

Gods "Warriors"

1: A red car drives through the morning fog. A Dodge. It is half past 6 in the morning, it is a little cold, but the first people have already taken their spots around a concrete building, which signals - without windows and surrounded by a big fence - a certain? ...curiosity?

The red car is about a hundred meters away. In the start, it drives slowly, but when it comes close to the guarded fence, it speeds up and goes through. If it wasn't for the brakes, you could probably hear the driver's relief. Finally safe! He thinks.

A middle-aged woman makes the sign of the cross, and yells, "Little children have a beating heart. Do you?"

She doesn't get an answer. She makes the sign of the cross again. The abortion doctor hurries inside the building, without looking back. A new day has started in the American culture battle.

For and against abortion. For and against the basic questions that are behind the conflict of abortion - and when the day is over, America will be even more divided.

2: In New York and L.A., it is called "fly-over-land". It's meant to be negative, but in a way, it's true. Kansas is fly-over-land for the Democrats.

There's nothing to get here. Last month, when the party's presidential candidate, John Kerry, journeyed on his campaign, he didn't do one single stop in Kansas. He went to bed and woke up 750 kilometers later, in a more friendly-minded part of the country.

It's weird.

It's weird because only a couple of generations ago, Kansas, and other states in the mid-west, were the most leftwing minded in all of the union. Kansas had several socialistic newspapers, one of them with a circulation of more than a quarter of a million papers per issue. Here you also found the leaders of the socialistic movement in the US: Eugene Debbs, the Populist leader, and Robert La Follette. The union leader, Walther Reuther, was also from Kansas. The state had four or five militant farm groups, and a town in Kansas was even named "Liberal."

In 1931, the historian, Walter Webb called liberalism one of the states big mysteries. Kansas still likes to play the role of a bulldog, or of an underdog, and it is understandable. Even though it is right in the middle of the US, it is considered "far-out and far-away".

In the 1980s, you could see T-shirts in N.Y. with the text: "*New York -It ain't Kansas*". In addition, the bad guy in Superman wouldn't let a bomb go off in Kansas because then no one would hear about it. Economically it is not the best place either. The soil is not good. Except for a boom in low-paying jobs in the meat industry in the southwestern part of the state, nothing is really happening.



In Kansas, every sixth child lives in poverty. The majority of all Kansas counties have lost citizens from 1990 until now, and the state is number 49 out of 50 in the difference in health care between the rich and the poor.

It would be logical to conclude that Kansas would vote for the left. Looking at the past and present, Kansas most likely would vote for the party that traditionally was the weak people's party –the Democrats.

However, Kansas doesn't see itself that way. Not at all!

In 2000 Bush got 58% of the vote in Kansas, Al Gore got 37%. Today John Kerry doesn't even think about stopping in Kansas.

3: Mark Gietzen parks his Minivan in front of the seized building. He opens the trunk, and in the back, he has 167 small white crosses. He starts taking them out, a couple of crosses at a time, and puts them in the grass in front of the building. As they stand there, the crosses remind you of a soldier's graveyard in France, or in Arlington.

Each little white cross stands for an unborn child who has been aborted here during the past month. Woman's Health Care Services is the biggest abortion clinic in the US.

Mark Gietzen does this every day. At sunrise, he puts them up; at sunset, he takes them away.

In Denmark we see American anti-abortionists as crazy fanatics, old-fundamentalists giving testimony in their anger, and lunatics without humor, without knowledge about the world outside of their interest. Kind of an American jihad. Mark Gietzen is the opposite.

He is not just smart and modest, he prefers to talk about cars and airplanes, and presents himself with a charming self-irony. "I'm kind of a crazy guy," he says. He has worked all his life in the Boeing factory here in Wichita; he started on the floor, later became an inspector, then a company field representative. During most of his time at Boeing, he never needed to wear a tie to work. In other words, Mark sounds like the prototype of a Democratic voter - but he is not.

"My family has voted Democratic for generations. However, we are also a Christian family, and a family against abortion. I simply cannot vote for a party that supports abortion. In the 80's Reagan made the anti-abortion cause a Republican cause, and thereby the choice was easy. I became Republican," says Gietzen.

4: It might be true that a couple of generations ago, Kansas and the neighboring states on the prairie in the Midwest, voted Democratic, and it might be true that they gave their cities names like "Liberal" and experimented with socialism; but in other areas they were as conservative as Mads Skjem. [a Danish political figure]

Take the Democrat's Presidential candidate in 1896 1900 and 1904, William Jennings Bryan. He came from Nebraska, and he severely criticized Wall Street, was like thunder against the railroad "lords", and he demanded better living standards for the poor. But Bryan was also a Christian fundamentalist. In 1924, he tried to get a law passed that would make it illegal to teach Darwin's "theory", because man did not come from the ape. Man was made by God.

The qualities in Bryan are in many ways the qualities in Kansas today; "against the powerful, and for God".

As long as the Democratic Party had both populist appeal and traditional values, it could win in states like Kansas. However, in the culture battles of the 60's and the 70's, the Democrats chose to go with liberation, "the big flip-flop": for abortion, for equality for women, black people, and sexual minorities, absolutely for Darwin, and completely against conservative traditions.

Since 1968, Kansas has not voted for the Democratic presidential candidate.

5: "I would rather talk about something else, - and use my time on something else" says Mark Gietzen, after putting the crosses in the ground. "I don't think it's especially fun to be here and to demonstrate". He also has a full life besides anti-abortion activities. In his garage at home, he is re-building a Piper Tri-Pacer airplane. On his eyeglasses, he has an engraved image of that airplane, and he is a certified flight instructor. He has been married and divorced twice, and he has three children whom he likes to talk about.

The oldest is in college, the next one is planning to go into the Marines, and the youngest -Greg, 9 years old – has written a book about cats, which Mark has printed and published. Besides that, he has started a website for single, Christian men and women. We could stand and talk for hours, about all the things that make life interesting, but suddenly you get a sense of the fire that burns in his stomach.

Another car drives down the road, speeds up at the gate, and disappears into the parking lot. It is the abortion doctor from Nebraska. "He has come here to kill small kids today," he says. Abortion is the factor that drives Mark Gietzen politically, and he is certainly not the only one.

Kansas has always been conservative, but never this conservative! The big change came during the summer of 1991, "The Summer of Mercy" as it is called.

At that time, Gietzen was already an active Republican, and an anti-abortion advocate. He experienced how Operation Rescue came to Wichita, to protest against abortion. But "protest" isn't the right word, because it was like a fire that started and spread very fast. Demonstrations against abortion became more aggressive. Activists threw themselves on the road, even in front of cars, they chained themselves to the clinic's gates and they raged against abortion doctors private homes. Soon, the jails were filled with anti-abortion activists.

Finally, 30,000 people got together at the university stadium and heaven and earth reached each other. It was like one of the populist hurricanes of the past; only the hurricane went right, not left.

6: "It is one thing to protest, and it is another thing to achieve political results. No matter how well-meaning someone is, it doesn't make a lot of sense to throw yourself down in the middle of the road," says Gietzen. He started recruiting activists for his political work, because the more activists he could get in the Republican Party, the easier it was to make the party's politics more religious.

A couple of hours driving north, Tim Golba, a worker in a pop-factory, was doing the same thing.

They got 10,000 new activists into politics, and they were ready to wrestle with the other big fraction in the Republican Party, the so-called "Moderates".

The Moderates are the traditional well-off Republicans who fight for lower taxes and advantages for businesses. However, they are more in the middle on moral questions. The Moderate Republicans have the money, and the Religious Republicans have the foot soldiers.

In 1992, Gietzen and his Religious Conservatives started a "Revolution", and with the wind from The Summer of Mercy, they took over the Republican Party in Kansas, - all of it. Mark Gietzen became Chairman of the Sedgwick County Republican Party.

Later they got a majority in the state legislature and a majority on the state school board.

A right-wing Religious politician won over a leading Democratic U.S. Congressman from Wichita, and another Religious politician, Sam Brownback went to the Senate. All of this happened because of the battle against abortion and The Summer of Mercy!

God's army was marching.

7: Not a leaf can fall to the ground, without it being recorded outside the abortion clinic. Mark Gietzen has posted his volunteers all around the clinic, and he has a detailed plan, covering who will be where, and when. The volunteers write everything down in a logbook.

A new nurse shows up. Who is she? Look at the tag and find out. Who drives that old Mazda? Find out! Why was there an ambulance at the clinic yesterday? Call the hospital.

A pregnant women walks by, talk to her and give her a folder, try to persuade her not to go in there.

Have you seen the photo of the owner of the clinic in the newspaper, Doctor Tiller? Does he dye his hair? Get that photo and make it bigger.

When some of these anti-abortion activists find out the identity of a nurse, they make flyers and pass them around in the nurse's neighborhood. "Did you know that your neighbor works at an abortion clinic?" the flyers ask. In some cases, this pressure has caused the nurse stop working there.

In spite of the incredible number of work-hours spent in preparation, in consideration, in engagement, and in prayer, this Doctor Tiller had his clinic during The Summer of Mercy, and he still has it today.

Nevertheless, this effort is something different; Gietzen and his volunteers now talk about a seven-year plan to force him out. It is like the forever that is the horizon.

The big goal is to illegalize abortion in the US, and that goal seems just as far away as the horizon. Until at least one or two judges are replaced on the US Supreme Court, the majority of US voters who favor some abortion regulation go no where.

With Hand on the Heart: "Couldn't Mark Gietzen use his energy elsewhere?"

He, and the majority of other religious activists, come from humble backgrounds; wouldn't it be more useful if they used their energy on getting minimum wages raised, or toward creating health insurance for everybody, or toward promoting better education, and improvements to the environment?

8: That is the kind of question that the world's journalists ask. The author Thomas Frank also asks this question in his new book "What's The Matter With Kansas?"

In his book, Frank expresses respect for the Religious Right; they are people who generally have a humble job and limited education, and they work hard to gather treasures in heaven, not for the money, and not for the prestige.

It is admirable, he says. But on the negative side, he also sees the Religious Right as - to use Lenin's expression - "class cheaters". They do nothing for their own, and they do everything for the corporations, Frank says.

It might be difficult, in dollars and cents, to see what the Religious Right in Kansas have gained from a decade with almost all the power they could wish for. The school commission has started a new debate on Darwin's theory of evolution, and politicians have started a debate about equality for sexual minorities - as if it has gone too far. A Kansas minister has personally gone through 51,000 music CD's and has removed 1,600 of them, which he found to be too bad.

Even in cases where the Religious Right has gotten new laws passed, they often run out of steam in the sand. For example, politicians made a law against abortion in the third trimester, but the US Supreme Court changes it.

Another law gives homosexuals harder requirements than heterosexuals have, and it also is headed for the court right now.

These kinds of initiatives and ideas do nothing to better the living standard for the weakest and the middle class, at least not on a measurable scale. The richest, on the other hand benefit abundantly. Taxes in Kansas have been lowered for company owners, investors, and big trust-holders. Restrictions for companies are gone, and the state has adopted some "anti labor union" laws.

The religious Senator Sam Brownback said in a speech; the economy doesn't mean a lot to the voters in Kansas. "When I'm talking to people, I often ask them: "What are the biggest problems that we are facing? Are they moral or economical? The answer I most often get is: "Moral".

9: Is it Mark Gietzen that the populist song from 1892 is written about: "Oh, Kansas fools! Poor Kansas fool, the banker makes of you a tool"?

Gietzen laughs out-loud. "No, I don't think it's me". "It's not me, but we have to think about it."

"We Religious Conservatives certainly give something to the Economic Conservatives, and of course, we get something in return for our support. Is it possible that we both benefit from each other? I think that we do. The Bush administration has stopped public funding of abortion, and our president nominates only judges who are against abortion. Furthermore, he has signed a law that illegalizes abortion in the third trimester. We certainly could not have gotten that from the Democratic Party."

Wouldn't it be right to try? Wouldn't you belong in a party that takes the workers case?

Gietzen responds, "The Democrats aren't the workers party anymore, nor are they the family party, nor the average person's party. Today the Democrat party is a party that is in the pocket of those with big checks and Hollywood values. They have no idea what is going on in the rest of America. One of President Clinton's advisers called poor people; 'trailer-trash'. Should that be the worker's political party?"

It is obviously a question that Mark Gietzen has been thinking about. Three years ago, he published his thoughts in an 80-page book called: "Is it a Sin for a Christian to be a Registered Democrat Voter in America Today?"

His answer was, in a sense - Yes. You cannot be a Christian and at the same time stand on the other side of the culture battle.

To draw such clear lines, doesn't that mean polarization? A deep dividing of the country?

"Yes" answers Gietzen, "and that is actually a good thing. Polarization is good because it leads to clear choices." It is our Christian responsibility to polarize in support of that which is good, and to oppose those things that are evil.

10: Kansas is thereby a political microcosm (of the chaos that is going on in the US). As Kansas votes, so does a big part of the nation. The state of Kansas has written, in "heaven's language," exactly what Bush has to do to win the election.

He has to keep the anger boiling.

The economy, Iraq, and all the other concrete problems are worth a debate, but moral problems are the main factor.

That is why Bush says: Marriage between homosexuals? No. Abortion? No. Naked breasts on TV? No. He constantly talks about God, and emphasizes "moral responsibility". Good vs. Evil. White vs. Black.



Mark Carter (til venstre) løfter sine kors over hovedet i løbet af sin tur. Til højre ses Mark Carter, som bærer korsene på ryggen. Han er på vej til et møde med andre korsbærere i Washington.

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DAGENS TAL

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- 85 Antal medlemmer af ledelsen i Senatet, som kalder sig kristelige konservativer.
- 4 Antal medlemmer af ledelsen i Senatet, som kalder sig kristelige konservativer.
- 100 Antal procent af befolkningen, der er Bush-tro, og derfor taler han i 2004 ustandseligt om kampen mod abort, homoseksuelle ægtepar og Hollywood-værdier.

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KAPITLERNE

- 1. **Frigørelsen** (1945-1948)
- 2. **Reaktionen** (1948-1952)
- 3. **Hølløjsh** (1952-1956)
- 4. **Sort og hvid** (1956-1960)
- 5. **Hvad gør vi nu?** (1960-1964)
- 6. **Manden fra Midland** (1964-1968)
- 7. **Jorden** (1968-1972)
- 8. **Det daglige brød** (1972-1976)
- 9. **Grænsen** (1976-1980)
- 10. **Krig, krig, krig ...** (1980-1984)
- 11. **Det lars** (1984-1988)
- 12. **Sex and the city** (1988-1992)