

An Eye-Opening Look At 'God In America'



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It sounds like it would be the most boring six-hour documentary series on a network known for erring toward the dull. But the eye-opening **"God in America"** (CPTV, Monday through Wednesday, 9 p.m.) upends standard notions of religion.

Those who first came to the new world weren't attracted by religious freedom, according to the well-sourced co-production of "Frontline" and "American Experience." Rather, sects from the Puritans in New England to the Catholic Spaniards in the Southwest did their best to make sure their religion was the only one followed.

The notion of religious liberty didn't come until after the Revolution, and after several states dropped their Anglican-only religious stance. Even so, there was the kind of reaction against Catholicism years ago that may be recognizable in bigotry toward Islam today.

Tuesday's episode looks at the Bible's role in fueling both sides of the Civil War as well as at the reaction to the beliefs brought by immigrants in the early 20th century. The Cold War to the present day is covered on Wednesday's concluding chapter, in a series that deserves to be saved and taught in schools.

A second six-hour miniseries showing at the same time, **"Carlos"** (Sundance, Monday through Wednesday, 9 p.m.) follows the story of Carlos the Jackal, who was behind a wave of terror attacks in Europe and the Middle East in the 1970s and '80s. Édgar Ramírez is strong in the lead role, and the ambitious production by French director Olivier Assayas does a good job balancing action and tension while creating a convincing picture of the era in dress, manner and detail.

Docs This Week

"Once Brothers" (ESPN, Tuesday, 8 p.m.) follows the progress of basketball players Drazen Petrovic and Vlade Divac,

teammates on the Yugoslavian National team who went on to Europe and America, becoming players in the NBA. When Yugoslavia split in 1991, so did their homelands, Croatia and Serbia. It caused a rift between the two, one they couldn't reconcile before Petrovic was killed in an auto accident two years later.

"Monica & David" (HBO, Thursday, 8 p.m.) chronicles the marriage of a pair of adults with Down syndrome. Filmed by a cousin, Alexandra Codina, the look at the couple's planning to marry seems unique for those two. While the parents are hailed for allowing them to be this independent, they are still kind of sheltered even after their union. But it's a pleasure to get to know the couple, so full of love and hope for the future.

On Today

Today's date of 10-10-10 is a big thing in some circles. It's been named the international day of action for climate change. And it may be the biggest day for weddings since, well, 9-9-09. But it's used on TV to launch The Hub, a new network for kids in the place where Discovery Kids once was.

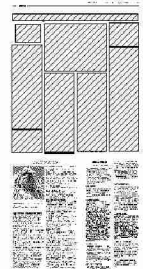
A co-production with Hasbro, it doesn't just have commercials for kids, it's practically turned over to commercial concerns with such offerings as **"Pound Puppies"** (2 p.m.), **"My Little Pony"** (2:30 p.m.), **"Strawberry Shortcake's Berry Bitty Adventures"** (3 p.m.) and **"Family Game Night"** (7 p.m.).

Tony Curtis, the movie star who died Sept. 29 at age 85, is saluted all day on Turner Classic Movies with a 24-hour marathon of a dozen of his films. It begins early with the 1954 **"Beachhead"** (6 a.m.) and includes in prime time with **"Sweet Smell of Success"** (8 p.m.), **"The Defiant Ones"** (9:45 p.m.), **"Trapeze"** (11:30 p.m.), **"The Great Race"** (1:30 a.m.); and ending with **"Don't Make Waves"** (4:15 a.m.).

The second of three Wallander capers on **"Masterpiece Mystery"** (CPTV, 9 p.m.) has the grizzled Swedish detective portrayed by Kenneth Branagh battling depression.

In Sunday Night Football, it's **Philadelphia at San Francisco** (NBC, 8:15 p.m.).

I'm not thinking there will be too many scary costume ideas on **"Tricking and Treating with Martha Stewart"** (Hallmark, 9 p.m.).



"Into the Lost Crystal Caves"

(National Geographic Channel, 8 p.m.) peeks into a newly discovered area in a lead mine that looks like Superman's hideout.

It's the second-to-last episode of "**Mad Men**" (AMC, 10 p.m.) for the season, and it's interesting to see where the fledging agency ends up. One more crisis comes up tonight. Jimmy gets to know Chicago on "**Boardwalk Empire**" (HBO, 9 p.m.).

"**The Amazing Race**" (CBS, 8 p.m.) continues in Ghana.

Reality Bites

We certainly don't need another group of peroxide biddies in various stages of plastic rehabilitation meeting together for fights 'n slights. But here come "**The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills**" (Bravo, Thursday, 10 p.m.), a title that in itself seems an oxymoron.

If they really wanted real housewives in that area, they'd choose from the four nannies of Camille Grammer, a woman who is so embarrassed about her over-privileged life, she begins many of her sentences by saying "I know how this will make me sound, but ..." She's married to Kelsey Grammer, but only tentatively; she seems to be using this series as a gilded pathway to the rest of her career.

Others in the group include sisters who were former child actors, as if to prove that the only way they can get on a series now is to exploit their fears and foibles on reality TV. The requisite Brit is named Lisa Vanderpump, who dresses up her dog. And the most annoying of them may be the most rich, who invites the rest of them to join her in her private plane to see her basketball team, the Sacramento Kings.

A much more esteemed group of women can be found, oddly, among the cast of "**Teen Mom**" (MTV, Tuesday, 10 p.m.) which reaches its second season finale.

In "**Rock and Roll Fantasy Camp**" (VH1 Classic, Saturday, 10 p.m.), producer Mark Burnett follows 15 musicians as they go through the motions under the mentorship of rock has-beens like Kip Winger and Rudy Sarzo. It's a little sad.

Speaking of which, "**The Vanilla Ice Project**" (DIY Network, Thursday, 9 p.m.), follows the one-hit rapper into his new field, flipping houses, which seems like a dying business in a foreclosure era.

A new season comes for "**Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making the Team**" (CMT, Friday, 8 p.m.) which is the

first series in which reality TV fans got a glimpse at Melissa Rycroft, before the whole "Bachelor" business.

In the culinary realm, there is also Nadia G., tough-gal host of something called "**Bitchin' Kitchen**" (Cooking Channel, Wednesday, 10:30 p.m.), as well as "**Food Feuds**" (Food Network, Thursday, 10 p.m.), which is a little more civilized than it sounds. It's more of an argument posed each week, as in: What is the best meatball in Philly?

Also This Week

Nicky Minaj and Jay-Z are poised to be big winners at the **2010 BET Hip Hop Awards** (BET, Tuesday, 8 p.m.), where Salt-N-Pepa are given the I Am Hip-Hop Award. The event was taped Oct. 2.

An energetic, husky comic recognizable from his many cameo appearances, including "Reno 911!," gets his own showcase in "**Nick Swardson's Pretend Time**" (Comedy Central, Tuesday, 10 p.m.). It's a crude show with some occasional laughs, which you might expect from the co-writer of "Grandma's Boy" whose comedy album was titled "Seriously, Who Farted?"

A new season comes for "**Sanctuary**" (Syfy, Friday, 10 p.m.). Wonder how many fans of "**SmackDown**" (Syfy, Friday, 8 p.m.) will stick around to watch.

The latest live-action, straight-to-TV movie is "**Scooby-Doo! Curse of the Lake Monster**" (Cartoon Network, Saturday, 7 p.m.).

The movie "**Reviving Ophelia**" (Lifetime, Monday, 9 p.m.) stars Jane Kaczmarek and Kim Dickens as mothers raising teenage daughters with different problems, one of whom is a victim of dating abuse. It's based on the bestselling book by Dr. Mary Pipher with a script by Teena Booth, who was behind such Lifetime movie hits as "The Pregnancy Pact" and "Amish Grace."

"**Smallville**" (The CW, Friday, 8 p.m.) reaches its 200th episode with a visit from Braniac, who may well ask Clark: Haven't you been in high school a little too long? It is, however, the final season for the series. And "**Life Unexpected**" (The CW, Tuesday, 9 p.m.) withstands its first forced crossover episode with characters from "**One Tree Hill**" (The CW, Tuesday, 8 p.m.). Sweetening the combo is some musical intervention from Sarah McLachlan, Ben Lee and Rain Perry.

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COURTESY OF BILLY GRAHAM CENTER

IN 1947, Rev. Billy Graham began traveling across America hoping to spark a spiritual revival with his own conversion story. His story is part of "God in America" on CPTV this week.