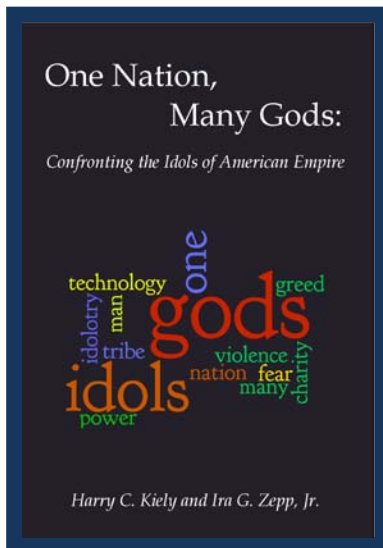


One Nation, Many Gods: Confronting the Idols of American Empire

by Harry C. Kiely and Ira G. Zepp, Jr.



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Publishers Comment:

“For Christians in today’s political climate, what is most often lost is a focus on the principal object of their faith, the radical other that gives and takes away all that we cherish, the things that we may even unwittingly idolize.

This book recovers the perspective of Christian faith in a final reality that endures when all other realities fail. Indeed those realities which we try to give ultimate meaning become idols that war with each other.

We hope you as a reader will find in these chapters what those who have reviewed this book have seen as a way to confront those things that we try to make ultimate, but in the end only lead to our disillusionment or even self-destruction; a position from which to reassert care and responsibility for the well-being of all, especially the innocent suffering among us; and a recovery of the power of the faith that the authors intend us to live out of, the faith that lets us risk our lives to mold the future of America for its whole populace as a symbol to the world.”

Walter Wink, author of award winning “*Engaging the Powers*” and Professor Emeritus Auburn Theological Seminary; and **June Keener Wink**, artist, creative dance instructor and workshop leader say:

“We carry our idols with us. They penetrate our dark dreams. They give birth to our future hopes in ways that deceive what is God’s truth. This book focuses on helping the reader to recognize the depth of damage inherent in worshiping the same gods of fallen empires. We find this a thrilling book.”

David Carrasco, Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the study of Latin America with a joint appointment in the Department of Anthropology, Harvard Divinity School says:

“This book is a rare combination of intellectual insight and prophetic anger, stinging critique and a loving call to justice. It is a cry for dialogue and a trumpet of Christian Hope in the face of an incipient American fascism. It is as though Martin Buber is meeting with Jesus and Jeremiah just on the edge of Dante’s Inferno. But according to Zepp and Kiely that Inferno is not in an epic landscape of literature but rather it is an American territory built and bounded by seven idols and an idolatry of fear. Seldom has a critical Christian theology been applied so directly to the sweeping social dangers and psychic injuries of our Homeland. And yet there is a fundamental commitment to Hope and a call to forgiveness. Herein Ira Zepp has left us the culminating, soaring vision of his theology of love and his ministry of liberation. Herein Harry Kiely continues to preach the Gospel he loves.”

Charles Wallace, Jr., Chaplain and Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Willamette University says:

“What happens when two colleagues (a veteran local church pastor and a former college chaplain/master teacher) weave together their theological and social passions: what they’ve learned from historic spiritual practices, evangelical piety, the social gospel, neo-orthodoxy, liberation theology, the history of religions, and a sophisticated and prophetic interpretation of the biblical narrative? In the hands of Harry Kiely and the late Ira Zepp, the answer is One Nation, Many Gods: Confronting the Idols of American Empire, an unsettling but bracing lovers’ quarrel with the nation and the church, one that ultimately points us toward a just, peaceful, sustainable (and faithful) praxis – and a world to match..”

Dr. Christiana Leahy, Professor of Comparative Government and Chair, Political Science and International Studies Department, McDaniel College says:

“Harry and Ira have miraculously engineered a bridge by which Christian thinkers can traverse over the polluted waters below that are littered with the bastardization of scripture by the extreme right, to the proverbial city on the hill sparkling with social justice, environmental sustainability, corporate responsibility and public policies that address the basic needs of all who call her Home. A remarkable feat and an excellent read for anyone who genuinely cares for the future of the democratic experiment that we call America .”

Susan M. Morrison, Bishop in the United Methodist Church says:

“I grow more and more disturbed by the lack of a justice vision in local churches, not only in worship, but also in the adult studies offered. This book, authored by both a prophetic pastor and a prophetic teacher, challenges us to be about the ministry God calls us to engage in.”

One Nation, Many Gods© is published by Resurgence Publishing™ Corporation. See reverse side for ordering and contact information.

Inside the Cover:

Foreword: The Church in a time of global crisis and understanding of Biblical idolatry.

Part I: The Biblical Background: Traces the Biblical understanding of idolatry through the Old Testament, New Testament and the early church and Constantine; explores what it meant in those contexts to "speak the truth" to political and religious power; articulates through the life of Jesus and the early church what it meant to symbolize through Baptism the adoption of a singular dedication of one's self to the One God.

Part II: America's Golden Calves: Exposes the subtleties and treacherous mine fields of idolatry beyond the surface of power, fear, charity, greed, tribe, technology, violence and the nation itself; unveils the policies, practices and systemic realities in which we as idolaters are trapped; illuminates how this indeed oppresses those who most need care and compassion and counters efforts for justice and peace.

Part III: Is America Headed Toward Fascism? Presents a sobering reflection that illuminates the danger signs and warnings for those who would head off such a global disaster.

Part IV: Concluding Reflections: Offers a practical articulation of the multiple ways one may recover a stance of faith in the One God, both individually and corporately as the Church, and take positive action to practice their faith as one who loves America as a patriot Christian today.

Afterword: Reminds the reader of the life sustaining power of hope for people of faith who would dare to love God first and then love and hold accountable their country.

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About the Authors:

Harry C. Kiely:

Harry C. Kiely is a United Methodist minister who has served as a local pastor in the Washington, D.C. area for more than 30 years. He has been a lifelong social justice advocate for civil rights, world peace, economic equality, health care, and marriage equality. He has written for *Sojourners*, *The Progressive Christian*, *Christian Social Action*, *Engage*, and other publications. He is the author of two books, *Grateful Recovery: Spirituality and the Healing of Addiction*, and *Jesus' Life, Teachings and Ministry* (Cokesbury). Kiely is a graduate of the University of Texas and Union Theological Seminary (NY), where he was influenced by the teachings of Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich and Robert McAfee Brown. He earned a Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C. His most distinguished pastoral work was at Dumbarton United Methodist Church in Washington. He initiated programs that attracted young families that shared his interest in social outreach and the arts, bringing about a significant growth in church membership and social justice activism. Harry and his wife, Arlene, have four sons, two daughters-in-law, two grandsons, and one granddaughter, and reside in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Ira G. Zepp, Jr. (1929-2009):

Ira G. Zepp was professor emeritus of religious studies at McDaniel (formerly Western Maryland) College. After Graduating from Western Maryland College he received his theological degree *magna cum laude* from Drew University and his Ph.D. from St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore. He has studied theology in Edinburgh, Scotland and Gottingen, Germany as well as the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Hartford Seminary and at CIDOC in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Zepp also spent a summer studying Christian-Marxist dialogue in Eastern Europe and was a Fulbright scholar in India in 1967. He has received McDaniel's Distinguished Teaching Award three times, and in 1989 was named Maryland's Professor of the Year as well as National Gold Medalist by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. He is a founding Director Emeritus of Common Ground on the Hill. The Ira & Mary Zepp Center for Nonviolence and Peace Education is a program of Common Ground on the Hill.

This book is dedicated to the memory of

Ira G. Zepp, Jr.

Committed Professor of the Liberal Arts,
Prophetic Voice, Brilliant Scholar,
Faithful Husband and Father.

1929 - 2009