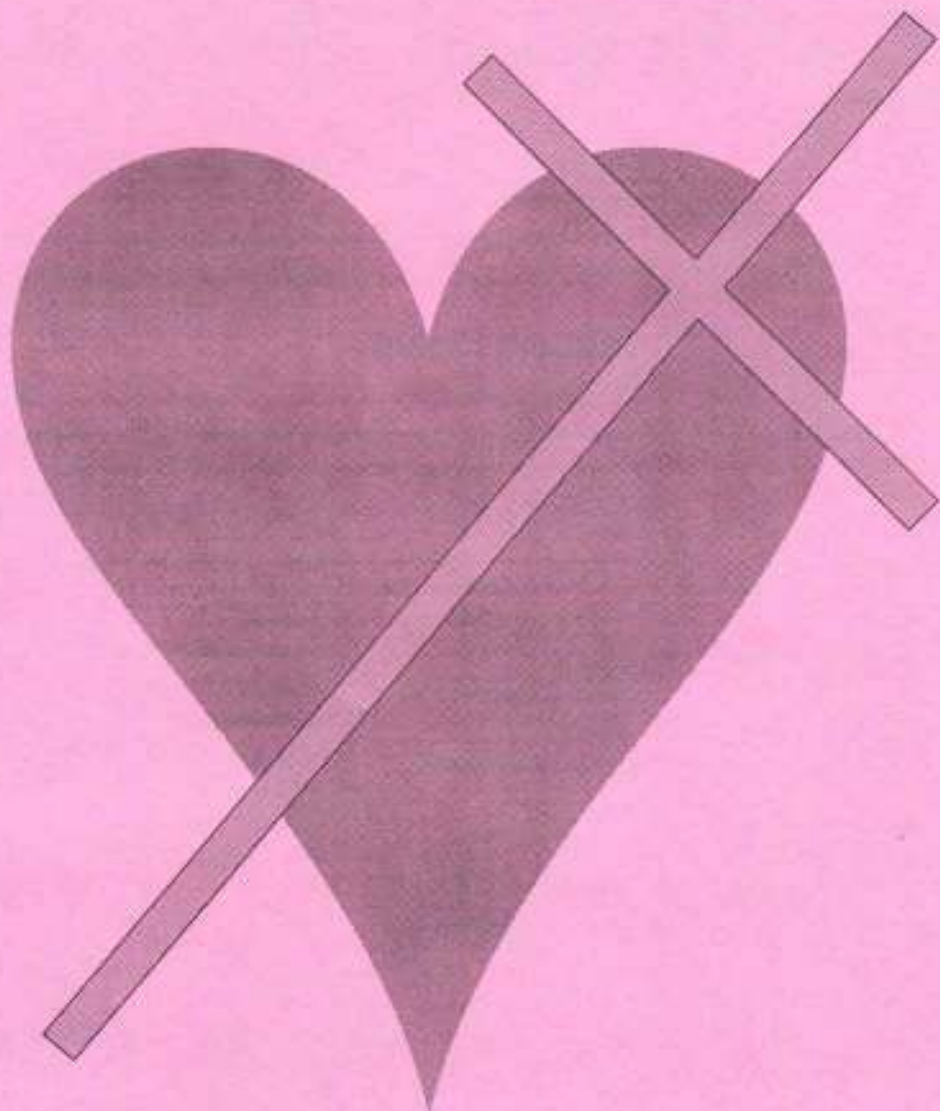


CONNECTION

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc.



On Submission and Self-Discovery

SDA KINSHIP INTERNATIONAL, INC.

KINSHIP BOARD

President: Darin Olson
Vice President: Yolanda Elliott
Secretary: Charles Shobe
Treasurer: Mike McLaughlin
Connection Editor: Ben Kemena
Public Relations: John Edwards
Church Liaison: Donald Freeman
Worship's Coordinator: Jacquie Summerton
Kamp'99 Coordinator: Jim Chilson

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Members-at-Large: Marge Doyle, Greg Cox, Larry Whitford, Lee Stover
Campus Coordinator: Greg Cox
Member Wellness: Larry Whitford

SUPPORT STAFF

Office Support: Hal Jobe
Informational Services: John Wieland

CONNECTION STAFF

Contributors: Judy Chicago, Ray Dabrowski, Kyle Ben Kemena, Editor: Walt Elias, Layout:

INFORMATION

The Connection is published 6 times a year by Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Principal office: P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607; (949) 248-1299; U.S. Subscriptions are \$25 for bi-monthly issues, and \$15 for additional subscriptions. Foreign subscriptions are \$40.

Submissions of letters, articles, pictures, art, and graphics are welcome. Include your name as you want it published, address, and telephone number. If an item is to be acknowledged or returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Some Connection contributors have chosen to remain anonymous. Pseudonyms from this issue appear at the bottom of this page. The Connection reserves the right to edit manuscripts for length, syntax, grammar, and clarity. Address all submissions to the Connection, P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607; inquiries and article submissions may also be e-mailed to sdakinship@aol.com

The mention or appearance of any names, organizations, or photographs in this publication is not meant to imply a fact or statement about their sexual orientation or activity.

Subscription requests or address changes must be sent to Subscriptions, P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607, (949) 248-1299. The Kinship mailing list is confidential and used only by Kinship officers. The mailing list is not sold, rented, or exchanged for any purpose.

©1999 Connection. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. OPINIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF SDA KINSHIP. Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association. Printed in the U.S. on 100% recycled paper. If you aren't out, please consider it. Offers will again come from you.

Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a support group which ministers to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well being of Seventh-day Adventist lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and their families and friends.

SDA Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of homosexual and bisexual Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation.

Founded in 1976, the nonprofit organization was incorporated in 1981 and has a board of 15 officers and 10 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes well over a thousand people in 16 countries.

SDA Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn, or even mention, homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts, which are often used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up gay or lesbian has its roots in a misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

Kinship operates solely on contributions from its members and friends.

SDA Kinship supports the advancement of human rights for all people.

Support Kinship

Kinship depends on you. Kinship is supported solely by contributions. Help us reach out to more gay Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to SDA Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below. SDA Kinship, P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607, (949) 248-1299.

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

Region 1

Obed Vasquez (401) 521-9319

Region 2

Yolanda Elliott (410) 531-5382

Region 3

Sandy Mann (404) 633-8447

Region 4

Bruce Harlow (773) 338-2389

Region 5 and KinNet

Floyd Pomeroy (214) 416-1358

Region 6

Ben K. (303) 321-5331

Region 7

Brian Costa (503) 292-5098

Region 8

Roland Anderson (209) 339-8113

Region 9

Lee Stover (626) 791-8608

Region 10 (Kinship Canada)

Brent Lehmann (604) 469-6976

Region 13 (Kinship Germany)

HADInfo@aol.com



Visit our
Web Site:
<http://www.sdakinship.org/>

Pseudonyms: Walt Elias, Donald Freeman, Kyle, Lee Stover, and possibly others.

God Loves All of Me:

Kyle's Story

(Editor's note: Kyle is a pseudonym for a Kinship member. With his permission, Kyle has allowed us to reprint his story. As much as possible, Kyle's story is in his own words.)

"God! It can't be true, it can't be!" I whispered, in intense pain and trying to keep my sobbing from being heard. I was in the bathroom of the home of a fine Adventist couple — almost a second set of parents. However, they had just shown me Romans 1 — condemning homosexuality. That was devastating to a sixteen year old boy whose objects of affection were male. It seemed so natural, so wonderful, and now it was so wrong? Can't be, CAN'T BE! ... As I desperately sought a way out, it occurred to me: didn't I see the movie of Christine Jorgensen, one of the early transsexuals? Ah HA! I must be a female being trapped in a male body! I can't be one of those "evil and perverted" homosexuals — despite my obvious attraction to males.

At the time, I did not completely appreciate my self-deception. It was ironic considering Romans 1 talks about trading the truth for a lie. But I was SO desperate! And it was ironic that the same friend who introduced me to gay sexual experiences also introduced me to a local Adventist church and this wonderful Adventist couple. This couple befriended me, showed the better side of Christianity, but quite inadvertently, helped send me on a strange personal journey with respect to my sexual identity. Despite these personal internal conflicts, I did find God in a small rural Adventist church. I bucked my non-religious family to join a little known denomination — and discover a marvelous Jesus who loved me so much. My friend moved away as my fragile Christianity got off the ground. I lost contact with him, but never lost contact with my Jesus. During my senior year in high

school, I became extroverted and a bit fanatical as I shared my Adventist faith. The other students took it in remarkable stride and actually started to include me in their circle as the resident "fundamentalist". I was making friends — more than one at a time!

The same Adventist couple encouraged me to go to an Adventist college. I went. I had a marvelous time and took advantage of the spirituality offered by a parochial college. I still quietly had crushes on many guys but never acted on them (didn't want to have anything to do with such "evil"). In spite of my connection with Jesus, I was still a bit insecure. My social skills were new and clumsy. There were still parts of myself that I did not like — maybe even hated. And I didn't dress the best or take care of myself like I

.....

*"There were still parts of myself
that I did not like."*

.....

should. Graduation came and I was worried about getting a job. Interviews were difficult. I didn't look like someone who anyone would like to hire.

Graduating from college, I went to work for the Adventist denomination at a conference office. I was pleased — an opportunity to work for the church — to hold my first real job! Yet, I still didn't take care of myself and it was noticed. My interest in clothes was minimal and my hygiene was not the best. My boss literally had to have a talk with me about it. I had a "secret pal" give me some ties (kind ladies at the office really helped me). My crushes landed on one very handsome fellow who probably wondered why I was so friendly. Internally I was fighting myself. I desper-

ately wanted a man, desperately! But how? I can't be gay! Then on a talk show I saw another transsexual: Canary Conn. I started doing research on transsexuality. I bought books and went to libraries — I even went to the library in Loma Linda. I became convinced of what I needed to do if I was to have peace and happiness: a sex change. Feeling torn and helpless, I sent a letter to my parents explaining my intent. My mother reacted violently and phoned me hysterically crying — she did not want her beautiful son to be mutilated. But my internal struggles just wouldn't go away! The emotional pain increased.

Eventually, I quit denominational employment for a secular job. I began to consider a master plan of "what I should be." Unfortunately, the deception I got myself into grew increasingly complicated. I despised my male parts, yet used them in fantasies. I hated my face so I grew my hair long to look female. I tried dressing as a female, but it did not bring me peace. I even started estrogen hormone treatments. When would I feel better about myself? Wasn't I supposed to look forward to the change? Yet, the deeper my attempts at self-deception, the less satisfying it became. I was propping up a delusion that took more and more of my energy. I tried to manipulate my emotions, manipulate my friends and family — and even manipulate God.

I got lucky. An understanding lady doing electrolysis on me put me in contact with a transsexual. It was interesting to see reality. The lady, bless her, was worried about me. She was particularly worried that my counselor did not seem to be probing my inner self. She had me contact another excellent counselor — the same one that was counseling my new transsexual friend. He started probing in certain emotionally sensitive areas. It was not easy — I said "OUCH!"

.....

"I could not fully accept that I was gay, but I knew I was attracted to other men."

.....

often. Slowly, I saw flaws in my logic, flaws in my perceptions, and flaws in my false peace of mind. The delusions came crashing down around me.

I could not fully accept that I was gay, but I knew I was attracted to men. I stopped going to the counselor because of my fear. What else might be uncovered? I was miserable and the pain continued. So, I made another bargain with God: I'll marry and have a child like God would want me to, right? And I'll just simply control this little attraction I have for men while I live

with a good female friend. Right? Just praise God for attractive men and never act on it! Right?

I became an elder of a local Adventist church congregation. I enjoyed being active in my local church. I made new friends. My social life was active. I traveled and upheld the Seventh-day Adventist faith (maybe a bit too rigidly at times). Of course, my sexual pressures increased. My isolation increased. And my self-directed hatred continued to intensify. I did have one friend, Dave, that I could confide in — a straight man and a good Christian. Finally, I had to talk to someone and so I had Dave over to my home after a church function. I wandered over unrelated conversation topics before my frustrations boiled over. I confessed to Dave that I was gay, and started sobbing

.....

"I asked God to control my gay nature and send me a wife."

.....

uncontrollably. He reached over, put his hand on me and said very simply, "God loves you!" The power of that tender human touch extended to one who felt morally filthy, and the promise that God still looked kindly upon me was a tremendous comfort. Dave kept my secret and gave me as much support as he could.

Of course later on, I wanted to just forget it about the whole thing! So despite my revelation to Dave, I decided to keep my pact with God. I joined "Adventist Contact" and dated a few women. But the relationships never seemed to get anywhere. And it was nerve-racking trying to treat my dates as more than friends. I never succeeded (uh, can we get physically affectionate tomorrow?). Eventually, my obsession was redirected into having a son and being a father. I so much wanted a son! Please God, give me a son! But of course, I had to have a wife to do that (a minor detail). I actually contacted a beautiful female physician and we got along quite well over the phone. But when we met it was as if she became an utter stranger — cool and distant. She seemed to sense in me that I would not be a good mate for her. I was rejected by her and it genuinely wounded me.

I asked God to control my gay nature and send me a wife. Send me a wife! Lord, you can do it! Please! This pleading became routine over several years. By now, I was almost 40 years old. I decided to start adoption procedures to bypass the "wife part" and find me a son. I thought adoption would be no problem since my job paid well and I could be a "good provider." Suddenly, I was laid off from my job, my car broke down, and new job prospects appeared dismal. For a year, I had no permanent employment. My prospects for adopting a son vanished.

I became quite ill with a strange disease that left my legs with a bad rash and extreme pain walking. I was also depressed and felt very little reason to live. Fortunately, the local Adventist singles group kept a watch on me. I was fading but their care and attention kept me going. I became so weak and debilitated that I

.....

"I became so weak and debilitated that I couldn't even watch TV..."

.....

couldn't even watch TV and had to force myself to eat. Only my enjoyment in reading novels kept my interest in life going. It was ironic that the Adventist singles group did have one attractive gay man as a member, but we did NOT get along with each other. Despite this, I learned from this fellow and interestingly, my homophobia fractured slightly. I noticed that though this guy could be opinionated and inconsiderate, he was basically "normal."

I bargained with God again. Alright God, I guess the only recourse for me is to be celibate and alone, right?

My life gradually started to improve. My health returned and I landed a wonderful job working for the Adventist denomination. For three years, I worked 70 to 80 hours a week — something I had never done before. And yes, it was partly the nature of the work — but it was also another way to escape. My social life became non-existent, my activity in church shriveled. I gained weight and stopped bothering to take care of myself (though my hygiene was better!). My self-loathing never disappeared.

One day, I discovered a "muscle man" website on the Internet. It was pleasant. Then, I discovered other websites — gay websites. Why not peek at the gay websites — just a peek. Sex? Well, I really shouldn't but...I became addicted. I looked and had to have some pictures of gay sex. I spent so much time on it that sometimes I saw the sunrise after "just peeking" all night. But I promised God I would give it up — any day now — but can't I look at just one more, and one more, and....

My body rebelled against me in another frightening disability. I thought this was a judgment from God. After all, why should someone in their early 40's have cardiac problems? I begged God to forgive me of my gay passions and heal me. And to my utter surprise I was healed and praised God because of it! My doctors expected me to be somewhat crippled — I wasn't. I did have to make changes in my lifestyle but my health returned fully. I was cured!

But back home again, my obsession with gay sex materials returned. I found myself again sneaking peeks at gay sex websites. More and more, I was addicted to images of gay sex. Even Sabbath became a day to surf the pornographic websites and play games — with an occasional break to go to church (late, of course). Oddly enough, leaving home on Sabbath was the healthiest thing I did for myself — even if it meant going to buy treats at the local mall. I was approaching a low point.

My prayer life had not been good either — though it still existed. I became more withdrawn and formal in my prayers. I did still cling to Jesus though my grasp seemed weak. I wanted to love and be loved! I wanted a companion! But I couldn't have one, could I? In utter frustration and desperation I finally asked God for a mate, a male one! That was ridiculous, wasn't it? Didn't God say "wife" and NOT "husband"? But I had a sense that even though I was having difficulty, the Lord still regarded me as His. And I wanted a way out — one that would bring me peace and reconciliation.

This past Easter, I endured a particularly bad day. My friend Dave phoned. He asked me something about the Internet since I was a "computer guy." Then, to my surprise, Dave talked about an elder in his church who had taken sexual advantage of a disabled man. I started shaking as I listened to the story. It seemed like a replay of events so long ago. I had to share more with Dave! Again, I poured out my heart to Dave. We were both amazed at his timing. And again, Dave went on to reassure me of God's love. I took this providential conversation to mean that God did indeed love me and maybe, just maybe, God might answer my prayer.

After I had gotten off the phone with Dave (who

.....

"I got a Kinship pamphlet and started reading it" There were

.....

had prayed for me), I felt much better. I actually felt loved by the God Almighty! My sexual orientation started to become less of an enemy — that finding a mate was a real possibility! Dave had given me a book called "The Normal Christian Life," by Watchman Nee. Dave said it would get my "Christian journey" going again — I had to find the book. I had done nothing with the book for quite some time and had not even put it in my bookshelf. It was somewhere in my incredibly messy living room and I didn't even know if I could find it. But I took only a few steps in my living room and there it was — on the arm of a chair! Hmmm, was someone trying to tell me something? I started reading it and found I could only read about

one chapter at a time. I felt spiritual stirrings that I had not felt in a very long time.

I tried to look up homosexuality in the library hoping the librarians and other patrons would not notice! I devoted a lot of energy trying to find all of the Ellen G. White references on the subject. I only found two and they were not very helpful! In frustra-

.....

"I got a Kinship pamphlet and started reading it"

.....

tion and with my credit card, I went to the Adventist Book Center and spent \$200 on the EGW CD-ROM set that has every published Ellen White book in it! I found three references. The third reference looked like it was pasted in as an afterthought to the Adventist Church Manual. The references did not help and were irrelevant. I went to the larger book stores to examine gay resource materials. But I was still scared that people might think I was gay! How do you look at "that section" and NOT be identified as gay (or did anyone really care)?

I went back to the Internet instead, and looked up Kinship — desperately reaching out to an organization that I had once despised. I ordered a pamphlet from them. Then on the Internet, I found an "online" bookstore and started ordering books on homosexuality topics. One book, "The Battle for Normalcy" painted gays as so neurotic and pitiful that they couldn't cross the street without a nervous breakdown. But other books were more useful and I was ready to read and learn.

I got a Kinship pamphlet and started reading it. The author was not exactly perfect in what he represented but he did show cracks in traditional Biblical interpretations. Hope was coming through. I decided I really needed to visit a gay bookstore. I looked up an address and went there the first weekend of May. It was a beautiful day. I was surprised to find myself in the middle of a "gay community!" Though why I was surprised I did not know. Where else would a gay bookstore be? I finally found the gay bookstore and entered it. There were books about all sorts of gay-related topics. It was difficult to focus on the books around me. I had an overwhelming urge to leave, NOW! Later, I learned that gay bookstores are often where gay people meet on "dates." I'm glad I did not know that then. In my state of mind then, I would have had a difficult time resisting temptation — and I was not ready! I left the bookstore and went down the street. I savored some fat free ice cream while admiring all the rainbows.

Curious about the local area, I walked down the

street noticing everyone (sneaking past a gay club after casting furtive glances). I walked down to a nearby park. There were many gay men. I felt exhilarated seeing them all doing rather normal things. I was not alone! I saw well kept dogs and even a cat. There was a gay couple holding hands — I felt a twinge of envy. I was able to smile — really smile! A smile that came from deep within, a smile that said, "Someone interesting is living in here," — and a smile that loved the world in general. I sat under a tree, pretending someone would come up to me and say, "Where have you been all my life?" A dog approached me and he wasn't that friendly, oh well. I chuckled to myself at my romantic delusions, but my spirits soared. I left reluctantly.

The next day I was able to interact calmly and intelligently with my coworkers. I seemed to be more at peace with myself. It was a nice feeling and I made a mental note of it. One Friday evening, I called Dave and told him about my experience. Dave wasn't that encouraging and started talking about "change ministries" — especially about one where he lived. I told him about the problems that change ministries have had (problems like the leaders falling in love with each other). Also, for someone my age, it would be optimistic, to say the least, for me to be able to change. He

.....

"When I hung up the phone, I felt strangely oppressed. What was the matter?"

.....

said, "Oh," but still thought I should check these programs out. I was shaking for some strange reason as we talked about some of the Bible verses about homosexuality and some problems with them. He did point out Paul's famous verse about men and women trading natural relations for unnatural — good old Romans 1 again — and the "promise" that some would be cured. Wasn't that encouraging? I did not want to disappoint Dave. I told Dave that he could send me their pamphlet and I would send him the Kinship pamphlet. When I hung up the phone, I felt strangely oppressed. What was the matter?

That night dragged on endlessly. Finally, I got up and wondered aimlessly around my apartment trying to shake a real depression as the sun was beginning to rise. What was wrong? Why was I feeling so unsettled? Wasn't I being logical? Hadn't I looked at everything? Wasn't I being honest. Wasn't I — ...? Right then and there I broke into uncontrollable sobs and intense emotional pain. I grabbed my head and

curled up into a little ball. I blinked away the tears, totally confused. What was happening?

The following Sabbath morning, I went to church and listened to the sermon. The sermon seemed interesting. The Bible seemed more interesting than I last remembered it. The church seemed more interesting. I went home and I continued to reading and review basics about the Christian life which had grown dim. I had a couple more crying spells which I did not understand.

I decided to write a letter to Dave pouring out my heart. I pointed out that I never had "natural relations" with a woman so how could I have traded them? Also, changing my nature would be akin to ripping out my heart. The final part of my letter summed up my plight and determination quite well: "But I cannot and will not continue as I have been. I am suffering far too much — and have been for far too long for it to continue I must have resolution! I must have the truth! I must reject shallow interpretations from all sides! I must follow Jesus in all things He wants! I must be whole" I put in the Kinship pamphlet with the letter and mailed it.

One otherwise uneventful day, I went to a local shopping mall. I was actively aware of my self and surroundings, and felt a peace I have rarely experienced. I noticed everything (yes, even the men — but sexual desire was not paramount). I felt connected to everything — I felt so alive. I could like me! I could like my life! I went to get a haircut and had a rather "different" experience than the one I normally had. The hairdresser went out of his way to pamper me (he cut hair IN my ears, for crying out loud!). I wondered if he was gay and reacting to me (don't really know but the experience was pleasant!). Afterwards, I went to a huge bookstore and purchased two good books on sex, Dr Ruth's "Sex for Dummies," and the latest Kinsey report. When I was checking them out, the salesclerk was friendly. Was it because of what I was buying? Was he gay too? Or was it the fact that he and the hairdresser sensed that I was at peace with myself?

As time progressed, I found myself easily brought to tears. I was "feeling." Small but important things started happening. When I asked someone, "How are

"As time progressed, I found myself easily brought to tears."

you?" I genuinely wanted to know. I was so much more comfortable with myself that others noticed. One day, I inadvertently bumped into a little girl and said as I briefly touched her head to prevent further collision, "Excuse me, darling." She replied cheerily, "That's alright." What was interesting about that

exchange was that I called her "darling" — NOT my normal mode of address but it made a little girl feel good and I felt good. Strangers started talking with me. I got warm smiles from a variety of people. Something was happening. I was changing for the better!

I started buying clothes — fashionable clothes. In fact I started to visit clothing stores regularly just to look over the fashions — this from someone who bought clothes only when the old ones were falling apart! I bought a new suit, matching shirts and ties — the first in over 5 years. I started to comb my hair better. I even started pulling stray hairs from my eyebrows and mustache. I noticed that when I smiled, I had a small dimple. A forty-something year old man FINALLY realizes he has a dimple! Dimples — a feature I love on men was something I actually had! Had I hated myself so much that I never noticed? I was committed to taking care of myself — I felt I was worthy of taking care of! And I started walking and talking to God everyday.

I called Dave one Thursday because I wanted to prepare for Sabbath properly. We talked a bit and he was encouraging about the positive changes in me. Dave said he was no longer "worried about me" since he thought our minds ran in "similar tracks" (although not entirely). Dave was trying to help by pointing out "my options," but I got upset with the suggestion of these "options." Sabbath came and the mental anguish and crying spells occurred again. I began to dread the

"I had actually had prayed a prayer that upset my life."

next Sabbath.

I kept reading the "The Normal Christian Life." There was a passage about people who didn't dare pray certain prayers for fear of upsetting their comfortable yet empty lives. That hit home and brought tears to my eyes — I had actually had prayed a prayer that upset my life. But I felt led by God — and seemed to have evidence of God's hand in my journey. That made me feel better about my course. But still why the crying?

As yet another weekend approached, I spoke with Dave again. He was more sympathetic this time and was actually impressed with my spiritual growth — that and the fact that I was actually quoting things out of the book. I shared the passage of the book and he felt much better about my journey. But tension remained.

I became discouraged. I "surfed" the Internet and found some interesting references to "safe-sex" clubs. That went directly to my base nature! The weekend came and I HAD to find out more about this club.

The day was not sunny and I had a hard time locating it. I finally arrived in front of the club — I went when I knew it would not be open — I just had to see it. When I actually saw it, its allure over me vanished. It was just another townhouse among many — the club was in the basement. I turned and walked away. I was not looking for promiscuity and this was not for me. I was looking for love and affection. At least I knew that!

I kept walking. I avoided the gay bookstore but went into a small fastfood restaurant next door. I was readily charming and got a few smiles. I noticed a straight couple — the guy was handsome. Not wanting to make him uncomfortable, I deliberately sat where I would not be tempted to stare at him. This courtesy had come unbidden to me. I was able to eat the best black bean burrito ever in peace!

I returned to my car and started driving back with the radio tuned into the local Christian station. A song came on singing about the "mighty power of God." I had so many mixed emotions literally attack me! It took an effort of will to fight off the powerful

.....

***"Why, WHY? Then I realized
the answer: I was AFRAID of
God!"***

.....

emotions and keep driving to my nearby and empty office. I jumped out of my car, unlocked my office, and laid on the sofa and uncontrollably cried. Anyone looking at me would have seen me in utter torment and literally writhing. What was going on? Why had that "safe-sex" club tempted me so? Why did a song about "mighty power of God" hit me so? Why, WHY? Then I realized the answer: I was AFRAID of God!

I sat on the sofa stunned. I worshipped a God that had always shepherded me. One that cared for me. There were no stern parents saying I had to join or else... Now I was afraid of a loving Father? In fact, I didn't even like using the term "Father." Why was I afraid? It was because I assumed God wanted me to be celibate — hence lonely and miserable. For over two decades I had tears come to my eyes when I thought of my future — my lonely future. How could I fight the Most High God? Was I not condemned to celibacy? Was it not unlike a prison sentence? I had quite unintentionally turned God into a harsh Dictator from which I had no recourse, no appeal... No wonder I had endured these crying spells; I was grieving and mourning.

I prayed. Talking to God about how I feared Him helped immensely. Somehow the Father (and I was able to use the term Father now) seemed less unbending and far more sympathetic to me. I shared this personal revelation with Dave and he encouraged me. He also said I should start reading my Bible a bit every day. That was where God talked back to me. Okay, I thought, I'll do that. And I started to get blessings from that. I tried opening up the Bible at random like Dave had and got delightful pieces of encouragement ... It seemed that God was talking to me.

I continued to read "The Normal Christian Life." There was a chapter on giving God everything — everything? That made me feel uneasy but I thought it would be less than futile to deny God any part of me (also dishonest). So, with a bit of dread, I gave my sexuality to the Lord. Immediately I felt intense peace and reassurance — and a distinct feeling I would not be celibate in the future. I would have my mate ... I even got the feeling it would be a gay one.

Dave was amazed I did it but thrilled also. It was God's problem now!

The battles were far from over. I read more "change ministry" material and got depressed again. I went down to the local Adventist Book Center and started looking at book titles. I picked up "My Son,

.....

***"I read more 'change ministry'
material and got depressed
again. ."***

.....

Beloved Stranger," briefly, and read the ending where the guy decided to be celibate. My surprising emotional response was ANGER! What was so terribly wrong with two of the same sex in a committed loving relationship? I stood in the middle of the store tense with rage and thought: "There's nothing here for me!" (That wasn't quite true since I later found books that were quite comforting — even if they only advocated celibacy.) Inside, I felt rage and rebellion — I stomped out of the store and went home.

I decided to commit one act of rebellion. I did it. Then feeling very much like a dejected little 8 year old — with a heavenly Father putting His arm around me and asking "Feel better?" — I nodded my head then puffed a bit of laughter. What was I thinking? God was always there with me. And He seemed to promise that if He asked me to abandon my dream of a gay mate, He'll explain why — though I got the impression He was NOT asking me to do that!

I decided to join Kinnet (an electronic Internet discussion group for gay Adventists). Dave, at first, wasn't thrilled with it but I said I could remain anonymous. So I contacted Kinnet then I joined Kinship. I felt incredibly nervous! I gave Kinnet the minimum I could — identifying myself by a pseudonym. A few days later, the Kinnet manager asked me for clarification. It took three tries and me being very nervous before I gave him my full name. He was sympathetic with poor little me.

It was amazing how supportive Kinnet has been for me. People contacted me and welcomed me to Kinnet. One even said that she had to crack the closet open just a hair and whisper, "Welcome". I even had a much younger gay guy posting me — we started frequent and long exchanges. It was wonderful! I felt SO much calmer. And I started to save some of the Kinnet messages. I even had Floyd (Kinnet manager), who I

.....
"It was amazing how supportive Kinnet has been for me."
.....

had only known through his website, have an online chat with me. And there was a straight Christian woman who shared items with Kinnet. I decided to offer to share with her some of the wonderful things that were happening. She has been very encouraging.

I talked to Dave about my interactions. I mentioned some of my research into change ministries and how one guy went and twisted facts around while disproving "gay theology." Dave said that the change ministry where he was at seemed to emphasize God's love. "Okay," I replied, but I also want to meet a gay couple. I really did need to have the reality of a real life model (I was thinking back to meeting the transsexual so long ago). Dave told me to be careful but he wasn't too worried and that I seemed to have a similar analytical mind that he did (that was a high complement).

I continued to look at change ministries. I found one that offered testimonials. One was from a gay guy that was miserable from "bed hopping," vain fashion appearances, and malicious gossiping. The story felt foreign to my experience. One woman said she was in a dependent relationship where she was so insecure and trapped with another woman. She was SO glad to get out of that. Well, duh? Then another guy had dressed up like a woman and had done the gay scene. He decided to leave that (didn't like the make-up). None of these testimonials resonated with me, in spite of the fact that for a while I had convinced myself I was really

a female in a male body (anything to make peace with my orientation). But the point was that I was NOT sexually active! Wanted to be, of course. But I was held back (righteous by cowardice — or was it protection by God?). And all the testimonials flat out stated that everyone was born heterosexual (really? ... Was that stamped on a kid's forehead and they come out of the womb?).

Then I came across a statement saying, "You must confess to God that homosexuality is a sin!" That hit me hard! I ripped off my music headphones and sank

.....
"Then I came across a statement saying, 'You must confess to God that homosexuality is a sin!'"
.....

to my knees in front of the computer in emotional pain. I felt a "bungee cord jump" of ripping emotions. To me, the problem with that declaration was that it ignored the fact that homosexual orientation comes unbidden — there is NO choice, it's just THERE! Now you could argue about the acts but NOT about the orientation — orientation is NOT a sin anymore than temptation is (if it is then God is quite an arbitrary tyrant).

I took my intense pain into the bedroom and sank to my knees in tortured prayer to the God. I got up and felt anger again! That anger turned upward. I started to become quite sarcastic with the Almighty. I argued about orientation (I was "born" heterosexual, huh? What happened? My license expired?). I snapped about the "holy heaven of heterosexuality" and how marvelous and flawless it was (heavy sarcasm). I mocked about the fact that "two men enjoying themselves in bed" were far worse than any sin in the planet (bombing a city was not as bad), and I ranted and raved for quite a few minutes while wondering about the apartment. Friends watching me would have probably been looking for lightning proof places to stand (smile!). Finally exhausted, I leaned my head against the wall and moaned, "Lord, why is it so evil for me to love a man in a monogamous relationship?" Then I decided to submit to God again and whispered, "Okay, you win" ... That was when I got the impression, "No, you won!" Little Kyle of planet earth struggled with the Lord and found peace? I laughed about that — laughter of joy. The Lord understood! He had let me vent my frustrations! It was far easier to put myself

back in His loving arms (struggling is unpleasant but reconciliation is wonderful!). Then I chatted with Floyd about change ministries. He told me to request a copy of a paper on Colin Cook written by a fellow Kinnet member (Ron Lawson). Boy, was THAT an eye-opener!

July 2, 1998. I went to meet a gay couple who had graciously invited me to their home. The same couple had also put me in contact with a marvelous counselor. One of them had a son visiting and I was a bit apprehensive about that. I was reassured that he'd be trustworthy. I nervously went to their apartment building and was sent up. I took a deep breath and knocked on the door — a 16 year-old answered! The couple had gone grocery shopping. The son welcomed me and gave me something to drink. Then he asked if I wanted to play a Nintendo game. Sure! After half an

.....
"I was also concerned about my employment with the denomination. . ."
.....

hour, the couple came back from grocery shopping and found us deep in the game (I had definitely found one 16 year old friend!). Dinner was served and I talked to them about my fears and bouts with God. They were quite sympathetic. And we discussed the problems I had with Dave. They agreed that Dave might not completely understand (to be fair, why should he understand?). I was also concerned about my employment with the denomination. They gave me reassurances and pointed to some gays who quietly continued working within the Adventist church. My fears definitely subsided. It was such an enjoyable evening — it was hard to leave them. It was nice to see this couple hold hands — and kiss — in their home! They invited me to come to a picnic on Sabbath and then to see the 4th of July fireworks with them and some Kinship members ... I said I'd think about it (fear still there).

July 3, 1998. I bought a baseball-style cap! Me, the one who had shunned masculine trappings actually bought a cap! It was strange to put it on in a shopping mall. But I quickly got used to it. It felt like a proclamation saying, "I'm male!" I went to help my counselor with his computer and he liked the cap (and it was fun flipping it around — the simple pleasures).

As the next Sabbath approached, I grew apprehensive. I had practiced what I was going to discuss with Dave. I picked up the phone — then paused. Am I trying to convince him under my own power? What was I really doing? I put down the phone and decided

to walk around the complex and have a small chat with God first! I needed to make peace with Dave and the way I related to Dave. I needed to pull toward him and not away, and in a small way, come a bit closer to the body of Christ which he was a part. I was on the verge of tears when I dialed him thinking, "This is going to hurt." But when I started to open up to Dave and

.....
"We talked about the change ministries and Colin Cook's mess."
.....

confessed I was pulling away he was wonderfully supportive. We talked about the change ministries and Colin Cook's mess. Dave agreed that trying to force change was very unchristian. I talked about how orientation is different from the sexual activity. The simplistic "homosexuality is a sin" statement totally ignores the fact that orientation is temptation, NOT the act. Dave also agreed that the Adventist Church has made mistakes like when it supported Colin Cook's "Quest" ministries. I did call Dave my "elder brother in faith" which I believe he is. And he definitely supports me in my journey with God while I try to understand what I'm supposed to do! Dave said that as soon as he "figures it out," he'll phone me up and "straighten me out" (he also said for me not to hold my breath!). Our conversation continued. I prayed for him now! My prayers were a bit short, but at least they got to the point. I told Dave that I would be going with the gay couple to the fireworks with other Kinship members. I needed a dose of reality. He cautioned me, of course. His opinions did not change — but they did not need to! He acknowledged my freedom ... What more did I need?

July 4, 1998. I went to church and sat in the balcony as I normally do. The Pastor talked about the "Aryan Nation" and of all the people they wanted to kill, including gays (the pastor was definitely against that!). He focused most on race, of course. After the service, I walked down to the main floor and saw some gay people that I was told would be there. I walked toward them — and then I saw my boss standing and looking in their direction. Fortunately, my boss left in a few minutes. Eventually, I started down the aisle again. I seemed to meet EVERYBODY from work (groan)! It took a bit of time before I felt comfortable to ask the couple and son whether or not they wanted to see my place of employment. They had to say good-byes — but sure! We agreed to meet in a few minutes. The minutes passed — I tried to avoid people that I knew. And, as I approached my place of work, I met,

you guessed it, another coworker with his family (this wasn't my day). I converted my panic into a cheery, "How are you? — Oh! — And how are the kids...?" I admired the little ones in the stroller for a moment and waved good-bye with my gay friends in tow. We made it the remaining thirty yards without meeting anyone else. Inside the building I relaxed. My new friends are definitely going to know more about me — but so what! They shared with me and I wanted to share with them! In fact I desperately needed to (it's amazing how isolated I was — and how I craved friendship of gay Christians). It felt wonderful. As we walked out of the building, I loaned their son 2 CD games (it felt so good to be able to share). They left for their apartment and I changed clothes in my office.

Later, I met them and we went down to see holiday fireworks. We had great seats as the fireworks went off just about above us! Then we visited a gay neighborhood restaurant for a late night meal. It was amazing seeing gay men on a Saturday night — and the fact that my reactions to them were changing. While I'm not sure I would want to live there, visiting seemed quite reasonable. The wonderful evening ended and we parted. The couple invited me to a Kinship social event.

I had to pray about whether or not to attend the Kinship social — a swimming party. But it seemed that the Lord did want me to go and so I called and said I'd be there. I left for the gym and did my exercises and

"It was amazing seeing gay men on a Saturday night — and the fact that my reactions to them were changing."

had lunch. I arrived at their apartment with my gym bag and a brand new swimsuit! Together, we left for a home in the country.

The lesbian host for the pool party was warm and welcoming. I got a hug from her and her partner (mom always wanted me to meet nice women!). The hugs felt good (I hadn't had a hug for a long time)! We entered their home and visited. Eventually, we went out to the pool. Most of the guys dove in while most of the women caught the afternoon sun. We did get one woman in the pool after her partner gave her a "little push". We had a fun game of using a ball to play "keep away" in the pool. It was fun to associate with this group. My old stereotypes were breaking down

rapidly. I sat next to an attractive fellow (lucky guy has a partner!) and had a marvelous conversation as we ate dinner. I discovered that my libido, which often seemed my enemy, go DOWN. I had brakes, real brakes! It was amazing! Since then, fear has left. Being gay does NOT equate with being barely in control. I have options, I can relate in healthy ways to the gay community, and my homophobia is rapidly melting away. I'm still closeted but there is now a BIG crack in the door! It was a quite a day.

Recently, I returned to the same gay bookstore and,

"I am at peace — praise the Lord! God loves me — all of me."

ignoring all the guys, went looking for specific books for half an hour. There was information I needed to read. I was calm and collected and was able to ask the desk clerk for help without tension. There was no obsession, very little fear, and a quiet confidence. Things are getting better.

Romans 1 is no longer an enemy. It's message of so long ago has finally sunk into me — keep the truth no matter what the pain. I needed to rely on God and not myself. It's taken nearly three decades for me to truly learn that. Will I get my gay mate? Will I keep my job? Will I even live to see tomorrow? It matters not. As my friend Dave had said, "Do not go in front of the Lord, nor behind — but go with the Lord and don't worry about the cost for the Lord will preserve." I have tasted of the Lord and found Him loving! Besides, if He says "No," it is foolish of me to fight Him. And if He says "Yes," no power on Earth will stop Him!

I am at peace — praise the Lord! God loves me — all of me. ▼

If you are interested in KinNet, the online group mentioned in the above article, contact kinnet-owner@vector.casti.com for information.

Further information may also be obtained at the Kinship website: <http://www.sdakinship.org>

The Editor's Reading List

A Bibliography of Suggested Further Reading
(* denotes language that may be offensive to some)

Homosexuality in Scripture:

1. What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality. Daniel A. Helminiak, Ph.D. San Francisco: Alamo Square Press. 1994. ISBN 0-9624751-9-X.
2. The Church and the Homosexual. John J. McNeill. Boston: Beacon Press. 1976. ISBN 0-8070-7931-6.
3. Taking a Chance on God. John J. McNeill. Boston: Beacon Press. 1988. ISBN 0-8070-7945-6.
4. Is the Homosexual My Neighbor? Letah Scanzoni and Virginia Mollenkott. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1994. ISBN 0-06-067078-9.
5. The Good Book. Peter J. Gomes. New York: William Morrow and Company. 1996. ISBN 0-688-13447-5.
6. Pastor, I Am Gay. Howard H. Bess. Palmer, Alaska: Palmer Publishing Company. 1995. ISBN 0-9644123-0-6.
7. The New Testament and Homosexuality. Robin Scroggs. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. 1983. ISBN 0-8006-1854-8.
8. Why Christianity Must Change or Die. John Shelby Spong. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco. 1998. ISBN 0-06-067532-2.
9. The Letters of Paul. John Shelby Spong. New York: Riverhead Books. 1998. ISBN 1-57322-683-1.
10. The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology. Mark D. Jordan. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1997. ISBN 0-226-41040-4.
11. The Abundant Life Bible Amplifier: Romans. John C. Brunt. Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association. 1996. ISBN 0-8163-1296-6.

Historical Background:

1. Out in All Directions. Editors: Lynn Witt, Sherry Thomas, Eric Marcus. New York: Warner Books. 1995. ISBN 0-446-51822-0.
2. Homosexuality in History. Colin Spencer. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. 1995. ISBN 0-15-100223-1.
3. Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe. John Boswell. New York: Villard Books. 1994. ISBN 0-679-43228-0.
4. Being Homosexual. Richard A. Isay. New York: Farrar-Straus-Giroux, Inc. 1989. ISBN 0-374-11012-3.

5. Gay Men and Women Who Enriched the World. Thomas Cowan. Boston: Alyson Publications. 1992. ISBN 1-55583-147-8.

6. Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality. John Boswell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1980. ISBN 0-226-06711-4.

7. The New Civil War. Diane Silver. New York: Franklin Watts. 1997. ISBN 0-531-11290-X.

8. Homosexuality. Robert Dunbar. Springfield, New Jersey: Enslow Publishers, Inc. 1995. ISBN 0-89490-665-8.

9. * A Certain Terror: Heterosexism, Militarism, Violence, & Change. Richard Cleaver and Patricia Myers, editors. Ann Arbor, Michigan: American Friends Service Committee. 1993. ISBN 0-9635516-0-4.

10. * The Gay Metropolis: The Landmark History of Gay Life in America Since World War 2. Charles Kaiser. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. 1997. ISBN 0-15-600617-0.

Self Acceptance of a Gay Identity: "Coming Out"

1. On Being Gay. Brian McNaught. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1988. ISBN 0-312-02959-4.
2. Coming Out Within: Stages of Spiritual Awakening. Craig O'Neill and Kathleen Ritter. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1992. ISBN 0-06-250706-0.
3. Becoming a Man: Half A Life Story. Paul Monette. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1992. ISBN 0-06-250724-9. (Winner: National Book Award)
4. Coming Out: An Act Of Love. Rob Eichberg, Ph.D. New York: Plume/ Penguin Books. 1990. ISBN 0-452-26685-8.
5. * The Male Couple's Guide. Eric Marcus. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1992. ISBN 0-06-096936-9.
6. * Outing Yourself. Michelangelo Signorile. New York: Random House, Inc. 1994. ISBN 0-679-43838-6.
7. * Family Outing. Chastity Bono. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1998. ISBN 0-316-10233-4.
8. Letters from the Closet. Tony Ferrante & Paulette Jacobsen. Sacramento, California: Tzedakah Publications. 1994. ISBN 0-929999-03-7.
9. Coming Out As Sacrament. Chris Glaser. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1998. ISBN 0-664-25748-8.

Books for Parents of Gay Adult Sons and Daughters:

1. *Is It A Choice*. Eric Marcus. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. 1993. ISBN 0-06-250664-1.
2. *Now That You Know*. Betty Fairchild and Nancy Hayward. New York: Harcourt Brace and Company. 1989. ISBN 0-15-667601-X.
3. *My Son, Beloved Stranger*. Kate McLaughlin. Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association. 1995. ISBN 0-8163-1257.
4. *The Family Heart*. Robb Forman Dew. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co. 1994. ISBN 0-201-62450-8.
5. *Christians and Homosexuality: Dancing Toward the Light*. Dee Dee Risher & Douglas Davidson, editors. *The Other Side*. Special Issue: 1994. (300 West Apsley Street, Philadelphia, PA 19144).

Gay Experience with HIV and AIDS:

1. * *Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir*. Paul Monette. New York: Avon Books. 1988. ISBN 0-380-70779-9.
2. * *Sometimes My Heart Goes Numb: Love and Caregiving in a Time of AIDS*. Charles Garfield. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. 1995. ISBN 0-7879-0105-9.
3. * *Sexual Ecology: AIDS and the Destiny of Gay Men*. Gabriel Rotello. Dutton/Penguin Books. 1997. ISBN 0-525-94164-9.
4. * *Love Alone: 18 Elegies for Rog*. Paul Monette. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1988. ISBN 0-312-02602-1.
5. * *Personal Dispatches: Writers Confront AIDS*. John Preston, editor. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1988. ISBN 0-312-03412-1.

Being Gay in the United States:

1. * *House and Home*. Steve Gunderson and Rob Morris. New York: Dutton/Penguin Books. 1996. ISBN 0-525-94197-5.
2. * *Wrestling with the Angel: Faith and Religion in the Lives of Gay Men*. Editor: Brian Bouldrey. New York: Riverhead Books. 1995. ISBN 1-57322-003-5.
3. * *Getting Simon: Two Gay Doctors' Journey to Fatherhood*. Kenneth B Morgan. New York: Bramble Books. 1995. ISBN 1-883647-04-5.
4. *Gay Issues in the Workplace*. Brian McNaught. New York: St Martin's Press. 1993. ISBN 0-312-09808-1.

5. *Now That I'm Out, What Do I Do?* Brian McNaught. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1997. ISBN 0-312-15616-2.

6. * *Coming Out to God*. Chris Glaser. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1991. ISBN 0-664-25176-5.

7. *Both Feet Firmly Planted in Midair*. John McNeill. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1998. ISBN 0-664-25808-5.

8. *Rainbow Family Values: Relationship Skills for Lesbian and Gay Couples*. Michael Piazza. Dallas: Sources of Hope Publishing. 1995. ISBN 1-887129-02-2.

9. * *Ex-Gays: There Are None!* Sylvia Pennington. Hawthorne, California: Lambda Christian Fellowship. 1989. ISBN 0-9616853-2-8.

10. * *Gay Men at the Millennium: Sex, Spirit and Community*. Michael Lowenthal, editor. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam. 1997. ISBN 0-87477-892-1.

11. * *Sister and Brother: Lesbians and Gay Men Write About Their Lives Together*. Joan Nestle and John Preston, editors. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco. 1994. ISBN 0-06-251055-X.

12. * *Taking Liberties: Gay Men's Essays on Politics, Culture & Sex*. Michael Bronski, editor. New York: Masquerade Books. 1996. ISBN 1-56333-456-9.

13. * *Conduct Unbecoming: Gays and Lesbians in the US Military*. Randy Shilts. New York: St. Martin's Press. 1993. ISBN 0-312-09261-X.

14. *One Nation, After All*. Alan Wolfe. New York: Viking/Penguin Putnam, Inc. 1998. ISBN 0-670-876771-1.

15. * *In Search of Gay America: Women and Men in a Time of Change*. Neil Miller. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press. 1989. ISBN 0-87113-304-0.

Conservative Gay Contemporary Thought:

1. *A Place At the Table*. Bruce Bawer. New York: Touchstone/Simon and Schuster. 1993. ISBN 0-671-89439-0.

2. *Beyond Queer: Challenging Gay Left Orthodoxy*. Editor: Bruce Bawer. Free Press/Simon and Schuster. 1996. ISBN 0-684-82766-2.

3. *Freedom, Glorious Freedom*. John J McNeill. Boston: Beacon Press. 1995. ISBN 0-8070-7936-7.

4. *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity*. New York: Crown Publishers. 1997. ISBN 0-517-70682-2.

5. * *Love Undetectable: Notes on Friendship, Sex, and Survival*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1998. ISBN 0-679-45119-6.

Gay Issues and Christian Churches:

1. *Homosexuality in the Church: Both Sides of the Debate*. Jeffrey S. Siker, editor. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press. 1994. ISBN 0-664-25545-0.

2. *Congregations Talking About Homosexuality: Dialogue on a Difficult Issue*. Beth Anne Gaede, editor. Alban Institute Publication. 1998. ISBN 1-56699-198-6.

3. * *Reclaiming the Spirit: Gay Men and Lesbians Come to Terms with Religion*. David Shallenberger. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press. 1998.

ISBN 0-8135-2488-1.

4. *The Homophobic Healer*. Sandra St. John. Denver: Tiderwick Publications. 1994. ISBN 1-885-084-33-1.

5. *Religion Is A Queer Thing*. Elizabeth Stuart. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press. 1997. ISBN 0-8298-1269-5.

Medical Reviews of Homosexuality:

1. Special Article: Homosexuality. Richard Friedman, MD and Jennifer Downey, MD. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Volume 331, Number 14; 6 October 1994.

2. *Queer Science: The Use & Abuse of Research Into Homosexuality*. Simon Levay. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 1996. ISBN 0-262-12199-9.

3. *The Science of Desire: The Search for the Gay Gene and the Biology of Behavior*. Dean Hamer and Peter Copeland. New York: Touchstone Books. 1994. ISBN 0-684-80446-8.

4. *A Biological Perspective on Sexual Orientation*. Richard Pillard, MD and J. Michael Bailey, PhD. *The Psychiatric Clinics of North America*. Volume 18, Number 1; March 1995.

5. *Gay Science: The Ethics of Sexual Orientation Research*. Timothy Murphy. New York: Columbia University Press. 1997. ISBN 0-231-10848-6.

Gay Meditation Books:

1. *Glad Day: Daily Meditations for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender People*. Joan Larkin. Center City, Minnesota: Hazelden. 1998. ISBN 1-56838-189-1.

2. *Lavender Light: Daily Meditations for Gay Men in Recovery*. Adrian Milton. New York: Perigee/Berkley Publishing Group. 1995. ISBN 0-399-51939-4.

3. *The Word is Out: The Bible Reclaimed for Lesbians and Gay Men*. Chris Glaser. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco. 1994. ISBN 0-06-063134-1.

The Editor's Resource List

A few words about the resource information to be shared.

First, please remember that this is a short list of national organizations. Many of these organizations have local chapters — check your local information guides. Furthermore, there are often local resources which are excellent guides for additional information.

Second, please remember that most gay-support organizations, even at the national level, are staffed with qualified volunteers. However, the service and return calls may be a bit slower. Please be patient.

Third, please remember that addresses, phone numbers, and websites can change at a moments notice.

Fourth, with respect to HIV and AIDS information, do not rely on old (more than 2 years old) information. There are new issues to consider almost every month. And if you need information regarding "safer sex," nothing replaces person-to-person discussions and some technique practice! (So, please find a local program if at all possible).

Fifth, don't be afraid to ask questions and share what you have learned. Help others so that the wheel does not need to be "reinvented" over and over again.

1999 Seventh-Day Adventist Specific Resource Information

SDA Kinship International

P.O. Box 7320
Laguna Niguel, CA 92607

949-248-1299

Website: <http://www.sdakinship.org>

Email: sdakinship@aol.com

"Someone to Talk to..."

Adventist Families of Gays and Lesbians

Carrol Grady (aka Kate McLaughlin)
13008 234th Street SE
Snohomish, WA 98296

1999 General Resource Information:

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays PFLAG

1101 14th Street NW
Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20005

202-638-4200
202-638-0243 - fax
Website: <http://www.pflag.org>
Email: info@pflag.org

Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation GLAAD

150 West 26th Street
Suite 503
New York, NY 10001

212-807-1700
800-GAY.MEDIA
212-807-1806 - fax
Website: <http://www.glaad.org>
Email: glaad@glaad.org

Lambda Services Anti-Violence Project

PO Box 31321
El Paso, TX 79931
915-533-6024
915-562-GAYS
915-534-7778 - fax
800-259-1536 24 hour victims' assistance hotline
Website: <http://www.duke.edu/~kerl/avp.html>
Email: AVProject@aol.com
LAMBDAEP@aol.com

The Human Rights Campaign HRC

919 18th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-628-4160
202-347-5323 - fax
Website: <http://www.hrc.org>
Email: hrc@hrc.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force NGLTF

NGLTF Main Office:
2320 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

202-322-6483
202-332-0207 - fax
Website: <http://www.nglftf.org>
Email: nglftf@nglftf.org

NGLTF Policy Institute:
121 West 27th Avenue
New York, NY 10001

212-604-9830
212-604-9831 - fax

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund LLDEF

120 Wall Street
15th Floor Suite 1500
New York, NY 10005

212-995-8585
212-995-2306 - fax
Website: <http://www.lambdalegal.org>
Email: general@lambdalegal.org

HIV - AIDS Information:

Center for Disease Control - Atlanta CDC

Information Phone Lines:
800-342-AIDS English - 24 hour
800-344-SIDA Spanish (8am to 2am - daily)
800-AIDS-TTY deaf access (10am to 10pm M-F)

Gay Men's Health Crisis GMHC

129 West 20th Street
New York, NY 10011

212-807-6655

The Names Project (AIDS quilt)

310 Townsend Street
Suite 310
San Francisco, CA 94107

415-882-5500
415-882-6200 - fax

Website: <http://www.aidsquilt.org>
Email: info@aidsquilt.org

Adventist World Church President Resigns

ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK
BY RAY DABROWSKI

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA ... [ANN] Robert S. Folkenberg, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, announced his decision to resign at a specially-called meeting today (February 8, 1999) at the Church's World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. Folkenberg chose to personally inform staff of his decision to tender his resignation to the Church's Executive Committee.

Citing the controversy over allegations arising from an on-going lawsuit, Folkenberg said that this was "detracting from God's work" and so in order "to avoid pain and conflict to my family and the church I love I am removing myself from the controversy." Concerns over business relationships with James Moore, the plaintiff in the lawsuit filed in Sacramento, California, had led the Church to set up, with Folkenberg's

support, a special committee to address the church-related issues. This committee reported to the Church's Administrative Committee on January 27, 1999, which referred the issue to the Church's full Executive Committee, the body authorized to deal with such matters.

The son of missionaries, Folkenberg was born in Puerto Rico and grew up in the U.S. and Cuba. He began working for the Adventist Church as a pastoral intern in 1963 and has worked as evangelist, missionary pilot, and in a wide range of leadership roles. He was elected president of the Adventist World Church in 1990, at its executive session in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Folkenberg's years as leader of the Adventist Church have seen major advances in global mission and the effective blending of cutting-edge technology and evangelism. He personally led in developing strategies to use satellite broadcasts and the Internet in gospel outreach. As the Church's "communication president," Folkenberg has devoted a significant portion of his time to visit and support the Church's mission around the world. He emphasized the active role of laity in ministry and witness as well as greater personal and professional accountability at all levels of the Church.

In his formal statement addressed to G. Ralph Thompson, secretary of the Executive Committee, Folkenberg said, "I will continue to give my all to advancing the mission of the church." According to the Church's working policy, Thompson now serves as acting president until a new president is elected by the full Church Executive Committee in its meetings beginning March 1. ▼

(reprinted with permission)

[Ed. note: Pastor Jan Paulsen was elected as president March 1]

And then...

By Judy Chirago

And then all that has divided us will merge
And then compassion will be wedded to power
And then softness will come to a world that is harsh and unkind
And then both men and women will be gentle
And then both women and men will be strong
And then no person will be subject to another's will
And then all will be rich and free and varied
And then the greed of some will give way to the needs of many
And then all will share equally in the Earth's abundance
And then all will care for the sick and the weak and the old
And then all will nourish the young
And then all will cherish life's creatures
And then all will live in harmony with each other and the Earth
And then everywhere will be called Eden once again.

Kinship Events

For further information contact the Kinship office as listed on page 2.

July 18-25, 1999. Kampmeeting, Baltimore, Maryland.