

Atheists Mock Church After Camping Rapture Fails Again

Harold Camping's false rapture predictions are giving atheists ammunition to mock the church. The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is reporting plenty of facts, but then heaps the whole Bible into Camping's belief system.

Camping predicted the world would end on May 21. When that didn't happen, he pointed to Oct. 21 as rapture. The world is not ending Friday, and the FFRF is taking full advantage of the fact with a campaign called "fool me once" that ultimately serves as an attack against Christianity.

FFRF hired 40 billboards in San Diego and Oakland, Calif., to display its five key messages. Family Radio is based in Oakland.

One billboard offers the headline "Fool me once ..." It features three alarm clocks with hand dials inching toward midnight. Under each alarm clock is a date Camping predicted would be the end of the world, followed by a statement indicating his prophecy was false: "9/7/1994, Wrong;" "5/21/2011, Wrong again;" and "10/21/2011, Still wrong." Against a backdrop of twilight sky and clouds, another billboard proclaims, "Between 2004-2009, Family Radio raised \$80 MILLION. Sometimes it pays to be wrong."

On May 31, FFRF wrote the California attorney general asking for a fraud probe into Camping's rapture campaign. FFRF wants an investigation into how many people may have suffered financially, emotionally and physically due to his predictions.

"There are media reports of dozens of Camping's followers who liquidated their own assets to contribute tens and sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars to Campings organization,"

FFRF's letter said. The letter also noted tragic reports that some of Camping's followers committed suicide. One of the more horrifying reports indicated a California woman who slit her children's throats and then her own in order to "prevent them from suffering through [the Tribulation]."

Although much of the FFRF's attack on Camping is based in fact, FFRF co-director Dan Barker uses the occasion to smear the body of Christ as a whole.

"Harold Camping may be considered by many Christians to be a fringe element," Barker said. "What they conveniently overlook is that the Bible itself is the source of these wacky and harmful beliefs."

How should the body of Christ deal with issues like Camping's prophecies and the problems they cause?