

A Response to Ty Mansfield: Another Review, and Recent Statements from The First Presidency

Except as set forth herein, Byrd *et al* have elected not to respond to Ty Mansfield's rebuttal but rather to refer FAIR readers who may be interested to a review of *In Quiet Desperation* presented by Hugo Olaiz (obviously not a supporter of the Church's position) at the Sunstone Symposium, July 30, 2005, Session 336. Perhaps FAIR readers might also be interested in recent statements from The First Presidency.

Excerpts from the Olaiz review include the following:

- “*In Quiet Desperation* is not really a book. It's two parts of two distinct books, so radically different that one wonders how possibly they could have been put into one single volume.”
- “The first essay in the book is one of the most hopeless readings I have seen in a long time.”
- “The second part is so subversively progressive that it is destined to either shred everything we have heard in the Church about homosexuality or to spark a reactionary move by Church leaders and become the object of the shredding.”

According to Olaiz, a culture is described in the book “in which Church members and Church leaders have created a system of spiritual co-dependency. Under such a system no one can possibly find blame in anyone else. When bad things happen, they are guiltless tragedies.”

Olaiz finds it remarkable that the book contains the following declaration regarding homosexuality: “Even love expressed in ways contrary to God's eternal purposes still retains elements of love's grandeur.”

Finally, Olaiz notes that “with a simple stroke of a pen,” 50 years of LDS statements about homosexuality are challenged.

(A CD of the complete presentation can be obtained from the Sunstone Education Foundation.)

As an anchor in this storm, we offer recent statements from The First Presidency to FAIR readers:

- Homosexual activity “distorts loving relationships and prevents people from receiving the blessings that can be found in family life and the saving ordinances of the Gospel.” (2004, The First Presidency, *True to the Faith*, p. 30).

- “As a doctrinal principle, based on sacred scripture, we affirm that marriage between a man and a woman is essential to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children. The powers of procreation are to be exercised only between a man and a woman lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

“Any other sexual relations, including those between persons of the same gender, undermine the divinely created institution of the family.” (The First Presidency, News Release, October 19, 2004).”

When questioned about *In Quiet Desperation*, the Church’s response issued by Dale Bills (December 18, 2004) was as follows:

“Those who desire to be free of same-gender attraction can overcome that attraction and find hope by turning to the Lord and committing themselves to a program of change.”

As the authors of the review of *In Quiet Desperation* which Ty Mansfield has addressed in his rebuttal, we regret that Ty has suggested that we have attempted to “tar the book with rhetoric.” As clinicians, we have been on the front lines in dealing with the negative fallout of the book, and have given our honest assessment of it.

From our perspective, the overarching problem of *In Quiet Desperation* is the context in which it was published, that is, the story of two young men both of whom have struggled with homosexual attraction: one committed suicide and the other’s feelings and understandings are still evolving. Noticeably absent are the stories of many men and women who have had far more positive outcomes than Stuart Matis and Ty Mansfield. Standing alone, *In Quiet Desperation* leaves the reader exactly where the book’s title suggests: in quiet desperation.

Further, while neither the publisher nor the authors may have intended for *In Quiet Desperation* to be more than the heartfelt stories of two young men, it has become much more than that. As Ty Mansfield noted in his rebuttal, *In Quiet Desperation* has been co-opted by activist groups to further causes and beliefs contrary to Church doctrine.

It is our hope that the stories of Ty Mansfield and Stuart Matis can be told in the context of the many people who have had greater success in dealing with their homosexual attraction, and in the context of a more complete doctrinal, clinical and experiential discussion of homosexual challenges that offers greater hope and understanding than we found in this book.

