



Healed by God's Love by Ron Dennis

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I grew up in Camden, New Jersey, a small industrial community across the river from Philadelphia. My early childhood was a time of insecurity and self-consciousness about being Jewish. I was different, and was frequently made fun of by the guys at school. Sports and the kind of activities most guys liked didn't interest me, but I loved music and art.

My physical desires always were toward other guys. I can remember back to third grade, being drawn to certain older guys at school.

My first sexual involvement was in my early teens. I would go to the local park, hoping for someone to approach me for sexual activity. I hoped it would be someone I liked. During my last two years of high school I recognized and accepted the fact that I was different in more ways than one.

During my high school years the family moved to Los Angeles for about six months. One night, while walking home, I was arrested for being out after curfew. I had stopped by a gay party and talked with a few friends. The police phoned my mother and told her that I'd been to a gay party. I was tired of living a double life, decided to be honest, and I told her about my homosexuality. She wanted to have my friends arrested for leading me astray. Even though I hated the pain my family was going through, it was a relief that the truth was out.

The family moved back to the east coast for a while. I returned to Los Angeles several years later to stay, got my own apartment, established a few friendships and started getting involved in the gay bar scene.

I met a young man, and we ended up living together for about seven years. He was a heavy drinker, but I tried to make friends outside of the bar crowd, but it didn't fit with our lifestyle. We bought a house and an apartment. It was like building a material kingdom that would lock us together. We eventually broke off our relationship and sold the property. It was a difficult time for both of us.

I moved to Las Vegas, and in 1971, a tragedy happened which later helped turn my life in a completely different direction. I invited a young man home for the weekend. On Sunday night, after I was asleep, he severely beat me. He used a clawhammer hitting me over the head and face a number of times. I was near death for several days, and woke up two weeks later in a local hospital. One side of my face was shattered, and my skull had been split open like an eggshell. The doctors said, "He's got about a 10% chance, and if he lives he'll probably be blind and a vegetable."

Somewhere in the course of my recovery, I remember hearing the words, "God is going to heal you completely." I do not know where they came from. Perhaps it was a Christian visitor, chaplain or that still small voice of God's Spirit. Little did I understand the fullness of those words.

After the doctors determined I would live, they did surgery on my eye and face. My optic nerve had been damaged. Amazingly I did not need glasses; although, I had needed reading glasses before. That started me thinking about what had happened. Wow! Maybe God has healed me completely. I began a relationship with Jim, who was studying for the ministry in the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), the gay church in Los Angeles. They had a meeting every Friday night for Jewish people. I drove down after work each week, attended the meeting and stayed the weekend. I began to hear about Christ. (Continued on back page.)

Being Jewish, I had not heard the Gospel. It was my emotional attachment to Jim that motivated me to attend church. God says His Word ". . . will not return to Me void, but it will accomplish that which I please," (Isaiah 55:11). And it sure did!

During that year, I attended many social activities with Jim. It was the first time I publicly admitted I was gay. I still resisted Jesus because I was a Jew. I started reading the Bible and noticed the correlation between Jesus' life and the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah. I became convinced that Jesus was who He said He was. I really believed it!

I went to Los Angeles to tell Jim. When I arrived, I found Jim with another man, and it hurt me deeply. I realized that when I wasn't there, Jim was involved with someone else. Even though it was an awkward situation, I remember sharing with him that I believed Jesus was real.

Sunday morning I went to the MCC church. At the end of the sermon, there was an altar call and I went forward and received Jesus into my heart and life.

Until this time, I felt no guilt about my homosexuality. I'd lived with it all my life and had learned to accept it. But I started reading the Word of God and discovered Romans, Chapter 1 and First Corinthians, Chapter 6. The Bible said my life-style was not pleasing to God. I went back to the gay church in Los Angeles and questioned the pastor. His responses didn't line up with what I was reading and I started realizing how wrong it was. I couldn't talk about it with anyone then. I began thinking of myself as a non-practicing homosexual, and yet I was still not at peace.

Finally, one night I prayed. "Lord, I commit the whole thing to you. I'm gay and Your Word says it's wrong. I can't change, so I put it in your hands." Things within me started changing from that point on. The Lord was working in my life. I can't explain how He did it – I just know He did. My fantasies started to vanish, and I could hug a Christian brother without feeling awkward and embarrassed. I thought God was doing a unique thing with me – I had never heard of anyone coming out of homosexuality.

The following year, I heard about a meeting in Anaheim, California, concerned with ministries to gays. In June 1976, at that meeting, 55 of us formed a coalition called Exodus International.

I really praise God for what He's done in my life. God not only healed me physically, but God has healed me emotionally and spiritually – truly a complete healing. I spent years looking for a solid and secure relationship, but I was looking in the wrong places. I have found that security in Jesus Christ. He has satisfied every need in my life – and that's something no one else could ever do.