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0521533287 - Knowledge and Belief in America: Enlightenment Traditions and Modern Religious Thought

Edited by William M. Shea and Peter A. Huff

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The Enlightenment values of individual autonomy, democracy, and secularizing reason appear to conflict with the religious traditions of community, authority, and traditional learning. Yet in American history the two heritages have been intertwined since the colonial era: The development of the Enlightenment has been influenced by community-based thinking, and religious institutions have adopted to some extent critical methods and a democratic ethos even within their own walls.

This volume brings together the work of a distinguished group of theologians, intellectual historians, literary critics, and philosophers to explore the interaction between Enlightenment ideals and American religion. The Enlightenment's effect on the major religious traditions, including the Catholic Church, evangelical Protestantism, and Judaism, is examined. Also highlighted is religion in the thinking of such representative figures as Edwards, Franklin, Emerson, Lincoln, Santayana and the pragmatists, Stevens, and Eliot. The collection concludes with a three-part discussion of the nature of the "post-Enlightenment."

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# *Knowledge and belief in America*

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WILLIAM M. SHEA  
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PETER A. HUFF



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## Foreword



This book is the result of a Woodrow Wilson Center project on the place of religion in modern American culture and intellectual life. Thanks are due to many whose patient cooperation made possible the completion of this volume—first among them the scholarly contributors. A planning committee composed of Richard J. Bernstein, James T. Kloppenberg, William M. Shea, John E. Smith, and David Tracy sketched out the basic rationale and terms of reference for the collaborative effort. The Center is pleased to acknowledge the support of the Exxon Education Fund, without which the undertaking of the project would not have been possible. Finally, a special word of gratitude is due to William M. Shea, the senior editor of this book. He had more to do with bringing it into being than anyone else, and when occasionally the project faltered, he steadied it. The volume's writers and readers equally are in his debt.

MICHAEL J. LACEY  
Director, Division of United States Studies,  
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