

“The irrationality and absurdity of the Christian faith”
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Greetings in the Name of our Crucified and Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

In case you haven't heard, comedian, political satirist, and hater-of-all-things-religious, Bill Maher has made a documentary titled “Religulous,” which opened in theaters yesterday. “Religulous” is Maher's attempt to show the world how irrational and absurd religion is. With that purpose in mind, Maher traveled the globe and interviewed adherents of various world religions (mostly those who claim to be Christian), mocking and deriding them for believing in their “glorified superstitions” both to get a laugh and to try to prove his thesis that all religions are bunk, and that anyone who holds religious beliefs is simply ignorant.

Actually, to say that Maher “interviews” people in this documentary is a stretch; “ambushes” would be more accurate. Maher, and producer Larry Charles (of “Seinfeld” and “Borat” fame), use subterfuge and trickery to capture their unsuspecting victims on film. When asked how he was able to get people to talk to him, Maher said, “It was simple: We never, ever, used my name. We never told anybody it was me who was going to do the interviews. We even had a fake title for the film. We called it ‘A Spiritual Journey’ . . . The crew would set up and at the last second, when the cameras were already rolling, I would show up. So either they'd be seen on camera leaving the interview and lose face or they'd have to talk to me. It was like – ‘And now here's . . . Bill!’”

One would think that Maher would be a little more hush-hush about the dishonest approach employed in producing this documentary, but he is unabashedly unashamed about it. He simply doesn't care. He is not out to take a serious look at religion, but to make religion look as irrational and absurd as he possibly can, which is made blatantly obvious not only by the sinister approach he takes, but also by the cast of characters he chooses to interrogate, most of whom do not even come close to representing the faith of historic Christianity.

Maher is on a mission (not from God, of course!). He believes that religion, and especially Christianity, is “detrimental to the progress of humanity,” and he will do whatever it takes, using any and all means, no matter how dishonest and despicable they are, to get that message out. To Maher, the end justifies the means. The fact that he ambushed people in this documentary and subsequently edited out any parts of the “interviews” which had any chance of being received as positive from the audience is perfectly justified in his eyes, for the sooner the world is rid of religion, and especially Christianity, the better he believes it will be.

But, for all that Maher gets wrong, he is exactly right about one thing: Christianity is irrational and absurd. According to our sinful human reason, it is irrational and absurd to believe in a Triune God, who reveals Himself as Three Persons in One God and One God in Three Persons; it is irrational and absurd to believe that this God created the universe in six, literal days; it is irrational and absurd to believe that Noah built an ark and survived a flood that encompassed the whole earth; it is irrational and absurd that God parted the Red Sea and allowed Moses and company to pass through on dry ground and escape the pursuing Egyptians; it is irrational and absurd that God Himself came down from heaven and was born of a Virgin and became Man; it is irrational and absurd that this God-in-the-Flesh, Jesus the Christ, walked on water, healed diseases, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead, calmed storms, and performed many other miracles; and, it is especially irrational and

absurd that this same Jesus rose from the tomb on the third day after being crucified, dead, and buried.

That the Christian faith is irrational and absurd to Maher is not surprising in the least. He lacks saving faith, and, without saving faith, no sinful human being can believe in the tenets of the Christian faith, which are undeniably irrational and absurd to sinful human reason. But, to those who have been brought to saving faith by God through the power of His Holy Word and Sacraments, the Christian faith is undeniably true. It is no longer irrational and absurd to them, for they know that nothing is impossible with the One, True God in Whom they believe.

I don't know how well "Religulous" will do at the box office. What I do know is that Maher can blaspheme God and condescendingly hurl insults and poke fun at Christians through that vile, filthy, and lying mouth of his until the cows come home, but he cannot harm the faithful in the least. For the faithful have the sure and certain promise of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that they are blessed when persecuted, that He is with them always, and that nothing – not death and hades, and certainly not the ravings of an unbeliever, like Bill Maher - can prevail against His Holy Church, to which they belong.

I know all of that is just plain silly and downright ignorant to people like Maher. So be it! As it is written, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men" (1 Cor. 1:25a). For that reason, I'll continue to place my trust in the irrational, absurd, foolishness of God, through Whom I have been given forgiveness, life, and salvation. I hope and pray that you will, too!

In the Name of Jesus Christ, who lived, died, and rose for you. Amen.

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