

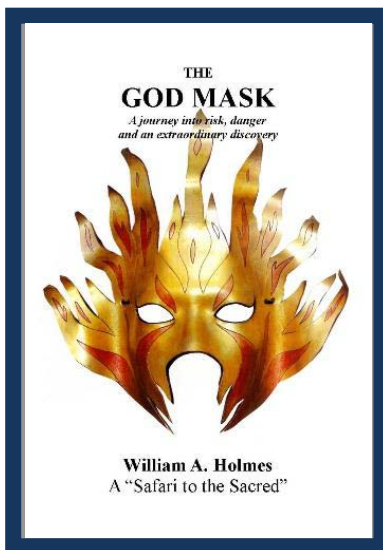
The God Mask:

A journey into risk, danger and an extraordinary discovery

By William A. Holmes

The God Mask:

*A journey into risk, danger and
an extraordinary discovery*



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William A. Holmes has written “The God Mask” as a companion volume to his 2010 book, “Mature Christianity.” While the first book, published in 2010, expanded on the theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Paul Tillich, this second volume personalizes all the more what it means to encounter God in “down to earth,” “real life” and often controversial situations.

A “Safari to the Sacred”

What to expect:

Following a fascinating discussion on the role of masks, Holmes invites the reader to join him on a quest to discover what lies behind the “Ultimate Mask” – the “Mystery” symbolized traditionally as “G” “O” “D.”

The chapters unfold as a hazardous adventure employing the metaphor of a safari and drawing on the wisdom of certain “guides” along the way. In the evenings, around a campfire we share the day’s discoveries and hear from an assortment of characters: Mother Teresa, Trudy, the “Bag Lady,” David Hume, Joseph Wesley Mathews, Jesus Seminar Scholars, etc.

Each day, the safari moves further and further away from the safety of generalizations and theological abstractions. Increasingly, we find ourselves in specific social, political and economic “jungles” where radical caring is required and where “life in Christ” means “being God’s love in the world.”

And, not incidentally, the further we go into these “jungles,” and the more we risk ourselves in human encounters with love and justice, the more the “Mystery” of the “God Mask” is revealed.

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What is Inside

A Word from the Author



About the Author: *Dr. William A. Holmes is Minister Emeritus, United Methodist National Church, Washington D.C. His career spans over four decades as an author, minister, lecturer and television host with titles including Tomorrow's Church (1968); Nonviolence, Origins and Outcomes (2003); A Man Named John F. Kennedy (1964) and articles in the Harvard Divinity Bulletin. He was also the host for the weekly television program,*

My intention with this volume is to get certain values off the written page and into action. The Gospel is not “The word became *book*” but “The word became *flesh*” – that is, “made concrete, specific and acted out in deeds.” Understanding a concept can be important, but unless eventually that concept is *lived*, it’s simply lost as an abstraction.

As I look back over 46 years of preaching, the sermons which “connected” with congregations were the one’s which applied to specific instances and avoided generalities. Some parishioners may have been offended by what I said, but they didn’t leave wondering about what I intended as practical applications.

There will be readers of “The God Mask” who disagree with some of my conclusions and examples. After all, toward the end of the book I talk about “undocumented immigrants,” the “Tea Party,” the “Occupy” movement and other controversial, hot button issues. I tend to take such disagreements as complimentary to the reader and the writer, signaling that at least we have *engaged* each other in the struggle to turn Christian values into ethics. Besides, it will be no compliment to either of us if we simply **agree** on “things in general,” and then *do* nothing.

On these terms then, and through “The God Mask,” I invite you to join me in considering how and when the Mystery of all mysteries – disguised and incognito – becomes personal and is wondrously revealed. This “Safari to the Sacred” is headed, not away from, but into “jungles” of specific, human encounters and ethical applications.

~ Bill Holmes ~

The Chapters

Chapter I: Faces and Masks

Concealing and revealing identities.

Chapter II: The Perilous Journey

Stalked by an “awesome presence”

Chapter III: The Unexpected Stranger

Doubt and Faith belong together

Chapter IV: Campfire Tales

Love: Altering itself for the beloved

Chapter V: Up Close and “Personal”

Loving family, friends and others near

Chapter VI: Far Away and “Personal”

Loving strangers far away

Chapter VII: Praxis as “Leaven”

Working from “within” for radical change

Chapter VIII: Praxis as New Cloth and Wineskins

Creating new social vehicles for radical change

Chapter IX: Conclusion and Celebration

Preparing to embark on the “Great Assignment”

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