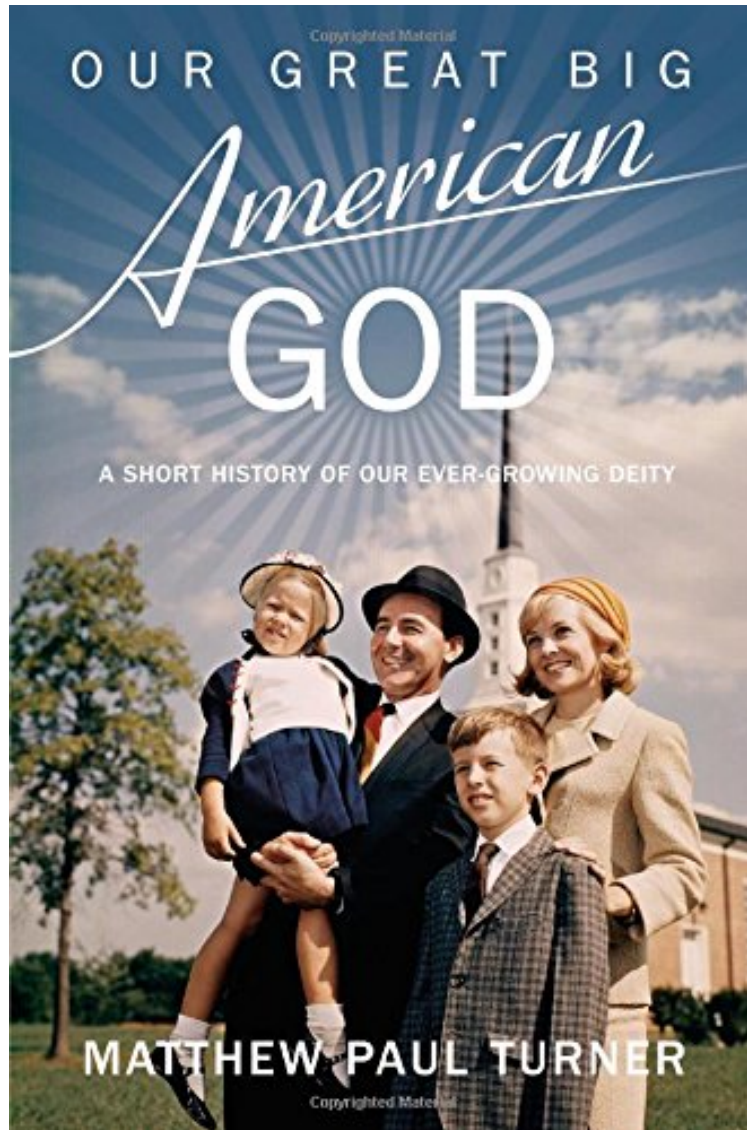


[Free download] Our Great Big American God: A Short History of Our Ever-Growing Deity

## Our Great Big American God: A Short History of Our Ever-Growing Deity

*Matthew Paul Turner*

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#1095003 in Books 2014-08-19 2014-08-19 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.50 x 1.00 x 6.50l, .0 #File Name: 1455547344256 pages | File size: 33.Mb

**Matthew Paul Turner : Our Great Big American God: A Short History of Our Ever-Growing Deity** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Our Great Big American God: A Short History of Our Ever-Growing Deity:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Church JesterBy TomWe're all familiar with Matthew Paul Turner by now. His shtick is to critique the foibles of evangelicalism/fundamentalism with snarky - make that SNARKY -

edginess and scoffing humor. But every court needs its jester and Turner fills the niche. In this latest effort Turner cynically examines the history of Evangelical Christianity in America from the New England Puritans to Mark Driscoll. Of course, Turner had a LOT of dubious history to pick from including the antebellum church's support of slavery, Pentecostal snake handling, preoccupation with prophetic end times, idolatrous American nationalism, Jim Bakker, Jerry Falwell, health and wealth evangelists on TBN, etc. You'll get mad at Turner for his irreverence on one page and laugh along with him as he hits the nail on the head on the next. Yes, the church in America created widely-shared perceptions of God that often had little connection to the God of the Bible. Yet, despite the sheer ridiculousness of many of the beliefs, attitudes, and practices of American believers and despite all the messiness of intra and inter denominational squabbles, the Lord has accomplished His purposes. I definitely share Turner's annoyance with American Christianity's fervent embrace of nationalism. The short of it is that Christians in this country were taught from the pulpits to view America as God's new covenant chosen nation. As Turner points out, this attitude served the country's leaders and capitalists extremely well. I'm not one to compliment the Jehovah's Witnesses cult but I do believe their teachings regarding politics, governments, and nationalism fit the New Testament model a lot more closely than the red, white, and blue jingoistic patriotism of many Evangelical and Fundamentalist churches (1 Peter 2:11). I hesitatingly recommend this book. Sure, Turner's choices of what constitutes the major themes of the American Christian story are interesting, informative, and even funny at times but I often cringed at his scoffing, as if the work of the Holy Spirit among imperfect believers is something to be laughed at with contempt. Yet, with Falwellian hyper-nationalism as a prime example, some of our foibles do deserve a critical, Dennis Miller-ish thrashing. Turner covers about 400 years of American Christian history in 220 pages so buckle your seatbelt. If history's not your thing the numerous names, places, and dates may be a bit overwhelming. Matthew Paul? What's up with that? "Matt" would be fine for most guys. Oops! Sorry. This book is starting to rub off on me. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. American's obsessed with religion By Reid McCormick God and country. Take a drive around the highways of America and within minutes you can spot a bumper sticker or two that proclaims love for God and country. On my commute, my wife and I would play a game: who could spot the first "in not of this world" bumper sticker. She usually wins within the first three miles. In the United States, religion and patriotism are two ends of the same stick. It is unfathomable to be one but not the other. Can you be a patriotic atheist? All Americans have a complicated relationship with religion, not just the religious or non-religious. Though I wholeheartedly believe that the United States is not a "Christian nation," religion definitely impacts everyday matters in America. I picked up *Our Great Big American God* via a recommendation from a colleague after discussing the role of Christianity in culture. The book is great at explaining the theology of certain groups throughout American history, starting with the Puritans and ending with the Moral Majority. Each group left significant on America, however, the lasting impacts were not really discussed in the book. I guess I was looking for more of an outsider's view of Christianity in American history. Additionally, I felt the author tried to throw in some wit here and there and it typically fell flat. At times he would address God like an independent figure and other times treat God like a figment of the collective's imagination. All in all, it felt disjointed. The book is good with lots of resources, it just did not fit my taste. I'm now more interested in the resources he used rather than this book. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A pointedly biased account of a truly fascinating history By justonesmallvoice I have to admit, I devoured this book in a few sittings. Turner does a good job of culling fascinating facts and excerpts from a broad range of sources, and he did begin to answer the question I purchased the book for, which was how the contemporary evangelical Conservative version of Jesus in America had become so different from the Jesus I'd met and fallen in love many years ago. I could have done without the author's many opinions about various groups and movements, though. I think I would have enjoyed the reading more if he had allowed me the freedom to draw own conclusions from the array of sources and quotes he so diligently collected. Sometimes I found the tone judgemental and sarcastic, which saddened me and seemed to be a disservice to the book as a whole.

Americans love God. We stamp God on our money, our bumper stickers, and our bodies. With a church on nearly every street, it's hard to deny our country's deep connection with the divine. Yet culture critic Matthew Paul Turner says that God didn't just change America-America changed God. As a result, do we even recognize the "real" God? Whip-smart and provocative, Turner explores the United States' vast influence on God, told through an amazing true history of faith, politics, and evangelical pyrotechnics. From Puritans to Pentecostals, from progressives to megapastors, Turner examines how American history and ideals transformed our perception of God. Fearless and funny, this is the definitive guide to the American experience of the Almighty—a story so bizarre, incredible, and entertaining that it could only be made in the U.S.A. No matter what your political or religious affiliation, this book will challenge and delight with its razor sharp wit, social commentary, and savvy historical insight. It will make you reconsider the way you think about America as a "Christian nation," and help you re-imagine a better future for God and country. Ultimately, Turner dares to ask: Does God control the future of America—or is it the other way around?

"Fiendishly clever and meticulously sourced."?Library Journal, Starred "Engaging history that turns a penetrating eye

on how God has been shaped to fit the varieties of faith in America... An energetic presentation of our complicated relationship with God."?Kirkus s"With wit and captivating narrative style, Turner takes a historical look at the ways Americans have been shaped by our faith and how the development of the American empire has affected our perception of God. His work offers a deeper look at what it means to be a Christian in the United States."?Relevant Magazine"Whether you're a conservative Christ follower or a seeker straddling the fence of what to believe, Turner's book will challenge all that you've assumed and presumed to be historically accurate about America's founding religious voices."?Book Reporter"Matthew Paul Turner has written a fascinating biography of God-specifically God's sojourn in America. This book is enlightening, funny and filled with so many historical insights, I found myself uttering 'Aha!' at least twice per page."?A. J. Jacobs, New York Times bestselling author of *The Year of Living Biblically*"OUR GREAT BIG AMERICAN GOD by Matthew Paul Turner combines history, social commentary and good writing into a powerful work that tells us just why we Americans are all so crazy-God made us do it! If you want to understand America, read this book."?Frank Schaeffer, author, *And God Said, "Billy!"*"A delightful overview of American church history with a perfect blend of sarcasm, irreverence, and love. Illuminating, engaging, and playful, this book is the best thing that has happened to America's God since, well, America. You will love this book, provided you're not a Calvinist."?Ed Cizewski author, *The Good News of Revelation and A Christian Survival Guide*"Whip-smart, wry, acerbic, and surprisingly tender, OUR GREAT BIG AMERICAN GOD is a grand family tree of the union between God and America. As a Canadian who is often baffled by-while still very influenced by-this great big American God, I found Turner's book enlightening, bold, and downright funny."?Sarah Bessey, author of *Jesus Feminist*"I read Matthew Paul Turner books for two reasons, he's been a good friend for years and his ideas always challenge me. The question, "Who have I made God out to be?" is a critical one to wrestle with, and this book provides the gym for the match."?Jon Acuff, New York Times bestselling author of *Start*"In this book Matthew Paul Turner gives us a glimpse into how the church in America has been trying its best to destroy Christianity, and gives us some hope that it might just survive regardless."?Peter Rollins"With humor and refreshing candor, Turner has once again challenged the status quo, dared us to all to challenge our pre-conceived notions of God, and succeeded in bringing our eyes back to a God that just simply loves us all."?Timothy Kurek, author of the bestselling book, *The Cross in the Closet*"Who knew I could have this much fun reading about Puritans, Great Awakenings, and Jerry Falwell? Who knew a historical book about American Christianity could make me laugh out loud and still cringe at my own hypocrisy? Matthew Paul Turner's story of America's God may make you uncomfortable. It may even offend you. But you will walk away from this book wiser. You will long to know a God outside of culture and time, a God unmarked by humanity's stain."?Micha Boyett, Author of *Found: A Story of Questions, Grace, and Everyday Prayer*"The pages are packed full of history, but Turner's approachable and cheeky writing style make it truly entertaining. It's funny, provocative and exceptionally well-written. A must-read." ?Nish Weiseth, author of *Speak: How Your Story Can Change the World*, Editor in Chief, deeperstory.comAbout the AuthorMatthew Paul Turner is the author of *Churched*, *The Christian Culture Survival Guide*, and *Everything You Need To Know Before College*. Before he began writing and speaking full-time, he served as editor of CCM and music and entertainment editor of Crosswalk.com. He and his wife Jessica live in Nashville, Tennessee.