



Our Constitution: The Myth That Binds Us

Eric Black

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Is the Constitution a myth? If that question strikes you as blasphemous, you confirm the thesis of this brightly written book, which offers a lively new perspective on an old but timely subject. Eric Black suggests that the Constitution is not at all what we like to think it is—a fixed body of written law that changes incrementally through amendments and court interpretations. Nor is it a road map to equality and justice for all. What is the Constitution, then? Black suggests that it is the holy writ of a national civil religion, in which Americans expect to find the answers to their most troubling questions. It is a mirror that reflects our history, a medium through which each generation turns its values, attitudes, and prejudices into law. Most of all, it is a myth that gains its power from our belief in it. Based on a series of articles written in 1987, this book presents a hypothesis that no historian or legal scholar would have developed. Bringing the irreverence and inquisitiveness of a journalist to the subject, Black has rethought the story of the framing, the addition of the Bill of Rights, and the relationship between our Constitution and our history. The result is a fresh and clear-eyed explanation of how the Constitution has worked and why it still works today. Eric Black has been with the *Star Tribune* of Minneapolis–St. Paul for ten years as a state reporter, feature writer, and project reporter.

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