

connection

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. October 2006 Vol. 30 No. 9



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Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. (Kinship) is a non-profit support organization which ministers to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of Seventh-day Adventist lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is an organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people.

Founded in 1976, the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the US. Kinship has a board of up to 15 officers and 13 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes several thousand people in 43 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 as LGBT has its roots in a misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

Support Kinship

Kinship operates solely on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBT Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to SDA Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below. (You can also donate, using your Visa or Master Card, by contacting Karen Wetherell at treasurer@sdakinship.org. She will phone you so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)

SDA Kinship, P.O. Box 49375, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375, or call toll-free in the U.S. 866-732-5677 or toll from outside the U.S. 01 (941)

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Is It?

I, like many of you, have wondered if God has really ever spoken to me. Sometimes I feel confident He has, other times I wonder if I merely heard what I wanted to hear. I *am* sure of one exception. God changed my life saying two sentences, which combined, come to six words in English, none of which contain more than three letters.

While walking in the country, talking with my Lord, agonizing over something I deemed important, I prayed for God to reveal something. I didn't expect the words that filled my head. "Jim, you are gay." Part of me screamed out, No, I can't be gay. Another part of me quietly said, I know. I have always known. For as long as I can remember I have always been attracted to men. As I got older I told myself that it can't be, it is a thought put there by the devil. I have always been told that being gay is a sin. I decided to remind the Lord of this.

He answered. Sort of. Evidently God has retained some of His Jewish customs, because He didn't say to me, "I know it's a sin. You need to let me do a work in you." He didn't say, "Who told you it was a sin? Me, or someone else?" He didn't say, "I love gay and lesbian people. My Kingdom was made for them as well. Some disturbed people have claimed in My name that anyone different from them must not be a Christian." Instead, He replied to my query of "...it's a sin!" with, "Is it?" That stopped me.

Is it? Those four letters have begun an investigation. Thanks to careful study of scripture, SDA Kinship, and the amazing stories of others, I am forever learning. I pray soon to start a ministry to reach out to gays and lesbians who have been led to believe that God doesn't love them. To church the church, that others, with preconceived notions have led an attack on God's children.

I want to let others know that being gay or lesbian is a special gift given to only a few here on earth. We have been entrusted with a unique kind of love; let us not let the Father down. I thank the Lord for knowing me better than I know myself. Thank you to SDA Kinship and IMRU? for letting me know for sure that I was not alone. God bless. ▼

Life with Chloe Sage

Elena Davis Stenhouse

Adventures in lesbian parenting have far surpassed all of our expectations. I constantly look at Chloe and think: "Who is this little being? I can't believe she's here—and she's all ours!" The past eight and a half months have run together as a conglomerate of sweet delights, challenges, and ever-growing boundless love. We have had the amazing experience of seeing the wonder of life through Chloe's squeals of delight, her endless curiosity, and pure emotion. She is so proud to stand and hang off the

coffee table. She is awed by crumpled paper wads and bags of unopened airplane pretzels. Her little pincher-grasp fingers grasp cheerios in delight. We read bedtime stories and fall gently into blissful slumber. She loves gleeful shoulder rides with



wild and crazy mama; and gentle nuzzles with peaceful, nursing mommy. Playing in the dog's water bowl is the ultimate delight; pulling whiskers and tails is fun too. When we go out as a family, I have gotten to say "This is my partner and our daughter" to a coworker we ran into in the mall. I also have gotten to answer stranger's questions of "Who's the mom?" with a smiling, proud "We both are!" (And then we secretly wait to see their reaction—usually only a brief "Oh, ok..." before

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HIV and the Dating Game

Thor Montgomery

For anyone who dates; whether they be gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, transgender, or inter-sexed; the realities of HIV make the prospect a bit scary. So very scary, in fact, that some people have stopped having any sexual contact at all. While this fear is legitimate, being completely celibate strictly because of the possibility of HIV transmission is unnecessarily extreme. We are made in God's image and as such, are whole persons and being complete, a healthy sex drive is only reasonable. I am often surprised, when I tell someone I have HIV, that the first question they ask isn't, "Aren't you afraid you're going to die, " but, "Aren't you afraid of giving it to your partner or is he positive too?" Needless to say, the issues that swirl around HIV and who to tell; when, how soon, or even if we should tell a partner are very personal and subjective issues.

As someone who had to deal with HIV when most young people are just worried about the next crush, I had to come to grips with what I would do when I found a prospective partner. At first I thought that it would only be fair to tell everyone if even a chance of sexual contact was to occur. But, after being summarily dumped countless times after making the revelation, I decided that I would only tell those with whom it was likely to be an ongoing relationship.

While this is, undoubtedly, a very controversial subject to many who read this, if you are doing everything possible to practice safer sex anyway, you're doing all you can to protect them. And, for all you know, they too could have a more virile strain HIV or AIDS which could re-infect you, making you more likely to go downhill. I've experienced the self-righteous condemnation of those who believe they are negative who say, "Well, you should tell them anyway." Another way of looking at that is this, "If you really care so much, why not protect yourself by just asking them about their HIV status"? If both parties are doing their mutual best to practice safer sex and are observant during it, you should be at little risk of testing positive from that encounter. The reason why I had decided to only tell those whom I was going to be settling down with was to A) Save myself the "Pariah aspect" in the early stages B) To give them a chance to get to know more about me than just my

physiology before blaring my status to them and, not uncommonly, to all their bar-fly friends by extension, and C) To see how educated they are about safer sex, HIV, and to ascertain whether they, too, may be a Person With AIDS (PWA) or with HIV (PWHIV).

It is truly up to each individual to set their own HIV & dating parameters, whether you're HIV+ or Negative. Are you going to disclose every time things get physical or later, going to ask before you get to the bedroom or at that point, going to just do the common sense thing and use safer sex all the time, or a combination of the above. You could even choose to do none of the above, although having anything other than safer sex is endangering you and the other person or people you are involving yourself with.

As I talk to young people in the GLBTI community, I discover, particularly in the more rural areas, that the great inroads we made when ACT-UP was still a vocal voice for HIV prevention and education have faded. The belief that pervades the media and the general public is that HIV/AIDS is a "Manageable Illness" like Diabetes. It is completely false. Granted, people with HIV who take a very strict regimen of anti-HIV medications (aka the "Cocktail") live much longer, on average, than they did a decade or more ago. AIDS is still considered a deadly illness. I know that many people with HIV think that they MUST tell others that they have HIV, and if it is for strictly personal reasons, that's understandable. Anyone having sexual relations needs to protect themselves and their partners with safer sex.

The risk of HIV transmission actually decreases dramatically with a primary, exclusive partner. The reason for this is because the stress levels of constantly searching for a mate tend to keep the viral load high. That means there are a much higher number of viruses per measurement of blood in those dating versus those in a monogamous relationship. Because of this, it is much less likely to be transmitted to the partner, especially in the presence of safer sex! So, if you're negative, I hope this will give you a measure of supportive fact in how dating someone with HIV will or will not affect you. For those who are positive, being in a monogamous relationship has been proven to be a real boost for your mental, spiritual, and physical health. The longer you are in a healthy relationship

(Note: we would like to invite people who may have opinions different than the ones expressed here to write a response.)

that is sexually exclusive, the longer your life expectancy. This is related as follows: "For people with HIV, having a stable partner is associated with a slower rate of progression to AIDS or death, finds a study in the British Medical Journal. (Feb. 5, 2005) Researchers based in Switzerland followed 3,736 adults with HIV who had started highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) before 2002. Every six months, patients were asked whether they had had sexual intercourse with a stable partner."

The pluses for someone dating an HIV positive person or someone with AIDS include all those seen in any monogamous relationship. Sure, there will be rough times, but no relationship sails smoothly every second of every day! But, being a reason someone is fighting for life and as part of the support system for someone who very likely enjoys sharing a unique life-experience with another loving human being is a positive thing no matter how you look at it. No two HIV/AIDS experiences are alike so the adventure will most likely include things new to both parties, even if both are positive. The Bible says, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity." (Psalms 133:1) This, alone, is a good reason why we should not let HIV statuses stop us from the enjoyment of an emotional connection of a lifetime. My partner and I are living and breathing examples; we're sero-differing partners and have enjoyed each other's love and affection for 5 years and intend on continuing it indefinitely! ▼

Chloe Sage...

they bounce back with "Congratulations! She's beautiful!"). In the back of our minds, we know we still need to seek out and find a church in the Denver area where we can raise our daughter and call our own. We feel this challenge acutely but continue to move through it, trusting God to guide us in this journey. We are dreaming of the future while remembering to enjoy each and every precious moment of this amazing adventure. Chloe Sage is surely an amazing gift from God and we are thankful for each and every day we get to enjoy our precious little girl. ▼

Kinship News

Connection Correction -

Catherine Taylor

I would like to correct a misprint from the last issue. I misunderstood Ruud's perfectly fine English and wrote that he is grateful to still have his intellect when what he said is that he appreciates the internet so that he can keep in touch with all of us. Mea Culpa Ruud. Thank you for your patience with me.

IMRU? - Naveen Jonathan

Fall has begun. The school year is in full swing. Many IMRU? members on the East & West coasts are preparing to attend the Mini-Kampmeetings in their region. Some Region 1 and 2 folk will be heading up to Vermont's gathering during the weekend of November 3-5. IMRU? members are planning on presenting musical features at the worship service in Palm Springs and Vespers in Vermont. If you are interested in attending

an event or would like more information about IMRU?, please contact us at IMRUGroup@gmail.com

Kinship Older Adults - Virginia Reynolds

For the very first time the young are seeing history being made before it is censored by their elders.
Margaret Mead

I think you might find the following web site helpful. It's from a Berkeley, California run group who has women's plights in mind upon retirement. Even though it focuses on women I think the information is useful for both sexes. A friend who was in brokerage sales until her death used to explain to anyone who would listen to her that if you save enough to give to yourself even \$100 per month it could make a tremendous difference to the quality of life, a person's life. The earlier one begins saving the more you might get per month from savings vehicles. If one begins to save from the time one leaves college, lives a frugal life, retirement could be easier on us as we live longer with inevitable inflation. For example: I bought a good car. I then drove it for over twenty years. I have a friend who bought a car in 1974 and she still drives it. She lives very well, but is still frugal in her retirement and loves her car. We can do simple and easy things that make living much easier if we can look at our entire lives as stages for the next part we are to play.

<http://www.longviewinstitute.org/research/rosen/womeninthecold>

Longview Institute - Old Women in the Cold

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The Rise or Fall of Your Relationship

Michele O'Mara

If you long to be an expert golf player you will not want to golf with me. Most athletes would agree that in order to improve your game you must play with teams and competitors more skilled than you are.

Relationships are sort of like that too. In the loosely quoted words of Mathew Kelly, author of *The 7 Levels of Intimacy*, we rise or fall to the level of those with whom we surround ourselves.

Our relationships develop in a context over which we have tremendous influence. Who do you spend time with? How do they value or treat your relationship? How do they approach their own relationships? What is their understanding of your commitment to your relationship and how do they support or sabotage it?

Our relationship will grow or atrophy according to the environment in which we require it to exist. Is your relationship visible? Do people know it exists? Are those people supportive of your relationship? Do you protect your relationship from forces that don't support it? How? Are you choosing your relationship above other people, places and things?

This week I encourage you to discuss these questions with your partner:

With whom do you spend time?

How do these people treat or value your relationship?

How do these people treat or value their own relationship?

What is their understanding of your commitment to your relationship and how do they support or sabotage it?

Is your relationship visible?

Who, if anyone, holds you accountable to a successful relationship?

Do you protect your relationship from forces that don't support it?

Are you choosing your relationship above other people, places and things?

What can you do today to create a better environment for your relationship to grow?

Who is your greatest relationship supporter?

Hopefully these questions will trigger discussion that leads to a more conscious examination of how well you surround yourselves and consequently your relationship. Find supporters and those who hold you accountable to one another and your love. ▼

Building our Vision

Our Kinship community has groups all over the world. Many of them were represented in Florida and at EKM5. Noel from Australia, Itamar from Brazil, and Mike Lewis who is working in the UK and Eire were all in Orlando. Ruud and Mike were at EKM5 in Gudhem, Sweden two weeks later. And of course most of the board members were in either Florida or Sweden.

Over the last two years we have chosen to spend time to develop long range plans of how we will grow our organization. The board set up a task force that put together a strategic planning process. Andrew Pang acted as our consultant in this process. Isis Montalvo has been our coordinator.

We are focusing on four areas: Communication, Finance, Infrastructure, and Outreach and Attitudes. We want to work on improving and strengthening the ways we communicate within Kinship as well as develop outreach to Seventh Day Adventist congregations and individual members.

We are working to insure that the many programs Kinship supports such as the January Workshop on Homosexuality and the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Kampmeetings, Mini Kampmeetings, the Connection, KinNet, International outreach, Information packets, Regional Supports etc can be supported and new needs met. Our plan is to send out five grant proposals per year for the next five years. In January, we got a \$25,000 grant to support the Workshop and the book we are developing from that workshop! We are also working to expand our base of donors by letting the Kinship community know our needs as well as our projects.

As we look at the infrastructure of the organization we are working to develop ways to support increasing numbers of people. We have decided to hire a part time staff person to help with the administrative work in our office. In September we offered training for Regional Coordinators to build strategic plans for their areas. Because of the way Kinship is growing we are setting up a by-laws committee to make sure our structure accurately matches the way we work.

As we look at changing attitudes within the Seventh Day Adventist Community we are developing ways to survey pastors. We want to increase awareness of Kinship in SDA communities.

We would like to build a Seventh Day Adventist straight ally list. If you have any recommendations please feel free to send them to Fred at office@sdakinship.org.

We are planning ways to improve our communication technology. Russell, Scott and Josephine are going to work on updating us and making a variety of information systems more available to us. We are a long way now from the days of phone calls and snail mail. ▼

Kinship News...

I must admit that I personally measure success in terms of the contributions an individual makes to her or his fellow human beings.
Margaret Mead

Region Coordinator's Training Weekend

Over Labor Day weekend, thirteen of our regional coordinators and their supporters converged on the Glendale City Seventh Day Adventist church to spend some time building leadership skills, discussing ways to reach out to our various geographic areas, and to make plans for the future. Obed and Fred spent hours putting together a work book. Naveen spent hours making sure we had wonderful food and representation from IMRU? as well as filling in many developmental spaces. Despite all of the demographic differences one common theme is that we want to hear from you about your needs and interests. Please feel free to call your Regional Coordinator, who is

listed on page two of the Connection, to let them know your needs and interests.

Homosexuality and The Seventh Day Adventist Church:

Book in Progress - Dave Ferguson

We are quite excited about the work that has been done on the book so far. Most of the articles have been written and re-written and are ready for publication. Many of the responses to the articles have also been submitted. We are looking at publication early in 2007 and are developing a creative and organized plan to make sure this ground breaking book will be available to Seventh Day Adventist thought leaders and members all over the world.

Treasurer's Report - Karen Wetherell

I want to thank those of you who responded to my report or the inspiration of the Holy Spirit last month. We have received some new donations that I am assuming came from your awareness of our needs and your choice to support them. Donations to Kinship qualify for charitable contributions on your income taxes so be sure to remember us when you are making your plans for the end of the year. You are helping us build visions and reach out to even more people around this tiny globe.

Australia - Noel Thorpe

The Kinship Australia Kampmeeting, Health and Well Being, was a success and was a spiritual high for all of the people that attended. I appreciated this chance to have GLBTI Seventh Day Adventists and their allies share spiritual togetherness. Our venue was wonderful and we are planning on using it again for



Kampmeeting Australia, 2007. The dates will be September 28-30. Some of our members from the Philippines are already inquiring about being there. Thank you to all who made this so memorable.

Europe - Ruud Kieboom

Kinship Germany 'Get Together'

The streets must have been paved more than forty years ago. Quickly Joachim rides through a gate and another one. The building before us looks like a workshop, the wall painted skilfully with beautiful bright blue and red colours. On the left a building is a building that looks like a canteen. Then I notice a name on the long painted wall. "Adventgemeinde Bremen-Findorf". Is this a church? When we enter the building there is the canteen on the left and an exhibition room on the right. Straight ahead we saw the small and cosy church room. We walk through the church to other rooms where the children have classes. In the basement we found more rooms, showers and kitchen. This is not only a church, but a multifunctional building fit to host a European Kinship Meeting. This is the place where we will gather in 2008; Bremen, Germany.

We are here to enjoy the fellowship of a warm hearted (and gay friendly) Seventh-day

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Meet This Year's Elected Officers...



Bob Bouchard: President

I have been involved with SDA Kinship for a long time. I was on the board in 1980 and have been to twenty of the twenty five Kampmeetings. I really believe in the mission of this organization to help those who are out there who need us. I don't have problems with being gay and Seventh Day Adventist but I do want to help others who have had difficulty. Right now one of the important projects for Kinship is working on our regional focus to build up different areas where Kinship has members. I cannot "do it all". I make no attempt to try and do it all. This is a very empowered group. Many of you have roles in our organization and this makes Kinship healthy. I am thinking this will be my last year. This will be my sixth term and I believe that every so many years it is healthy to make a change. I was president for six years several years ago but still stayed involved. I am sure I will stay involved again.

Jeremy Brown: Vice President

Kinship has been very helpful to me for the last six years. It is an invaluable social connection. Two years ago I decided to become more involved and joined the leadership of IMRU? I began to work on getting more active members there. We have increased the membership posts from thirty two per month to over three hundred per month. These last few months I have led one of the strategic planning groups.

Bruce Harlow: Secretary

When I first came out to myself and to the world Kinship was invaluable to me. Today coming out is not an issue. Now I want to give back to this organization and minister to others like me. I believe there is still a lot of work to do and many people out there who can use our help. I am compulsive and detail oriented. That is what you need in my position. We are looking to revise the by-laws in the next year. I have done that several times in the past with other organizations and I would like to work on this project for Kinship. I think it is important that what we do matches what is in our by-laws.



Karen Wetherell: Treasurer

For the last two years I have focused on updating and re-organizing our systems. Now I want to

focus on strengthening our financial base. I also plan on

making regular reports about our financial status and projects in the Connection. This year we worked on creative ways to support IMRU members attending Kampmeeting.



Catherine Taylor: Connection Editor

My bias for the Connection is that this is our community story. One of the things I want from you is your experiences and your thoughts. I want stories and articles from all ages of Kinship members; teenagers, young adults, beginning families, retired folk. I want the thoughts of those of us who are religious conservatives and those who are angry at God and/or the

church. When someone suggests a topic, generally I expect them to write it. But Noel in Australia was impressed that we should have articles about HIV/AIDS and then Thor in the New England area of the US felt impressed to write them. We have an international community. I want our news to be from all different areas of the Kinship globe. If there is something else you think is important to have in our newsletter, we look forward to having you write about it.

Church Liaison: Dave Ferguson

One of our big projects this year was the January workshop on Homosexuality and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. We are now working on the second part of that project which is the production of a book of the presentations. We are working on grants to provide some resources to help retrain pastors who have lost their careers working for the church because of church reaction to their orientation. Arranging the pastoral speakers who come to Kampmeeting is also my responsibility. We try to find ones who live near where we are holding the Kampmeeting for the year. I help develop "Quick Response Letters" when there are difficult events like the Series on Homosexuality by It is Written. I don't always know about these things so if

you hear of relevant events, actions or issues, please let me know. Every one of you needs to write to It is Written to let them know about the damage their program is causing. Right now they are making a DVD of their series and sending it out for \$50.00 to be available sometime this autumn. It is important to write to Elder Paulsson because he is on the board of It is Written and can be a power to stop the distribution of the DVD.



Kampmeeting Coordinator: Elena Thomas

Next year our theme will be "Nurturing all the Qualities of You." I am planning to incorporate the skills and gifts of our members to create workshops for us. We are going to include options for younger members, families, men and women as well as times for all of us. Our Kampmeeting will be in the San Francisco area.

Public Relations: Scott Tetley

I have been communications secretary in many Seventh Day Adventist Churches. I have done all my volunteer work in Public Relations related fields. I love working with by-law development. I became interested in doing this work with Kinship after talking with Noel from Australia about ways I can be involved with our community. I used to work for the church but decided to find other employment when I decided to come out. Kinship has given much to me. Our meeting last year was the first time I was able to reconcile my sexuality with my faith. I would like to begin to contribute to our community with my work here. I want to work with our communication pipeline. We have members in many different places in their lives. Some use pseudonyms and need to have their identities protected. Others want to become more involved. I plan to use technologies to keep us all in contact with each other and with the world outside of our organization. I plan to work with the Board to provide instant responses to issues. ▼



Kinship News...

Adventist congregation, as part of our get together with members from the German Kinship Group. Joachim is working to build up our Kinship group in Germany. He organizes weekend meetings twice a year. Each meeting attracts six to eight people. We would have had ten this year but Joerg and Tomas were called in to work medical shifts.

Kees and I left Holland on Friday afternoon and after a five hour train ride we arrived at Oldenburg, about 50 km west of Bremen, early in the evening. Joachim and his partner Stefan and David and his partner Werner met us at the railway station. It was good to see them again after six months. First we had a good German meal (we couldn't finish it all) before we went to the youth hostel where we would stay overnight.

On Sabbath morning we all went to Bremen to join in the service of the Finsdorf church. The church isn't very big, but the room was full when the service started. Finsdorf is a special congregation that attracts many young people with its open and welcoming atmosphere and alternative services. Young people accompany the community singing with non-traditional hymns and members of all ages have a part in the service. The pastor preaches, wearing jeans. His message is a happy one. My scepticism when we arrived is gone. This is the right place to meet with joyful fellow believers. After service we join the congregation in a light meal of bread, cheese, grapes and drinks. We take a walk into the beautiful city centre. I hope to visit it again in 2008 during our European Kinship Meeting.

Returning to Oldenburg we

took another walk. Oldenburg obtained its city rights in 1345. Until the end of World War Two it was the residence of the dukes of the Duchy of Oldenburg. It has some nice museums. On Sunday we visited on the "Landesmuseum" which shows the history of the Duchy and the town. On Sunday we had our last dinner in a cosy "Bierstube".

During our talks we discussed ways to reach out to a larger group of German GLBTI present and former Seventh Day Adventists. Joachim plans to organise a bigger meeting for the weekend of Pentecost, May 17, 2007, with speakers and a packed program. He and Stefan are also working on the European Kinship Meeting 7 during the following year.

United Kingdom and Eire - Mike Lewis

Peeping over the fence in Scotland

On Sept 26th, in God's perfect timing, (this was the only time it could have all come together), the quarterly Scottish Pastor's team meeting in Crieff Church was presented with the story of how a gay man came to the realization that he could really be a Gay Christian with a Mission. Peterson Toscano (self-defined gay Christo-centric Quaker activist actor) presented the group with a moving account of how, as a young man, he fell in love with Jesus, spent 17 years struggling to change from gay to straight (failing miserably), accepted his homosexuality and now works tirelessly to help people in many walks of life realize that gay and Christian are not self-exclusive. For the first time this group of SDA Pastors met face-to-face with a Queer, and experienced the anguish of a real person as he wrestled with self-acceptance.

He challenged them with the question: If it is the view of the World that homophobia is OK, why does the Church accept and promote that world-view when it opposes most other world-views? Discussion followed on a number of topics including celibacy, relationships and implications of Genesis 1 27.

The response that "we must do more to listen to and learn from these people" was very encouraging. Both sides have now looked over the fence and have not been frightened by what they have seen and heard. Dialog will continue as time allows. Exciting times are ahead as we continue to dismantle the fence completely. For Peterson's own write-up of the event visit his blog at http://www.a_musing.blogspot.com/ and look at his entry for Wed 27th Sept: "Slow Dancing with Ministers".

Uganda - Joseph Brown

Joseph sent us the following report.

Uganda outlaws male homosexuality, under laws originally imposed by the British colonizers in the nineteenth century. Offenders can face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Lesbians and gays are subjected to vigilante violence by homophobic mobs, especially in rural areas where most of the population live. They get little or no police protection. The government has banned same-sex marriage. In 2004 Radio Simba was fined for airing a debate on gay issues. State-funded HIV campaigns stress abstinence and ignore gay and bisexual men. The government refuses to promote safer sex and condoms to same-sex partners. The director of the UN AIDS agency was expelled from the country for having discussions with gay

rights campaigners. In July 2005, the home of lesbian activist, Victor Juliet Mukasa, was raided and searched illegally by local government officials. They confiscated gay rights documents, and arrested a friend who was staying in the house. Earlier the same year, the play Vagina Monologues was banned on the grounds that it promoted "unnatural sex acts, homosexuality and prostitution." Recently there has been an outing campaign by the Ugandan tabloid newspaper, Red Pepper, reportedly owned by the half brother of the homophobic President, Yoweri Museveni. President Museveni has urged the police to hunt down and arrest gays and lesbians. Red Pepper has outed 58 alleged lesbian and gay men in the last two months; and has urged readers to send more names, so they too can be outed. The paper also published a list of underground gay venues. Recently, Red Pepper carried an article with the headline 'Jinja Cops Hunt For Gays, ' in which they reported a police manhunt to arrest homosexuals in the city Jinja. Letters of the protest should be addressed to: The Ugandan High Commissioner, Uganda House, 58-59 Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5DX. Fax: 020 7839 8925. Email: info@ugandahighcommission.co.uk

US Region 1 - Catherine Taylor

Samuel Pang sent us the following announcement from PFLAG:

You are invited to join us in a forum whose message is "God blesses same sex relationships". "Homosexuality and the Bible" will be at Arlington Street Church, (corner of Arlington & Boylston Streets) Boston on Saturday, November 18, 2006 from 4:00pm - 6:00pm followed

by a reception from 6pm-7pm. It will feature Rev. Jeff Miner and John Tyler Connoley, co-authors of "The Children Are Free". Rev. Jeff Miner is a former evangelical Christian, a Harvard educated lawyer, and a minister who offers great insight and historical perspective and compassion into the Biblical passages that are often used to "clobber" GLBT people. John Tyler Connoley is a licensed minister in the United Church of Christ. It is open to the public. A suggested donation of \$10 will be gratefully received by those who can do so. If you have further questions, please email us at info@gbpflag.org. We look forward to seeing you there!



September 27 a small group of us shared the afternoon touring New England's Five State fair.

The Juniper Hill Inn was full by mid September. IMRU? Members are carpooling north and camping in Springfield. The menus are complete. The workshops are set. We're quite excited about our first Mini Kampmeeting!

For those who need to plan in advance, on December 9 we will be meeting for a late afternoon potluck meal and sharing the rest of the evening with the Boston Gay Men's Chorus at their holiday concert. Samuel Pang has offered to reserve

tickets for us. If you are interested, contact Samuel at samuelcp@comcast.net.

Region 2 - Yolanda Elliott

On September 30 we enjoyed a great spaghetti dinner at Stacy, Greg and little Vianne's home. Isis gave us a strategic planning presentation. This segued into our report on the Regional coordinator training. Enthusiastic discussions followed both talks. I'll be bringing reports from our group to SDA Kinship board meeting. We also talked about ways to make Kinship and our gatherings comfortable for everyone who attends. I enjoyed being able to talk with Stanley. Many of our group ended up the evening with card games.

We will be announcing the dates for our Christmas Party in the local news.

Jim, Stacy and Greg and I have divided the year and will each be planning four socials.

Region 3 - Jon Roberts

Plan ahead to attend our Kinship Southeast 2nd annual Thanksgiving feast on November 12 at 4PM! This is a great time to sit around a table with your family and reflect on the blessings the Lord has given us over the past year. There will be plenty of food. Please bring a desert to share with your family. For directions, contact me at sauguy2000@yahoo.com.

US Region 4 - Bruce Harlow

Here in the Mid West Region we are beginning to reactivate our meetings. I'm going to be in Indianapolis Nov 6-10 and am going to coordinate a get-together at a local restaurant. The specific date hasn't been

Continued on next page...

Kinship News...

determined, and will be based on the response to the e-mail I sent all Indiana members. Then, I am going to be in Dayton, OH, Nov 10-12, and am planning either a Dayton or Columbus restaurant get-together, both the location and date to be determined by the Ohio members.

If anyone is interested in getting together but didn't hear from me, they can contact me at bgharlow@sbcglobal.net or my cell at (773) 991-3571.

US Region 8 - Obed Vasquez

We have been developing our yearly calendar of events. We've decided to meet once a month on the third weekend of the month. Jacquie will be sending out announcements to all our regional members. If you would like to get our "newsletter", please feel free to contact her. She can be reached at: jacqueline@hegarty.com ▼



Kinship Calendar

October 27-29 - SDA Kinship International Board Meeting in San Francisco, California.

October 28 - Region 5 will participate in the Halloween Party at the Oak Lawn Street Party.

November 3-5 - Region 1 Mini Kampmeeting in Windsor, Vermont. For those of you who want to check out the venue, feast your eyes on www.juniperhillinn.com. You can find more information on our KOL website. Sherri

Babcock will be our Sabbath Speaker. Dinner will be a New England Thanksgiving Banquet...and that is just for starters. For more information you can contact Catherine at katgurian@aol.com.

November 10 - Region 2 Vespers at Oaklands Presbyterian Church in Laurel, Maryland.

November 12 at 4PM - Region 3 Thanksgiving Feast.

November 18 - Homosexuality and The Bible discussion at

the historic Arlington Street Church in Boston.

November 26 - Kinship Australia will participate in the Adelaide Feast Picnic Day. It is held in Rymill Park from noon to 6pm.

December 8 - Region 2 will attend the candlelight concert series.

December 9 - Boston Gay Men's Chorus and Region 1 Potluck at Samuel Pang's home. ▼

Holiday with Kinship Europe

Catherine Taylor

One of the traditions developed by our European group is our annual plans to spend a holiday together after the annual Kinship meeting. We want to give you a flavor of our time and adventures. We'd like to thank Ivan for being our photographer. We'd like to thank Reino and Ingemar for being such extraordinary hosts. And we'd like to invite all of you to join us on future adventures!

Our travelogue continues...

Wednesday: Ruud, Kees and I slip out early in the day and head for the bird lake. The swan and her cygnets greet us at the nature center. The uniquely Swedish herd of cattle keeps an eye on us. We skirt the edges of the lake, view the entire area from the top of the sheep hill, realize we're hungry and walk back, much more quickly, to the car and home to our traditional ninety minute, four course breakfast.

Reino has told us that the art exhibit we will see today in Tidaholm is very powerful and we should be emotionally prepared. Jesus and the Homosexuals is a series showing ten stages of Jesus' life surrounded by those of us from the GLBTI community. We are looked upon today in much the same way as many of the followers of Jesus were perceived in Roman ruled Galilee. I was prepared to be shocked but I'm not. The lesson makes sense to me. I am powerfully moved by a companion exhibit of large photos showing the effect of HIV/AIDS in Africa. Gerard, Annelies, Ruud, Kees, Ingemar,

Ivan and Melanie head off for other parts of the museum. I find a bench and a tree and supervise the squirrels. Reino stops to talk.

Ach, it's been two hours since breakfast and there is a desperate need for.....refreshments. A small river flows through the center of town; shops line its edges. We find a café and settle in for our midday stop. We're on our way to Vatter Lake and the wonderful village of Hjo. It is beautiful, large, lined by parks and home to marinas with a great variety of lake traveling vessels. We shop for food and I think we needed more refreshments. Reino and Ingemar invite us for dinner. Yea! More food.



We arrive to the sound of birds and cicadas. The outdoor table is set with China, silver (silver?!) and crystal bowls full of flowers. The neighboring bee keeper stops by before we eat. The shadows arrive as we enjoy the salmon (Annelies thinks to bring me Quorn croquettes), vegetables and fresh berries for dessert. Another friend drops by for the final rays of the sunlight and conversation.

Thursday: Melanie sterilized the house today. I don't think that was the original plan. I am sure

we had some sightseeing in mind and on the calendar. I was beginning to get exhausted with all this holiday making and wondered how on earth the Europeans did it. Somewhere at the second course and 43rd minute of breakfast I realized I was not alone. We were concerned that Ingemar might be upset that we could not enjoy his plans so sent ambassadors over to see what he thought. Ingemar thought a day off was a grand plan. Blankets were laid out in the back yard, chairs were lounged around the table, we got out our books and sunscreen and began some serious holiday resting. Gerard and Annelies stopped by to say good-bye on their way to the second part of their holiday time. We did pay some catering bills from the conference. We came back from that errand and found Melanie with latex gloves and supplies making our flat clean enough to compete with a surgery. The Swiss would be envious. Ruud was kind enough to be interviewed. We made dinner and invited the Ostra Tunhem annex. They brought organic raspberries. I picked out all the ones with small guests living in them and sent them back to the fields. Kees didn't understand our dietary trepidations and ate the berries with gusto. We would need to explain to him in more detail at breakfast the next day. Reino exhorted us to "have courage" when it came to those lush raspberries and their occasional occupants. I remained a fruit sorting wuss. We spent the evening looking at Ivan's photos.

Continued on next page...

Friday: This morning, we are supposed to pay the rent. Now, you would have thought that a group with a sterilized living space would feel fine about welcoming the manager of the guest house to our abode. Oh no. We found ourselves in yet another great clean up. I really do think the queen of any country would have felt fine...well, roughing it fine, to visit here. Kees joined several of us in our roles as fresh berry investigators and wusses. Reino and Ingemar trekked us up to the end of a lake to see a medieval fort and amazing gardens. We had refreshments as we got there to strengthen us for our tours. We cooked dinner in the twilight, left all our windows open and listened to the music at our picnic table that Ivan played through his laptop. Coming inside to do the dishes, we realize that a horde of flies had arrived before us. Bravely, Melanie and Ivan grabbed the vacuum cleaner and ran around the house, saving us from the dreaded buzzing. Even writing this, I get the giggles and appreciate their efforts.

Sabbath: Reino invites us to his garden for worship; just what Melanie had wished for. Reino should teach all the time. After lunch Ingemar shows us the soon to be inaugurated medieval pilgrim path. We wander through woods, come out on a meadow, stop by a pond and home. Great day! We create a meal out of leftovers from breakfast, refreshments, and other dinners. The rest of the crew will leave in the morning. Ingemar and Reino bring a salad from their garden and make us mongul. I don't know what it is other than a plant in their garden with béchamel sause. It's great. They tease us about the raspberries: "Be Brave!"

Sunday: I do not like the good-bys. My housemates are packed. Ivan and Melanie will take Ruud and Kees to the airport on their way to Denmark. Ingemar appears during our "last breakfast". Everyone who works in the café will be at a gathering honoring all the work they have done to create this place that is restoring a part of history. Can I run the café? Oy Vey. In English? I can barely say thank you in Swedish and I'm just learning how to pronounce the geography. But I do and it's fun and I think I could cook something special the next time if there had been one. Reino keeps me company for the last part while Ingemar runs tours in English. I get the history of Roses. Amazing story. Listening to him teaches me part of my heritage. There is dinner in their garden. They are preparing when I arrive. It is slow and evening speed. Beets, potatoes, leeks, carrots; mostly from the garden. We have cheese that Ingemar got as a reward for being a community oriented person. He says Reino should get the Rose Day credit. Gracious men, they drive me home. I GOT to run a café today, in Sweden. I will remember this.

Monday: It is so difficult to leave here that I do not want to think about it. At the same time I will be glad to get home to Karen and the beasts and the plants and my life at home in Vermont. Generativity: the ideal of a functional relationship. Not always children, but to build our world in a variety of ways. It seems that the focus of Reino and Ingemar's world is to love each other while building. Reino's roses and his passion for gay Christians. And Ingemar "the PR" guy. I walked the bird lake good-by. I think that tonight I will take the camera to

the stones. The interview with Reino was poignant for me. I wish he could inoculate so many of us with his life and his understanding of his relationship with God. Got to sit in the evening sun. And and and...got my adventure walk. Took a sunseting stroll to the stones and the tombs. I had wanted to get back all week but we just had too many adventures. I think we got everything in. I am going to try to get the windmill tomorrow and then I think we really will have gotten everything in.

Tuesday morning: There are butterflies in the sun on the flowers in the breeze as I shut the window, lock the door and head for home. ▼

Reino's Psalm and Sermon

Sabbath, 22 July 2006

Psalm 66

Shout with joy all the earth
Sing the glory of His name
Make His praise glorious
Say to God, How awesome are
Your deeds
So great is your power
That your enemies cringe
before you
They sing praise to you
They sing praise to your name

Kom en zie de werken van God
Zijn daden vervullen de mens
met ontzag:
Hij heft de zee veranderd in
droog land.
Zijn volk trok te voet door de
rivier.
Laten wij ons dan in hem
verheugen:
Machtig heerst hij voor eeuwig
Zijn ogen weaken over de
volken
Laat niemand zightegen hem
verzetten sela
(Dutch)

connection ▽

The Journal of the Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship International, Inc.

Praise our God oh peoples
Let the sound of His Praise be
heard
He has preserved our lives
And kept our feet from slipping
For you, oh God, tested us
You refined us like silver
You brought us into prison
And laid burdens on our backs
You let men ride over our heads
We went through fire and water
But you brought us to a place
of abundance.

Vs. 12

Sina olet antamnut vihollisten
ajaa ylitsemme
Me olemme jouhteuneet
tuleen ja veteen
Mutta sina olet avanut meille
jalleen tien.

(Finnish)

Come and listen, all you who
fear God;
Let me tell you what He has
done for me.
I cried out to him with my
mouth
His praise was on my tongue
If I had cherished sin in my
heart
The Lord would not have
listened
But God has surely listened
and heard my voice in prayer

Praise be to God who has not
rejected my prayer or
withheld
His Love from me.

I think this Psalm is for us.
The circumstances are different
for Kinship members than for the
person who wrote the words but
the feelings are the same ones
many of us have felt. Our God
has great power and I believe He
will vindicate us before those
who denigrate us or want to
harm us.

I believe it is important for us
to remember His power. He has
led us through places that are as

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scary as the time when the
Israelites had to cross through
the Red Sea on foot. He has
delivered us from people who
wanted to cause us harm.

God has tested us. Sometimes
it has felt like we go through the
flames. But He can keep our feet
from slipping. I think about
verse 12 a lot. It is powerful.
Many of us have felt like people
were "riding over our heads".
We feel the "fire and water". We
have had difficult or awful
experiences. We have lost
people we loved. But the Lord
will bring us to a "place of
abundance."

The Finnish translation of part
of this Psalm reads: "when I was
able to ask for help, I already
had the praise in my mouth".
God's answers affect us this way.

Many of us have been told

that God will not hear our
prayers because we are sinners.
But God does answer our prayers
and "If I had cherished sin in my
heart, the Lord would not have
listened". I find great comfort
that "God has not rejected my
prayer or withheld His love from
me." The Finnish reads that God
gives us His grace and His
mercy. We are already
vindicated. We are already
loved. We have already been
shown mercy. We are already
members of God's family. ▼



And Finally...

When you see geese heading south for the winter... flying along in V formation...you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range, than if each bird flew on its own. People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more quickly and easily because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone... and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are. When the head goose gets tired it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. It is sensible to take turns doing demanding jobs...with people or with geese flying south. Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. What do we say when we honk from behind?

Finally...and this is important...when a goose gets sick or is wounded by gunshots, and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies, and only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group. How far can we go if we will stand by each other like that.

Author Unknown

