
connection

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

April 2004 • Vol.28 No.3



Between the Institution and the Individual...page 3

Pink Elephants...page 5

Confessions of a World Traveler...page 7

KINSHIP BOARD

President: Bob Bouchard
Vice President: Taylor Ruhl
Secretary: Bruce Harlow
Treasurer: Karen Lee
Connection Editor: Catherine Taylor
Marketing & PR/Webmaster:
RobbCrouch/Dave Gilsdorf
Church Liaison: Leif Lind
Womyn's Coordinator: YolandaElliott
Kampmeeting 2004 Coordinator:
Fred Casey

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

IMRU: Eric Gilleo
KinNet Coordinator: Floyd Poenitz
Office Manager/Member Services:
Fred Casey
Fund-raising: Mark Driskill
Finance: Karen Wetherell
International Coordinator:
ObedVazquez-Oritz

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bob Bouchard, Taylor Ruhl, Bruce Harlow, Catherine Taylor, Sherri Babcock, Samuel Pang, Karen Lee

REGIONAL COORDINATORS—USA

Region 1 (PA, NJ, NY, CT, RI, MA, VT, NH, ME) Eric Gilleo
617-524-8210
ericgilleo@earthlink.net
Region 2 (WV, VA, NC, DE, MD, DC)
Yolanda Elliot 410-531-5382
yselliott@aol.com
Region 3 (TN, AL, MS, GA, SC, FL)
Fred Casey 866-732-5677
office@sdakinship.org
Region 4 (MN, IA, MO, WI, IL, MI, IN, KY, OH) Fred Casey
866-732-5677
office@sdakinship.org
Region 5 (TX, OK, KS, AR, LA) Floyd Poenitz
972-416-1358 floydp@attbi.com
Region 6 (ND, SD, CO, NE, WY, UT, NM) Robb Crouch 402-438-0883
region6@sdakinship.org
Region 7 (AK, WA, OR, ID, MT)
Fred Casey 866-732-5677
office@sdakinship.org
Region 8 (No. CA, NV HI) Elena Thomas-Blough 480-272-7168
elena4region8@yahoo.com
Region 9 (So. CA, AZ) Bruce Boyd
818-708-7448 cinobruce@aol.com
Michelle Cornwell 760-320-1853
mrcandsb@aol.com

AFFILIATED INTERNATIONAL REGION COORDINATORS

Australia: Noel Thorpe
sdakinhipaust@primus.com.au
Brazil: Itamar Matos de Souza
matos.souza@pmdf.df.gov.br
Canada: Brent Lehmann
rblehmann@telus.net
Europe: Ruud Kieboom
kinshipeurope@yahoo.com
Germany: Roy Ratzer
info@had-ev.de
Central & South America:
Alexander Gomez Pasco
alexpasco@yahoo.com
Philippines: Jonathan Co
cancer108@hotmail.com



Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. (Kinship) is a non-profit support organization which ministers to the spiritual, emotional, social, intersex 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 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the US. Kinship has a board of up to 15 officers and 13 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes several thousand people in 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 (VISA and MasterCard also accepted).

SDA Kinship, P.O. Box 49357, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375 — 866-732-5677

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

OTHER COORDINATORS

Intersexed Coordinator:
Carolyn Parsons 425-917-0842
kinshipintersex@hotmail.com
Transgendered/Transexual Coordinator:
Sandra Hoffecker
sandrahoff@aol.com

CONNECTION

Circulation: Fred Casey
European Editor: Ruud Kieboom
Photography: Bruce Harlow
Production: Karen Wetherell

INFORMATION

The Connection is published by Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Principal office: P.O. Box 49357, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375; 866-732-5677. 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 or use pseudonyms.

The Connection reserves the right to edit manuscripts for length, syntax, grammar, and clarity. Address all submissions to the Connection, P.O. Box 49357, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375. Inquiries and article submissions may also be e-mailed to office@sdakinship.org.

The mention or appearance of any names, organizations or photographs in this publication is not meant to imply a fact or statement about sexual orientation or activity.

Subscription requests or address changes may be sent to: Subscriptions, P.O. Box 49357, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375, or call 866-732-5677. The Kinship mailing list is confidential and used only by Kinship officers. The mailing list is not sold, rented, or exchanged for any purpose.

© 2004 Connection. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. OPINIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF SDA KINSHIP INTERNATIONAL.

Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.

Between the Institution and the Individual

Last month Ruud interviewed Gerard Frenk, our speaker at Kampmeeting Europe October, 2003. Gerard is a board member of the Dutch Seventh Day Adventist Union and was the pastor of Ruud's church for several years. Ruud asked Gerard about his experience with Kinship, and what it is like for him to see our work for GLBT people within the European Adventist Community.

My first experience with Kinship was very interesting and certainly enjoyable. It was good for me to meet some of the people who are active in the organisation. I knew about Kinship through articles, reports in *Spectrum* and of course through the discussion, which played in *Ministry* in the 90's, about homosexuality as a curable disease (sic!). I knew that Kinship comes together now and again at Kampmeetings. I was interested in meeting people face to face and listening to their experiences. It was good to see how integrated religion is in your lives and how many members of Kinship are also able or choose to remain more or less within the church.

Kinship seems to be an irenic group of people, but the church tends to view its leaders and members as a rebellious fringe. What I experienced during our weekend together was a sense of Christian community and an understanding of the core of the gospel, which I often miss in my work in the church. My wife, Annelies felt very much enriched by the fellowship she experienced. We both felt that there were no barriers to cross. Talking to people during our walks and between



sessions I sensed that they were able to think clearly and intelligently. Perhaps more importantly the people I met at Kampmeeting Europe were capable of listening to and understanding each other. They were attuned to each other and gave ample room to the experiences and emotions that were shared. There was a deep



sense of spiritual oneness which I enjoyed very much.

I can't remember ever approaching anyone with real fear or suspicion. People are what they are. My life is in no way threatened by the existence of someone who doesn't fit the mould. People are people and if they treat me as a worthwhile human being, what the heck! The questions about homosexuality (and gay marriage) that are currently being raised in the church are frightening to many of the members. Even when pastors are sympathetic to the aims of Kinship and would personally have no problems including gays in the full life of the church, they find themselves in a pastoral and organisational bind. Most of you who read the Connection are well aware of this so I won't talk about it any further.

Personally, I don't like to be identified too much with my role as pastor and church official. The priesthood of all believers is primary. A church (especially its leaders) tends to forget that. I prefer to think of myself first as a (reasonably) human being. I am a pastor yes, but I am first of all a believer among other believers. As I said during the meeting, if I am forced to choose between the organisation and an individual, I will normally choose for the individual.

I don't know if there is a great difference between pastors in Holland and pastors in the United States or Germany. We all tend to forget that a minister is a *person*, who fulfils a *church role* and has a *profession*. Danger lurks if pastors, when relating to others, retreat into

Continued next page...

Between...

their role. They then identify too closely with the church and thereby forget that they have to keep a *professional* distance not only to church members, but also to the organisation in which they fulfil their role. A pastor who identifies too closely with the church organisation may lose sight of the fact that s/he has a *personal* and *professional* responsibility for the people whom s/he meets. It is church administrators (and in my present job I'm discovering that dilemma) who tend to become confused by the three roles and seek a way out of that confusion by hiding in their institutional role. The great danger is that relationships now become too impersonal. When that happens ideology is not far away, and ideologies tend to be embraced and defended with a vengeance. That's why I really distrust and dislike the church as an institution while at the same time realising that we cannot do without it, if we are to be more or less effective agents of Christ in the larger world.

I hope that Kinship will soon be recognised as a worthwhile witness by the church within the church. I hope that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and intersex people (working together in Kinship) will keep on talking to

the church at large. I hope that the church will soon realise that she denies the gospel when she repeats the words of Caiaphas: *for it is expedient that one man should die for the people*. I hope that the church will realise that individual words of care and love and acceptance need to be accompanied by institutional acts of care and love. I hope that the church will soon cease to profess loving the gays while institutionally encouraging their exclusion.

When I talked to a number of people during the meeting, I found that they were very strong spiritually even within a setting which wasn't really prepared to recognise their spirituality. Received wisdom in the church says: "Homosexuals can't really be spiritual people". But of course they can be and many are. The stories I heard were mostly about the difficult journeys through life. It struck me that most of the storytellers have (developed) a strong personal centre. They are prepared to go the extra mile to remain in conversation with the church and fight for their own particular experience. And even when they dwell on the fringes or have left the church, they still have a sense of "I am a worthwhile person in the eyes of God and nobody is going to take that away from me".

I don't think that Kinship

changed my journey with my life, the church, my spirituality and relationship with God. You have enriched it. Ruud, we've known each other for some 15 years now and you are probably in a better position to answer that question than I am, but I don't really feel I have changed. I have known gay men and women throughout my life and have never felt the need to measure them one way or another. What Kinship *has* done, is give me more work! Now I'm having interviews, speaking with pastors, writing for the Connection and coming to Kampmeeting! I'm also beginning work on developing a European Advisory Board.

In November I had the pleasure of speaking at a Belgian pastor's meeting and had a good conversation with one of them, an old study friend. We intend to meet shortly to talk about a few people we might approach for an advisory board. Meanwhile I have contacted a number of others, but must confess that there is some reluctance to talk openly. But we'll get there! I have recently mailed Reino from Sweden and he's given me a worthwhile contact to follow up. An advisory board isn't going to appear within the next few months, but I imagine if we keep plodding, (or should we say plotting!) we will get there in the not too distant future."

–Ruud Kieboom, 15/16 februari



Pink Elephants

May Sarton started her novel *As We Are Now* by using these words: "I am not mad, only old. I make this statement to give me courage. To give you an idea what I mean by courage, suffice it to say that it has taken two-weeks for me to obtain this notebook and a pen. I am in a concentration camp for the old, a place where people dump their parents or relatives exactly as though it were an ash can."

We often think of the elderly as going to Arizona or Florida in order "to retire." We often do not speak of what comes next. We find it too depressing or too far away from us. We look at this as "a weakness." Most of us do not have much money set aside in savings for nursing homes or insurance for "long- term care." The woman about whom May Sarton wrote, when Sarton herself was about sixty

years old, may be a reality about which we do not often want to think. We, as community, or being more specific, this SDA Kinship group are beginning to find that aging is one of the pink elephants about which we need to speak. The elephant stands right here in our midst. There is not one set of things to do for the aging elderly because it may depend entirely on whether they have "means" or if they do not. It may depend on you to care for parents, aunts and uncles and others in our families. When do we think about ourselves if at all? Is taking care of ourselves only an inner dialogue that begins to play out within ourselves after we reach a place near the age range of forty, fifty or sixty? I pose that we commence our thinking yesterday or today.

Bud Hinkle was one of us. He

was a leader. He planned the second Kinship Kampmeeting, held in the Russian River country of Northern California, and he was an important person to all of us in Region 8. His mom went to Kampmeeting. His parents were involved with Kinship. I remember his importance to our becoming SDA Kinship and the parts he played in the growth of this group. Bud was a counselor. He was in school at Chico State University when we first met. He interned in San Francisco before opening his practice in San Francisco. Then he went home to die with his loving family looking to his care and needs. A college class mate of mine and his wife were there too. We all need that closeness of a family. During his final illness, as he grew weaker, Bud and I talked

Continued next page...

Through the Study Window...

If you snuck over the stone walls, wandered across the front lawn, pillaged my lilac bushes and peeked into the windows that lighten our computers, you would get a bit of an "inside" view of how the Connection gets put together each month. Ignore the stacks of gray mailing envelopes that are strewn in no particular order across the carpet. You might not make any sense of the piles of notes that will soon rise to cover the monitor. They are a minor attempt to help me organize my mind and memory as we begin to put together each issue. (By the way...we'd be interested in finding out what our esteemed readers think is the difference between an edition and an issue. We haven't figured it out yet.) I'm not sure that

investigating the working memory of the hard drive would be a help. And looking into my cranium would be a sure disaster. I'm not sure about any logical organizing factor that would help you find what you want. But there are some things we'd like to share with you, so we'll let you peek over my shoulder as I type. We're trying to make the Connection a mix of many different voices and viewpoints. We want to let you know the news and events of our Kinship community. We'll try to always have a calendar. We will write something spiritual for those who enjoy that course of food. Larry Hallock is planning on writing a series of travel stories that remind us of how big our world is and how diverse it's people. I note some quiet lessons in each tale he

brings. We're trying to include regular thoughts on gender. We want to include as many stories about relationships as you are willing to tell. We'd like you to meet some of the church leaders who support and work to protect us. Ren is beginning a series on aging in our community. The youthful Kamp counselors are shipping us their growing ideas for Kampmeeting's children. We want to make sure there is something on health in each issue (or edition). When we have room, we'll throw in a recipe. We want to begin to have people share stories of what it's like to grow a family. And we would like to invite you to write for us. If there is something you think would be important, please ship it over.

on the phone. He could not take lengthy calls but we talked about things he wanted to discuss. One topic centered on what Kinship could do, should do, to make life and death real, even if we felt skittish about talking about death. We, as an organization had such difficulties with the topic of death that Bud had only a very few lines devoted to him when he died and others merited only a line or two. A women's paper in Napa County was able to publish a truly, loving and caring tribute to Bud. I think we had difficulty with this because it is painful to remember that we are all mortal beings.

We, as GLBTI, do not often enough think of our future as progressing through each phase of life (toddling to dawdling and beyond). I'm asking you to think about it and to plan for it as you are able to do so. For many of you there is some time but what is time, really? We do not know our future through tea leaves. We must take things into our own hands, draw up a will or other instrument see that our needs and desires are known, place all legal and other wishes on paper commit it into writing and let those who love us know where these instructions are located in our files. Get that over and done with but do it for your loved ones. Review it now and again when life changes. Be certain that each addition is dated and in your own handwriting. Take charge of yourself. Then you may be able to relax, except for reviews.

Many sell a home and move to a retirement village, and then have to move again, probably into a smaller or more "supported" home and with very mixed feelings. Often they grieve their need and their decision. Each move is harder than the last. As one becomes older or is challenged by other problems of health these mental and physical transitions grow greater and greater in dimension.

If you no longer can drive does the "home" provide ways to see that

your needs are met to get around to, do your business and shopping and to see friends. Will you be able to cook for yourself. Food choices loom rather large to those of us who are primarily vegetarian. Poor health may cause us to have certain foods removed or added to our diet; changes. Will those needs be cared for in a loving way?

In Sarton's book the woman, Caro Spencer, is in a "home" because her brother has remarried after his first wife died. His new wife cannot tolerate Caro and her living with them. Caro is taken to the country and depends upon two women for every morsel of food she gets as well as other things. Her first meal there is a bowl of corn flakes. She is there because her own home had stairs that she could no longer negotiate after a heart attack -- so it was sold. That is an end of an era of freedom. She could react in one of several ways but what she does is to show spirit and courage and finds alternate ways to care for herself as best she can under these circumstances. She has little choice. She does devise ways, but that comes later. We all do that. We search for ways to adjust to a very different way of living or we devise some way to escape. She was not the only person at this new and very different "new home."

I believe we must show and give care to our sisters and brothers all along our way. We need each other for elder housing where there are people much like ourselves - Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transsexual and Intersex. This is very difficult as there are not many places that are giving care to us, the GLBTI community. That's difficult enough, even if you do not have a Seventh Day Adventist background. If it is at all possible, don't go away from the availability of your friends, acquaintances and churches or move to remote areas. In my county there are senior representatives who can be alerted to suspected elder abuse and general care for the elderly and

impaired but we are at near-crisis as to the number of people who provide this service to seniors and others. If they are available, they can bring charges or suits if it does prove necessary. Find out if your doctor makes calls on patients that they have seen and known for years. If you do not have your own doctor you are another step removed from something that is familiar.

Use May Sarton as a guide or other books that are more recent. Become a visitor to nursing homes and long term care centers. Be alert to what seniors talk to you about their own care or if they seem afraid to talk about their care. Learn what things to look for that will make their lives a little less lonely, brighter and safer - if they can speak. Find out from employees who the people are who do not often have visitors. We can always hold the hand of someone who is there who possibly craves human touch. They probably will hold your gaze if they cannot hold your hand. Learn foot massage and offer that to people you visit. In Boulder the Hospice there is a place where a friend donates foot massage regularly. You of course have to work this out with the management and the person who lives there.

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare.... I do hope to instill within each of you that this is up to you and us and it is one of the eras of life that appears to be one of the most neglected in our/every community.

- Ren Reynolds -

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.

- Jane Addams

Confessions of a World Traveler

By Larry Hallock

While navigating the freeway the other day, on my way to work, a nagging question found its way into my consciousness: Why have I been sensing my next trip abroad more as a burden than a wonderful vacation? Why am I dreading something that should be exciting? If I loved my two weeks in Ethiopia six years ago, why the trepidation now?

The answer came easily, but it



reveals a weird kind of mental confusion, like when your mind has been turned loose in a large and unfamiliar pasture. What I realized was that when I travel in third-world countries, I bring people home with me. And I don't just confine them to the pages of photo albums. They live with me, in a way. I think about them almost daily, wondering how they're doing, picturing where they live and how they live. Are they getting enough rain? Did

Shanko ever get to the capital to take that driving course, so he could get a good job? I don't know why they become such a part of me, they just do.

The odd thing is that some of them I only met in passing, and some I never even spoke to, at least not in any verbal language we both understood. Yet I still remember them, probably more than they remember me....and more than what should make sense to a fully rational mind.

This time I'll bring back a whopping six weeks-worth of people, and these will be ones I will have gotten to know longer and better. This time I'll be directly

Larry is spending six weeks

assisting Dell Russell, president of the International Children's Outreach Network, a charitable organization that seeks children who need surgical repairs, and makes it happen for them.

Logistics is the biggest challenge—transporting the children and a parent or guardian to the capital, Addis Ababa (or even to another country), finding and arranging with a surgeon, providing housing and oversight during recovery, and transportation home.

Mr. Russell, a retired mortgage banker, founded the organization after visiting Ethiopia as a tourist a few years ago. He pays all administrative expenses out of his own pocket, so every penny donated goes directly to the work. This is truly a hands-on operation, Larry says, by people committed to service, not to holding onto a job. Even the printed brochure is impressively not wasteful. Mr. Russell prints it on his personal computer at his own expense. To receive one, write to the International Children's Outreach Network at dell@skykomish.net or P.O. Box 278, Skykomish, WA 98288

involved with a humanitarian project that will no doubt create a kind of bonding I've not experienced before. I don't know that I'm prepared to expend the kind of emotional energy this will generate both there and upon my return. I don't want to be changed that much.

Travel always changes a person; especially travel that puts you with people still largely unaffected by western civilization: men and boys who own only one item of clothing, a wrap around the waist,



and herd cattle or goats on the free range; women who still wear animal skins and carry water by hand to fields of coffee plants. It's a place of no electricity or plumbing, no stores, doctors, mp3 players, Q-tips or box springs. You simply cannot have that kind of experience without coming back a changed person. But I don't want to change any more than I already have. I don't want to become even more sensitive to poverty and

Continued next page...

global problems, don't want to think about it more often than I already do. What will happen to me over a six-week period of seeking out the maim and the lame to facilitate their healing? Will I turn into a left-wing bleeding-heart liberal extremist against my will? Will I feel compelled to turn the rest of my life into martyrdom on the altar of caring too ridiculously much? However this may sound, I have real and intense concerns which trouble me. Like I say, confessions.

Yet off I go, taking with me both a sense of burden and a sense of exciting anticipation. By the time you read this, I'll be there with photocopies of pictures I took years ago, trying to locate people I



met before, however briefly. I'm sure my apprehension will turn to pleasant and intense engagement. I will take a large suitcase that a friend donated, filled with clothes still others have donated. I will take cash donations that two separate business clients volunteered out of the blue. I will use it to buy medicines and supplies in Addis Ababa which I'll take to remote areas. Or I might use it to buy a goat or two for a needy family.

A major difference between my last visit and this is that I will make it a point to have a translator with me at all times (no doubt some youngster from among the

fortunate few who go to school), so that I can speak to everyone I meet. I'll find the young lad who left his herd of cattle to join me as I walked across the open savannah, and be able to ask what he was thinking when we walked in silence for a mile. I'll tell him how sorry I was to just hop in a car and ride away when the vehicles caught up, leaving him as if stranded there. It's fun to think of a small gift that he might keep forever.

I'll get to talk to the older man with the many scarification markings on his chest and ask what they mean. Valor, I've been told. And in Konso, a village more developed than the remoter areas, I'll find the 40-year-old shop



keeper who sold me my first souvenir from the region—a soft-stone carving hand crafted by a friend of his, with a personalized inscription and date. On one side is carved a relief of the continent of Africa, Ethiopia on the reverse. This was a keepsake, and the man adamantly did not want to part with it for any price. So I kept offering him more, until he parted with it for what must have been the equivalence of one or two years' salary. I subsequently felt slightly guilty of exploitation, and still do. I've already gift-wrapped what I've decided to take for him. You can guess what it is.

Local News

Someone To Talk To...in Colorado with the North American Division

Ella Hammond, Craig's mother, and I had a booth at the NAD Youth Ministries Convention in Denver, Colorado, February 19-22. Some 1200 Pathfinder and Adventurer leaders and youth directors, pastors and leaders were in attendance and there were over 50 exhibitors. Our booth was located between the General Conference Sabbath School department and the GC health ministries department.

Since I started exhibiting four years ago at the 2000 General Conference Session I have been able to use a nice display board from the conference office. It is turquoise green felt with gold trim, about 4 1/2 feet high, curved, and has spotlights at the top. The backdrop is the picture by Darrel Tank on the home page of my website, showing Jesus with his arms around a mother, father, and their son who has obviously just told them he's gay.

"Someone to Talk to...for Adventist families of gays and lesbians" is written across the top, and under the picture is 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, as on my website. I had two display racks containing my book and the following handouts: a sample newsletter, a suggested reading list, "Myths About Homosexuality," a booklet of stories - "Have You Walked in Their Shoes?", and a booklet of articles - "Christians Look at Homosexuality" - all of which can also be found on my website. By the time the convention was over all our handouts had been taken.

I can't say ours was the most popular booth - smile! Many people still seem to avoid us, as if they fear being seen showing an

interest in this issue might lead someone to think they are gay or have a family member who is. Of course, those booths offering catchy wares for children and young people were much busier, but people who were really interested in what we had to offer stopped by for in-depth conversations. We had dozens of wonderful one-on-one contacts, and while most of those we talked to were a long way from where Ella and I are in understanding, they were sympathetic and interested in learning more. Hopefully we said some things, and they read some things in our handouts that will open their minds a crack further. I think that, for the most part, change is going to happen one person at a time, slow as that seems.

Over the past four years I have noticed both a growing polarity of viewpoints and greater willingness of those with negative feelings to confront us. Both Ella and I commented that these experiences help us understand what it feels like to be rejected for being gay or lesbian. I was so thankful Ella was with me, as I was about to lose my voice the whole time. She is talkative and outgoing, which was a great help.

One of the special side benefits of our trip was seeing Ben Kemena and his partner Mike Brewer. Ben picked us up and returned us to the airport, 25 miles out from Denver, saving us expensive taxi rides. He was also a great help with our mountain of luggage, which included a large and heavy display case, a long awkward tube containing the backdrop, a very heavy box of handouts and a carry-on with miscellaneous paraphernalia, besides our personal luggage. And we enjoyed a delightful evening at their home.

I want to express my appreciation for all the prayers and financial help from Kinship members.

—Carrol Grady

Kampmeeting's Children: The Organizer's Report

(You may be able to discern from our monthly check-ins that the reporters are young adults.)

Ok, this is what we are thinking so far. We want the children's Kampmeeting to be sort of like a Vacation Bible School program, if not one directly ordered from an Adventist Book Center. We want to have singing, crafts, games, exercising/sports, maybe a sort of photography type class, using polaroids or disposable cameras. Of course we'd have to have nap time for at least the little ones who are more likely to need one :), We plan to have a religious theme, well maybe not a theme (we know how difficult themes can be :) but just a religious backing to all of them. We're gonna do it all! :) really. I hope that is enough for now, I don't think we can be much more specific. We're going to try to practice up on our guitar over the summer :)

Editor's note: This is what some of your special contributions can fund. We're making it a focus to offer Kamp with scholarships to as many parents and children as we can possible manage.

New Resource For Religious Leaders and Community Organizers.

In response to recent public debate over the right of same-sex couples to legally marry, the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (CLGS) at Pacific School of Religion has created a new web-based Marriage Project, now available on its web site at www.clgs.org.

The project was launched on Valentine's Day, the culmination of Freedom to Marry Week, which also coincided with the historic decision by San Francisco's mayor to defy California state law by

issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Designed for religious leaders and community organizers, the CLGS Marriage Project provides biblical, historical, and theological resources for affirming same-sex committed relationships and liturgical models to honor those relationships. It features information on the history of marriage, denominational policies and statements, legal definitions by states, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered) religious caucus statements, sermons and pastoral resources, teaching tools, and many other materials.

"The right-to-marry debate promises to be one of the more divisive 'wedge' issues in this year's presidential campaign," says PSR Professor Mary A. Tolbert, the Center's Executive Director.

"Reactionary religious organizations have obscured the important difference between civil rights and religious rites. Marriage equality for same-sex couples is a matter of civil rights, of enjoying the same benefits and responsibilities as any other married couple."

"Securing these civil rights has nothing to do with whether or not faith communities choose to celebrate and bless same-sex couples with religious and liturgical rites. CLGS is particularly suited to help both LGBT people and communities of faith learn about the important distinctions between the civil and religious issues involved in marriage and become articulate advocates for marriage equality."

Learn more about the new CLGS Marriage Project at www.clgs.org.

For more information, contact Jay Johnson or Alvan Quamina at 510/849-8206.

*Only when we are no longer afraid
do we begin to live.*

—Dorothy Thompson

Beans are a good source of **antioxidant nutrition**, with black beans packing the most antioxidant nutrition of all varieties. Darker seed coats appear to offer the most antioxidants in general, with red and brown beans taking the antioxidant lead after black beans.

Holding your breath when you perform stomach crunches may cause your **blood pressure** to spike higher than it normally would during resistance training. In a study, people who voluntarily held their breath during abdominal exercises had higher peak blood pressure elevations compared to when they breathed during the exercises.

Early research suggests that cinnamon may help improve both **glucose and cholesterol** levels in the blood, a finding that may prove especially important for diabetics. In a study, type 2 diabetics who consumed as little as a gram of cinnamon per day experienced an improvement in their blood glucose levels after 40 days.

Compared to people who did only basic **skin self-exams**, patients in a recent study who took pictures of their own skin and used the pictures as a reference tool did a better job of detecting new moles or changes to their moles over time. Moles that change shape or have irregular borders may have the highest risk of turning cancerous.

Researchers estimate that over the past 40 years, **daily caloric intake** has increased by 75 calories per day, an amount that could cause weight gain over time. Replace one of your favorite sweet drinks with a bottle of water each day for a quick and slimming calorie cut.

Starting a **community watch** program might help make your neighborhood not only safer but also healthier. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention revealed that when people feel good about their neighborhood, they are more likely to exercise. Feelings of community may increase perceptions of comfort and safety, making outdoor exercise more appealing.

Sweet red and yellow bell peppers contain almost twice as much **vitamin C** as green bell peppers. An ample supply of vitamin C in the diet has been credited with reducing the risk of stroke, one of the most common causes of death and disability in the United States.

Studies of people over the age of 60 revealed that **strength training** three times per week helped increase the amount of time the study participants were able to spend walking on a treadmill. Both high-intensity and low-intensity strength-training programs did the trick.

Improving your **cardiovascular fitness** through brisk walking or jogging can help boost your mental acuity. In a study, people who regularly participated in cardiovascular exercise were able to focus better on a target compared to people who performed only stretching and toning exercises.

A study involving **mindfulness meditation** revealed that the practice boosted immune system function in participants. Mindfulness meditation is the practice of becoming deeply aware of the present moment through meditation. The stress-reduction qualities of this practice may be the source of its immune-boosting powers.

A diet that includes an overabundance of foods that rapidly boost **blood sugar**, such as sweets or sugary soft drinks, may boost colorectal cancer risk, according to research. In a study, women who had an abundance of these foods in their diets had almost a three-fold increase in colorectal cancer risk.

By Billy Glover

I spent some time yesterday reading in a book, *Pagans & Christians*, by Robin Lane Fox, Harper San Francisco, 1986. If you get a chance, glance at the pages describing sexuality. I think I see a parallel between the problems early Christians had in serving in the Roman army and gay/lesbian people today. The era described is around 200 A.D. The author, talks about how Christians had a problem serving in the military since it was pagan and they were expected to honor pagan festivals. Some refused to wear wreaths and the irony is that some of the people who attacked/exposed these Christians were other Christians who had no problem with honoring the pagan gods and so were allowed to stay in the service.

Christianity got more powerful as the Christians educated themselves and were, by discussing, reading, etc prepared to discuss their beliefs with pagans. I wonder how much more powerful we would be if we had a clear understanding of our past. One poignant parallel is Tertullian's remarks about Christians thrown to the lions in the Arena, "look how these Christians love one another."

Fox mentions a speech by Apuleius, in self-defense and an Artemiddorus on lesbians being unnatural and men being natural. They were against pimping. Sex with slaves was acceptable. The passive partner was not as good as active one. Pederasty was a thing of the Gauls, although Tatian says the Romans "rounded up herds of boys like herds of grazing mares." Until the 2d century soldiers couldn't marry. In Egypt marriage was not encouraged; people co-habited instead. But generally marriage was not a great thing to early Christians, so it is strange that they make such a big deal of it as a 'religious' thing now. If you read this, I would love to hear what you think.

Devotional: Level Ground

In the middle of a culture in the middle of a world where power, class, gender, race, and age determined status, ability to function, place in community, and often, even the chance to stay alive, the writers of the Bible continually called for places of and a journey to level ground. Seventh Day Adventists often say that the cross is a great equalizer but sacred canon began to call for a "different world order" long before the Assyrians ever designed their powerful object of torture. In four simple verses Moses took dictation for the road back to heaven.

Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.

Set time apart. You need to get a vision of something you will not see in the everyday stresses and power struggles. In Hebrew, to "remember" is an act of the life, not an exercise of the mind. In many ways the Sabbath was designed to teach the children of Israel what Eden was and what heaven is designed to become.

Six days will you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

What I love about this is the phrase "all your work". It indicates that there is an amount we need to get done in a week, and no more. When I look at my house and my lists and my ever important priorities I could go on a never ending roll of energy until my adrenals gave up. Isaiah talks about the appointed round of the stars and their constellations. If the heavens can have a set limit, it puts us in good company to have limits that know there is a weekly amount that needs to be done and no more. It helps us to remember that God is in control and if something is truly important, He will make sure it gets done, in the time and in the way that is best for all

concerned. It's interesting to me that other Hebrew Sabbath Festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Succoth) were held during the times of the growing season that were difficult to leave. The people had to trust that God would take care of their crops. It's the same with the weekly Sabbath. We're asked to believe in a God that "will take care of our crops."

On it, you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son nor your daughter, your man servant, your maid servant, your animals or the alien that is within your gates.

Ah, here lies the level ground. Despite their culture and, I believe, to change it, the Lord on Sinai made a time where His sense of power was in control, not ours. For one twenty four hour period each week your age, your gender, your status, your species, or your nationality was equal with everyone else. What a way to create a context where people had to live equality, not just argue about it. What a way to make sure there was the lesson of a safe place. What a way to create a home of time. What I also notice here is the implicit discussion of power. This commandment is not about forcing someone to believe the way we do. It's not about forcing them to make choices. This commandment is about making sure we begin to get the lesson of hospitality, of graciousness, of fairness, of equal love.

Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath and made it Holy.

Holy, set apart. Holy, of heaven. Holy, one of the lessons we need to learn about how the Deity sets priorities.

In our community, what are the ways we can create or re-create this Rest? What are the ways and places we can make a safe home and safe

places in time? What are the ways we can know our limits and know what to leave to God? What are the ways we can be inclusive, accepting, gracious, fair, encouraging of choice while accepting our own decisions? How can we make our very organization an example of the lessons of the mountain top Sabbath?

Calendar

March 26-28 - Board Meeting
March 27 - Field Trip To Los Angeles Gay Men's Chorus
April 17th - Region 8 Meeting
For details, contact Elena Thomas at elena4region8@yahoo.com.
April 30 - Mini Kampmeeting at Rehoboth, Delaware
August 12-15 - Women and Children First
August 15- 22 - 25th Anniversary Kampmeeting
September 17th - 20th - Kampmeeting Europe

Web sites you might enjoy

www.buddybuddy.com/famous.html
www.cnn.com/wolf (this was one of the vote about gay marriage sites)

A Sunbeam

A person will worship something, have no doubt about that.

That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson



The Chemist's Mango Salsa

Those of you who need to meticulously measure each and every item should stop reading here. This is designed for those of you whose grandparents taught you to cook by saying; "pitch in a dollop of Crisco, or maybe butter if you would like...some people have used lard..but we don't. Beat that until it looks right then pour in some flour until it has the right consistency, etc."

One or two mangos.

Two is really better but you could try other amounts. If you can't tell the difference between mangos and papayas, well, maybe the people who eat your salsa can't either.

Some Cilantro

I generally pitch in an entire batch, however much that is. My apologies to those who don't like this lovely herb. The original recipe I read called for two tablespoons but I'm an American and I figure "if a little is good, a lot is better."

One Jalepeno Pepper

Now, this is in New England where people think paprika is on

the spicy side. For the rest of my world we chop up some seranos to keep on the table and for Karen we try to keep some habeneros nearby.

The Juice of One Lemon

But, if you have more than one lemon around, that tastes pretty good too.

A Poured Dollop of Olive Oil

Yep, that is exactly what I mean.

Three cloves of Garlic

I might consider using less but this is the cold and flu season and we think using salsa for medicinal purposes is a creative and efficient way to access pharmaceuticals. Given that, maybe you should throw in five.

One Food Processor

more than one is also fine if you would like to make two different kinds of salsa at the same time.

Pitch all the ingredients into the processor. Hit the pulse button a few times. Store in container for 30 minutes. Serve within two days. It might last three, but never around my house.