

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

January 2010



A Mother's Journey & Advice

by Nora Seemann

Nora Seemann is a friend of Mid-Valley Fellowship and resides in New Albany, Ohio. Nora and Duan first became acquainted through a support forum sponsored by Exodus International. Nora and her husband Fred lead a Parent's Support Group at *Bridge of Hope*, an Exodus ministry in Columbus, Ohio. We are blessed to have her share from her experience as the mother of a woman embracing the homosexual lifestyle.

My daughter Beth lived the homosexual lifestyle for almost 24 years. She is the oldest of my four children from my first marriage. 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. **To read the rest of Nora & Beth's story, visit our website, www.midvalleyfellowship.org.**

Fred and I have learned many things over the years. Fred has learned confrontation is not always the answer, but compassion goes a long way. We would like to pass on some of the things we have learned to be so important in relating to your loved one, your child, or your friend who has embraced homosexuality.

- **Keep the communication open between yourself and your child.** You do not need to discuss "the issue" in every conversation. Your child already knows how you feel about the situation. Confrontation just causes the son/daughter to be more secretive and to withdraw from the parent and any influence you may still have.
- **Express your love for your child.** Show your child your "unconditional" love. "Unconditional love" is giving your love — without conditions, without requirements. I love my husband and my children for themselves, just as they are, warts and all. And I'm sure that's the way they love me: warts and all.
- **Don't be afraid to touch your child.** I have heard grown men say "I was afraid my Mom and Dad wouldn't ever want to touch me again or hug me." Such fear of losing the love of their parents. Hug him/her and don't isolate yourself from being "Mom" or "Dad." Children (regardless of age) have a fear of rejection by their parents. I Peter 4:8 tells us, "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins." Voice your love and show it. Never give up on your child. Release that fear from your child's life. Be a safe place for that precious one.
- **A special word to dads: Your children need you.** Spend time with your child, regardless of their age. It's never too late to let your child know you love him, care about him, and want to be with him. Your sons and your daughters need your affirmation.

- **Educate yourself.** Find resources that will help you understand the homosexual lifestyle and take advantage of those resources. Mid-Valley Fellowship's website has a lot of great information and links to other sites.
- **Give yourself permission to grieve.** Recognize this is a normal reaction. You may go through the cycles of grief many times. This is to be expected. Learn how to turn it over to God.
- **STOP blaming yourself.** Recognize you are in no way directly responsible for your child's sin. The life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ provides a way out of that sin. If God does reveal to your heart something you've done that may have played a negative part in your child's life, go to them and ask forgiveness. This may be a truly healing act for your child and for you.
- **Find support for yourself.** It is important that you not keep this secret to yourself. No one should carry this weight alone. You need to relate to others who can pray for you and encourage you.
- **Don't neglect your church attendance.** God has given each of us a gift in our lives — not to keep within ourselves, but to use to bless our brothers and sisters in Christ. Let your church community bless you and give of yourself to bless others.
- **Maintain your marriage.** You will need each other's love and strength to get through this. Look for things you can do together to just have fun. Don't lose your ability to laugh and don't let this "issue" control your life. Life goes on, and it's important that your marriage stand strong.
- **Encourage yourself with Scriptures and devotions.** Build on your relationship with the Lord and remember, He has begun a work in your child's life, and He will finish the work He has started. He is also working in YOUR life. Trust Him and believe. It may surprise you what God has in mind for YOU.
- **Journal your journey.** This should be where you record God's blessings, His love, answered prayer, and Scripture verses. In times of defeat, you will find this to be a real blessing to you and the memories will uplift you and renew your joy (Philippians 4:8).
- **Pray.** Keep your child and your family covered in prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God, just like you'd talk to your closest friend, and that's exactly what He is. He loves. He cares.
- **Enjoy life.** We only have one on this earth. Find joy and happiness in God, despite the heaviness of your heart, and let that joy reflect in your face and in your life. It will reveal your trust in your Heavenly Father and will speak volumes to your child. Remember, "the joy of the Lord is our strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).



Nora with her husband Fred

"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

Donor Acknowledgement

As an expression of gratitude to our generous donors, we would like to acknowledge you in our 2009 Annual Report next month. **If you would prefer not to be acknowledged in the Annual Report, please contact us by Friday, January 22, 2010.** If you have previously specified your preference not to be acknowledged, that will remain in place.

541.928.2164 • office@midvalleyfellowship.org
or utilize the enclosed response card & envelope



Prayer Requests

Pray for parents, relatives, and others of those currently in the homosexual lifestyle -- for their encouragement and support.

Pray for our participants and leaders as Taking Back Ground resumes at the beginning of January. Our desire is for God to reveal significant truths to each participant that will positively impact their lives.

Pray for wisdom and direction as we focus on further development of our Board of Directors.

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Friend or Family Member Embracing Homosexuality?

It can be **difficult, confusing, and overwhelming** when a family member or close friend shares they are embracing the homosexual lifestyle. As you face the questions and challenges ahead, **it can be helpful to have others to walk alongside you.** Are you interested in being part of a monthly group where you can receive support, prayer, and encouragement?

Please complete this quick survey and return it in the response envelope.

All responses will be confidential.

You can also complete the survey online:
www.surveymonkey.com/s/RG5VTCR

How did you first hear about Mid-Valley Fellowship?

- presentation at my church
- ad in a magazine
- searching the internet
- a friend
- referral from a pastor/ministry leader
- other (please specify) _____

What is your relationship to the person in your life embracing homosexuality?

- son/daughter
- brother/sister
- spouse
- other family relationship
- neighbor
- friend

Please indicate your first, second, and third choices of a day to meet for a Family & Friends Support Group. (Note: Tuesdays are excluded because we already have a group that evening.)

	Mon.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
1st Choice				
2nd Choice				
3rd Choice				

Please specify your geographic region:

- Albany
- Corvallis/Philomath
- Lebanon/Sweet Home
- Salem Area
- Eugene/Springfield
- Other (please specify) _____

Do you know of others who might be interested in a Family & Friends Support Group?

- Yes
- No

Their Name(s) & Contact Information:

Please enter your contact information below so that we can be in touch with you about a Family & Friends Support Group:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Thank you for completing our survey regarding a Family & Friends Support Group! Your feedback will help guide our decision-making process. Please contact us if you have further questions.

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