

## TriBakery Group: Christians & Kitsch #11

Discussion compiled by Kirk Irwin

### Scripture:

“Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves molded gods: I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 19:4

“...and command them, saying, ‘Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood firm’...And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.”

Joshua 4:3a, 20

“I, *even* I, am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake; and I will not remember your sins.”

Isaiah 43:25

“He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.”

II Kings 18:4

### Quotes:

“The souvenir speaks to a context of origin through a language of longing, for it is not an object arising out of a need or use value; it is an object arising out of the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia.”

Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection, as quoted on p65, A Profound Weakness: Christians and Kitsch

“Ultimately, the meaning of any souvenir is to be found not in its materials or even in its visual content but in the narrative of the journey. It serves as a receptacle for memory and for the nostalgia that arises from leaving the real place and experience behind.”

Betty Spackman, p67, A Profound Weakness: Christians and Kitsch

**Questions:** Share what your most valued “souvenir” is. Does it have a place of visibility in your home? When you see it does it take you back to that time and place where you purchased it? What is the importance of memory in the life of a believer? Do you have “souvenirs” of your spiritual journey?

### Quote:

“Religious jewelry owes its existence in part to the practice of carrying miniature reliquaries that housed a treasured item such as a lock of a saint’s hair or a fragment of their bone...The practice of carrying or wearing a symbol of one’s faith has generated a huge market for an unlimited variety of jewelry designs made of everything from driftwood to the finest gold and precious stones. The many angel pins now for sale in North America are not exclusively Christian in origin, however. They’re based on a conflation of beliefs that mix a ‘New Age’ infatuation with angels in general and the Christian notion that we have guardian angels to protect us. Although Christians would be horrified to be told they were wearing a fetish (which most would associate with the occult practices), they often buy and sell some of the most interesting of these pins, which are essentially good-luck charms in the tradition of rabbit’s feet, four-leaf clovers, horseshoes and mustard seeds.”

Betty Spackman, p72, A Profound Weakness: Christians and Kitsch

**Questions:** When have you or someone you know had a severe attachment to an object or trinket? What has been the reason for that attachment? Is there ever a right time for something like this? What affect should this have on how we present our art? Have any of your pieces ever become ‘souvenirs’ or religious artifacts?

### Quote:

“‘Souveniring’ is like the process of naming. It helps one to own a place or an experience which is otherwise too big to carry away and too expensive to possess in any other way. Unfortunately, most souvenirs are not only proof that the traveler has bought something of the ‘exotic’, the ‘other’, in a foreign place but are evidence too that they have ‘bought into’ the cultural myths propagated by the merchants and the travel agents who have ‘sold them the goods’. Paris is not the Eiffel Tower. Hawaii is not a hula dancer. Holland is not a wooden shoe. What a stretch the mind has to make in order to understand what Hawaii is really like from seeing a six inch dancer....”

Betty Spackman, p78, A Profound Weakness: Christians and Kitsch

**Questions:** Talk about the importance of remembering and not remembering in the Christian life. When is each important?