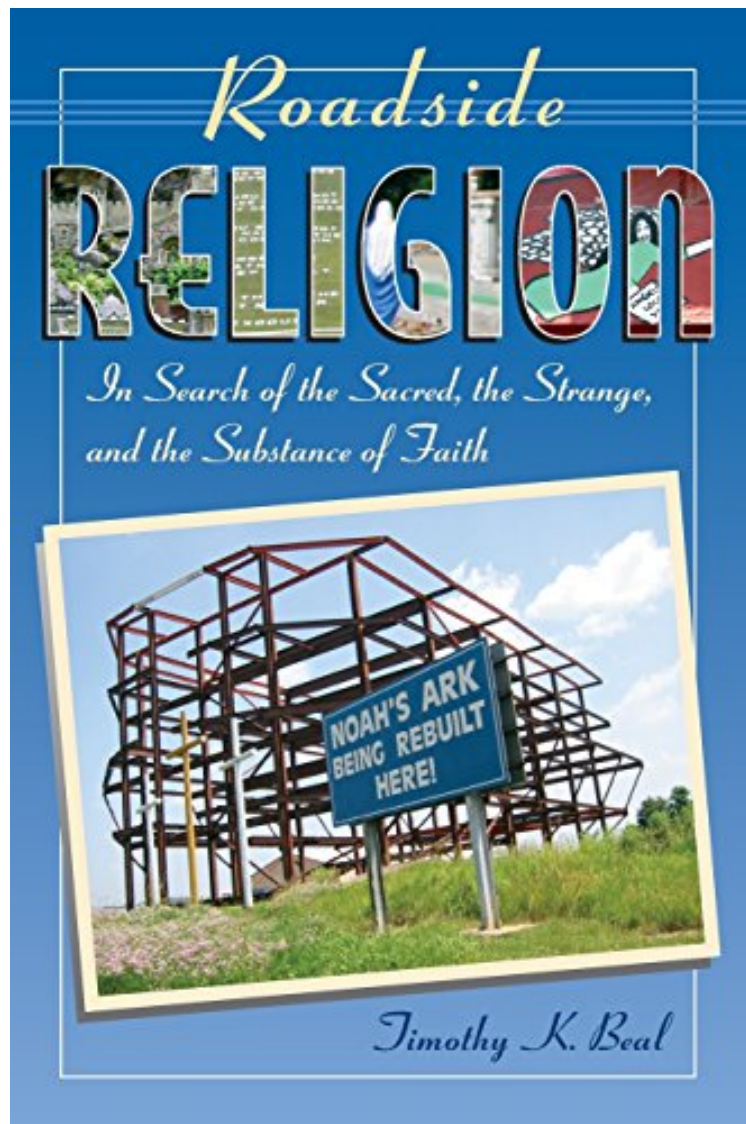


[Free pdf] Roadside Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith

Roadside Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith

Timothy Beal

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Timothy Beal : Roadside Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Roadside Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ok, not my typical read. By Ryan W Gustason This book was ok. It is not my typical read, but rather class material. The author was effective in his goal of a thoughtful and reflective

summary of many trips to various American Christian roadside attractions. It can make you think, if you allow yourself to be reflective. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Weird religion in America* By John C Holbert A bit too scattered for a fully effective presentation of the weird stuff in American rural religion but a fun read nonetheless. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Five Stars* By Customer Entertaining and yet respectful look.

In the summer of 2002, Timothy K. Beal loaded his family into a twenty-nine-foot-long motor home and hit the rural highways of America in search of roadside religious attractions—sites like the World's Largest Ten Commandments and Precious Moments Chapel. *Roadside Religion* tells of his attempts to understand the meaning of these places as expressions of religious imagination and experience, and to encounter faith in all its awesome absurdity.

From *Publishers Weekly* Starred . Beal, a religion scholar who took his family on a summer RV tour of some of America's oddest religious sites, explores the varieties of religious experience while daring to be vulnerable and personal about his own faith. Whether he's tackling the popularity of biblical mini-golf courses or Precious Moments figurines, Beal (*Religion and Its Monsters*) uncovers serious questions about religion and its sometimes highly singular practitioners. It's clear that the sites he finds most compelling are those whose creator has stepped out of the mainstream to carry out a quixotic personal vision, like the Maryland man who is building a gigantic replica of Noah's Ark to the size specified in the Book of Genesis; or the quiet Alabama Catholic who discovered his life's calling in transforming throwaway items (lipstick tubes, broken china) into sacred grottoes and replicas of biblical and historic sites. (Beal doesn't have as much patience with the slick Orlando theme park Holy Land Experience, which he calls "a fundamentalist Magic Kingdom.") The book is full of gentle humor and clever observations, such as when Beal notes that the World's Largest Ten Commandments site, in rural North Carolina, makes "a graven image of the prohibition against graven images." Although he can be critical, Beal is never cynical or snide, guiding readers to an informed understanding rather than simply proffering these sites as case studies in a religious freak show. (May 15) From *Booklist* Beal chose to discover religion in contemporary America by traveling with his wife and two children in a rented 29-foot-long motor home to visit roadside religious attractions. He reports about 11 of those, such truly unusual places as Holy Land USA in Bedford County, Virginia; Golgotha Fun Park in Cave City, Kentucky; Biblical Mini-Golf in Lexington, Kentucky; and God's Ark of Safety in Frostburg, Maryland. The book is full of good humor, and Beal doesn't patronize the creators of these attractions but accords them respect and dignity. He takes the attractions seriously, as unique expressions of the religious imagination and examples of "outsider religion." Part of his purpose in writing the book, aside from slaking his own curiosity, lay in discovering not only what kind of person would go to such lengths to display personal faith so publicly but also, and more important, why. Why write the Ten Commandments in five-foot-tall concrete letters on the side of a mountain? Why use miniature golf to tell the Creation story? Entertaining, quirky, and surprisingly thoughtful. June Sawyers Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Beal quietly goes beneath the surface to show you that what you see is not always what you get . . . [Answers] questions you might never have thought of asking, even as it keeps the pages turning. --Caroline Leavitt, *Boston Sunday Globe* "A definitively open-minded professor of religion . . . In his introduction, Beal notes that his daughter, Sophie, has said that what he likes to do 'is make creepy things interesting.' Smart girl." --Sarah Ferrell, *New York Times Book* "Full of gentle humor and clever observations . . . Whether he's tackling the popularity of biblical mini-golf courses or Precious Moments figurines, Beal . . . uncovers serious questions about religion and its sometimes highly singular practitioners." --*Publishers Weekly*, starred review "[An] informative meditation on American religion." --Ray Waddle, *Tennessean* "If you're in the mood for a contemporary American-style religious pilgrimage, this book can help you have a good time reflecting while you journey." --Judith Klamm, *Presbyterians Today* "An enjoyable read that would have succeeded as a quirky guide to Christian-themed tourist traps. It goes further in showing that people can find their faith in strange ways—even in a twisted landscape of wooden crosses, rusty appliances and fire-and-brimstone graffiti declaring, 'Hell. Hell. Hot. Hot.'" --*Cleveland Magazine* "Roadside Religion is a generous and intelligent guide to some of the most unusual expressions of faith that grace the American Landscape." --*Body and Soul* "The book is full of good humor, and Beal doesn't patronize the creators of these attractions but accords them respect and dignity . . . Entertaining, quirky, and surprisingly thoughtful." --*Booklist* "With humor and sensitivity, [Beal] analyzes the substance of American faith as he explores what these places mean to the people who made them and to the people who visit them." --*Religion News Service*