

connection ▽

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. February 2005 Vol. 29 No. 2



**A coward is incapable of exhibiting love;
it is the prerogative of the brave.**

Mohandas Gandhi

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Region 1 (PA, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME) Catherine Taylor 802-885-6050
katgurian@aol.com
Region 2 (WV, VA, NC, DE, MD, DC) Yolanda Elliott
410-531-5382
yselliott@aol.com
Region 3 (TN, AL, MS, GA, SC, FL) Brenda McColpin N2pepsi@aol
Region 4 (MN, IA, MO, WI, IL, MI, IN, KY, OH) Darin Olson
612-870-8199 darinjo@aol.com
Region 5 (TX, OK, KS, AR, LA) Floyd Poenitz 972-416-1358
f.poenitz@comcast.net
Region 6 (ND, SD, CO, NE, WY, UT, NM) Robb Crouch
402-438-0883
region6@sdakinship.org
Region 7 (AK, WA, OR, ID, MT) Betty Hale 503-794-0110
betty.hale@providence.org
Region 8 (No. CA, NV, HI) Elena Thomas-Blough 480-272-7168
elena4region8@yahoo.com



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 26 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) 371-7606, or visit SDA Kinship's Web Site at: www.sdakinship.org

Region 9 (So. CA, AZ) Bruce Boyd
818-708-7448
cinobruce@aol.com
Michelle Cornwell
760-320-1853
mrcandsb@aol.com

AFFILIATED INTERNATIONAL REGION COORDINATORS

Australia: Noel Thorpe
sdakinhipaust@primus.com.au
Brazil: Itamar Matos de Souza
matoso25@yahoo.com.br
Canada: Brent Lehmann
rblehmann@telus.net
Europe: Ruud Kieboom
kinship@xs4all.nl

Germany: Roy Ratzer
info@had-ev.de
Central & South America:
Alexander Gomez Pasco
alexgpasco@yahoo.com
Philippines: Jonathan Co
+63921-217-2617
cancer108@hotmail.com
Uganda: Joseph Brown
kkindu2001@yahoo.com

OTHER COORDINATORS

Intersexed: Carolyn Parsons
425-917-0842
kinshipintersex@hotmail.com
Transgender/Transexual: Sandra Hoffecker transkinnet@aol.com
Older Adult: Ren Reynolds
renone24@aol.com

Pedestals

Ben Kemena

As a general rule, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersex people are known for our love and passion. It is the heart and core of who we are. It should not be surprising when this is used as slander against us. Those who spew hateful venom would label our love and affection as immature, indecent and immoral. Yet, anyone who has spent time in an AIDS hospice, attended a gay or lesbian choral concert or participated in a Kampmeeting comes away knowing a very certain truth. We are a loving group of people a group who perseveres to love during times of trouble, attack and fear. We love because we must love or all is truly lost. Those that inspire violence against us will continue to draw blood that is a sad reality but love wins. History is with us. God is with us. God is in us.

I believe our love was created in the image of Christ. I believe we have found refuge in each other. I believe we have seen the passion of Jesus. Full spirituality is indelibly tied to our maturation through relationships on all levels; spousal, friendship or societal. Refusal to discern this truth is the heart of bigotry, violence and annihilation. I am very proud that "our tribe" has continued to walk the moral high-road. Despite the waves of bigotry, our visibility is growing and our inclusive loving spirit is drawing attention. We know that we live in a global village, we dwell in an international coalition, and we espouse peaceful and respectful coexistence.

Ten years ago on Valentine's Day, Mike and I went to a hardware store in the Georgetown district of Washington, DC. Mary sat behind a steel caged window at the back of the store offering notary services. Mike and I had our domestic partnership signed by her as our official notary. Mary had never seen the document before and was a bit disconcerted. She

muddled through and we with her. Mary was a good sport. We brought two friends with us, and, document in hand, went to a delicatessen afterwards to celebrate our civil declaration (you just cannot make this stuff up!). I smile whenever I remember this day because it has remained so emblematic in our lives.

We certainly could have never married in an Adventist church; indeed, as I write, the thought is laughable. In our lifetimes, we may never have the sacramental affirmation of our local church, society or civil law. We will likely never share the witness of a formal announcement to our families. But, in the face of certain nefarious Christians, civil injustices and societal prejudices, our loving light lives. The fact that our love remains steadfast is the foundation of my faith, hope and spiritual understanding.

Love wins. We must always believe in such goodness.

Someday, even the institutional Adventist church will reconsider its views because love is a bedrock virtue. Should the day ever come when Mike and I may have a "real wedding" I'm not sure what we would do. After all, we have our quaint history to defend! But I do know this the free choice to love and to have that love announced, cherished, affirmed and solemnized will be a very great day and the Adventist church family will be much better for it.

All of you, gay or straight or otherwise, seek out and nurture love around you; in friendship, community or courtship. May you adore and be adored. On this loving season of Valentine's Day, I hope you make it a point to place your love on a pedestal. That is where it has always stood; undeniably. Christ-like. ▼

If I speak with the tongues of humanity or of angels but have not love I am only a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. I Corinthians 13: 1



Academy

Andrew Strong

I was lying on my dorm bed, worrying why my roommate was still out at midnight, when the boys' dean knocked on the door. "Jeremy won't be sleeping here tonight," he said. "He says he doesn't feel comfortable around you ... um ... that you touched him. He's going to spend the night in a vacant room. We'll talk about it tomorrow with the principal."

I was 16 and thought I had found first love during my junior year at Gem State Adventist Academy. While the relationship led me to realize that I was gay, the ensuing scandal prompted me to eventually leave the church. I think it's time to tell this story, if only in the hope that it might bring comfort to someone on the often-painful journey to self-discovery. Perhaps it will prevent one of you from repeating my mistakes.

The first 10 years of my life unfolded in Africa. The son of missionary parents, I was a prankster always looking for a laugh. I sometimes greeted my teacher and classmates at our small brick school wearing my mom's dress, wig and heels. I led the boys on loud biking adventures and Lego-building marathons. We all played doctor in my tree house.

My parents and I transferred to Asia, where I spent the next five years pining after my friends in Africa. I enrolled in boarding school in Singapore, and tried to readjust to being around kids my own age. When my parents broke up and returned to the United States, I was a shy, withdrawn 15-year-old in culture shock. I resolved, however, that the move was my chance for a fresh start and an opportunity to fill a deep longing for a close male friend my own age.

I met Jeremy a few days into the school year, sitting next to my sister in the cafeteria. He flashed a white smile and chuckled nervously at his own jokes. I felt an instant attraction to the 16-year-old sophomore. I quickly learned that he had grown up isolated in a very conservative Adventist family. He was grappling to fit in with his peers and had decided to come to Gem State for a fresh start. Could we have been a better match? I marveled to myself.

Sabbath arrived, and I invited Jeremy to my room for the afternoon quiet time. After hours of animated discussion, suppertime neared and I cautiously suggested that we might make good roommates. Jeremy's grin grew broad. I was thinking the same thing! he exclaimed. He moved in that evening.

A week later, Jeremy lay down on my bed with me as we chatted and waited for a Sunday afternoon school outing. Before I knew it we were both sound asleep.

We awoke with a start when the dean announced over the PA system that the school buses were ready to go. I then noticed that my arm was wrapped around Jeremy. After we were seated on the bus, Jeremy turned to me and smiled. That was a real nice nap," he said.

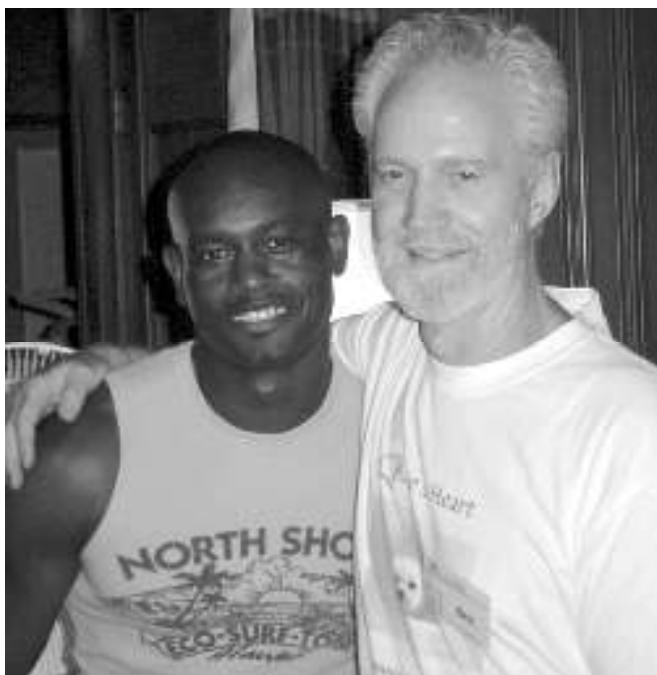
I struggled to show Jeremy how much I liked him. I gave him hugs and tried to hold his hand. But one day when I tried to hug him in a storage room at the school library, where I worked, he blurted out: Don't hug me anymore! People might see us here! I was shocked. I didn't care what other people thought.

Jeremy quickly explained: I spoke with my mom about

you, about how you sometimes want to hug me or hold my hand. She said you are used to doing that with guys because you grew up overseas, where all men do that. So it's OK if you hold my hand or hug me, but don't let anybody see us.

The next time we shared the school bus on a trip home for a long weekend, I spread out a blanket on our laps and then clasped Jeremy's hand underneath it. He winced, but when I whispered that nobody could see us now, he grinned and relented. About the same time, Jeremy told me during one of our many conversations that he liked back massages. I promptly offered him one, and from then on massages became a tradition in our room before bedtime.

We found we had a lot to talk about, both during the massages and in our free time: God, religion, music, our childhoods, classes, school snobs, the cafeteria food. We waited for each other after classes and at meals. We carried each other's books. We had petty



arguments about which teacher was better and which one of us was more intelligent. In many respects, we were going through the same Adventist dating ritual as the other boys only not with a girl.

Meanwhile, the nightly massage was expanding beyond Jeremy's back. He worked at an on-campus bread factory and started complaining that the work was causing an ache on his lower back. He pulled down his shorts to show me the sore place and asked me to massage it. After a few minutes, he asked me to massage his buttocks, too. I was confused. Jeremy clearly liked our friendship and the massages, but did he, like me, want more? Jeremy once asked why I gave massages when he did not often feel like giving any in return. I replied that he had a bad back and I didn't. He thanked me.

The first indication that Jeremy might be interested in something more came one night when, after I had pounded and caressed his back for a while, he lifted his stomach and asked me to pull down his shorts and massage his behind. I obliged, but his shorts got caught and I realized he had an erection. It would have been a good time to put my desires into words. But as a good Adventist boy I couldn't. So I tried making the massages more erotic, hoping Jeremy would get the hint. He didn't let on if he did, but I could see that he was now feeling aroused almost every night.

Sexual frustration began settling in. I wanted to talk with somebody, anybody, about my disquieting feelings. But who? Many students thought I was a nerd or gay particularly after a student hall monitor walked in while I was giving Jeremy a massage. Several students had called me fag to my face. And the faculty members even the pastor treated me coolly at best, making it clear that they preferred to hang out with the more popular students.

Christmas vacation arrived. Jeremy introduced me to my first North

American winter by inviting me to spend a week with his family on a Canadian mountain. When I nearly froze on a hike, he ordered me to take off my gloves so he could give me a hand massage. The two of us shared a bed, allowing the nightly massage routine to easily continue.

Back at school, I began to look forward to bedtime; the massages made me feel so close to Jeremy. But the desire for more continued to grow until I took matters into my own hands and crossed the line. I found that if

I massaged Jeremy long enough, he would fall asleep and I could roll him over. Anxiety, guilt and fear crept over me and then grew. Jeremy and I began to argue frequently, and I started to worry that I would lose my best friend. I didn't know what to do. I once again tried to find someone to talk to. No luck.

Only four years later did I learn that the assistant boys' dean, a college student who lived directly across the hall from me and saw me every day,

was gay and in a relationship very much like my own. He never offered a word of support or even let me know that his door was open if I needed to talk. I also later found out that one of the sophomores who lived down the hall from me was gay and had struggled with deep depression over his orientation.

I did know that a classmate was having sexual intercourse with his younger sister, a freshman, and had been doing so since he was 12



and she was nine. I also knew that a sophomore girl was being molested at home abuse that the faculty only learned about a year later when the

police arrested her father.

One night Jeremy wasn't quite asleep after the bedtime massage, though

I thought he was. The next day, he acted strangely distant toward me, and when he didn't appear for study time in our room that evening, I began to think. Why nude massages, hugs and handholding and nothing else? More importantly, did he know? At about midnight the dean knocked. He said

Jeremy had spent the evening at a teacher's home, where he had wept and finally confided.

I pleaded to see my roommate. The dean balked at first but, when I wouldn't stop crying, went down the hall to ask Jeremy. A few minutes later I was sitting next to Jeremy on his new bed. Jeremy stroked my hand. I like you a lot, Andy. You're a good friend, he said. But we can't sin.

The dean wanted to expel me right away. After a flurry of meetings, the principal said he would give me a break since it was only a month until the end of the school year. The terms: I could stay if I did not talk with any of the boys. I would have to visit a psychologist in a nearby town once a week and then sit down with the principal's wife, who was the school nurse, and tell her what we had discussed. I agreed. Jeremy's mother was

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What's Love Got to Do With It?

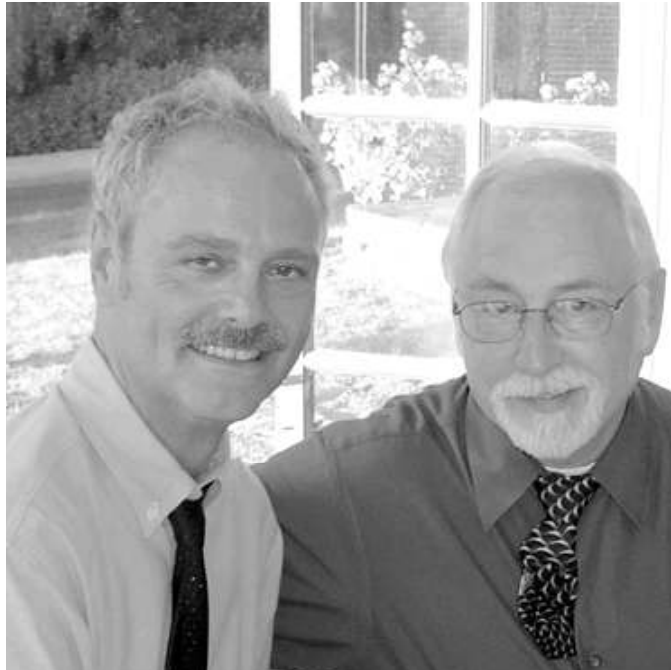
Travis Roe

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.
--Alfred Lord Tennyson

We all know that the stupid things we do make life difficult. Love helps us look past flaws and stupidities. Keeping love strong is as unique as an individual relationship. Each of us requires something different to know that we are loved and nurtured. Some of us need

Relationships are hard work. They are built by communicating and a bond built by blending the myriad of nuances each of us brings. The answer to the question Ms. Turner sings so perfectly, What's love got to do with it? is that love is what keeps us wanting to put in hours and effort.

Love is the decisive incentive program that keeps us working at a relationship. It is a decision and a commitment. The only decision we tend to make in a one night stand is whose home we choose. Absence of love allows relationships to fall apart. It's not the problems. Every relationship has problems; some major, some minor. We hold together when we love each other enough to work through those difficulties.



romantic getaways and candlelight suppers. Some of us need praise for a job well done. Some of us need flowers for no reason at all. All of us need the love that sustains and enhances.

This richness, even once in our lives, changes us and leaves us more whole human beings. I know that the struggle to find someone, to know them, to be with them, to love them is rewarding beyond measure. Truly, I would rather have loved and lost, than to never have loved at all. ▼

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have

a faith that can move mountains but have not love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:2

Academy...

livid that I was still at school and managed to bar me from coming within 50 feet of her son.

Every night I cried myself to sleep. Every morning I could barely pull myself out of bed. The new psychologist provided the only welcome diversion. He was a curiosity: the first non-Adventist I had spoken to in my life. I was stunned when he told me during our second session that it was OK to like boys. Have you ever had sex with a woman? he asked. I shook my head. You should try it, he said. Get laid, the sooner the better. Then you'll know for sure whether you like boys or girls. Either way, you aren't doing

anything wrong. Being gay or straight is part of nature.

Years later his words help me learn to accept myself. At the time I was fuming that the school had put me in therapy, and with a non-Adventist of all things. When I got back to school, I reported to the principal's wife that the psychologist had advised me to have sex with a woman. I never saw him again.

The next time I spoke with Jeremy was three years later, when we coincidentally passed on a sidewalk in a different state. He smiled broadly and wanted to make small talk. I could barely talk. My pain was still too raw. After Jeremy graduated from college, he

spent several years overseas as a missionary and found a wife there. The last I heard he had returned to his small hometown to raise a family near his parents.

I moved to Russia. I haven't set foot in a church in eight years, and I

don't have a life companion yet. But I have made many good friends and,

perhaps most importantly, I'm happy and at peace with myself and God. ▼

If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13: 3

How Can I Be Loved If I Am Single?

Naveen Jonathan

What is love? Popular culture in our society portrays love to be between two people who are romantically involved with each other. Society places great emphasis on this relationship as the answer or cure to loneliness, isolation and lack of companionship. Although such love is extremely special and wonderful, there is danger in the way that the media describes it. We are blasted with messages saying without this type of relationship in your life, you are incomplete, isolated, unloved and beneath those that have achieved this type of relationship. Many individuals spend their life-long journey searching for that one true, special love, a certain Prince or Princess Charming that will be the savior of their life.

I have battled with this issue. In my 26 years, I have spent a good amount of time complaining about the lack of romantic relationships in my life. I would spend hours feeling sad, worthless, unloved and not good enough because I was not in a relationship. I would get jealous of my friends who were in relationships and ask, Why not me?

One day a very close friend of mine helped me reach an epiphany. He pointed out how many individuals in

my life loved and cared about me. We identified friends, family, coworkers, church members, students, even my cat, and many others that have shown their love and affection towards me. From that point I began to pay more attention to those with whom I came in contact. I saw gestures of love all around me that I had taken for granted. I had not identified little acts of

kindness placed in my path as acts of love. This activity helped me realize how truly loved I was. Sure, I don't have that one special guy in my life at the moment. I do have love from many individuals. This revelation has been an awesome experience.

During the month that houses Valentine's Day I challenge each of you that are single to pay attention to those who touch your lives.

My strong belief is that you will find many individuals who love you. Remember, your pets love you too! And God loves you more than all others combined. ▼

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Corinthians 13: 6,7



Kinship



Couples



MIRACLES and LOVE

Brian Smith

A few years ago I was asked to lead out in one of the discussions which our small group at church held from time to time. The topic was: The Meaning of Miracles. One of the examples I used was from a 1963 book: **Miracle on the River Kwai** and described in the **Scotsman** as "Unquestionably one of the most wonderful stories of World War II." The tale describes a journey in a terrible POW camp where the Spirit of forgiveness and love grew and finally blossomed; first among those incarcerated; eventually toward their cruel oppressors.

I believe that both the greatest miracle and the strongest force working on our hearts are two facets of the one supreme Jewel which God bestowed upon the human race. Before our planet came into existence, God deliberated over creating more beings to fellowship with Himself and the other denizens of the universe. He knew His values would demand that He give us the power of choice to reject Him. God foresaw that many would exercise their right to His eternal sorrow and their eternal loss.

Two awesome choices were involved; our mental freedom and a plan that incorporated a supreme antidote. That antidote was LOVE; love for the Creator, and love for our fellow human siblings. God knew that the fracture of our relationship with heaven would inevitably result in a fracture of our inter-personal relationships. We saw the results in Eden and we see them now.

There are four Greek words that describe a miracle of love.

Epithymia (when interchanged with the Latin libido (desire)) refers to the more physical dimension of love. It is the sheer, sustained and severe longing for coitus. Paul Tillich speaks of it as- a hungering and thirsting of the whole person for closeness and union. Mutuality is not essential. It includes the need for physical release as well as the desire for bodily pleasure. (God knew many would be born LGBTI and He chose to include epithymia universally with no exceptions! (Note that in the God-man relationship there is a longing and thirsting for God-- - e.g. As a deer longs for flowing

streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. (Ps 42:1, 2-NRSV Oxford Annotate)

Eros is often confused with epithymia but refers to the more aesthetic and mystical dimension of love. Here also mutuality is not essential. Eros pursues beauty and transports one into ecstasy whenever it discovers excellence. e.g. When shall I come and behold the face of God? Vse. 2

Philia refers to the more emotional dimension of love and is the fondness that friends have for one another. It

includes the feeling of being uplifted and pleased when seeing a friend. Further **philia** provides a secure serenity which permits each person to be at ease whether one or both are well or ill; succeeding or failing; elated or dejected. There is a sense of peace when one is in the presence of a true friend and each realizes that they are both desirous and desirable. Mutuality and reciprocity is essential with Philia. All unrequited lovers know this. With Philia it is impossible to have a friend without being a friend and to be a friend without having a friend.

Agape infers an involvement that exercises the will. At the very least it is a

decision to consider another's interest as favorably as we consider our own simply because they are a fellow human being. In this narrow sense agape is not emotional, reciprocal or preferential, conditional or surprising. It is in this way that we are able to love even our enemies.

When I was a child I could not imagine, how I could ever love my enemies even though I was told to do so. I thought it meant that I would have to hug a cannibal right before they boiled me in a big pot! (Such works the mind of a young child.) Agape refers to a premeditated determination to treat each other, wherever we find each other, as those who are infinitely valuable.

Epithymia without Agape turns another person into a mere instrument for carnal gratification. **Eros without Agape** can become fickle and oppressive. This type of love becomes ready to forsake its focus when we no



longer appear as beautiful as first infatuation. It can also attempt to force someone to our own standard of excellence. **Philia without Agape** can smother others in a suffocating insistence that we always be present or consulted. Philia can act as though others have justifiable life apart from us. Philia can overlook the truth that genuine love enables true friends to be worlds apart in important areas of their lives.

Many of us have read the story of Corrie Ten Boom in The Hiding Place. She tells of the time when she came face to face with the SS guard of the shower room at Ravensbruck where her sister died. In reaching out to shake his hand she found that she had become the current of the miracle of agape love. This is love in its Godlike form. ▼

My Father is omnipotent
And that you can't deny;
A God of might and miracles;
Tis written in the sky.

It took a miracle to put the stars in
place;
It took a miracle to hang the world
in space,
But when He saved my soul,
Cleansed and made me whole,
It took a miracle of love and grace.

*And now these three remain; faith,
hope and love. The greatest of
them all is love. I Corinthians 13:
13*

Anniversary

Ruud Kieboom

Valentine's Day is not traditionally celebrated in the Netherlands. Recently the shops have begun advertising this special day. I think they smell money. Mother's Day, Father's Day and Sinterklaas (the real Santa Claus) on the 5th of December are THE occasions in Holland to show your love and appreciation for somebody.

Despite the fact that my partner and I don't celebrate Valentine's Day as such, this day is very special to us. On February 14, 1994, we stood before a lawyer and friend of ours, to have our relationship legalized. Another friend witnessed. On that same day we began to share a home where my partner had lived in Leiden. (I sold my apartment that morning!). Though we officially legalized our partnership in May 1998 (when it was made possible through a change in the law) we still consider this day as our wedding day.

We "met" each other in 1987. I had gone through various coming out stages over the previous two years. It wasn't love at first sight. We just decided to try and build a

relationship. It worked! Gradually we started to love each other more and more. Now I cannot imagine a life without my partner. I think some might call our relationship a dull one. We hardly ever have fights. We never shout at each other. Our style is to become silent and quit talking. I think this is worse than shouting. Fortunately, the silence never lasts long and we start discussing what is bothering us. We never go to sleep in the middle of a misunderstanding or argument. I wouldn't want it to be different.

Life with Kees is so wonderful that I wish everybody would have a partner. I do understand that life without a partner can be wonderful too. Some of us are not made for having a partner. In my experience, life is richer. It is in the small things that I feel what my partner means to me. I love coming home together after a night at the movies or after a holiday. I love never returning to an empty place. I appreciate talking to Kees about the good and bad things that have happened during the day. I appreciate sitting next to him on the couch when watching a lousy program on the television. (well, not really watching I suppose...) I enjoy the silence when he is around and both of us are working on our own projects. In every aspect my relationship makes me happy and satisfied with the life I am living now. I hope someone made you feel special on Valentine's Day!

Love from Holland. ▼

*Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self seeking. Love is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs.
I Corinthians 13: 5*



We Will Miss You

We have the sad duty to report that our colleague Dr. Madelynn Jones Haldeman passed to her rest this morning, January 28, at a hospital in Naples, Florida. She had been in poor health of late, and had been living with her sister there in Naples. She was 79.

Born in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, Madelynn was an alumna of Columbia Union College (BA: Theology and German) and of the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews (MA: Systematic Theology; ThD: Biblical Theology and Exegesis). She served on the faculties of Mt. Vernon Academy, Kingsway College (where she chaired the religion department), Loma Linda University and La Sierra University. A superb teacher of Koine Greek and of New Testament interpretation, Madelynn led many hundreds of students into deeper insights into scripture's meaning in early Christian times and in our times today. Her mastery of syntax and of literary style also made her an excellent copy editor for several publications, including the Journal of Medical Sciences and Spectrum.

Madelynn's focus in her doctoral work and in much of her teaching was the thought of the Apostle Paul--with whom she wrestled deeply and well. In recent years, many Adventists benefited from her insights in the "Women and the Word" sessions that accompanied the annual meetings of the Association of Adventist Women. The Gospel of Matthew was also a focus of hers; she brought great sociological and feminist insight to the text.

Madelynn was honored by the Association of Adventist Women as Adventist Woman of the Year in 1995 and, in December of that same year, ordained to the ministry at the La Sierra University Church... She was a leading member of the Gender Equality Commission of the Southeastern California Conference, and led out in the establishing of the Women's Resource Center at La Sierra University. Madelynn was the first female president of ASRS (1993-94) and a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the American Academy of Religion, and Alpha Mu Gamma Honors Society for Modern Languages.

Through her preaching, counseling, teaching, seminars, retreats and camp-meeting presentations, Madelynn made an enduring impact on Adventist laypeople's understandings of God, forgiveness, and grace. Her ability to draw rich meaning and spiritual insight and encouragement from the New Testament writings distinguished her beyond the confines of campus and classroom.

In addition to her sister, Madelynn is survived by her son Joel and her daughter Kimberly. La Sierra will be saluting her memory in the University Church this coming week.

Those of us who knew Madelynn will always remember her as a forceful, gutsy, provocative and profoundly honest colleague whose vision for the church was complemented by a warmly pastoral instinct toward students and fellow believers. Our lives are the poorer for her loss, but far the richer for having known and worked with her.

This was reported by John Jones.

Madelynn had an enormous impact on Kinship and our individual members. She presented the love of Jesus and the teachings of the Bible in a way that dismissed the guilt and shame placed on so many of us. She supported us, helped us see ourselves as cherished by God and gave us hope to raise our heads as full members of the Christian family.

Here are some of the responses of Kinship members to her life and her effect on us.

I first met her through a tape that was made at a women's meeting perhaps 25 years ago. I came away with some belief that the church had changed...mostly because this scholar was talking like a real person and to "me". I thank my lucky stars for Madelynn and all that she gave to Kinship. Those wonderful worship services that she did for our region 9 group are to always be cherished...just as her time with us at Kampmeetings will be cherished.

Madelynn was at my very first Kampmeeting. It was that week I started to believe the Bible didn't condemn homosexuality

Madelynn was speaking at the first Kampmeeting I attended. She spent considerable private, personal time with me that week sharing important wisdom that I needed desperately at that time in my life. I believe God knew what I needed and used Madelynn to minister to me.

This is very sad news. I first met Dr. Haldeman when I entered La Sierra as a sophomore. She was the only religion teacher who could actually keep me from falling asleep at 8:00AM. She was a truly gifted teacher. She made the Bible make sense and Christianity do-able. I took every class I could from her because she was by far the best religion instructor at La Sierra.

Her interest in me was genuine and as I told my story to her, she wanted to minister to me as no one ever did before or since. I had trouble resolving my homosexuality and my relationship to God. They were seeming

Kinship News:

Australia: Noel Thorpe

Australia has a new web site for GLBTI folk. You can find us at www.sdakinshipaustralia.org. We are also having a presence at the New Mardi Gras Fair Day in Sydney, on the 20th of Feb. The stall will show the banner and hand outs on us here in Australia.

Europe: Ruud Kieboom

Kinship's president Bob Bouchard visiting Holland! Though his visit is not on Kinship business, Bob said he would love to meet members from Europe. We would like to invite you to come by our home in Den Haag, Donker Curtiusstraat 204 on Sunday afternoon, February 13 from 14.00 hours to spend some time with Bob. If you like to join us, please e-mail us at ruud@sdakinship.nl and let Ruud know if you would like to stay for dinner and/or if you need information how to get to Ruud and Kees.

Website of Kinship

Netherlands has been moved

The website of Kinship Netherlands has been transferred to SDA-Kinship's website. Webmaster Dave has copied the information to Kinship's website, which makes it easier and faster to access. Have a look at it at www.sdakinship.nl. You can also go to the main page and click on "regions" which will lead you to this part of the site.

Fourth European Kinship Meeting

EKM4 will take place in Scotland, United Kingdom from September 23 - 26. The registration fee will be between € 140,00 and € 150,00. The meeting is being planned by Mike Lewis (mike@sdakinship.nl) and will take place in the country side near Edinburgh. Our site for this year is easy to reach by public transport as well as by car. As soon as more

opposites which troubled me into my late 20's. Madelynn told me she was going to spend Sabbath afternoon with me alone. We went for a walk and found a place to talk. She talked to me one on one, going through the texts, explaining the Bible, reasoning with me and making God and His love for me as a Gay man ring out. That day was the day that it came all together for me. Madelynn Haldeman was the instrument through which God spoke to me. I could hear God saying, "I love you as you are. I made you a Gay man and I am proud of you, why can't you be proud of yourself?"

"Well done thy good and faithful servant."



"Si muero sobrevíveme con tanta fuerza pura"

"If I die, survive me with such sheer force"
by Pablo Neruda

If I die, survive me with such sheer force
that you waken the furies of the pallid and the cold,
from south to south, lift your indelible eyes
from sun to sun dream through your singing mouth,
I don't want your laughter or your steps to waver,
I don't want my heritage of joy to die,
Don't call up my person, I am absent,
Live in my absence as if in a house,
Absence is a house so fast
that inside you will pass through its walls
and hang pictures on the air,
Absence is a house so transparent
that I, lifeless, will see you, living,
and if you suffer, my love, I will die again.

sent to us by Dahlia

Kinship News...

information is available it will be published on Kinship Netherlands' website (in Dutch) or sent to you (in English, German or French) when requested on .

Germany: Roy Raetzer

The former HAD-group (Homosexual Adventists Germany) has its next meeting in Erfurt, Germany from April 22 - 24. Those who wish to participate can contact Joachim Deuerling, who will organize this meeting at . Registration fees are moderate. Of course the language during this meeting will be German. The meeting is in a youth hostel. Meals are included, except for Sabbath afternoon, when dinner will be at a restaurant of your own or the group's choice.

Philippines: Jonathan Coo

Our group had a visit from our friend Richard in January. Thank God he was spared from the tsunami catastrophe. He used to work in Phuket, Thailand but is now based in Bangkok. We had our usual Saturday night out at Malate (gay district of Manila). We gave him a tour around Orosa and Nakpil streets and went to PRIDE EXCHANGE, a gay store, BED, the latest gay dance club in Manila, and finally, a new addition to the gay scene--MALELANDIA, a KTV sing-along bar.

We hope to report on the Valentine scene next month:)

Uganda: Joseph Brown

Our Kinship group in Kampala supports part of the Open Door AIDS Orphanage Home. Since we started this ministry we have now become connected with over 100 children between the ages of 5-14 years. Many of them have lost both parents to AIDS. Some of them have HIV themselves. Others did not get the virus. We are raising funds to send them to school and

to allow them to have access to the ARV medicine that fights the HIV virus. We are also raising funds to build permanent housing and collect shoes, pens, books and pencils.

United Kingdom: Mike Lewis

Over 150 Christmas cards were sent out from Kinship to all pastors in the United Kingdom. The card included a Christmas Greeting, the Kinship logo and the Kinship Mission Statement as seen on the Kinship web-site home page. This was the first of a series of mail shots planned for 2004/5. The next mail shot, scheduled for early spring, will include a personal letter, a copy of the flyer "Nothing in the world is like..." and a copy of Ben Kemena's article "Another Adventist Viewpoint". We are taking the approach of 'little and often'. Please pray that this mail shot will be well received. On January 21, I met with Pastor Elias (currently South England Conference Secretary). I gave him a couple of Kinship articles, one of which explains simply the reasons for the existence of Kinship, the other (Ben Kemena's article) goes into the subject in more detail. These are the articles I want to circulate to all UK pastors next month, through 'official Church channels'. He agreed to look at the articles and discuss the matter with his colleagues in the Church Administration. I am fairly hopeful, (but just today, not terribly confident) that I will be allowed to do this. If I am not allowed to work through official channels I will have more work but will go ahead with the project.

Pastor Elias also referred me to Pastor Bernie Holford (Life Ministries Department of the South England Conference). He was very positive, although he (understandably) takes the official Church position. He was interested in talking longer but both of us ran out of time, so I am trying to set up a meeting with him in February. He teaches a course at

Newbold in which LGBT issues are discussed, and seemed keen to get additional information. This was an encouraging exercise, which I hope will be the start of greater freedom of discussion here in Britain. On January 29 I have a meeting with the British Union President to discuss similar topics. Please continue to pray for a greater understanding and acceptance of LGBT people here in Britain and the rest of Europe. Greetings to all, and many blessings; have a wonderful Sabbath.

US Region 1: Catherine Taylor

Any and all of you who can get there, including Andrew Strong, are invited to our New York gathering on February 26th. We will meet for worship at our New York Forum then gather for lunch at Bob and Vince's home. We will surprise you with wonderful afternoon and evening activities. For directions you can contact Bob at

US Region 2: Yolanda Elliot

Hear Ye!! Hear Ye!!! It is now time to mark your calendar for our famous, once a year, Rehoboth Beach Mini Kampmeeting on the weekend of May 13-15. People come from all over the US and some foreign countries so make sure you let us know soon. Our gathering will begin with a craft project like you never did in Vacation Bible School for those who arrive early Friday afternoon. We will serve dinner at 6 and have a vespers program. The next day begins with breakfast followed by Sabbath School, church service, a Sabbath Dinner that many of you have requested, afternoon services and lots of time for the beach, kite flying, outlet shopping and great fun. For more information you can contact .

US Region 3: Brenda McColpin

I am the new Region 3 coordinator. I would love to hear from people in this region. My email address is . Please feel free to contact me. I would really like to hear from the people who are already leading out in groups/chapters within this large region. I would like to meet the leaders as well as get information about how you started your chapter. If there is not an active chapter in your area and you are willing to head one up please advise me. I look forward to hearing from you and garnering input/ideas from you as to how to develop this region. I am dedicated to promoting growth of chapters within this region.

In case you were worried, we did not dispatch the news from the rest of the regions to a cyber netherworld. Once a month we send out a request to all the regional coordinators throughout the world asking them to get their news to the Connection so you can know what is happening. We publish what gets sent to us. We would love to hear from all of you. So please feel free to write to the Connection about your events.

Kinship Board Meeting...

March 4-7 Taylor and Leif will be hosting our Spring Board Meeting in Redlands, California. We are so excited about the myriad projects, events, activities and possibilities that are going on in Kinship that we are stretching our meetings to cover them all well. Please feel invited to join us. For more information you can contact Taylor at taylorruhl@earthlink.net.

connection

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Editor: Catherine Taylor
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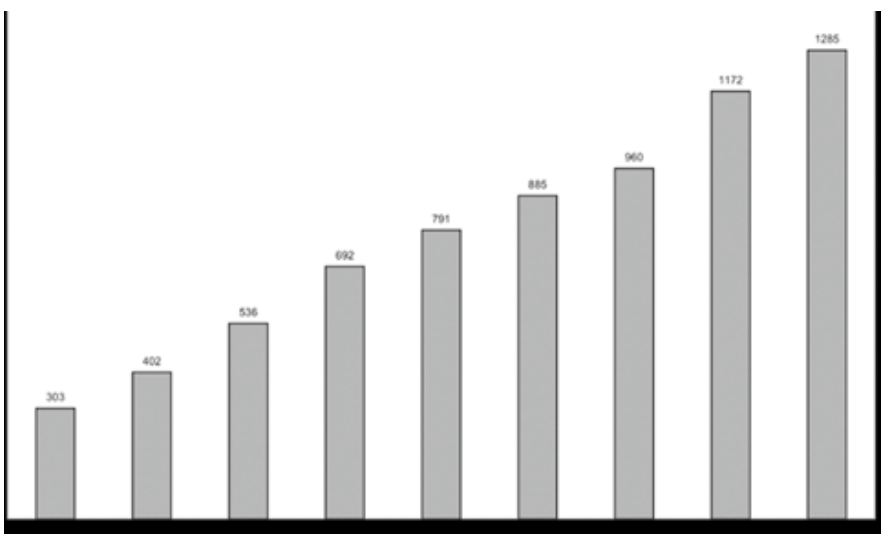
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SDA Kinship International

Membership Growth
Aug. 2001 – Jan. 2005

The Road to St. Louis (USA)

Isis M., Kampmeeting Coordinator 2005 (USA)

St. Louis University (SLU) here we come!!!! "SLU" as it is affectionately called is located 2 miles from downtown St. Louis. It is a liberal arts Jesuit university that was reshaped, rebuilt and restored by the efforts and dedication of their current University President, Father Biondi. The campus is beautiful with various fountains and sculptures throughout. We are including a few pictures from the site visit.



On-campus and off-campus housing will be provided. On-campus housing includes the Student Village Apartments which have a kitchen and a living room. Off-campus accommodations will be at the Drury Inn. These accommodations were selected based on availability as well as feedback received from the surveys.

The campus is also residence to the historic Samuel Cupples House, a beautiful mansion and home to a collection of many antiques and art. There is a nominal fee (\$4) to visit the building and view the many collections. (That's where I'm staying...just kidding!!)



Our Kampmeeting program will be held in Dubourg Hall. Another beautiful building and eye candy for the architecturally inclined.

I'm also pleased that the expense of Kampmeeting



will be very reasonable and details of costs will be forthcoming. I cannot stress enough how important it is to plan ahead to attend Kampmeeting. Due to the General Conference session and other activities occurring in St. Louis around that time, we need to have final head count confirmation with payment by June 15th. *After that date you will be on your own regarding accommodations* (which may be difficult to find).



If you would like to learn more about SLU, please feel free to visit their website at www.slu.edu

In the meantime, have you found a baby picture of yourself? If so, please send the photo to the office along with your name, place of birth (city & country) and date (minus the year). Another option is to send an electronic version to Kampmeeting@sdakinship.org. I look forward to receiving your baby pictures!

St. Louis Trivia: St. Louis is home to the oldest institution of higher learning west of the Mississippi River - Saint Louis University. St. Louis offers more free, major visitor attractions than anyplace outside of the nation's capital, including the Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis Zoo, Cahokia Mounds, Museum of Westward Expansion, Science Center, Missouri History Museum, Grant's Farm and more.

Plan on Meeting Me in St. Louis - July 10-17, 2005!!