

### ***Love called 'parents in the closet'***

As parents of children who are homosexual, they know that when their children come out of the closet, they will enter the closet. They become 'parents in the closet.'

When Chi Man's (Pseudonym) son was in puberty, he was trendy and loved to wear loose shirts and wide hats. He was not 'sissy' and so Chi Man did not notice his homosexual orientation. However, his wife later found that their son kept some pornographic magazines and browsed websites featuring gay sex. The unintended come out triggered conflicts at home.

Chi Man said it was hard to suppress his anger and he directly confronted his son's behaviour. His son remained silent. At that time, Chi Man thought his son was wrong and had done something inappropriate. He wanted to change him and his sexual orientation. A turbulent period followed. Chi Man realised that there was no longer room for discussion between the father and son. He tried to gently persuade his son but ever since the day of uncovering his son's secret, his son rarely shared his deepest thoughts with them. As a second generation Christian, perhaps his son did not know how to handle his own sexual orientation and also an angry father.

In the face of the changed relation, Chi Man decided to reflect and find a way out.

As parents, can they really let go of their son's life? Chi Man realised that it was ultimately his son's choice. 'I need to give us room where we accept each other.' It is easy to say 'I accept him' but how can that be lived out? 'I cannot accept his behaviour but I accept the fact that he has that behaviour. He is my son and I love him dearly...'

The couple chooses to accept their son and to love him with the love of Christ, with the hope of his turning back. Chi Man thinks that there are many different kinds of love. 'The love of God and that of parents is forever. Some relationships, sex relations, depends. Those relations may be overwhelming but when one calms down, other kinds of love may be seen.'

The couple has not stopped showing love towards their son who was hurt. They would not force their son even though they do not agree. 'He will leave if we force him and nothing could be done.'

After their son has grown up, Chi Man hardly knows their son's social circle. He cares about his son's relationships though they do not talk about it. 'He doesn't share about that. Sometimes when I notice that he is very upset, I know that he might have ended a relationship.' His son was very lonely. So, Chi Man tried to accompany him, all out of his love for him. 'I don't like his behaviour and I am angry about that. But if anything happens to him, we will be heartbroken.' Before the worst happens, Chi

Man would try to show his support through text messages.

Sometimes, parents may not know how to express their love. The conflicts at home may intensify, communication may break down and opportunities to change may vanish. After more than ten years, Chi Man has learnt that sexual orientation is not a Yes/No question and it can hardly be discussed. At present, the couple could share with their son other aspects of life and care for his health and diet.

Can love resolve all problems? Chi Man is assertive. 'When he knows a kind of love that is stronger than what he has now, I think most people would know how to choose.' Chi Man believes that God would work in His time.

Chi Man knows that his son is avoiding God's love but he cannot avoid his parents' love.

Love from 'parents in the closet' is tough and real.