

BILL MAHER – THE VILLAGE ATHEIST MEETS THE VILLAGE IDIOT

By Don Feder

Bill Maher thinks he's cute, clever and funny -- because he hires cute, clever, funny people to write his comedy routines and ghost his books.

If you're religious, Maher thinks you "suffer from a neurological disorder" that "stops you thinking," also that your "mentality" is what causes people to fly planes into buildings.

On his HBO series "Real Time" last week, Maher experienced a mental meltdown (resulting in a bout of verbal bowel disorder) over the recently concluded War on Christians conference.

Maher: "The Christian right are (*sic.*) now the party of paranoia." Conservative Christians think they're persecuted, the comedian sputtered, even though Christianity has taken over all three branches of government (*including the Supreme Court?*), country music, public schools (*and*) the best sellers list."

Comedians are allowed some license, but -- c'mon! Christians put "The DaVinci Code" on the top of The New York Times Bestsellers List for what seems an eternity? Christians dominate the Supreme Court? (Maher apparently is unable to count; the left still has a 5-to-4 majority on that Constitution-bending body.)

Christians control public education – where condoms are distributed like colored beads at Mardi Gras, "sexual diversity" is celebrated, Christmas has morphed into a generic winter holiday and a moment of silence is forbidden lest students be encouraged

to meditate on the G-word? Forget his planet of origin. What galaxy does Maher inhabit?

These stupid Christians are “bitching and moaning about being persecuted for their Christianity when they aren’t Christians at all. They’re demagogues, conmen and scolds; the only thing they worship is power,” Maher fumed.

Christians are sooo powerful. And the last Christian to have a weekly talk show on HBO was? How about a series reflecting Judeo-Christian ethics, with cable TV crowded with polygamy-pushing “Big Love” – not to mention “The L Word,” “Queer As Folks,” “Weeds,” “The Sopranos” and other paeans to modern paganism.

Maher’s mind is like a lump of Silly Putty. ABC cancelled his failing series “Politically Incorrect” (it was anything but – I know, I was a guest twice) when, on the day the World Trade Center collapsed and 3,000 Americans died, the comic who thinks he’s a commentator opined: “We have been the cowards lobbing cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away. That’s cowardly. Staying in the airplane, when it hits the building, say what you want about it, it’s not cowardly.”

Aside: Despite his protestations, Maher really does hate America – which figures: America was founded by religious people. Hate religious people, and you’ll end up hating America.

His famous quote also says much about his sense of military strategy and ethics. War is about killing. Winning a war means killing your enemies more efficiently. Lobbing cruise missiles at terrorist bases is more efficient than engaging in hand-to-hand-combat. If we’d sent the Marines into Libya with M-16s, Maher would probably complain that we didn’t arm them with K-bar knives or clubs to prove our bravery.

(Maher proves his on his network shows, where he always has two or three liberals for every conservative -- to keep dissident guests from challenging him.)

Targeting civilians -- deliberately incinerating office workers, which is how Maher's idols fought on 9/11 -- is another matter. Forget cowardice and bravery, it was despicable, evil – Nazi-like.

Besides being a moral philosopher and a military strategist, Maher is a historian. The U.S. itself is guilty of terrorism, Maher observes: “During World War II in 1945, we bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, before we even bombed them, we destroyed 67 Japanese cities. We killed between 50 and 90 percent of the population...”

And if we hadn't firebombed Tokyo and dropped the big one on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan would have fought to the last man, woman and child -- causing America to take a million casualties in taking the home islands. Yet 60 years later, this limousine liberal can insouciantly label acts that saved American lives (to end a war Japan and Germany started) terrorism.

To chronicle the wit and wisdom of Bill Maher would take more space than available here. But let me mention just one more “brain dropping” (as comedian George Carlin calls them).

A big-time PETA supporter, Maher once compared retarded children to his dogs.

Maher: “But I've often said that if I had – I have two dogs – if I had two retarded children, I'd be a hero. And yet the dogs, which are pretty much the same thing. What. They're sweet. They're loving. They're kind, but they don't mentally advance at all ... *Dogs are like retarded children.*” So, if you're the parent of

a mentally handicapped child, according to Bill Maher, in essence, you're a dog-owner.

In Europe before the war, a great rabbi always made it a point of rising when a mentally or physically handicapped person entered the room. When his students asked why, he said that if God placed such a burden on an individual, he must have a very great spirit, and the rabbi rose to honor that spirit.

That's an essential difference between the religious worldview (born of a neurological disorder?) and Maher's perspective. The rabbi believes the mentally handicapped should be treated with respect. Maher thinks they're sweet, loveable dogs. Also, that the slaughter of six million chickens is the moral equivalent of the murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust. Hey, that's what Maher's buddies at PETA believe.

But more than the retarded, or Republicans, or pilots who lob cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away, Bill Maher really, really, really hates the religious.

He is "embarrassed" that America has been "taken over by people like evangelicals, by people who do not believe in science and rationality." What about the evangelicals working as physicists, biologists, chemists, engineers and software designers? It must be a real burden to work in the sciences and not believe in science and rationality – and stuff like that.

Here is the age-old conceit of atheists: If you don't agree with us, you're an idiot, a feeble-minded, superstitious wretch -- mired in the Dark Ages.

Was Einstein an idiot (though not adhering to a formal faith, he certainly believed in God)? How about Thomas Aquinas? Thomas Moore? Maimonides? John Paul II? Sir Francis Bacon?

Rene Descartes? Isaac Newton? Gregor Mendel? What about Washington, Adams and Lincoln – believers all? Without religion, Maher would have no country to sneer at.

In her book “Menace in Europe,” Claire Berlinski, who describes herself as a secular Jew, touches on the root of Europe’s crisis (a plummeting birthrate and rising Muslim immigration). After noting that weekly church attendance in Europe is around 5%, compared to 35-40% in the U.S., Berlinski writes:

“A poll conducted in 2002 found that while 61% of Americans had hope for the future, only 42% of the residents of the United Kingdom shared it. Only 29% of the French reported feeling hope, and only 15% of the Germans. These statistics suggest – to me, anyway – that *without some transcendental common belief, hopelessness is a universal condition*. I do not believe it is an accident that Americans are both more religious and more hopeful than Europeans, and more apt, as well, to believe that their country stands for something greater and more noble than themselves.”

No one ever founded a republic, or freed slaves, or created a great work of art, or wrote a symphony, or established a charity or a university based on a secular worldview.

Listening to a comedy routine never inspired anyone to: hide Jews during the Holocaust, work the underground railroad transporting runaway slaves to freedom, aid hurricane victims, risk their lives bringing medical supplies to civilians in a war zone, throw themselves on a live grenade to save their buddies, or pick the dying off the streets of Calcutta to comfort them in their last moments on earth.

It’s religion that helps us to understand the difference between the mentally handicapped and dogs, between those who

cut off the heads of civilians (after forcing them to say “I am a Jew”) and soldiers trying to save as many lives as possible to end a war they didn’t start, between people who try to live good lives (who honestly believe they have a duty to their fellow man) and blow-dried boobs who pay more attention to the way their hair is styled than the consistency or logic of their arguments, and for whom life is an extended punch-line.