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Bruce grew up in Lafayette, California and received a BA in Political Science from UCLA as well as a Graduate Gemologist degree from the Gemological Institute of America. After graduating, Bruce operated his family's 100 year-old retail fine jewelry business for twenty-two years. Bruce had a passion for computers and graphic arts, so he changed careers and joined his best friend at a national technical publishing company for seventeen-years as the company's Publisher, where they invented the modern labor law poster industry, including the first "All- On-One Labor Law Poster" and "Labor Law Poster Compliance Plan."

Aside from being the Founder of the website, "My Elevator Pitch for God," Bruce was the co-editor of the book, *My Elevator Pitch For God: Volume 1*, and author of the cookbook titled, *Immediate Chef: No Previous Experience Required*.

Idolizing Idols

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Most people think of the ancient pervasive practice of bowing to carved wooden or stone idols as laughable.¹ Yet the underlying motivations, including the fear of the unknown and the search for meaning, continue to entice many to worship new but less obvious modern "idols."

Throughout history, people have believed that hand-crafted statues could impart spiritual power, while revered idol-makers and religious leaders of the time explained how these inanimate objects wielded mystical influence.

Today, we too can place our faith in mesmerizing, contemporary idols, such as political ideologies (uncritical adherence to a politician's or party's platform), technology (believing every human problem has a technical solution), and the commodification of self-identity (the obsession with "*AI Companions*,"² and personal branding where one's constructed online identity becomes a carefully curated but misleading representation of one's self).

It's important to ask, however, if these present-day idols are really any different from their antecedents? Is it possible that all idols, past and present, can only flourish when people have skewed values or a faulty worldview?³ The underlying fear in challenging deeply held beliefs is often not necessarily the idea itself but the possible loss of the intellectual ground supporting the position. Sadly, to defend against such criticism, contemporary idolaters routinely resort to similar rhetorical tactics that were used by primitive shamans and sorcerers, including the following:⁴

- 1) **Dismissal** - ("*It's settled science*" or "*It's just how the Universe works*"). This tactic shuts down a line of inquiry without having to explain it.
- 2) **Derisive ad hominem attacks** - ("*You don't really believe in God, do you?*" or "*You're not really a young Earth creationist, are you?*"). This tactic, with the goal of discrediting the opponent instead of understanding their views, can quickly shut down discussion by presenting an assertion as an unassailable fact, as opposed to an ongoing line of inquiry, and discourse can easily devolve into personal attacks.
- 3) **Changing the subject** - ("*Wars of religion have killed more people than anything else*" or "*Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?*"). This tactic is a deflection to avoid addressing the core issue.
- 4) **Intellectual outsourcing** - ("*One of the genius professors must understand how this works. It makes no sense to me, but I'm sure they have answers*"). This tactic abdicates personal intellectual responsibility and prevents critical engagement by relying on expert authority. While necessary for modern life, this approach becomes problematic when narratives are accepted because they come from accredited sources, without questioning the underlying data or assumptions behind them.
- 5) **Adding complexity** - This tactic aims to overwhelm the discussion with technical jargon, tangential sub-topics, hypotheticals, and counterarguments, to confuse and exhaust the opponent and prevent the conversation from arriving at a definitive conclusion.

The true delusion isn't our ancestors' practices but our own hubris in believing we have outgrown such follies.⁵ By mocking the past, we blind ourselves to the fact that we still defend our own illogical "idols" as well, with the same fearful and irrational tactics used across millennia.

Footnote:

1. Multitudes around the world still bow before hand-carved images, including Voodooism in Benin, Shintoism in Japan, Buddhism in Thailand, etc.
2. *"Unlike real friends, however, chatbots' social understanding about when to encourage users and when to discourage or disagree with them is not well-tuned. The report details how AI companions have encouraged self-harm, trivialized abuse and even made sexually inappropriate comments to minors."*

Read more about "AI companions" here:

<https://med.stanford.edu/news/insights/2025/08/ai-chatbots-kids-teens-artificial-intelligence.html>

3. A worldview is the framework of beliefs through which an individual interprets the world and interacts with it. Worshippers of contemporary idols have worldviews that allow them to cultivate and pay homage to their modern idols.
4. From Rabbi Yaakov Wolbe's (of Torchweb.org) "Closing Remarks" on page 177 in *Elevator Pitches For God: 70 One-Page Essays By Thought Leaders On Why They Believe*.
5. In chapter 30 of Deuteronomy, on the last day of his life (which Rabbinic Judaism regards as being on the 7th of the month of Adar in the year 1271 BCE), Moses strongly warned the Jewish people how idolatry in any form is abominable, the punishments that would befall those who serve idolatry, and how it is detested by God. Moses said beware and stay vigilant against all forms of idolatry as they can lead to immorality.