



Believers, Thinkers, and Founders: How We Came to Be One Nation Under God

Kevin Seamus Hasson

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In *Believers, Thinkers and Founders: How We Came to be One Nation Under God*, Kevin Seamus Hasson—founder and president emeritus of the Becket Fund for Religious liberty—offers a refreshing resolution to the age-old dispute surrounding the relationship of religion and state: a return to first principles.

“The traditional position,” writes Hasson, “is that our fundamental human rights—including those *secured* by the First Amendment—are endowed to us by the Creator and that it would be perilous to permit the government ever to repudiate that point.” America has steadfastly taken the position that there is a Supreme Being who is the source of our rights and the author of our equality. It has repeated that point for well over two hundred years throughout all branches and levels of government.

Never mind, says the secularist challenge. God is, to put it mildly, religious. Religion has no place in Government. So God has no place in Government. It’s just that simple.

But for the government to say there is no creator who endows us with rights, Hasson argues, “is to do more than simply tinker with one of the most famous one-liners in history; it is to change the starting point of our whole explanation of who we are as Americans.”

He proposes a solution straight from the founding: the government acknowledges the existence of God who is the source of our rights philosophically but not religiously. This idea of the “Philosophers’ God” is a conception of God based not on faith but on reason. Hasson suggests that by recognizing the distinction between the creator of the Declaration of Independence and the God of our faith traditions, we may be able to move past the culture wars over religion that have plagued the country.

In *Believers, Thinkers, and Founders*, Hasson examines the idea of the “Philosophers’ God” while looking at a host of issues—including the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer at public events, and prayer in public schools—as he demonstrates how we can still be one nation under God.

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