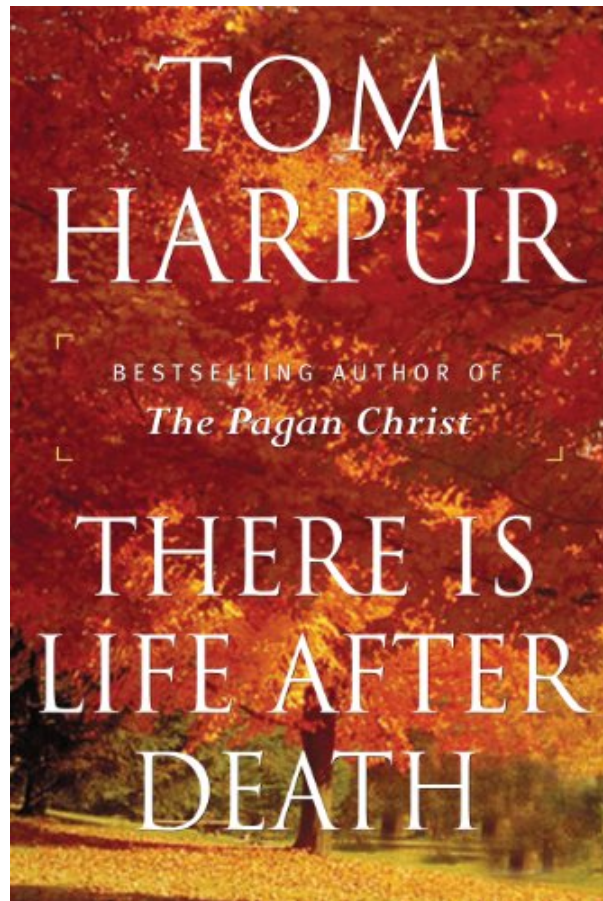
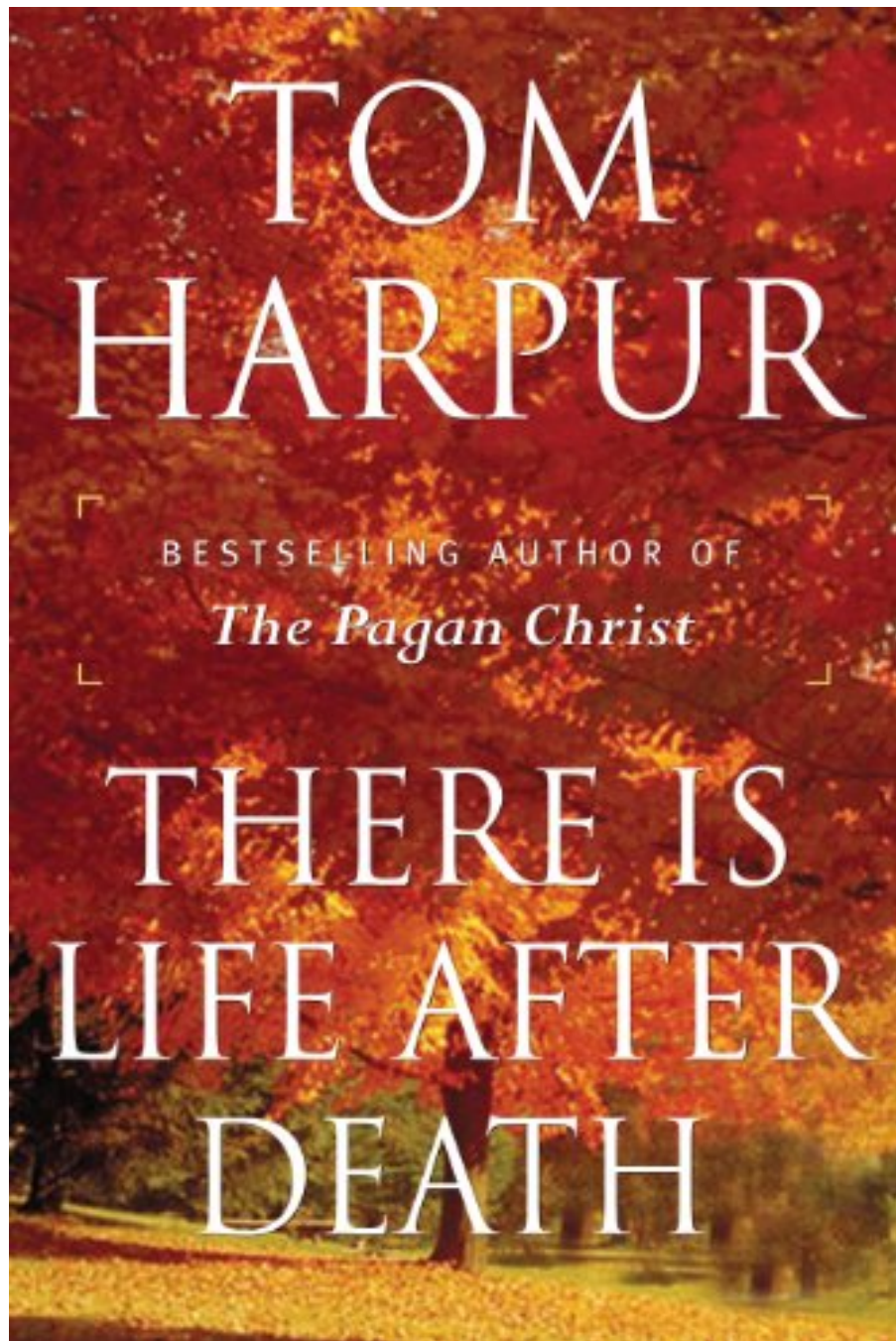


THERE IS LIFE AFTER DEATH BY TOM HARPUR



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Review

Stimulating and readable...A judicious and many-sided account of a subject of unending concern. (The Canadian Jewish News)

Harpur is as lucid a guide to the hereafter as we are going to get in the here and now. (The Globe and Mail)

This book helps us take the spiritual pulse of the times...I admire the clearheaded honesty that seldom seems to desert Harpur. (The Montreal Gazette)

About the Author

Tom Harpur, columnist for the Toronto Star, Rhodes scholar, former Anglican priest, and professor of Greek and the New Testament, is an internationally renowned writer on religious and ethical issues. He is the author of ten bestselling books, including *For Christ's Sake* and *The Pagan Christ*. He has hosted numerous radio and television programs, including *Life After Death*, a ten-part series based on his bestselling book of the same name.

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What happens when we die? Will we simply dissolve into nothingness, or will we survive death in some other form? Issues of death and dying have consumed humanity from time immemorial. In our modern western culture, we have tended out of fear to deny and push death away. And yet, a healthy consideration of this issue can help us embrace and understand what happens to us when we die. There is Life After Death is Tom Harpur's classic examination of death and dying. Now fully revised and updated, here is a new edition of a book that weighs the scientific, religious and anecdotal evidence of survival of death and what happens after we die. The likelihood of death being a portal to other forms of existence is argued persuasively. Tom Harpur looks at the witness of near-death experiences, and examines the idea of reincarnation, as well as the claims of channelers and spirit mediums. Most importantly, the author looks at how the great world religions from Ch

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Most helpful customer reviews

10 of 11 people found the following review helpful.

Update on Life After Death

By K. R. Vincent

THERE IS LIFE AFTER DEATH by Tom Harpur is an up-dated and expanded version of Harpur's 1991 book LIFE AFTER DEATH. He answers the query, "Is there life after death?" with a "resounding, reasoned yes!" This book follows the same outline as his earlier book.

Chapter 1 deals with evidence for life after death, namely, after-death communications and death-bed visions which Harpur calls "Strange Encounters." Chapter 2 is about "The Near-Death Experience." In my opinion, these first two chapters provide his best evidence for afterlife.

Harpur agrees with Mark Fox who, in his book RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY, AND THE NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE, declares there is largely silence in the theological community about the near-death experience. Harpur (a theologian himself) states that the near-death experience, "offers a bridge between religion and the modern world that church leaders should be rushing to cross."

Chapter 3 is "The Spirit Mediums." While Harpur is a skeptic, he cites the excellent work of Gary Schwartz and Linda Russek of the University of Arizona whose book THE AFTERLIFE EXPERIMENTS has caused him to be more receptive to the field of mediums, a practice that has historically been riddled with fakes.

Harpur is not a big fan of reincarnation, but his chapter (4) does include the excellent work of psychiatrist Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia Medical School on this topic. This is followed by a chapter (5) on "Dreams of Death and Dying" that individuals have of their deceased loved ones. Chapter 6 is entitled, "New Light From Science." Here Harpur has chosen to highlight the anti-reductionist research that supports the idea that the mind exists separate from the brain. As in his earlier work, Harpur includes the research of the great Canadian neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield but updates the book by adding the more recent research of Canadian neuroscientist Mario Beauregard.

When Harpur told me he was updating his 1991 book on afterlife, I could not wait to see how he would deal with the fact that he no longer believes in a historical Jesus, but instead believes in a Jesus of spirit that he refers to in his 2004 book THE PAGAN CHRIST and his 2007 book WATER INTO WINE as the "Mythic Christ," "Christ Spirit," "Christ Consciousness," "Christ Within," and "Spiritual Christ of the Mythos." For the sake of brevity, I will refer to this Christ concept as simply, the "Cosmic Christ" (my words). Harpur does not disappoint in his updating the chapters on "Christianity" (7) and "Heaven, Purgatory, and End-Times" (8). He brings his current views that the Cosmic Christ is the model for showing us the way to God's promise of eternal life for all - and I do mean "all" - for Harpur is still committed to the idea of Universal Salvation for ALL. While Harpur believes that we all face, "a moment of review or kind of tribunal which will be intense for some" and "a kind of suffering or hell," in the end, ALL will be saved.

His next chapter (9) on "Other World Faiths" includes the major religions of the world. He follows through with his commitment to Universalism by pointing out that Universalism is either the dominant position on afterlife in the religion (as it is in Zoroastrianism) or a minority position in the religion (as it is in Islam). His inclusion of Native American spirituality is excellent.

In "Personal Reflections and Conclusions" (10), Harpur's conclusion also echoes his theme that the Cosmic Christ is, "the central motif in a mythical drama, almost as old as humanity." At death, the "Light not only reveals and brings judgment" but also "love, mercy, and forgiveness as well." At death, Harpur sees us ALL reunited with God and our loved ones (including animals).

If you have not read Harpur's earlier book on afterlife, this one is a "must-read." If you have read his earlier

book, don't miss out on this sweet up-date.

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

Not as conclusive as the title suggests.....

By Ronald W. Maron

After reading a few of Mr. Harpur's texts, I was somewhat disappointed in this presentation. The title suggests that he can show provable certainty about life after death but the text, itself, fails in this regard.

The main premise of this text is in the reliability of religious scriptures and tenets, dream investigation, and the reports from near-death experiences. Having experienced an NDE myself I, too, can state that there is certainly something that exists beyond this existence. What it is and where it exists is quite inconclusive, but I do applaud the author for its inclusion. The reliability of scriptures and other religious beliefs, however, have very little objective validity. Countless questions have existed over the ages about the level of rational thought behind religious beliefs and an equal amount of pessimism is tied to all of the religious writings throughout time. Did these miraculous events really occur? Did the prophets and apostles really say what the text states that they said? Or did the early churches alter the writings in order to have their thoughts and dogma become viewed as the 'holy scripture'? Lastly, Mr. Harpur places a great deal of confidence in the theoretical writings of Carl Jung. While his ideas about a universal consciousness and symbolic dream interpretation are quite intriguing, there is a great deal of difference between intriguing and scientifically verifiable. The chances of this encompassing theory ever being objectively verified are very slim.

On the other hand, the author has a dismissive attitude towards areas that DO have a track record of provability. Minimizing the long-term studies on reincarnation by Stevenson's work with hundreds of other-life believing children and, instead, highlighting fallacies behind "The Search for Bridy Murphy" is quite confusing! Other scientists have followed up on the Stevenson studies and confirmed their overall accuracy. Why are you discounting such data? And while I agree that the field of spiritualists has been flooded with carnival barkers over the years, there are recent studies, that you mention in a minimal manner, that prove that highly skilled mediums have a undisputable success rate of over 80%. Why, Mr. Harpur, did you mix the scam artists and skilled mediums together in the same bucket? There are also numerous studies done over the last decade that show, without a doubt, that by examining ESP, psychokinesis and clairvoyancy that there definitely is an ability of the consciousness in all persons to perform tasks that lie outside of the brain-centered materialistic theory. Could you not have shown that these reliable studies added to the premise of an out-of-body consciousness and, hence, having the ability to survive beyond physical death? Lastly, you are correct in stating that quantum physics theorems do point to the fact that we exist in a universe that is not at all like our perceptions of it. I wish that you had been able to do so in a more understandable, yet more inclusive, manner for these, too, are scientific observable facts.

In sum, this book may be a good starting point for someone who wishes to begin exploring the concept of life after death but in no manner does it provide much objective and reliable proof. It relies too heavily on topics that offer little scientific proof and discounts those topics that do. Yes, I am convinced, like Mr. Harpur, that there is an existence that occurs after our natural life ceases to be. But, my confidence comes from much more reliable sets of data than does his.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Thoroughly Researched Conclusion

By Paul McCright

Tom Harpur is a well-published theologian and journalist from Canada. This book, first published in 1991, is his definitive exploration of the evidence that there is a conscious existence for humans beyond the grave. This is a fascinating study that covers evidence drawn from the secular world coupled with statements and beliefs from the major religions of the world.

The first half of the book focuses on secular evidence drawn from accounts of strange happenings that cannot be satisfactorily explained according to natural physical laws, accounts of Near-Death Experiences in which a person's soul leaves the body and encounters an afterlife before returning to the body, testimony from spirit mediums who communicate with the deceased, supernatural dreams, and scientific/medical evidence. He also presents evidence from the study of reincarnation. Taken together, Harpur presents a wide range of evidence suggesting that life does continue beyond "death."

After presenting a fascinating case from the secular viewpoint, Harpur then looks at what he calls "the testimony of religion". Along with a thorough look at Christian scriptures and theology, he includes viewpoints of Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Baha'i, Native Spirituality, and differing Christian sects. Drawing from all these religious viewpoints, he presents an impressive set of beliefs that may differ in detail, but which also point strongly to the existence of life in the hereafter.

Harpur's conclusion is that "I am today fully persuaded and assured that life after death is very much like birth. It is the traumatic but essential passage into a new phase of life. There is life after death. It is not for some holy huddle or a select few, but for all." Knowing his conclusion is only half the fun. I strongly encourage you to join him on this fascinating exploration.

By Paul McCright, Author of "Heaven Talks"

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