

Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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“This is Not Your Father’s Fuller Brush Man”

When I was a kid, I enjoyed visits from the Fuller Brush Man. He was a door-to-door salesman who sold hairbrushes, nose hair clippers and other brush-related personal items. He usually lived in a nearby community and most of us considered him part of our extended family. The Fuller Brush Man was never pushy and yet he always made a sale. Along with the dry cleaner, the milk man and the ice cream man, he was a frequent visitor and we welcomed his *direct* marketing techniques.

Today, however, it’s a different story. Our email inbox, our telephones and even our front doors are bombarded by peddlers promising body enhancements, financial security and a cure for a newly discovered toe fungus. I suspect that most of these people are not as lovable as the Fuller Brush Man *and* they’re pushy. For instance...

On Monday, I received an email with an URGENT REQUEST from the widow of the Minister of Health in Nigeria. She confided in me that she had inherited \$8 million but couldn’t find a place to deposit the money. She *promised* that if I gave her \$1,000, as a good faith deposit, she would send me \$8 million in cash to deposit in the bank of my choice. Then, after she moved to the United States, I would get 20% of the money in exchange for my assistance. I did the math and was just about to contact her when later that day, I got the same request from the Minister of Health in Beijing, China. Now, I’m weighing my options.

On Tuesday, I received an email offering me the opportunity to become a legally ordained minister – within 48 hours. For \$29.95, I’d receive a certificate with a genuine gold seal that would allow me to “marry my brother or my sister (which I thought only happened in Southwest Virginia where I grew up), do funerals, baptisms, visit correctional institutions and even start my own church.” Now that’s some deal! Especially considering that a friend of mine spent several years and thousands of dollars to get his ordination. And he had to learn Greek. I could bypass all of that for the price of a decent meal. After ordering the certificate, something else occurred to me. Perhaps now I could apply for the \$8 million job openings in Nigeria or Beijing.

On Wednesday, I got a phone call from a financial management broker in New York telling me he had some investment advice that would guarantee returns of 20-30%. After a delightful bantering back and forth expressing my suspicion and frustration about his investment advice, I respectfully told him that a good friend did my investments. He

asked if I made money last year. I told him we did. He said I was lying. I told him he was rude. He said / was rude. I hung up on him. He called back. I hung up again.

After the call, I reflected on his offer. If he has a sure fire method of making 20-30% on his investments, why isn't he investing rather than trying to sell something to me? It's like the guys who will teach you how to make a million dollars using their \$99 "system". If they can make a million dollars so easily, why are they selling a system instead of sipping piña coladas on a beach in Tahiti? Besides, I bet their system doesn't come close to the salary of a Minister of Health. So there.

On Thursday, I got 17 offers for Viagra and Cialis. It made me realize how many people have problems in this "area". Since frisky Bob Dole made it chic, I guess everybody has to have some.

Finally on Friday, I heard my doorbell ring. On my porch were two clean-cut young gentlemen with white shirts, black pants and big smiles. I greeted the Mormon missionaries and thanked them for sharing their religion with me. I let them know that I would have considered converting if I hadn't gotten ordained a couple of days earlier. They appreciated my candor and left me alone.

Regrettably, as they rode away on their bikes, I realized that they were as close to the Fuller Brush Man as I was going to get.....without the nose hair clippers of course.

Until next time, just humor me.

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Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit www.RonCulberson.com.