

What Is Connection?

con-nect 1 to bind or fasten together; unite; 2 to establish communication for; 3 to attach electrically; [see KinNet]; 4 to associate; 5 to join;

con-nec-tion 1 act of connecting or state of being connected; 2 means of connecting; 3 relationship, association

I've been hearing a lot this past year about connecting and disconnecting. The psychologists and other therapists talk about how it is connections which keep us healthy and how being disconnected is that which enables us to mistreat each other and ourselves.

Long ago Kinship chose as the title for its newsletter: *SDA Kinship CONNECTION*. Last year the firm I work for began an internal newsletter for the 3000 employees in our division, and the title of this newsletter is of course, it is *CONNECTION*.

People in business seem to understand what the shrinks are saying, that *CONNECTION* is vital to the survival of an organization just as it is vital to the survival of individuals.

This *CONNECTION* is for you, for us. It is one way we can stay connected with each other. Your thoughts and comments are wanted and welcome! ▼

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 What Is Connection? ▼ Letter to The Review
- 2 Who's Who & What's What & Where's ... well, you get
- 3 IMRU
- 4 An Incomplete History of Gay & Lesbian OC
- 5 Being Young/Coming Out ▼ About the Review Article
- 6 Wellness ▼ Room for a View or Two
- 7 Why I Am an SDA ▼ KINNET
- 8 Longterm Relationships
- 9 Lesbian Lifestyles ▼ Hugs
- 10 Playing the Role
- 11 Regional Reports
- 12 Of Parachutes and Pardons
- 13 Of Parachutes and Pardons - continued
- 14 What We Look Like ▼ What's in Next Month's
- 15 Book Review ▼ Video Review
- 16 Calendar ▼ Hawaii 2000

TO THE EDITORS OF THE REVIEW...

I am a Seventh Day Adventist.

My parents are third generation Adventists. My uncle was once the head of a regional conference. I, myself, attended SDA elementary school for 7 years, graduated from an Adventist Academy, and attended Andrews University.

I also worked for the church for over a decade.

I tell you all this because I am also a Lesbian.

I am writing to express my deep sadness over the article written by Royson James. Mr. James is right to fear that the Church will be painted as intolerant and hateful because that is indeed what many gay SDA's who remain in the church experience from church leaders and from their congregations.

As someone who has seen first hand the "witch hunts" in our universities, and the hypocritical expulsions in our schools of gay and lesbian Adventists, I would tell Mr. James that if the church was to be seen as "kind, loving and caring" it must truly be loving and caring.

There are many Adventists who do accept and cherish their fellow gay church members. Their courageous, loving example is to be commended.

There are also many Adventist parents who love their gay children. I am lucky to be the daughter of one of them. But there are many who aren't so lucky. Especially if they are force fed the hateful, UNChristian message they are receiving from the church on this matter.

I, for one, find it profoundly offensive that the church in 1985 added "homosexual and lesbian practices" to the list of offenses for which church members may be disciplined or disfellowshipped. It was added along with incest and spousal abuse. Now what kind of message does that send to gay and lesbian members of our congregation? Mr. James is right to fear our church would be labeled "intolerant". It's easy to see why.

Like the quote says: "The fact is that more people have been slaughtered in the name of religion than for any other single reason. That is true perversion."

To their credit, some SDA leaders occasionally mention that all Christians should love the homosexual while hating the homosexuality. Unfortunately, this message is often ignored by the membership; they end up hating both.

Continued on page 5

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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 non-profit 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.

SDA 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 because it 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.

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Special thanks to Ben, Walt, and Hal ... who each went the extra mile to help me! - Ron

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

IMIRU

FROM THE NET

Greg Cox

Young Gay/Lesbian Outreach Coordinator

This posting on the Campus Outreach web page really caught my eye and heart. For one who has been out for more than 10 years, I think it is easy to forget the struggles and turmoil it was to come out. This posted message reflects just that for one in the process. It has been edited for content, but the message was not censored.

"I guess I can say I'm confused. Since I was very young I remember being amazed with the male anatomy. This probably isn't unusual, but maybe not if you are in this position and are a male yourself. I didn't know much about sexuality, or gave thought to the desire of a man's body until I was told it was wrong. I became really unsure of what I liked, men or women? I told myself I liked women...but was that true? Did I make that assumption because I was told so? I don't know, but I knew that I had to like women. When I was depressed, I would close my eyes and picture a man hugging me and comforting me...never a woman.

I was taught at an SDA school. They said that homosexuality is condemned. That scared me, I did not want to burn in hell. I loved God. Why? Why would God want to kill me? I told myself that I am not gay, I told myself that I liked women, I told myself homosexuality is bad. I knew I had to like women because it is "natural" and that homosexuality is bad as it says in the Bible. So during my early teens, I decided that I was bisexual and that I wouldn't show my gay side. I kept my fantasies of men to myself.

When I was 16 I started going to the gay chats on the Internet. Sometimes I would abuse them or just read whatever was typed. I started to let my feelings run wild and was able to be myself in the chat rooms. This made my heart race! This was a big step and this was really scary. This also made me more confused later on. I wasn't sure if I was purely gay, but I knew that liking women was a cover-up.

Later on I met someone that was gay. He was what I thought "typical" with peroxide hair and the semi-gay voice. I didn't mind except that I fell in love with him. It was very weird. We started to hang out with other gay people. This made me uncomfortable as they had very gay voices and gestures. They were queens but I got used to them and started to be like them. I wore black mascara, nail polish and started saying "love, honey and darling" too much. I was in a dilemma, I didn't want to burn in hell, I wanted to go to heaven. I started to question my faith, the bible, and

myself. I asked why? Will gay people burn in hell? Would my friends die? They are nice people; they are human beings too. I was so distressed but I had to come to terms with being gay. I needed some answers, and I needed some quick.

I researched at school and looked up the entire Bible references and verses about homosexuality. That didn't help. So I looked on the Internet and found some different answers. The Bible does not condemn homosexuality! I found some support groups on the Internet for gay/lesbian Christians. They all say the same thing: the bible was misinterpreted, homosexuals are not condemned.

Is this true? For someone who is depressed, these lies can seem inviting. Are they just comforting me? Is it really OK to be gay? Can you gamble your own life on a fact that may not really be true? Can you save your life and eternal happiness? This is confusing because support groups say one thing and the majority says another. Is the support groups lying, or is it just bad because it's not with the majority?

Support groups say the Bible was misinterpreted. If this is so, could it be possible that other things are not correct too? How can the Bible be wrong? Do people just listen to what they want to hear? How can the Bible be wrong? It has stood the test of time and has a logical explanation through faith. Are we all deluded? Are we deceived, and should we stop our homosexual sins right now? Do you really want to gamble with your life? If you are gay, do you want to take that chance with your life?

I tell myself that God is the final judge. People can't judge me, only God. I don't know what I believe myself. Will homosexuals really be in heaven? Where are these facts, or is it just faith that we will be in heaven? What can I say, I have no idea and I am really confused." ▼

This posting brings up a lot of issues as well as deep emotions. I can remember feeling the exact same way, questioning everything. How could I be raised and educated in a society that has totally lied to me? I knew that I wasn't a totally dreadful freak. But "why was I different", and "where were others like me"?

We can only answer these questions ourselves. Since I became involved in Kinship, the resources they provided truly did help me begin to understand my sexuality. I hope others can also have a similar experience, and by sharing this posting, maybe it will.

If you are between the ages of 18-29 and would like to associate with others, share information or just read postings like this, please email me at gregprpt@msn.com

An Incomplete History of Gay & Lesbian OC (Part 1)

Rich Kane

"An Incomplete History of Gay & Lesbian OC" (Orange County, California) by Rich Kane which appeared in the *ORANGE COUNTY WEEKLY*, August 12, 1999, gives some interesting parallels to many parts of our own histories, tongue-in-cheek at times. Because of its length, it will be presented in more than one part.

Rich Kane has graciously given permission for it to be re-printed here in the *Connection*.

Special thanks to our resident research leader, Vickie, for finding this treasure.

3 MILLION B.C. The Pacific Ocean begins sculpting Laguna's famous gay West Street Beach.

LATE 1700s Over 130 North American natives are documented to include among their tribes berdache, androgynous people classified as neither man nor woman—cross-dressers, basically, but in a spiritual sense. Berdache are plentiful among the Native Americans living at the missions that pepper the length of California—nearly every village has two, three if they're lucky. But the Spanish Catholics who have established the mission system are hell-bent on eliminating berdacheism. A priest writes, "We place our trust in God and expect that these accursed people will disappear with the growth of the missions." Apparently, they do. By the 1820s, a missionary living at San Juan Capistrano reports that while berdache were once very numerous among the natives, "At the present time, this horrible custom is entirely unknown to them."

1835 After a five-month voyage from Boston around Cape Horn, Richard Henry Dana, a 19-year-old Harvard student, arrives aboard the trade ship *Pilgrim* in what is now known as Dana Point. In *Two Years Before the Mast*, Dana's journal of the adventure, he describes his friend Bill Jackson as a "fine specimen of manly beauty" and admits having "affection" for another shipmate, a young Hawaiian named Hope. Hmm...five months at sea...a shipful of burly seamen.

1920s The blossoming film industry discovers that Laguna Beach makes a great shooting locale. Laguna's first wave of gays arrives as members of these early movie crews.

1927 The South Seas bar in Laguna Beach—later known as the Boom Boom Room—opens.

1937 Puritan fraidy-cats take a plaster fig leaf and cover over the wibbly-wobbly thing between the legs of the David statue at Forest Lawn in Cypress. Big Dave's package will remain sealed until June 1969.

1942 The El Toro and Tustin Marine Corps air stations open. Until both are decommissioned in the '90s, an untold number of mostly closeted gay and lesbian servicepeople will pass through them.

1957 Two years after its opening, Disneyland adopts regulations regarding public dancing, which includes a ban on same-sex shimmying. The idea, officials say, is to control crowds. The rule remains on

the books until 1985.

1964 The Happy Hour, a women's bar in Garden Grove, opens. Lured by cheap rents, other gay bars spring up in the city throughout the next 10 years, including Rumour Hazzit, the Tiki Hut, the Mug, the Iron Spur, the Old Bavarian Inn, the Knotty Keg, the Hound's Tooth, the Ranger, the Saddle Club and DOK West. For a while, gay bars in Garden Grove actually outnumber West Hollywood's. Police harassment eventually shuts down most, but the Happy Hour is still there 35 years later.

APRIL 1966 The California Angels move into Anaheim Stadium. Take the Kinsey Study, which claimed that 10 percent of the population is gay, and apply it to the approximately 1,100 ballplayers who've ever put on an Angels uniform during the team's 33 years. Then there's the fact that sports is a great place for a closeted queer athlete to hide.

MAY 1966 The Santa Ana Register (later known as The Orange County Register) reports on a "crackdown of suspected homosexuals" in the Newport Pier area, men who have allegedly been propositioning undercover police officers. The key word here is "alleged": before the men can be convicted, the Register prints their names, ages, home addresses and occupations, as if they're already guilty.

MARCH 1968 The Advocate, which has just started publishing and will eventually grow into "the national gay and lesbian newsmagazine," reports that an OC man has recently lost his home and car insurances after a neighbor saw him kissing a man in his back yard. The neighbor called police, who notified his insurance company.

1971 Christ Chapel Metropolitan Community Church, affiliated with the church's growing movement of gay-tolerant denominations, opens its doors in Santa Ana.

FEBRUARY 1971 Cal State Fullerton's Experimental College offers a course called Gay Life and Lib: A Study in Homosexual Life Styles and Politics. The Experimental College is part of a national trend on college campuses, a move toward non-traditional classes and new educational concepts. Other classes offered this semester at CSUF include Witchcraft: Traditional Vs. Avant-Garde, Appreciation of Restroom Graffiti, and the Life and Music of Jimi Hendrix.

APRIL 1972 The pink mailbox outside the Costa Mesa home of John Rule tells you that you've found what will eventually evolve into the Orange County Gay & Lesbian Community Services Center—one of the first in the country. The center is born in Rule's house this month, with a hot line and group rap sessions. The center will later move to Garden Grove to be more accessible to bar patrons, but it will endure broken windows and other assorted acts of vandalism—including a dead possum with a knife through its head left on the front porch. ▼

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WATCH NEXT MONTH FOR MORE OF THE
INCOMPLETE HISTORY OF GAY AND LESBIAN OC

BEING YOUNG COMING OUT

I never considered myself to be a conservative, active member of my large SDA church in South Lancaster, MA. But I believe religion and spirituality, although dependent on one another, can be two separate entities altogether.

I've just had a recent baptism, and my spiritual life has never been stronger than it is now. It took me 20 years (my whole life) of growing up in the SDA faith to realize who I am. I am a lesbian and a child of God. I believe that I owe some of my new-found spiritual strength to my coming to terms with and accepting myself as being a lesbian. To some this may seem bizarre — that becoming more secure in my sexuality could and actually has strengthened my spiritual life. But this is what has happened.

I have been living a fairly lonely existence since I came out to my family, friends, and even to myself about four years ago. Sometimes I feel like I must make a choice: To chose to be gay...or to choose to be an SDA Christian.

I've feared never being able to find another woman like me. — Someone who believes in the church's messages. — And how can I find another woman like me if I hide who I am? And hiding feels sometimes necessary, or at least necessary in the sense that I not broadcast my sexuality. And should I abandon my church community for one that is gay-friendly? — I feel ripped between these two at times.

I am going away to college in Northern California this Fall. It will be my third year of college but my first time away from home. I know that God has worked in my life, is working in my life, and will be working in my life. I know he will supply me with the support I need to make it through a school year on my own. However, I fear the possible 'need' of closeting myself when I am at school. I cannot hide who I am, but I feel in a constant struggle about how much to reveal and to whom.

Knowing that there are other people like myself, the people of Kinship, gives me strength, strength in who I really am. I am a child of God...I don't have to hide myself from Him...Why do I have to hide from others? I live for the day when I won't have to. — When we can all be ourselves, without fearing what others will think. ▼

~ Aimee

LETTER TO THE REVIEW

continued from page 1

To quote "Justice and Respect," a conservative Christian group addressing the homosexual issue: "Tragically, the knee jerk reaction of 'shooting our wounded' is never more apparent than it is with same-gender attraction and these people who most need a sense of Christian love and community often receive the least. We ...made our offer of love very conditional. It's time we stop tolerating our own unChristlike behavior...It is time to become Jesus to the hurting."

There are over 750 Christian congregations in the United States that welcome and affirm gays and lesbians in their churches including Presbyterians, Lutherans, Unitarians, and Methodists. Many SDAs, crushed and spurned by the church of their youth, are beating a path to find the love Jesus preached about in these other churches. Others reject Christ all together and turn to a non-religious life.

I hope that one day the SDA church as a whole will learn to accept and love its gay and lesbian members as well as addressing serious social issues like homelessness. Maybe Toronto 2000 will be the place where the changes will start to take hold. ▼

~ Melba L.

The above letter was in response to an article titled "What Should We Leave Behind?" in the Adventist Review. This was written by Toronto Star columnist Royson James.

His premise appears to be that if 70,000 Adventists were in Toronto for GC in the summer of 2000 and went home without leaving behind some evidence that they had been there, it would be a shame.

He then asks "...should the church be making pronouncements on issues of social and spiritual concerns? Does Toronto — with a huge gay population — need to be told that the Adventist Church opposes a gay lifestyle? Should there be a statement on gambling as a debilitating enemy of the family and a scourge of society?"

"The gay issue would no doubt be incendiary — especially seeing that the city's annual Gay Pride Parade takes place on the first Sabbath of the session. Is this the way the tiny and relatively unknown Seventh-day Adventist Church in Toronto — 40,000 members out of an area population of 4.3 million — wants to be introduced to the media? (Imagine the headline: "Adventists Slam Gays.")

"Never mind that the message might be carefully crafted to sound sensitive and nonjudgmental. People who have never been introduced to the kind, caring, loving face of the church might be presented with an image of intolerance and hate. Citizens who would otherwise find our health lifestyle attractive might be turned off as the church is vilified as narrow-minded."

He goes on to discuss the homeless issue and how the church could make an impact in Toronto on that issue with gifts of time and money.

Obviously many SDA g/vlt persons took great offense at his statements regarding the church's stance on gay issues. Many letters were written to the editor of the Adventist Review expressing this, one such being the letter by Melba. ▼

~ rw

"People who are queer aren't the ones who are failing at marriages.
We're not even allowed to give it a shot, at least not legally."

Frank Morris Susa in the "Colorado Daily" - 30 July 1999



Just to introduce myself - I'm Bev Winsted and will be working with the Wellness Program of Kinship this year. I am a physician assistant in Gerontology at Wake Forest University School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, NC. I'm so pleased with the emphasis on prevention. I enjoyed meeting Larry at Kampmeeting this year and so appreciated the legal guide workbook for gay & Lesbian couples. My partner & I have made that a priority this year.

I believe very strongly in the next national health care agenda of our US Surgeon General David Satcher, MD, PhD, Healthy People 2010. Healthy People 2000 achieved about 75% of its goals. There is decreased infant mortality, homicide and suicide rates, smoking among adults, deaths from cardiovascular disease and eight of the top ten types of cancer.

The percentage of smoking cessation has declined very slowly over the last nine years, however, from 28% to 23%. A study showed, however, that 2 million more Americans would stop smoking every year if clinicians advised them to quit. Fewer than a third of physicians ask their patients if they smoke, or talk to them about the benefits of physical activity and good nutrition.

There is an increase in diabetes, and it's probably related to the increase in obesity. Too much time and money have been spent treating disease, especially the late stages, and too little on prevention and early detection.

America's health care system spends \$1.5 trillion per year—15% of the gross national product—whereas in Scandinavian countries they spend 7-10%. Only 1% of our budget is spent on prevention and early detection.

Diabetes is now seen in children younger than two years of age. We can prevent 30% of type 2 diabetes through exercise and diet. Right now only one state requires physical education in grades K-12. In 1996, only 25% of children were taking PE.

As for nutrition the average American takes in 25 pounds more sugar per year than in 1950.

We can do better with early detection of diabetes with screening in our churches, schools, and communities. A fasting blood sugar greater than 126 is diabetes.

Here is what we can do individually:

- 1) Moderate physical activity, at least 5 days a week, for 30 minutes;
- 2) Eat at least 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day—10 servings are great;
- 3) Decrease toxins such as drugs, alcohol, and tobacco;
- 4) Behave in a sexually responsible manner.

We need to increase the longevity and quality of life and eliminate the disparities in health, especially those related to race. The proportion of African Americans with new cases of AIDS has increased from 25% in 1986 to 45% in 1997. The proportion of Hispanics with new cases of AIDS has increased from 14% to 22%.

Gun control is a tough political issue. In Japan in 1996, there were 15 deaths from firearms; in England there were 30; in Canada there were 105; and in the United States, there were 9,500. "Life is full of golden opportunities carefully disguised as irresolvable problems." ▼

~ Bev Winsted

If you have wellness issues you'd like to discuss with Bev or that you'd like her to address in this column, please feel free to email her at: Bswinsted@aol.com

Room for a View or Two

As the new editor of SDA Kinship Connection, I want to first thank you for your confidence in me, then share with you my vision of what I hope this newsletter will do and be. To expect any one vehicle to convey the thoughts, feelings and ideas of everyone in this marvelously diverse organization is probably unrealistic. But 'unrealism' is a religion I've long held dear.

In order to accomplish this unrealistic task, or at least come as close as possible, it will take a willingness on the part of each of us (or at least a whole lot of us!) to speak out and up. I long to hear from you.

What do you want to see on these pages? What are your opinions on issues surrounding our common threads: the SDA church and homosexuality (not necessarily in the same sentence)? What are you doing in your lives, individually and collectively, to stay sane and healthy and active? What turns you on? (Oops, better skip that one.) What turns you off? What hurts you and what helps you? What authors and books do you recommend? What has given you hope, laughter, courage, ulcers?

Personally I enjoy reading a broad range of 'news' from my Kinship brothers and sisters. I like knowing about gatherings, small and large, about you and your relationships, your struggles, your victories. I like short-shorts (in articles, and OK, on certain people) and medium-length articles.

Since my powers of ESP seem to have almost completely left me, I need you to send the above information to me, either via email (Rawmie2@aol.com) or Pony Express (Connection, P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607).

Articles/columns/thoughts/news sent via email can either be in the letter or as attached files. I also encourage you to share photos. Please be sure to indicate what names you want used. First and last names will only be used with your permission. ▼ Yours for quality and quantity, ~ Ram

WHY I AM AN SDA

I have been thinking quite a bit lately about why I am still involved in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

Last week for the very first time ever in our church, that I can recall, we had an antigay sermon. Actually it was part of the main sermon, not really the main thrust.

The pastor spoke with all the conviction of someone who is happy to be able to back up all his prejudices with Biblical support yet hasn't bothered to study out the subject for himself.

He didn't say anything I hadn't heard before, and I doubt he upset anyone else present that day. He actually made me more sad than mad, though I was angry too. I thought of people like my homophobic sister going 'Amen brother!' I thought of the many basically decent people who were not being challenged to overcome their prejudices because the pastor says it is OK for them to be prejudiced. And I worried that there might have been someone struggling with this issue who came to church that day and received condemnation rather than a message of hope. The minister didn't even talk about "love the sinner, hate the sin."

It really caused me to wonder 'why' or even 'if' I want to be a part of a church like that.

Here is what I came up with. As a warning I realize this might at first glance seem judgmental and intolerant, but I am talking about what is important to me in a religious sense. I fully support anyone's right to worship or believe as they choose, but that doesn't mean their beliefs hold meaning for me.

Probably one thing which has become apparent to me is that I don't care about gay issues as much as I care about other some other things. There are several gay supportive protestant churches here in town in addition to an MCC church, but I don't feel a sense of fellowship, in religious matters, with people who don't believe in a literal creation, nor the importance of keeping the seventh day of the week as a holy day. I can't spiritually relate to nor feel comfortable with people who believe in a God who would torment people forever in hell, -or who think God doesn't really care what you do or how you live your life as long as you love people. It feels to me as if we don't really believe in the same God. It might be different if I lived in a Muslim country for example, where getting together once a week with people are simply Christians would be meaningful to me, even though we differ on what I consider to be basic issues. Here in the USA it is not meaningful to me to get together with Christians of other faiths. I am not sure our focus is the same.

As I write this, I am heading back to my church. I am going to sit in my usual place and have a smile on my face even if I have to tape up the corners of my mouth. Meanwhile I will continue to

hope and pray that I do find my people someday, people whose theology closely matches mine and who worship together as a church where I will feel free to be me and still feel the love and support of fellow believers. ▼

~ Martin



★ ★ ★ OUT
SDA Kinship's
Homepage.
It has a new LOOK!
★ Areas being
added, developed, and improved
all the time!

★ ★ ★ OUT
the gaysda webring.

★ ★ ★ OUT
the KinNet webpage with
members' listing and pictures.

★ ★ ★ OUT
<http://www.sdakinship.org>
For more information
email Floyd Poenitz at
floydpo@flash.net

But you don't have to be OUT
to enjoy the fellowship on KinNet!

LONGTERM RELATIONSHIPS

"What do gay men do on the second date?"

"What second date?"

from Husband Hunting Made Easy, by Patrick Price

In the same week that Rom asked us to write about relationships, one couple we know celebrated their 45th anniversary, another split after 13 months, AOL was doing a promo for New Woman magazine with the lead - "19 Tips: How to Be Satisfied with One Man for the Rest of your Life" and at least 12 romances on TV "soap operas" were in the midst of sailing or crashing.

Not being ones to write articles, all I could think of (when Eddie finds out I said "Yes" to Rom) was Oliver Hardy berating Stan Laurel with, "Well, *this* is another fine mess you've gotten us into." On the other hand, I also knew he'd be there, to help me get the job done.

Life isn't easy, and just having a partner doesn't always make it flow better. In fact, s/he might even make your life more complicated. We've been at too many "ideal" weddings, straight and gay, to know it's true.

So, why do some relationships last forever, others linger and then fall apart, and some never get off the ground? Actually we don't know!! We learned a long time ago, "Never give advice, someone may actually follow it." If it works, they'll take the credit for it; if it fails, you'll get the blame.

"What's the difference between true love and herpes?"

"Herpes is forever!!"

We smile because there is a bit of truth to it. How many couples do you know that have been together for 10 years? 15 years? Or longer?

At the 1987 Kampmeeting in Aptos, time was set aside on Sabbath afternoon, for a private discussion between the clergy and any "committed" couples who wished to share thoughts. The meeting included those in long term relationships, those who had just started dating, and others who were somewhere in between.

Six or seven couples showed up and in many ways it was an 'eye opener' for the straight clergy who attended. Shortly after we stated basic information (our names, years together, etc.), one of the clergy blatantly asked, how we did it! A Kinship member immediately snapped back, "Extremely well."

We left it at that, but the Kinship couples looked at each other, and thought, "These people really need a course in Sexology 101."

The other amazing revelation for us was that, contrary to the church's admonition to its straight couples - "Be ye not yoked with unbelievers," each of the Kinship couples, including the long term ones, started out as a SDA /non-SDA pair.

A Ceremony of Commitment for a lesbian couple, not from the United States, was held later that day. A non-SDA minister officiated and a "wedding feast" was held. We hope now, 12 years later, that they and others from that original group, are still a happy, loving couples.

~~~~~  
Since no two individuals are the same, no two relationships can be the same. What works for one couple, may not always work for another. However, certain things do seem to ring true in the long-lasting relationships we've encountered. Here are a few thoughts to consider:

- A good relationship is not 50/50, it is 100/100.
- Every good thing takes work.
- Learn to communicate. The silent treatment only makes things worse - but...
- Don't even let it get to that point.
- Be generous with hugs and praise.
- Little, unexpected things can bring your partner (and you) great joy.
- Leave a little love note where s/he is sure to find it.
- Don't just wait to make a big splash on those once a year events.
- Discuss how the day went for your partner. On those bad days, if s/he doesn't want to discuss it, a big hug and a tender word may be the best thing you can give.
- Learn to listen to what your partner is saying. Don't interrupt.
- Try never to go to bed without resolving differences. But don't keep your partner up all night, until s/he agrees with your point of view. You might just be wrong!!
- Complete trust takes years to develop. And it can be lost in a second.
- Humor and patience are essential virtues.
- Learn to laugh at your own foibles. You're not that perfect, either.
- Don't be afraid to admit you've made a mistake.
- Sometimes a good cry together is important.
- Choose a partner whose attitude is positive.
- If you can't cook, find someone who can; but make sure that you clean the dishes.

In their later years, the actors Jessica Tandy and Hume Cronyn only considered scripts in film or on stage where *both* would have major roles.

They had been married for over 50 years when an interviewer asked them for sage advice that could be passed on to younger couples. Their reply was: "What binds you together is not the mutual ecstasy, but the mutual crises that you overcome, mutually."

~~~~~  
A parting thought, from a source unknown to us:

You can have sex without love,
You can have love without sex,
But, when you can share both with the
same person,
There's nothing like it in the world. ♥

- Bruce & Eddie

LESBIAN LIFESTYLES

I just had an email conversation with a soul who is trying desperately to be straight. She told me she was quite ready to give up the "lesbian lifestyle" and move on to a true Christian commitment. Now there are many things I could have said and certainly lots of things I thought. But what the dogs and I spent our time discussing as we walked around the block that night was the nature of this "lesbian lifestyle" thing. "What on earth does that mean?" asked the cocker spaniel. "Duh," I replied. No wonder she thinks four footed creatures are smarter.

When I came out in 1972, the lesbian lifestyle in Venice included lots of brown rice, alfalfa sprouts and stewed tomatoes. If THAT is what my correspondent meant, well, I have to admit I am glad I have moved on. I do remember the moments when lesbian lifestyle meant baring your breasts at some large gathering. Well...I am middle aged now and mine are moving south. I would never say I have not skinny dipped but I am not, at this moment ready to bare all in the Washington, DC Reflecting Pool. I was wondering if lesbian lifestyle meant playing pool in a bar. I am uncoordinated and never could manage that anyway. Besides the most pool I ever played was at the wake of a beloved mother-out-law of mine and everyone else there was straight.

These days my lesbian lifestyle consists of sending ditties to Kinnet and trying to emulate Larry Hallock's writing abilities. Maybe this correspondent of mine was trying to say I should give up the effort. There, of course are the lesbian mums I just put in the garden and the lesbian lifestyle composted cow manure I just dug into the soil. There are the lesbian dishes waiting to be washed and the lesbian laundry that really should be too. I wonder if lesbian lifestyle included that trip to Oshkosh to spend a week with 24 thousand Pathfinders. I did try to look out for potential Kinship members but the one time I thought I saw one, I was staffing the shower rooms (ah, now that sounds like lesbian lifestyle) and didn't think I could just run out the door shouting "Are you sixteen and from Utah???" I wish we could have had some signal so we could have had dinner while in the midst of drum beating, plane flying, song singing, laundry loads and tornadoes.

Maybe parenting, preaching, working, walking and swimming are taking up so much time I don't have the insight to see what it is People Attempting Straight Ties (PASTS) are working so hard to leave. I haven't had a moment when getting ready to teach Sabbath School to see how this is blasphemy. When I am worried about John's surgery and family, I don't see where that fits a Biblical prohibition. And I see Mike's amazing tolerance for difference or Obed's humor and care or David's extraordinary spirituality or Valerie's remarkable parenting patience. I don't really understand why I would want to leave this lifestyle. But, as the animals and the thirteen year old constantly let me know, I am a little dense. Maybe you all could help me out here. ▼

Blessings,

Catherine



There has been an ongoing discussion on KinNet about hugs ... about their importance and about how our cultures are so different in what they've taught us about hugging.

Without scientific footnote to back up this statement, here's something most of us consider to be a fact: hugs are necessary for good health!

According to Kathleen Keating, author of The Hug Therapy Book, hugs take many forms, depending on what you want to communicate.

A few examples include:

- The Bear Hug – ideal for two individuals of disproportionate sizes and for saying, "You're terrific," or "You can count on me".
- The A-Frame – Brief embrace ideal for little-known relatives and situations requiring a bit of formality. All of the hugging takes place above the neck. This hug communicates polite caring or detached warmth. Great for new huggers.
- The Cheek Hug – A tender hug that can be executed sitting or standing. This hug says "I'm sorry you're disappointed," or is ideal to share joy or greet an elderly relative.
- The Group Hug – Great for good friends sharing an activity or project. Group hugs communicate support, security, affection, unity and universal belonging. ▼

“... DON'T DISCUSS INTERIOR DECORATING! NEVER MENTION JUDY GARLAND, THE WIZARD OF OZ, AND ABOVE ALL, RUBY SLIPPERS! NO STREISAND! WATCH THE WRIST, WATCH THE WALK! BUTCH IT UP, TONE IT DOWN!”

Sound/feel familiar? I hope each of you will enjoy the piece. And I hope you take a few moments to write down some of your thoughts on “playing the role.” If you’d like to share those with your fellow Kinship members (and remember, being a professional writer is NOT a prerequisite to either writing a letter to the editor nor to writing a column/article), please send your words either by email or by ‘snail mail’ (see “Room for a View or Two” on p. 6 for details.) ▼

PLAYING THE ROLE

Michael I. Roehm

In “As You Like It,” Shakespeare wrote, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players: They have their exits and their entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts...” (Act II, Scene 7, lines 139+)

All of us are familiar with the many parts that we play during the different stages of life, and the many parts we play during any one stage of life: son, daughter, spouse, parent, partner, sibling, friend, colleague. Psychologist C.G. Jung noted that each role requires a mask that is the image of oneself fabricated to fit a particular role. Many Gays and Lesbians are forced to be acutely, painfully aware of such role-playing, for most of us have been—and still are—socially coerced to “play it straight” in order to avoid being emotionally hurt, or physically harmed, or worse.

I played that role—the straight role—successfully for much of my life. I heard again and again the homophobic jokes, gibes, and slurs told too freely and comfortably among family and friends. And I played the role, the straight role; I listened, watched, learned, and remembered the truth hidden behind the social masks as I hid behind my straight persona. I was very careful to watch what I said and did. I told myself, “For god’s sake don’t discuss interior decorating! Never mention Judy Garland, the Wizard of Oz, and above all, ruby slippers! No Streisand! Watch the wrist, watch the walk! Butch it up, tone it down!”

“He’s nice, but I don’t want him around the children.” That’s what my cousin’s husband told me, the “straight” one, about my brother, who is also gay! I told myself, “Play the role, the straight role; listen, watch, learn, and remember. Protect yourself.” While playing the role, the straight role, I forgot that I had unintentionally submitted myself to “the torture of a thousand cuts,” little nicks and slices which though directed at others were equally aimed at me. Slur upon slur, hurt upon hurt, wound upon wound built up in my mind and heart. I felt like an outcast, for I knew that if family and friends felt about my brother and others like that, they would despise me too, for I was “one of them,” a faggot, a queer. The gloom of a fragmented self often overcame me, and I carelessly played the role, the straight role.

One day I got a call from a friend; he said, “Mike, I thought you should know that some friends are speculating on whether you are gay; they’re gossiping when you’re absent.” “Thanks,” I said. “I am gay, and it’s time to say so,” and I did. I had had enough of playing the role, the damn straight role; I had listened enough, watched enough, learned enough, and remembered far more than enough.

Now I don’t play the straight role. Now I am rarely able to listen, watch, and learn what many people really think behind their polite social masks. But I know the whispers, sneers, asides, and innuendoes continue. I still see certain looks in certain eyes, and certain ways of turning away...the silent reminders of hidden inner thoughts and feelings. Even so, I am who I am and involve myself in the world as I am. Now I no longer have a fragmented self. Now I am whole. I no longer “play it straight.” ▼

Editor’s note: I heard this given as part of the annual g/l/b/t church service at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington (Virginia) and because Mike said what I’ve so often heard Kinship members saying, I asked his permission to print it here.

REGIONAL REPORTS

Region 1 – Boston's Samuel Pang was seen and heard in Washington, DC at the 1999 GALA Choruses Leadership Conference & Singers Weekend Closing Night Concert. During "Diversity" each of the 50+ men gave his hometown, then after another verse each gave his occupation. When they got to the handsome Bostonian he proudly said: "Gynecologist" and brought down the house. Several of the Region 2 members who were in the audience were guests of Denise Proulx, so got to meet and watch the awesome sign language interpreters.

Region 2 – At the August 14 social get together in the Washington, DC area there were 10 women and 9 men – an absolute phenomenon! Everyone enjoyed a lasagna dinner and old movies at Yolanda & Joyce's home. • On August 27 Leif led a discussion on intolerance and forbearance, a chapter from the book Amazing Grace. This vespers was enjoyed by about 15 people sitting around the pool at Yolanda & Joyce's home (yup, they host[ess] a lot of the Region's events). • If you're in the DC area, join the Region 2 people who have been getting together regularly after the services at Sligo each Sabbath for lunch and fellowship.

Yolanda Elliott – YSE@compuserve.com

Region 3 –

Region 4 – Darin and Matt shared good news and sad news. They just bought their first home in St. Paul. Congratulations! But they also just had to say good-bye to their best friend, the woman who introduced them to each other. She died in September. Our sympathy on your loss.

Region 5 – Dallas area Kinship still meets regularly twice a month for movie night and a potluck evening. Aug 7th we had about 15 at the meeting and were treated to a delicious meal at Van and Art's lovely home. Lots of antiques and neat knick-knacks and also a surprise hobby/interest education at the end of the evening. • August 21, eight of us went to see the movie TRICK and ate out afterwards. • We had our Labor Day Weekend Pool Party on Sunday the 5th. The weather didn't totally cooperate, but no one really seemed to mind. There were about 10 in attendance. We ate "Haystacks" and ice cream. Watched movies, swam, discussed what the group wants to see happen in the future, and initiated a phone/email buddy system.

Floyd Poenitz – floyd@flash.net

Region 6 – Bryan recently finished his training as a certified massage therapist and moved to Denver. • Mike, Ben's partner, graduated from law school in May. • Ben missed Kampmeeting this year because

of a last minute job scheduling glitch! • Kevin (from "down under") visited Mike and Ben for 8 days in August – a lovely time was had by all. • Robby and Brian visited in August on their way to San Francisco where Robby starts law school. • Vickie had her left knee replaced in September and was home 3 days after surgery! • Three new people have joined KinNet from the Lincoln, Nebraska area. *Ben Kemena*

Region 7 –

Region 8 – had a wonderful meeting in August at Harry's in Alameda. We got reports about Kampmeeting from Karen, Damon, and John (both this year's and Hawaii's). • It looks like we're going to have some new members as a number of people have expressed interest. We look forward to meeting them. • We met at my home in Lodi Sept 18. • In Nov. and Dec. we will meet in Alameda. • Oct. is still in the planning stages; we're hoping for something close to PUC. • Region 8 meets third Sabbath of the month at 2 p.m. for potluck, spiritual hour and socializing. It's always a delight. Anyone is more than welcome to contact me at my email for further info.

Roland Anderson – rolandea@jps.net

Region 9 –

Region 10 –

Region (Lucky) 13 – Germany. This letter came for Kinship members from Stefan:

I'm a member of HAD e.V. (Region 13) and the webmaster of our brand new site. I've got a note from our president (Andrea Heinrich) today. She asked me to give you some recent information about us. Well, there are currently just a few things of public interest to talk about:

We're round about 30 people now - not much at all but better than nothing, right? We're on the net for a few days at <http://www.had-ev.de/>

This is our first try and it's all German. I'm working on the English pages so please, be patient. We have at least two official meetings per year (one during Springtime, the other in Autumn) and our next meeting will be in October (15.-17.) in a small village near Kassel. The last meeting was in April (16.-18.) in Rheine (a smaller city near the Dutch border) and we had a great time and good weather. The main goal of our meetings is to swap experiences and information, to help each other with current problems, and to talk about bible related items regarding topic #1 – Homosexuality.

Your brother in Jesus,

Stefan Pietruska – steve@idbremen.de

LET'S HEAR FROM THOSE MISSING REGIONS NEXT TIME

Of Parachutes and Pardons

Ritch Barron

In 1998, the State of Texas executed a woman for a series of heinous murders which she had committed when she was young. What made this newsworthy was that after being convicted, she found Jesus. She converted to Christianity. Religious leaders from all over the country and from every theological persuasion, appealed to Governor George W. Bush to stop the execution. He refused. During the days leading up to the execution, the story was all over talk radio.

Dennis Prager, a Jewish talk show host in Southern California, pointed out that Christians teach that an evil man like Jeffrey Dahmer, could "find Christ," ask for forgiveness, and be welcomed into heaven. But a wonderful man like Gandhi, whose life and work was a blessing to millions, would burn in hell because he had rejected Jesus as his Saviour.

I recoiled at the total injustice of that doctrine. Yet, as the program progressed, many callers admitted that they believed this doctrine. Some of them were even proud of such a belief. They saw nothing unjust about the loss of great men like Gandhi.

The Adventist version of this doctrine is even more exclusive: not only must a person be Christian if they expect to make paradise, they must not have rejected the special "Third Angel's Message."

In spite of its popularity, this doctrine is not Biblical. The topic at issue is pardon and forgiveness. How does pardon work? Who gets to go to heaven? Can you only get there by using the name of Jesus? How do we qualify, in God's eyes, for paradise?

When ever I want to know about what Christians should believe, I start with the words of Jesus. His words are the magnifying glass through which all the rest of scripture must be interpreted. You cannot take a verse out of Romans or 1 Corinthians and preach such and such if it does not agree with what Jesus says. You cannot take a verse out of Leviticus and preach this or that unless it agrees with what Jesus says. So what does Jesus say?

In Luke 15 Jesus tells the story of a man with two sons. The youngest boy took his share of his father's wealth and went to seek his way in the world. The older son, steady and consistent, stayed home and worked the farm.

The boy was inexperienced in the ways of the world. He found plenty of friends who would help him spend his money. Being unused to work, he lived high and happy - till the money ran out. All the "friends" who had helped to spend his money disappeared. Cold and hungry, he sought work with a local farmer who put him in charge of the pigs.

Finally, Jesus says, the boy "came to himself." Who knows how long it took, but one day it dawned

on him that he was in a pig pen.

Now what does he do? He gets up and heads back to his father. When he arrives, he says "Father, I have wronged you terribly. I do not deserve to be your son. I would love to be your slave".

But the father says - "Nothing doing. You will not be my slave. You are my son!" He puts clean, new robes on him and throws a huge party.

This story suggests that there are three steps to salvation. The first two are steps the boy does himself. The last one is the father's response.

First the boy recognizes that he has made a mistake. Then he acknowledges that mistake to his father. Then the father throws a party. **Salvation is no more complicated than that. Those who would make it complicated have a hidden agenda which we will see shortly.**

But Jesus didn't end the story there. The young runaway has come home, big brother never left. Everybody's happy, right?

NOPE!!

Luke 15:29 records a bitter, angry older brother who is resentful that Dad is throwing a party for the runaway. He liked having Dad all to himself. As far as he is concerned, his father OWES him. He has earned his place in this family by always doing the right thing.

Now compare the relationship of the two boys to their father. The younger one knows he screwed up and is grateful for his dad's mercy. The older son believes that he has made no mistakes and is angry because his dad is forgiving. Reading the story as recorded in Luke, the tension between the father and older boy is palpable.

Using this parable then as paradigm, what about the Jeffrey Dahmer/Gandhi problem? Does God save evil people who say "I trust Jesus to save me" before dying?

Saying "I trust Jesus" is a classic dodge. I don't confess anything. I don't admit anything. I just say "I trust Jesus" and its over. No embarrassment, no shame.

But without confession to God, there is no pardon. A person cannot live a life of evil then pull a magic "I Trust Jesus" rip cord and float gently to heaven on a cosmic parachute. It doesn't work that way.

Now people will say "Remember the thief on the cross? All he did was believe in Jesus" But look closer. He recognized the evil he had done. He made an honest assessment of the state of his soul and confessed that he deserved the punishment he was receiving. He does not presume that heaven is now his destination. Rather, he begged to be remembered. He was not trying to manipulate himself out of punishment. He knows how much he deserves to be consigned to hell and he begs for mercy. And God, as always, is there with love and assurance.

Do deathbed confessions work? YES! But the confession must be genuine. And that only God can establish.

Continued on page 13

OK, so what about people who are just good? Can good people make paradise without the name of Jesus?

Gandhi is a good example. He was well aware of his spiritual condition. He gives an honest assessment of his triumphs and failures. He appears to have accomplished the two steps which are the human part of the pardon equation. But... he was familiar with the life and teachings of Jesus and considered him a wise man. He did not, however, accept him as God. Does that exclude him from heaven?

Many Christians will say a resounding "yes" and they will quote Acts 4:12 as proof: "For there is no other name, given among men where by we must be saved." There it is in black and white! Only the NAME of Jesus can save you.

They have to rip this verse right out of context. Peter and John were on their way to temple when they saw this man who had a crippling congenital birth defect, begging at the temple gate. Peter knows the state of his own finances so, instead of silver and gold, Peter healed the man. Wow! The man got so excited he started running, jumping and shouting. Of course a lot of people came over to see what had happened and when they recognized the man, they looked to Peter and John for an explanation. What a perfect opportunity to preach. So Peter preached, about 5,000 people believed, and the Temple Police arrested Peter and John for disturbing the peace.

The next day the assembled Sanhedren brought the prisoners before them. The High Priest, Caiaphas, asked "By what power or by what name did you do this?" Note that was the question Peter is answering. He was not talking about how a sinner gets to paradise. He was saying that the authority for salvation, rests only in Jesus. It is Jesus, he says, who paid the penalty for sin and by the death on the cross, earned the right to save whoever he chooses. Peter is not saying that if you don't claim the name of Jesus you will not be saved, that is not the issue. What he is saying is that Jesus is the active, visible person of God who is at work saving the world.

So can a person who does not claim the name of Jesus be saved?

What was Jesus' response to the Roman Centurion, a heathen. He was apparently very spiritual and had respect for the religions of other people. Now when Jesus healed the Centurion's servant/lover, he didn't say, "Oh by the way, do you believe that I am God? 'cause, if you don't, I can't help you."

No, he healed the young man. He then turned to the crowd and praised the Centurion's faith.

Another example of Jesus in action: Jesus met a woman at Jacob's Well. Because she was a Samaritan, she was a considered a heathen by the Jews. Christians today would consider her outside of God's grace because of her many husbands and lovers. But what did Jesus do? He talked with her

and invited her to partake of living water. In spite of her past, Jesus still loves her and she gets scared.

Notice what she says:

"Our Fathers worshipped on this Mountain but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place to worship" What in the world is she talking about?

She is trying to muddy the conversation with doctrine. Rather than deal with God on a personal level, she hides behind dogma. Doctrine and dogma are the stuff which people use to separate themselves into religions, denominations and sects.

Jesus rejects the concept of denominations (religions). He says: (John 4:21) "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem...." In other words, all the petty disagreements that make for separation don't count. He's saying that where and how you worship is NOT important. So what does Jesus think is important? (verse 23) "...the time is coming and has now come, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth."

It is not certain words or saying "I believe in Jesus." It is not even "believing in Jesus" that is required. It is having a spiritual connection to the Father and a sincere love of truth.

Jesus does talk about using his name. But what does he say that it gets you? NOTHING.

"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you.' "(Matthew 7:22)

There was NO RELATIONSHIP. There was no spiritual connection. They were busy prophesying and fighting evil and working miracles. They were busy USING the name of Jesus rather than getting to know the man.

In John 10:16, Jesus says "I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold." Clearly there are people who are not Christians who are followers of the good shepherd. They may not say the "Christian" words. They may not even know about Jesus, but they hear the Good Shepherd's voice calling to their spirit and they respond with gratitude and love.

There is a T-shirt which shows two boys -- one black, one white -- hugging and smiling at the camera. The caption reads: "Nobody is born a bigot." This concept that you must be a Christian and believe in Jesus is just another form of bigotry. Jesus does not want us building walls of separation. He does not want us designing ways to keep people away.

Will there be those in heaven who are not Christians? You bet! Much to the hatred of the legalists of his day and the fundamentalists of today as well, Jesus came preaching a gospel of INCLUSION! He sought to bring everyone. There is no magic password, no cosmic parachute.

Jesus taught that love, not a name, was the difference, a love that was active not just words.

It's not what you say, it's what you do. ▼

[Ritch Barron writes from Southern California.]

Hey! They didn't tell me they
were going to do THIS!!



"A Rose Between Two Thorns"
Charlene, Doug, Rom
(How many chins do YOU count?)

So this is how they
felt with my cameras
snapping their
pictures all week!



John -
the man
with the
cameras!



Kevin Rabe & Denise Proulx
from
Australia & Virginia

They discovered their sign languages were different.

Changing of the Guard →

Ben Kemena & Rom Wilder
- photo taken when Ben
was visiting Washington,
DC in 1998.



Ben & Rom

NEXT MONTH

- ▼ Mission (fields, statements)?
- ▼ The Vanity Fair "Proust Questionnaire"
- ▼ *CONNECT* - the book
- ▼ Coming Out
- ▼ OWL's
- ▼ Toronto update
- ▼ IMRU
- ▼ The Washington Post 100 word challenge
- ▼ How did they change because of us?
- ▼ AND MORE

BOOK REVIEW

Isensee, Rik. **Love Between Men: Enhancing Intimacy and Keeping Your Relationship Alive.** Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1990.

Isensee, Rik. **Are You Ready? The Gay Man's Guide to Thriving at Midlife.** Los Angeles: Alyson Publications, 1999.

Isensee's books (along with the first "Reclaiming Your Life: The Gay Man's Guide to Love, Self-Acceptance and Trust") are a good core for any gay man's "self-help" collection. Isensee obviously has experience, both as a gay man and as a therapist (licensed social worker), and writes well.

In "Love Between Men," Isensee begins with the question, "OK, so you're sexually attracted to your lover, and you share many of the same interests. What's next?" The first section, "Resolving Conflicts," is particularly valuable because it deals with many issues that many men generally, and particularly those in a closed religious subculture, have not had a lot of experience dealing with: listening, expressing feelings, solving problems, dealing with conflict, internalized homophobia, gay relationships, and male socialization.

The second section deals with "Making It Work" – dealing with differences (from cultural to affection in public), sexual communication, monogamy/open relationships, dealing with families of origin, and AIDS. He concludes with a section on "Seeking Help" – that it is OK to seek outside help through couples therapy, and specifically dealing with sexual compulsions, substance abuse, and physical abuse. The book ends appropriately with a chapter on what to do if it doesn't work out – how to end a relationship and move on. The epilogue deals with a crucial issue for many – how to develop intimacy.

I highly recommend this book for any gay man in a relationship or wanting to develop one. It could well serve as joint reading material for many gay men wanting to develop their relationship.

"Are You Ready?" builds on Isensee's earlier works (although it can be profitably read without having seen the others), and is specifically geared toward men in midlife. This is a particularly valuable contribution as there is very little available with this combination of concepts. In a subculture often dominated by youth, a book outlining the life tasks and beauty of midlife for gay men is particularly welcome. To quote Dante, "Midway through life's journey, I went astray from the straight road and found myself in a dark wood."

In this book, Isensee draws on the life experiences of a diverse group of gay men. The author believes that rather than withering at midlife, it is time to thrive, although it means many changes for the life traveler as he works through his midlife tasks. He deals with stereotypes, reaching closure with the youthful identity, recovery, "the inner butch and the inner fairy," body image, dealing with our shadows, physical and sexual changes, sex and dating, how relationships change over time, creating families, loss and mortality, meaningful work, mentoring, and so much more. He concludes with a chapter on gay men as shamans, tricksters, and wounded healers.

A truly wonderful book,
and highly recommended. ▼

*Harvey Brenneise
East Lansing, MI*

VIDEO REVIEW

OUT OF THE PAST (1998; 65 minutes)

This documentary is now available on video to rent from your local video store or purchase (under \$30) through Amazon.com. A history of gays and our rights, this video deliciously juxtaposes a story of a teenage girl (who ruffles the feathers of the Utah conservatives all the way to the State Legislature by starting a Gay Straight Alliance in her high school) with some of the lesser known gays of history.

It tells of the angst of many who contributed to the history of our nation, though their stories haven't been fully told, people such as Bayard Rustin who organized the civil rights march for which Martin Luther King, Jr. is so famous. It tells of these people in an interesting, informative way, sharing things most of us can relate to. If you haven't seen this, I encourage you to 'get thee to thy local video store' and rent it. ▼

~ rw

OCTOBER 1999

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	This calendar needs to be filled with the events in your lives that matter. Please send in your names (pseudonyms accepted), dates of birthdays, anniversaries, and other dates to celebrate – past or upcoming ... send them for ALL months! Regional Coordinators – Your upcoming events can go here also.					

Picture yourself attending the
First Kampmeeting of the New Millennium,
watching the sunrise overlooking the ocean,
on the big island of Hawaii

This year's Kampmeeting will be a renewal of our Kinship spirit. We are planning to offer programs to strengthen the closeness and inner spirituality that has always been the force behind the success of Kinship as an organization.

When I attended my first Kampmeeting I was struck by the way all the Kinship members treated each other. It was as if I had known these people all my life. I was awed by the experience. My goal as this year's Kampmeeting Coordinator is to recreate that memory.

Kalani Oceanside Retreat is a perfect place to accomplish that goal.

The rural beauty and natural harmony of the retreat lends itself to programs designed to encourage personal growth and foster development of closer relationships within our Kinship family.



The program will include: Sunrise Devotionals overlooking the ocean, Yoga, Hawaiian Culture, Stargazing 9400 feet up a volcano, and workshops on individual, community, and spiritual relationships. Organized free time activities are structured to allow our Kinship family to experience our Hawaiian adventure together.

As planning progresses, we will keep you updated. Make your reservations soon as there are a limited number of spaces available.

This year's Kampmeeting will be a very special one. Don't miss it!

Hal Jobe
Hawaii 2000
Kampmeeting Coordinator



21st ANNUAL S.D.A. KINSHIP KAMPMEETING

July 30 – August 6, 2000

Kalani Oceanside Retreat near Pahoa, HI (on the big island)

Name(s) _____ Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Phone _____

Preferred roommate(s) _____ e-mail address _____

Please select one of the following room types. Rates include 7 night's accommodations and meals.

A. Lodge double/triple occupancy (per person) shared bath: \$375.00 \$ _____
12 double rooms & 6 triple rooms available

B. Lodge double occupancy (per person) private bath: \$400.00 \$ Sold Out
3 rooms with 1 queen bed and 2 rooms with 2 twin beds available

C. Lodge single occupancy: \$800.00 \$ Sold Out
1 room with a double bed available

D. Cottage double occupancy (per person) private bath: \$675.00 \$ _____
8 rooms with 1 double bed and 1 twin bed available

E. Airport transfers are available only from the Hilo airport: \$15.00 \$ _____

Total Charges: \$ _____

Down payment based on the payment plan you've chosen from the list below: \$ _____

Please select one of the following payment plans by placing a (X) next to your choice.

1. _____ \$50.00 down then one half on September 1, 1999 and December 1, 1999.
2. _____ \$100.00 down then one half on February 1, 2000 and June 1, 2000.
3. _____ \$75.00 down then one third on October 1, 1999, February 1, 2000, and June 1, 2000.
4. _____ \$50.00 down then ten equal monthly payments starting September 1, 1999. Credit cards only.
5. _____ Full payment now.

_____ Check enclosed made out to SDA Kinship.

_____ Please charge my MasterCard or Visa per the payment plan I selected.

Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiration date _____ Signature _____

If payment in full is made by December 1, 1999 you may deduct \$20.00 from your Kampmeeting fees. Room rates will increase by \$25.00 per person for reservations made after January 1, 2000. Cancellations after March 1, 2000 will result in forfeiture of all fees paid. In an effort to make this Kampmeeting more affordable for all attendees, Kinship is covering approximately 25% of the cost of Lodge rooms. Therefore, we are unable to offer scholarships as in years past. The facility is in a rural area south of Hilo, HI, and only has accommodations for 75 people. The nearest motel is more than 20 miles away.

Confirmation and additional information will be sent to persons registering by June 15, 2000. **Pre-payment of Kampmeeting fees is required.** Rooms are assigned on a first come first serve basis. Amounts quoted are in US currency. Registration is for the entire week. If you need accommodations in Hawaii due to early arrival or late departure please contact the conference center at 800-965-7828. All other questions please call Kinship at 949-248-1299 or e-mail to SDAKinship@aol.com. To learn more about Kalani Oceanside Retreat please visit their web site at www.kalani.com. Mail completed forms to:

SDA Kinship
PO Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607