

Duquesne University

## Duquesne Scholarship Collection

---

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian  
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly  
Excellence and Professor of Law

---

6-9-2008

### June 9, 2008: More on Michael Hampson

Bruce Ledewitz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

---

Title: More on Michael Hampson

Date: 2008-06-09T16:52:00.002-04:00

6/9/2008--Michael Hampson responded to my last posting, which as he wrote, is testament to Google Alerts. I love this instant quality. Hampson responds as a good author should. He writes, "Get the book". As a fellow author, I appreciate a man with his eye on the ball. The full title of the book is, *God Without God: Western Spirituality Without the Wrathful King*. The excerpt in *Tikkun* magazine did not make clear that the God of presumptive monotheism is not just the wrathful king, but any manifestation of human qualities, such as personhood and will. Hampson clarifies that in his blog response. The book's subtitle is a little misleading. Now it is true that all Christian theologians, not to mention Jewish and Muslim, have always cautioned that human attributes are not applicable to God. Aquinas wrote, for example, that it is false to claim that God exists. God does not "will" in the sense that human beings do. To this extent, Hampson is orthodox. But as C.S. Lewis said, the claim that God is Beyond Personality (the title of Lewis' book of 1945) must mean that God is more than personality, not less. Not impersonal. God is not will, but more than will. God does not exist in the sense we do because God really does exist and we are mere shadows. And so forth. Thus, to move from human attributes to "mystery," as Hampson does, is at once faithful to the tradition and quite potentially inconsistent with it at the same time. The heart of the Christian message is, as the nutty people show on their signs at sporting events, John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." This is certainly a mystery from the Christian perspective, but it is also an intelligible action. In that sense, it is quite human-like. Hampson and I may be close to agreement on a lot of this. I have to read his book and he has to read mine. (He could begin right now with the manuscript if there were some way to get it to him). The difference is that I felt I had to leave the biblical religious tradition, while he feels free to stay. Hampson says one other very important thing. The problem with progressive religion of most kinds is that its proponents cross out the tenets of the faith one by one. Hampson wants to proceed by going deeper into the heart of faith. This is clearly right. Whatever religion promises, it promises total engagement. The alpha and omega. Religion can never be less. It must show us that the lives we currently live are less.