



Under the Influence: California's Intoxicating Spiritual and Cultural Impact on America

Monica Ganas

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California culture wields an enormous influence on the rest of the United States and indeed the world. *Under the Influence* explores the hypnotic effect of the Golden State, offering an insider's critique of California culture and showing how Christians can respond to its pervasive influence.

According to Monica Ganas, a lifelong Californian and veteran of the stage and screen, we are intoxicated by a belief system, "California-ism," which drives our worldview and our choices in every area of life. After considering California's religious background and state history, she addresses various aspects of its culture that impact the culture at large, such as television, celebrity, politics, funerals, weddings, cars, and food. Ganas concludes by encouraging us to escape the intoxicating effects of California-ism by aligning ourselves with the truth, beauty, and goodness that surpass understanding.

"As a California native, Monica Ganas skillfully charts the paradoxical terrain of the bellwether state: its mediated myths and trendsetting realities. *Under the Influence* reads like a ride on Disneyland's Soarin' Over California, a sweeping collage of the cultural landscape with personal anecdotes and textual analysis probing the meanings of American popular culture."--**William D. Romanowski**, author, *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*

"Monica Ganas skillfully weaves biography and cultural analysis into a brilliant book. She demonstrates how California's values have overtaken our notions of marriage, funerals, and meals. We're all California dreamin'. *Under the Influence* is a smart and sobering wake-up call."--**Craig Detweiler**, director, Center for Entertainment, Media, and Culture, Pepperdine University

"Displaying her keen intellect, Ganas weaves history, popular culture, and personal story into the tapestry of belief systems and thought patterns that make up the California experience and influence. In prose that's both hard hitting and redemptive, Ganas explores the intoxicating effect of what she calls 'California-ism.' Be warned, this book will touch you."--**Thomas F. Andrews**, former executive director, Historical Society of Southern California

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