

War and “Christian Right” Fundamentalism

A Review of Chris Hedges' Christian Fascism

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Chris Hedges is a journalist who for two decades was a foreign correspondent for the New York Times spending much of his time reporting from conflict zones in El Salvador, the Middle East and from Serbia covering the Balkan wars of the 1990s that divided and destroyed a country under the guise of humanitarian intervention providing cover for naked imperialism. There it allowed NATO (meaning the US) to expand into Central and Eastern Europe to keep predatory capitalism on the march for markets, resources and cheap labor everywhere using wars to get them and eliminate “uncooperative” heads of state like Slobodan Milosevic who was kidnapped, Mafia/Mossad-style, by the ICTY kangaroo court in the Hague, hung out to dry when he got there, and in the end effectively or, in fact, murdered to shut him up and prevent ugly truths coming out about what the conflict was really about and who the real criminals were.

The wars and subsequent show-trials had nothing to do with myths about it fed us by Western media. Those wanting the truth can find it in excellent books like Diana Johnstone's *Fools' Crusade*; the extensive research and writings of Edward Herman, Noam Chomsky, Michael Parenti, law professor Michael Mandel; and the newest book out on the subject titled *Travesty: The Trial of Slobodan Milosevic and the Corruption of International Justice* by British journalist John Laughland. Edward Herman wrote a superb review of the book in the April, 2007 issue of *Z Magazine* now available in which he pointedly says “the rules of the (illegally constituted) ICTY (established by the US and UK) stood Nuremberg on its head” and Laughland states “instead of applying existing international law, the ICTY has effectively overturned it” to hide NATO's crimes and allow more of the same playing out now in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

The Christian Right supports these type crimes and motives for them readers will understand from Hedges' new book. He's also written many articles and is the author of four books including his bestselling *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* drawing on his experiences in the conflicts he covered describing how people and nations behave in wartime. The book was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for nonfiction. His newest book is *American Fascists – The Christian Right and the War on America* published in 2007 and subject of this review. It's an incisive examination of the huge threat extremist Christian fascists pose to a shaky free society most people in the US take for granted but no longer will after reading this important book.

Hedges was educated at Colgate University and received a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School. For a time he was a seminarian and is now a senior fellow at the Nation Institute as well as a writer and lecturer at Princeton University where he teaches in the Program for American Studies. He was also an early vocal critic of the Bush administration's

plan to attack, invade and occupy Iraq characterizing war as “the most potent narcotic invented by humankind” while professing not to be a pacifist.

This review will cover the essence and flavor of American Fascists beginning with some background on the Christian right, its influence, and danger it poses that Hedges covers in detail. He said he wrote the book out of anger and fear of the fundamentalist Christian Right seeking to establish theocratic dominion over society in America in the name of God and is using the Republican party as their vehicle to do it. He compares the movement’s messianic mission to Italian and German fascism of the last century cloaking itself in Christianity and patriotism as their way to gain political power under theocracy’s literal meaning from the Greek words “Theos” meaning “God” and “cratin/crazy” meaning to rule.

They’re not kidding and neither is the risk they’ll gain control of government with some observers in Washington believing they already have it including journalist/commentator Bill Moyers saying “for the first time in our history, ideology and theology hold a monopoly of power in Washington.” Some call them “The Christian Mafia” noting they’re well-funded by and allied with wealthy, powerful hard right businessmen like beer magnate Joseph Coors and Amway founder Richard DeVos, Sr. Hedges calls them American Fascists, and his powerful book leaves no doubt how great a threat they are to our cherished liberties in a free society now in great jeopardy. Below is an explanation of the Christian Right and fundamentalist movement overall before getting into the book.

The Christian Right and Its Fundamentalist Movement

The Christian or Religious Right is broadly defined to include adherents of the radical or hard right embracing their kind of extremist political, economic, social and religious ideology falsely called conservative which is a relative term referring philosophically to favoring traditional values including libertarian ones centered on the right of everyone to be master of his or her own fate.

Earlier, sociologist scholar Sara Diamond wrote extensively on the rise of right wing groups in the country providing readers with a wealth of information based on her firsthand research. In her seminal 1995 book, *Roads to Dominion*, she traced the various movements over the past 50 years identifying four types she discovered:

1. The anti-communist conservative movement that in the 1970s included moral traditionalism of the emerging Christian Right.
2. The racist Right including the KKK and other segregationist groups and later the paramilitary white supremacist movement.
3. The Christian Right with its evangelical roots, and
4. Neoconservatives with roots in the Cold War and Democrat party later finding a new home in the Republican party under Ronald Reagan.

Diamond explained these movements involved scores of organizations, not monolithic in beliefs, who nonetheless share a common set of policy preferences that unite them listing three core areas – the economy, the “nation-state in global context (military and diplomatic),” and moral norms relating to race and gender. The movements are also unified in their advocacy of free-market capitalism, anticommunism (now anything left of center), US worldwide military hegemony, traditional morality, superiority of native-born white male

Christian Americans, and the traditional nuclear family. In addition, Diamond lists what she calls the “three pillars of the US Right” calling them “tendencies, not absolutes” – libertarianism, anticommunist militarism (now all liberal/progressive/leftist non-extremist Christian ideology), and traditionalism.

In her book, Diamond included a detailed history of the Christian Right explaining how it came to be the largest, most influential movement on the far right dominating policy-making in Republican-led governments and especially the one not yet in power under George W. Bush. She explained it all in over 300 fact-crammed pages and another 100 pages of notes and references. It’s important background information summarized here briefly to set the stage for Hedges important account of what the Christian Right is up to today, why it matters, and why this dominant movement threatens freedom and democracy in America and the values most here hold dear, including most of the 70 million evangelicals, a minority of whom are radical ideologues selling their dogma of hate and domination to convert the others and destroy non-believers.

Our Secular State Founding Principles

Christians founded America believing church and state should be separated, and Jefferson called for “a wall of separation” between them in 1802 after freedom of religion became part of the First Amendment to the Constitution. Today that bedrock founding principle is jeopardized by the extremist Christian Right. If they get their way, they’ll tear down that wall with considerable public support from the 40% in the country polls say take the Bible literally, and nearly one-third believe in the “rapture” as Hedges explains in his book. The notion comes from conservative Protestant eschatology denoting the final happening when “good Christians” on earth are saved and “raptured” to heaven to be with Jesus in eternal immortality while non-believers are doomed to a more hellish, less “rapturous” fate Hedges characterizes as suffering “unspeakable torments below.”

These believers and all others are entitled to their views, but the Constitution forbids them forcing them on others. Earlier Supreme Courts agreed in decisions requiring a “wall of separation” between church and state prohibiting the adoption of any state religion and requiring government to avoid undue involvement in religion, its trappings or expressions.

That status was put in jeopardy following the introduction in Congress of the “Constitution Restoration Act of 2004.” It was then reintroduced in near-identical form in 2005, never passed, and now awaits its fate in the Democrat-led 110th Congress or a future one that may or may not let it die. If it’s ever adopted in its present form, it will turn the country into a de facto theocracy despite its supporters’ denial. Don’t believe them as getting this passed is key to the Christian Right’s mission to turn America into a fascist theocracy where constitutional law is abolished in favor of extremist Christian dogma Dominionists like Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, James Dobson and others in the movement want to be the supreme law of the land.

In their world, under their law, practitioners of other faiths will be lawbreakers including about 75 million non-Christians and many others of the faith not willing to go along with their interpretation of it. The “Constitution Restoration Act of 2005” will also deny the Supreme Court’s right to challenge anyone in or affiliated with federal, state or local government acknowledging the Christian “God (in their canon) as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government.” Henceforth, any judge at any level interpreting the new law differently would be subject to impeachment and prosecution in the United (extremist

Christian) States of (fascist) America ruled by people like Pat Robertson and others like him.

American Fascists Masquerading as True Christians – Defiling the Teachings of Christ, His Twelve Apostles and Others of the Faith

Hedges begins his book with a powerful quote from Blaise Pascal that “Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction.” Until the modern era, the best examples in Christendom were the first Crusades when Popes like Urban II sanctioned holy wars between 1095 – 1291 to wrest Jerusalem and the “Holy Land” from “heretic” Muslims and later ones in the 16th century against infidels – in the name of God.

Today in America, Dominionists are the new “crusaders” Hedges equates with 20th century fascists because of their fanaticism. They cloak their ideology in Christianity and patriotism as their way to gain political power they claim is sanctioned by the Almighty to give the movement moral legitimacy. But beneath the surface, their doctrine is dark and foreboding posing real dangers to a free society not to be taken lightly. It comes from their view of Genesis 1:26-31 they interpret to mean God gave man “dominion....over all the Earth,” and that Jesus commanded his followers to impose godly rule over everyone denouncing people of other faiths and non-believers. The modern blueprint for this ideology comes from the writings of RJ Rushdoony’s 1973 book, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, calling for a Christian government. It advocates torture and death for gays, non-Christians resisting conversion, anyone committing blasphemy, and women guilty of “unchastity before marriage.”

Ideology of Radical Christian Right Fascists

Christian Right extremists advocate a frightening ideology detailed below. It includes:

- Racial hatred.
- White Christian supremacy.
- Blind adoration and obedience of the movement’s leadership while discouraging free and independent thought.
- Male gender dominance portraying Jesus as a real man dominating through force like a powerful warrior ignoring fundamental Christian “thou shall not kill” doctrine. It’s an ideology of hypermasculinity centered in a male-dominated authoritarian church and in the home where men are encouraged to dominate their wives, and women and children are taught to submit.

Well-known Christian Right leader James Dobson built his career on these ideas and now has a huge media empire dispensing advice as a Christian therapist over his Focus on the Family program. He’s heard on more than 3000 radio stations and 80 TV stations reaching 200 million people in 116 countries from his 81 acre campus in Colorado Springs, Colorado employing 1300 people. He’s fiercely anti-choice and anti-gay and has backed political candidates advocating abortionists be executed. He also calls stem cell research “state-funded cannibalism” and urges Christian parents take their children out of public schools and put them in Christian ones teaching his ideology.

Dobson preaches male dominance calling non-submission a violation of God’s law. He also thinks murder is wrong but not when committed against infidel Iraqis or Islamic terrorists

saying all non-believers, heretics and sinners will be consumed in an End Times Tribulation of terrible calamities and torment lasting seven years with non-redeemers condemned to eternal punishment. True believers adhering to holy scriptures, however, will be saved and “raptured” to eternal life and bliss in heaven. But getting there means going along with what he, End Times guru Timothy LaHaye, and other dominant Christian Right figures like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell preach including that they have a divine right to rule and must be obeyed.

Hedges notes that televangelists like Robertson, Benny Hill, Paul and Jan Crouch and others “rule their fiefdoms as despotic potentates” some adherents might think isn’t God’s way of doing things. They travel with burly bodyguards in kingly luxury on private jets; have amassed huge personal fortunes, much of it gotten from listener subjects; and show up everywhere in limousines with all the pomposity of heads of state and billionaire CEOs but in their case playing God as false prophets “clutching the cross and the Bible (offering seductively), like Mephistopheles, to lead us to a mythical paradise and impossible, unachievable happiness and security” provided we surrender our will to theirs and our money too, which is one way they get rich.

They preach a false gospel of prosperity and well-being preying on the gullible to believe faith alone cures illness, overcomes emotional distress, and assures financial and physical security so there’s no need for traditional secular institutions, social service organizations and government regulatory agencies to exist. The movement preaches those not trusting them lack faith, that God alone is enough, and that fate is determined by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in a world in which individuals surrender their will to a higher authority dictated by the leadership. Hedges sums it up saying tyranny follows when “fealty to an ideology becomes a litmus test for individual worth” and a world of “miracles and magic” is the only “place to turn for help” ruled by Christian Right extremists “grow(ing) rich off (the vulnerable) who suffer” becoming passive in the process.

— Hatred of gays, the “gay agenda,” and everyone in the LBGT movement with Christian Right adherents believing “same-sex attraction” can be cured like a virus their ideological medicine can fix. They define the problem as “male gender deficit” for which “reparative therapy” is the antidote gotten from a close connection with a strong heterosexual man “comfortable in his male role.” With nonsensical ideological fervor, they believe bonding with a straight man makes homosexuality disappear while at the same time denouncing gays as depraved perverts and criminals threatening all Christians.

— Disdain for non-believers and rational intellectual inquiry.

— Condemnation of self-criticism and debate as apostasy.

— Frequent use of the death penalty including for abortionists, gays, Muslim “terrorists” and other “heretics.”

— Adoration of militarism, war and apocalyptic violence. Adherence to these notions is so extreme that in the run-up to the Iraq conflict, many Christian Right leaders and End Times believers preached opposing war was anti-American and contrary to God’s plan and what’s written in the Bible as they interpret it. Their many supporters in Congress include Minority Leader John Boehner, who supports endless wars. He recently said “The spread of radical Islamic terrorism is a threat to our nation (and) the free world....They are (everywhere and) growing right here in America....dedicated to killing Americans (and) our allies, and ending

freedom and wanting to impose some radical Islamic law on the entire world.” With leaders like Boehner in Congress and the administration, it’s easy to see the influence of radical Christian fundamentalist poison infecting the body politic and threatening everyone with it.

- Illegalization of abortion even in the case of rape and incest.

- Ending public education with Bush administration help budgeting billions of dollars for extremist Christian faith-based organizations. They renounce proved science like evolution allowing only creationism repackaged as “intelligent design” to be taught as well as other extremist Christian values sold through the “big lie” to trick those in the movement to believe mysticism and magic are facts. Hedges calls the process a “war on truth” where the culture war front lines are in classrooms, and the battle is one traditional educators are losing. Core values of a free and open society are being destroyed and replaced through a process of thought control based on pseudoscience assaulting the real thing on everything challenging extremist Christian ideology from creation to HIV/AIDS to pregnancy prevention to global warming to war and peace.

It’s also happening inside government alarming the nonprofit Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) advocacy organization to write in its March, 2004 Scientific Integrity in Policymaking report: “There is significant evidence that the scope and scale of the (scientifically unethical) manipulation, suppression, misrepresentation of science by the (Christian Right dominated) Bush administration are unprecedented.”

- A primary Christian mission to proselytize non-believers to the faith by recruiting “soldiers in the army of Jesus Christ” quoting Dr. D. James Kennedy of the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Coral Ridge, Florida near Fort Lauderdale, just north of Miami. His voice is dominant in the Christian Right and carried over the huge multimedia empire he built with his weekly broadcasts heard and seen on more than 600 TV stations, four cable networks and the Armed Forces Network reaching millions of people.

He also has a six day a week radio show on 744 stations reaching millions more preaching his radical ideology that “the Christian view of morality (according to the Christian Right) is the (only) one that should prevail in America” while denouncing liberal churches and other religions as godless. He holds workshops teaching how to sell his brand of religiosity using the same kinds of brainwashing/marketing techniques political and other extremist movements know work. They promise believers eternal life while those not saved are damned to eternal punishment.

- Rejection of secular humanist notions of reason, ethics, social equity and justice believing a better world is possible through good will in a free and open society. Also claims secular humanist organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union, NAACP, National Organization for Women, Planned Parenthood and others want to destroy a Christian America. They further include the major TV networks (for airing sex and violence); major newspapers and magazines; US State Department; foundations like Rockefeller, Ford and Carnegie; the UN; the Democrat party left/liberals; Harvard, Yale and 2000 other universities; and all others not buying their gospel of extremist white Christian dominionism and hate.

- Seizing on the common denominator of pain, disillusion, dislocation, suffering and despair felt by millions caused by a culture of “soulless landscapes filled with strip malls and highways” to build a mass movement of servile, unthinking followers. They’ve replaced the real world of science, law and rationality with unquestioning belief in the word of the

leadership and a glorious other utopian unreal world of prophets, mystical signs and magical mumbo jumbo that's real to them and in which they're "protected, loved, guided and blessed." It promises what followers don't have - a stable home and family, loving community, fixed moral standards, financial and personal success, and abolition of doubt and uncertainty based on religious vision and moral clarity. It also frighteningly promises a final apocalyptic battle of their "good" against all else they call "evil" exterminating the forces believers blame on their despair after which they will emerge victorious and saved.

— A Christian totalitarian ethic based on a gospel of "free -market" capitalism, militarism and intolerance of democratic freedom of thought and action.

— A fanatical devotion to and support for the state of Israel as Jerusalem, and specifically the Temple Mount Muslims call the Noble Sanctuary, is where Fundamentalist Evangelical Christians believe the second coming of the Messiah will be and thus is the holiest site in the world for Christians and Jews as well who want it for a third and final Temple. Enter Rev. John Hagee of the 18,000-strong Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, global TV ministry, and his Christians United for Israel (CUFI) radical organization founded in early 2006. He's perhaps the most extremist, bellicose and influential Christian Zionist in America today preaching Muslims are Islamic fascists waging war against Western civilization. His antidote is a gospel of preemptive war against Islam in self-defense including one against Iran now if he had his way. The danger is warmongering hate-preachers like Hagee and others reach large audiences convincing millions of adherents they're right.

The Dark Side of Radical Christian Morality

Hedges notes the movement's appeal is from the leadership's promise of a moral Christian nation promising renewal. But the message hides a darker side with Dominionists awaiting a fiscal, social and/or political crisis great enough to end democratic constitutional government replacing it with their vision of a Christian fascist theocratic America. In the meantime, they spent a generation working for this and now have great influence at state, local and federal levels of government.

Hedges notes the movement already controls the Republican party. In addition, Christian fundamentalists hold a majority of seats in 18 of 50 states plus large minorities in the others. Also, (as of the book's publication) 45 senators and 186 House members got 80 - 100% approval ratings from the three most influential Christian Right advocacy groups: The Christian Coalition, Eagle Forum and Family Resource Council. This represents a dominant mass movement succeeding because mainstream Christians and the major media aren't confronting it, and their passivity threatens the constitutional rights of a democratic state on life support sinking fast with help from the Christian Right on the ascendancy.

They're influence is spread by Christian broadcasters commanding large audiences estimated to be 141 million in the US through radio and TV. They preach the Christian Right gospel flaunting their wealth, power and celebrity status to show it works for believers of the faith. They believe in unrestrained free-market capitalism, divinely sanctioned to freely create a global marketplace of (non-Christian, non-believing) serfs, denied all rights, forbidden to organize, and left to the mercy of a repressive state and corporate predators out for profit and to be allowed to dictate wages and control the right to work.

Compassion for the less fortunate is left to individual acts of charity and the churches with government out of it entirely and only dedicated to social control and aggressive militarism

dictated by a warrior God (meaning Jesus) giving Christian America the right to rule the world and assure corporate giants can suck all the profit and life out of it. Hedges explains the Christian Right sells an ideology believing it's a "Christian duty to embrace the exploitation of others, to build a Christian America where freedom means the freedom of the powerful to dominate the weak....to bring about (their notion of) a Christian utopia (that when no legal or social protections remain) it will be too late to resist (and the movement's leadership will be in control of everything)." Their plan is to "convince the masses to agitate for their own incarceration" shocking as that notion sounds, but it's working.

The movement is on a "crusade" against constitutional government working for now within the political system it wants to destroy and remake in its own image. Awaiting the time they'll take over, they're creating a parallel system within the existing one in which only "Bible-believing" judges, Christian teachers, and pseudo-reporters on Christian broadcasts are tolerated. And only white Christian men championing their extremist doctrine will be allowed to rule. Students are taught this ideology in Christian schools Hedges says are the fastest growing segment of the private school system. Textbooks used call Islam, Buddhism and African religions "false," Hinduism "pagan," and even Catholicism "distorted."

It's also heard on the campaign trail from candidates like "stalwart on the Christian Right" 2006 Ohio gubernatorial losing candidate Kenneth Blackwell who as secretary of state and co-chair of Ohio's Committee to Reelect George Bush in 2004 "arranged" for enough votes in the state to go to the sitting president to swing Ohio and the election for him. In his own losing effort in 2006, he appeared at Christian Right rallies laying out a blueprint for an authoritarian state where all dissent is heresy yet campaigned carefully not to offend those outside the movement by avoiding religious terminology.

Christian Right Fascism in Real Time in "Bush's Shadow Army" - Blackwater USA

Journalist and author Jeremy Scahill characterizes Blackwater USA as "the world's most powerful mercenary army" in his new book about them. Like Hedges' book, it's frightening reading needing exposure. It describes a "shadowy mercenary company....largely off the congressional radar....having remarkable power and protection within the US war apparatus" with no accountability or oversight on the ground in Iraq, (working for the State Department, not the Pentagon, with a \$300 million no-bid contract), Afghanistan, on US streets and in neighborhoods like New Orleans, and coming soon to a city and neighborhood near you courtesy of the Gestapo-like Department of Homeland Security. With backing from the Bush administration, it operates outside the law and Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and is immune from civil lawsuits like the military. Scahill calls Blackwater the "Bush Administration's Praetorian Guard (along with the CIA long-serving in that capacity and that uses Blackwater in its illegal covert operations abroad and at home)."

Blackwater was founded in 1996 by former Navy SEAL and now super-rich Erik Prince who's closely tied to the Christian Right he funds and supports. It came into its own post 9/11 becoming a dominant player in the Bush administration's "Global War on Terror" (GLOB) now rebranded "The Long War." Today, Blackwater employs 2300 personnel in nine countries with 20,000 or more private mercenary contractors ready to go wherever needed and are part of the 100,000 contractors in Iraq, 48,000 of whom are paramilitary mercenaries. It also has a fleet of 20 aircraft (believed to have been used covertly as part of the Bush administration's "extraordinary renditions" of targeted individuals), including helicopter gunships, a private intelligence division, and operates at home on its 7000 acre Moyock headquarters Scahill calls "the world's largest private military base."

It's not enough for Blackwater in the burgeoning world of privatized secret mercenary paramilitary armies coming soon to a neighborhood near you, so the company is preparing by seeking an environmentally sensitive protected agricultural preserve southeast of San Diego, CA for its current expansion plans. It's an 824 acre site in Potrero, CA surrounded by the Cleveland Forest. Blackwater wants for a military training base with 15 firing ranges for automatic and non-automatic weapons and various types of commando-type training facilities residents don't want near their community for obvious reasons concerning safety. People everywhere should object, for what may endanger one isolated community now or a larger one in New Orleans already may threaten us all in a paramilitarized America we're heading for locked down by Blackwater-type storm troops enforcing Christian Right fascist dogma.

In the meantime, Blackwater is cashing in big as a war profiteer getting huge no-bid Bush administration contracts. Congress belatedly is showing interest in wanting to oversee to eliminate abuses. Whether it will happen, however, is problematical as current laws on the books aren't enforced making it likely new ones won't be either on all matters relating to foreign wars, so-called "terrorism," or anything claimed for national security. As long as the nation is in wars both parties support and the Christian Right is dominant, companies like Blackwater will thrive. With them, wars are easier to get into and harder to end meaning the culture of militarism will grow abroad and at home that's part of the Christian Right's agenda to impose its extremist theocratic rule on the country where, if it happens, democratic freedom, as we know it, is incompatible. Under it, Blackwater's private army will be on our city streets as thuggish paramilitary enforcers licensed to terrorize and kill with impunity bringing to America what they're well paid to do abroad.

"Eternal" Fascist Chickens Coming Home to Roost

A generation ago, the notion of a "global Christian empire" was barely credible, but Hedges' ethics professor at Harvard Divinity School, 80-year old Dr. James Luther Adams, warned back then we'd all one day be fighting "Christian fascists." It was when Pat Robertson and other radical televangelists began preaching a new political religion aimed at creating a dominant Christian world according to their extremist views. Adams was in Germany in 1935 and 1936 and saw with horror what happened there firsthand. Hedges says he "was not a man to use the word 'fascist' lightly." He understood before most others the similarities of that time in Germany to what was developing here around 1980. He saw "how the mask of religion hides irreligion (and) our world is full to bursting with (various) faiths, each contending for allegiance." It was a virtual "battle of faiths, a battle of the gods who claim human allegiance."

Adams knew deep-seated resentments and bigotry exist in all democratic societies like Weimar Germany and saw it emerging in 1980s America promoting the destruction of democracy. He feared late in his life a movement here was on the march, more cleverly packaged and sophisticated than in the past and this time with no serious opposition. He saw hatreds being stoked, progressive forces weakening, and the despair of tens of millions of Americans losing good manufacturing and other well-paying jobs being easy prey for smooth-talking fanatics like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell promising miracles and visions of apocalyptic glory.

Adams said then to watch the Christian Right's treatment of gays knowing the Nazis used their "values" to repress opponents and just days after coming to power in 1933 Hitler banned all gay and lesbian organizations as his first target with many others to follow.

Pastor Martin Niemoller warned us in different versions of his famous quotation listing Jews, communists and trade unionists targeted but omitting the one Hitler chose first. He didn't speak out because he wasn't one of them, and when they came for him there was no one left. It was too late.

Adams explained gays in a Christian Right dominated American would be the first "social deviants" singled out for condemnation, disempowerment and elimination as in Nazi Germany. Other targeted groups would follow, and we would be next. He then warned as does Hedges that forces against American democracy are "waiting for a moment to strike, a national crisis that will allow them to shred the Constitution in the name of national security." The Christian Right awaits that time "with gleeful anticipation" wanting adherents to be ready.

Hedges warns we also must be ready quoting Alvin Toffler saying "if you don't have a strategy you end up being part of someone else's strategy." It means challenging the Christian Right's gospel of hate, "exclusion, cruelty and intolerance in the name of God" with a doctrine of life, hope and respect for the worth and dignity of everyone, and their right to practice their beliefs openly in a free society. That's the American dream shared by free people everywhere. At the book's end, Hedges says preserving it means giving up "passivity, challeng(ing) aggressively this movement's deluded appropriation of Christianity (and fighting back) to defend tolerance." Wishing won't make it so. Defending democracy means working at it every day. Today we face an imminent threat to our freedom against which "tolerance coupled with passivity is a (deadly) vice" that will destroy us unless we're on guard to be sure it doesn't.

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