

PROF DOUGLAS JAMES DAVIES

Douglas James Davies is Professor in the Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University, UK. He is both an anthropologist and theologian with theoretical and practical interests. After an initial degree in Anthropology at Durham he engaged in his first research on Mormonism at the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology under the supervision of the sociologist Bryan Wilson. He then read a theology degree at Durham and shortly afterwards became Lecturer at Nottingham University where he became Professor of Religious Studies before leaving for Durham in 1997. During that period he engaged in further work on Mormonism, as well as in Sikhism and Anglicanism, and in death rites. He also completed his first doctorate there on the issue of meaning and salvation. In Durham, as Professor in the Study of Religion, he helps teach undergraduate modules on the Introduction to the Study of Religion, and Death, Ritual and Belief, and a module for postgraduates on Ritual, Symbolism and Belief in the Anthropology of Religion. Academically speaking, he also holds the degree of D.Litt. from Oxford as well as an Honorary Dr. Theol. from the University of Uppsala in Sweden. In 2009 he was made an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences.

A great deal of Prof Davies' general work has sought to relate issues in theology and social (*Anthropology and Theology*, Berg, 2002). He then had several other areas of research interest. Special research in Mormonism has resulted in *An Introduction to Mormonism* (CUP 2003) and *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Ashgate 2000) along with other books, chapters, and encyclopaedia entries. He has also been a visiting professor at Brigham Young University in Utah.

In terms of Death Studies he has edited the *Encyclopedia of Cremation* (with Lewis Mates: Ashgate 2005), and also written *A Brief History of Death* (Blackwell 2004), *Death, Ritual and Belief* (revised and expanded edition, Continuum 2002). Extensive empirical research for *Reusing Old Graves* (with A. Shaw 1995) has been influential in relation to issues of burial reform in the UK. In terms of Christian church life Davies has, for example, joint edited (with Helen Cameron, Philip Richter, and Frances Ward) *Studying Local Churches: A Handbook* (SCM Press 2005). His *Private Passions* (Canterbury Press 2000) was the Archbishop of Wales's Lent Book for that year. *Church and Religion in Rural England* (with C. Watkins and M. Winter, 1991) involved a major study of the Church of England. Many other papers and book chapters numerous aspects of religious life including, for example, some biblical interests in 'Purity, Spirit and Reciprocity in the Acts of the Apostles', in *Anthropology and Biblical Studies*, (eds) L.J. Lawrence and M.I. Aguilar, Leiden: Deo Publishing 2004), and 'Rebounding Vitality: Resurrection and Spirit in Luke –Acts', *The Bible in Human Society* (eds) M.D. Carroll, D. Clines and P. Davies, Sheffield Academic Press 1995.

For full biography see <http://www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/staff/profile/?id=663>.