

#9021

1979: GOD FIGHTS BACK

PBS VIDEO

1999

Grade Levels: 10-13+

56 minutes



DESCRIPTION

Explores the current trend to take political action based on religious belief. Outlines the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and Egypt, the Christian Right in the United States, and orthodoxy among Israeli Jews. Their common theme is religious teaching mixed with political rhetoric.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: United States History

- Standard: Understands how political, religious, and social institutions emerged in the English colonies
 - Benchmark: Understands characteristics of religious development in colonial America (e.g., the presence of diverse religious groups and their contributions to religious freedom; the political and religious influence of the Great Awakening; the major tenets of Puritanism and its legacy in American society; the dissension of Anne Hutchison and Roger Williams, and Puritan objections to their ideas and behavior)
- Standard: Understands economic, social, and cultural developments in the contemporary United States
 - Benchmark: Understands how the rise of religious groups and movements influenced political issues in contemporary American society (e.g., the position of major religious groups on such issues as abortion, gay rights, women in the clergy, and educational issues; the causes and significance of religious evangelism and its effect on American political and religious culture in the 1980s; how Supreme Court decisions since 1968 have affected the meaning and practice of religious freedom)

Subject Area: World History

- Standard: Understands the search for community, stability, and peace in an interdependent world
 - Benchmark: Understands the role of ethnicity, cultural identity, and religious beliefs in shaping economic and political conflicts across the globe (e.g., why terrorist movements have proliferated and the extent of their impact on politics and society in various countries; the tensions and contradictions between globalizing trends of the world economy and assertions of traditional cultural identity and distinctiveness, including the

challenges to the role of religion in contemporary society; the meaning of jihad and other Islamic beliefs that are relevant to military activity, how these compare to the Geneva Accords, and how such laws and principles apply to terrorist acts)

Subject Area: Civics

- Standard: Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations
 - Benchmark: Understands why transnational loyalties such as those to ethnic, religious, tribal, or linguistic groups sometimes supersede allegiance to a nation-state (e.g., Communist International, Islam, Christianity)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To observe followers who hope that their morals and beliefs will guide their country's entire population.
2. To compare goals of the Islamic and Christian fundamentalist movements for their followers.
3. To research various religious movements that have influenced politics.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. This program addresses issues such as abortion and religious fundamentalism. Preview the program before using it in the classroom.
2. What appeals to people about religion? Why do you think people follow particular faiths?
3. Define the word *crusade* in terms of the history and philosophy of Christianity. Describe what you know about the word *jihad* ("holy war.") in terms of the history and philosophy of Islam.

DURING SHOWING

Applications and Activities

1. Have students write down the goals of the Islamic and Christian fundamentalist movements for their followers.
2. Divide the class into two groups. As students watch the program, have one group write down information about Iranian society under the Shah, and the other group write down information about what people hoped for under Khomeini.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Based on Carol Owen's quotation, how do you think she perceives American society as violating the "word of God"? How did Islamic fundamentalists perceive Iranian, Egyptian, and Algerian societies as violating the precepts of Islam? What problems was each fundamentalist movement trying to solve? What solutions did they propose?
2. Sheila Kerley describes the views of preacher Jimmy Swaggert as "black and white, right or wrong, and there were no in-betweens." Why do you think these qualities appeal to her and others? Why has Christian fundamentalism drawn so many supporters since the 1980s?

3. How did the fundamentalist movements effectively challenge secular authority? In what ways do the goals of theocracy conflict or coincide with the goals of democracy or monarchy?
4. Why did Iranians become disillusioned with the Shah and the society he had helped to create? Why were people inspired by Khomeini's vision?
5. What tools did Khomeini and his supporters use to organize opposition to the Shah? How did the Shah respond? What were the consequences of his actions?
6. How did Khomeini propose to change people's lifestyles? How do you think dramatically changing people's lifestyles enforced people's devotion to Islam? How do you think it enforced people's loyalty to Khomeini?

Applications and Activities

1. Have students research religious movements that have influenced American politics, such as the Puritans, Quakers, transcendentalists, the Moral Majority, or anti-religious parties such as the Know-Nothings. Have students write an essay on why religion must influence politics from the point of view of one of the movements. Have students share their findings and discuss whether or not they agree with the point of view.
2. To help students understand the historical context of the Iranian Revolution, have them research twentieth-century Iranian history. Based on their reading, have them list key events and explain how each event influenced or fostered the Iranian Revolution. Key events might include the discovery of oil in the early 1900s, the nationalist revolution of 1906, the partition of Iran by Great Britain and Russia in 1907, the accession of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925 and his son's succession in 1941, the nationalization of oil companies in 1951 and the failed coup of 1953, the Islamic revolution and the seizure of U.S. hostages in 1979, the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988, and the death of Khomeini in 1989.
3. Bring in several articles about Islamic fundamentalist movements in different countries (including the United States). Have students use the articles to list some of the movements' practices and beliefs. Then have students research the basic tenets and origin of Islam, expand their list, and relate each item to the religion. Discuss the beliefs that underlie the Islamic fundamentalist movement, the complexity of the religion, and the range of Muslim practices.

RELATED RESOURCES



Captioned Media Program

- Faith and Belief: Five Major World Religions #8078
- The Janissaries #3621
- Jerusalem: Three Faiths...One God #8780
- The Siege of Constantinople #3516



World Wide Web

The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **THE MUSLIM WORLD**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/newszone/specialreports/challenge/muslim/islam.htm>

Information on the beginnings of Islam, Islam after the death of Mohammed, the impact of Islam, Islamic beliefs, and other related topics are presented by Scholastic.

- **UPFRONT ONLINE**

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/upfront/issue/articles/5aafghan.htm>

The New York Times' news magazine for teens, presents an article on Afghanistan.

- **CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM**

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/>

Under the subheading "Christian Life," click on "Christian History" to read how Christianity came into being from crusades to homeland defenses. Provides a choice of in-depth or in brief readings.