In The Names of Gods
Religion and Politics on Film
Center for the Study of Democracy, Toleration, and Religion
Free and Open to the Public
Oct 17-Nov 12, 2010

Please join Columbia University’s Center for the Study of Democracy, Toleration, and Religion (CDTR) for In the Names of Gods, a month-long documentary film series on the intersections of religion and politics. Each screening will be free of charge and will be accompanied by a Q&A from the filmmakers. Several events will include special guests. Professor Alfred Stepan, Director of CDTR and Co-Director of the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life (IRCPL), will open the festival.

The topics introduced in this film series span the diversity of roles, both positive and negative, that religion has played in the political sphere, such as: the presence of military chaplains in Iraq and Afghanistan; Liberian Christian and Muslim women who helped peacefully dismantle one of the most notoriously violent dictatorships in the world and homosexuality in the Muslim world.

CDTR conducts research and training on the interfaces of and tensions between religion, toleration, and democracy in the world. For more information on CDTR and our film series, please visit http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/cdtr.

In the Names of Gods is proudly co-sponsored by the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) and the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life (IRCPL).
Chaplains Under Fire (2010)
Sun, Oct 17, 6:30 pm
Roone Arledge Cinema
Alfred Lerner Hall
Q&A with dirs. Terry Nickelson & Lee Lawrence

As the special opening event, Professor Alfred Stepan, Director of CDTR and Co-Director of IRCPL will open the film and members of the US Military Veterans of Columbia (MilVets) and Columbia SIPA Veterans Association (CSVA) will be joining the filmmakers for the Q&A.

Should the government be allowed to fund the presence of religious clergy on our battlefields? Filmmakers Lee Lawrence and Terry Nickelson explore this complex question concerning US military chaplains in their emotional and thought-provoking documentary. Lawrence and Nickelson’s film takes the viewers to bases in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars where military chaplains give their troops support and guidance at a time when they need it most. But is the government financially supporting deathbed conversions and religious proselytizing? Is the presence of clergy in the military unconstitutional or the very embodiment of the First Amendment? Chaplains Under Fire uses both personal stories from soldiers and civilian testimony to investigate this controversial issue. For more information on the film, please visit http://chaplainsunderfire.com.

Chaplains Under Fire has been featured in Independents Night at Lincoln Center and won a Remi Award at the 43rd Annual Worldfest International Film Festival.

The Lord is Not on Trial Here Today (2011)
Fri, Oct 22, 8:30 pm
Room 569
Alfred Lerner Hall
Q&A with dir. Jay Rosenstein

“The First Amendment rests upon the premise that both religion and government can best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other within its respective sphere.”
-Justice Hugo Black
McCollum v. Board of Ed.

“Separation of church and state” is a phrase often thrown around in discussions of religion and government. However, little is known about the US Supreme Court case that solidified the “wall of separation” between the two. Director Jay Rosenstein’s The Lord is Not Here on Trial Today tells the story of Vashti McCollum, a small-town mother in suburban Illinois who bravely battled the Board of Education to ban religious teachings in public schools. With recent interviews from McCollum herself, Jay Rosenstein’s film tells the personal story behind the landmark First Amendment case. For more information on the film, please visit http://www.jayrosenstein.com.

This screening will be a special sneak preview of the film, which is expected to have its national release on PBS in March 2011.
Meet Menachem Daum. An Orthodox Jew, the son of Holocaust survivors, and a man with an overwhelming sense of compassion. Menachem worries about the growing bigotry against non-Jews within his religious community and his own family. Oren Rudavsky’s *Hiding and Seeking* chronicles the journey to Poland Menachem takes with his sons in order to teach them the values of an open perspective and the perils of a closed heart. Carrying with them the scars of history, they search for the Catholic family that risked their lives to hide Menachem’s father-in-law from the Nazis for over two years. To their surprise, they find that they are not the only ones carrying the burden of resentment. For more information on the film, please visit [http://www.pbs.org/pov/hidingandseeking](http://www.pbs.org/pov/hidingandseeking).

**Oren Rudavsky** is an award-winning independent filmmaker with both Emmy and Academy Award nominations. *Hiding and Seeking* was nominated for best documentary at the Independent Spirit Awards, won Grand Prize at the Warsaw International Jewish Film Festival and was Best Film at the North American Interfaith Film Festival in 2004.


*Fri, Oct 29, 8:30 pm*  
Room 555  
Alfred Lerner Hall  
Q&A with dir. Oren Jacoby

In addition to the feature-length *Constantine’s Sword*, we will be showing the director’s Oscar-nominated short film, *Sister Rose’s Passion*.

The son of a Catholic Air Force officer, writer James Carroll had two heroes growing up — his father and the Roman Emperor Constantine. Based on the book by the same name, *Constantine’s Sword* interweaves the history of Christian violence and war with the personal narrative of how this history affected one man’s faith. Carroll — a former priest — recounts stories about his religious and moral upbringing and his slow realization of the contradictions between the two. Citing religious discrimination in the US Air Force Academy and the Catholic Church’s role in the Holocaust as examples, *Constantine’s Sword* sets out to prove that, indeed, no war is holy.

*Sister Rose’s Passion* is an Academy Award-nominated film about a Dominican nun’s personal campaign against anti-Semitism in the Catholic faith. For more information, please visit [http://www.storyville.org](http://www.storyville.org).

In addition to being honored by the Academy and Tribeca Film Festival, Oren Jacoby has won CINE Golden Eagles, the Royal Television Society (UK) journalism award, and the MacArthur Golden Owl award. *Constantine’s Sword* is a NY Times Critics’ Pick.
A Jihad for Love (2007)
Fri, Nov 5, 7:30 pm
Room 569
Alfred Lerner Hall
Q&A with dir. Parvez Sharma

A lesbian couple living in Turkey. A gay imam in South Africa. An Egyptian refugee in France. A Jihad for Love’s narrators are as diverse in point of view as they are in location and lifestyle. The two things they all have in common — their faith and their sexual orientation — are the subjects of this film by director Parvez Sharma.

The term “jihad” does not mean “holy war,” as it is often understood in the West. In Arabic, it means “struggle” and it is most often used in the context of “striving toward the path of God.” A Jihad for Love spans twelve countries and nine languages to document the struggles of Muslim homosexuals in their efforts to reconcile their religion with their sexuality. Sharma, a Muslim homosexual himself, spent five and a half years collecting interviews with other gay and lesbian Muslims from around the world in order to explore this little-documented issue. For more information on the film, please visit http://www.ajihadforlove.com.

In 2009, UTNE Reader listed Parvez Sharma in “50 Visionaries Who are Changing Your World.” A Jihad for Love has been screened at most major international festival venues including a world premiere at Toronto in 2007 and a European premiere (as the opening film of Panorama Documentary) in Berlin, 2008. It was also the winner of the prestigious GLAAD media award for Outstanding Documentary (2009).

Pray the Devil Back to Hell (2008)
Fri, Nov 12, 5:30 pm
Satow Room
Alfred Lerner Hall
Q&A with producer Abigail Disney

Who would stand up to a bloodthirsty dictator? Pray the Devil Back to Hell chronicles the actions of a group of ordinary women in Liberia who had the courage to do just that — and consequently helped put an end to their devastating civil war. Sick of the unending violence that was plaguing their country, Christian and Muslim mothers, grandmothers, wives, and daughters came together to demand peace in Liberia. Through peaceful protests, steadfast sit-ins, and a mass call to withhold sex until peace was achieved, their grassroots activism altered the trajectory of their nation’s history. Abigail Disney’s film serves as an inspirational example of real change through peaceful means. For more information, please visit http://www.praythedevilbacktohell.com.

Pray the Devil Back to Hell has won countless awards including Best Documentary at Tribeca, the Witness Award at the AFI Silver Docs Film Festival, and the Audience Choice Award at the Jackson Hole Film Festival (2008). The United Nations has also honored the film, screening it multiple times as a tool for peace-building education and advocacy.
Contact Information

Film Series Organizer
Center for the Study of Democracy, Toleration, and Religion
Cindy Choung
syc2126@columbia.edu
(646)207-1540

Assistant Director
Center for the Study of Democracy, Toleration, and Religion
Melissa Van
cdtr@columbia.edu
(212)854-7813
Fax: (212)854-8925
http://www.sipa.columbia.edu/cdtr

Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy
iserp@columbia.edu
(212)854-3081
Fax: (212)854-8925
http://iserp.columbia.edu

Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life
info@ircpl.org
(212)851-4145
Fax: (212)851-0781
http://ircpl.org