

NZ OUTDOOR HUNTING

Book Reviews

The Bushman's Bible

Dr Dave Baldwin

Fields Publishing House

RRP \$40

Reviewed by Daryl Crimp

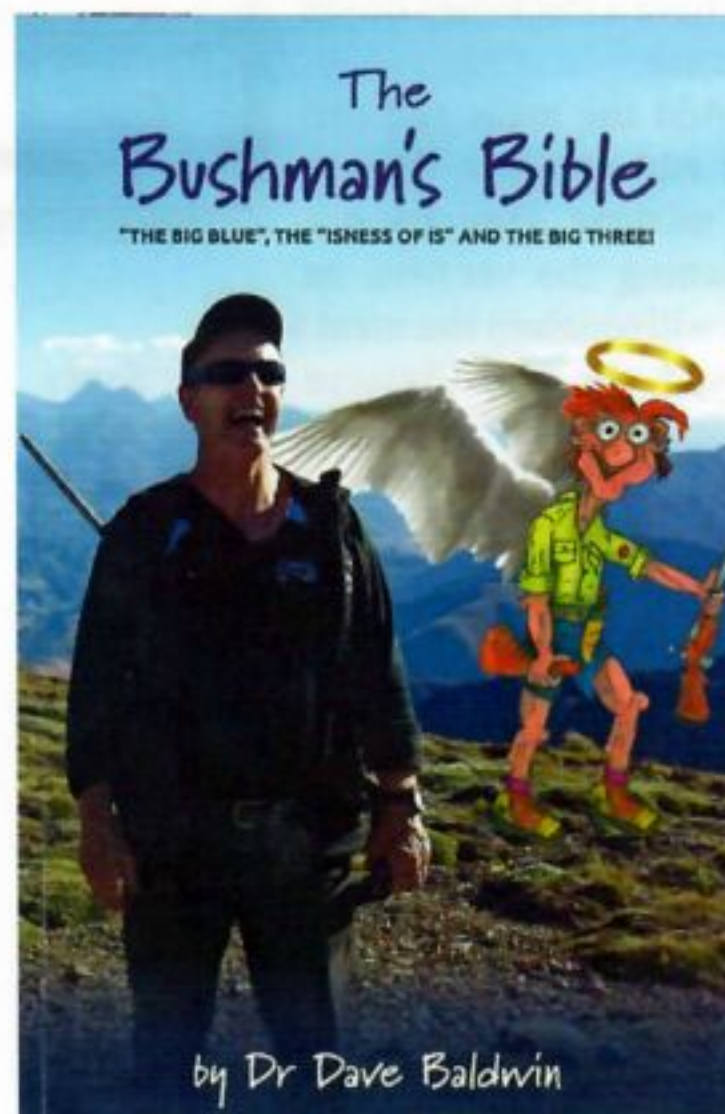
Dr Dave is back with his third book in the Healthy Bastards trilogy (Healthy Bastards and The Flying Doctor) with this quick read subtitled THE BIG BLUE, THE ISNESS OF IS, AND THE BIG THREE, which essentially deals with spirituality and religion, but in a manner palatable to ordinary folk or 'Mr and Mrs Bushman'.

The first book, Healthy Bastards, focuses on the physical elements of 'wellness' and is described as 'a medical manual for Ding Bats'. The second, The Flying Doctor', through humour, anecdotes, and true stories, redefines the healthy bastard as someone who takes care of his physical, mental, and spiritual side on the journey to becoming well.

In The Bushman's Bible, Dr Dave first explores the concept of spirituality as a dimension beyond the material world, as it relates to the average bloke, hunter, outdoorsman, and adventurer, in the context of our natural wilderness surroundings. He draws on personal experiences and those of others to frame the notion that all of us 'people of the bush and mountains' have experienced some sort of mystical or spiritual experience at some stage.

So as not to frighten off some of the hardened 'real blokes' who see a prostate exam as a

spiritual experience, Dr Dave relies on humour to tame the lion. The story is loosely framed around conversations with his mate, Gav, which is reflective of 70's, 80's and early 90's humour where the protagonist uses a foil to accent the message: the 'Trevs' of Fred Dagg, Jeez Wayne of McPhail & Gadsby, and, of course, Camp Leader to Camp Mother of Topp Twins fame.



He also writes in vernacular or common conversational language at times, which gives the text a heavy 'blokesy' feel in places and, at times, can feel a bit contrived.

However, Dr Dave shines when he speaks from the heart and simply tells it like it is. From the platform of spirituality, he gives a wonderful, relaxed, and insightful overview of the evolution of religion, covering everything from the history of the Jews, who was Jesus, the Hebrew Bible, the bible, Roman involvement, the birth of Christianity, Judaism, and interesting stuff about Muslims. Clearly, a huge amount of research has gone into this book but is by far the best explanation of religion in a capsule I have ever read. For no other reason than getting a broad brushstrokes understanding of religion so you can better understand what is happening around, that alone is worth the read.

While Dr Dave and his wife have visited places of religious significance around the world, they are also travelling their own 'spiritual journey', and this underlying theme adds credibility and poignancy to what he is saying. Better still, it is not a ram down your throat look at religion but a suggestive guide to developing your own spiritual identity, on the path to good health. And it can all be achieved without setting foot in a church... unless it's that big blue temple in our mountains. Well worth the read.

The Bushman's Bible can be purchased from: www.flyingdoctor.co.nz or ordered through Whitcoulls and Paper Plus.