

Introduction

Witch Hunt Production

“War is at best barbarism. Its glory is all moonshine. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell.” General William Sherman

You are listening to Religion Roundtable, the most controversial show on radio.

God Without Religion is a multi-award winning book that anybody with religious power would hope you never read. Here's why:

12 My Comments/News

Our subject today is war, and in the next segment we'll have Tonje Schei, an independent filmmaker, on the show, so when talking about war we come to the heart of the issue in GWR: Centralized power, which creates cliques, cults, nations -- basically tribes and tribal identities.

The laws and religions the tribe establishes will reflect the interests of the power structure and the survival of the tribe.

A popular religion today comes from the ancient Hebrew cult, or tribe: With its so-called Ten Commandments.

Why is murder wrong? Murder is bad because the tribe's survival is good.

Who is this God making commandments? If a tribe's god is saying not to murder, then what that is really saying is that the god is the tribe; God is what we value, God is us and our continued survival.

And here's the proof: That same god that prohibits murder within the tribe is the same god that promises the land of other peoples. Murder in war is good because the tribe's increased wealth is good.

If that ancient Hebrew tribe figured out that murdering outside the tribe was bad, because it leads to retribution and other tribes murdering you for your wealth, then their God would say it is bad. But they didn't figure that out, and we haven't yet either.

It's been said that "No nations are more warlike than those professing Christianity."

Why is that? It's no wonder, when your god is your own increased wealth and survival.

Colonialists saw the native Indians as the new Canaanites, and the Americas as their new promised land. How convenient! The Canaanites were culturally more advanced than the Hebrews, but you wouldn't know that from the Hebrew Bible.

The Colonialists were their own God too.

In fact, any peoples attracted to the precepts of the Judeo Hebrew Bible is obviously inclined to make themselves into their own god, and their beliefs about themselves and their god will naturally reflect divisive and exclusive thinking, projecting outward all violence. The tribe becomes God.

So here we are in the 21st century with literally billions of people still holding onto divisive thinking that makes gods from their own narrow ambitions and survival.

Now we have the Iraq war, and we can analyze all the reasons given for it in light of Judeo-Christian theology.

WMD EXCUSE: Why are WMDs bad? Weapons of Mass Destruction are bad because they are not good for our tribe. When are they good? When we have them.

DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM EXCUSE: Why are democracies good? Judeo-Christianity is founded on hierarchy, not social equality. Christianity, when it was in power, created monarchies and theocracies and tyrannies, not republics.

If you want to find republics, look to ancient Greece, and if you want to find the real Jesus, the real philosopher, before the fictional Jesus character of the NT emerged, read Plato.

So why would religious power, centralized hierarchical powers, profess to spread and enjoy democracies? Democracies can be easily perverted. For centralized religions, democracies are actually ideal system in which to implant an up down power structure, which is why it is no surprise that today we have the most fundamentalist president in US history centralizing in himself more power than any president prior to him.

Democracies can be ruled by fascist theocrats too. The Weimar republic voted in Hitler and voted itself out of power. How has our Congress disempowered itself? How is it we are in all these wars and yet Congress isn't declaring any of them?

Are democracies safer? Yes, the puppet kind.

Let's recall that it was a democracy that dropped nuclear bombs. America egged Japan into war, and then nuked it, TWICE.

OIL EXCUSE: Why is cheap oil, or economically undermining OPEC, good? It is good for our tribe.

For whatever reason we are there, we are there for ourselves. We are our own highest value, so we are our God.

Now, that is the BEST CASE SCENARIO. What's closer to the truth is that we are not even there for ourselves, meaning for our whole tribe. Again, we're talking about CENTRALIZED POWER.

We are there for a cabal far smaller than America. It's just that it's such a powerful elite, it has managed to centralize the power of millions of Americans and bamboozle them into thinking that we are there for America's best interests.

Or, even more pathetically ridiculous, that we are there for the Iraqi people.

Let me say this to those who believe such a self-righteous assertion: to believe we are there for the Iraqi people is the height of narcissism.

And politicians will continue to feed that line so long as they see a narcissistic population eat it up.

And they will see such a receptive populace so long as it is raised on Judeo-Christian theology – which is the best source material for self-absorption IN THE WORLD. Self-loathing, guilt, self-delusion, self-mystification, self-denial, self-destructiveness – they're all in there.

Now Iran is on the horizon. Iran represents a threat to no one but Israel, the one Middle Eastern State actually IN possession of nuclear weapons. Israel has never even admitted it has nukes, let alone declared a policy of "no first strike." Unlike the Israelis, the Iranians are signatories of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which gives them the right to build power plants.

But no one points this out because depicting Israel as a self-mystifying cult of aggressive and occupying terrorists holding a nuclear threat over the entire region would be "anti-Semitic."

My family was in Baghdad for 2600 years, we were part of a Hebrew tribe exiled to Babylon. If there is anyone who can trace his ancestors right back to the ancient Hebrew cult, it's me.

Incidentally, it was after that Babylonian conquest that the Hebrew tradition went downhill. Monotheism formed, Judaism formed, ignorant Rabbis gained power, the ascetic and mystical tradition died out, Satan was invented, resurrection became a dogma, and self-delusional Semitism, pride of pedigree, became far more prominent.

Nevertheless, I am not anti-Semitic. I can't be, because Semites do not even exist, contrary to the opinions of self-proclaimed Semites. Those so-called Jews are only human beings drunk on delusional self-mystification. I am anti-Semitism and anti anti-Semitism. Because the only way to get rid of anti-Semitism is to uproot the divisive Dark Age concept of Semitism from the minds of human beings, who seemingly never fail to bestow their noxious god-like ideas of themselves onto their children.

I was one of those children. So I know both first hand and from studying the Hebrew Bible that the whole idea of Semitism is rooted in racism, a cultural superiority complex, and divisiveness.

And sadly, the Dark Age Roman world lapped up that puny image of the self, which is why today the biggest terrorist states in the world are the USA and Israel, the Christian state and the Jewish state.

I talk about self-knowledge in GWR, and I get E-mails from people who tell me that I worship myself. Au contraire.

Service to the expansive self, the larger self, is a world apart from reveling in the narrow self. And it is Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, the three monotheistic religions, which overwhelmingly glorify the little, sniveling, pathetic self in human beings.

Christianity is the most belligerence-producing religion in the world **PRECISELY BECAUSE** it offers a god that is none other than the very confined community of worshippers.

It obliterates self-knowledge. It dishes up self-love and caters to centralized power that then divides the human race and feeds the intellectual and emotional weakling in us. It rejects reason, places itself above scrutiny and penetrating questions, and then commands the little ego to go out and convince everyone in the world that it is absolutely right, but never has to prove or show any evidence that it is right.

They talk about the trials of spreading the Gospel, but how about the much harder test of challenging yourself and your identity?

Why does Christianity create societies with such economic inequity? Because it teaches the oppressed that envy is the work of the devil, that we are all sinners. Instead of inspiring social justice, it promotes up down systems that give divine right to rulers (even an American President!) who are then free to exploit the masses. Of course, those masses deluded by Christianity have been promised an eternal heaven as the reward for their lifelong ignorance.

“Forgive me father, for I have sinned...” Who came up with that rubbish? I can tell you, it was a Dark Age fat cat who was afraid that the people would get wise to his gluttony for the wealth produced by other people’s labor.

So the fat cat says, let’s keep the masses busy with self-destructive feelings. Keep them skinny and stupid, dreaming of their heaven full of pork chops and God’s wisdom. And in the mean time, today, keep them entertained with situation comedies, mass media, and movies.

In the last two elections, the Bible Belt became the nations noose, a block that is voting into office incompetents and authoritarians who know that the masses will genuflect at the mention of the name of an archaic tribal war god of a peoples long dead.

How are we going to escape this noose?

12 Minutes Guest/Skit/Callers/E-mails

“What a country calls its vital interests are not things that help its people live, but things that help it make war. Petroleum is a more likely cause of conflict than wheat.” Simone Weil

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Director/producer, Ground Productions
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Tell us about your documentary.

We were told Iraq was a threat to America though it did not have weapons of mass destruction. The intelligence was deeply flawed and, in some cases, manipulated to fit a political agenda. The president didn’t give us the whole story. Now, I never bought the

tripe, but millions who gave their power to the centralized authority did.

Why are we in Iraq? And why are we still there? If the US military poses a danger to Iraqis, what is our role in Iraq?

<http://www.iraqbodycount.org/>

About 40,000 to 100,000 deaths

IRAQ DEATH TOLL IN THIRD YEAR OF OCCUPATION IS HIGHEST YET

And these are ultra-conservative or perhaps we should call them neoconservative.

This doesn't even bring into view the tens of thousands of life crippling injuries or the fact that over half the dead are women and children.

Reminds me of Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt's advice to Iraqis who see innocent civilians killed by coalition troops on their TVs: "Change the channel."

"Once we thought a few hundred corpses would suffice, then we saw thousands were still too few, and today we can't even count all the dead everywhere you look." Peter Weiss

Now we have a recent NYTIMES article discussing the wanton murder of Iraqi civilians by our forces.

But of course our use of chemical weapons or the harmful effect of depleted uranium have never been seriously covered by the media.

Your documentary was haunting in that way. Share with us some of the images in your documentary, give us a taste of the real cost of war that we don't see on TV. Share the faces of the children deformed by radiation poisoning. Were there some images that you refused to put in the documentary because they were too graphic?

“We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.” General Omar Bradley

Those who live by the sword die by the sword. I ask myself, is that the only way out for America, for us to reap as we've sown and die by the sword? Because I can't but help feeling that we are all murderers.

What is the way out of this quagmire? Is it informational and a new media? Did you see anyone who was for the war see you movie and change their minds?

<http://costofwar.com/>

“The butter to be sacrificed because of war always turns out to be the margarine of the poor.” James Tobin

We are trillions in debt, the uber rich consistently receive tax breaks, the poor are getting poorer, and there are more and more falling into poverty every year. Yet we spend billions on manufacturing weapons and billions to build military bases and then billions to rebuild a handful of the buildings destroyed by the weapons.

Any look at history shows that wars about wealth. This war was the administration's goal of preventing OPEC's use of the Euro as an oil transaction currency standard. In order to pre-empt OPEC, the US needed to gain geo-strategic control of Iraq along with its 2nd largest proven oil reserves.

It's been said that the "The Federal Reserve's greatest nightmare is that OPEC will switch its international transactions from a dollar standard to a euro standard.”

Of course, immediately following Congress's vote on the Iraq Resolution, we suddenly became aware of North Korea's nuclear program. No one asked why Saddam's dormant WMD program possesses a more imminent threat than North Korea's active program.

Obviously, the majority of the American people are not aware of any of this because the U.S. mass media, which are little more than a

handful of profit-oriented corporations, filter the flow of information. It seems the Internet, Democracy Now, and Air America provide the only source of unfiltered news

But is there a legitimate moral justification for this war? Or, do the moral justifications that we've hastily rounded up fail having seen what you've seen?

"If war is horrible, isn't patriotism the dominant idea that supports it?"
Guy de Maupassant

This goes back to my treatment of this issue in GWR.

Where did you find jingoism and patriotism fueled in the media?

What are the Bush objectives: the subjugation of the Middle East by violence. This was the Nazi Party's objective in Europe and in Russia. Bush is doing this because the world is not unifying against him, much as they failed to unite against Hitler until later on. Like Hitler, he has so far intimidated world opposition to his policy.

Most would not go that far because Hitler stands not merely for geopolitical hegemony, but the holocaust. Though we are now hearing of huge concentration camps being built in this country.

After making this documentary, would you go that far?

12 Minutes Guest/Skit/Callers/E-mails

"No soldier wants war – they only give their lives to it. Wars are started by you and me, by bankers and politicians, newspaper editors, clergymen who are expacifists, and Congressmen with vertebrae of putty. The youngsters in the streets, poor kids, pay the price." Father Francis Duffy

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Amy Goodman suggests in the documentary that if the American public saw for one week on TV the blood of the children butchered by this war, that the public outcry would end the war.

But what do we see? "What are the triumphs of war, planned by ambition, executed by violence, and consummated by devastation? The means are the sacrifice of many, the end the bloated aggrandizement of the few."

Is that how you would characterize the media's coverage of the war? Did it aggrandize the belligerent?

I think we all lazily assume information will be freely distributed by the media. But in a time of war, there is censorship, false reporting, fear-mongering, and name calling, and we're left with the watered down version of the war.

"In wartime the press is always part of the problem. When the nation goes to war, the press goes with it...the blather on CNN or Fox or MSNBC is part of a long and sad tradition." CHRIS HEDGES, reporter for The New York Times

So we have the press deterring dissenting opinions. Objectivity is abandoned once war starts and is replaced with jingoism, which obviously mimics the administration's stance on the war.

And this White House sends a message to journalists: Be independent and we'll say you are giving aid and comfort to terrorists.

And of course, reporters are more concerned with being perceived as un-patriotic than with reporting on the war and supplying the American public with the information.

How much was the media responsible for drumming up this war? Are they guilty of continuing it by failing to report on the death and carnage? Where did you see the failures of the press?

There is loyalty by the press to the administration and vice versa because the two are one in the same: the wealthy and the elite.

"The media lines up with the government on fundamental matters...because the media themselves are huge corporations that share the same economic and political interests with the tiny elite that runs the U.S. government," Anthony Arnove

As a result, journalists in Iraq are limited in what they can and cannot report. As a guest of U.S. military, journalists have to abide by the rules or be sent home. Journalists also bond with the troops, though you'd think that would inspire them to tell of the hell they are going through.

Talk to us about embedded journalists. Talk to us about the murder of independent journalists. Who is killing them and why are they being killed?

As the Iraqi forces attempted to fight back against the U.S. military, it is strange how their defense was framed as terrorism, their deaths as "collateral damage" and progress.

"With a straight face, and a scant willingness to raise fundamental questions, American networks uncritically relay nonstop barrage of statements from U.S. officials that portray deadly Iraqi actions as heinous and deadly American actions as positive. They have "death squads," and we have noble troops. Their bombs are odious; ours are remedies for tyranny."

"The visible anger of Iraqi people has roots in events that usually get described in antiseptic and euphemistic terms by U.S. media outlets," said Norman Solomon.

Did you ever once hear a major news outlet mentioning that this war is in violation of international law?

"We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we...remember that we are not descended from fearful men, not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes which were, for the moment unpopular." EDWARD R. MURROW

Daniel Schechter, weblog writer for mediachannel.org said, "The non-stop news cycle turns breaking events into history with an unprecedented rapidity. Soon we will be flooded with books, videocassettes and documentaries about Operation Iraqi Freedom through a media recycling operation already in high gear."

Where will there be room for documentaries like yours? How do you make the room?

In the words of Norman Solomon: "In the functional category of 'use it or lose it,' The First Amendment remains a partially realized promise. To the extent that it can be fulfilled, democracy becomes an actual rather than a theoretical. But that requires a multiplicity of voices. And when war demands our silence, the imperative of dissent becomes paramount."

If we are engaging in selective journalism to make ourselves feel good, then how are we different than any of the tyrants we claim to be against? How is our corporate fascist tyranny any different or better?

You likened war coverage – particularly that practiced by television – to a televised sporting event. Rather than journalism, it becomes entertainment.

And it's clear that no matter how many lies George Bush tells, the corporate media won't ask him the hard questions.

Bush and his administration know that they can count on the "patriotism" of the press--which will report on the coming war like a local sports reporter rooting for the home team.

And Bush--unlike the rulers of the former USSR--won't even have to censor because the press does that itself.

The fact is that the media will support this war despite the administration's open manipulation of information.

Talk about how war reporting becomes a travelogue, a sporting event.

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“After each war there is a little less democracy to save.” Brooks Atkinson

In May 2002, CBS news anchor Dan Rather acknowledged, "What we are talking about here--whether one wants to recognize it or not, or call it by its proper name or not--is a form of self-censorship. It starts with a feeling of patriotism within oneself. It carries through with a certain knowledge that the country as a whole...felt and continues to feel this surge of patriotism within themselves. And one finds oneself saying: 'I know the right question, but you know what? This is not exactly the right time to ask it.'"

My book is precisely about questioning the accepted truths we are spoon fed by centralized powers. Would you also say that the blows against democracy is in the failure to publicly ask the right questions?

“What we now need to discover in the social realm is the moral equivalent of war; something heroic that will speak to man as universally as war does, and yet will be compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proven to be incompatible.” William James

We need to all ask ourselves: How is it that human beings, children, can be so twisted by the delusional convictions of politicians to murder and be murdered? Was it simply fear or perhaps it was also the media helping people to feel self-righteous about going off to save the Iraqis from a dictator? Why are we being dragged into one war after another?

In making this documentary, where did you find hope to escape this cycle? Where were the moments of heroism? Who or what deeds stand out in your mind? Did you find any justice in any of this? Any silver lining to this war?

President Bush has not fired any of the architects of the Iraq war. In fact, the key planners have been rewarded – not blamed – for their incompetence.

WOLFOWITZ

Role In Going To War: Wolfowitz said the U.S. would be greeted as liberators, that Iraqi oil money for pay for the reconstruction, and that Gen. Eric Shinseki's estimate that several hundred thousand troops would be needed was "wildly off the mark."

Bush promoted Wolfowitz to head the World Bank.

DOUGLAS FEITH

Role In Going To War: As Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, Feith spearheaded two secretive groups at the Pentagon — the Counter Terrorism Evaluation Group and the Office of Special Plans — instrumental in drawing up bogus documents that explained the supposed ties between Saddam and al Qaeda.

Where He Is Now: He is co-chairman of a project at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government to write an academic book on how to fight terrorism. You can't make this stuff up.

STEPHEN HADLEY

Role In Going To War: As the Deputy National Security Advisor, Hadley disregarded memos from the CIA and a personal phone call from Director George Tenet warning that references to Iraq's pursuit of uranium be dropped from Bush's speeches.

Where He Is Now: Stephen Hadley was promoted to National Security Advisor.

RICHARD PERLE

Role In Going To War: Richard Perle, the so-called "Prince of Darkness," was the chairman of Defense Policy Board during the run-

up to the Iraq war. He suggested Iraq had a hand in 9-11. Perle resigned from the Board because he came under fire for having relationships with businesses that stood to profit from the war.

Where He Is Now: Perle is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute where he specializes in national security and defense issues. Can this get any better?

ELLIOT ABRAMS

Role In Going To War: Abrams was one of the defendants in the Iran-Contra Affair, and he pled guilty to two misdemeanor counts of withholding information from Congress. His name surfaced as part of the Plamegate.

Where He Is Now: Abrams was promoted to deputy national security adviser.

DAVID WURMSER

Role In Going To War: At the time of the war, Wurmser was a special assistant to John Bolton in the State Department.

Where He Is Now: Wurmser was promoted to Principal Deputy Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs; he is in charge of coordinating Middle East strategy. His name has been associated with the Plamegate and with an FBI investigation into the passing of classified information to Chalabi.

ANDREW NATSIOS

Role In Going To War: Shortly after the invasion of Iraq, Andrew Natsios, then the Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, went on Nightline and claimed that the U.S. contribution to the rebuilding of Iraq would be just \$1.7 billion.

Where He Is Now: Teaching at Georgetown University as a Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy and Advisor on International Development. Say what???

DAN BARTLETT

Role In Going To War: Dan Bartlett was the White House Communications Director at the time of the war and was a mouthpiece in hyping the Iraq threat.

Where He Is Now: Bartlett was promoted to Counselor to the President.

MITCH DANIELS

Role In Going To War: Mitch Daniels was the director of the Office of Management and Budget and was responsible for releasing the initial budget estimates for the Iraq War which he pegged at \$50 to \$60 billion.

Where He Is Now: In 2004, Daniels was elected Governor of Indiana.

GEORGE TENET

Role In Going To War: As CIA Director, Tenet was responsible for gathering information on Iraq and the potential threat posted by Saddam Hussein.

Where He Is Now: Tenet voluntarily resigned and was later awarded a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

COLIN POWELL

Role In Going To War: Despite stating in Feb. 2001 that Saddam had not developed “any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction,” Powell made the case in front of the United Nations for a United States-led invasion of Iraq on precisely those grounds.

Where He Is Now: Shortly after Bush won reelection in 2004, Powell resigned from the administration. Powell now sits on numerous corporate boards. He’s the only one who’s shown even the slightest remorse.

DONALD RUMSFELD

Role In Going To War: Prior to the war, Rumsfeld repeatedly suggested the war in Iraq would be short and swift.

Where He Is Now: Despite increased calls for his resignation, Donald Rumsfeld continues to be the most vocal supporter of staying the course in Iraq. Recently, he claimed that an early U.S. pullout would be the equivalent of leaving Germany in the hands of Nazis.

CONDOLLEEZZA RICE

Role In Going To War: As National Security Adviser, Rice disregarded at least two CIA memos and a personal phone call from Director George Tenet stating that the evidence behind Iraq's supposed uranium acquisition was weak.

Where She Is Now: In December of 2004, Condoleezza Rice was promoted to Secretary of State.

DICK CHENEY

Role In Going To War: Among a host of false pre-war statements, Cheney claimed that Iraq may have had a role in 9/11.

Where He Is Now: Cheney earned another four years in power when Bush won re-election in 2004.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Role In Going To War: Emphasizing Saddam Hussein's supposed stockpile of weapons of mass destruction, supposed ties to al Qaeda, and supposed nuclear weapons program, Bush led the effort to build public support for an invasion of Iraq.

Where He Is Now: In November 2004, Bush won re-election. Since that time, popular support for the war and the President have reached a low point.

Your movie shows serious breaches of the Geneva Convention, for which the penalty is death. Is there any court in this world for the Bush Administration?

Do we need to destroy America in order to save her? I mean, do we need to destroy what America has become in order to save the spirit that inspired her birth? Has it come to this?

Closing

Thank you Tonje for joining us today

“I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.” Albert Einstein

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Events on the horizon: From July 22nd to the 28th, I'll be leading a retreat at the Omega Institute in Rhinebeck, NY on Seeking God Without Religion. For more information, you can call (800) 944-1001, or write to registration@eomega.org. Visit www.eomega.org.