

David Hancock: Ahead of His Time

Along time ago my wife and I were seeking help for someone with substance abuse. It was a subject that we were aware of, but didn't know where to turn in order to get help. This was the first time that someone in our family had turned to a controlled substance in order to cope with the struggles of life. It was our oldest son who had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder when he was a first grader. Now he was 17 and struggling with academics in high school. It wasn't difficult for him to find other classmates that had already gotten access to alcohol and other controlled substances and this was how he chose to deal with his problems.

My first thought was to ask the staff at The House of Hope if they knew of someone that could give us answers on where to turn and what we might do to get help. Initially, no one could offer a name, but after some conversation the name of Rev. David Hancock was suggested. Rev. Hancock was a Presbyterian minister who left the traditional ministry in order to lead the nonprofit Prevention of Alcohol Problems. David invited me to his home to discuss our son's substance abuse, its causes and where to find counseling. He also suggested that we begin attending an Al-Anon support group.

Family and friends of alcoholics share the hope and faith that the alcoholic will find that place in their inner self that will give them peace. Today our oldest is 35 with two children of his own that brings its own set of stresses. He eventually found the success he needed in academics and in an occupation that gives him the self esteem he needs to stay sober. We will be forever grateful for the helping hand that Rev. Hancock gave us.

Reading from David's obituary: "He spoke nationwide about alcohol- and drug-abuse prevention, and served on boards and commissions in the Presbyterian Church and elsewhere. In the 1970s, he served as program director of a treatment center in Jordan, Minn., and served on a hospital accreditation council, developing standards for hospitals and treatment centers nationwide. 'A million copies of his pamphlet *I Can't Be an Alcoholic Because ...* were sold,' said his son, John Hancock, of Cincinnati. Hancock taught church officials and others not to judge but rather to pursue prevention of abuse through education. 'He was really ahead of his time,' said the Rev. Gordon Grimm, a retired Lutheran pastor."

—Dennis Anderson

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