

Gay feelings must be resisted, Mormons declare: New booklet on homosexuality

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A new Mormon booklet on homosexuality states that same-sex relationships are “inconsistent” with God’s plan, but adds that some people may not be able to “overcome” such attractions.

The document differentiates between those who have same-gender attractions and those who act on them. “Attractions alone do not make you unworthy,” the document states, adding that God has declared any sexual relations outside marriage unacceptable.

The booklet, “God Loveth His Children,” was posted on the Web site of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in late July with little fanfare.

“While many Latter-day Saints, through individual effort, the exercise of faith, and reliance upon the enabling power of the Atonement, overcome same-gender attraction in mortality, others may not be free of this challenge in this life,” the new church document reads.

Faith in Jesus’ sacrifice for human sins can empower those with “same-gender inclinations” to resist improper conduct, it states. It adds that if God’s plan is followed, “our bodies, feelings, and desires will be perfected in the next life so that every one of God’s children may find joy in a family consisting of a husband, a wife, and children.”

In a similar move earlier this year, Brigham Young University, the LDS Church’s flagship university, changed its honor code so that it no longer listed homosexual “feelings” as a violation. Acting on such feelings remains grounds for expulsion.

The immediate former cochair of Family Fellowship, a Provo, Utah–based support group for Mormon families with gay children, said the new church document is an improvement over three previous pamphlets on homosexuality but “still woefully inadequate.”

Physician Gary Watts said the first pamphlet, which called homosexuality “evil,” was published in 1994.

Watts said the latest document is an improvement because it does not imply that homosexuality is chosen, and it says that same-sex feelings exist and are not sinful unless acted upon.

“Until the church can figure out a way to place some value on committed same-sex relationships, the problem will never go away and the church will continue to lose a very high percentage of [its] gay and lesbian members,” he said. —*Religion News Service*