

A MINISTER FATHER TRIES TO UNDERSTAND

When I heard that my son, whom I will call Danny, was a homosexual, I refused to believe it was true. I thought he was confused because he had grown up almost exclusively with girls in the small church school he had attended.

From what I had read on the subject, I believed he could change. After all, he had been engaged for over two years to a girl we all loved and admired. I thought maybe this idea of being a homosexual was a reaction to their breakup six months before their planned wedding.

Surely, he couldn't be serious! The whole idea of homosexual behavior was repulsive to me. Pictures I had seen of gay couples on the TV news flashed through my mind, and I was sickened by the thoughts they suggested.

My talks with Danny left me, as well as him, really frustrated. Without a doubt, it was going to take a while for him to seriously want to change; in fact, it didn't seem that he was interested in changing. He tried to make me understand that he couldn't change, but to me that was ridiculous!

Then, as my wife and I got to talking with others who had had experience with this subject and I began to read some books and articles about homosexuality, I realized that this wasn't just a phase Danny was going through. It was, very possibly, a genetic condition.

With this understanding, my feelings about Danny changed. I knew it was not something he had chosen, and my heart went out to him. I realized he would never know the joys of a heterosexual marriage or have a family to enjoy. In spite of his outgoing personality, he would be alone in the world and would constantly have to hide his identity or face the persecution that would follow.

This change in my thinking did not come overnight, I assure you. It has taken several years to come to my present understanding of Danny's dilemma. Once he faced the fact that he was a homosexual and God wasn't going to change him, Danny decided to "come out" and let his friends know who he really was. That was not a prudent thing to do in an Adventist college. I tried to warn him about what would happen, but he was naive and trusting. Before long, his life was being threatened and he was being called every ugly name that has been applied to homosexuals. From that point, his life went downhill for some time.

I have to hand it to my wife. Her loving personality couldn't let her son destroy himself. She earnestly studied the subject and prayed. Never losing faith in Danny, she kept in constant contact with him, doing more listening than counseling (preaching). Danny needed a loving mother to talk to who could understand his pain, loss of self-confidence, and anxiety.

Since there was so little helpful information on homosexuality for Christian parents, she decided to put her writing skills together with her compassion and write a book, telling our story. She checked everything with Danny, not only to be sure that it was accurate but that, from his viewpoint, it would help others to better understand the plight of homosexuals and their parents.

I believe that what a homosexual young person needs is constant, understanding, unconditional love; affirmation in good decisions, and encouragement to believe that God loves him/her, and that, because of this, he/she can have a bright, meaningful, and valuable future.

For other fathers going through this difficult experience, I want to say that I believe it is harder for a father than for a mother because homosexuality strikes at the very heart of your sense of masculinity. But let your love for your child overcome your natural revulsion, and remember that this is just another of the consequences of living in a sinful world. I would also add that while one might expect that a minister would face ostracism as this situation became known, I have found, instead, only compassion and understanding.