

connection

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

January 2003 • Vol. 27 No. 1



coming out...

poetry by
carolyn parsons

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11/17/2002

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SDA KINSHIP INTERNATIONAL, INC

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INFORMATION

The Connection is published by Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Principal office: P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607; (949) 248-1299.

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

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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.
Printed in the U.S. using 100% recyclable paper.

Derek Easton is a pseudonym.

Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. (Kinship) is a nonprofit support organization which ministers to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of Seventh-day Adventist lesbian, gay men, bisexual, and transgendered individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBT 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 501a(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 20 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.

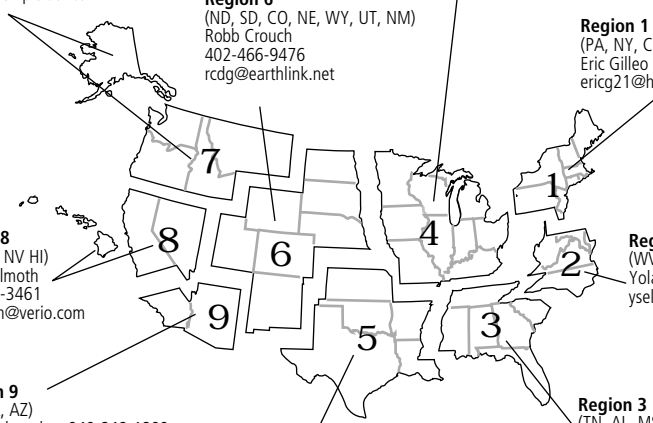
Support Kinship

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.

SDA Kinship, P.O. Box 7320, Laguna Niguel, CA 92607 — (949) 248-1299

Visit SDA Kinship's Web Site at: www.sdakinship.org

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Kinship in 2003: What are we doing?

Bob Bouchard, SDA Kinship International President

SDA Kinship Int'l Inc was formed in 1980, over 22 years ago, after the first Kampmeeting. The small group of people who attended the follow-up gathering came up with two primary, broad objectives for the organization. They are, as amended :

- 1) to minister to the spiritual, emotional, social and physical well-being of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered (lgbt) people of Seventh-day Adventist backgrounds and their family and friends; and
- 2) to facilitate and promote through education, advocacy, and reconciliation understanding and affirmation of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (lgbt) Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community.

Those are still the primary reasons for Kinship's existence in 2003. With over 600 active members and a total mailing list of interested members and friends of over 1400, Kinship aims through its programs, communications vehicles and informational resources to "be there" when somebody needs us.

While there are many differences in how we do that from 22 years ago, what remains the same is that there are still many people in pain who need help in becoming comfortable with their God-given orientations, either through an understanding ear, useful information, or the opportunity to meet people like themselves in a safe environment.

So what is Kinship focusing on nowadays? The answer falls into four large categories under our objectives: 1) outreach; 2) member services; 3) education for the church(es); and 4) increasing our awareness of the diverse needs of our members.

I. Outreach

In recent years, we have focused on the internet to create new services and provide for new ways to reach us or to stay involved. www.sdakinship.org is our web site. This year the web site has been totally reorganized by our PR Director Robb Crouch and his partner Dave Gilsdorf to be more user friendly and provide more information. It also allows an inquirer to apply for membership, do a change of address, ask for information.

The Kinship board, at its November board meeting, voted to refocus on advertising in the print media. So look for Kinship ads to reappear in The Advocate and other LGBT-focused media in the near future.

Kinship is also working closely with other organizations, such as Heartstrong (a non-denominational group that supports students in religion-related high schools and colleges), the Religious-Roundtable (a coordinating organization of LGBT religious support groups such as Kinship, Integrity, Dignity, etc.) and an independent group that supports

parents of SDA lesbians/gays group.

We are also currently working on creating a new Kinship logo and banner for use in programs and marketing.

We have, in the past year, been focusing on international outreach as well. In July of 2002, the first European Kampmeeting was held in Sweden. The meeting of nine representatives from six different countries planned future outreach activities in Europe. Also, Kinship's outreach in Australia, under Noel Thorpe's supervision, continues this year. A February, 2003 mini-Kampmeeting is being planned for Sydney. In 2003, we are planning to work with the Canadian members to help revitalize that program. We also have individual members in a significant number of other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

II. Member Services

The Kinship office has been completely overhauled by Fred Casey in 2002 to provide more services quickly. The board recently voted to reinstitute a toll-free telephone

continued on page 5



Meet the Kinship Board

**Bob Bouchard
President**

Lives in: New York City, NY with partner of 8 years, Vincent Lummus

Occupation: VP Sales, Marketing and Product Development AICPA

Education: Greater New York Academy; Andrews University '73, BA Math, English and History; Andrews University '74, MA History; New York University School of Law '79, Juris Doctor (JD)

Kinship Activities: Since 1980, Bob has been the editor of the Connection, Region 1 coordinator, a member-at-large of the board, president from 1982 to 1988 and current president since 2000.

Tidbits: Bob is a frequent theatre / opera goer and loves to travel.

Make a difference

Advertise Kinship in local GLBT press

For most of us, meeting other GLBT Adventists near our homes is a lot like finding Waldo. But, a lot less amusing. Like Waldo, there are other GLBT SDAs in the crowd, but they aren't always easy to find. And, like Waldo, placing ad's for gay SDAs in GLBT publications went out of vogue during the 90s internet mania.

On November 15, the Kinship board voted to change that. A national awareness campaign in major GLBT publications launches March 4, 2003 in the US. Public Relations Manager, Robb Crouch states that, "it's interesting to note that the founders of Kinship placed a small ad in the Advocate some 27 years ago, hoping to let others know about Kinship".

Kinship ads will run in every other issue of the Advocate for five months. The bi-weekly Advocate is targeted to the mainstream GLBT community. The board will review a proposal to place ads in more targeted publications at the March board meeting.

In November the board discussed the potential for placing ads in Venus, CV and GirlTalk. Venus is a bi-monthly publication targeted to the black community. CV and GirlTalk are targeted to Hispanics and women respectively. "We're excited about plans to increase Kinship's advertising efforts this year," says Crouch, "We have such an important mission or reaching out to those who are perhaps most ostracized by the SDA Church, so it's necessary that we build awareness of our organization and share with people our message of love and acceptance."

Just because Kinship is returning to print doesn't mean that web based efforts will be forgotten. "Online directory listings and advertising is also another avenue I'll be evaluating this year." states Crouch, "Hundreds of gay online publications and organizations provide links and resource listings, and I've begun contacting them to request that they also include contact information for Kinship and links to our Web site." Between 600 and 700 unique visitors consistently view the Kinship web site each week.

Kinship how-to series

No place like home

While the national campaign and Kinship's web presence are the most efficient means of managing Kinship resources, experience has shown that local campaigns can be even more effective, For example, booths at recent

PRIDE events in San Francisco and Washington DC resulted in seven and six new members respectively.

If there is a struggling GLBT person in your area, reading about Kinship in a local magazine can help that person feel less alone than connecting to a larger, but further removed national organization.

Place an ad in your local paper

A sample ad is shown in the upper right corner of this page. It isn't important that the ad in your local paper look exactly like the sample, but the words should read exactly like the sample. No information should be left out. No information should be added. No information should be changed. The ad copy is effective and meets the

continued on page 5

LGBT and SDA?

SDA Kinship is a supportive organization for GLBT individuals, their friends & family
www.sdakinship.org
office@sdakinship.org
1-866-732-5677

Want to make a difference?

This is the first of a three-part how-to get involved in Kinship series.

Get acquainted

If you haven't been to Kampmeeting, there isn't a better way to get acquainted with the Kinship family. KinNet is a great way to stay in touch throughout the year and the Connection will attempt to live up to it's name. When you are ready for more here are some ideas:

in this issue:

How to: Advertise Kinship in local GLBT press

in our March issue:

How to: Establish a local chapter

--nothing happening in your area? - that can change! Some ideas from people who have been there and changed their world for the better.

in the May issue

How to: Volunteer in Kinship

From song service at Kampmeeting to office projects to board positions, there is a Kinship volunteer opportunity to suit your calling.

Of course there are always opportunities to support Kinship financially as well. Perhaps you will find something below that interests you:

send a new-member packet	\$20
mail 6 new-member packets	\$100
underwrite 1 US GLBT ad	\$165
Kampmeeting scholarship	\$500
1 issue of Connection	\$1,000

- Place an ad - continued from page 3
organization's legal requirements.

Evaluate the cost

Pick up an issue of a local GLBT rag and check out the personal ad section. Many publications will provide free classified space for non-profit organizations. If the classified information does not mention non-profits, it doesn't hurt to ask.

Try calling or writing to the publisher. Provide basic background information about SDA Kinship (use the first two paragraphs under the "Who we are" section of the *Connection* fly leaf, and ask whether they provide free or discounted space to non-profit organizations.

If they don't provide free or discounted space they will tell you. That's OK, getting to "no" just like getting to "yes" is an important part of the exploratory process.

Determine duration

A general rule of thumb is that someone who might be interested in your ad, will see it within six issues, unless the publication is a daily. Other than that, budget is probably the determining factor.

It's that simple.

Placing an ad is a great way to generate awareness in your area and to find Kinship friends.

- Kinship - continued from page 3
number (866-SDA-KNSP) for easier access, in addition to a web address (sdakinship.org) and the PO box listed at the front of this newsletter.

Useful educational resources are available through the organization (e.g. a pamphlet on the "gay-related" biblical verses; addresses of gay-related organizations; confidential usage of supportive clergy or social workers; a medical or legal publication, etc.). Our newsletter, the Connection, has recently been reenergized under the guidance of Editor Steve Pline (just look at this issue!). A member-only internet service, Kinship Online, provides, under the long-time direction of Floyd Poenitz, a place where members can talk to each other through an e-list, see pictures and listings of Kinship events, and perhaps even meet someone.

Our annual week-long summer Kampmeeting doubles as the organization's annual business meeting, our primary spiritual retreat and social occasion. It typically attracts over 100 members, speakers and special guests to camp or conference facility. It is a highlight of our annual activities. This year's event, under the leadership of John Edwards, will be held July 20-27. [more details on page 10]

In addition, local and regional activities occur, depending on the availability of volunteers to organize

Unlike many other Christian denominations which have become more progressive over time, the SDA Church, has, if anything, become more exclusionary in the past twenty years.

and host them To be very honest, the amount of local activity varies widely from place to place. In a number of areas, such as the middle Atlantic states, Florida, and northern California regular monthly meetings or activities are held. In other places, irregular meetings are held and in others we await someone willing to step forward to help out (that's a hint!). For the past few years, a Mini-Kampmeeting (a weekend event) has been held in Rehoboth Beach, outside of the Washington D.C. area in early May.

III.

Education for the church(es)

As many of you reading this article know, the central SDA Church has a very repressive view of church members with LGBT orientations. Unlike many other Christian denominations which have become more progressive over time, the SDA Church, has, if anything, become more exclusionary in the past twenty years. To perhaps over-summarize, the Church only approves of heterosexual relationships within the context of marriage.

SDA Kinship has, in the past two years, formed a Church Advisory Board, under the leadership of former Kinship Church Liaison Dave Ferguson and current Kinship Church Liaison Leif Lind. This group, consisting of current and former

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Meet the Kinship Board

Taylor Ruhl Vice-President

Lives in: Crownsville, MD with partner Leif Lind, together 6 years

Occupation: College library director and professional church organist

Education: Pacific Union College (PUC) Preparatory School, '67; PUC, '71; PUC '72 Master of Music; University of Southern California '74 Master of Library Science; University of the Pacific '96 Ed.D in Higher Education

Kinship Activities: Involved since 1997, a board member at large, is Kinship's representative to the NGLTF Religious Leadership Roundtable, as VP since '01, coordinates Kinship regions and chapters

Tidbits: Taylor enjoys homemaking, entertaining, shopping and travel



Meet the Kinship Board

Samuel Pang
Member-at-large

Lives in: Boston, MA with partner Andrew Searle, together 1 year

Occupation: Reproductive Endocrinologist.

Education: Seventh-day Adventist School in Singapore (not FEA); University of British Columbia; UBC Medical School; University of Toronto Medical School; UCLA School of Medicine

Kinship Activities: Since 1983 Samuel has attended every Kampmeeting except '88, established Kinship Canada, coordinated Kampmeeting '86

Tidbits: Samuel swims for LANES, representing Boston at the Gay Games in '98 and '02. Has sung with the Boston Gay Men's Chorus since 1996.

- Kinship - continued from page 5

Church pastors, teachers and social workers is working with us to help devise plans to maximize our impact on the church as a whole and on individual churches and leaders.

While we need, unfortunately, to be vague in describing this, Kinship has helped educate many pastors and teachers over the years, many of whom are available to counsel and comfort those grappling with orientation issues. We have periodically distributed informational packets to church thought leaders.

We are currently working to update the information we make available both in print and through Kinship's web site. In 2002, we have also created a "quick response team" to be ready to respond to homophobic statements made from the pulpit or in other public settings. We used this new group to respond to a recent intemperate article published in a church news magazine (see the last Connection issue for more details).

IV.

Increasing our awareness of the diverse needs of our members:

In addition to supporting an independent outreach for parents of LGBT people (see above), we also have, as part of Kinship, an organization titled IMRU (as in "I am; are you?") which is focused on the needs of youth to 29 year olds, under the leadership of Eric Gilleo. Eric is

in current need of people who want to pitch in to help on the various projects.

At Kampmeeting this past summer we also voted to improve our ability to attract a diverse membership by focusing on the needs of and having relevant responses for people of color, Hispanics, transgendered and intersexed people, youth and

While there are many differences in how we do that from 22 years ago, what remains the same is that there are still many people in pain who need help in becoming comfortable with their God-given orientations

the differently-abled. The above list is obviously not meant to be complete or exclusionary, but only to prioritize areas where we have immediate requests. We have in recent Kampmeetings, for instance, offered signing services for the deaf. We are also looking to create an open atmosphere for greater understanding of the differences even within our own group.

Scholarship

Steve Pline

Requests for collegiate scholarships are up significantly this year. Kinship traditionally awards a single \$500 scholarship to an applicant selected by the scholarship committee. Applicants are GLBT individuals who plan to attend an SDA college. If you are interested in increasing the value of Kinship scholarships, please contact Eric Gilleo or Taylor Ruhl directly or through the Kinship office, office@sdakinship.org

As you can see, there is a great deal that has been done and that needs to be done, both at the national and the local level. Kinship is a ministry in the best sense of the word. It is a place with no pastors but where everyone can minister as well as be ministered to.

Every time we get a call, e-mail or letter from someone looking for help (and it happens a few times a week!), we are reminded why Kinship exists and the role it plays in individual lives. We can, of course, do so much more if there are more volunteers. For instance, we currently need people to

- organize, host or just attend local functions
- help with Kampmeeting
- put ads in local LGBT publications
- participate or lead a discussion on Kinship online
- and, of course, financial support

If you would like to volunteer your time or resources, please drop us a note at sdakinship.org or call, toll-free 866-SDA-KNSP. If you need information, or know someone who needs our help, please let us know. And, finally, if you have some suggestions on ways we can improve, please drop me a line at rbouch9595@aol.com. I would love to hear from you.

I hope to see you in 2003.

Vermont Civil Union

www.hrc.org

1. Gather your personal documents.
You and your partner need:
Birth certificates
If previously married or in a civil union, evidence of divorce decrees or death certificates
2. Go with your partner to the appropriate town clerk's office.
If one or both of you reside in Vermont, you must go to the town clerk's office in the town in which you reside.
If you both live outside Vermont, you may go to any town clerk.
Poultney town clerk: Patricia A McCoy, 9 Main Street, Suite 2; Poultney, VT 05764; (802) 287-5761; poultney@vermontel.net M-F 8:30-12:30 & 1:30-4:00
3. Complete an Application for Vermont License of Civil Union
4. Pay the license fee of \$20.
A Vermont judge, justice of the peace or clergy must certify
5. Have your civil union license certified within 60 days
Once the qualified individual completes and signs your license, it becomes a civil union certificate
6. Return the civil union certificate to the town clerk's office, where it will be registered.
7. For a \$7 fee, the town clerk will send you a certified copy.

Large print

If you can read this, but know someone who can't, let them know that the *Connection* is now available in a large type edition. This is a three issue experiment to see if there are enough people who would like the larger print to justify the extra time in getting the *Connection* out. Getting the small type out is hard enough! To receive a large-print edition, send a message to the office.



Meet the Kinship Board

Charles Shobe
Secretary

Lives in: San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles with partner Scott Block, together 4 years

Occupation: Corporate Trainer for the disability division of the California Department of Social Services

Education: Highland Academy, Portland, TN; 2 years at Southwestern Adventist College, 2 years at Loma Linda University, La Sierra

Kinship Activities: Since 1994, previous board member-at-large

Tidbits: Charles likes Country-Western dancing and driving sports cars

Supreme Court Brief

Kinship joins other religious groups

The Executive Board has voted to be named in a friend of the court brief being filed with the United States Supreme Court in the case of JOHN GEDDES LAWRENCE AND TYRON GARNER V. STATE OF TEXAS. The amici curiae, or friends of the court, are religious bodies and leaders representing faith traditions throughout the US.

The case is a sodomy challenge that has the potential to overturn the 1986 precedent of *Bowers v. Hardwick*. The case stems from the arrest of two Houston men who were having sex in their own bedroom when the police entered their home on a false emergency call from an angry ex-lover. Lawrence and Garner were arrested, jailed and fined.

Texas is defending this statute based on immorality and supposed reliance on religious traditions. The religious brief is designed to show that the Texas statute cannot be justified on that basis (1) because there is no unanimous religious view of the conduct involved and (2) the religious traditions discussed do not support criminalizing the conduct.

Additionally the brief is fully supportive of full and equal rights.

To maintain maximum credibility with the Court, the religious brief honestly presents what various religious groups stand for.

Kinship makes a strong statement by joining the religious brief. We demonstrate community with other religious LGBT people. Moreover, we implicitly reinforce traditional SDA belief in the separation of church and state. We should not be subjected to governmental intrusion because of religious belief.

Reader's notes

Ren Reynolds, Region 8

I want to tell you that I grinned from ear to ear to see page four. It is so elegantly eloquent. It also carries such a subtlety eloquent message: Upstream, in being blocked out with your letter as an overlay, is a powerful message to the SDA decision-makers. The Frederick Douglas quote was what took it the rest of the way so it can never be quoted in a negative light on our part. It stings the hypocrites.



Meet the Kinship Board

Karen Lee
Treasurer.

Lives in: Martinez, CA with partner Shelby Smith and their three boys

Occupation: Accountant and stay-at-home mom

Education: San Gabriel Academy '78, Pacific Union College '83, Loma Linda University, School of Public Health '85

Kinship Activities: Joined Kinship in '96. Served as Region 8 coordinator for 2 years, and has been treasurer since 2000.

Tidbits: Karen enjoys spending her family, especially playing with their baby and watching the children grow and learn. She also enjoys camping, walks, traveling, attending ballet and theatre.



Meet the Kinship Board

John Edwards
Kampmeeting Coordinator

Lives in: San Francisco, CA

Occupation: Clinical Social Worker in child protective services

Education: Mackenzie High School, Linden, Guyana and Prospect Heights High School in Brooklyn, NY '84; Atlantic Union College '89 BS in Social Work; Walla Walla College, Master of Social Work '90

Kinship Activities: Joined 1991, Region 1 coordinator, Kampmeeting coordinator, public relations coordinator, board member-at-large, Connection editor, and Kampmeeting coordinator again.

Tidbits: John enjoys the theatre, classical music and opera.



Meet the Kinship Board

Robb Crouch
Public Relations Coordinator

Lives in: Lincoln, Neb with partner David Gilsdorf, together 6 years

Occupation: Public Relations/Communications at University of Nebraska Foundation

Education: Des Moines SDA School and Sunnydale Adventist Academy, Centralia, MO, 1989; Union College, Lincoln, Neb., 1993

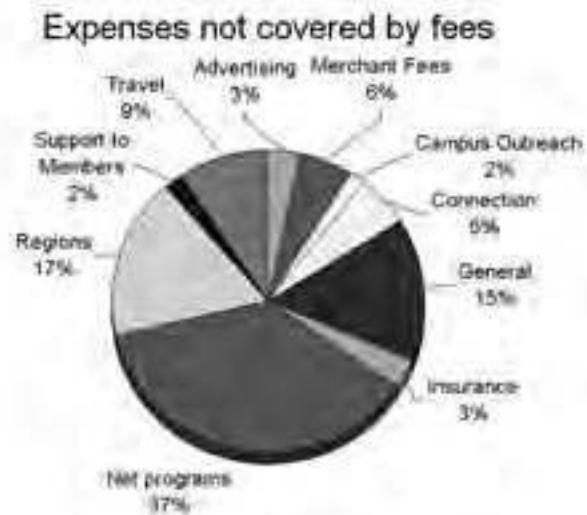
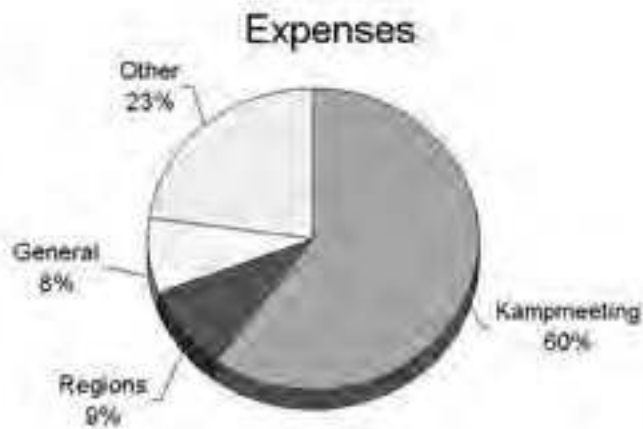
Kinship Activities: Joined 1997, Vice-president and Public Relations

Tidbits: Robb enjoys cooking, entertaining, piano playing, 80s music, Mexican cuisine, travel, cats, homemaking, volunteering and being out and proud.

SDA Kinship financial statement

January 1 2002 through October 31, 2002, unaudited

Ordinary Income/Expense		Balance Sheet	
Income		ASSETS	
Donation Income	36,622.89	Current Assets	
Kinship Boutique	166.50	Checking/Savings	
Miscellaneous Income	10.00	General Checking Accounts	
Program fees	26,903.67	BofA Checking	11,613.68
Total Income	63,703.06	BofA Money Market	43,181.64
		Total General Operating Accounts	54,795.32
Expense		Total Checking/Savings	54,795.32
Advertising	1,000.00	Accounts Receivable	800.00
Merchant Fees	1,737.36	Total Accounts Receivable	800.00
Campus Outreach Connection	500.00	Other Current Assets	
Office supplies	89.73	Endowment Fund Accounts	
Postage	817.07	B of A Investments	
Printing	791.16	Time Deposits	
Total Connection	1,697.96	CD#1	22,231.71
		CD#2	24,511.45
General		Total Time Deposits	46,743.16
Miscellaneous	3,116.55	Total B of A Investments	46,743.16
Office Supplies	429.72	Merrill Lynch	
PO Box rental	100.00	Agere Systems	4.65
Postage	92.29	Avaya (AV)	2.00
Telephone	518.34	Blackrock	5,489.87
Web Page	390.65	Cash Account	28,772.42
Total General	4,647.55	Lord Abbett	2,745.43
Insurance		Lucent	24.60
Liability Insurance	980.88	Massachusetts Investors	8,237.57
Total Insurance	980.88	Microsoft	1,336.75
Program Expense		ML Eurofund	2,381.53
Board meeting	355.82	Total Merrill Lynch	48,994.82
Book inreach	532.00		
Kampmeeting	34,478.35	Total Endowment Fund Accounts	95,737.98
Womyn's weekend	2,814.35	Total Other Current Assets	95,737.98
Total Program Expense	38,180.52	Total Current Assets	151,333.30
Regional		TOTAL ASSETS	151,333.30
Dinner	1,400.12	LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Mini-KM	2,303.47	Equity	
Miscellaneous	986.77	Opening Balance Equity	19,439.61
Postage	196.82	Retained Earnings	134,155.57
Printing	327.61	Net Income	(2,261.88)
Total Regional	5,214.79	Total Equity	151,333.30
Support to Members	650.00		
Travel	2,871.08	TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	151,333.30
Total Expense	57,480.14		
Net Ordinary Income	6,222.92		
Other Income			
Interest Income	903.68		
Unrealized Gain/(Loss)	(9,388.48)		
Total Other Income	(8,484.80)		
Net Income	(2,261.88)		



Kampmeeting 2003 Announced

July 20-27, 2003; Green Mountain College, Poultney, VT; www.greenmtn.edu

On Sunday, January 12, the SDA Kinship Executive Board unanimously voted to hold Kampmeeting 2003 at Green Mountain College. The college is located in the historic town of Poultney, Vermont (inset), twenty-five miles southwest of Rutland, Vermont, and seventy-five miles north of Albany, New York.



Excellent interstate highways and public transportation connect the campus with New York City, Boston, and Montreal. Amtrak train service is eight miles from the College. Kampmeeting shuttle service from the Albany airport (ALB) will be available for \$20. Nearby, Rutland (RUT) has a small regional airport.

The scenic, lake filled, Vermont countryside offers myriad outdoor opportunities. Hiking, rock climbing, swimming, paddling, sailing, golfing, horseback riding, mountain biking, tennis, are just a few of the activities available. An outlet mall and numerous antique shops are located nearby.

An entire dormitory will be



reserved for Kinship. The name of hall is not yet available; Moses

hall is shown. Each room has two twin beds that can be moved together. Shared baths with private shower and toilet stalls are located on each hallway. A number of B&B's are also available in the area. One is adjacent to the college property. Check the links from www.greenmtn.edu for more information.

Cost for the week will be very close to \$500 per person, double occupancy. Final pricing was not available at press time.

According to the Green Mountain College web-site, the Two Editors Inn, currently the College's guest house, is named for two famous names in American journalism. Horace Greeley, founder of the New York Herald Tribune, lived in Poultney during the 1820s while learning the printing trade at the Northern Spectator. The Eagle Tavern, where he resided, and the district school,



where he delivered his first political speech, still stand. George Jones, co-founder and editor of the New York Times, was born and raised in Poultney.



Vermont memories

Pamela Roberts, Kinship Board member-at-large

Like Henry Fonda and Katherine Hepburn, every spring Grampa and Gramma Roberts would open up the summer home on *Peachum Pond*. Many such ponds, covered bridges and antique shops dot the landscape, blanketed with never-ending trees. I will never forget the summer I was five years old and spent *my week* alone with them in this New England paradise.

The Roberts family enjoyed many trips back east to visit and enjoy the green mountains of Vermont. We picked up a bumper sticker proudly displaying, "Vermont, the Way America Was." When the Vermont Supreme Court struck down their state marriage statutes as unconstitutional and the Legislature passed its landmark civil union bill, I wrote the Governor and recommended a new bumper sticker, "Vermont, the Way America Should Be."

In the past two and one-half years, more than 4000 civil union licenses have been issued, 80% of them to couples who reside outside Vermont. While it takes only one day and \$20 to obtain such a license,

Vermont attorneys are warning us that it is far more complicated to dissolve. Apparently, the couple must obtain access to the family court system in Vermont, which means establishing residency by living there six months. And the divorce isn't final until one partner has been living there for one year.

The interesting legal issue developing in nearby Connecticut and probably other states soon concerns whether a couple can file for dissolution in their home state. Since no other state recognizes such unions and many states have specifically disavowed them, will the couple who once enjoyed marital bliss find themselves in marital purgatory?

Regardless of whether you follow the path to the alter or through the woods, you will create wonderful memories during your week at Green Mountain College.

To read more about civil unions and other interesting articles about GLBT families, Pam recommends "And Baby", currently published bi-monthly out of New York.

The Old Testament and Homosexuality

a Connection retrospective: January, March & May 1982

Derek Easton, a conservative Christian Biblical scholar

The Christian's life is guided by the principles found in the Bible which he/she regards as God's revelation to human beings concerning the way of salvation. For this reason Christians -- especially those who discover their homosexual orientation -
- want to know what the Bible has to say about homosexuality. This brief essay attempts to answer that question as far as the Old Testament is concerned. The reader should keep in mind this limited objective. One would have to go elsewhere to get the New Testament view and even to other texts, including Old Testament texts, to construct an adequate "theology of sexuality."

Because the Sodom story in Genesis 19:1-11 has so heavily influenced traditional views and even terminology ("sodomy"), it is the natural place to begin. The word "homosexual" does not occur there, of course, nor any place else in the Bible (except in certain interpretive translations), but what today would be called a homosexual act is put in a very negative light in the Genesis narrative.

Some have argued that the Hebrew word *yada*, "to know," used in verse five refers to cognitive knowledge (as it most often does in the Bible) rather than sexual intercourse. But the use of the same word in Genesis 4:7, 17, 25, not to mention verse eight in the immediate context, refers to carnal knowledge. Clearly the men of Sodom were bent on a sexual act and cannot be exonerated on the basis that they were merely inhospitable. Furthermore, it is obvious from the context that their inhospitality took the form of intended homosexual rape -- evidently not for the purpose of gratification (in which case the females should have been at least second best) but for degradation.

Among some ancient peoples the most demeaning and emasculating act possible was to treat a man like a woman (such as in the homosexual abuse of a defeated foe suggested in the Egyptian myth of Horus and Seth).

It is worth noting a few details in the Sodom story. Verse four states,

The problem here is not finding out what the Old Testament says about these acts but rather in arriving at an understanding of the implications that these Levitical laws have for us today.

"The men of Sodom, both young and old, all the people to the last man" were involved so it is logical to assume most of them were heterosexuals. Remember, too, that they had already been judged wicked before this episode; that is the whole point of chapter 18. Had they now intended heterosexual acts they could hardly have been absolved of all evil. So homosexuality *per se* does not appear to be the issue. Fortunately we do not have to guess. The Bible itself, in all other references to Sodom, does not mention homosexuality. Isaiah 1:7-31 and Jeremiah 23:14 refer to the sins of Sodom as greed, rebellion, empty ritual, lack of justice, etc. Ezekiel

16:35-50 tells of pride, comfort, and ease despite the poor in their midst. The prophets say nothing of homosexuality though it may be alluded to in Ezekiel under the term "abomination" to be discussed later.

Intertestamental apocryphal literature (Wisdom of Solomon 10:8; 19:14; Ecclesiasticus 16:8) mentions only Sodom's wickedness, inhospitality and insolence. Later even Jesus referred to Sodom in the context of inhospitality (Luke 10:10-12). Two late New Testament epistles (2 Peter 2:6-11; Jude 6-8) do specify the sexual misconduct of the Sodomites but in terms of "going after strange flesh," or unnatural lust for angelic flesh. Considering these many references to the sins of Sodom it is surprising they do not mention homosexuality if indeed that was their understanding. It seems that the primary sin of Sodom was an attitude of mind that justified the abuse of one human being by another.

This conclusion is confirmed by reading Judges 19:13-25, an Old Testament story that must certainly have been influenced if not modeled on the Sodom episode. Again homosexual acts were intended, and again, it was specifically a question of inhospitable humiliation by gang rape -- though this time a female substitute was acceptable (hardly the mark of a true homosexual).

Neither the passage in Genesis 19 nor the one in Judges 19 say anything about the homosexual condition or orientation as we understand it today -- except possibly that it can be used to abuse others. In contrast to these negative examples of violent inhospitality, we have the positive example in Joshua 6 of Rahab, the prostitute, whose life was spared as a reward for her having provided

Meet the Kinship Board

Pamela Roberts Member-at-large

Lives in: Reno, Nevada with partner, Gretchen,
together 11 years

Occupation: Prosecutor. Previously, taught elementary school
Education: St. Croix Central High School, Wisconsin; University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Hastings College of Law.

Kinship Activities: Since 1983, Pam's past board positions include president, vice-president, womyn's coordinator, and secretary.

Tidbits: Pam currently devotes her time to her family, her job and Nevada's Women's Lobby. She coordinates SPECTRUM's family group for LGBT parents and their children who live in northern Nevada.

hospitality (and this despite the fact that her occupation was condemned, Leviticus 19:29).

[Ed. Note: In the last issue of the newsletter we ran the first part of this three-part series on references to homosexuality in the Old Testament. We urge you to clip all three of these articles for future reference.]

Other Old Testament texts (Deuteronomy 23:17,18; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7; Job 36:14) mention the gadesh, translated "sodomite" (KJV) or "male temple prostitute" (RSV) an analogy with the better known gedeshab or female temple prostitute. Literally the Hebrew term means "a holy one" and probably refers to a cultic functionary. We know from Canaanite practices how pervasive fertility rites were. It would be natural for Israel to be affected (cf. 1 Samuel 2:22). There is no historical or linguistic reason I know of to assume that such prostitutes -- either male or female -- serviced persons of their own sex though this has been suggested. Just what role a homosexual would play in a fertility cult is not obvious!

The parallelism in the Deuteronomy passage equates gedeshah, "female prostitute," with zonah, "any kind of female prostitute," and gadesh, "male cult prostitute," with keleb, "dog." All of these are called "abominations," a technical term

usually associated with idolatry.

Because to "uncover nakedness" is a common idiom for sexual intercourse (cf. Leviticus 18:1-19), it is possible that the enigmatic occasion for Noah's curse in Genesis 9:20-25 was a homosexual act. Perhaps verse 24 subtly suggests that his son was involved in more than "a look." If so, it is evaluated negatively.

There have been suggestions that the Old Testament includes positive examples of gay and lesbian relationships, too. The close friendship of Jonathan and David is detailed in 1 Samuel 18-20 (especially 1 Samuel 20:30, 41, plus 2 Samuel 1:26), while Ruth's love

for Naomi is described in Ruth 1:16, 17; 4:15. Though that possibility exists, a good knowledge of Near Eastern culture would show that such references are hardly conclusive in favor of homosexual relationships. Furthermore it is known that all four were involved in fruitful heterosexual marriages and David's heterosexual exploits are a matter of record!

The only place in the Old Testament where homosexual acts per se are mentioned without ambiguity is the Levitical laws. And because of their unquestioned prohibition, these laws are the real crux of our topic.

Leviticus 18:22 says, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination." Leviticus 20:13 says, "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death, their blood is upon them." The first law is called an apodeictic law because it is in the form of a divine command whose sanction is taken for granted though not formally expressed.

The second law is called a casuistic law because it is in the form of a case where the sanction is specifically spelled out. As we look at the context for the first law we note that it comes within a chapter which outlines the basic principles of sexual behavior that are to characterize the community. Verses 1-5 articulate the unifying principle for these

Meet the Kinship Board

Leif Lind Church Liaison



Lives in: Crownsville, MD with partner Taylor Ruhl,
together 6 years

Occupation: Senior paralegal with a Maryland. immigration law firm

Education: Maxwell Prep. School (Kenya)/Helderberg (S. Africa) '68; Middle East College (Lebanon) '73 B.A.; Newbold College/Andrews University '76 M.A. Religion

Kinship Activities: Leif has been a Kinship member since 1995.

Tidbits: Leif was born in Uganda to Norwegian SDA missionaries and previously served as an SDA pastor. Leif likes playing the piano, reading, and tending to his salt-water aquarium.

regulations: Avoidance of heathen customs. So Israel's sexual morality is something that marks her off from her neighbors as God's special people.

In other words, certain standards of sexual morality are seen to be decisive marks of religious allegiance. The institution of marriage is especially guarded as the cornerstone of society. The unifying principle in the context of the second law is sins against religion (threatened by idolatry) and family (threatened by no posterity) which are deserving of capital punishment -- the maximum penalty. In both laws, the proscribed acts are called to'evah, "abomination." This is a technical term associated with the most serious infringements of ritual purity (and family solidarity) -- those acts which offend the religious sense of a people whose duty is to maintain their distinctiveness in the face of idolatry and everything connected with the worship of heathen gods.

Without question, then, these laws condemn homosexual acts between men (women are not mentioned in this context). The problem here is not finding out what the Old Testament says about these acts but rather in arriving at an understanding of the implications that these Levitical laws have for us today.

[Ed. Note: The first two parts of this three-part series on references to homosexuality in the Old Testament appeared in the Jan/Feb and March issues of the newsletter.]

As a general rule it is too simplistic to say biblical ethics are automatically Christian ethics (all you have to do if you think that is to read all the Levitical laws!). A necessary intervening step is to carefully study the historical and social contexts of the times in which these laws were given. So what were the reasons for these prohibitions in Israel's situation? We may not know all the reasons but the context yields some:

1. Separation from surrounding nations and customs (Lev. 18);

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Meet the Kinship Board

Floyd Poenitz
Member-at-large - Kinnet

Lives in: Carrollton, Texas

Occupation: Massage Therapist.

Education: Seguin High School, Seguin, Texas 78-79; Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen (SDA college) in Austria '78-'79; Southwestern Adventist College, Keene, Texas '81

Kinship Activities: Floyd has been involved since the late 1980s. He is currently Region 5 coordinator and the developer of Kinship Online.



Meet the Kinship Board

Michelle
Member-at-large

Lives in: Cathedral City, CA

Kinship Activities: Attended Kampmeeting for the first time in 2002 and wrote about her experience for the Connection



Meet the Kinship Board

Eric Gilleo
Member-at-large - IMRU?

Lives in: Boston with partner Travis, together 3 years

Occupation: Eric works full time at Merrill Lynch and part time at Banana Republic

Education: Home schooled with his brother K-12; Hartland College, Rapidan, Virginia, BA in Publications Management

Kinship Activities: Eric became involved with Kinship in 1998. He is Region 1 coordinator and moderator for IMRU?

Tidbits: In his spare time Eric collects teddy bears, enjoys music and spending time with friends



Meet the Kinship Board

Susan Carver
Member-at-large

Lives in: Orlando, FL

Occupation: self employed

Kinship Activities: Susan first became involved in Kinship in last year and attended her first Kampmeeting.

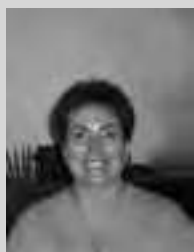
2. Avoidance of idolatry and fertility practices associated with it (Lev. 20).
3. Because of the need for children, avoidance of sexual activity which intentionally hindered procreation (Dent. 7:14; Gen. 38: 9, 10);
4. Avoidance of any practice that might blur the radical separateness and inequality of the sexes, e.g. by dressing like the opposite sex or by treating a man like a woman (Num. 5:11-31; Judg. 19:22-26; cf. the Tale of Two Brothers from Egypt);
5. Avoidance of behavior that would render one ceremonially unclean (Lev.15:16-18; 18:17; 20:18).

Do these reasons apply today in our context? Perhaps the first one, though one would have to ask whether that reason alone would be sufficient for continued adherence to the prohibitions. Certainly temple cult prostitution, lack of procreation, maintaining male domination, and ceremonial uncleanness are hardly compelling reasons in our time and place.

One must also face the question of whether it is fair to "pick and choose" among the Levitical laws. Because these laws appear morally right from a traditional Christian standpoint, we can easily fail to see the incongruity in accepting them as still valid while dismissing as no longer binding the following regulations from the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26): eating meat with blood in it, wearing clothes with two or more kinds of thread, planting a field with two or more kinds of seed, cutting one's beard, having sex during menstruation, executing children who curse their parents, etc.

Theologians have traditionally justified picking and choosing by arguing that the laws dealing with homosexual acts are moral laws whereas the others are ceremonial. Though this is perhaps a helpful distinction for us, it is foreign to biblical thinking and very difficult to apply consistently. Instead of

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Meet the Kinship Board

Yolanda Elliott
Womyn's Coordinator

Lives in: Clarksville, MD with partner Joyce Reece, together 5 years

Occupation: Assisted Living Provider since 1985

Education: Highland View Academy, Mt. Aetna, MD; Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, MD

Kinship Activities: Yolanda first became involved in Kinship in 1995 and attended her first Kampmeeting that same year. She has been Region 2 coordinator since 1996. She was vice president in the past.

Tidbits: Yolanda likes to visit lighthouses and to play racquetball.



Meet the Kinship Board

Fred Casey
Office Manager

Lives in: Sarasota, FL with partner Nelio Barros, together 6 years

Occupation: Registered Nurse

Education: Monterrey Bay Academy, '74; Pacific Union College '79 and '83; California State University Los Angeles 1985

Kinship Activities: Since 1995, Kampmeeting Coordinator '97, '98, & '02, Office Manager since Kampmeeting '02, Region 9 Coordinator

Tidbits: Fred likes to cook, bake, entertain, financial planning, volunteering, travel, music, piano accompaniment, and a persnickety black cat that chooses not to respond to the name "Ingy".

distinguishing between moral, civil, ceremonial, etc., it would better, I think, to say that some Levitical injunctions are broad and generally applicable to most societies while others are more specific and directed at the particular social problems of ancient Israel.

As Christians we assume that the Bible is an essential authority for the conduct of life, but the particulars of its morality are not necessarily identical to our own Christian reality. Another way of saying it is to suggest that the moral principles of the Old Testament are still valid today but insofar as our situation differs from the Old Testament setting, the application of these principles may well be different too.

In general, humanity's moral predicaments have changed very little with time. We still need authoritative guidelines to regulate our treatment of our fellow men and women, to protect the institution of marriage, and to separate ourselves from the unwholesome practices of the world. Therefore I still see profit in studying these laws in Leviticus. They remind us that however lightly

we might regard certain types of behavior, in God's family they deserve the severest censure.

Whether our situation as Christians is different or the same with regard to homosexuality cannot be answered by the Old Testament alone. We need to look at the New Testament, to construct a theology of human sexuality, and to relate it to the human condition -- reality as

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

I walked barefoot in the rain yesterday,
Like I did when we were young.
Back before they pulled us apart, and we each went our own way.
Before they put mines in your belly, and metal in my hip,
Before you were worn by war, and I was worn by time.
Before you were starved and I was over fed,
Before you were under siege and I was under marriage,
Before you searched for independence and I swallowed mine,
Before you lost your people and I lost my soul

Carolyn Parsons

in memory of my childhood in Angola

similar topic web sites of interest:

www.godmademegay.com

www.jeramyt.org/gay.html



Meet the Kinship Board

Steve Pline
Connection Editor

Lives in: Boise, ID with Tony Paul partner of 3 years, and teenage son

Occupation: Business strategist for HP Color LaserJet printer business

Education: Gem State Academy, '80; Walla Walla College, B.S.E., '84; University of Washington, '88, M.B.A.

Kinship Activities: Joined in 2001

Tidbits: Steve enjoys hiking — particularly to remote hot-springs, cooking, reading, blading, music, volunteering, theatre — especially Shakespeare, and re-finishing his vintage Craftsman-style house.

Editor's notes

Steve Pline

I'll be interested in hearing your reactions to the reprint article. How much has the SDA church changed in the last 20 years? How much have we? Should Kinship spend time articulating a contemporary, commonly held interpretation of scripture as it relates to homosexuality?

Next issue is about relationships. It's about us, and I want to include a scrapbook of our pictures. Send a snapshot to the Connection with a few words related to an important relationship you have. The relationship can be with friends, family, God, a partner. Hey, it's your relationship — you tell us who it's with and how it adds meaning to your life. Don't wait for a deadline. Send it now!

COMING OUT

One of these days I will make myself known,
I'll shine radiantly from the shadows
glow like an expectant mother.
people will ask themselves "what's she taking?".

I'll sit under the spreading oak tree
close my eyes, tilt my head back and breath deeply.
My nephews will run to me like boulders bouncing down the hill,
they'll mow me over.
I'll kiss them hug them as we roll around in the grass
and they'll wonder what's with me.

I'll stand atop Silver Star on a clear day
and see four peaks at once;
Rainier, Adams, Saint Helens and Hood.
I will smile and stretch my arms from east to west,
and my dad will wonder what I'm thinking about.

I'll swim off Marrowstone, in the cold salty sound,
roll on my back and hear nothing.
The sky will fill my sight,
a cloud blowing slowly above will look down and say,
"I know what you mean".

Until then

I will lean my head on the speaker
while Dulce sings the fado.

I'll stand on the end of the pier and stare into the water,
wondering how deep the light gets.

I'll pedal up the old rail grade
keeping my eyes fixed to the gravel just in front of the tire.

I'll drive the 405 in silence
counting rainbow stickers on cars.

I will look in the mirror
and hate the stranger looking back at me.

Carolyn Parsons