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# American Beliefs: What Keeps a Big Country and a Diverse People United

*John Harmon McElroy*

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# American Beliefs: What Keeps a Big Country and a Diverse People United

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**American Beliefs: What Keeps a Big Country and a Diverse People United** John Harmon McElroy
Why do so many different people with widely dissimilar ideas and customs get along as Americans? In *American Beliefs*, John McElroy identifies and explains those essential ideas that promote the unity of a vast nation and a diversified people?because they have been shared and acted upon by generations of Americans. Tracing these beliefs historically from their origins in the earliest experiences of the American colonists, Mr. McElroy shows how they became continuing convictions that together form a pattern distinct from those of other peoples. Work, he argues, shaped the primary beliefs of Americans, for the task of the early settlers was first of all to survive in a new wilderness. He then goes on to discuss beliefs that grew from the experiences of immigrants, from life on the frontier, and from the ideas that Americans developed about religion and morality, politics, human nature, and the workings of society. It is not birthplace or skin color that makes a person an American, Mr. McElroy observes, but a common behavior based upon principles of freedom and equality, individuality and responsibility, improvement and practicality. *American Beliefs* is a book greatly needed, a powerful antidote to decades of historical and political writings that have concentrated on the differences among Americans.

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