



Robert Kirby

Worse than Apocalypse? Letting fear sap your life

I just got an e-mail warning me that World War III is a matter of days away, that the world is going to be destroyed in a nuclear holocaust caused by peeved Russians and Muslims.

As if that isn't awful enough, the e-warning further claims homosexuals are going to take over the government and morally bankrupt America.

Cool. Sin has apparently taken such a hold on the world that it's now impossible to tell whether we're all going to die or simply become more fashion conscious.

Most religious people believe the world will end badly. Many feel we are already in the End Times. If God isn't turning the knob on the door to the Apocalypse, he is at least reaching for his hat.

As a kid, stuff like this scared me silly. Back then, the world was also minutes away from some terminal horribleness: nuclear war, plague, processed sugar, famine, Communists, etc.

People I was raised to respect insisted that the world wouldn't last long enough for me to have sex, go for an airplane ride or own a muscle car. In a world so constantly on the brink, fear became a constant companion.

Eventually I realized that my personal world was going to end anyway. If feminists or nuclear fallout didn't get me, a failed liver or a car crash would. One end or another was inevitable.

That's when I started wondering about the mechanics of the Apocalypse, specifically that if God says the world is going to end badly, wasn't it more than a little presumptuous of me to go around acting like I could keep it from happening?

Finally, it occurred to me that fear of the end might actually have a worse effect on me than the end itself. After all, a plague could only kill me. But fear — as it seems to be doing to so many — could turn me into a jerk.

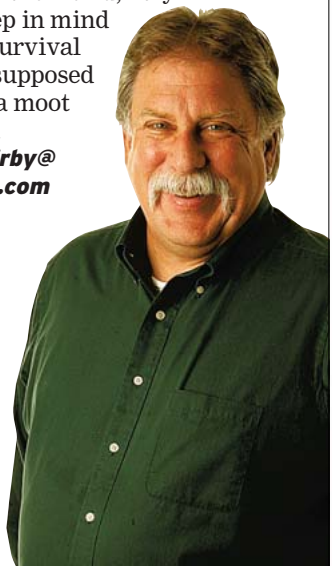
Unfortunately, fear seems to be a prime motivator these days. Fear drives most political campaigns. Fear gets the wrong people elected. Fear pits us against each other. Fear — oh, to hell with it.

The question isn't whether or not everyone is going to die. We are. And when we are dead, it's probably going to be less important how we got that way than what we became while trying to keep it from happening.

I try not to be quite so scared anymore. I still work on preparing for whatever tough times are coming. It only makes sense.

But in worrying about the end of the world, I try to keep in mind that survival isn't supposed to be a moot point.

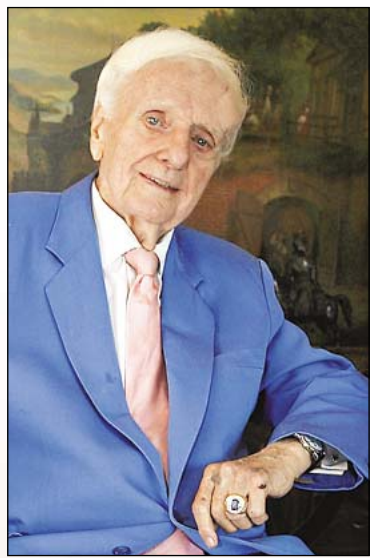
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A FAMILIAR RING



Choose The Right rings adorn the fingers of kids the world over — but the history of the famous Mormon symbol is a little fuzzy



RICK EGAN/The Salt Lake Tribune

Douglas "Coy" Miles says the original CTR ring design and its manufacturing and distribution were done by him and his employees at Belfour Merchandising in the 1960s.

BY JESSICA RAVITZ
The Salt Lake Tribune

Scattered about Douglas "Coy" Miles' Federal Heights home are remnants from years in promotional sales. Collection plates featuring wildlife artwork by Clark Bronson of which Miles says he sold 25,000 sets.

Aged brochures showcasing awards, plaques and assorted Relief Society jewelry created for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Copies of paintings by famed Mormon artist Arnold Friberg, which Miles personally commissioned to commemorate the 100th anniversary of college football. "I had to go sit with him to make sure they got done on time," Miles says.

But in a small blue box resting on his dining room table is the star of them all: an original CTR (Choose The Right) ring, this one made in Taiwan. "It's the smallest, simplest thing I ever made, and now it's become the biggest," says Miles, 90, who claims the logo design, the sample, the manufacturing and the distribution of the ring — at least in the beginning — were all him and his employees at Belfour Merchandising.

Turns out Miles isn't the only one who's staked a claim on the famous Mormon symbol meant to guide moral behavior. Several names, which he asked to keep off the record, come to Miles' mind. In fact, he says he once spotted on the road a license plate surrounded by the words "Father of the CTR Ring."

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CHRIS DETRICK/Salt Lake Tribune

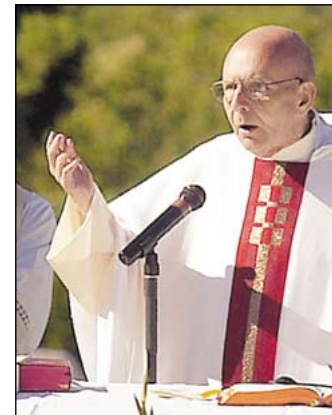
Bishops propose guidelines for gays

New document will emphasize kindness — but condemn same-sex marriage and adoptions

BY PEGGY FLETCHER STACK
The Salt Lake Tribune

In a carefully worded document, the U.S. Catholic bishops have proposed new guidelines for dealing with gays and lesbians that emphasize kindness, friendship and support for those with "homosexual inclinations," but condemn same-sex marriage and adoptions. Baptizing the children of same-sex couples is complicated, it says, but could be done if the couple promised to raise the child in the faith.

The document, "Ministry



"This document is an effort to reach out to them and say, 'The church is universal, it's an embrace, you have to feel welcome.'"

MONSIGNOR TERENCE FITZGERALD

Interim administrator of the Catholic Diocese of Utah

to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care," has been in the works since 2002 and is set to be approved at the bishops' annual meeting next week in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Catholic Church last took up this topic in 1997 in a piece known as "Always Our Children," aimed at helping Catholic parents love and accept their gay children. It encouraged parents not to break off contact or reject their child but to create an atmosphere of understanding to talk about sexuality.

But that was before the drive to legalize same-sex marriage, civil unions and gay adoptions. It was before Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten and left to die on a Wyoming fencepost.

All the questions that have arisen regarding the church's moral stands prompted the 41-page document, the bishops said. It spells out clearly the church's dos and don'ts regarding homosexuality, ranging from theological principles to pastoral practices.

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