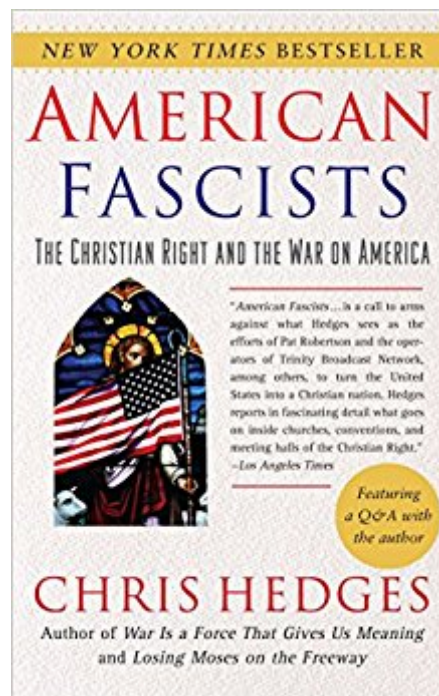




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American Fascists: The Christian Right And The War On America



Synopsis

Twenty-five years ago, when Pat Robertson and other radio and televangelists first spoke of the United States becoming a Christian nation that would build a global Christian empire, it was hard to take such hyperbolic rhetoric seriously. Today, such language no longer sounds like hyperbole but poses, instead, a very real threat to our freedom and our way of life. In *American Fascists*, Chris Hedges, veteran journalist and author of the National Book Award finalist *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning*, challenges the Christian Right's religious legitimacy and argues that at its core it is a mass movement fueled by unbridled nationalism and a hatred for the open society. Hedges, who grew up in rural parishes in upstate New York where his father was a Presbyterian pastor, attacks the movement as someone steeped in the Bible and Christian tradition. He points to the hundreds of senators and members of Congress who have earned between 80 and 100 percent approval ratings from the three most influential Christian Right advocacy groups as one of many signs that the movement is burrowing deep inside the American government to subvert it. The movement's call to dismantle the wall between church and state and the intolerance it preaches against all who do not conform to its warped vision of a Christian America are pumped into tens of millions of American homes through Christian television and radio stations, as well as reinforced through the curriculum in Christian schools. The movement's yearning for apocalyptic violence and its assault on dispassionate, intellectual inquiry are laying the foundation for a new, frightening America. *American Fascists*, which includes interviews and coverage of events such as pro-life rallies and weeklong classes on conversion techniques, examines the movement's origins, its driving motivations and its dark ideological underpinnings. Hedges argues that the movement currently resembles the young fascist movements in Italy and Germany in the 1920s and '30s, movements that often masked the full extent of their drive for totalitarianism and were willing to make concessions until they achieved unrivaled power. The Christian Right, like these early fascist movements, does not openly call for dictatorship, nor does it use physical violence to suppress opposition. In short, the movement is not yet revolutionary. But the ideological architecture of a Christian fascism is being cemented in place. The movement has roused its followers to a fever pitch of despair and fury. All it will take, Hedges writes, is one more national crisis on the order of September 11 for the Christian Right to make a concerted drive to destroy American democracy. The movement awaits a crisis. At that moment they will reveal themselves for what they truly are -- the American heirs to fascism. Hedges issues a potent, impassioned warning. We face an imminent threat. His book reminds us of the dangers liberal, democratic societies face when they tolerate the intolerant.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. The f-word crops up in the most respectable quarters these days. Yet if the provocative title of this exposé by Hedges (War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning) "sounds an alarm, the former New York Times foreign correspondent takes care to employ his terms precisely and decisively. As a Harvard Divinity School graduate, his investigation of the Christian Right agenda is even more alarming given its lucidity. Citing the psychology and sociology of fascism and cults, including the work of German historian Fritz Stern, Hedges draws striking parallels between 20th-century totalitarian movements and the highly organized, well-funded "dominionist movement," an influential theocratic sect within the country's huge evangelical population. Rooted in a radical Calvinism, and wrapping its apocalyptic, vehemently militant, sexist and homophobic vision in patriotic and religious rhetoric, dominionism seeks absolute power in a Christian state. Hedges's reportage profiles both former members and true believers, evoking the particular characteristics of this American variant of fascism. His argument against what he sees as a democratic society's suicidal tolerance for intolerant movements has its own paradoxes. But this urgent book forcefully illuminates what many across the political spectrum will recognize as a serious and growing threat to the very concept and practice of an open society. (Jan. 9) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Chris Hedges may be the most credible figure yet to detect real-life fascism in the Red America of megachurches, gay-marriage bans and Left Behind books. American Facists is at its most daring when it enunciates...the perversities that are obvious to those of us not beholden to political exigencies." -- New York Observer

"Throughout, Hedges documents, and reflects on, what he feels is the bigotry, the homophobia, the fanaticism -- and the deeply un-Christian ideology -- that pose clear and present danger in our previous and fragile republic." -- O, the Oprah magazine

"This is a powerful book that looks inside some of the darkest movements on American soil." -- Time Out New York

American Fascists: The Christian Right by Chris Hedges. I enjoyed this book and it scared the heck out of me. The influence of a subset of evangelical Christians on the political agenda of the Republican party, or vice versa, is extremely clear. The emphasis on guns, God gays and restriction of women's rights is very clearly driven by the "faith-based, Oath Keeper" community. I am terrified at the prospect of any government that is run or creates laws based on a specific subset of their religious views. Legislated morality is a very dangerous concept, especially when it involves consensual crimes or personal choice. In matters of science or civil rights, thousands of years old beliefs are really bad news and to be avoided at all costs in my opinion. Religion is a personal matter. I am grateful for the churches that run food pantries and provide shelter for the homeless but feel that our government is taking advantage of that and using it as an excuse to ignore and discard the needs of our citizens. I am not opposed to the social and community needs which many churches serve and respect that many religious believers are trying to help make the world a better place. The threat of the ultra-traditional conservative evangelical Christian minority fused with the power of politicians and those believers of extreme faith who share the same beliefs, is the threat of which Hedges speaks and warns us about in this book. This is a real threat and I believe that those who support secular government and a sustainable future must fight against this threat to our constitution and our freedoms. I thought this book, while not perfect, contains a lot of truth about how indoctrination, starting at an early age, and training in how to convince people to your beliefs is tricking people into giving up our constitutional rights in the name of religion. I'm glad to see this type of information clearly stated where it is easy to see it for what it is.

Jefferson wrote Danbury Baptists "religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God...the whole American people...declared that the legislature should `make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation

between the church and State" in 1802. Thirty years later Tocqueville remarked "peaceful dominion of religion" in America is due "mainly to the separation of church and state. I did not meet a single individual, of the clergy or the laity, who was not of the same opinion on this point. The American Clergy...do not support any particular political system. They keep aloof from parties and from public affairs."Fast forward to the 13 Sept 2001 '700 Club' broadcast. Rev. Jerry Falwell (asked to comment on the 9/11 terror attacks) said "I really believe that the pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People for the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen.'" Host Pat Robertson (media mogul, televangelist, and failed presidential candidate) readily agreed.Both men pioneered organizations (the 'Moral Majority' and 'Christian Coalition') designed to actively influence political races, public education, legislation, foreign policy, medical practice, law, and the judiciary. They're not alone. Religious conservatives now routinely breach Jefferson's 200-year old "wall of separation" with radical agendas and are not above demonizing minorities while they do it.This is a lucid, provocative profile their movement. The author (HDS alumni and son of a minister) skillfully reveals a bizarre world of ersatz piety, intolerant political activism, judicial meddling, chauvinism, egocentric paranoia, messianic violence, denominational imperialism, cult propaganda, tacky commercialism, and the worship of compassionless plutocracy.Ultimately it's a movement smitten by worldly wealth, fame, power and celebrity. This would matter less if pastors were content to tend their own domains. It becomes dangerous when they seek political dominion with strategies that have more in common with fascism than with faith.Highly recommended.

This book is well written, revealing many of the nefarious tends being perpetrated on society by a group of people who seek to destroy our great society.

It gave me an insight into the motives of the far Christian right without condemning all Christianity and in fact, warning them as well.

Seems I'm married to a likely one. There's a large number of americans that believe the myths of the bible. Many have been told that the government and all other people are against them and their beliefs. As such, they loudly proclaim the abuse of religious liberty and freedoms, and more. And it's all imaginary, made up to reinforce a belief that the US must be governed by christians and only christians, a belief that the bible is fact. A belief that any belief other than stated in the bible is a lie

or fabrication or is unproven. This is a dangerous bunch. We who are able to reason, understand science in all aspects, are truly threatened by this wild eyed bunch.

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