all those who are crowding out of the great West door.

Not all at once, of course. The pressures of modernization towards structural diversity, epistemological relativism, and the stress on individual autonomy and freedom of choice are not enough entirely to eradicate the human tendency to cling on to the past, and even try to revive it; but its overall dynamic is irresistible.

Perhaps a suitable metaphor is that of the progress of any point on the circumference of a wheel on a vehicle running down a gentle slope. As the wheel turns the point rises and falls but after each turn it is lower than it was before. (p. 176)

As numbers decrease, church structures become defensively tighter, and expressions of new life tend to emerge in the form of cults, which with the passage of time come to resemble more and more the churches they replaced, thus entering the secularization process at points further on and lower down in the cycle.

The argument is certainly a powerful one; but only as long as it defines religion in the essentialist way in which Bruce understands it. In other words, so long as it is restricted to 'the sorts of existential and ontological questions that religion has traditionally answered' (p. 105); and, we might add, answered in the same traditional way. For Bruce, only that which 'has to do with gods or the supernatural' (p. 200) is to be recognized as authentically religious; anything else is the result of misguided attempts to widen the category out of all recognition. Questions about transcendence may only be answered in one kind of language—explicitly religious language—and if this no longer sounds convincing enough to influence the ways in which we carry out our lives, as to so many people it no longer does, then the sociological categories involved in the secularization paradigm have triumphed over the human capacity to go on thinking beyond itself, and God is truly Dead. Belief in God is kept alive by the existence of a living church—something which social change is in the process of rendering impossible. The fact that people depend upon the church to sustain them in any hope they may have had for meanings which are final, inclusive and conclusive, is demonstrated by their palpable failure to 'make their own provision' (p. 155).

It certainly seems strange to those of us who recognize implicit religion as a way of giving life a meaning congruent with explicit religiosity but using a different kind of language in order to express itself.

Implicit Religion corresponds to the symbolization of a meaning which, for its 'devotees', possesses an ultimacy associated with experiences and behaviour

categorized as religious, without itself accepting the category. In the secularized societies described by Steve Bruce it is an indispensable epistemological category for making sense of religion. Bruce, however, persists in regarding it as an attempt to avoid the conclusions drawn by the secularization paradigm, by making secular things religious *on the side*: 'Depicting gardening as religious seems rather pointless' (p. 201).

The point that something which is not religious *in itself* may be treated, and *work*, as if it were, is entirely missed; along with its corollary, that this kind of elevation of the banal into the ultimate is exactly what might be expected in the kind of social circumstances he himself so vividly describes. To see Bailey's analysis as 'merely functional' is to indulge in wilful distortion of what is actually being said; in a world in which 'the dominant church fails to provide the opportunity, is loathed or is staffed by sloths', the implicit may well give rise to a deeper level of commitment, a more complete self-giving, than things which are explicitly religious but socially discredited. There is considerably more to Implicit Religion than 'religion-by-extension', and it is a pity that Steve Bruce has seen fit to ignore the fact.

The attempt to write off Implicit Religion by the time-honoured method of *reductio ad absurdum* fails miserably. There is nothing remotely 'pointless' about gardening, if you value everything else in your life in terms of the extent to which it measures up to your involvement in your own (and perhaps everyone else's) garden. After all, it is not what a thing is that matters, but what it is to us; what we make of it. Voltaire, a noted religious sceptic and stern critic of the church, recommended gardening as a serious solution to the problem of making sense of life.

All in all, however, this is a good book, scholarly yet very readable, if a little repetitive. It is certainly possible to have too broad—and optimistic—a view of what may reasonably be called religious, as Implicit Religion is only too willing to admit. However it is equally possible, as Bruce's approach demonstrates, to have far too narrow a definition: one which excludes states of mind and ways of organizing one's life which are cognitively and behaviourally congruent with religious ones, and whose participation in religion constitutes their human truthfulness.

Roger Grainger

7 Park Grove, Norbury, Wakefield, WF4 6EE, UK