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## Vulgar mockery of Christians: Is this what we want in a U.S. senator?

By **KATHERINE KERSTEN**, Star Tribune

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I get it -- Al Franken is a serious senatorial candidate despite his penchant for the pornographic. Franken's one-liners about rape and oral sex and his leering fantasies about big-busted women were just for yucks, right?

Last June, DFL bigwigs chose to forget about their man's decades-long record of sexual crudity after he hooked the endorsement by putting on a serious face and saying "sorry" at the party's convention.

But Franken didn't apologize for another aspect of his trash-talking shtick. He's aimed some of his most offensive material at religious believers, particularly Christians.

Why hasn't this been aired in public? We in the press are too busy searching through Sarah Palin's junior high yearbooks and tracking down the filing dates of Joe the Plumber's tax returns.

Meanwhile, Franken gets a pass for making a joke of the life and death of Jesus Christ.

Franken finds Christ's crucifixion to be a barrel of laughs. For example, in his 1999 book, "Why Not Me?" he wrote about his discovery -- as a fictional former president -- of "the complete skeleton of Jesus Christ still nailed to the cross" during an archeological dig. At the Franken Presidential Library gift shop, visitors can buy "small pieces of Jesus' skeleton."

"We would like to display Jesus' skeleton at some future point," Franken went on. "It's merely a matter of designing and building an exhibition space ... . Until then he's very comfortable in a box down in our basement near the geothermal power station."

Very funny. Anybody want to try a joke like that about Mohammed?

Franken also wrote a Saturday Night Live monologue for Jesus Christ that appeared in a magazine. After poking fun at Christians' belief that Jesus was both God and man, he had Christ speculate on having the hots for Mary Magdalene:

"If Mary Magdalene looked like Barbara Hershey, I might have thought twice about this celibacy thing. I mean, the real Mary Magdalene was about four foot two, 135 pounds. And with bad teeth yet."

In Franken's world, God has a mouth as foul as Franken's. In one book, he has God refer to books about liberal media bias as "total bullshit." Later, he describes God as having his head "up his ass."

But Franken saves his sharpest barbs for those weirdos, Catholics.

In 2006, he and a guest on his Air America radio show joked about Eucharistic communion wafers -- sacred to Catholics as the body of Christ -- and compared them to chips and guacamole. In "Dog Confessional," a proposed sketch for Saturday Night Live, Franken depicted "a series of dogs, played by cast members, confessing to a priest," according to the Washington Post. NBC refused to air it.

In another book, Franken described greeting a New York audience with the words, "Isn't Cardinal O'Connor an asshole?"

Franken's campaign did not return a phone call seeking comment.

If a 12-year-old kid spouted this stuff in a schoolyard, he'd be hauled to the principal's office and told to grow up. But in today's surreal political climate, a guy who lobs insults like these has a shot at one the highest political offices in the land.

We're used to slanderers of Christianity getting government arts grants. But Franken wants more. He's asking us to send him to what's been called "the most exclusive club in the world" -- and to serve us there until 2014.

Our nation's founders wanted the Senate -- as Congress' upper house -- to balance with a sober, long-term perspective the much more numerous House of Representatives, whose members serve only two-year terms and are supposed to reflect the people's shifting sentiments. Senators serve six-year terms, and were intended to be the nation's wisest councilors -- equipped to discern and protect the country's broad, enduring interests.

"The use of the Senate," explained James Madison in 1787, "is to consist in proceeding with more coolness, with more system, and with more wisdom, than the popular branch."

For this reason, the Constitution entrusts the Senate with unique powers -- its members conduct impeachment trials, make treaties, and give the president advice and consent on important appointments, including Cabinet secretaries, ambassadors and federal judicial nominees with lifetime tenure.

A Minnesota senator represents the whole state, not a smaller, relatively homogeneous congressional district, as House members do.

If Franken is elected, can he represent all the people of Minnesota -- including Christians -- for whom he has repeatedly shown disdain?

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