



THE
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
OF THE
FIRST FRIDAY
BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.

First Friday News & Views

NOVEMBER
2008
VOLUME
13
ISSUE
11

THE PROFITS OF FALSEHOOD

by Jonathan Wilson

INSIDE

Religulous — Movie Review by Gary Kaufman 2

Speaker Review by Bruce Carr 3

Briefs & Shorts 3

From the Editor 4

CALENDAR

▼ The next FFBC meeting is 7:00 A.M., Friday, November 7, 2008 at Hoyt Sherman Place.

Our guest speaker will be Nate Monson, Executive Director of the GLBT Youth in Iowa Task Force.

▼ R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, November 5 to JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com or 288-2500 by phone.

The Bible warns us against “false prophets.” Matthew 7:15. In the political arena that’s to say that there are folks who will lie to us convincingly for their political advantage. That will come as no surprise even to those who aren’t Biblical scholars.

The false prophets of our time will do it with the help of advisers, speechwriters, tele-prompters, spin-meisters, surrogate spokespeople, and slick commercials, all coordinated using an obscene amount of money. They’ll do it with slight of hand and clever distractions. Perhaps most insulting, they’ll even bold-face, unabashedly lie to us again and again with the same falsehoods even after they and we know they’re lying. That has to be the ultimate disrespect for the electorate, borne of utter desperation, repeating their untrue statements even after the statements are patently, demonstrably false and the falsehood has been regularly reported by the media. The Bush Administration has shown that it works, so it’s no wonder that we get more of it; we tend to get what we reward.

Fortunately, the Bible also gives us a clue to recognize false prophets when it tells us that we will “know them by their fruits.” Matthew 7:16. Our challenge is to look past their rhetoric and look instead to their records. Look behind the falsehoods and look instead for the facts.

Senator McCain has claimed to be a reforming “maverick.” The truth: he was a card-carrying Republican when Bush and a Republican-controlled Congress invaded a sovereign nation that was not a threat to us or our interests, based on erroneous intelligence; when a budget surplus was turned into a huge budget deficit; when the national debt incurred for our grandchildren to repay was doubled from \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion; when tax cuts were given to the rich with no requirement that they invest in creating American jobs; when no-bid contracts were awarded to private-sector war contracting cronies; when deregulation led to the secondary mortgage market crisis, the implosion of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers; and when unemployment and mortgage foreclosures have skyrocketed and our national reputation has been besmirched. Through it all he voted with the Bush Administration 90% of the time.

For national security credentials he touts his military record, principally his five years in a Vietnamese prison. His conventional heroism in surviving that ordeal is true enough; it’s just not relevant to the unconventional threats we face today. His disconnect from the realities of today is betrayed by his insistence that we must “win” in Iraq. In truth and fact, we already “won” in Iraq, and we’re now engaged in an occupation. No one “wins” an occupation of another country; you either continue the occupation or discontinue it.

In a political ad “approved by John McCain,” it was falsely claimed that Senator Obama voted for comprehensive sex education for kindergartners. The truth: Obama supported teaching kindergartners how to recognize and protect themselves against sexual predators.

When Sarah Palin says she turned down the “bridge to nowhere” because of her opposition to earmarks, she lied—count ‘em—*three times*. In truth: (1) she had actually lobbied for the earmarked money to pay for the bridge until Congress made it no longer politically feasible. (2) Then she kept the earmarked money to spend on other Alaska projects. (3) And then she used other federal money to go ahead and build the approach to the eventual “bridge to nowhere.”

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The fatal flaw of the McCain-Palin campaign is its adoption of the Bush-embellished Nixonian doctrine that the ends justify the means. That doctrine has been used to invade our privacy, which McCain has supported, and immunize the perpetrators from accountability. It has been used to eliminate the writ of *habeas corpus* that has its origins in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and, before that, in the Magna Carta. The doctrine has been used to authorize torture and other war crimes like extraordinary rendition, secret prisons, denial of counsel, and unaccountability to the International Red Cross. It has been used to contort our core values and make our own government into an enemy of its citizens and a friend of our enemies. The doctrine has been used, frankly, to make us less distinguishable from “them.” That it would be used to justify mere lying should come as no surprise.

It has been rightly said that if you want to know how someone will govern, look at how he runs his campaign. If you want to know who’s a false prophet, look for someone who’s trying to profit from falsehood. ▼

Politics is not the art of the possible. It consists in choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.—John Kenneth Galbraith

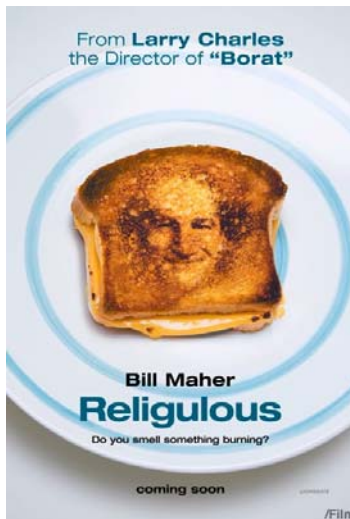
Religulous

Starring Bill Maher

Directed by
Larry Charles

1 Hr 41 Min

Religulous is a film where Bill Maher challenges the tenets of the religions of the world. He opens the film at the very spot in Israel where many believe the world will come to an end based on **Revelations**. He strongly believes that religion is detrimental to the progress of society and sets us out on a journey throughout the world in an effort to test the religious and to challenge those whom he interviews by pointing out illogical beliefs to these believers and then has them confront those beliefs.



ther, the Mahers were raised Catholic, but they never discussed in the family why mother was not going to church. However, even the father quit going to church when the family began adopting birth control. At that time there was nothing worse a Catholic could do than practice birth control. That was the last time the family every attended church.

Bill travels throughout the world to find the religious. He interviews a converted Satanic Priest who is now a confirmed Christian; he explores the merchandizing of religion, the dress of leaders of religion. He tells the story of Sodom and Gomorrah where two angels were sent to find one good man. When they get to the town, the townspeople try to rape the angels, but Lott offers to the crowd his daughters to rape as a substitute—“and this was the good guy in town!”

Bill Maher spends a fair amount of time interviewing an “ex-gay guy” who went from being gay to marrying a former lesbian, and they together formed the Exchange Ministries to help other gay people convert to heterosexuality. Bill points out that it was nature that made gay people, and it was men who wrote the Bible that declared their acts “unnatural”.

He interviews Ex-Jews for Jesus, an Arkansas senator, a Vatican astronomer, and the person who plays Jesus at the Holy Land Experience, a Christian themed amusement park in Orlando, Florida. In addition to Christianity, Bill also takes on other religions. He visits a gay Muslim bar in Amsterdam. He discusses the tenets of Scientology where the Scientologists believe all humans are infected by aliens, and the Mormon religion where Joseph Smith declared any other creed on Earth to be an abomination.

Bill then compares the Christ story to the stories contained in religions that predated Christ. The similarities of these stories are amazing. Krishna and the god Mithra have similar stories. And Horus, of ancient Egypt, was born the son of a god who had mated with a virgin mother—so we had a virgin birth, born on December 25th, was baptized by a person who was later beheaded, had twelve disciples, was crucified, but was found arisen days later by two women. It is amazingly similar, and it predated Christianity by thousands of years.

Bill ends his film with sort of a call-to-arms for the nonreligious minority to speak up and not let our government positions be based on religion. He fears that the world is too dangerous to allow things to be driven by religious dogma and fervor. It is time for people either “to grow up or die”.

The film is often amusing. But don’t go to the film without being willing to have your religious beliefs challenged. They will be challenged. The film will make you think. Not too many films do that anymore.

—Gary Kaufman

Doing to others as you have been done to is a path to hell for them and you.

Power Fund: Expanding Iowa's Renewable Energy Industry



Our guest speaker on the First Friday of October was Fred S. Hubbell, a scion of one of Iowa's first families and formerly Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Equitable of Iowa Companies, where he was Chairman from May 1993 to October 1997, and President and Chief Executive Officer from May 1989 to October 1997. After Equitable was bought by ING Group in 1997, he served as a member of the Executive Board and Chairman of Insurance and Asset Management Americas for ING, retiring from ING Group's Executive Board in 2006.



Fred Hubbell

Hubbell spoke to us from his new volunteer post as a board member of the Iowa Power Fund, created in 2007 to be a tool for Iowa's legislatively mandated Office of Energy Independence, its Power Fund Board, and Due Diligence Committee to use in promotion of the goals of Iowa energy independence. Power Fund money is appropriated to the office to be used in providing financial assistance to entities conducting business, research, or programs in Iowa which will: (1) accelerate research and development, knowledge transfer, technology innovation, and improve the economic competitiveness of efforts, and (2) increase the demand for and educate the public about new technologies and approaches.

The 18-member Iowa Power Fund Board which Hubbell heads consists of seven voting members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, four state agency directors, and seven ex-officio non-voting members. The duties of the board include considering and approving grants, loans, or investments and other financial incentives made from the fund; providing the governor with advice concerning economic development, policy, technical issues, and strategic direction concerning renewable energy, renewable fuels, and energy efficiency; and directing moneys from the fund to be used to purchase private or public technical assistance needed to conduct due diligence activities and to develop an Iowa energy independence plan.

Hubbell outlined the awards planned so far from the Fund's \$100 million, authorized in early 2006 to invest in projects related to renewable energy. Today there are about 20 proposals completely vetted, approved, and contracted, comprising roughly 1/3 of the dollars dedicated. The projects submitted, and studied by the Due Diligence Committee, range in size from \$12 thousand to \$15 million, and in length from 1 to 3 years. He remarked happily on the willingness of Iowa gov-

ernment—executive *and* legislative officials—to trust the Due Diligence Committee to do its work without political interference, and on the Fund's having already become a model for similar efforts in other states, especially Minnesota, Michigan, and Tennessee.

(In a real-time example, the Iowa Power Fund board voted, half a week after Hubbell's talk to us, to approve a \$1.1 million grant to the Amana Society for a methane digester, which converts gas emitted from livestock manure into a fuel that can be used to power electricity generators. The grant would amount to about 20 percent of the \$5 million cost for the digester, which is under construction in Amana.)

Fred Hubbell also took a few minutes to outline—and to plea for help with—the new rescue work of the associated “Embrace Iowa” program, now providing some \$1.6 million in relief for Iowans devastated by the tornados and floods of spring/summer 2008. He said that only \$6.5 million total is available from “Embrace Iowa”—a pittance, he noted, when compared to the devastation caused in Cedar Rapids alone (where 20,000 people lost their homes to the flood)—but it's the message sent by this rapid financial response that prompts more relief and that facilitates collaborative work with United Ways, Salvation Armies, and chambers of commerce throughout the state.

—Bruce Carr

If the enemy is in range, so are you.

BRIEFS & SHORTS

Be sure to RSVP for the November 7 meeting no later than November 5. E-mail JonathanWilson@davisbrownlaw.com or call him at 288-2500. Our speaker will be Nate Monson, Executive Director of the GLBT Youth in Iowa Task Force.



Thanks to James Swanstrom for his introduction of our October speaker, Fred Hubbell of the Iowa Power Fund.



A reminder to both members and non-members to designate FFBC when filling out your United Way pledge card.



Remember to VOTE on November 4. The ballot has two sides, so be sure to turn it over before placing it in the voting machine.



FFBC

*First Friday
News & Views
Des Moines, Iowa*

NOVEMBER 2008

First ▼ Friday
Breakfast Club

Board of
Directors

▼ DIRECTORS ▼

TERRY HARRIS
BYRON HUFF
SCOTT KLINEFELTER
RICK MILLER
LARRY SCHLATTER
RANDY SWARTS
DAVID TEACHOUT
MICHAEL THOMPSON
JOHN TOMPKINS
ALLEN VANDER LINDEN
RYAN WEIDNER
JONATHAN WILSON

▼ OFFICERS ▼

DAVID TEACHOUT
Treasurer

ALLEN VANDER LINDEN
Vice President

JONATHAN WILSON
Secretary & President

Newsletter:

STEVE PERSON, *Copy Editor*
DAVID TEACHOUT, *Production Editor*
THATCHER WILLIAMS, *Webmaster*

Website: www.ffbc-iowa.org

PUBLISHER, FFBC BOARD OF DIRECTORS
©2008 FIRST FRIDAY BREAKFAST CLUB, INC.

From the Editor

In Search of Sea Glass

Every September, for the last few years, a friend and I spend a week along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan in beautiful South Haven, Michigan. To me, Lake Michigan is one of the natural wonders of the world. This vast inland sea of fresh water is a paradise for fishing, sailing, yachting, and beachcombing. The latter is my hobby of choice when I am there.

Walking the sandy beach is a great form of exercise. Lake Michigan, like any large body of water, can very temperamental. Playing tag with the waves on a rough surf day is a challenge. Other days, the lake is so calm that a person would think he was walking along the shores of Gray's Lake in Des Moines—that is, until he looks to the horizon and sees nothing but water in all directions.

One particular day this year, a man was working his way up the beach very slowly, stopping along the way to bend down and sift through the sand. As he approached me, I asked him what he was looking for. "Sea glass," he replied, "and Petoski stones." Not knowing what either of those was, I asked him to explain. Sea glass are bits of glass that eventually wash up on shore after being tossed around in the lake for God-knows-how-long. They are small to tiny shards that have been worn smooth by the wave action. Most of these tiny pieces are clear glass, residue from bottles that were dumped into the lake at some unknown time. Rarer bits are green or brown in color, and the rarest is blue glass. Occasionally, a piece of smoothed down pottery can be found, too.

Petoski stones are somewhat larger than sea glass and more difficult to find. They are a particular gray stone with fossils embedded in them, named for the area around Petoski, Michigan.

Meeting that man along the beach changed my entire waters' edge experience. I began to slow down and scour the beach with my eyes. Lo and behold, I started to find pieces of sea glass! Once I knew what to look for, I was amazed that I had been plodding over all these things for years and literally never knew the rare and tiny "treasures" beneath my feet. The old saying about slowing down and taking time to smell the flowers along the way applies here. I never did discover a Petoski stone, however. I will keep looking next year if I am lucky enough to go again.

In a world that now teeters on the brink of economic disaster, it is good to know that some of life's greatest satisfactions can come from such small discoveries, and what seems so overwhelmingly important today will be worn down over time like those pieces of glass, tamed by the waves of time.

—Steve Person

With money: you can buy a clock, but not time.

With money: you can buy a bed, but not sleep.
