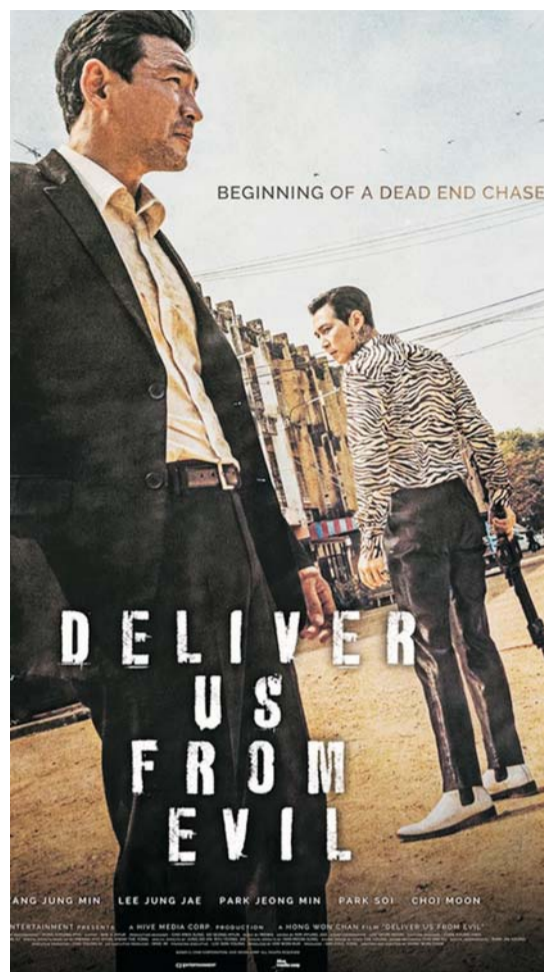




## CINEMA



Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil – *The Lord's Prayer*

**Evil is a terrible thing to watch. Deliver us from evil, made by Korean director, Hong Won-Chan, subtitled in English, is filmed across Japan, Thailand, and Korea's cultural diversity and complex histories. Former Korean special agent Kim In-nam (Hwang Jung-min) accepts one last job to find a kidnapped nine-year-old. Arriving in Thailand, he finds himself followed by his past, including Ray (Lee Jung-jae), seeking revenge for the assassination of his twin brother.**

The result is a rapid spiral into violence, torture and revenge killing. Yui (Park Jung-min), a trans-female, provides humour as she is paid to guide and translate.

While watching evil is terrible, pretending sin does not exist is a

travesty. Vulnerable children deserve to play in safety after school. Trafficking in children and organ harvesting must be exposed.

The presence of evil presents challenges; experientially, to those who suffer and intellectually, to claims of God as loving and powerful. It is tempting to consign ideas of sin and evil to a premodern universe. We might tap along to *Into my Arms*, joining Nick Cave (*The Boatman's Call*, 1997) in singing, "I don't believe in an interventionist God". Yet, the atrocities humans commit, whether ancient or modern, require some form of intervention.

The *Lord's Prayer* is another response. The well-worn words turn the Sermon on the Mount's beatitudes into lived reality. The Prayer names the reality of sin. Evil is something to watch for. The words Jesus taught his disciples recognise the personal and the systemic, the individual lure of temptation and the malevolent power of unexplained systems.

Prayers require an answer. Deliver us from evil provides two different responses to the tragedy that is human trafficking. In-nam leaves a trail of bodies. The value of sacrifice, mixed with the use of violence, has been one

way of understanding Christianity. Substitutionary atonement, poorly applied, can turn Jesus' body broken on the cross into some sort of Divine revenge killing for human sin. But violence, even if sacrificial, should have no place among those who pray the beatitudes.

Deliverance can also occur through random acts of kindness. Yui is delightful. Initially paid as a guide, she demonstrates a depth of love. Wide-eyed and out of her depth, her persistent presence becomes essential for the redemption of nine-year-old Yoo-min. Wide-eyed kindness is another way of understanding Jesus. In the somewhat foolish act of riding a donkey on Palm Sunday, the human temptation to follow a crowd and the presence of evil is exposed even in religious communities. Jesus' actions, mixed with his persistence unto death on the cross, form a new community. Those who see evil find new ways to care for each other. Such can be the wide-eyed hope for all who dare to watch and pray for deliverance from evil.

*Rev Dr Steve Taylor is author of First Expressions (2019) and writes widely in theology and popular culture, including regularly at [www.emergentkiwi.org.nz](http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz).*

## ON PAPER

## With the End in Mind: How to Live and Die Well

(Alternate subtitle: *Death, Dying and Wisdom in an Age of Denial*)  
Author: Kathryn Mannix  
Publisher: Harper Collins, 2017  
([withtheendinmind.co.uk](http://withtheendinmind.co.uk))  
Reviewer: Heather Fraser

A best seller about death? Is it possible? Yes! And this book proves it is.

Few things are certain in life. However, death is the one thing that is 100 percent guaranteed. As Christians, we might feel that we have a bit of an understanding about death.

After all, modern Christianity is based on a man who died and then rose again from the dead.

The reality is something quite different.

This book is not about sudden death. Kathryn Mannix is a British doctor who spent 30 years specialising in palliative care. As a death doula, her job was to ensure that loved ones have as pain free and dignified

an ending as is possible with modern medicine. Each chapter is a respectfully written 'case study' of a different person living with cancer, a terminally debilitating illness, heart failure or the effects of age. Readers learn that death can be peaceful, beautiful and even full of joyful laughter. Each death is as unique as its person and extended family.

Despite being set in the United Kingdom, the stories are easily relatable to the New Zealand context. We have similar hospital systems, medical training and palliative care

facilities. The chapters cross cultures, ages, sexes, religions and attitudes.

Our generation has forgotten how to talk about death. Many avoid the topic and yet it needs to be the subject of discussion. To be able to talk about it, we need to understand it. Through understanding the process, we can take it from a scary topic to a natural process. We can nurture our dying loved ones and come out the other side knowing that they have been cared for with compassion.

Mannix has a beautiful writing style that is more suited to a novelist than a scientific doctor. She creates a depth

of humanity, connections and emotions that makes each of her patients and their families relatable to the reader.

Mannix is against euthanasia and gives compelling reasons to put the care of the dying into the reassuring hands of palliative care specialists. This book

can easily be read from cover-to-cover or by picking relevant chapters as you wish. Having just been through a death myself, I found it answered some questions for me and was an insightful therapeutic read.

The book is recommended by grief counsellors to help the bereaved understand more about the process of death and the huge variety of human emotions and reactions that death elicits.

*Hear Her Speak: to listen to Kathryn Mannix speak about dying well, visit: [www.maxim.org.nz/article/mannix](http://www.maxim.org.nz/article/mannix)*



## Hand in Hand

*Blending secular and sacred to enlarge the human spirit*

Author: Ian Harris.  
Publisher: Wellington: Cuba Press, 2021.  
230 pages.  
Reviewer: John Meredith.

After the earthquake of 2011, the spire on the Anglican cathedral in Christchurch tumbled and lay sideways on the ground. Someone remarked that the spire was no longer pointing to God in some sacred realm above but to God in the world of every day.

"Secular" refers to the world of every day, of the here and now. The underlying premise of *Hand in Hand* is that the secular world is where religion must be practised and faith lived out. This is a profoundly biblical concept: life cannot be divided into holy or sacred and ordinary or secular spheres.

The world we live in is, however, vastly different from the world of the Bible. We live in a world of rapidly expanding knowledge that raises many challenges to the veracity of what was once widely accepted. Quite frankly, the world has moved on. In this new world Harris recognises that for many people the existence of God as an independent being who maintains life on earth (a concept known as theism) no longer seems tenable. This does not mean a necessary rejection of religion but people are seeking ways of thinking about God that are consistent with their experience of life and that do not require a sacrifice of their intellectual integrity.

If we can set aside the idea of God as a being with independent existence, Harris states it may be possible to give the word God new meaning as a symbol that expresses the core of religious understanding. He

suggests that "in this symbolic view God is a word summing up what is central to a person's understanding of life and its purposes and what they sense as ultimate in the values they choose to live by. It points to what is best, highest and deepest in human experience."

Harris emphasises the partnership between religion and science in seeking to understand life. He quotes Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks who said, "Science is about explanation. Religion is about meaning." Understood thus, there is no conflict provided religious and scientific views are not held and promoted dogmatically. Mutual listening aids

understanding. It may even open up a new appreciation of the sacred as we revere the wonder revealed by scientific discovery.

Content is grouped under helpful headings relating to what is secular: spirituality, theism, science and the environment. The last section is a challenge to the churches: adapt or die.

Harris states: "It will be a grand day for Christianity

when it ditches its obsession with belief and rediscovers the centrality of faith." There is a need to move from ancient creeds and to find that when lived with reverence, respect and responsibility, life yields the fulfilment of faith, hope and love.

The author dedicates *Hand in Hand* "to all who embark on an exploratory journey of faith that continually changes shape and never quite ends." Written in an incisive and highly readable style, this book should be essential reading for anyone who is willing to think seriously about faith today and realistic possibilities for the future.

