

THE GOSPEL OF THE FLYING SPAGHETTI MONSTER

Clever notions mildly diminished by an occasional foul word

by Bobby Henderson
2006, Villard, 166 pages

In the wonderful *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins mentions Bertrand Russell's parable of the celestial teapot:

If I were to suggest that between the Earth and the Moon there is a china teapot revolving about the sun in an elliptical orbit, nobody would be able to disprove my assertion provided I were careful to add that the teapot is too small to be revealed even by our most powerful telescopes. But if I were to go on to say that, since my assertion cannot be disproved, it is intolerable presumption on the part of human reason to doubt it, I should rightly be thought to be talking nonsense.



If, however, existence of such a teapot were affirmed in ancient books, taught as the sacred truth every Sunday, and instilled into the minds of children at school, hesitation to believe in its existence would become a mark of eccentricity and entitle the doubter to the attentions of the psychiatrist in an enlightened age or of the Inquisitor in an earlier time. — Russell, *Is There a God?* (1952)

The Flying Spaghetti Monster is an upgraded version of Russell's celestial teapot in combination with Charles Schulz's *The Great Pumpkin*. It's really quite a hoot as author Bobby Henderson develops his religion of the Pastafarians, in which Pirates are the chosen people and Heaven contains the Beer Volcano and the Stripper Factory.

Doctrine:

"What do we stand for?"
"All that is good."
"What are we against?"
"All that is bad."

Which is a page out of the Kirby J. Hensley's Universal Life Church handbook, a religion that advocates "whatever is right." Give us that old time religion, hey? The FSM offers the cathartic experience of being moved and touched by the FSM's Noodly Appendage... analogous to Christian conversion.

The book meanders benignly (marred only with the exception of an inexplicable use of the f-word on a few occasions in an early chapter).

The origin of the Gospel of the FSM comes courtesy of the Intelligent Design (ID) debate via the Kansas School Board. The board ruled for a while that ID—ID is essentially Christian creation doctrine—would be taught in schools. Henderson wrote a letter to the board arguing for inclusion of FSM doctrine as well. He did not receive a reply. It makes as much sense to posit an whimsical Spaghetti Monster at the foundation of life as the arbitrary supernatural Yahweh, Zeus, or whatever.

On a final note, instead of God's Ten Commandments, the FSM has The Eight "I'd Really Rather You Didn't's." I particularly like #2 and #7.

#2: I'd Really Rather You Didn't Use My Existence As A Means To Oppress, Subjugate, Punish, Eviscerate, And/Or, You Know, Be Mean To Others. I Don't Require Sacrifices And Purity Is For Drinking Water, Not People.

#7: I'd Really Rather You Didn't Go Around Telling People I Talk To You. You're Not That Interesting. Get Over Yourself. And I Told You To Love Your Fellow Man. Can't You Take A Hint?

Good ones. I think I'll get a T-Shirt and hold some meetings.