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Mormon leader weighs in on same-sex attraction

Peggy Fletcher Stack The Salt Lake Tribune | Oct. 26, 2010

SALT LAKE CITY -- Mormons may not know until the hereafter what causes same-sex attraction, but "God loves all his children" and expects everyone to do the same, a top Mormon leader said Oct. 24.

While the message -- delivered to more than 200,000 Utah Mormons -- may not seem significant, the messenger was.

As second counselor in the governing First Presidency, Dieter F. Uchtdorf is one of the highest-ranking leaders in the hierarchy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to address the thorny topic of same-sex attraction.

The gentle tone and emphasis of Uchtdorf's remarks came in the wake of a speech by Boyd K. Packer, senior member of the LDS Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who said homosexual "tendencies" can be "overcome." Packer later changed "tendencies" to "temptations" on the church's website.

Packer's speech generated national controversy and protests from church-members and non-Mormons, many of whom saw the apostle's statements as contributing to the self-loathing and suicides of gays.

In response to the outcry, LDS spokesman Michael Otterson issued a strongly worded condemnation of bullying and belittling of gays, saying, "Their struggle is our struggle."

On Sunday, Uchtdorf reiterated the church's position that it doesn't know the cause of homosexuality and that it doesn't matter.

"Many questions in life, however, including some related to same-gender attractions, must await a future answer, even in the next life," Uchtdorf said. "Until then, the truth is, God loves all his children, and because he loves us, we can trust him and keep his commandments."

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