



Religulous

101 minutes, 2008, USA

Director: Larry Charles

Cast: Bill Maher

Synopsis

Religulous is directed by Larry Charles who brought us the film of Borat and is written and stars Bill Maher, better known in the US for talk shows and comedy on TV. It may not come as a surprise then that Religulous – a cross between 'religion' and 'ridiculous' may please and amuse atheists and agnostics but offend believers – be warned!

The film is a series of interviews with followers of organised religions from all over the world, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism, TV evangelism and scientology and also comments on some pagan cults and ancient Egyptian beliefs. Those escaping his sharp tongue seem to be Hinduism and Buddhism. His starting point is that he believes they are all crazy and could lead us into nuclear doom.

Reviews:

Roger Ebert from Chicago describes the film in his review and then comments: 'This review is going to depend on one of my own deeply held beliefs: It's not what the movie is about, it's how it's about it. This movie is about Bill Maher's opinion of religion. He's very smart, quick and funny, and I found the movie entertaining, although sometimes he's a little mean to his targets. He visits holy places in Italy, Israel, Great Britain, Florida, Missouri and Utah, and talks with adherents of the religions he finds there, and others.'

Or maybe "talks with" is not quite the right phrase. It's more that he lines them up and shoots them down. He interrupts, talks over, slaps on subtitles, edits in movie and TV clips, and doesn't play fair. Reader, I took a guilty pleasure in his misbehavior. The people he interviews are astonishingly forbearing, even most of the truckers in a chapel at a truck stop. I expected somebody to take a swing at Maher, but nobody did, although one trucker walked out on him. Elsewhere in the film, Maher walks out on a rabbi who approvingly attended a Holocaust denial conference in Iran.'

The question is, does this film add to the debate, particularly acute in the US where the Bush regime has encouraged a rise in evangelical Christianity and a creationist might have become Vice President. Or is it a film getting cheap laughs for the converted (or non-converted).