

September, 2018 Newsletter of the Lake Superior Freethinkers

George Erickson, editor - tundracub@mediacombb.net

First Sunday - Radisson Hotel -

9:00 AM Social – 9:30 Breakfast - 10:00 Presentation

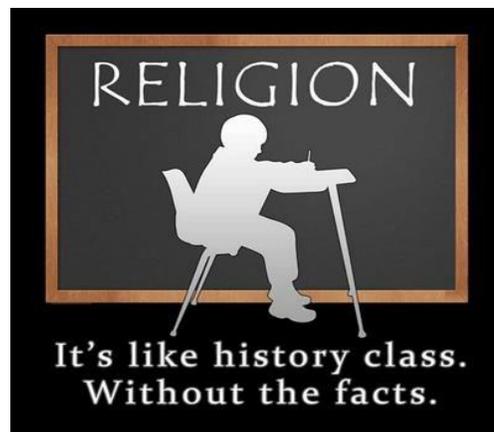
Free and open to the public.

Jan Resberg, Chair/President 715-919-0513

Sue Anderson, Social Director 218-728-1361

Program

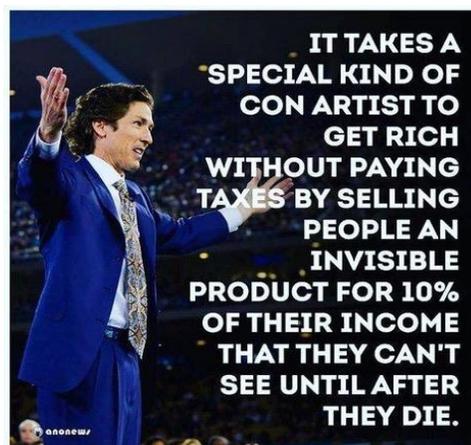
Gary Boelhower, Professor of Theology at the College of St Scholastica will speak on the **Positive Aspects of Religion.**



Vatican proposes Irish State indemnify it against clerical abuse claims

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/vatican-proposed-irish-state-indemnify-it-against-clerical-abuse-claims-1.3589213>

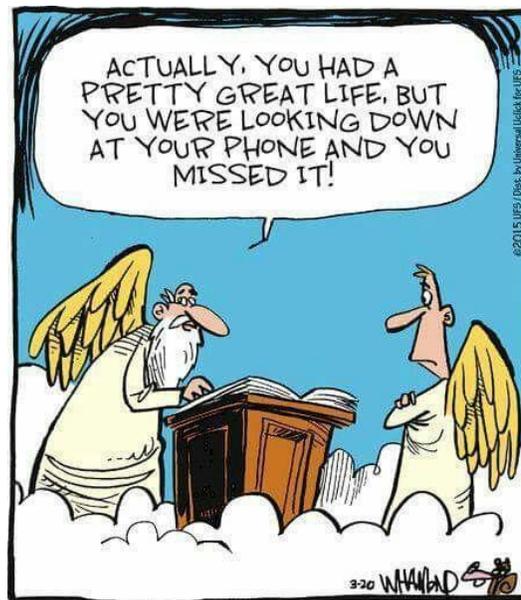
Former minister for foreign affairs [Dermot Ahern](#) says a [Vatican](#) official Cardinal Sodano sought an agreement under which [Ireland](#) would indemnify the [Catholic Church](#) against legal actions for compensation by clerical child sexual-abuse survivors.



NBC News: "The new Religious Liberty Task Force is *part of a dangerous Christian nationalist campaign of discrimination*"

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has announced the formation of a Religious Liberty Task Force in the Department of Justice, saying that the government must protect religious groups—specifically Christians—from persecution...

This is a continuation of the Trump administration's attacks on true religious freedom, demonstrated by earlier attempts to ban immigrants of specific faiths and pack our courts with religiously conservative judges.... Roy Speckhardt, Exec. Dir. American Humanist Assoc.



Mike Pence, 'Christian supremacist': 6 key takeaways from his new book - Maureen Groppe - AHA

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/08/23/mike-pence-book-calls-vice-president-christian-supremacist/1062696002/>

Democrats may not like President Donald Trump, but do they want the alternative?

"That is what we hear most from Democrats," said Kevin Mack, lead strategist for the "Need to Impeach" President Donald Trump campaign. "Well, if we get rid of Trump, then we end up with (Mike) Pence."

As Trump's presidency became more endangered this week with the conviction or guilty plea of two of his former aides, a new book about the vice president will stoke concerns about Pence.

1. Is he a 'Christian supremacist'?

In "The Shadow President: The Truth About Mike Pence," Michael D'Antonio and Peter Eisner cast Pence's background – congressman, Indiana governor, Trump VP – in a harsh light, arguing that "the most

successful Christian supremacist in American history” is already functioning as a “kind of replacement president” and is preparing to “fashion a nation more pleasing to his god and corporate sponsors.”

A [flattering preview](#) of the book by NYT columnist Frank Bruni – that ran under the headline “Mike Pence, Holy Terror” – has religious leaders and Pence supporters accusing Bruni and the authors of religious bigotry. Saying he’d “never heard such hatred poured out against such a good man,” [evangelist Franklin Graham](#) urged supporters to pray that God will put a “hedge of protection” around Pence and his family.

2. It's not the first Pence warning.

Arguing that Pence has taken advantage of the chaos of the Trump administration to amass “enormous power,” the Human Rights Campaign [launched a campaign](#) earlier this year to highlight Pence’s record on issues important to the LGBTQ community.

Former White House aide Omarosa Manigault Newman writes in her [new memoir](#) that Pence is biding his time until Trump resigns or is impeached. “As bad as you think Trump is, you should be worried about Pence,” she said after leaving the White House. “He thinks Jesus tells him to say things.”

3. 'Weaponized' niceness.

While Pence may have cited convicted Watergate conspirator Charles Colson as a “dear friend and mentor” because of the conversion Colson underwent in prison, the authors assert that it’s “just as likely that Pence was drawn to Colson’s lingering aggressive tendencies.”

And Pence’s trademark “extreme niceness” is not benign in the authors’ eyes. Instead, Pence has “weaponized” his niceness as “a tool of persuasion and deflection.”

4. What is Pence deflecting?

The book asserts that many of Pence’s evangelical friends believed his ultimate purpose is to establish a government based on biblical law, what they called “Christian Dominionism.”

5. President in the shadows

The authors say he was the least qualified vice president since Spiro Agnew, with his background as an “inept” legislator in Congress and a “middling” governor who didn’t like to work hard and was more interested in the status of the job than the job itself. (Pence was the first governor to order up a collection of custom-embroidered clothes decorated with his name and the words “Governor of Indiana.”)

Despite that lackluster background, the authors say Pence has been functioning as a kind of shadow president, “taking on so many domestic, foreign and partisan political assignments that he seemed more engaged in serious matters than the TV-addicted president himself.”

6. Pushback on 'religious bigotry'

The book asserts that white conservative Christians, despite their “vast numbers and influence,” see themselves as victims. They cheer when Pence asserts, “No people of faith today face greater hostility or hatred than followers of Christ.”

Meanwhile, Mack of Need to Impeach has an answer for why those who worry about a Pence presidency should still push to get rid of Trump.

"It's kind of like saying, 'I have terminal cancer but I don't want to deal with it because I might get diabetes,' " he said. "You have to deal with the first problem, and then we'll deal with the second problem."

