

The Bumper Book of MORMON HUMOR



John David Card

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I - *The Book of Jarom*: One-liners and short gags

II - *The Utah Tax Code*: Longer jokes, suited for adult eyes

III - *As Seen in the Ward Newsletter*: Longform humor and funny Latter-Day Saint stories

IV - *The Lord Loves Humor*: An examination of the relationship between contemporary Mormon evangelism and comedy

I – *THE BOOK OF JAROM*: One-liners and short gags

Why do Mormon women stop having children at 30? – *Because 31 or more is where daycare fees admittedly start becoming excessive.*

*

You know you're a good Mormon businessman if... *every car you own is at Temple on Sunday!*

*

As an Arizonan, the worst part about travelling into Nevada is needing to set my watch back an hour – *the worst part about heading into Utah is needing to set my watch back one-hundred years!*

*

Where do Mormon cows live? – *Salt Lick City!*

*

As a Mormon, heritage is very important to me. From a very young age, I learned all about my forefathers – *and my five mothers!*

*

How many Mormons does it take to change a lightbulb? *Well, they keep showing up here in pairs, but show far, they haven't changed anything!*

*

How do you stop a Mormon from drinking all the beer on your fishing trip? *Invite a second one!*

*

Did you hear they're using Mormons instead of live white rabbits in laboratory testing nowadays? *Apparently, they breed faster and get less emotionally attached!*

*

What's the difference between a devout Mormon and a lapsing Mormon? *The temperature of their caffeine!*

*

You know you were a good Mormon kid if... *you thought "Heck" is the place for people who don't believe in "Gosh".*

*

This economic recession is tough on everyone – *I know guys from Temple with once-thriving Ford dealerships that have even had to cut back to only one new wife a year!*

*

Have you heard about the new LDS fishing gear? – *It's called the Mormon nabber-tackle!*

*

You know you're really a devout Mormon man if... *you stayed after your own wedding reception to help clean up!*

*

You know you're really a devout Mormon woman if... *you only looked at wedding dresses with wraps because you planned to use the excess material to make sleeves!*

*

You know you're really a devout Mormon couple if... *there are basketball hoops visible in the background of all your wedding pictures!*

*

What's the main difference between a Mormon and a Southern Baptist? *Baptists don't immediately avert their gaze in shame when you make eye contact with them in the liquor store!*

*

Why can't you take a Mormon speed-dating? – *He'll start pushing all the tables together.*

*

Can you imagine if Henry Youngman was Mormon – *Take my wives, please!*

*

Why did the Mormon schedule his wedding for Black Friday? – *The 2-for-the-price-of-1 special!*

*

One 19th Century Gentile says to another: "I heard those followers of Joseph Smith are so ostentatious, *they eat off of Golden Plates!*"

Did you hear about the hippie who mixed up LSD with LDS? –
He went on a Mission instead of a trip!

*

What's a Mormon's favorite type of humor? *A knock-knock-knock joke!*

*

Why did the Mormon cross the road? *To get to the other bride!*

*

Joseph Smith sold so many copies of The Book of Mormon, that it made him *a profit!*

*

Why did God invent Mormons? *So Protestants would know how the Jews feel!*

*

Mormons are such lovely people. They all smile at you. – *Some of them even blink too!*

*

My Temple's musical group doesn't actually do that much singing. They mostly just sit around during rehearsal time drinking diet soda and eating fruit – *must be why they call it the Mormon Tab and Apple Choir!*

*

Why did the Lamanites all have bruised shins? Because of all the *knee-fights.*

*

One Mormon says to another, “You know what would be fun?”
“Doesn't matter”

*

If I told any of these jokes in Temple, someone would surely slap me. *It would only be proper of me to thank anyone who cared enough to do so!*

*

I have a very good joke about the Golden Plates, and at least twelve witnesses who will attest to the funniness of my joke. *However, I can't tell it to you – You'll need to hear it with your spiritual ears!*

*

I appreciate the fact you enjoyed the last joke. However, I'm still going to need to reprimand you. *Loud laughter is forbidden within the Temple – even when it can't be heard.*

*

Spending days and days on end writing decent Mormon-themed puns knowing so few people will understand them, let alone enjoy them, is like *casting Pearls of Great Price before swine.*

*

II – THE UTAH TAX CODE: Longer jokes, suited for adult eyes

Two young boys are seated at the back of the congregation at a Temple wedding when one of them leans over and asks the other:

“I’m confused, how many wives are we allowed to have?”

His companion mulls it over, “Sixteen... I think. *Four better, four worse, four richer, and four poorer.*”

*

Last Sunday it was a bit too cloudy out to go play my usual few rounds down at the golfclub, so I was just lounging around the house with not much to do when I heard the doorbell ring.

I opened it up to see a pair of well-dressed young men standing there who said, “We’re missionaries from the Church of Latter-Day Saints. Do you have a moment to talk about Jesus Christ?”

With not much else planned for the day, I decided to invite them in, “Come in, sit down, *make yourselves at home.* – So, what exactly would you like to talk about?”

Both young men looked hesitant. One piped up, “Beats the hell out of me, we’ve never actually made it this far before.”

*

In a shockingly progressive break from tradition, one newly constructed Mormon Temple has asked an artist from the Jackson Pollack School of Art to design a huge rainbow flag to promote LDS-LGBT unity to display in their public concourse.

From now on, they’ll be known as the *Church of the Splattered Gay Paints.*

*

A devout Mormon is seated next to an Irish Catholic on a flight from the British Isles to America.

As soon as the flight gets underway, a hostess comes round to take drink orders. The Catholic very happily requests a whiskey. The hostess then turns to the Mormon and asks if he’d care for a hard drink too. He replies in disgust, “I’d rather be savagely set-upon by a dozen women of ill-repute than let liquor touch my lips!”

The Irish Catholic pipes up, “*Oh, I would too, but I didn’t realize that was an option.*”

*

What did the Mormon girl do when she was offered a beer at her first frat party?

She pulled her pants back up and left indignantly.

*

A Southern Baptist, a Roman Catholic, and a Mormon were all discussing their families with one another.

The Baptist, proud as punch says, “I have four strapping young lads at home, *just one more and I’ll have a basketball team!*”

The Catholic, eager to one-up him adds, “I have ten fine sons of my own, *just one more and I’ll have a whole football team!*”

“Ah-“ the Mormon says to both of them, “*I have seventeen wives, just one more, and I’ll have a golf course!*”

*

I saw a Mormon family pull up to one of the free pumps at the gas station at the exactly same time as I did alongside another.

Two women and a man were in the car. When the man got out to start pumping gas, I couldn’t help but lean over and ask him, “What’s it like having two wives?”

He laughed, “The one in the back is my oldest.”

I said back to him, “*That’s a really blunt thing to say about one of your wives.*”

*

Day after debate held at SLC University discussing possible merits of state-wide cannabis legalization, Tribune headline reads: ‘*LDS Elders concerned Marijuana could prove gateway drug to Coffee.*’

*

(Overheard in a Quebec hostel and translated from French;)

What three things do testicles and Mormons have in common?

They always travel in pairs.

One is always bigger than the other.

They knock, but never enter.

Following a crackdown on profanity, rowdy young Mormon men are being asked not to play ‘Fuck / Marry / Kill’.

The Church would prefer they stick to ‘Marry / Marry / Marry’.

*

What’s the difference between a militant Mormon and a militant Muslim?

The Mormon gets his 72 virgins, *before he kills himself.*

III – AS SEEN IN THE WARD NEWSLETTER: **Longform comedy and funny Latter-Day Saint** **stories**

A Sunday School teacher was testing her class to see if they properly understood the concept of going to The Celestial Kingdom.

She asked them, “If I sold my house and my car, and had a big garage sale and gave all the money I made straight to The Church – would that get me into The Celestial Kingdom?”

“No!” the children answered correctly.

“If I cleaned the Temple Hall every day, mowed the concourse grass, and kept everything neat and tidy – would that get me into The Celestial Kingdom?”

Again, the children knew to answer “No!”.

Now, the teacher was smiling, the children were getting it. “Well then, if I was kind to all the animals, and gave candy to all the children in the Ward, and loved my husband with all my heart, – would that get me into The Celestial Kingdom?”

“No!”

She was bursting with pride for them. “Well-“ she continued, “then how can I get into The Celestial Kingdom?”

The youngest boy in the class pipes up: “*You gotta be dead first!*”

*

A Cardinal burst into The Pope’s private quarters in the Vatican holding a cell phone, exclaiming, “Your Holiness, I have some extremely important news for you!”

The Pope looks to the Cardinal with some concerns and says, “Okay, let’s hear it.”

The Cardinal take a few deep breaths to steady himself and continues, “There is really good news, and really bad news...”

The Pope puts one reassuring hand on the man’s shoulder and says, “There, there, – now, why not share with me the good news first. That will surely soften the blow of whatever is next to come.”

The Cardinal nods his head, after a few moments of hesitation he begins, “Your Holiness, Our Lord, Jesus Christ has returned to Earth in the flesh to walk among us!”

The Pope looks over to the man before him wide-eyed, “My, that really is some good news. But what was the bad news?”

Trembling, the Cardinal hold out the phone, “He wants to talk to you...”

The Pope takes the cell and slowly raises it to his ear.

An Almighty voice comes over the earpiece: “*Where are you? I’m calling from Central Salt Lake and I can’t find you anywhere*”

*

A Hindu Brahmin, a Jewish Rabbi, and a Mormon Missionary who were travelling to an All-Faiths dialogue convention together are lost out in farmland, miles from home.

They stumble across a farmstead, the only apparent shelter for miles around, knock on the door, and humbly ask the farmer inside if they might take refuge here for the night.

The farmer is willing to let these three nice men of the cloth stay at his property for the night, but he lets them know there's only room for two more inside the stead itself – one of them will need to stay around back, in his barn.

The Hindu immediately volunteers to stay the night in the barn, insisting it's no problem. However, a few minutes later, he knocks on the farmstead door again and says, "I'm sorry, but there is a cow in the barn. Cows are sacred to me, and it would be against my religion spend the night alongside one"

"No problem" says the Rabbi, and he goes around to the barn instead. However, a minute later, he too returns. "Very sorry, but there is a pig in there too. Pigs are not kosher; it would be impossible for me to stay in the same barn as one."

"No worries – I will go to the barn then friends." says the Mormon Missionary, and he proceeds out to the barn. Less than a minute later, there is another frantic knocking at the door – *it's the cow and the pig, they can't stand him!*

*

Man goes to the doctor for a routine check-up and gets some pretty dire news.

"We've found you've got a rare, terminal, illness, and we estimate you've only got six months to live, at most." The doctor tells him. The patient is stunned, incredulous, and tells the doctor he's going to go get a second opinion.

He quickly finds another doctor who runs a full battery of tests, but alas, this doctor gives him the same grim prognosis. The man, still in shock, asks if there's anything at all he can do.

The doctor pauses for a moment before saying, "Can I give you some non-medical advice?"

"Sure, anything at all, Doc. I'm desperate!"

"Are you religious?" The doctor asks.

"Not at all." Responds the patient.

"Well-" adds the doctor, "I encourage you to join the Mormon Church. Go to every service, get involved with every group and organization there, and completely immerse yourself in the culture. And I do mean, EVERY aspect you can."

The patient perks up, "Will that extend my life?"

"Technically, no" admits the doctor. "*But it'll feel like the longest six months you've ever had.*"

*

Many years ago, in a largely Catholic country, the local Minister decided that he would call for the expulsion of all Mormons from his city. Naturally, there was a huge uproar from the Mormon community. So, the minister made a deal – he would have a theological debate with any one member of the LDS community.

If the Mormon won, they could all stay in peace. If the Minister won, the Mormons would have to agree to leave.

Realizing they had very little choice, the Mormons picked a young and eager Missionary from Utah, named Chris, to defend them.

Not able to speak the local language very well, Chris asked for one other stipulation to the debate; to make it more interesting, he asked that neither side would be allowed to speak. Confident nonetheless, the local minister agreed.

The day of the big debate arrived. Chris and the minister stood opposite one another on the debate stage for a full minute before the minister raised his right hand and showed three fingers. Chris looked back at him and raised up just one, his pointer.

The minister then waved both arms around his head in every direction. Chris just pointed down to the ground where he stood.

The minister pulled out a communion wafer and a goblet of wine. Chris took out a single apple.

The minister threw up his hands and said, “I give up! This man is too good, the Mormons can stay!”

Afterwards, the Catholic Church’s council gathered around their minister, asking him to explain what had happened. The minister said, “First, I held up three fingers to represent The Holy Trinity. He responded by holding up one finger to remind me that there was still one God common to both our religions.”

“Then, I waved my arms about me to show him that God was all around us. He responded by pointing to the ground to show that God was also right there with him then.”

“I pulled out my eucharist to demonstrate that God absolves us from our sins. He brought out an apple to remind me of the Original Sin. He had an answer for everything. – What could I do?”

Meanwhile, back at their own Temple, the Mormon community and all the other Missionaries had crowded around Chris. “What happened” they asked.

“Well-” said Chris, “First he said to me that the Mormons had three days to get out of town. I let him know that not one of us was leaving. Then, he told me that the whole city would be cleared of Mormons but I told him we would be staying right here.

“And then?” asked one woman. “I don’t know” admitted Chris, “He took out his lunch so I just took out mine.”

*

A rancher, who just moved from Texas to Montana, walks into a saloon and orders three large mugs of beer.

He sits alone, at a table in the back of the establishment, drinking a sip out of each mug in turn. When he finishes all three, he comes back to the bar and orders three more.

The bartender tells the rancher, “You know, a mug starts to go flat as soon as I draw it. They’d taste better if you bought just one at a time.”

The rancher replies “See, I have two brothers. One currently in Arizona, one in Colorado. When we all left the family home back in Texas, we all promised that we’d drink this way to remember the days when we drank together. – So I’m drinking one beer for each of my brothers, and one for myself.”

The bartender admits that’s a nice custom, and indulges the rancher’s peculiar method of ordering.

In time, the rancher becomes a regular at the saloon and always orders the exact same way – three mugs at a time.

One day, he comes in but only order two mugs. All the other regulars immediately notice and fall silent.

When he finishes both, he comes back to the bar for a second round of two more. And the bartender says, “I don’t want to intrude on your grief, but I just wanted to offer my condolences for your loss.”

The rancher is taken aback for a moment, but then begins to laugh, “Oh no, everyone’s fine” he explains. “It’s just I’ve joined the Mormon Church and given up drinking – *my brothers are still both Episcopalian though.*”

*

LDS Church President Russel M. Nelson is being chauffeured around Salt Lake City in a limousine when he happens to

mention to the driver that he’s never personally driven a limo before. He politely asks his driver if he thinks it might be okay to give him a turn behind the wheel. The limo driver says “Sure, no problem.”

So President Nelson slips behind the wheel, and before long, he’s loving it. He’s cruising around Salt Lake with not a care in the World... perhaps a little too fast. He sees a flash of red and blue behind him and know he’s being pulled over by highway patrol.

The patrolman approaches the driver-side window and sees that President Nelson is the one driving. A little unsure of what to do, he radios his supervisor. “I know we’re supposed to ticket important people all the same, but I’m a bit unclear here, Chief. I think I’ve pulled over someone REALLY important.”

The chief responds, “A senator?”

“No, even more important.”

“Is it the Governor, again?”

“No, EVEN more important.”

“Well, who is it”

“I think it must be Jesus Christ Himself, because President Nelson’s the one driving Him around.”

IV – THE LORD LOVES HUMOR: An examination of the relationship between contemporary Mormon evangelism and comedy.

To some, the idea of a “culture of comedy” anywhere near the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints might sound absurd. Religion – particularly the more marginal and “weird” sects most of us only ever observe from the fringes in modern Western society, if ever – doesn’t exactly have a strong association in the mind of most with anything humorous at the best of times.

The closest we might come to connecting the two concepts would usually be the sort of open-emphasis quotes “edgy” sort of banter bandied back and forth between disgruntled atheist blogs and forums online, principally. Many examples of the exact type have of course already been provided thusfar in this very publication.

However, for all the fun there might be to have dunking comically on the stereotypes of the LDS Church all day, there might be more intellectually productive ways to analyse the modern culture of the church and its institutions through the cynical comedy which surrounds it. To this end, I do honestly believe there is an underlying, post-ironic, and largely self-aware subculture among the young adults raised more closer than most to the physical epicenter of the contemporary LDS movement, that is, primarily the American “flyover” Midwest states, and

nowhere more prominently than middle-class urban and suburban Utah.

The Church itself largely underpins a lot of the culture in these regions – perhaps not as strongly for the newly emerging generational identity, but absolutely to a significant extent for their parents and grandparents. Even among the non-Mormon and outright entirely irreligious in these areas, the customs and mannerisms of the Latter-Day Saints remain broadly common knowledge. So, it might therefore not be surprising as it would have at first seemed to be able to find elements informed by this cultural pervasiveness in the intellectual output of the fine folks hailing from these sorts of regions – regardless of their professed religious affiliations, or lack thereof.

In attempting to understand where the modern day, latest generation, or comedy culture within majority- or major plurality-precinct Mormon population areas, I submit that one must ask: ‘What are Mormons and non-Mormons alike already seeing, watching, reading, and listening to for the purposes of entertainment’ – *Their own artistic output has not originated from a blank slate*, obviously.

This brings me back to my aforementioned first thesis herein: that the modern humor surrounding the LDS Church – of the kind exemplified by the first sections of this book – is a largely self-aware product being created and disseminated authentically (ie; without obscuring any hidden propagandistic agenda) by

individuals making use of the capacity of spread such jokes and jibes almost effortlessly via the internet in all manner of decidedly Mormon, and anti-Mormon, online spaces. It is also of interest to note that their practical output is much the same – jokes of the type collected earlier in this publication can largely all be found being posted, and accepted heartily, on both online sides of the ‘LDS fence’.

Perhaps the only difference in their presentation to a practicing LDS member or a vehement anti-Mormon of the type know to congregate around digital spaces like *ThirdHour dot org* or Reddit’s very own *r-slash ExMormon* respectively is to what exact degree of above-it-all jaded irony one views it all with. Are you reading the LDS-centric jokes and memes to groan at the applied stereotype with mock deference or reading the joke *ironically* just to get the smug satisfaction of knowing someone, somewhere, might be, right this very moment, viewing it in earnest, *like some sort of naïve sheep-fool*.

It wasn’t until I took a long step back I could see this perplexing cultural interchange between the people who so frequently write and propagate these jokes and how it had evidently emerged.

I think the only thing I could compare it to that I’ve seen online are the types of people who congregate in similarly frenetic online groups dedicated to particularly ‘bad takes’ from the opposite side to their stated position on the political axis for no tangible benefit but to rile one another up.

To joke about any ideological material in this way, on- or offline, is to implicitly play around with the meaning and the validity of the source material. Someone who grew up in or around the LDS Church will always be the most likely one to start joking about how “all Provo girls want to marry before age twenty-two” or how “BYU frat-bros dare one another to try Starbucks” or what have you, but only because they’re the ones to already have that prior understanding of the stereotypes that is needed to turn a trope into a joke.

Furthermore, to gently laugh about one’s own cultural norms and signifiers is, in this sort of instance, both a way of signifying to others – both those in their (in this case, for example, Mormon, in-group) that it is safe to express their actual, tacit, religious values in a not-so-serious way that might even serve to blunt the actual poignant societal criticism lying at the heart of the joke, as could be said to exist in each of those two hypothetical examples, and might have served to leverage an actual explicit attack on the values of the LDS Church and its members if performatively made by a non-member of the in-group.

In this way, the author or teller of the joke can express their own faith (or political stance, nationality, ethnicity, sexual-orientation or gender-identity, or any other basis for an emergent stereotype) while at the same time appearing to *gently* critique themselves. In short, the humor serves as the perfect vehicle with which to dodge a large amount of criticism.

The culture of casual jokes and gags which surrounds just about every prominent religious community in the Western World, especially the USA, could be said to be much the same in the broad details too. Not only could very many of the example jokes in this very book be used to describe many other in-groups (Baptist, Quaker, Pentecostal, Muslim, Jew, *et al*) with only a very simple, literal *find-and-replace*, edit, the exact stereotypes and the finer details on the rest could just as easily be rewritten for any pointed effect. And that doesn't seem to be likely to change anytime notable soon, for better or for worse. Or for neither.

But I would suggest, for what very little it's worth to bother mentioning, in spite of whatever small amount of fleeting dopamine repeating these lines over and over and over again might give you, *it doesn't actually seem to be doing all that much* in reality. Especially given that most of these jokes were written during the Post-War Boom anyway, if not earlier, – and not the LDS Church, nor any other 'large-minority' religious sect anywhere of note in the USA seem to have been all that subverted by posting jokes alone. – *See opposite: an illustrated pamphlet of anti-LDS satire from 1884, employing much of the same stereotypes as used in this very publication more than a century later.*

Truly, time is a flat circle.

John David Card

