

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

---

11-23-2017

### November 23, 2017: David Brooks Gets the Need for Hallowed Secularism

Bruce Ledewitz

*Duquesne University*, ledewitz@duq.edu

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



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

---

#### Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2017). November 23, 2017: David Brooks Gets the Need for Hallowed Secularism. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/1124>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact [beharyr@duq.edu](mailto:beharyr@duq.edu).

Title: David Brooks Gets the Need for Hallowed Secularism

Date: 2017-11-23T06:32:00.001-05:00

11/23/2017—Happy Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving has always stood as the one religious holiday that secularism has been able to assume. This is surprising, since giving thanks is an essentially religious attitude. Thanks has to be given to someone or something. For the early actors in the holiday, that would have been the author of life—God or the Great Spirit. And now? The hallowed secularist has no problem giving thanks for this universe we did not create that gave us life and sustains us. That kind of deep cosmology is not supernatural and is only put off by the atheism and materialism that insists the universe does not care about your purpose. Why take that attitude? The universe made beings who have purpose. So, don't assume the universe does not care. As CS Lewis might have said, the universe went to a lot of trouble to create you like that. This is reconstruction of the culture. David Brooks wrote yesterday in the PG, here, that elites do not get the need for moral formation. We are losing those institutions—primarily caring, loving, stable families. The elites provide those but then insist that individualism is all that is necessary—economic individualism on the right and lifestyle individualism on the left. This is called naked liberalism. Brooks wrote that the young know this is not enough, but people over 40 don't know it. Brooks should get out more. People at Duquesne know it, which is why we could have our symposium there. And it was in that spirit that I wrote hallowed secularism. But, returning to my story above, Thanksgiving reminds us that it is cosmology, not morality, that is needed. Those moral institutions themselves must rest on something. Brooks does understand this--he talks about re-enchanting these formative institutions, but it is clear that he does not have a feel for how this happens.