

**An excerpt from the book:
*Hijacked! Idols in Disguise. Breaking the Stranglehold.
Falling in Love with God Again.***

By Rosemary Monreau

INTRODUCTION

As idolatry has engulfed us and acculturation lulled us to sleep; are we, Western Christians, ready to stand in Christ in the face of increasing hostility towards Christianity?

Western culture appears to be pushing the envelope of social boundaries ever further and the contrast with the Eastern world I served is increasingly stark. Additionally, it looks like Western Christians have tacitly accepted the predominant culture's progression into hedonism and social adulation, and seem quite unfazed of such progression. On one hand, diversity is admired, and so it should, at the same time increasingly bizarre lifestyles are applauded and normalized, even legalized. On the other hand it appears to be quite acceptable to ridicule and demonize any Christian who takes a stand for what he/she believes. I am not speaking of the strident, confrontational and often embarrassing outspokenness of some, but of those who with quiet strength resist the erosion of values that has insinuated every layer of our society. Christophobia has become an accepted behaviour.

How did we get to this point and how can we Christians raise ourselves back out of these traps and regain our saltiness? In the following chapters we shall examine some of the culprits; traps and idols that beset us, and contemplate a move forward in holistic ways that honour and exalt God. From the story of our downward slide, the present state-of-affairs, then the reclaiming and redeeming of ourselves and of those things we use on a daily basis. Finally, our becoming ready to withstand the increasing hostility that we are, and will be, facing as Western Christians.

CHAPTER 1

RECOGNIZING THE IDOLS THAT SEDUCE US

"[Idols] ... are lifeless producers of death, part of the created world, controlling and dominating, binding humans into chains of necessity, and – being unable to speak – they work to enslave by means of the visual."

—Andrew Goddardⁱ

It may be quite depressing when investigating the many idols the enemy uses to entice Christians into distraction. But let's take heart, there is hope and freedom from the bonds of idolatry. It takes a diagnosis of our spiritual health before we can deal with the disease and be healed.

Consider this: during a dinner with friends and fellow seminary graduates, a question arose: "According to Acts 15: "The Jerusalem council instructed Gentile believers to 'abstain from things polluted by idols, from fornication, from whatever had been strangled and from blood.'" What does 'abstain from things polluted by idols' mean for us today?" Most around the table agreed that it was a personal matter and different for every Christian. None however, were willing to specify what those idols could be. The reactions seem to underline an unease and reluctance to define something that might require us to question our lifestyles let alone change it. If we don't name our idols, they remain unseen and harmless, or so we think. The issue becomes vital for Christians who grapple with defining where secular culture ends and Christianity begins in a largely acculturated Western faith. It is a challenge for young people, in particular, to discern godly voices from the siren's song. In *The Grand Inquisitor Lives*, Alonzo McDonald suggests that: "False gods that are more devious and difficult to deal with are factors that are basically good most of the time. They become idols only when they are misused and pursued to excess."ⁱⁱ

Good things can become idols indeed; have we been captivated unawares?

ⁱ *Idolatry. False Producers in the Bible* sub. Jacques Ellul on *Idolatry*. (T & T Clark, a Continuum imprint London and New York, NY: 2007), p. 230.
ⁱⁱ *No God But God*. Os Guinness, John D. Seel Jr. Editors, Richard Keyes, et al. (Moody Press, Chicago, Ill: 1992), p. 13

CHAPTER 5

THE IDOL SLAYER

"We live in a world that, to the same extent that it more and more rejects the Christian faith, also fabricated for itself more and more idols . . . And I believe that Christians have an enormous service to render to humankind in smashing these idols."

—Andrew Goddard¹

We have established that anything or anyone is a potential idol the moment it diverts our affection from God. And, deep down, none of us desire to suffer bondage and intentionally act against the will of our Lord.

To avert the danger of something or someone becoming an idol, and to slay any idol that besets us, we must resist that object of our obsession and put it in its rightful place. There are ways with which we can redeem the good while rejecting the temptations the enemy places in our path.

It is comforting that Paul states in Romans 7:18b-20, 24: "For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me . . . Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

Here is this champion of God who admits that, although he delights in the laws of God, his inner being is constantly at war for or against sin. In our human condition, our broken, sinful state will be with us until we move from this world into the eternal Kingdom and into the presence of the Lord. "Then what's the point of resisting?" we may ask; it is in this: we can relate to Paul when he cries out: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" But Paul does not end there, then comes his jubilant shout:

¹ *Idolatry. False Producers in the Bible* sub. *Jacques Ellul on Idolatry*. (T & T Clark, a Continuum imprint London and New York, NY: 2007), p. 230.

“Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.” And this is our ultimate consolation; that faced with this tension, through Christ we can overcome, because He has overcome death and the power of sin. No longer do we have to bow to sin.

When an idol is named, it is no longer hidden. It takes courage to name one’s idol(s). The first step is to acknowledge the idol(s) so that it can be dealt with and the road to recovery and forgiveness can be taken.



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Hijacked! Idols in Disguise, is available in print and e-book format [here](#).

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