

The big question about other faiths?

EMPTY AND EVIL

The worship of other faiths in 1

Corinthians 8-10 and today

By Rohintan K. Mody

The Latimer Trust. 71 pages. £3.99

(or £3.50 from www.latimertrust.org)

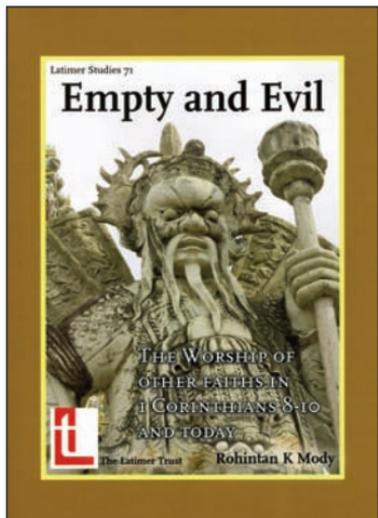
ISBN 978-0-946307-72-2

Empty and Evil addresses the multi-faith society of modern Britain. It assumes that Christians face perplexing situations such as invitations to multi-faith meetings, Hindu weddings, and Muslim social occasions. The difficulties are magnified for converts from false religions.

The author addresses the paradox raised in 1 Corinthians 10.18-22. If idols are nothing ('empty'), then what is wrong in participating in a multi-faith meeting? But if demons are of necessity associated with idolatrous religions ('evil') then there is everything wrong with participating. So, what is the relationship between demons and false religions? The conclusion is that demonic powers of necessity lie behind all false religion. Christians must therefore give exclusive worship to the true God, revealed in Jesus Christ, and must avoid participation in any act of homage of another faith.

The author was converted from an Indian Zoroastrian background, and is an Associate Vicar in the Church of England. His book is one of the Latimer Studies series and appears to be drawn from his PhD thesis. It is systematic and analytical, neither popular nor highly technical, but requires careful reading.

Chapter 1 examines Paul's understanding of idols and demons. An idol is a god that has no objective existence, but demons are real personal supernatural evil beings. The discussion is stimulating but at times speculative and superfluous.



Chapter 2 investigates the relationship between idols and demons. Demons co-opt the worship intended for the idols, regardless of the intention of the worshipper, and are of necessity involved in all false religion.

Chapter 3 draws theological conclusions, rebuts inclusivism, and focuses on pastoral and practical implications. The author applies these conclusions and his personal experience in six real-life case studies. The key pastoral principle is: 'In love, we must point out that it is seriously wrong for any Christian to be involved as a participant in any act that is intended as an act of worship by the member of another faith'.

I recommend *Empty and Evil* for its orthodoxy, the exegetical and theological foundations of its counsel, and for its helpful guidance in actual situations that may be faced in Britain today.

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