

SOFiA

Exploring Values, Meaning and Spirituality

Secularisation or Differentiation?

One of the privileges of my time in Germany was a visit to Taizé. On the way there, we stopped off at the Hôtel-Dieu (French for Hostel of God) in Beaune, begun in 1452 and currently a museum, but originally a hospital. This gave us a vivid impression of hospital care in the Middle Ages. The Hôtel-Dieu was donated by a wealthy aristocrat and administered by the Catholic Church. Patients were in rows in a single, big ward.

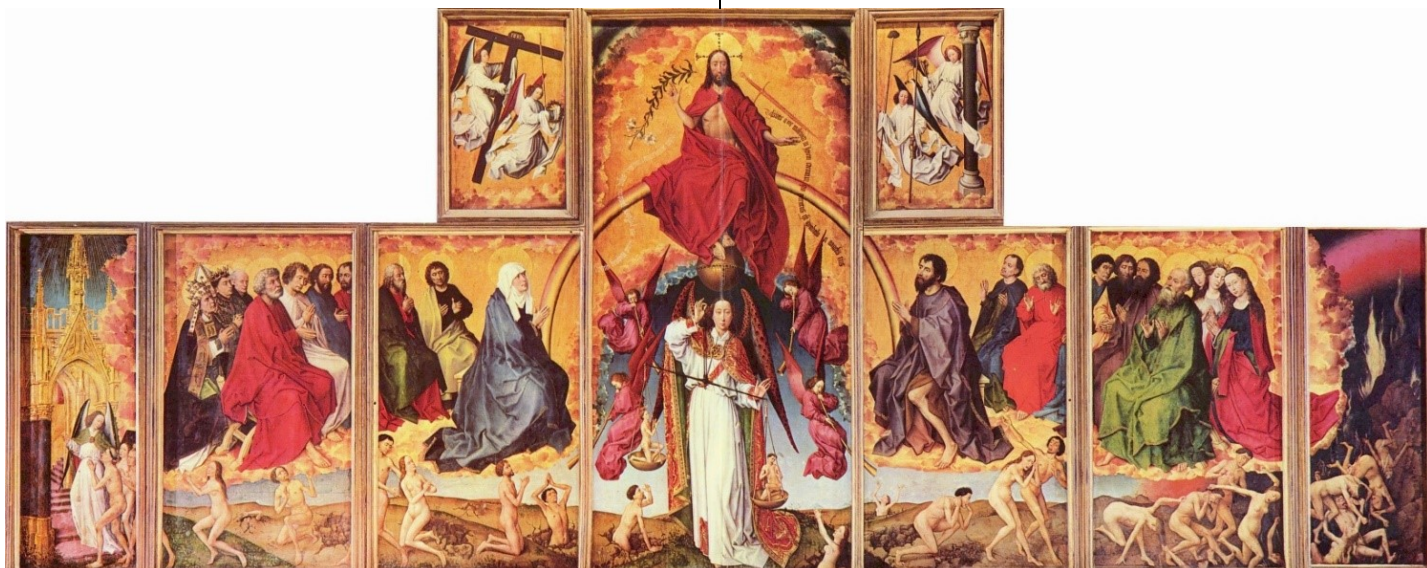
The adjacent chapel had a large altarpiece by Rogier van der Weyden (see below). I imagine that patient care was minimal, given the medical science of the time, but there was plenty of opportunity to meditate on the altarpiece, which showed the dead emerging from their graves, the Archangel Michael assessing their sinfulness or virtue and deciding their subsequent fate; entering the gates of heaven on the left, or descending into hell on the right. A moralistic and rather

terrifying vision, allowing patients to obsess continually about whether they had been good enough to earn their passage into heaven.

Contrast this with our modern health system, which I have experienced three times in recent years. I was treated by many different staff members, each with a very specific task: setting up a portable ECG, setting up a full ECG, removing a full ECG, taking blood, etc. It's not so much that the world is now secular, but rather that the world is a complex, highly structured system with many and varied specialists. The era of the nun who provides a holistic service to the bodily and spiritual needs is past.

This increased differentiation is also found in areas other than health. For example, the Citizens Advice Bureau has a database of over 35,000 services and organisations. That's a big number, even granted that local branches count as extras.

The Editor



About SOFiA

SOFiA (The Sea of Faith in Aotearoa) is a network of people interested in the non-dogmatic discussion of values, meaning and spirituality. We want to explore for ourselves what we can believe and how we can find meaning in our lives.

SOFiA is not a church: it is a forum for discussing ideas, experiences and perspectives. SOFiA itself has no creed; its members come from many faiths and from those with no attachment to any religious institution.

If you are in sympathy with our aims, you are most welcome to join us; receive our Newsletter, attend a local group and/or come to our Conferences.

We follow similar organisations in the UK and Australia in taking our name from "Sea of Faith", the 1984 BBC TV series and book by the British religious academic, Don Cupitt.

Committee

Our national Committee oversees the work of SOFiA.

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Life Members

Sir Lloyd Geering ONZ, Don Cupitt (UK), Ian Harris, Suzi Thirwell, Yvonne Curtis, Peter Cowley and Norm Ely. Also Fred Marshall and Noel Cheer (both deceased).

Publication deadline for the next Newsletter is 7 October 2020.

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Biblical Convenience Stores

SOFiA News

From the Committee

Your committee has carefully investigated the option of holding a one-day Conference in or near Wellington but has decided instead to simply hold our AGM using Zoom. This will be a new technology for some but enables members from around New Zealand to participate without needing to travel to a central location.

2020 AGM

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday **31st October 2020 at 2:30pm**. It will occur as a Zoom meeting, so you don't need to travel.

We will have a practice session for those new to Zoom on **Saturday 17th at 2:30** to enable as many people to get to grips with Zoom as possible.

Please register your attendance with Ian ian.crumpton@gmail.com for the AGM only or for the practice session and the AGM. Closer to the time Ian will email the Zoom access details to you.

Sir Lloyd Geering Scholarship

The Sir Lloyd Geering Scholarship in Religion marks 50 years since Sir Lloyd's appointment as founding professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. It seeks to honour his extraordinary career, securing his outstanding legacy of incisive, provocative, cutting-edge thinking.

The scholarship will give postgraduate students the opportunity to undertake excellent research on religion, tackling the compelling issues of their times with the fresh thinking and expansive imagination that Sir Lloyd's work exemplified.

The University is over halfway to raising its target of at least \$200,000, which will permit granting a substantial annual scholarship in perpetuity. An initial award is anticipated in 2021.

We invite you to consider supporting the Sir Lloyd Geering Scholarship in Religion.

Gifts of any size are warmly welcomed and gratefully received (tax deductible, 100% of the gift going directly to the scholarship).

We also welcome your support in making the scholarship known.

For details on giving, see:

<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/engage/giving/donate/> (Sir Lloyd Geering Scholarship)

For further information, contact Dr Geoff Troughton (Programme Director, Religious Studies): geoff.troughton@vuw.ac.nz.

Your Opinion, Please

The Committee would like expressions of opinion on the format of the 2021 SOFiA Conference. Would you prefer a 24 hour Conference over two days or a 48 hour Conference over three days? Email your preference to Ian Crumpton (ian.crumpton@gmail.com) or Peter Cowley (prcowley@gmail.com)

Publication Declined

Your editor received an article arguing against human-induced climate change. Your Committee discussed it and decided against publication. This is an unusual move, especially considering that the author is a SOFiA person. There is a risk arguing that climate is not a serious problem would give a wrong impression to our readers. We would probably do the same if we received an article rejecting the theory of evolution, arguing the divine inspiration and infallibility of the bible, or rejecting a heliocentric solar system.

Johnny Cash 1932 to 2003

In winter 2020 I gave three talks in the Palmerston North City Library on rock icons: Johnny Cash, Aretha Franklin and Bob Dylan. These were co-sponsored by the city library's Palmy Vinyl Club (PVC) and the Manawatu People's Radio (MPR), the community radio station. All music was played on vinyl recordings, giving listeners that rich sound of analogue recordings.

The word 'icon', in its original usage, referred to the visual reproduction in art of spiritual figures or saints. In contrast to another four letter word, 'idol', as applied to music artistry, it helps distinguish those artists who can genuinely be described as having 'genius' from those marketable products of the commercially-driven pop industry – 'here today, gone tomorrow'.

Over the weekend of July 31 to August 2 this year I shared four talks at the Ephesus annual conference in the Catholic Centre, Bethlehem, nearby to Featherston in the Wairarapa. The thirty people who came, typical of the older generation, were familiar with Western Classical music, but very open to new sounds and new stories from the popular music world. I will cover two songs, the first from his early 70s recordings, and the second, from his revival in the late 90s.

With his childhood years attending the Baptist Church in Arkansas, Cash's faith would have been based on a fundamentalist theology. But some of the basic truths found in the Bible, especially those dealing with the life and teachings of Jesus and the missionary letters written by Paul, would have remained part of his spiritual DNA. In 1973 he went to Israel and made a film on the life of Jesus, which he both produced and narrated. A two-record set and

videofilm, titled *Gospel Road*, are both still available.

In his adult life experiences, Cash's faith widened to embrace a strong social gospel: expressing justice for the indigenous Indian population and for those imprisoned often for petty crimes, supporting government welfare protection for the poor, showing compassion for victims of all forms of prejudice, and identifying with those whose weaknesses and misfortunes in life led to drug addiction – something Cash wrestled with for much of his life.

The artist was asked why he always dressed in black when performing on stage. He replies to this question in the song 'Man in Black.'

'If we want to know what it means to be mortal, we need to look no further than the Man in Black. Blessed with a profound imagination, he [Johnny Cash] used the gift to express all the various lost causes of the human soul. This is a miraculous and humbling thing. Listen to him, and he always brings you to your senses.'

- Bob Dylan, quoted from the rock music journal, *Rolling Stone*, 2003



'Man in Black' 1971

Well, you wonder why I always dress in black
 Why you never see bright colors on my back
 And why does my appearance seem to have a sombre tone
 Well, there's a reason for the things that I have on

I wear the black for the poor and the beaten down
 Livin' in the hopeless, hungry side of town
 I wear it for the prisoner who is long paid for his crime
 But is there because he's a victim of the times

I wear the black for those who've never read

Or listened to the words that Jesus said
About the road to happiness through love and charity
Why, you'd think He's talking straight to you and me

Well, we're doin' mighty fine, I do suppose
In our streak of lightnin' cars and fancy clothes
But just so we're reminded of the ones who are held
back
Up front there ought to be a Man In Black

I wear it for the sick and lonely old
For the reckless ones whose bad trip left them cold
I wear the black in mournin' for the lives that could have
been
Each week we lose a hundred fine young men

And I wear it for the thousands who have died
Believin' that the Lord was on their side
I wear it for another hundred thousand who have died
Believin' that we all were on their side

Well, there's things that never will be right I know
And things need changin' everywhere you go
But 'til we start to make a move to make a few things
right
You'll never see me wear a suit of white

Ah, I'd love to wear a rainbow every day
And tell the world that everything's okay
But I'll try to carry off a little darkness on my back
Till things are brighter, I'm the Man In Black

'Unchained' 1996

Having lost touch with his audience through the 80s and mid 90s a producer Rick Rubin made contact and worked with Cash to release four significant recordings all miraculous gospel records. 'Unchained' comes from the first, having the same title as the album.

The singer and producer found they shared common ground. As Rubin said: 'We both loved music and the history of music. We were interested in spirituality.' Knowing death was near – Cash's body inflicted by autonomic neuropathy – a deepening spiritual bond formed between the two.

For his material Cash scrolled the Songbook of American music and stamped his own unique vocal personality on every song. This one is by a woman singer/songwriter Jude Johnstone. It is a song of conversion, expressed in secular imagery but with a religious subtext. The

words are about breaking the chains that bind: a metaphor for all the physical and spiritual addictions that inhibit the spirit breaking free – ultimately defying death itself. The words could have been written by Cash himself:

I have been ungrateful
I've been unwise
Restless from the cradle
Now I realise
It's so hard to see the rainbow
Through glasses dark as these
Maybe I'll be able
From now on, on my knees

*Chorus: Oh, I am weak / Oh, I know I am vain
Take this weight from me / Let my spirit be unchained.*

Old man swearing at the sidewalk
I'm overcome
Seems that we've both forgotten
Forgotten to go home
Have I seen an angel?
Oh, have I seen a ghost?
Where's that rock of ages
When I need it most?

John Thornley

The Geering Controversy

Most of us in SOFiA lived through the Geering controversy. I well remember standing in a queue at the Presbyterian General Assembly to record my dissent from the motion by which the Assembly distanced itself from Geering's views. Recently, I watched a new video on Youtube. It consists of Allan Davidson's 2015 lecture at the Community of St Luke in Remuera Auckland on the history of the controversy.

I think he gave a good and balanced insight into the changes we have gone through, of which the Controversy was only the most visible manifestation. Unfortunately for us, the opening up that happened in the 60s was followed by a rejection of Geering's views and a 'great tightening' i.e. a return to conservative thinking. In short, the conservatives came out winners in the controversy!

<https://youtu.be/OGj4p2iS8xQ> *The Editor*

Living Your Values

Shortly after I moved to Auckland, my wife and I walked around the Panmure Basin, which is quite close to our flat. Towards the end, we walked down a side path and on our return were confronted by a strange sight. A shag was standing just outside the gate to the garden of a property overlooking the Tamaki Estuary, looking rather like an elegant gentleman in tuxedo about to go to a ball.

It turns out that it was waiting for food. Pam Howlett moved into the area in the 1960s and could observe the shags from her property. She became a dedicated bird rescuer. While others were fully engaged in furthering their career, maximising their earning potential and ignoring their effect on the environment, she was busy taking in birds that had been hit by cars, snagged by fishing lines, polluted by oil, or damaged by fish hooks. She stuck to her values and went against the life philosophy of most of her peers. No doubt her neighbours were unsympathetic and resented the presence of

the birds, their fishy smell and hard-to-clean waste products.

On later visits we saw many birds in the big trees overlooking the Estuary. That there are still birds here is the result of her environmental convictions. One time we hung around and waited. Sure enough, a volunteer appeared and fed the birds. Pam Howlett's dedicated work has resulted in the formation of the New Zealand Bird Rescue Charitable Trust, which continues to look after the birds following Pam's death. An example of living your values contrary to the conventional wisdom of the time. *The Editor*



Feeding the Shags

Meditative Moments

A Mid-Winter Meditation

In darkness we are drawn to germinate,
flowers prepare to bloom,
and our dreams unfold.

Darkness is a gift.

In darkness, the edges blur.
Boundaries between reality and fantasy,
between friend and stranger become fluid,
opening new possibilities.

Darkness is a gift.

In darkness, when our eyes rest, our ears
become more attentive to the sounds of
story, of lullaby, of wind, of loved ones
breathing in the night.

Darkness is a gift.

In the darkness, we find space for reflection;
for deep, dream-filled and refreshing sleep.
We are bidden to journey into the unconscious.

Darkness is a gift.

In the darkness of the womb, we were
formed in great complexity.

Under the cover of darkness, many creatures
have their being.

Only in the deepest darkness can we see the
star-studded sky.

Darkness is a gift of grace.

***As we celebrate the shortest Winter Day,
may we also celebrate
the many gifts of darkness.***

By Nancy L Steeves; provided by Marion Hines

Book Reviews

Pharisees & Fallacies: Myth and reality in religious thought

by Norman McLean, published by Steele Roberts

The very first page starts with a drawing and a caption: Audacious yet fallacious: Mythical traps and legendary pitfalls are often encountered on the path to historical understanding. The very first paragraph sets out the nature of this journey *"If a tilt at misconceptions is suspected at the outset of this book, that's a fair anticipation. Fallacies are the central focus, and for most people these tend to make the most impact when exploded, and if they are of the religious variety they make an effective bang. This book examines some of the hardest annuals; largely delusional or misunderstood concepts and convictions that have captivated spiritual thinking in the Western world for over two millennia."*

This sets the tone for the excellent and informative read. I was surprised to find I have fallen victim to many of the traps so clearly exposed in this book. Many of my own fallacies were indeed exploded. I knew that intimate knowledge of the historical context is important in understanding what was written, by whom, and for what audience, but my own lack of the necessary cultural framework led to many moments of enlightenment about why various misunderstandings, sometimes deliberate, have come about. It is a great read!

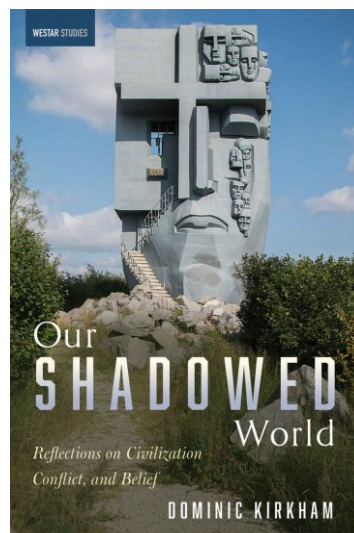
The chapters covered are:

Audacious yet Fallacious (the overview)
Jewish Villains
That Age of Gold
That Archaic Boat
Moses Supposes
The God-King
Holy — Wholly Holy
Saints Alive
Heaven and Hell
The End is Nigh
Queen of Heaven
Seven Times a Sinner
New Rage

Pete Cowley

Our Shadowed World

by Dominic Kirkham



Civilisation is often seen as the opposite of savagery – the living city rising above the threatened wilderness, a progressive idea leaving in its wake a more primitive state.

It is a story that can perhaps be

best represented by the monumental concrete face, rising some fifteen meters high, which stands on a hill alongside the Road of Bones (human bones!) overlooking Magadan in the Kolyma region of Eastern Russia. Here in what has been called the capital of the Soviet Gulag this overpowering memorial – the Mask of Sorrow – was built in memory of all those countless millions of people who perished under the flimsiest of pretexts in the forced labour camps of Stalin's regime over a period of three decades. This modern pietà has an Aztec quality to it, with its grim visage and weeping tears of skulls, which bears witness to the industrial scale of slaughter that took place among civilized people.

When Columbus stepped ashore on the Bahamas in 1492, he was welcomed by the Taino people, a hospitable multiethnic people who had inhabited many of the Caribbean islands for over a thousand years and had a well-ordered and peaceful society. These he summarily denounced as heretics and while women were raped he began mass burnings: at one auto-da-fe eighty caciques (chieftains) were burned alive. After twelve years of genocidal butchery and disease brought by the Spanish, the islands had been depopulated. In such a case we may well ponder just who exactly were the savages?

The Bibliography is extensive – Karen Armstrong's 'The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World'. Tariq Ali, 'The Clash of Fundamentalism: Crusades Jihads and

Modernity'. I bought Niall Ferguson's 'Civilisation: The West and the Rest' and considering adding Tim Flannery's 'Here on Earth: A twin biography of the Planet and the Human Race' to my library.

For readers in the Commonwealth, the effects of Colonialism will cause speculation about 'belief' at the time of the growth of Protestantism in the sixteenth century. Even in the Geneva Bible of 1560-, the word 'tyrant' appears more than 400 times to describe an ungodly ruler who subjected a nation to his cruel whims.

The reader can also ponder why the mythical history of Israel legitimises the modern state.

Beverley Smith

Eat, Pray, Love

One Woman's Search for Everything, by Elizabeth Gilbert. Bloomsbury, London 2006



Elizabeth Gilbert in meditative pose

This book was made into a movie in 2010. I saw it some years ago and remember the occasional detail: the landlady in Rome insisting that Elizabeth not have any male guests stay overnight; Richard in the Ashram in India calling her Groceries because she had such a prodigious appetite. My overall impression wasn't positive; the heroine seemed like a wealthy, entitled

American on a self-centred quest that most of us could only dream of. The plot also seemed very schematic; equal parts culinary excess, ascetic withdrawal at an Indian Ashram and falling in love in Bali. See bitchmedia.org/article/eat-pray-spend for a review that takes a similarly critical line.

Then I happened upon a copy at a library sale and snapped it up for 50 cents. The cover proclaims loudly that the book has sold 10 million copies world-wide, so it has evidently struck a chord with many people. One of the first things I discovered is that the book is autobiographical, not fiction; it handles Elizabeth's quest for happiness and meaning after the collapse of her marriage.

There must indeed be few of us who could become divorced, let our ex-partner keep all the marital assets, and still afford to take a year out from ordinary life, eating at restaurants, travelling to the most desirable places on earth and paying for temporary accommodation. No doubt the \$200,000 advance from her publisher helped.

Her affluence didn't trouble me so much when reading the book. Sure, she was able to do her eating, meditating and falling in love in wonderfully exotic and beautiful locations. This helps her to function as a model for us ordinary mortals to follow in humbler ways when our own relationships are in trouble. We hear her glamorous story and can at least visit a yoga class at the local gym or have a great night out with friends at a local restaurant. This modelling function helps to explain the book's extraordinary success. There is also a sequel, *Eat, Pray, Love Made Me Do It*, in which a variety of people tell the story of their journeys that were inspired by the book.

It's easy to look down our nose at this work and wish for a more theological or less self-centred world view. But Gilbert gives hints that there is rather more to her than one might suppose. See page 9 for an example. No doubt there was a tendency to make the story more dramatic than its actual reality but her book has given the ashram and the Balinese healer great popularity.

The Editor

Interesting Texts

Lockdown Thoughts

I'm normally a social girl
 I love to meet my mates
 But lately with the virus here
 We can't go out the gates
 You see, we are the 'oldies' now
 We need to stay inside
 If they haven't see us for a while
 They'll think we've upped and died.
 They'll never know the things we did
 Before we got this old
 There wasn't any Facebook
 So not everything was told.
 We may seem sweet old ladies
 who would never be uncouth

But we grew up in the 60's-
 If you only knew the truth!
 There was sex & drugs & rock 'n roll
 The pill and miniskirts
 we smoked, we drank, we partied
 And were quite outrageous flirts.
 Then we settled down, got married
 and turned into someone's mum.
 Somebody's wife, then nana,
 Who on earth did we become?
 We didn't mind the change of pace
 Because our lives were full
 But to bury us before we're dead
 Is like a red rag to a bull
 So here you find me stuck inside
 For 4 weeks, maybe more
 I finally found myself again
 Then I had to close the door!

It didn't really bother me
 I'd while away the hour
 I'd bake for all the family
 But I've got no bloomin' flour!
 Now Netflix is just wonderful
 I like a gutsy thriller
 I'm swooning over Idris
 Or some random sexy killer
 At least I've got a stash of booze
 To while away the time
 there's wine and whiskey, even gin
 I've even got a lime.
 So let's all drink to lockdown
 To recovery and health
 And hope this bloomin' virus

Doesn't decimate our wealth.
 We'll all get through the crisis
 And be back to join our mates
 Just hoping I'm not far too wide
 To fit through the flaming gates!

*Written by a Ryman Village resident and
 sent in by Jan Ewart of the Gisborne SOFiA*

Elizabeth Gilbert on God

"What happened was that I started to pray. You know – like, to *God*.

Now this was a first for me. And since this is the first time I have introduced that loaded word – GOD- into my book...it seems only fair that I pause here for a moment to explain exactly what I mean when I say that word, just so people can decide right away how offended they need to get.

Saving for later the argument about whether God exists at all (no-here's a better idea: let's skip that argument completely), let me first explain why I use the word God, when I could just as easily use the words, *Jehovah, Allah, Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu, or Zeus*. Alternatively, I could call God "That" which is how the ancient Sanskrit scriptures say it, and which I think comes close to the all-inclusive and unspeakable entity I have sometimes experienced. But that "That" feels impersonal to me – a thing, not a being-and I myself cannot pray to a That. I need a proper name, in order to fully sense a personal attendance. For this same reason, when I pray, I do not address my prayers to The Universe, The Great Void, The Force, The Supreme Self, The Whole, The Creator, The Light, The Higher Power, or even the most poetic manifestation of God's name, taken I believe from the Gnostic gospels: "The Shadow of the Turning."

I have nothing against any of these terms. I feel they are all equally adequate and inadequate descriptions of the indescribable. But we each do need a functional name for this indescribability, and "God" is the name that feels the most warm to me, so that's what I use...

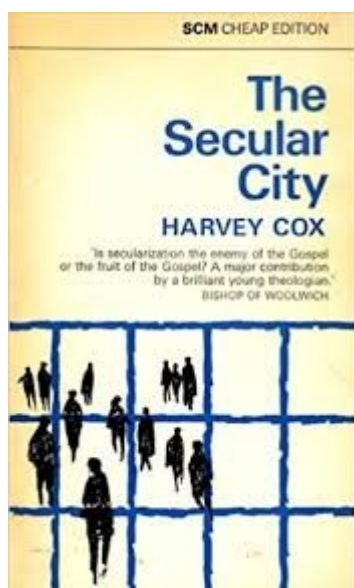
Traditionally, I have responded to the transcendent mystics of all religions. I have always responded with breathless excitement to anyone who has ever said that God does not live in a dogmatic scripture or in a distant throne in the sky, but instead abides very close to us indeed-much closer that we can imagine, breathing right through our own hearts. I respond with gratitude to anyone who has ever voyaged to the center of that heart, and who has then returned to the world with a report for the rest of us that God is

an experience of extreme love. In every religious tradition on earth, there have always been mystical saints and transcendents who report exactly this experience. Unfortunately many of them have ended up arrested and killed. Still, I think very highly of them." (Eat Pray Love, p13-15)

Religion Classics

The Secular City

Secularisation and Urbanization in Theological Perspective, by Harvey Cox.
SCM Press 1965



This book is another classic, like *Honest to God*, that was very popular in the 60s, selling nearly one million copies (a big number for a theological book!) and being translated into 17 languages. While churchmen were lamenting the decline of religion in big cities and presenting the church community as a refuge from the loneliness and anonymity of the city, Cox provided an articulate counterblast. He praised the city and the freedom and enhanced choice it offers, arguing that with so many contacts, it was impossible to have personal and meaningful relationships with all of them. City-dwellers get to choose their friends from a much bigger pool.

The book began by arguing that core biblical themes had a pro-secular side to them. The creation story deprived sun and moon of divinity, the Exodus deprived the Pharaoh of divine authority and the Sinai

covenant, in forbidding graven images, relativises any human point of view.

Having softened up any religious opposition to secularisation, Cox proceeded to take a sociological approach, dividing history into three epochs; the tribe, the village, and the city. The city is not just a larger village; it is qualitatively different. The city he has in mind is also not just an empirical entity but something like an ideal future, something that might jar with today's readers given the multiple problems cities are facing.

It's interesting to re-read a book that is 55 years old; some things that were unquestioned assumptions are now no longer obvious. Cox is critical of Paul Tillich, Martin Buber and existentialism, seeing them as stuck in the era of the town. Cox seems to be most influenced by Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. So we are proceeding towards a time of no religion at all, but Cox continues to ask about the role of the church, to explore how to speak in a secular fashion about God and to assume that the Gospel or the Word has certain effects on us. But doesn't 'secular' mean that God-talk cuts no ice, that 'gospel' is empty of meaning, that 'church' is a doomed institution, and that the Word is inextricably linked to the sermon, a superseded mode of communication? Cox seems to be dependent on a dualism of radical criticism based on the secular, in the tradition of Bonhoeffer's "religionless Christianity," as if we could separate out Christianity from religion in general, or bury religion in the name of secularity and then resurrect it by a preacher's exhortation to call us to faith.

You can definitely say one thing about Cox's writing: it is not boring. Some are critical, calling it 'religious journalism' or some such, but Cox is determined to go 'where the action is' and explore issues that are contemporary. And so, he wrote later on celebration and festivity, on the interest in Eastern religions, on Pentecostal spirituality and on the market as God, with some success but not as much as *The Secular City*.'

The Editor

My City

The young John Ylvisaker, an American Lutheran musician and composer, was much influenced by Cox's Secular City. The following song bears witness to this. It is lyrical praise of the current and future big city, which Cox called Technopolis.

Ylvisaker also composed "Mass for the Secular City" which was performed at Carnegie Hall, one of the most prestigious venues for music of any sort. This work wove the story of a young man coming to the city, experiencing loneliness, but eventually finding a worshipping community not in a church but in a coffee bar. The story was ingeniously interwoven with the standard pieces from a liturgical mass. You can listen to both on Spotify. Just search for John Ylvisaker.

1. O city O city of night

Arrayed in your neon diamonds of light
I have walked in your tall alleys of desolation
And seen the raindrops swirl on the high roofs
And I am called forth.

I am freed in the sunburst of your neon nights
And the voice of love speaks in my red veins
O child of a new day.

Go into the streets and speak of my city
Swept of old news and built like a garden
Where women can walk at night unafraid
And children sing in the wide winds of the day.

[Chorus] My city stands in the four free winds
Her people burdened and slow to cry
And in the night when the winds go down
Her glow is a heartbeat against the sky.

2. O city o city of light

Terraced and flown tier on tier
Tall in the jet streams of the afternoon sky
Your traffic hunched in a blue blazing of sound
You are called forth.

I have seen your festivals like bright waterfalls
Tumble and burst in the sentries of my mind
Jerusalem, Athens, London, New York.

Sweep your alleys clean of desolate ways
Redeem your slums your political bosses
Go worship at candles in the heart of a child
And build his loving soon into new life.

[Chorus]

My city stands in the four free winds
Her airways leap where the jets fly high
And in the night when the winds go down
Her glow is a heartbeat against the sky.

3 O city O city of hearts

Where the word of love burns in desire
Where rivers run to the thunder of mighty seas
I have known you and found out your ways.
O possible city.

Your avenues crave for fountains and green
lives

Your people cry for a crimson advent of love
O city of park light

Teeming with the spoils of far-flung lands
Look inward and find the word in your street
Shouting to be born from the pathways of love
And deed on deed O city for the new day
Build in our lives what more excellent way.

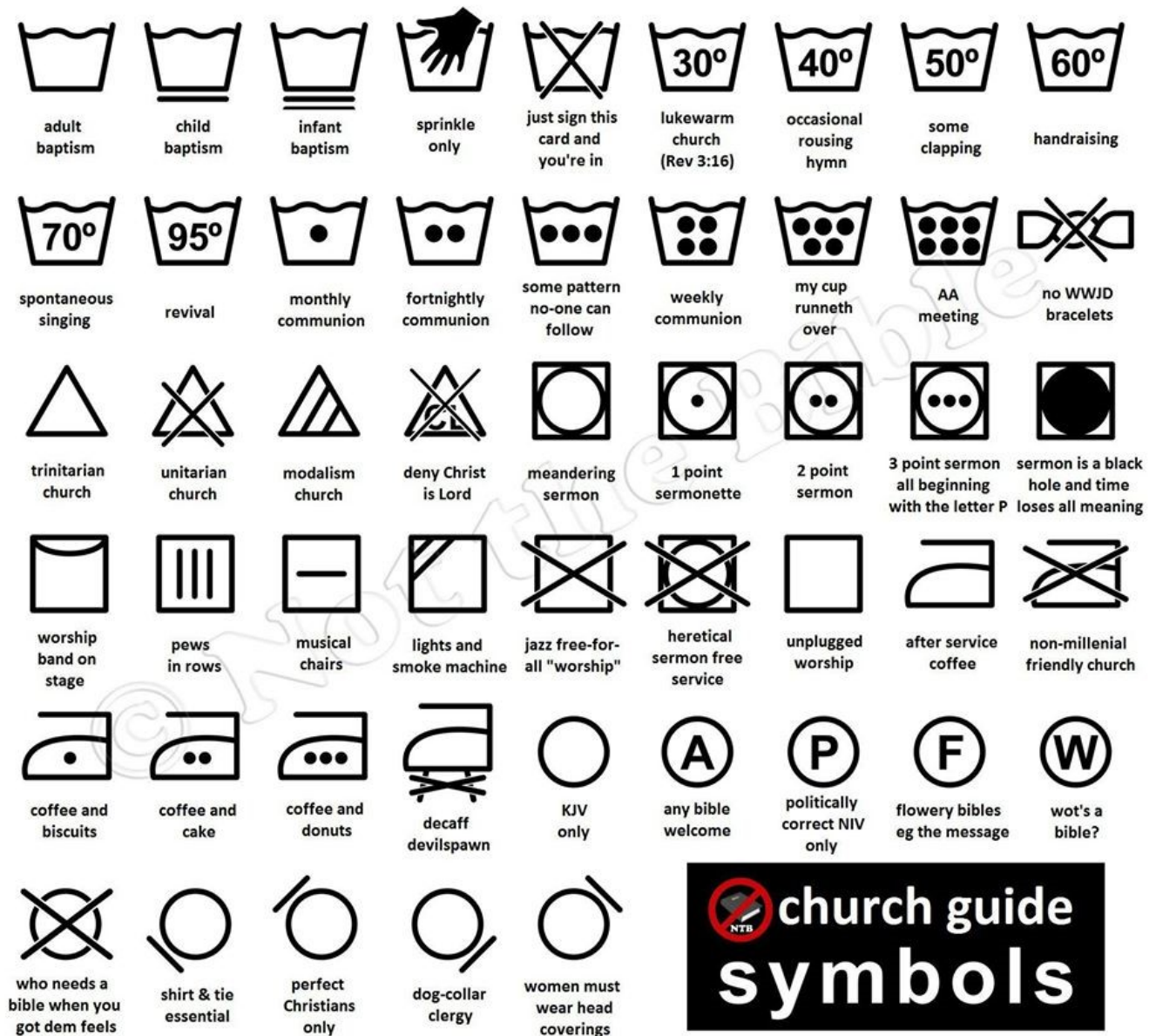
[Chorus]

My city stands in the four free winds
Her streets have seen our hearts dance and die
And in the night when the winds go down
Her glow is a heartbeat against the sky.

John Ylvisaker

A System of Church Symbols

In many areas of life, information is conveyed briefly and visually using symbols. For example, the care instructions for a garment or the key features of a house or flat for sale (number of lounges, bedrooms, bathrooms, garage spaces etc) can be quickly presented. Some wit has devised the following system for giving you information about the nature of any particular church, its worshippers and its theology:



Charles Taylor on 'A Secular Age'

"After summarizing his argument, Taylor looks to the future, which might follow the slow reemergence of religion in Russia in people raised in the "wasteland" of militant atheism, but suddenly grabbed by God, or it might follow the "spiritual but not religious" phenomenon in the West. In any case, we are just at the beginning of a new age of religious searching, whose outcome no one can foresee." From the Wikipedia article on *A Secular Age*.