



BROTHER SAM SINGLETON
Atheist Evangelist

"Who says I require some sort of authority [to poke fun of superstitious beliefs]? Where would this supposed authority come from? Like I say: Don't make a public profession unless you want to hear back from the public," says Brother Sam. And Sam Singleton doesn't shy away from voicing his opinions about public professions of faith, especially when the professions are sponsored by the government. He adds: "America makes it impossible for those of us who don't believe in God to avoid being constantly reminded of our marginalization, of our minority status. That's wrong."

Brother Sam confronts evil in good humor, in the hopes that those who harbor the most ridiculous beliefs might be swayed to question them if they could only come to see how ridiculous those beliefs are. As Robert A. Heinlein put it: "One mans theology is another man's belly laugh!"

But what about beliefs that make people happy, even if they're not true? "Reminds me of that quote from Shaw," says Sam, "about how a believer being happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that the drunken man is happier than a sober one."

(NO) LAUGHING MATTERS

People have long speculated about the origins and meaning of laughter. Aristotle and the ancients observed and considered the nature of comedy. Freud thought that jokes released emotional energy when the superego allowed the disguised expression of otherwise forbidden thoughts. In modern society, we have learned to recognize the "forbidden thoughts" that someone might consider offensive or that we fear might become uncritically accepted. This has been decried. But if we are the butt of the joke or the joke depends on an idea that is wrong-headed or malicious it is well not to laugh. Sometimes forbidden thoughts are forbidden for good reason. People in days gone by used to laugh at things that we would consider appallingly distasteful if not disgusting.

Perhaps the most important thing about humor and laughter that we recognize today is that they are literally good for us. They help overcome the effects of stress and anxiety that most of us encounter daily. Neurological and other biological changes that help keep us resilient and able to function effectively are brought about by smiles, laughter, and good humor. Jokes and making fun are even profitable for those who make their living on them.

We Freethinkers find much to laugh about. The incongruities of everyday life are almost mind-boggling. And the possibilities multiply when we see well-intentioned people struggling to make sense of absurd theological doctrines. It is not our intention to offend. But foolishness should not be allowed to pretend that it is a special, let alone a "higher" kind of wisdom, nor ignorance to pretend that it is knowledge, however "mysterious."

COMING IN MAY: "Friendship"

Christian writer C.S. Lewis said many things of his faith that Freethinkers could as easily say of their faithlessness. Among other things, Lewis suggested that friendship has no survival value but, "rather it is one of those things which give value to survival."

Many other pithy comments have been made about friends and friendship. They call attention to and extol the human values of unconditional love, of devoted patience, of understanding, and of the places in our hearts for others with whom we identify and feel a deep closeness to.

On May 2nd, NTCOF Minister Luciana Whipple and others will consider this important and meaningful part of the human condition. Don't miss it!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION:

Q: Did you hear about the group of dyslexic devil worshippers?

A: They sold their souls to Santa!

A drunk man who smelled like a beer sat down on a subway seat next to a priest.

The man's tie was stained, his face was smeared with red lipstick, and a half empty bottle of gin was sticking out of his torn coat pocket. He opened his newspaper and began to read. After a few minutes the man turned to the priest and asked 'Say Father, what causes arthritis?' The priest replies 'My son, it's caused by loose living, being with cheap wicked women, too much alcohol and contempt for your fellow man' 'Well I'll be darned' the drunk muttered, returning to his newspaper.

The priest thinking about what he said, nudged the drunk and apologised. 'I'm sorry to come on so strong. How long have you had arthritis?'

'I don't have it, Father. I was just reading here that the Pope does.'

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening of religious service when she was startled by an intruder. As she caught the man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables, she yelled, "Stop! Acts 2:38!" [Turn from your sin]

The burglar stopped dead in his tracks. Then the woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, "Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a scripture at you."

"Scripture?" replied the burglar, "She said she had an axe and two 38s!"

A young lad was visiting a church for the first time, checking all the announcements and posters along the walls.

When he came to a group of pictures of men in uniform, he asked a nearby usher, "Who are all those men in the pictures?"

The usher replied, "Why, those are our boys who died in the service".

Dumbfounded, the youngster asked, "Was that the morning service or the evening service?"

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. Little Johnny seemed especially intent when they told him how Eve was created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week Johnny's mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, and asked, "Johnny what is the matter?"

Little Johnny responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife."

"You can't stay mad at somebody who makes you laugh!" - Jay Leno

All NTCOF events can be found through our website calendar, or through our page at www.meetup.com/church-of-freethought from which you can also RSVP.

Social Luncheon: Today, immediately after our Service, join us for lunch and discussion at the Golden Corral Buffet and Grill in Grapevine, located just across from the Grapevine Mills Mall, at 2605 E. Grapevine Mills Circle, phone (972) 874-7900. To reach Golden Corral from the Wyndham, take the SOUTH exit from the parking lot (turn your head left as you walk out the main entrance), then drive across Esters Blvd onto John W. Carpenter Freeway (114). Then take the first exit RIGHT onto International Parkway (121), then Grapevine Mills Parkway exit. Turn LEFT on Stars and Stripes Way, continuing on to E. Grapevine Mills Circle.

Game Night: The regular game night crew meets nearly every Friday night at the IHOP on 2310 Stemmons Trail (I-35), near Northwest Highway (Loop 12). Plan to arrive at about 7:30 PM, and stay late playing Risk, Rummikub, and other fun games!

Secular Singles: Freethinkers have met their life-partners with whom they have begun families through the Secular Singles group. Check the meetup site for the next date, time and location!

Facilitated Discussion on Recovering From Religion - join at <http://www.meetup.com/Freethinking/> - meets monthly on a Tuesday.



The North Texas Church of Freethought
A Fellowship of Unbelievers

Presenters: David Burgess, Dr. Tim Gorski,
Don Lewellyn, Erin Taylor,
and Lu Whipple

Music Coordinator: Jay Purrington

Videographer: John Gauthier

Ministers: Dr. Tim Gorski and Lu Whipple LPC

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