

Edited by Yvonne Bennett

# Women and Religion in Britain Today

*Belonging*

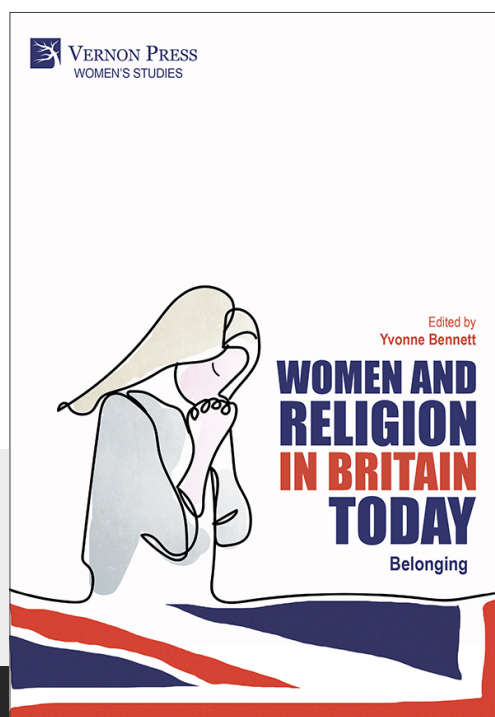
WOMEN'S STUDIES

## Summary

Little is written about the lived religious lives of women in 21st-century Britain. The authors of this book seek to address this gap by exploring contemporary women's spirituality in Britain. As the authors inhabit different academic fields, we bring together an interdisciplinary collection of voices to address this subject. We examine a range of ways in which religion continues to impact the lives of women in Britain today. The chapters of this book examine the manner in which religion and spirituality continue to impact women's lives, and by doing so, we offer a heterogeneous look at religion in the 21st century. We not only tackle the spirituality of our research participants but, by writing about our experiences as 'women being spiritual', we offer a hybrid academic-practitioner viewpoint.

From Islamic marriage laws to the ordination of female Anglican clergy, we focus on the concept of belonging (or not) through culture and the use of female-only spaces and organisations. Belonging is an important social motive; the

need for acceptance and belonging is a fundamental concept that drives behaviours. Exploring how we belong grants an understanding of how choices are made, both by the individual and the group.



## About the editor

**Yvonne Bennett** obtained her BA and MA through The Open University in Milton Keynes, England. On leaving school, she had trained as a nurse and after having her children, retrained as a nursery teacher. When studying for her MA, she worked as a volunteer teacher for the now-defunct charity Kids Company, where she taught Biology, Health and Social Care and Parentcraft. Bennett continued her involvement with the parenting group and wrote a book, 'The Church, Who Needs It?' The book looks at the women's struggles with Universal Credit and the role the church plays in supporting them. Bennett's academic research interests are situated in the conservative Scottish Presbyterian communities in the Gàidhealtachd (Highlands and Islands) of Scotland. Her research examines the ways in which religion and cultural identity are intertwined and how the boundaries between the social and secular spheres of the community are blurred. Throughout her PhD fieldwork at Canterbury Christ Church University, Bennett was drawn to the place religion had in the lives of women.

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