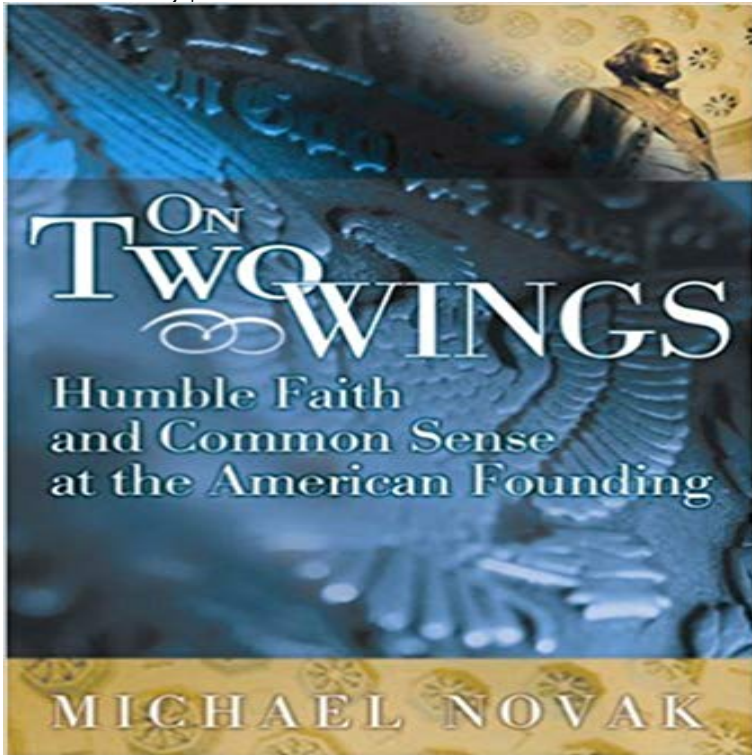


## On Two Wings: Humble Faith and Common Sense at the American Founding



The leaders of the American Revolution were not, like the leaders of the French revolution, secularists. They did not set out to erase religion. Quite the opposite. Michael Novak points out in this brilliant book about the birth of the American idea that the very first act of the Continental Congress in September, 1774, was to pray to Divine Providence for insight on how to respond to news of the British bombardment of Boston. In setting a course for republican self-government, the founders not only believed that they were acting reasonably but that they were carrying out Gods commandment. As Benjamin Franklin said, Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God. Of course there had been religious peoples before in history-including Jews and Christians-who did not see in faith the beacon of civil liberty. Novak points out that the American eagle could not have risen without the empirical turn of mind embodied in John Lockes teaching on the ends of government and the consent of the governed. Yet as he also shows, the founders believed that liberty depended on certain habits of the heart-and that these in turn depended on faith as well as reason. Novak probes the innermost convictions of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and the others who helped the American eagle to take wing. He shows how they were able to find common ground by appealing to the God of the Hebrews. He traces what happened to this Hebrew metaphysics as the world of the founders became the world of modernity. In the course of his career, Michael Novak has written several prize-winning books on theology and philosophy. Now, in *On Two Wings*, he has written a profound work on American history and on human nature and destiny as well.

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