



On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding

Michael Novak

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The leaders of the American Revolution, unlike the leaders of the French revolution, did not set out to erase religion. Indeed, the very first act of the Continental Congress was to pray to Divine Providence in the face of the British bombardment of Boston. In establishing a new model of self-government, the Founders believed that they were not only acting according to reason and common sense, but also obeying a religious duty. Benjamin Franklin proposed as their motto: “Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.”

In telling the story of the forgotten—if not deliberately ignored—role of faith in America’s beginnings, Michael Novak probes the innermost religious conviction of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and other of our Founders. He shows that while the American eagle could not have taken flight without the empirical turn of mind embodied in John Locke’s teaching on the ends of government and the consent of the governed, the men who made America also believed that liberty depends as much on faith as on reason.

In the course of his illustrious career, Michael Novak has written several prize-winning books on theology and philosophy. In *On Two Wings* he has created a profound meditation on American history, and on human nature and destiny as well.

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