

connection

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 32 No. 5 – July 2008

"Our deepest fear
is not
that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear
is that
we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light,
not our darkness
that frightens us most.
We ask ourselves,
'Who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous,
talented,
and famous?'
Actually,
who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.
Your playing small
does not serve the world.
There is nothing enlightened
about shrinking
so that people
won't feel insecure around you.
We were born
to make manifest the glory of God
that is within us.
It's not just in some of us;
it's in all of us.
And when we let
our own light shine, we
unconsciously
give other people permission
to do the same.
As we are liberated
from our own fear,
our presence
automatically liberates others."

The Places
We're Going
The People
We're Meeting

Used by Nelson Mandela in his 1994 inaugural

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REGIONAL COORDINATORS, USA

Region 1 (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA, DE, NJ): David Thaxton and Catherine Taylor; region1@sdakinship.org
 Region 2 (MD, VA, WV, NC, SC) : Yolanda Elliott; region2@sdakinship.org
 Region 3 (TN, AL, MS, GA, SC, FL): region3@sdakinship.org
 Region 4 (MN, IA, MO, WI, MI, IL, IN, OH, KY): region4@sdakinship.org
 Region 5 (AK, KS, LA, OK, TX): Floyd Poenitz; region5@sdakinship.org
 Region 6 (ND, SD, NE, WY, UT, CO, NM): Erin and Elena Davis-Stenhouse; region6@sdakinship.org
 Region 7 (AL, WA, OR, ID, MT): region7@sdakinship.org
 Region 8 (NV, HI, CA zip 93600+): Obed Vazquez-Ortiz; region8@sdakinship.org
 Region 9 (AZ, CA zip 93599-): region9@sdakinship.org

AFFILIATED INTERNATIONAL REGION COORDINATORS

Australia-New Zealand: Noel Thorpe; info@sdakinshipaustralia.org
 Brazil: Itamar Matos de Souza; matoso25@yahoo.com.br
 Canada: Jerry McKay; ba360@ncf.ca
 Central & South America: Alexander Gomez Pasco; alexgpasco@yahoo.com
 Europe: Ruud Kieboom; kinship@xs4all.nl
 Germany: Roy Raetzer; roy@raetzer-botha.de
 United Kingdom & Eire; Mike Lewis
kinship_uk@scotmagic.co.uk
 Philippines: Jonathan Co; cancer108@hotmail.com

OTHER COORDINATORS

Intersex: Carolyn Parsons; intersex@sdakinship.org
 Transgender/Transexual; Sandra Hoffecker
transgender@sdakinship.org
 Older Adults: Ren Reynolds; olderadult@sdakinship.org
 IMRU? (Young Adults Under 30): Ruben López
imru@sdakinship.org
 Webmaster: Linda Wright webadmin@sdakinship.org

WHO WE ARE...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a nonprofit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender 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 United States. Kinship has a board made up of fifteen officers and thirteen regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three 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 that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

SUPPORT KINSHIP

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

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141 or visit SDA Kinship's website at: www.sdakinship.org.





From the Editor

Kinship members have been busy.

We're excited to share with you some of the press coverage about and reactions to our new book Christianity and

Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives. We want you to see pictures of the success of our booth at Open Day in the Dutch Union of Seventh-day Adventists. US Region 2 marched in the Washington DC parade handing out ...well, we'll tell you more in a few pages

Because last month's issue was so packed, we're including pictures from the Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting April and the European Planning Meeting in May. We want to share the story of what one Kinship member is doing in his community. We didn't want you to miss all of the European Kinship Planning Meeting, so we'll share the extraordinary sermon Mike Lewis gave for The Hague church plant called ARK.

Catherine



*The Places
We're Going
The People
We're Meeting*



God Moves In Mysterious Ways

Open Day, Netherlands



It wasn't on the agenda. We hadn't given it one moment of thought. When the Kinship Europe leadership team gathered in Den Haag for their May planning meeting, more than half the people present had never heard of "Open Day." Ruud invited Duco to join us because Ruud believes it's important for his local pastor to meet Kinship members and collaborate with our outreach to the church and to LGBTI Adventists. In the middle of discussion about a variety of possible activities, Duco said "You know, you should have a table at Open Day next month."

Wow. Oh. How could we pull this off? What is Open Day? Could we pull this off? Well, Carrol Grady has done things like this. But then she's busy. Let's call her. What time is it in Seattle? About 2 AM. Maybe we should wait a couple of hours. Okay. Who else might be available? Mike Lewis: "It looks like I have nothing in my diary for that weekend. I could fly from Scotland." How do we get a table? To whom do we speak? How much will it cost? Are there any left? What may seem odd from a US perspective is the fact that the Dutch Union would let Kinship have a booth. That's a large difference between this part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and many others. Ruud called Gerard. "Sure, there are booths. You can have one for free." MUCH later in the day we called Carrol. "Well, yes. It looks like my schedule is open. This is my last year to travel to conferences like this so it might be nice

to come to Holland."

Yea!! The pieces are falling together! Oh, how are we going to pay for Carrol to get here? Someone offers to contribute some of the fare. We mention it to the Kinship Board. Another generous Kinship member donates his frequent flier miles to cover the entire cost of getting Carrol across "the pond." More pieces of the puzzle. Good. Now, how are we going to decorate this booth? What are we going to hand out? Ruud has just finished translating the leaflet *Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?* into Dutch. He researches printers and realizes it is cheaper to utilize the printer the CONNECTION uses, Doolittle's Print Shop in Claremont, New Hampshire, and ship the fliers to Holland than have it printed in The Netherlands. Ruud works with Ted in Greenfield, Massachusetts to get his translation ready to print and ships it to Doolittle's. Fred in Tillamook, Oregon packages up a banner, Kinship's *Open Heart, Open Hand* DVD, several copies of *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives* and *My Son, Beloved Stranger* and ships them over. Carrol, in Seattle, Washington begins to pack her bags. Mike organizes his schedule. Melanie and her mother, Hannie, arrange for the group to stay at Hannie's home. Joachim and Stefan continue to work on EKM. Floyd and Catherine try not to be too jealous because they cannot be there.

- Catherine

Here in Holland, on "Open Day" at the Seventh-day Adventist headquarters near Utrecht, various departments of the church present themselves and their projects or missions to the members who stop by as part of Campmeeting. On June 8, 2008 about 1000 people visited. Carrol, Mike, Kees, Melanie and Ivan were of invaluable help at our Kinship booth. We handed out at least three hundred copies of the leaflet *"Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?"* We sold ten copies of *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*. We sold five copies of Carrol's book *My Son, Beloved Stranger* and one copy of the DVD *Open Heart, Open Hand*.

Some people came back to ask for more leaflets to hand to members of their congregations. A youth Sabbath School teacher told us she didn't agree with the official church teachings on homosexuality and

wanted more information to share with her class. The week before, the youth lesson had condemned our relational option. We had a long discussion. Several people asked us if our booth promoted or condemned LGBTI people. When I told them we were there to promote acceptance for this part of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, most people said, to my relief, "Oh, that's all right then." We had few negative reactions. Most people who didn't agree with our position just passed by without saying anything. Some people passed by several times without approaching the booth. They would look at us from "a safe distance." I wondered if they might be LGBTI people who were afraid to come out and don't dare to visit the booth. They had to have seen the banner Fred Casey sent. It was hanging clearly. I hope they will find their way to Kinship through the internet.

- Ruud

I am honored to have been invited to Open Day and grateful for the generosity of the person who got my tickets for me. I recently learned that one of my great-grandmothers was Dutch, so I had an additional reason to look forward to meeting Dutch people and observing their Dutch lifestyles. The day before I left I tried to check in to my flight and discovered that my name wasn't on the manifest! I called my beloved flight sponsor. Together, we figured out that he had somehow gotten my name listed as Grady Carrol. We got that straightened out. My anti-jet-lag medication seemed to work. I was tired but able to sleep and stay awake at the proper times.

Ruud and Kees are delightful hosts. Melanie and her mother Hannie arranged for Mike and me to stay at Hannie's home. It is a brisk walk between there and Ruud and Kees' home. I am happy to say that, despite enjoying Kees' delicious cooking, the walking helped me to lose two more pounds!



On Sabbath Ruud's gay choral group, Mannenkoorts, took a two-and-one-half hour train ride to give a series of concerts while Mike and I spent the morning with Kees. In the afternoon, while Mike, Kees, Melanie and Ivan went to ARK I read *Painting the Word* by John Drury, bishop of Oxford Chapel. Drury explained religious art with beautiful illustrations.

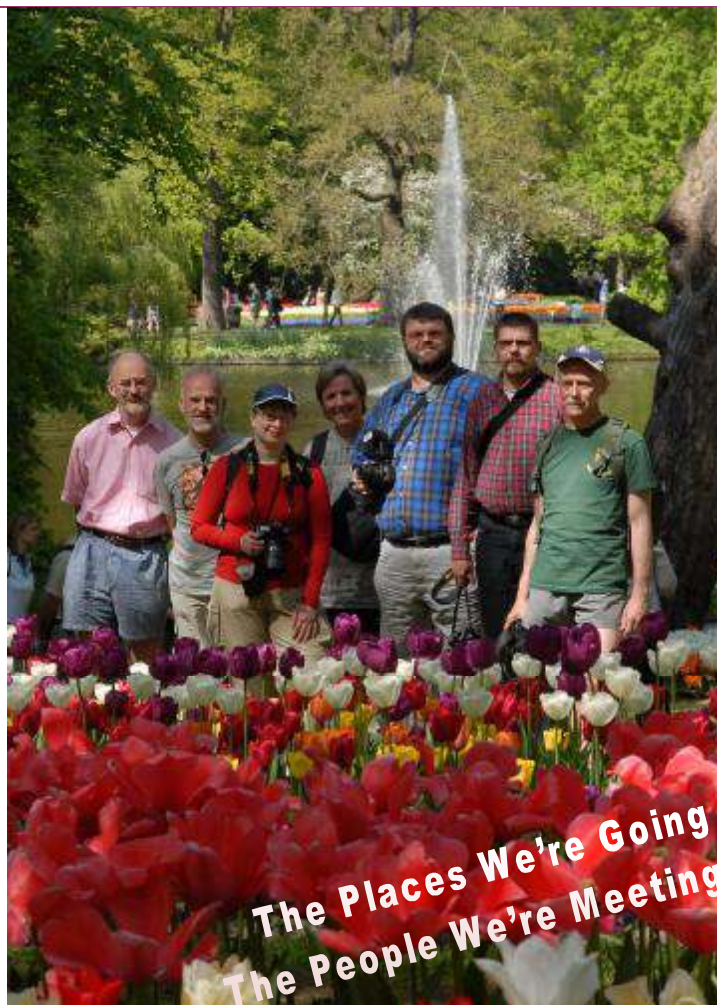
We were up and organizing ourselves very early on Sunday. Open Day is like a fair. Covered booths, set up around the perimeter of the Union Office lawn, are open from 10 AM- 4 PM. Attendance was steady all day. The majority of the plethora of food booths featured Indonesian cuisine, and I was able to get some vegetarian options. Most Dutch speak English so Mike and I were able to talk to quite a few people.

We had lots of good conversations. I particularly remember one mother about my age who told me she has been so sad about her gay son. She loves him and believes, from her understanding of Bible teachings, that he will be unable to go to Heaven. When I told her that quite a few Christians now believe that we haven't really understood what the Bible says on that topic, she was very happy. She had already spent the money she brought with her on other books but came back in the afternoon to get a copy of the new book.

It was a happy surprise to me to learn that the church leadership of the Dutch Union and many of the pastors are very supportive of Kinship. The Union Secretary invited us to his house for dinner after the Open Day, and we ate and enjoyed an open discussion sitting on their covered patio overlooking a canal filled with ducks. ➤➤

The only gnashing-of-teeth part of the trip occurred when I arrived back in Seattle. On my way home from Holland I tried to bring some of the nice Dutch weather with me. It got lost somewhere over the Atlantic. Seattle was cloudy and 56 degrees. I returned with the Kinship banner to the States and had checked it through. At Baggage Claim and Customs I watched two carousels unload bags, boxes and travel supplies. Kinship's banner never appeared. I told the Northwest Airlines baggage claim agent then went to the end of the line for Customs. If you've ever reported lost luggage (I had a bag lost on my last trip – how is this possible by the law of averages?), you know it is a time-consuming procedure. There were several people ahead of me. I finally got out to the curb where Paul was waiting. Just as we were about to drive away, the Northwest/KLM agent came running out, pounded on the car window and gasped "They found it!" SO, I went back in, got a gate pass, headed back through security, took the train to the satellite gate where we came in, went backwards through Customs and finally got our banner. We were home.

- Carol ▽



Participants European Planning Meeting at the Keukenhof Flower Exhibition in The Netherlands
f. l. t. r.: Kees, Ruud, Melanie, Catherine, Joachim, Stefan and Mike
(not on the picture: Ivan, Duco, Floyd and Jeff)

SDA Kinship Wikipedia Project

Carrol Grady

Several months ago Floyd Poenitz pointed out to the Communications Team the importance of having an article about Kinship published on Wikipedia. Jacquie Hegarty asked me, as someone who could be more objective, to write it. I began gathering information and source material from several of the long-time Kinship members such as Floyd, Obed Vazquez, Ron Lawson, and Bob Bouchard.

I also began learning how to be a "Wikipedian," to understand terms like NPOV (neutral point of view), COI (conflict of interests), and Notability, the necessity of documentation, and how to format and find help. When I finally moved the article to "mainspace" I am happy to say it was not flagged for "speedy deletion." It was soon noticed by the Seventh-day Adventist WikiProject, a group of editors who are dedicated to improving Wikipedia's coverage of all articles related to the Adventist Church, and the article was commended by one of the editors, a youth pastor in Australia. There

is still considerable work to be done in making this a first-class article. The URL for the article is

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventist_Kinship_International.

If, after reading it, you have any additional information or corrections you are invited to submit them to me at carrolgrady@hotmail.com. ▽



Marching with Pride

Kinship at Gay Pride Celebrations

Washington D.C.

US Region 2 decorated their pick-up truck, donned their designer rainbow accented outfits, and came up with a great public relations idea. Linda Wright designed rack cards to hand out. One side had information about Kinship and our book. The other side gave information about regional events. Being good Adventists, the group distributed the cards "like the leaves of autumn." One member reported that people were chasing him down to get more cards. There have been several inquiries about Kampmeeting from information on the cards. Two of the individuals that received cards at Pride will be attending! Those people said they had not known Kinship existed and to know there is a Kampmeeting in their back yard has been a Godsend to them! – Yolanda Elliott

Yolanda reports that the cards were beautifully designed, inexpensive and a wonderful way to let people know about Kinship.



Sacramento, California Pride

On a more than 100-degree (Fahrenheit) Saturday, June 21, Jacquie, Cathi, and Obed set up a table under the trees with pamphlets, leaflets, handouts, and t-shirts. Jacquie got stung by a bee; otherwise it was a really good day! We had plenty of cold drinks, food, and munchies to keep us going. We were able to talk to folks who were surprised to see our group and interested in knowing what Kinship was about. Some of the Sacramento Kinship members joined us in the afternoon, and in the evening we all went out for supper together at a lovely crepe bistro in the city.

– Jacquie Hegarty

Pride in Brisbane Australia

On June 14 Brisbane hosted its largest annual Gay Pride rally, march and fair day. The celebration started with a rally at Queen's Park in the city and ended with a colorful and vocal march that made its way to Musgrave Park in South Brisbane. Kinship had a stall and handed out information about us to lots of people. Kinship members and friends visited throughout the day and helped staff our booth.

The Newsletter for Kinship Australia is on the web.
<http://www.sdakinshipaustralia.org/pdf/KinshipNewsletter2008Issue2.pdf>

– Noel Thorpe

Pride in Tiel, Netherlands

On June 27th the little picturesque town of Tiel hosted this year's Gay Pride rally. In Dutch it is called Roze Zaterdag (Pink Saturday). Thousands of LGBTI celebrators almost outnumbered the citizens and "took possession" of the town. Everyone enjoyed the march, stage performances and speeches, including those from the Secretary of Culture and Education in The Netherlands and the mayor of Tiel. One of the booths was sponsored by LKP, a Christian organization that links LGBTI church groups together. I updated the information about Kinship that was on their table. I was so happy that I happened to have about ten copies of the leaflet *Homosexuality; Can We Talk About It* with me. The LKP staffers gladly added our leaflet to their information. Next year's Pink Saturday will be in my home town, The Hague (Den Haag). My choir and several other ones intend to organize a choir festival for that last Saturday of June.

Gay Pride in Cologne (Köln), Germany

Over the weekend of July 4-7, Kees and I enjoyed the biggest Gay Pride event in Europe which took place in Cologne, Germany. More than one million visitors from all over Europe were in attendance. The stunning Sunday Gay Pride march with more than eighty groups and thousands of people participating, took several hours to pass by. If you want to experience this biggest LGBTI event of Europe next year, better start planning now for the first weekend of July 2009!

– Ruud Kieboom ▽

Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives

The Journey

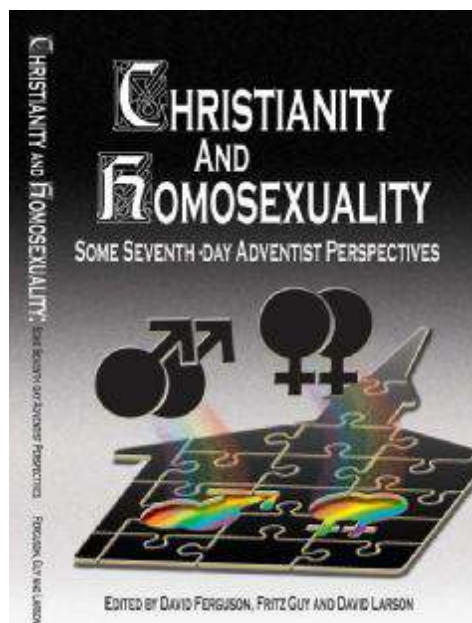
I arrived in Washington, DC twelve hours before the Press Conference for our new book. This was twenty-four hours later than I had scheduled. One canceled flight and one flight that aborted 10 seconds prior to takeoff made my journey east more of an adventure that I anticipated. I knew that the Press Conference was something meant to happen. My journey reminded me that there were forces that wanted to shake me up and there were Forces letting me know that, in spite of challenges, Somebody is still in charge. That's the story of my life in a nutshell.

David Ferguson — Church Liaison
for SDA Kinship International

When I arrived at the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) headquarters, I was delighted to find HRC friends, coeditors Fritz Guy and David Larson, and my good friend, Bronwen Larson who has provided administrative support throughout the entire process of book development. I met Miguel de la Torre from the Iliff School of Theology for the first time. We spent about an hour reviewing our plans for the event. Then we gathered in the room prepared for the Press Conference with a table of our books, a camera set up by Sheba and one for my personal use manned by my fabulous partner, Peter. You can see the entire Press Conference on our website at www.sdagayperspectives.com. Afterwards the HRC provided us lunch where we could relax and celebrate with our team.

I delivered copies of the book to my two Senators and Congressman. I will let you know later if I get responses from them regarding the book. Because of my flight delays Bronwen and I did not have time to personally take additional copies of the book to the nearby General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. We enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of Jim Chilson and even found a little time to visit monuments, the Smithsonian, and the National Gallery, and have dinner with Jim and other friends.

We were excited to find out that a former Adventist came by to check out the Press Conference because he didn't know that a gay Adventist organization existed. He bought a book and over the next few days read it and contacted Region 2 asking how to become a member. I'm looking forward to meeting him at our upcoming Kampmeeting. I'm convinced this is just the beginning of stories we will hear as the book begins to circulate.



We continue to move forward with our marketing efforts. We are contacting various organizations requesting that they list our book in the resource section of their website and create a link to our website. To date there are links created on 10 other websites. We are contacting college faculty about using the book as a course text. We have a number of Adventist and non-Adventist

reviewers preparing book reviews for use in publications. As they are released we will include them on the SDA Kinship book website where Europe and Australia are already posted. We will be having another press release go out to major US newspapers and local newspapers around Seventh-day Adventist institutions. We are working with a group of pastors to have the book used for quarter as an alternative Sabbath School class. If you have other ideas and you would like to have us assist you in your area, please contact churchrelations@sdakinship.org. One church has already purchased nearly 40 copies of the book. HRC has the book available at their store online. Amazon now offers the book.

Will this book change minds? The only way we will find out is to sell copies. Responses from many who have read the book have been very positive. I have only heard of three complaints from within the church. That's amazing. Perhaps some think this message will go away if it is ignored. I hope you and I will make sure enough people get a copy of the book to make certain our message is not forgotten. How many books can you sell this month? Special shipping rates are available for quantities over 10. I think by the time of Kampmeeting we are very close to selling or giving 1000 books since it was released. A big thank you to those who sponsored books that were given to church leaders and then followed up

to be sure it had arrived. I look forward to hearing stories about their responses.

When we were ready to return to Los Angeles Peter and I were sent to the wrong gate at the wrong terminal. When we did arrive at the correct gate and terminal they were in the process of canceling our flight. We were able to get on a nonstop flight to Los Angeles International Airport instead of our more local Burbank Airport. It cost us a shuttle ride and meant we had to pick up our luggage the next day - but we made it home safely and the same day as planned. Life is an adventure. ▽

From: The Human Rights Campaign Website

On June 17, HRC was proud to host an exciting book forum for the release of the Seventh-day Adventist book, *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*, edited by the Seventh-day Adventist affinity and advocacy group, SDA Kinship. To open the morning discussion, we featured a short video by the renowned Evangelical leader, Dr. Tony Campolo. If you missed the event, you can view a video of the panel discussion through the SDA Kinship website. ▽

From: Amazon.com

Our book can now be purchased at: http://www.amazon.com/Christianity-Homosexuality-Seventh-day-Adventist-Perspectives/dp/0967369428/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1214811426&sr=8-3

From Advent –

(The Union Paper of Seventh-day Adventists in the Netherlands.)

Review by Reinder Bruinsma, former president of the Dutch Union of Seventh-day Adventists.

Translation by Ruud Kieboom

Addressing the issue of homosexuality is one of the most difficult struggles for the Seventh-day Adventist church today. It's a subject with many facets. Our church always considers the theological aspect, what does the Bible say about it? How can one explain the texts in the Bible that deal with homosexuality? Other considerations include: how should the church deal with its members who are homosexual? Can the church offer them employment/keep them in employment? What does the outside world think of a church which apparently has great difficulties with its homosexual members? It is a fact that there are many homosexual Seventh-day Adventists; and it is also a fact that they face much misunderstanding and even hostility, particularly within the church.

The official point of view of the church is to be found in four declarations that have been published in the last couple of years. In short they say that it is clear the church welcomes all those who have a different orientation from the majority. At the same time it declares that they are not allowed to be in same-sex relationships. Sexuality, so it states, should be within a formalized, monogamous, permanent relationship of one man and one woman; and those who do not live in a matrimonial relationship can only live in celibacy.

Recently the independent Adventist organization Adventist Forums (which also publishes Spectrum magazine) released a number of essays about many important aspects of homosexuality within the Adventist Church. People who are Adventist and heterosexual and people who are Adventist and homosexual contributed. There is a biographical section. Next to a biographical section there is a section that deals with a number of biomedical perspectives. In the next part of the book the contribution of Professor Ronald Lawson, an American lecturer of sociology, who is homosexual and Adventist, is of particular importance. He offers an outstanding, well-documented summary about how the Adventist Church has dealt with homosexuality through the years.

Of course many readers will be especially interested in studying the fourth part of the book. In this part four, Adventist theologians speak. Their vision of what the Bible says about homosexuality varies greatly. Two of them suggest that the Bible writers did not know of the existence of variation in sexual orientation and only spoke about homosexual actions by straight people. One of the other theologians is very clear in his judgment that the Bible doesn't give any space for homosexual conduct. The decision seems to be how one interprets the Bible texts that deal with homosexuality. In the fifth and last part of the book some social and practical issues are presented.

This book can be beneficial to those who want to come to a clearer understanding about homosexuality and how a Christian should deal with it. Another recently published book may also be of help: Richard M. Davidson's "Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament" (Peabody MS USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 844 pages; price \$ 29.95. ▽

We would like to introduce you to:



Stanley Green was born in Tacoma, Washington, and went to school there and at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY. He is an advocate for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, working to make policies and services for them more inclusive. In the morning he loves

to drink green tea and see the tulips he and his daughter planted. She is twenty and his son is twenty-two years old. He enjoys cooking, exploring, bicycling, spending time with family and friends, studying transportation history and finding hidden bits of historical data. He thinks all of human behavior can be explained by food, sex, or transportation history. Stanley met Bob Bouchard in 1976 through a mutual friend with whom he had been a student missionary in Taiwan. He learned about Kinship through Bob. Stanley says he likes Kinship because "people accept and care about each other regardless of differences in race, economic status, family background or where we are in our spiritual journey...there is also often great food!"



Keith Ropka was born in Havre de Grace, Maryland and is now the administrator of an assisted living center in Delaware. He likes quiet, reflective mornings and enjoys gardening, photography and socializing. "When I feel comfortable, I come out of my shell. When I was growing up I was reserved and shy. That changed when I found myself. My sister is good friends with

David and Bronwen Larson, and through them we found Kinship. I like this organization because it is a very community- and family-based social group that accepts us for where we are. Kinship allows us to come here with no expectations. My Adventism was strict and hard core. It was difficult to adjust to some of my first experiences with people of diverse beliefs. I don't know what God has in store for me; I just hope I am willing to go through the doors He opens up. Sometimes I do not see things right away. One of my friends says 'Sometimes God will knock and when we don't answer, He begins to bang.' I have never done things the easy way." ▼

Transitions: Farewell and Appreciations

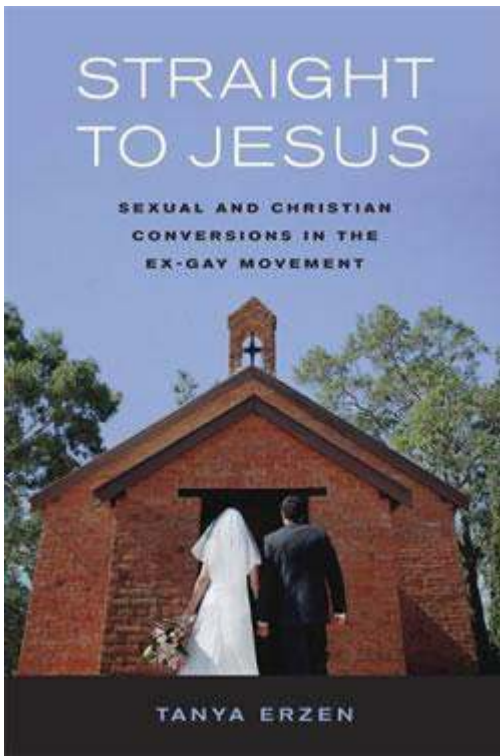
Bruce Harlow - We would like to thank Bruce Harlow for his five years (2003-2008) as Kinship's Secretary. During that time he provided a thoughtful sense of process at our Board meetings, took careful notes, and most recently, spent hundreds of hours chairing the committee that created the new Bylaws for the organization. As part of that process he researched dozens of organizations to find what structures might make our Bylaws more inclusive, more efficient and more able to meet the needs of Kinship as we grow. He worked to take into account all of our processes: elections, committees, finance, job descriptions and more. People who have looked at our present Bylaws have described them as elegant. They are a framework from which we can build policies and procedures and move forward. Bruce, you have been a remarkable asset and a gift as a human being. Thank you so much for making us a better community.



Jeremy and Bruce

Jeremy Brown - We would like to thank Jeremy Brown for his work and caring during the two years he served as vice-president. Jeremy's perspective on the Seventh-day Adventist church, his love for his father and his mother, his sense of humor and his dedication to Kinship enriched our conversations in person, over the airwaves, or in electronic conversations. Jeremy was part of the Strategic Planning Committee. This group facilitated the shaping of our mission statement and a thinking process that led us to develop structures that will help us become better able to serve our members and reach out to the communities that touch our lives. He was coordinator of the Outreach and Attitudes Committee, considering ways we can strengthen our conversation with mainstream Seventh-day Adventists.





Dr. Erzen is an ethnographer and professor at Ohio State University. This book is the result of her doctoral thesis. Ethnology is defined as "descriptive anthropology;" and Erzen states that until recently ethnographers "had a tradition of investigating groups with whom the ethnographer shares a political, cultural, or social affinity. Only within the past decade have ethnographers begun to document their experiences with groups they may disagree with politically." She adds, "There are inherent tensions in this situation, especially when writing about a proselytizing community means committing to understanding the community's belief instead of viewing it as 'false belief.'"

Erzen spent a full year at New Hope Ministries, an ex-gay residence program led by Frank and Anita Worthen and located near San Francisco. She conducted 2- to 3-hour interviews with 47 men and women, including New Hope participants of that year, as well as those in several other programs such as Love in Action, Exodus, and Jewish and Catholic programs over a period of three years. Her report is scrupulously neutral and honest, sympathetic yet realistic, and extremely well-researched and scholarly, yet readable. After reading this book I have a better insight into how these programs understand the issue.

Erzen makes absolutely clear that those in the New Hope program did not find change in their homosexual attractions and feelings, but that they see themselves as allied with Jesus in trying to "deny themselves, take up their

Book Review by Carrol Grady



cross and follow Jesus." They take on a new identity as ex-gay, rather than homosexual or heterosexual. It is all about spiritual struggles and having a close relationship with Jesus. Their frequent sexual falls are not unexpected and are forgiven when confessed. They are expected to report and confess every "sinful" action or thought, although Erzen said this requirement also seems to keep these "temptations" ever before them.

Four of the original 15 dropped out of the program during the year, one died under circumstances that suggested suicide, and several others became comfortable as gay men in the few years following their completion of the year. Only two of the 47 people Erzen interviewed, who had been "ex-gay" for a number of years, stated that they no longer experienced homosexual feelings.

She discussed the feelings of the men at New Hope, as well as Exodus leaders, regarding the political use of their testimonies by Focus on the Family and Concerned Women for America. They felt betrayed and felt that the ads were manipulative and false in implying that change to heterosexuality is possible and marriage is the goal. She also makes clear the guilt carried from church and family by the men at New Hope.

Here's a quote from her last chapter: "While the Christian Right speaks with assurance that men and women can become heterosexual, using testimonies as proof of healing, men and women in ex-gay ministries know that walking in a dark room means that hope for sexual and religious transformation is at best a leap of faith. Rather than concrete evidence that change happens, ex-gays retain the belief that change is possible. It is that possibility which keeps some of them stumbling forward despite sexual falls, statistics, and public scandals."

Although Erzen narrates the continuing struggles of "ex-gays," her description of the emotional and spiritual damage that results is implicit, rather than explicit.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone honestly trying to understand the viewpoint and methods of the ex-gay movement and the illegitimate use the Christian Right has made of their testimonies. ▽

Fundraising – John Edwards

Our organization continues to do amazing work in reaching out to the Adventist community regarding LGBTI issues, most recently with the publication of the book *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*. In order to continue to develop various types of programs for our members and to continue reaching out to the Seventh-day Adventist community at large, our organization will be seeking grants from a variety of sources to help fund some of its initiatives. We seek someone on a pro bono basis from the membership of Kinship or a non-Kinship member who has experience in grant writing to write grants and/or act as a mentor to a small team of current board members to apply for grants. If you are interested or know someone who would be interested in helping Kinship build this capacity, please contact John Edwards at johnredwards1@hotmail.com.

Kinship Kampmeeting Australia

We would like to invite you to come “Down Under” to Rejuvenation, Kinship Australia’s Kampmeeting October 3-6, 2008. Invercauld House Conference & Function Centre is a unique facility of Southern Cross University Lismore, set within 2.5 hectares of tranquil rainforest gardens and secluded from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding area. The centre has 27 motel-style suites within a short walk from the main facility. We have invited wonderful speakers and planned enjoyable activities. For more information, you can check out the Events page on our website <http://www.sdakinshipaustralia.org/>.



Register now at
<http://www.sdakinshipaustralia.org/registration.php>

Kinship Europe

At our planning meeting in May we developed the following action priorities for Kinship Europe:

- Facilitating a better acceptance of LGBTI people by the Seventh-day Adventist Churches;
- Witnessing to the church of LGBTI lives;
- Being a resource to LGBTI people with Adventist backgrounds;
- Using our meetings to have conversations with other church members;
- Developing a variety of media and personal methods to contact and have dialog with Seventh-day Adventist thought leaders, people of influence, pastors, administrators and members;
- Foster a community between former and current LGBTI SDAs and their allies;
- Providing training in ways to interact with churches;
- Developing ways to break down geographic isolation by building a variety of ways to have closer contact.

Long-range planning invitation! Kinship Europe would like you to consider joining some of us from July 31 to August 7, 2010, when the Gay Games will take place in Cologne, Germany. Twelve thousand people from more than seventy nations are expected to join the festival of open games. The Gay Games supports tolerance towards homosexual, bisexual, transgender and transsexual populations. Everybody can participate in the Gay Games -- independent of sexual orientation, sex, race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, political creed, athletic and/or physical ability, age, or state of health. Gay Games VIII Cologne 2010 will offer 33 different sports and four cultural events. The bandwidth of the competitions ranges from soccer and beach volleyball to pool, chess, figure skating and dance. The cultural festival consists of choir and band events as well as an art exhibition and the "International Rainbow Memorial Run" to commemorate all AIDS and breast cancer patients and victims. ▽



<https://gray.secure-host.com/sdakinship/EKM7regformstart.php>

Thor's Garden

Thor Montgomery is a Kinship member who wrote several CONNECTION articles focused on living with HIV/AIDS. This year his community project is to co-ordinate an organic garden, packed into 1/8 of an acre that will provide food for low-income families served by the Loaves and Fishes Food Panty in Ayer, Massachusetts, and the weekly neighborhood supper of the Littleton Congregational Church. Early this spring he filled the guest bedroom in the home he and Kevin share, with seedlings, soil, beginner pots and dreams. Despite carpal tunnel syndrome and the effects of HIV medications, he has managed an



endeavor that is nurturing ninety tomato plants, thirty peppers, squash, pumpkins, beans, radishes, herbs, flowers. Thor and his crew of volunteers are expecting a crop of 1200 pounds of produce. ▽

Women and Children First

Kampmeeting's First Weekend
Reston, Virginia July 12 and 13



We flew in from California and Oregon. We drove from Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Maryland and New York. Before we got here Kinship's Women's Coordinator Carol, with Yolanda and two of their remarkable event planners spent dozens of hours planning, researching, typing and designing. Linda and Jacquie put together wonderful welcome packets that explained clearly the series of adventures we enjoyed. Friday evening Grace, Faith and their mothers made the drive from Ohio with enough energy to have dinner and greet the rest of the group. Jacquie and Linda arrived with enough equipment to run a cyber network...and a children's program. Yolanda spent the

day helping set up our meeting room, hanging our Memorial Quilt from the twelve foot ceiling and making sure someone was there to welcome new arrivals. Denise S. from Brooklyn braved a carpool ride across the New Jersey Turnpike. Janice unpacked the vitamins she consumes getting ready for her birthday marathon race, Denise P. brought her quilt. Gemma came to meet most of us for the first time. She ran into Kinship at the Washington DC Pride Parade less than a month ago and was excited to find out that there would be a gathering in her home town this summer. Karen arrived with camera in hand so we can share these pictures with you quickly.

Brenda began our weekend with a chance to share the stories of miracles in our lives. Sabbath morning we got a chance to learn about the remarkable women, we've never known, who trained as astronauts with the original American Mercury team. Organizing us at the beginning of our holiday is a bit like herding cats. We have to talk, find strollers, remember our water bottles, Fortunately, it is a pleasure to catch up on our lives and our stories. The time putting together our carpools seems to fly by. We didn't all arrive at lunch together. What is remarkable is that we managed to dine at the same time. Rom slipped in to surprise us and have a bite to eat.

We had a chance to see the new Air and Space Museum that is connected to both the Smithsonian Institute and Dulles International Airport. Our leaders came up with a great idea to split us into groups.

(continue on back page)

A House of Prayer for All Nations



Mike Lewis

Think about Jesus arriving in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (as we now call it) and finding the situation in the temple: money changers, lambs being traded, crowds, noise, disturbance and mayhem. Well, what did He expect? After all, it was almost Passover.

MY house...

God takes the initiative. God comes looking for us, calls us to talk with Him, meets with us. We need to make sure our cell phones are on with a charged battery. It's God's house and not ours. God designed it, built it, maintains it, owns it, lives in it and is always at home in it. And God's people are always welcome - not just to wave as we pass by the window, but to drop in for a chat. Yet it's a curious double entendre-an overlay of physical (bricks and mortar) and spiritual (as our minds fall into resonance with God).

My HOUSE shall be...

Not (just) a restaurant – enjoy a good potluck without doing any washing up.

Not (just) a hotel – a place to go on holiday, getting away from work and responsibilities.

Not (just) a library – a place only for theological reference and information.

Not (just) a theater – place for entertainment (although worship should be intensely interesting).

Not (just) a school – even though study is important.

Not (just) a factory, office or production line – even though we have committees and community service and all that stuff.

Not (just) a police station – hey, we know the law already. (He writes it in our hearts.) Remember, God is our advocate, not our accuser.

God's house is HOME – a place of safety, comfort, family, assurance. Grace is all sufficient. The kettle is always boiling. Cookies are always supplied.

You can put your feet up and relax! How lovely is your dwelling place...Better a day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere...I would rather be a doorkeeper..." Psalm 84

...Shall...

That is an instruction. God's will. Not an option for sometimes. Whether you like it or not, recognize it or not, use it or not, My House will be used as a means by which I communicate with my people, 24/7. We misuse it at our peril.

...Be...

Present tense. Not back in Jerusalem. Not in the time of Jesus on Earth. Now. Continuous present.

...A House...

A mysterious internal place where we take our daily and weekly walks with God. His Spirit taking control of our lives, minds, being – when we meet or corporate worship and for private meditation. A continual, continuous being with God. Not bounded by four walls of glass and concrete. God dwelling with me in my bedroom of prayer, my kitchen of prayer, my garden of prayer, workshop of prayer, neighbourhood or prayer – and beyond. Jesus was often at home – visiting Peter's mother-in law (in her bedroom – shock, horror!), Mary, Martha, Zaccheus and the rest.

...Of Prayer...

Oh, yes. Something to be done last thing at night as I fall asleep. Maybe not. Maybe instead, a continuous chatter throughout the day. Is God the first one we call on our contact list, or the last?

Martin Luther: "I am going to be so busy today I need to spend at least three hours in prayer before I start." Paul of Tarsus: "Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17)

...For...

It is God's gift for His people, not something we do to or for Him. He does it for us, gives it to us.

...All...

How inclusive is that?

Fat, thin, rich, poor, black, white (and all shades of grey), clever, thick, hetero, homo, queens and bag ladies, tax collectors and prostitutes. All who stand outside feeling too ashamed, scared or rejected to step over the threshold are welcome.. ▽

Please God,
Make ME your
House of Prayer for All Nations

connection ▽

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➤ Women and Children First

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Let's try to do this without our partners so we can get to know each other...That's a good idea but it will take two of us to watch the kids to we should not be apart...I haven't seen my wife in a long time. I'd like to have her on my team...I think we can work it out." We're handed our rules and questions for an aeronautical scavenger hunt. We gather our papers and look at the questions:

"What 1940's aircraft is known by its bulldog-like appearance and interestingly enough resembles what gay women are sometimes called?"

"In Commercial Aviation, which airline company first called its pilots captains?" "Which German aircraft is affectionately known as 'Auntie Ju'?"

We gather our ten questions and head off to look at bi-planes, the Enola Gay, space craft, fighter jets and one of the original passenger prop planes. Some women asked the information folk at the museum for help. Some researched their questions on the Internet. Some women diligently read almost every board, notice and poster in the museum.

Two hours later, somewhat exhausted by our efforts we gather at the IMAX theater, turn in our scavenger worksheets to group leaders and watch a remarkable film about the universe. Some folk are so tired they nap. One woman was heard to say "I feel like a third grader! This is remarkable. I didn't know science could be so enjoyable!"

We did revive enough to head off to dinner. Energized by great food we finished off our day with vespers and awards from our "scavenger hunt."

Sunday we'll have free time and a chance to greet the next wonderful Kinship members who arrive for Kampmeeting. ▽

