

JESUS POLITICS



A film by Ilan Ziv Co produced with Serge Gordey. A co-production of Tamouz Media/ Bo Travail! and Independent Television Service (ITVS), Channel 4 Incorporated, ZDF/ARTE and in association with The Passionate Eye CBC Newsworld, CBC RADIO CANADA, ORF, TSR and RTBF, and with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)

After fighting as an Israeli soldier in the 1973 war, and troubled by the nation's obsessive mixing of the Bible with politics, filmmaker Ilan Ziv left for America, which he considered a "safe haven" because of its separation between church and state. Thirty-five years later, alarmed by the prominent role of religion in the 2008 American presidential campaign, he decides to make a road trip to understand the phenomenon.

Rather than follow the candidates, however, Ziv decides to meet with religious activists supporting the Democratic and Republican candidates. From the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire and South Carolina primaries to Super Tuesday in Oklahoma, **JESUS POLITICS** shows the efforts of Baptist activists for Obama, Catholics and evangelicals for McCain, Christian conservatives for Huckabee, as well as the political efforts of evangelical organizations such as Christians United for Israel.

Through archival footage and interviews with author and theology historian Randall Balmer (*God in the White House*) and Moral Majority co-founder Paul Weyrich, the film provides a historical overview of religion in American politics, from the Great Awakening religious revivals in the 18th and 19th centuries, through 1960, when JFK asked voters to disregard his Catholic faith, through the rise of Jimmy Carter in 1976 as a "born again" Christian, and the more recent rise of the Religious New Right, and its political activism around the issues of abortion and homosexuality.

These various themes are explored through encounters on the road, scenes with the film's characters, the imagery of the campaign and probing "side tours" (some of them as far as Israel). The different strands and layers are woven into a rich thought provoking cinematic essay. The 4000 miles journey that began in the snows of Iowa with the promise of a new dawn of American politics ends with the rumbling of decades old cultural; **JESUS POLITICS** is a probing look at how deeply religious faith shapes 21st century American politics.

