

MID-VALLEY fellowship *releasing the power of hope*

*Hope does not
disappoint us,
because God has
poured out his love
into our hearts
by the Holy Spirit,
whom he has given us.*

Romans 5:5

November 2007



Fred & Nora Seemann are friends of Mid-Valley Fellowship and reside in New Albany, Ohio. Nora and Duan first became acquainted through a support forum sponsored by Exodus International. Fred and Nora lead a Parent's Support Group at *Bridge of Hope*, an Exodus ministry in Columbus, Ohio. This month, we asked Nora to share their journey as parents of a woman embracing the homosexual lifestyle. Next month, the story will continue as she shares some very practical tips for parents. We are richly blessed by Fred and Nora's contribution to the newsletter and their support of Mid-Valley Fellowship.

A Mother's Journey

by Nora Seemann

My oldest daughter Beth lived the homosexual lifestyle for almost 24 years. Never once, during that time, did we hear "Mom, I'm gay." Beth is the oldest of my four children from my first marriage and this is our story.

When my children were 4 to 11 years old, their Dad chose to walk out on us. Fourteen months later I was granted a divorce. Times were difficult for us, but with Christ we stayed active in church. Unable to afford a sitter on my salary, Beth became the main caretaker of her siblings while I worked. I was in such depression, I didn't realize the problems I was presenting to my children because of this. Beth lost her childhood and her siblings resented her position over them. There are still some repercussions over this.

About eight and a half years after the divorce, I met a Christian man – someone who won the approval of each of the children. Ten years after the divorce from my children's father, Fred and I planned to be married. In January of 1979, we went to a local mall to shop for our wedding rings. After we made the purchase, we turned to leave the store and froze in our tracks. Beth and a girl were walking together in the mall. They were hand-in-hand and kissing each other – on the lips. Needless to say, we were shocked.

Fred took me home and waited with me until Beth came in. He confronted her about her behavior and her excuse was "My friend had bad news and I was comforting her."

This girl was a girl from our church! We knew her Christian mother! Her sister was my assistant teacher in Sunday School! This behavior was not what we expected from either of these young ladies and I – I felt numb, ashamed, guilty, and grief-stricken. My children were raised in church and each had made a

decision for Christ in their childhood. We were active in church, and I had seen nothing out of the ordinary in Beth's life that would cause me to question her lifestyle.

Two days after this incident, Beth had her twenty-first birthday. The next day, Fred married me, in spite of it all. Being an only child raised by his father, Fred had no idea of what the future held for him, for us, or for the children who were then 14 to 21.

Fred confronted Beth one morning a few months after we were married. At the time, Beth was working as a bartender and had brought an unknown girl home to spend the night. They were in bed together, asleep. It wasn't long before Beth moved out and shared a rental unit with yet another "friend." That "friend" came with Beth when she'd visit us. She joined us on holidays and for birthday celebrations. They never behaved in any questionable way, in our presence. We were always dealing with unconfirmed suspicions regarding her life. It was extremely unsettling.

Shortly after this relationship ended, Beth (who had been in the Air Force Reserves) elected to join the active Air Force. Later Beth would tell me this was when she openly lived the homosexual lifestyle. Over the years, when Beth would visit home and go to church with us, she would respond to the invitation to give her heart and life to Christ. Then she would leave, and resume life as she had before.

When it was time for reenlistment, Beth did not reenlist. Instead, she had a baby. They were living in another state, and Beth had another partner. When our granddaughter was about five years old, Beth sold her home there and moved back to Ohio. Other partners entered the picture.

When our granddaughter was 12 years old, she was diagnosed with leukemia. It was then, January 2001, that Beth came to the realization that God could/might take her daughter unless she changed her way of living. Beth again came to God for forgiveness. She has had some serious temptations, but turned to God, and He has been faithful to her to provide that way of escape which is promised in Scripture.

We are so grateful to God for answered prayer. Today, Beth is living a life for God and is celibate. Her pastor knows her story and she brings much joy to our lives. Our granddaughter had her 19th birthday two weeks ago and she is still in remission. God is faithful.

During those almost 24 years, we had no one to talk too and didn't want anyone to know about Beth and her lifestyle. We had no direction. I felt guilt. What did I do to cause this? What could I have done differently? How can I "fix" this? Mothers, in particular I've learned, want to "fix" things. We had no support, no family nearby, but then again, who wants their family to know? We kept our secret to ourselves. It was very painful all those years.

We talk quite often with Beth regarding those almost 24 years. She said she always knew we loved her. She has reminded me that I always ended our phone conversations with "I love you and so does Jesus." At the time she resented it, but she knew it was true. A seed planted.

It was about six months after Beth left the lifestyle, that we learned of a support group in Columbus, Ohio and were invited to attend. We chose to visit the group and found it to be a support group for spouses. We attended for a year. At the end of the year, we were asked to lead a Parent's Support Group there and have been leading this group for four years at *Bridge of Hope*. Later we had the opportunity to develop another Parent's Support Group at our church. We call it "Circle of Love." The crown of thorns encircling these words represents Jesus Christ, His sacrifice for our sins, and His never ending love, mercy, and grace which is extended to the parent/family/friend and to their loved one. The crucifixion and sacrifice of Jesus Christ was for all sin, including the sin of sexual immorality. God is faithful to complete the work He has begun in our loved ones' lives, and we have the hope for change and a new life in Christ for those we love and pray for.



Nora with her daughter Beth

**"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him,
so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

Romans 15:13



World AIDS Day Gathering

Saturday, December 1, 2007, 7:00pm to 9:00pm

at Willamette Community Church
420 Third Avenue SE, Albany

December 1st is World AIDS Day. Established by the World Health Organization in 1988, World AIDS Day serves to focus global attention on the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Join us for a time of **prayer, worship, and learning** about the fight against HIV/AIDS in our neighborhood and around the world.



Thanks for the Invitations

During the last month, we have had the opportunity to share a ministry highlight at **Providence Vineyard** in Scio and spend an evening with **Northside Church** in Corvallis. Thank you for the invitation to spend some time with your congregations. We greatly appreciate it.

If you would like to have Duan or Kendra share at your church, youth group, small group, chapel, or other gathering, please contact us via phone or e-mail.

Upcoming Events

November 4

Valley Christian Center

November 7, 14, 28

Taking Back Ground Program

November 14

Parish Nurses Meeting

December 1

World AIDS Day Gathering

MID-VALLEY
fellowship

PO Box 3141, Albany, OR 97321

www.midvalleyfellowship.org

541.928.2164

Duan Walker

Executive Director

duan@midvalleyfellowship.org

Kendra Hanes

Women's Ministry Director

kendra@midvalleyfellowship.org

Impacting
the Community



Thank You

Impacting the Community First Anniversary & Benefit Dinner

On October 20th, we had an incredible opportunity to celebrate the great things God has done over the last year at Mid-Valley Fellowship and look to the future. Eighty people joined us for the celebration and many took the next step of financially partnering with Mid-Valley Fellowship.

Overall, the evening was an exciting and encouraging time for us. We are immeasurably grateful! And the evening would not have been possible without the support of our Table Sponsors, Hosts, and Volunteers. Thank You! In gifts and pledges over the next year, we raised nearly \$10,000!

MID-VALLEY
fellowship
releasing the power of hope

Post Office Box 3141, Albany, Oregon 97321
541.928.2164 • office@midvalleyfellowship.org
www.midvalleyfellowship.org