

# Mungroo *vs* Steinhardt

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As this article isn't being assessed, I'm just going to bullshit my way through the next thousand-odd words and *poorly* compare two religious programmes, outlining the differences and similarities between them. The following text is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution licence (the terms of which are outlined in section 3.2) and was published in the early hours of 20 October 2010.

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# 1 Sunday Half Hour (BBC Radio 2)

So incredibly calm, religious and dull; . . . almost fell into a coma. In the episode I listened to,<sup>1</sup> Brian D’Arcy begins the programme with a hymn<sup>2</sup> before babbling-on about how imaginary creatures taught the world’s population how to live *peacefully*—and people say students never pay attention in class(!) D’Arcy recaps his last few episodes<sup>3</sup> before outlining the next half-hour of *this* programme—which, I will just point out, mainly consists of the reading of passages from a book with a few good reviews, and the singing of hymns<sup>4</sup> by various choirs from around the country. The programme never gets far above the “hymns and links” format of many-a-programme before it—even *requests* are sent in from listeners . . . though, where D’Arcy can’t<sup>5</sup> play a certain request, “[he] always like[s] to mention the dedication anyway”.<sup>6</sup> Another link. . . another hymn, . . . et cetera, etc.; talking about the Good Thief and taking emails from listeners “[praying for the *Sunday Half Hour*] team”—I’ve noticed that there’s an awful lot of *bullshit* throughout this production; I’m getting rather angry that my licence fee is paying for all this illogical drivel. (My god; what if children were listening to this?) Brian continues to read out messages of celebration—marital anniversaries,<sup>7</sup> birthdays in the higher figures,<sup>8</sup> . . . and let’s not forget requests for yet more bloody hymns. D’Arcy concludes<sup>9</sup> the programme with a prayer . . . to a god, perhaps; asking if s/he wouldn’t mind “strengthen[ing] us with faith” or “[making] us aware of [s/his] sav-

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<sup>1</sup>Broadcast on BBC Radio 2 on 17 October 2010, 20:30–21:00.

<sup>2</sup>The hymn was ‘*Rejoice; The Lord Is King*’ by Charles Wesley.

<sup>3</sup>He’s “been looking at Jesus as servant and Jesus as teacher”.

<sup>4</sup>Like all lyrics, the lyrics of hymns should not be taken literally.

<sup>5</sup>For whatever reason; with the backing of a omnipotent power behind him, you would think he could accomplish the simplest of tasks.

<sup>6</sup>Quote: 17 October 2010 episode of *Sunday Half Hour*, 00:07:42–00:07:48.

<sup>7</sup>Doubt he’d read out the anniversaries of civil partners.

<sup>8</sup>80s, 90s, . . . religious people tend to be on the way out.

<sup>9</sup>Chronologically, he concludes with ‘*Jesus Shall Reign*’—sung by the Glasgow Chamber Choir.

ing grace”.

## 2 Off The Shelf (Premier Christian Radio)

For a good ten minutes, I browsed the Premier Christian Radio website—looking for a podcast<sup>10</sup> that most matched *Sunday Half Hour* in its content.<sup>11</sup> I was looking for a calm and relaxing evening broadcast, perhaps focusing on the musical side of Christianity with some hymns or whatever but, after a while, I just thought “fuck it” and went with *Off The Shelf*: Premier Radio’s book club programme. The main comparison I could see between *Off The Shelf* and *Sunday Half Hour* is that they were both religious broadcasts; this being an article on religious programming might explain that one but if that wasn’t the case, what a coincidence(!) *Off The Shelf*<sup>12</sup> is a relatively short programme, at just over ten minutes; twenty minutes shorter than *Sunday Half Hour* . . . *Off The Shelf* is, however, a speech-based production whereas *Sunday Half H* . . . look; if I don’t ram their names into you, you’ll end up getting confused. *Sunday Half Hour* is a music programme: “hymns and links”—this episode of *Off The Shelf* is an interview; an interview of William Clarke-Charles:<sup>13</sup> editor of *Basil Hume: Ten Years On*.<sup>14</sup> The interviewer, James Cassidy, asks the usual “How close were you to Hume?” (n.v.) and “How hard was it to write portions of the book?” (n.v.)—usual

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<sup>10</sup>My reason for looking for a *podcast* was that I could “[l]isten to [their] programmes when [I] want[ed] to”.

<sup>11</sup><http://www.premierradio.org.uk/ondemand.aspx> was where I was looking.

<sup>12</sup>. . . or at least the 25 September 2009 episode of *Off The Shelf* . . .

<sup>13</sup>Amazon.co.uk says Charles, but the Premier presenter says something that sounds like nothing other than Clarke.

<sup>14</sup>Have an Amazon.co.uk link: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Basil-Hume-Years-William-Charles/dp/0826439411>

stuff you'd expect from a book interview.<sup>15</sup> This is completely different from the Other Programme which focuses on hymns, rather than books; in fact, the only book mentioned in *Sunday Half Hour* was the Bible—which, as we all know, is a bloody good read. Cassidy continues to fill time by asking questions irrelevant: in particular, “so which-which umm who which author was the most difficult to attract [into] your select group?”<sup>16</sup> Carefully-structured questions after carefully-structured questions; carefully *structured* to waste as much of my time as possible. *Off The Shelf* is of the kind of programme I would expect to be pumped into a coffee lounge full of stuffy conservative folk during the late evening; . . . a programme that plays throughout a hospital ward because the frail and decrepit are quietly moaning for more morphine, drowning-out the (hopefully) rhythmic sound of the life support machines that the doctors and practitioners pay attention to oh-so religiously. Speaking of religion, . . . I'm not too sure who this Basil Hume chap is,<sup>17</sup> but the references to certain denominations and practices are giving me an idea. I would assume that a specialist book interview would at least give *some* background information on the subject of the book, before moving into questions that require knowledge contained within the book being discussed or within similar, already-available titles. This interview is *so* painfully irksome that I've skipped forward five-or-so minutes—to a point at which James Cassidy begins to urmm like Chris Morris. At the end of the episode, Cassidy thanks William Charles<sup>18</sup> and signs-off; a podcast ident<sup>19</sup> plays and that concludes the programme. Dull at best; migraine developing slowly. I might not make it past midnight.

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<sup>15</sup>The book was interviewed later-on in the programme, completely denying anything William said; he claimed that he'd written himself before adding “Anyone who takes credit of a book *from* a book is surely a wankturnip”.

<sup>16</sup>*Off The Shelf*, 25 September 2009: 00:02:12–00:02:19.

<sup>17</sup>I just looked him up on Wikipedia; I wish I hadn't.

<sup>18</sup>The Premier site says Charles in its synopsis of the programme, so it must have been a thick accent or something. Source: <http://www.premierradio.org.uk/programmes/offtheshelf>, accessed 19 October 2010.

<sup>19</sup>“You can get more information [on our range of podcasts . . .]”, et cetera.

## **3 The boring shit**

### **3.1 Programmes used for analysis**

The following two programmes were poorly analysed for this article: the 17 October 2010 episode of BBC Radio 2's *Sunday Half Hour* as presented by Brian D'Arcy, and the 25 September 2009 episode of Premier Christian Radio's *Off The Shelf* with James Cassidy and guest William Charles.

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