

# Ep 55: Pastafarianism and the meaning of 'religion'

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A spoof religion devised to mock creationism has attracted a global following. But what does 'religion' mean anyway?

In this episode, [Emma Park](#) speaks to three guests with different perspectives on [Pastafarianism](#) and the challenge that it poses to religious privilege.

[Derk Venema](#) (03:20) is an assistant professor in legal philosophy at the Open University of the Netherlands. He was the legal counsel for two Pastafarians who featured in the 2020 documentary [I, Pastafari](#). Derk talks about [their court cases](#), the difficulties of letting the state decide what counts as a religion, and the requirement that a religious belief should be 'serious'.

[Captain Tanya Watkins](#) (28:35) is the self-appointed leader of the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster in Australia. She discusses her failed attempts to have her [church legally incorporated](#), as recognised religions can do, and explains why Pastafarianism is really about being nice to people – and eating pasta.

[Dr Tony Meacham](#) (43:17) is a law lecturer at Coventry University. He considers the challenge which movements like [Pastafarianism pose](#) to traditional definitions of 'religion', and the place of religion in English law.

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[A spoof religion devised to mock creationism has attracted a global following. But what does 'religion' mean anyway? Join @DrEmmaPark with guests Derk Venema, Tanya Watkins and Tony Meacham to find out.](#)

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