

The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster

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BASIC

Founder: Bobby Henderson, who claims to be a “Prophet.”

Founding Date: 2005

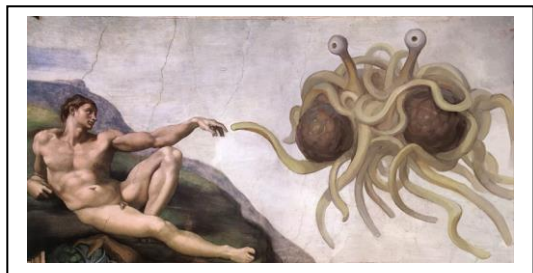
- The Claim: The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster, after having existed in secrecy for hundreds of years, came into the mainstream just a few years ago.¹
- The Reality: The Church of the FSM came into the mainstream in 2005 after [this open letter](#)² was published.

Official Publications:

- *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*
- *The Loose Canon, the Holy Book of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*

HISTORY

- Henderson says, “Some claim that the church is purely a thought experiment or satire, illustrating that Intelligent Design is not science, just a pseudoscience manufactured by Christians to push Creationism into public schools. These people are mistaken — The Church of FSM is legit, and backed by hard science. Anything that comes across as humor or satire is purely coincidental.”
- The "Flying Spaghetti Monster" was first described in a satirical open letter written by Bobby Henderson in 2005 to protest the Kansas State Board of Education decision to permit teaching intelligent design as an alternative to evolution in public school science classes.³
- In the letter, Henderson demanded equal time in science classrooms for "Flying Spaghetti Monsterism", alongside intelligent design and evolution.



¹ <https://www.spaghettimonster.org/about/>. Accessed: February 22, 2021.

² <https://www.spaghettimonster.org/about/open-letter/>. Accessed: February 22, 2021.

³ "In the beginning there was the Flying Spaghetti Monster". *The Daily Telegraph*. London. September 11, 2005. Retrieved December 19, 2009.

- After Henderson published the letter on his website, the Flying Spaghetti Monster rapidly became an Internet phenomenon and a symbol of opposition to the teaching of intelligent design in public schools.⁴
- Pastafarian⁵ tenets (generally satires of creationism) are presented on Henderson's *Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster* website (where he is described as "prophet") and are also elucidated in *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*⁶, written by Henderson in 2006, and in *The Loose Canon, the Holy Book of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*.
- The central creation myth is that an invisible and undetectable Flying Spaghetti Monster created the universe after drinking heavily.
- Pirates are revered as the original Pastafarians.⁷ Henderson asserts that a decline in the number of pirates over the years is the cause of global warming.^[10] The FSM community congregates at Henderson's website to share ideas about the Flying Spaghetti Monster and crafts representing images of it.⁸
- The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster now consists of thousands of followers,⁹ primarily concentrated on college campuses in North America and Europe.¹⁰
- According to the Associated Press, Henderson's website has become "a kind of cyber-watercooler for opponents of intelligent design". On it, visitors track meetings of pirate-clad Pastafarians, sell trinkets and bumper stickers, and sample photographs that show "visions" of the Flying Spaghetti Monster.¹¹

⁴ Boxer, Sarah (August 29, 2005). "[But Is There Intelligent Spaghetti Out There?](#)". *The New York Times Arts article*. Retrieved February 5, 2007.

⁵ Followers call themselves "Pastafarians" (a combination of "pasta" + "rastafarian").

⁶ *The Gospel* includes a creation myth, set of eight "I'd Really Rather You Didn't's", and guide to evangelizing, and discusses history and lifestyle from a Pastafarian perspective. Henderson uses satire to show supposed flaws with creationism and prove the Flying Spaghetti Monster, offering an alternative to the intelligent design movement in the process.

⁷ "[Austrian Pastafarian dons colander as religious headgear for drivers license](#)". *english.alarabiya.net*. 2011. Archived from [the original](#) on July 18, 2011.

⁸ Henderson, Bobby. "About". *The Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*. Accessed: February 22, 2021.

⁹ Savino, John; Marie D. Jones (2007). "Wrath of the Gods". [Supervolcano: The Catastrophic Event That Changed the Course of Human History: Could Yellowstone Be Next](#). Career Press. p. 56. ISBN 978-1-56414-953-4. Retrieved November 25, 2009.

¹⁰ Pope, Justin (November 16, 2007). "[Pasta monster gets academic attention](#)". NBC News. Associated Press. Retrieved October 25, 2009.

¹¹ "[Religious Scholars to Discuss 'Flying Spaghetti Monster'](#)". Fox News. Associated Press. November 16, 2007. Retrieved November 26, 2009.

DOCTRINES

- Although Henderson has stated that "the only dogma allowed in the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster is the rejection of dogma", some general beliefs are held by Pastafarians.
- Henderson proposed many Pastafarian tenets in reaction to common arguments by proponents of intelligent design.¹²
- These "canonical beliefs" are presented by Henderson in his letter to the Kansas State Board of Education, *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*, and on Henderson's web site, where he is described as a "prophet".¹³
- Note: Pastafarians tend to satirize creationism.¹⁴

Creation

- The central creation myth is that an invisible and undetectable Flying Spaghetti Monster created the universe "after drinking heavily". According to these beliefs, the Monster's intoxication was the cause for a flawed Earth.
- Furthermore, according to Pastafarianism, all evidence for evolution was planted by the Flying Spaghetti Monster in an effort to test the faith of Pastafarians—parodying certain biblical literalists.¹⁵
- When scientific measurements such as radiocarbon dating are taken, the Flying Spaghetti Monster "is there changing the results with His Noodly Appendage".¹⁶

Afterlife

- The Pastafarian conception of Heaven includes a beer volcano and a stripper (or sometimes prostitute) factory.¹⁷
- The Pastafarian Hell is similar, except that the beer is stale and the strippers have sexually transmitted diseases.¹⁸

¹² Thierman, Jessica (September 18, 2005). "[Touched by his Noodly Appendage](#)". Gelf Magazine.

¹³ DuBay, Tim (2005). "[Guide to Pastafarianism](#)" (Shockwave Flash). Retrieved August 26, 2006.

¹⁴ Vergano, Dan (March 27, 2006). "'[Spaghetti Monster](#)' is noodling around with faith". *USA Today Science & Space* article. Retrieved February 5, 2007.

¹⁵ Van Horn, Gavin; Lucas Johnston (2007). "Evolutionary Controversy and a Side of Pasta: The Flying Spaghetti Monster and the Subversive Function of Religious Parody". *GOLEM: Journal of Religion and Monsters*. 2 (1).

¹⁶ Henderson, Bobby (2005). "[Open Letter To Kansas School Board](#)". Venganza.org. Archived from [the original](#) on April 7, 2007.

¹⁷ DuBay, Tim (2005). "[Guide to Pastafarianism](#)" (Shockwave Flash). Retrieved August 26, 2006.

¹⁸ *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*, p.83.

Pirates and global warming

- According to Pastafarian beliefs, pirates are "absolute divine beings" and the original Pastafarians.¹⁹
- Furthermore, Pastafarians believe that the concept of pirates as "thieves and outcasts" is misinformation spread by Christian theologians in the Middle Ages and by Hare Krishnas.
- Instead, Pastafarians believe that they were "peace-loving explorers and spreaders of good will" who distributed candy to small children, adding that modern pirates are in no way similar to "the fun-loving buccaneers from history".
- In addition, Pastafarians believe that ghost pirates are responsible for all of the mysteriously lost ships and planes of the Bermuda Triangle.
- Pastafarians are among those who celebrate International Talk Like a Pirate Day on September 19.²⁰
- The inclusion of pirates in Pastafarianism was part of Henderson's original letter to the Kansas State Board of Education, in an effort to illustrate that correlation does not imply causation.²¹
- Henderson presented the argument that "global warming, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other natural disasters are a direct effect of the shrinking numbers of pirates since the 1800s".²²
- A deliberately misleading graph accompanying the letter (with numbers humorously disordered on the x-axis) shows that as the number of pirates decreased, global temperatures increased.
- This parodies the suggestion from some religious groups that the high numbers of disasters, famines, and wars in the world is due to the lack of respect and worship toward their deity.

¹⁹ Henderson, Bobby (2005). "[Open Letter To Kansas School Board](#)". Venganza.org. Archived from [the original](#) on April 7, 2007.

²⁰ *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*, p.124.

²¹ Savino, John; [Marie D. Jones](#) (2007). "[Wrath of the Gods](#)". *Supervolcano: The Catastrophic Event That Changed the Course of Human History: Could Yellowstone Be Next*. Career Press. p. 56. ISBN 978-1-56414-953-4. Retrieved November 25, 2009.

²² Henderson, Bobby (2005). "[Open Letter To Kansas School Board](#)". Venganza.org. Archived from [the original](#) on April 7, 2007.

- In 2008, Henderson interpreted the growing pirate activities at the Gulf of Aden as additional support, pointing out that Somalia has "the highest number of pirates *and* the lowest carbon emissions of any country".²³

Holidays

- Pastafarian beliefs extend into lighthearted religious ceremony. Pastafarians celebrate every Friday as a holy day.²⁴
- Prayers are concluded with a final declaration of affirmation, "R'amen" (or "rAmen"); the term is a parodic portmanteau of the terms "Amen" and "Ramen", referring to instant noodles and to the "noodly appendages" of their deity.²⁵
- The celebration of "Pastover" requires consuming large amounts of pasta, and during "Ramendan", only Ramen noodles are consumed; International Talk Like a Pirate Day is observed as a holiday.^{26 27}
- Around the time of Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa, Pastafarians celebrate a vaguely defined holiday named "Holiday". Holiday does not take place on "a specific date so much as it is the Holiday season, itself".
- According to Henderson, as Pastafarians "reject dogma and formalism", there are no specific requirements for Holiday. Pastafarians celebrate Holiday in any manner they please.²⁸
- Pastafarians interpret the increasing usage of "Happy Holidays", rather than more traditional greetings (such as "Merry Christmas"), as support for Pastafarianism.²⁹
- In December 2005, George W. Bush's White House Christmas greeting cards wished people a happy "holiday season",³⁰ leading Henderson to write the President a note of thanks, including a "fish" emblem depicting the Flying

²³ "[Somalia — Lots of pirates, low carbon emissions](#)". www.venganza.org. April 14, 2008.

Retrieved December 10, 2008.

²⁴ Vergano, Dan (March 27, 2006). "[Spaghetti Monster](#)" is noodling around with faith". *USA Today Science & Space article*. Retrieved February 5, 2007.

²⁵ Henley, Jon (August 16, 2018). "[Spaghetti injunction: Pastafarianism is not a religion, Dutch court rules](#)". *The Guardian*. Retrieved August 16, 2018.

²⁶ Ellis, Iain (August 3, 2018). *Humorists vs. Religion: Critical Voices from Mark Twain to Neil DeGrasse Tyson*. McFarland. p. 207. [ISBN 978-1-4766-3401-2](#).

²⁷ "[RD Magazine](#)". July 18, 2011.

²⁸ Henderson, Bobby (December 1, 2006). "[Happy Holiday Season Everyone](#)". *Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*. Retrieved November 25, 2009.

²⁹ Henderson, Bobby (December 1, 2006). "[Happy Holiday Season Everyone](#)". *Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*. Retrieved November 25, 2009.

³⁰ Cooperman, Alan (December 7, 2005). "'Holiday' Cards Ring Hollow for Some on Bushes' List". *The Washington Post*. Retrieved November 25, 2009.

Spaghetti Monster for his limousine or plane.³¹ Henderson also thanked Walmart for its use of the phrase.³²

BIBLICAL RESPONSE

- “My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and who give lying divinations. They shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord GOD.” (Ezekiel 13:9 ESV)
- “Thus says the LORD of hosts: “Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you, filling you with vain hopes. They speak visions of their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD.” (Jeremiah 23:16 ESV)
- “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound^[a] teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.” (2 Timothy 4:3-4 ESV)
- “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32 ESV)

ASSESSMENT

- Despite claims to the contrary the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster is simply a farce and not a bona fide religious organization.
- The U.S. District Court of Nebraska found that the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster is not a religion. "It is, rather, a parody, intended to advance an argument about science, the evolution of life, and the place of religion in public education," District Judge John Gerrard wrote in a [16-page decision](#).³³ See also [here](#).
- Pastafarians seem to be far more interested in drinking and carousing than anything else. There is no evidence to warrant any other conclusion.

RECOMMENDED READING

- *Fast Facts on False Religions* by Ron Carlson and Ed Decker. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2003.
- *Strange New Religions* by Leon McBeth. Nashville: Baptist Press, 1977.
- *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism* by Timothy Keller. New York: Dutton, 2009.

³¹ Henderson, Bobby (December 2006). "[FSM Card for Bush](#)". *Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*. Retrieved November 25, 2009.

³² *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster*, p.125.

³³ Wofford, Taylor (April 13, 2016). "[Flying Spaghetti Monster Not Divine, Says Court](#)". *Newsweek*. Retrieved May 3, 2019.