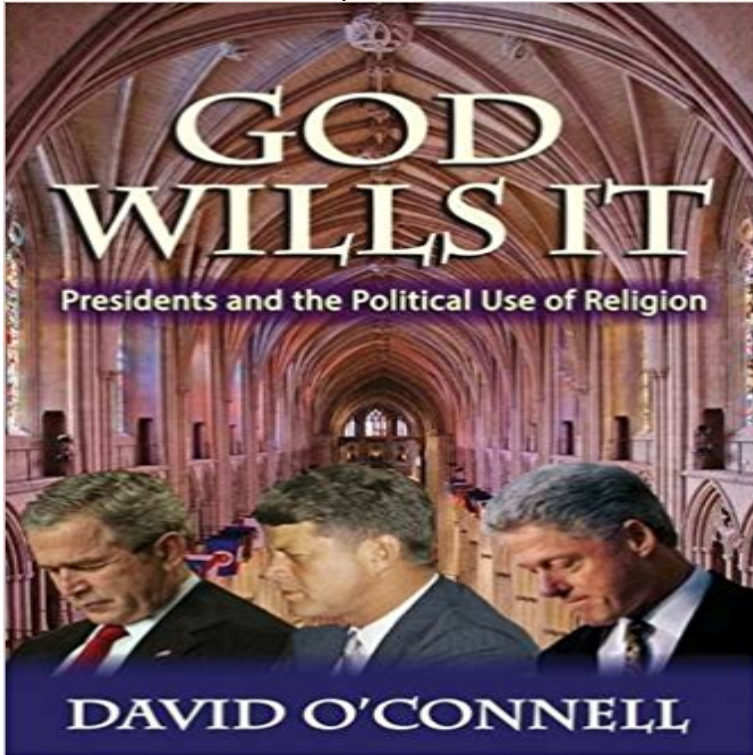


# God Wills It: Presidents and the Political Use of Religion (American Presidents Series)



God Wills It is a comprehensive study of presidential religious rhetoric. Using careful analysis of hundreds of transcripts, David O'Connell reveals the hidden strategy behind presidential religious speech. He asks when and why religious language is used, and when it is, whether such language is influential. Case studies explore the religious arguments presidents have made to defend their decisions on issues like defense spending, environmental protection, and presidential scandals. O'Connell provides strong evidence that when religious rhetoric is used, public opinion typically goes against the president, the media reacts harshly to his words, and Congress fails to do as he wants. He closes with a fascinating chapter on the efficacy of religiously themed speech. God Wills It shows that presidents do not use religious language because they want to. Presidents like Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush were quite uncomfortable using faith to promote their agendas. They did so because they felt they must. God Wills It shows that even if presidents attempt to call on the deity, the more important question remains: Will God come when they do?

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