



Bleached Faith: The Tragic Cost When Religion Is Forced into the Public Square (Stanford Law Books)

Steven Goldberg

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Public recognition of religion has been a part of American political life from the beginning of our country, and that is not going to change. But in recent years, the effort by some to challenge the long held separation of church and state by imposing religion in the public sphere has caused more harm than good.

Along the lines of other incredulous "neo-Enlightenment" books, *Bleached Faith* makes a forceful case that the gravest threat to real faith comes from those who would water down religion in order to win the dubious honor of forcing it into public buildings and classrooms.

The freedom of religion we enjoy in the United States, both as a matter of law and practice, is extraordinary by any measure. However, when American courts allow the government to insert religious symbolism in public spaces, real religion is the loser. Goldberg argues that people on both sides of this debate should resist this corruption of religion. The book provides a survey of the legal and political environment in which battles over the public display of the Ten Commandments, the teaching of intelligent design in our schools, and the celebration of religious holidays take place.

Goldberg firmly maintains that, "if American religion becomes a watered-down broth that is indistinguishable from consumerism and science, we will have no one to blame but ourselves. My opposition to pushing religion into the courthouse and the biology classroom does not stem from hostility to religion. I am opposed to bleached faith—the empty symbolism that diminishes the power of real belief."

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