**2/15/09 THESKEPTICARENA.COM**

**JOHN OF GOD**

**JOÃO TEIXEIRA DE FARIA, WHO CALLS HIMSELF "JOHN OF GOD," HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MORE POPULAR FAITH HEALERS IN BRAZIL FOR THE PAST 35 YEARS. TEIXEIRA DE FARIA CLAIMS THAT HE CHANNELS MORE THAN THIRTY "DOCTOR ENTITIES" (INCLUDING DR. FRITZ). HE IS BIG BUSINESS FOR TOUR OPERATORS AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING EMMA BRAGDON, WHO HAS A PH.D. IN TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY. BOB & DIANA OF WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA, CAN ALSO BE YOUR GUIDES. IF YOU ARE COMING FROM ENGLAND, CONTACT RUPERT DREW. HOWEVER, A WEBSITE IN NEW ZEALAND WARNED:**

**A RECENT TV DOCUMENTARY (60 MINUTES) PORTRAYED HIM IN A VERY NEGATIVE LIGHT, ALTHOUGH SHOWING VIDEO OF HIM SCRAPING A PERSONS EYEBALL WITH A SCALPEL, AND PUTTING SCISSORS UP A PERSON'S NOSE, THEY SAID THESE WERE EASY TRICKS TO PERFORM....YET, OTHERS HAVE REPORTED TO ME SEEING HIS HEALINGS FIRST-HAND. I SUGGEST YOU VERIFY HIS AUTHENTICITY BEFORE DEPARTING, AS A TRIP TO BRAZIL CAN BE QUITE EXPENSIVE!**

**ROBERT AND CATERINA PELLEGRINO-ESTRICH CLAIM THEY WERE THE FIRST NON-BRAZILIANS TO REVEAL TO THE WORLD JOHN OF GOD'S AMAZING HEALING GIFTS. THEY ARE PRACTICING "BIO-ENERGY SPIRITUAL HEALERS" AND REIKI MASTERS, PRANA THERAPISTS, AND SPIRITUAL HEALING PRACTITIONERS. CATERINA CALLS HERSELF "THE LADY OF LIGHT." THEY PROVIDE "GROUND SUPPORT" FOR VISITORS TO ABADIANIA, WHERE JOHN PLIES HIS TRADE. THEY ADVISE, HOWEVER, THAT BEFORE YOU TRAVEL TO BRAZIL YOU PURCHASE TRAVEL INSURANCE. "TRAVEL INSURANCE IS ESSENTIAL TO COVER YOU IN THE EVENT OF ACCIDENT, ILLNESS, LOSS OF PERSONAL BELONGINGS OR DEATH." NICE TOUCH.**

**JAMES RANDI HAS A FEW THINGS TO SAY ABOUT JOHN OF GOD, NONE OF THEM GOOD. RANDI HAS ALSO POSTED A LETTER FROM A MAN WHOSE PARENTS FLEW FROM AUSTRALIA TO SEE JOHN.**

**AS FAR AS I KNOW THERE HAS BEEN ONLY ONE MEDICAL STUDY OF JOHN OF GOD'S HEALING POWERS AND IT CONCLUDED: "THE SURGICAL PROCEDURES ARE REAL BUT WE COULDN'T EVALUATE THE EFFICACY. IT DIDN'T APPEAR TO HAVE ANY SPECIFIC EFFECT. OUR FINDINGS ARE UNDOUBTEDLY MORE OF AN EXPLORATORY KIND THAN CONCLUSIVE ONES. FURTHER STUDIES ARE CLEARLY NECESSARY TO CAST LIGHT ON THIS UNORTHODOX TREATMENT."**

**I HAVE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM A MAN WHO SWEARS THAT JOHN REMOVED A CYST (WHY NOT?) AND WHO HAD EPILEPSY RELIEVED, WHICH, HE SAYS, WAS CAUSED BY HAVING HAD A BRAIN TUMOR REMOVED A YEAR EARLIER (IN A HOSPITAL IN AMERICA). "AFTER BRAZIL," HE WRITES, "MY EEG WAS PERFECTLY NORMAL AGAIN. (THOUGH I ADMIT I AM STILL HAVING SOME SENSITIVITY TO EXERCISE OR STRESS)." MY CORRESPONDENT WONDERS HOW SO MANY INTELLIGENT AND IMPORTANT PEOPLE (INCLUDING SHIRLEY MACLAINE!) COULD BELIEVE IN JOHN OF GOD'S POWERS IF THEY WERE NOT REAL. THE ANSWER IS THAT THEY CAN BELIEVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE FAITH AND THEY ARE NOT TOO DEMANDING OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE EVIDENCE FOR DECEPTION VS. TRUE HEALING. (BELIEVERS ARE FOND OF LOYOLA'S STATEMENT OF FAITH: FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE, NO PROOF IS NECESSARY. FOR THOSE WHO DISBELIEVE, NO AMOUNT OF PROOF IS SUFFICIENT.) NO ARGUMENT I MAKE, OR ANY EVIDENCE PRODUCED BY SOMEONE WHO MIGHT ACTUALLY DO A FOLLOW-UP ON ABOUT A HUNDRED OF JOHN'S PATIENTS SELECTED RANDOMLY, IS LIKELY TO ALTER THAT FAITH. NEVERTHELESS, SUCH A STUDY SHOULD BE DONE, JUST FOR THE RECORD.**

**ON FEBRUARY 12, 2005, ABC NEWS PRIMETIME DEVOTED AN HOUR TO JOHN OF GOD. BOB PARK HAD THIS TO SAY ABOUT THE SHOW:**

**IS "JOHN OF GOD" A HEALER OR A CHARLATAN? IS ABC NEWS NUTS? IN AN HOUR LONG REPORT LAST NIGHT, PRIMETIME LIVE CO-ANCHOR JOHN QUINONES TRAVELED TO A REMOTE AREA OF BRAZIL TO FIND OUT IF "JOHN OF GOD" IS REALLY A MIRACLE HEALER AS HIS FOLLOWERS CLAIM. WAKE UP ABC! IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY. IN A POSITION TO HELP MILLIONS OF VIEWERS UNDERSTAND THAT THEY LIVE IN A RATIONAL UNIVERSE, ABC HAS CHOSEN INSTEAD TO TELL THEM THAT THEIR SAD SUPERSTITIONS ARE OPEN SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS. TO GIVE THE PROGRAM CREDIBILITY THEY TURNED TO "ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST RESPECTED SURGEONS, DR. MEHMET OZ." OZ IS NO DOUBT A FINE SURGEON, BUT HE HAS TOUCH THERAPISTS IN HIS OPERATING ROOM HELPING PATIENTS "CONNECT TO THE HEALING ENERGY EVERYWHERE."**

**RANDI WAS GIVEN 19 SECONDS TO COMMENT ON JOHN OF GOD'S TRICKERY. (RANDI SPENT MORE THAN AN HOUR IN NEW YORK BEING INTERVIEWED AND TAPED FOR HIS 19 SECONDS ON SCREEN. CHECK OUT HIS DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE INTERVIEW AND HIS COMMENTARY ON THE ABC PROGRAM.) ANOTHER 30 SECONDS WAS SPENT NOTING THAT JOHN OF GOD HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF MOLESTING ONE OF HIS YOUNG PATIENTS AND HAS BEEN ARRESTED SEVERAL TIMES FOR PRACTICING MEDICINE WITHOUT A LICENSE. JOHN IS A FARMER BY TRAINING AND HAS A LARGE RANCH OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN WHERE HE HAS HIS CLINIC. BUT MOST OF THE PROGRAM FOCUSED ON THE PEOPLE FLOCKING TO THIS CLINIC IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE (ABADIANIA) SEEKING A MIRACLE. I GUESS "FAIR AND BALANCED" JOURNALISM FOR TOPICS LIKE FAITH HEALING MEANS FOLLOWING A FEW PEOPLE AROUND TO SEE IF THE HEALING REALLY WORKS ON THEM. CONTRAST THAT WITH A FEW SKEPTICAL COMMENTS AND SOME ACCUSATIONS. AND BRING IN AN OPEN-MINDED PHYSICIAN TO SAY THAT JOHN IS EITHER A HEALER OR HE'S DELUDED.**

**DR. OZ MADE ONE COMMENT, HOWEVER, THAT SHOULD HAVE RECEIVED MORE ATTENTION. EVEN IF JOHN OF GOD IS A CHARLATAN OR DELUDED, SOME OF HIS PATIENTS THINK THEY'VE BEEN HEALED, CURED, OR HELPED BY HIM, AND IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO STUDY THOSE PEOPLE TO SEE IF THEIR FAITH, THEIR DRIVE TO BE HEALED, AND THE LIKE ARE OF ANY SCIENTIFIC IMPORTANCE. OTHER THAN THAT, THE SHOW WAS NOT ONLY WITHOUT MERIT, IT WAS MERETRICIOUS. ABC DID NOTHING TO DISCREDIT THE NOTION THAT JOHN IS INVADED BY SPIRIT DOCTORS OR CAN CURE DISEASES LIKE BREAST CANCER BY STICKING A FORCEPS UP A PERSON'S NOSE (A CARNIVAL TRICK) OR ALLERGIES BY MAKING A SLIGHT INCISION ABOUT THE BREAST OR NUMEROUS OTHER AILMENTS BY SCRAPING THE EYEBALL (ANOTHER TRICK).**

**THE FINAL TALLY FOR THE SHOW WAS 1. A MAN'S BRAIN TUMOR WAS SMALLER AFTER HE VISITED JOHN OF GOD (NATURAL BUT UNEXPLAINED REGRESSION AND AN AMAZING COINCIDENCE? TREATMENT BEFORE HE CAME TO JOHN FINALLY SHOWED SOME RESULTS? ONE OF JOHN'S CHANNELED SPIRITS DID INVISIBLE SURGERY? THE PATIENT'S WILL TO LIVE AND BE HEALED AFFECTED THE TUMOR'S GROWTH? OR ?); 2. A LADY COMPLAINING OF CHRONIC FATIGUE SAYS SHE FEELS A LOT BETTER AFTER JOHN SLIT HER ABOVE ONE OF HER BREASTS (PSYCHOSOMATIC? JOHN'S SPIRITS CUT JUST THE RIGHT PLACE TO RELIEVE HER SYMPTOMS? PLACEBO EFFECT?); 3. A MAN WITH ALS SHOWS NO EFFECT (DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH FAITH? JUST WHAT YOU'D EXPECT?); 4. A YOUNG ACTRESS FROM SOUTH AFRICA WITH BREAST CANCER SHOWS NO EFFECT (SAME AS 3); 5. A WOMAN PARALYZED FROM THE WAIST DOWN IS ABLE TO WALK USING RAILS TO HOLD ON TO, BUT SHE CLEARLY HAS NO USE OF HER LEGS; SHE SAYS SHE FEELS SOMETHING IS IMPROVING, THOUGH (PLACEBO EFFECT? DELUSION? DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH FAITH? IN ANY CASE, WE DON'T KNOW IF SHE TRIED TO WALK WITH RAILS BEFORE SEEING JOHN AND, IF SO, WHAT THE RESULTS WERE), AND 6. THE JOURNALIST'S SHOULDER DIDN'T HEAL IN 40 DAYS AS JOHN PROMISED BUT QUINONES ADMITS HE DIDN'T FOLLOW JOHN'S ADVICE NOT TO HAVE SEX OR EAT PEPPER.**

**NUMBER 6 MAY BE THE MOST TELLING OF ALL AS TO ABC'S SERIOUSNESS IN DOING THIS PROGRAM. IF QUINONES WASN'T GOING TO FOLLOW JOHN'S INSTRUCTIONS, WHY WAS THIS MATERIAL INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM? DID HE THINK IT WAS A JOKE?**

**SO, WHAT WAS LEARNED? NOT MUCH, EXCEPT THAT MILLIONS OF DESPERATE PEOPLE WILL TRY ANYTHING AND BELIEVE ANYTHING TO PRESERVE OR RESTORE THEIR LIVES TO A HEALTHY STATE. I THINK WE ALREADY KNEW THAT, THOUGH. OZ SPECULATED THAT WHEN JOHN STICKS A METAL OBJECT DEEP UP A PATIENT'S NOSTRIL AND TWISTS IT AROUND SEVERAL TIMES, HE MAY BE CONTACTING THE PINEAL GLAND, WHICH MAY TRIGGER SOME SORT OF RESPONSE IN THE BRAIN THAT AIDS HEALING. I SERIOUSLY DOUBT ANYONE IS GOING TO DO A STUDY ON THIS SPECULATION, BUT I ALSO WOULD HAVE DOUBTED ANY PHYSICIAN WOULD EVER STICK AN ICE PICK THROUGH A HUMAN BEING'S EYE SOCKET TO DESTROY PART OF THE FRONTAL LOBE. WHAT DO I KNOW?**

**I KNOW THAT RANDI SAYS THAT HE TOLD THE ABC PRODUCER AND CLEARLY STATED TO THE CAMERA DURING THE VIDEOTAPING SESSION [THAT IT] IS AN OLD CARNY EFFECT THAT MY FRIEND TODD ROBBINS TELLS ME TRACES BACK TO THE JADUWALLAHS OF INDIA AND WAS ADOPTED FROM THEIR REPERTOIRE BY AN AMERICAN PERFORMER NAMED MELVIN BURKHARDT, FIRST BEING DONE ON THIS CONTINENT IN 1926. IT'S NOW KNOWN AS THE "BLOCKHEAD TRICK," AND IS USUALLY DONE WITH A HEAVY 4 1/2" (30D — THIRTY-PENNY) IRON NAIL TAPPED UP THE NOSE AND INTO THE BACK OF THE THROAT, A CLEAR, STRAIGHT, PATH THAT SEEMS IMPROBABLE. IT'S PERFORMED TODAY BY EASILY MORE THAN 100 PERFORMERS IN CARNIVALS AND SIDESHOWS AROUND THE WORLD, AND JOHN OF GOD SIMPLY USES IT TO IMPRESS HIS VICTIMS, THOUGH HE HAS A FAR EASIER TIME OF IT BY USING SMOOTH NICKEL-PLATED (OR STAINLESS-STEEL) FORCEPS.**

**I KNOW THAT NOBODY IS LIKELY TO DO ANY FOLLOW-UPS ON THE DESPERATE PATIENTS WHO SEEK A MIRACLE FROM JOHN. I KNOW THAT THERE WILL BE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WILLING TO PROVIDE TESTIMONIALS TO THEIR OWN AND OTHER MIRACULOUS CURES. I KNOW JOHN DOESN'T KEEP RECORDS, BUT EVEN IF HE DID, HE AND HIS STAFF ARE NOT INTERESTED IN SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTATION. I KNOW JOHN DOESN'T CHARGE A FEE FOR HIS "SERVICES," BUT HE PRESCRIBES HERBS TO EVERYBODY HE SEES (ABOUT 1,500-2,000 PEOPLE A WEEK) AND HIS CLINIC SELLS THE HERBS. ACCORDING TO QUINONES, "THE CLINIC DOES PULL IN SOMETHING LIKE $400,000 A YEAR FROM THE SALE OF HERBS." I KNOW FROM WATCHING THE VIDEO OF JOHN AT WORK THAT HE PLACES HIS HANDS ON THE BREASTS OF HIS FEMALE PATIENTS REGARDLESS OF WHAT AILS THEM.**

**I KNOW THE LAB THAT DID THE TESTS ON THE YOUNG MAN WITH THE BRAIN TUMOR IS NOT GOING TO SUGGEST THAT MAYBE THEY MADE AN ERROR IN DOING OR READING THEIR MRI AND THE DOCTORS ARE NOT LIKELY TO SUGGEST THAT THEY MAY HAVE MADE THE WRONG DIAGNOSIS. I PREDICTED WHILE WATCHING THE SHOW THAT THE LADY WITH CHRONIC FATIGUE AND "ALLERGIES" WAS GOING TO TESTIFY SHE IMPROVED. SHE DID. HOW LONG WILL HER ELEVATED FEELING LAST? WHO KNOWS. I WONDER IF ABC WILL DO A FOLLOW-UP ON HER. IT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME IF THE GOOD FEELING DECREASED OVER TIME AND RATHER THAN ADMIT THAT JOHN HAS NO HEALING POWERS, SHE'LL GO BACK FOR ANOTHER DOSE.**

**TRAILING THE MAN WITH ALS AND THE WOMAN WHOSE SPINAL CORD WAS CRUSHED WAS UNNECESSARILY CRUEL. THERE IS NO WAY THAT THE PLACEBO EFFECT IS GOING TO CURE ALS OR ALLOW A WOMAN TO WALK AFTER 17 YEARS IN A WHEELCHAIR. I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH FAITH THEY HAVE, NO CHEERY THOUGHTS OR DEEP HOPE CAN CHANGE THESE KINDS OF CONDITIONS. TO FOLLOW THEM WITH CAMERAS WAS TO IMPLY THAT MAYBE THERE'S A CHANCE THIS WILL WORK. RIGHT. AND PIGS MIGHT FLY IF YOU PRAY OVER THEM LONG ENOUGH.**

**THE ACTRESS/DANCER FROM SOUTH AFRICA REMINDED ME OF PAT DAVIS, A LOCAL TV NEWSWOMAN WHO CHOSE GERSON THERAPY OVER CHEMOTHERAPY FOR BREAST CANCER. BOTH WOMEN'S MOTHERS ALSO HAD BREAST CANCER. DAVIS'S MOTHER SURVIVED AND OUTLIVED HER DAUGHTER. THE DANCER'S MOTHER DIED EVEN WITH CHEMOTHERAPY. EVEN AFTER HER DOCTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA GAVE HER THE NEWS THAT HER CANCER WAS STILL ACTIVE, SHE AGAIN REFUSED CONVENTIONAL TREATMENT AND IS OPTING FOR SOME UNSPECIFIED "ALTERNATIVE"...AND ANOTHER TRIP TO JOHN OF GOD'S CLINIC IN BRAZIL.**

**WHY DIDN'T ABC ASK WHAT ARE THE ODDS THAT A FARMER IN A REMOTE AREA OF BRAZIL WHO HAS NO MEDICAL TRAINING AND WHO STICKS METAL DEEP INTO PEOPLE'S NOSTRILS, CAUSING THEM TO BLEED EVEN IF RELATIVELY PAINLESSLY, WHO SLITS WITH A KNIFE AREAS ON THE BODY THAT HAVE NO KNOWN PHYSIOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP TO WHAT AILS THE PATIENT AND THEN STICKS HIS FINGER IN THE OPEN WOUND, WHO CLAIMS THAT GOD DOES THE WORK EVEN THOUGH HE HAS ABOUT 35 DEAD DOCTORS AND HEALERS TO ASSIST HIM BY DOING INVISIBLE SURGERY FROM THE SPIRIT WORLD, AND SO ON....WHAT ARE THE ODDS THAT THIS GUY IS PERFORMING MIRACLES? THE REAL STORY IS HOW IS IT POSSIBLE FOR MILLIONS OF INTELLIGENT PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN SUCH NONSENSE? HOWEVER, HAD ABC TOLD THAT STORY, WHO WOULD HAVE WATCHED?**

**WE'RE IN THE 21ST CENTURY BUT MANY OF OUR PEOPLE ARE POSSESSED BY SUPERSTITIONS THAT ARE THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD. RESISTANCE TO RATIONALITY SEEMS TO BE GETTING STRONGER RATHER THAN WEAKER EVEN AS OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE UNIVERSE KEEPS EXPANDING.**

**ONE WOULD THINK THAT A 21ST CENTURY NEWS ORGANIZATION LIKE ABC WOULD NOT WANT TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE SUPERSTITION, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE RESULTS COULD BE LETHAL. ARE THE PRODUCERS AT ABC NEWS JUST NAIVE? DON'T THEY REALIZE THE HARM THEY CAN DO BY ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN FAITH HEALING? DID THEY REALLY BELIEVE THAT SUCH AN UNBALANCED PROGRAM COULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF ANYTHING EXCEPT CATERING TO THE DESPERATE, THE FAITH-BASED, AND THE INCREASINGLY SUPERSTITIOUS BELIEFS ABOUT HEALTH CARE THAT THE DR. OZS OF THE WORLD PROMOTE?**

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**THE SCIENCE SEGMENT**

**10/27/08**

**HONEY BEES CAN COUNT UP TO FOUR, AUSTRALIAN RESEARCHERS HAVE FOUND, BUT NO HIGHER. IN A UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND STUDY, BEES REPEATEDLY FLEW TO THE SAME MARKED SPOT IN A TUNNEL, EVEN WHEN IT DID NOT HOLD FOOD, REUTERS REPORTS. "WE FIND THAT IF YOU TRAIN THEM TO THE THIRD STRIPE, THEY WILL LOOK SUBSEQUENTLY IN THE THIRD STRIPE," ONE RESEARCHER SAID.**

**"THE MORE WE LOOK AT THESE CREATURES THAT HAVE A BRAIN THE SIZE OF A SESAME SEED, THE MORE ASTONISHED WE ARE," THE RESEARCHER SAID. "THEY REALLY HAVE A LOT OF THE CAPACITIES THAT WE SO-CALLED HIGHER HUMAN BEINGS POSSESS."**

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**THE ARENA GOES ABROAD**

**GREAT BRITAIN**

**1/9/09**

**THE ADVERTISING REGULATOR HAS RECEIVED ALMOST 150 COMPLAINTS THAT AN ATHEIST AD CAMPAIGN, PROCLAIMING "THERE IS PROBABLY NO GOD. NOW STOP WORRYING AND ENJOY YOUR LIFE", IS OFFENSIVE TO CHRISTIANS AND OTHER RELIGIONS THAT BELIEVE IN A SINGLE GOD.**

**STEPHEN GREEN, THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN VOICE, IS AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE COMPLAINED TO THE ADVERTISING STANDARDS AUTHORITY, ARGUING THAT THE ATHEIST CAMPAIGN BROKE THE ADVERTISING CODE ON THE GROUNDS OF SUBSTANTIATION AND TRUTHFULNESS.**

**THE ASA HAS RECEIVED 141 COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE ATHEIST BUS CAMPAIGN WHICH LAUNCHED EARLIER THIS WEEK ON BUSES THROUGHOUT ENGLAND, SCOTLAND AND WALES, AS WELL AS THE LONDON UNDERGROUND. HOWEVER, 39 OF THE COMPLAINTS ARE REGARDING NEWSPAPER AND ONLINE ARTICLES ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN, WHICH THE ASA HAS NO POWER TO DEAL WITH.**

**THE COMPLAINANTS CLAIM THE AD CAMPAIGN IS OFFENSIVE TO CHRISTIANS AND THOSE OF OTHER MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS.**

**GREEN SAID: "IT IS GIVEN AS A STATEMENT OF FACT AND THAT MEANS IT MUST BE CAPABLE OF SUBSTANTIATION IF IT IS NOT TO BREAK THE RULES.**

**"THERE IS PLENTY OF EVIDENCE FOR GOD, FROM PEOPLE'S PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, TO THE COMPLEXITY, INTERDEPENDENCE, BEAUTY AND DESIGN OF THE NATURAL WORLD.**

**"BUT THERE IS SCANT EVIDENCE ON THE OTHER SIDE, SO I THINK THE ADVERTISERS ARE REALLY GOING TO STRUGGLE TO SHOW THEIR CLAIM IS NOT AN EXAGGERATION OR INACCURATE, AS THE ASA CODE PUTS IT."**

**THE REGULATOR HAS NOT YET DECIDED IF THE COMPLAINTS WARRANT A FORMAL INVESTIGATION TO SEE IF THE CAMPAIGN HAS BROKEN THE ADVERTISING CODE.**

**HANNE STINSON, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE BRITISH HUMANIST ASSOCIATION, WHICH LAUNCHED THE CAMPAIGN, SAID SHE "PITIED THE ASA IF THEY ARE GOING TO BE EXPECTED TO RULE ON THE PROBABILITY OF GOD'S EXISTENCE. HOWEVER, IF THEY DO INVESTIGATE WE WILL BE VERY HAPPY TO RESPOND".**

**THE CAMPAIGN USES QUOTES FROM FAMOUS PUBLIC FIGURES – SUCH AS ALBERT EINSTEIN, DOUGLAS ADAMS, EMILY DICKINSON AND KATHARINE HEPBURN – WHO HAVE EITHER ENDORSED ATHEISM OR EXPRESSED SCEPTICISM ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF GOD.**

**WRITER ARIANE SHERINE FIRST SUGGESTED THE IDEA IN A GUARDIAN COMMENT IS FREE BLOG LAST JUNE, SAYING AN ATHEIST BUS CAMPAIGN WOULD PROVIDE A REASSURING COUNTER-MESSAGE TO RELIGIOUS SLOGANS THREATENING NON-CHRISTIANS WITH HELL AND DAMNATION.**

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**FAMOUS QUOTES**

**GORE VIDAL (1925) 83 YEARS OLD.**

**HE IS AN AMERICAN NOVELIST, SCREENWRITER, PLAYWRIGHT, ESSAYIST, SHORT STORY WRITER AND POLITICIAN. EARLY IN HIS CAREER HE WROTE THE GROUND-BREAKING THE CITY AND THE PILLAR (1948) THAT OUTRAGED MAINSTREAM CRITICS AS ONE OF THE FIRST MAJOR AMERICAN NOVELS TO FEATURE UNAMBIGUOUS HOMOSEXUALITY.**

**"ONCE PEOPLE GET HUNG UP ON THEOLOGY, THEY'RE LOST TO SANITY FOREVER."**

**"THE GREAT UNMENTIONABLE EVIL AT THE CENTER OF OUR CULTURE IS MONOTHEISM.**

**FROM A BARBARIC BRONZE AGE TEXT KNOWN AS THE OLD TESTAMENT,**

**THREE ANTI-HUMAN RELIGIONS HAVE EVOLVED - JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM.**

**THESE ARE SKY-GOD RELIGIONS.**

**THEY ARE, LITERALLY, PATRIARCHAL - GOD IS THE OMNIPOTENT FATHER -**

**HENCE THE LOATHING OF WOMEN FOR 2,000 YEARS**

**IN THOSE COUNTRIES AFFLICTED BY THE SKY-GOD AND HIS EARTHLY MALE DELEGATES."**