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From: HTHALLJR
Subj: Manure, LM's, and Satan's cat.

Hi, everybody,

For a limited time, the SL Trib's archives

<http://www.sltrib.com/>

are free for searching while they "perfect" their search engine (as if anything having to do with that gentile rag could be perfected!)

So I'm stealing a bunch of Robert Kirby's columns while the stealing is good. Kirby is the self-styled "Oxymormon" whose column in the Trib pokes fun at LDS idiosyncracies. He and cartoonist Pat Bagley have just published a book entitled "Robert Kirby and Pat Bagley Go to Hell" (or something like that) which I'm sure will be a hoot.

While we're on the subject of oxymormonsn, here's one which I attribute to my mission president, Peter Loscher. I think he adapted it from Hello Dolly. I was reminded of it recently while watching Orem High School's production (Spencer was in the ensemble and played the clerk in the kangaroo court; the last time OHS produced it, HT played the judge).

The line in Hello Dolly, which is the sign from her departed Ephraim which lets Dolly Levi know it's ok to marry half-a-millionare Horace van der Gelder [translation: "from the money"], goes something like this: "Money (you will pardon the expression) is like manure. It should be spread all around helping young things to grow."

Pres. Loscher's line (which he used in 1965 to explain his transferring of about half the missionaries in Berlin out to distant corners of northern Germany) was: "Mormons [no pardon requested] are like manure. Spread them around thin, and they can do a lot of good, but leave them all in one heap, and they just stink."

Anyway, here's a couple of my favorite Kirby columns:

their resolve to teach more people than we did.

This in turn drove Martinet nuts because he was the district leader and, more importantly, a chauvinist. No way was he going to be shown up by a couple of priesthoodless women. We knocked on doors every night until the dogs chased us home.

It wasn't all bad. Today, there are Mormons in Tacuarembó who probably got that way simply because I bashed Jones with a rock. God works in mysterious ways.

Seriously, President Hinckley is right. Going on a mission is primarily a guy thing. As a general rule, guys need it and women don't.

If you put all the gospel stuff aside, a mission is a finishing school for Mormon guys. It's where we learn important social and spiritual skills, stuff that Mormon gals already know and take completely for granted. By and large, a mission is where 19-year-old Mormon guys learn to dress themselves, make their beds, and play well with others.

It's also a time of spiritual seasoning, wherein we reflect on life's deeper meanings, none of which involve surfing, drag racing, shooting deer, or tearing up the side of a mountain in a 4X4.

Sister missionaries, being female, already know this stuff. Socially acceptable behavior comes naturally.

Growing up, they played house and had cookie parties. For boys, it was Power Rangers and kick-boxing each other's faces off.

None of this means that women don't make good missionaries. They do.

There in Tacuarembó, Foster and Jones converted as many people as Martinet and Kirby. Jones in particular proved to be very skillful at overcoming the mean-spirited suspicion and bigotry she found in others. It's a good thing she did. We've been married now for 22 years.

Salt Lake Tribune columnist Robert Kirby lives in Springville. The self-described ``OxyMormon'' welcomes mail at P.O. Box 281, Springville, UT 84663, or e-mail at rkirby(AT)sltrib.com.

I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I SAID ABOUT ... 05/10/97

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I'm Sorry for What I Said About Your Hell-Bound Cat, and for What I'm About to Say

Byline: By Robert Kirby

One of the hardest things I've ever had to do as a practicing (but not yet

accomplished) Mormon is to ask for forgiveness from people I've wronged. The church says it's an absolutely essential part of the gospel plan.

I'm hoping that God isn't a real stickler on this one. Not because I hate to ask for forgiveness, but rather because I doubt that I could locate all the people I've ever wronged. We're probably talking billions.

I've asked for forgiveness approximately 50 times during my life.

Incidentally, I'm talking about non-coerced forgiveness here, the kind that if you don't get it, bad things will happen to you.

For example, I don't count begging for forgiveness from cops, judges, the IRS and my wife. Begging for forgiveness so that a loan shark won't have someone pull your nose off with a pair of vise grips is self-preservation, not repentance. As such, God probably doesn't count it either.

The forgiveness I'm talking about is the forgiveness you want because you injured someone and you feel bad about it. When I was young, I accidentally drove my car onto the neighbor's lawn, smashing a ceramic donkey and a bird bath. When I said I was sorry, the neighbor forgave me. Since restitution is part of repentance and forgiveness, I paid for the damage. There are, of course, some sins so huge that you can't make complete restitution here on Earth. Stuff like murder, embezzlement, and voting for Ross Perot. In cases like this, you just do the best you can and hope that God will make up the difference.

I'm going somewhere with all of this. Namely another plea for forgiveness. As you may already know, I've not been exactly kind to cats in this column. Recently, I claimed that Satan had a cat for a pet instead of a way-cool dog named Vern, like God has.

In the space of a week, I got a short ton of letters from cat lovers, most of whom were so offended by what I wrote that they wanted me ground up for kitty litter.

However, a few people (Susan Jackson, Anna Keisel, Barb Sehestedt, Nan Dalton, Ida Foster, Kori Walton, Ted Arnow and Sharon Cowley) presented their opposing views in such a way that I felt bad for saying all cats would go to hell.

So, here goes: I'm sincerely sorry for what I wrote about cats. What I really meant to say was that MOST cats would go to hell, but probably not

yours.

Those of you who screeched for my head can go pound sand. Your cats are going to hell even if I have to take them there myself.

OK, I'm sorry I said that, too. Please forgive me again.

What's really cool about asking for forgiveness is that it automatically

puts the ball in the offended person's court. Jesus not only wants us to ask for forgiveness, he also wants us to forgive other people.

Believe it or not, forgiving other people is even tougher than asking them to forgive you. A sense of self-righteous anger is the only thing that gets most people out of bed in the morning. If I couldn't hate at least 500 people a day, I wouldn't know what to do with myself.

I better work on it, though. God knows what to do with me if I don't. I'll be somewhere keeping your cat company.

Robert Kirby is a journalist who lives in Springville with his wife and three children. The self-described ``OxyMormon'' welcomes mail at P.O. Box 281, Springville, Utah 84663.