

knowledges a polite but fragile peace observed between the two that was famously broken by the Scopes trial in 1925. William Jennings Bryan, a staunch fundamentalist Christian, and Clarence Darrow, viewed as, at best, an agnostic fought a courtroom battle over the teaching of evolution in Tennessee public schools. This brought the head/heart tension into open sight—and open argument. Wills argues, reasonably, I think, that the gap between the two not only remains but that the camp-followers of fundamental-

ism are a danger to the republic in the form, say, of the present struggles over abortion rights, sex education and homosexuality. (I predict the next round will feature adoption procedures, euthanasia and the legality of torture.)

The book's first section is a helpful outline of Christian Heritage in America; however, I think most readers will be drawn to the second part because it addresses the Christian dilemma of discerning between our duties informed by the head and our responsi-

bilities dictated by the heart. However, as Wills shows us, this has for a very long time been the dilemma for Christians in America. He argues cogently, I think, that if we can keep the tension between head and heart in right balance, so much the better for the country.

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THE GOD STRATEGY: HOW RELIGION BECAME A POLITICAL WEAPON ON AMERICA

BY DAVID DOMIKE AND KEVIN COE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 240 PAGES

WHY POLITICS NEEDS RELIGION: THE PLACE OF RELIGIOUS ARGUMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

BY BRENDAN SWEETMAN
INTERVARSITY PRESS, 256 PAGES

THE MYTH OF A CHRISTIAN NATION: HOW THE QUEST FOR POLITICAL POWER IS DESTROYING THE CHURCH

BY GREGORY A. BOYD
ZONDORVAN, 208 PAGES

UNDER GOD: RELIGION AND AMERICAN POLITICS

BY GARRY WILLS
SIMON & SCHUSTER, 448 PAGES

Reviewed by Nicholas Richardson

Of these four books, all by professing Christians, three are recent works of relatively narrow focus. One, *The God Strategy*, statistically analyzes religion's role in presidential discourse since 1933. In particular, the authors use original research to point to a marked increase in references to God in presidential speeches, and a shift in presidential invocations of God from the relatively neutral act of *petitioning* to the "I have-a-direct-line-so-there-is-no-room-for-argument" *prophetic*. They conclude that this is to the detriment of the political process. One may or may not agree with the conclusion, but the factual bulk of the book breaks new and valuable ground.

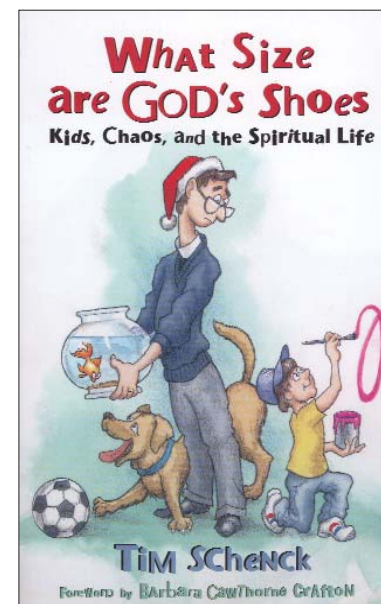
By way of contrast, the author of *Why Politics Needs Religion* claims that religion has been entirely shut out of the public square by secularism (which he argues is an irrational religion in its own right). He then, in essence, proceeds to argue for the closest thing to a theocratic state that he thinks he

can get away with. Beneath the text's surface lurks an unspoken but ever present nostalgia for the days when Rome snapped its fingers and governments scurried to do its bidding. Even if you are inclined to agree with the author's conclusions—he is realistic enough to settle for any theocracy, it doesn't have to emanate from Rome—this book, being well-nigh unreadable, will do little to reinforce your point of view.

Meanwhile, from an Evangelical pastor comes a book that makes a passionate case, in relatively crystalline prose, for the separation of church and state and for the shunning of political power by professing Christians *qua* Christians. *The Myth of a Christian Nation's* subtitle is *How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church*, and it is from this viewpoint that the author approaches his thesis—that Christianity is not about temporal power and enforcement, but about the expansion of the love-filled Kingdom of God, and that "the hope of the world lies not in . . . the kingdom of the world . . . [but in] . . . a kingdom . . . not of this world . . . that operates with a completely different understanding of power." The author is not, however, arguing for retreat from the world, but for the involvement of Christians in it from the bottom up, in lives of exemplary service to others. This book may not break new ground theologically, but it is interesting for the nature of its source, and is a good, readable exposition of its point of view.

The fourth book, *Under God* by Garry Wills, dates from 1990—long enough ago that the rise of the religious right had not yet fully made its mark. It grew out of the author's coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign, and so to a considerable extent looks at religion in America through the varied lenses of Bush senior, Jesse Jackson, Gary Hart, Michael Dukakis and Dan Quayle. At the same time it goes way beyond its origins to deliver a sweeping, masterful and occasionally disorienting historical and thematic survey of religion in American public life from colonial times to the date of its publication.

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WHAT SIZE ARE GOD'S SHOES? KIDS, CHAOS, AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

BY TIM SCHENCK
MOREHOUSE, 131 PAGES

Reviewed by Tina Donovan

Tim Schenck, rector of All Saints, Briarcliff Manor has written a charming book of reflections on family, faith and parenthood. Parents will identify with Schenck's tales of pet ownership, superheroes and the dreaded snow day. Schenck sees the sacred in the everyday things of life and points the reader in the same direction.

From the title essay:

As I'm faced with question after question about what God looks like, I find myself answering "yes" to most of these questions. Is God Tall? Yes, and short too. Does God have big shoes? Yes, and small ones too. Because the fullness of God is the ultimate "yes." If God is in everything, then God is both tall and short, big and small, and every size in-between. God has a face and yet God does not have a face. God is a tree or a flower or a star and yet God is so much more than any of these.

John's gospel tells us simply that "God is love." It's a simple straightforward statement, a three-word sentence. "God is love." And maybe that's what God looks like: love. It may be an elderly couple holding hands a mother cradling her child, the sharing of tears with a grieving friend. Love comes in many forms and appears in many faces. And so does God.

Schenck illustrates the many faces of God in his reflections.

Donovan is the bishop's deputy for public affairs.

