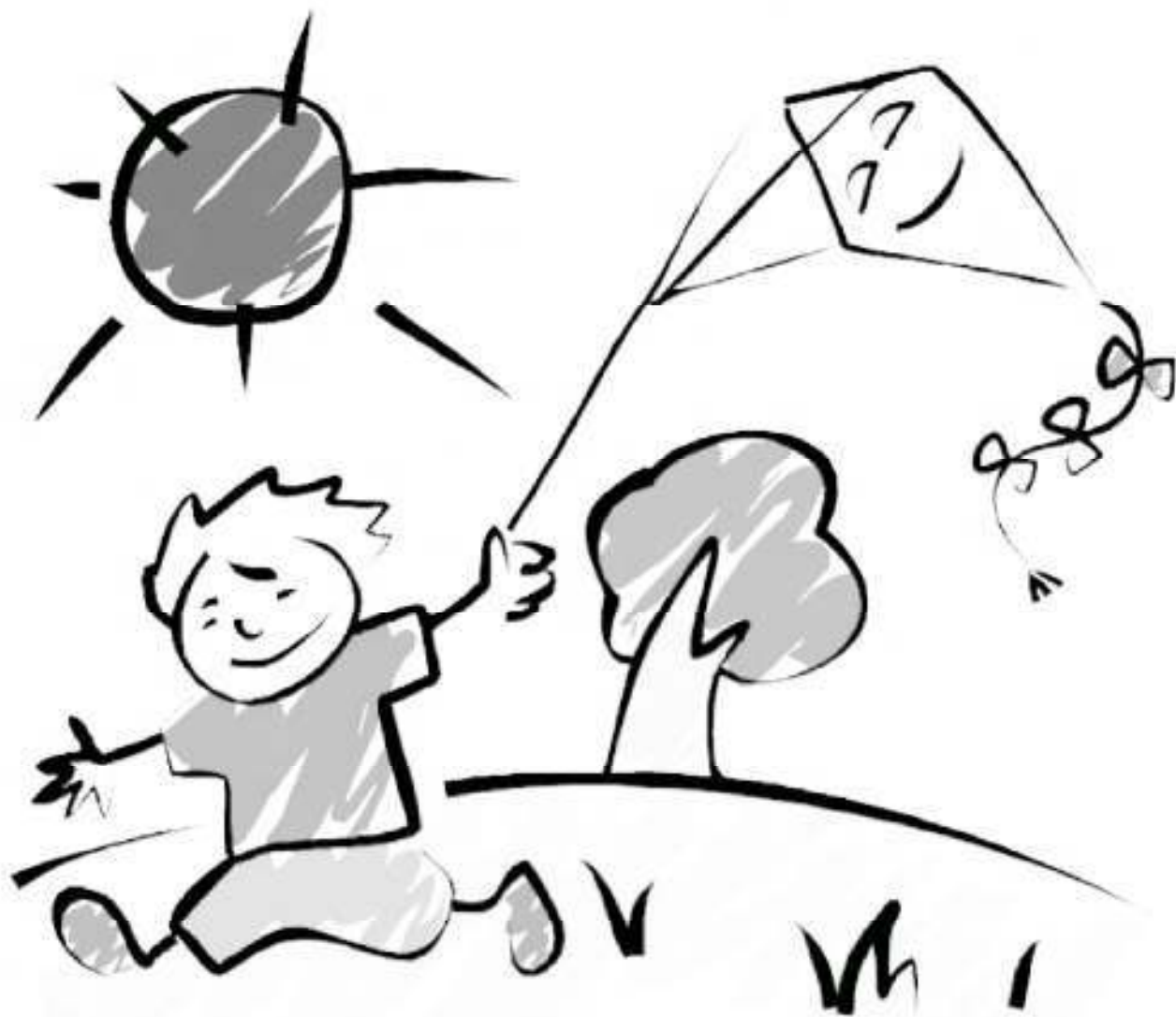


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The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. May 2006 Vol. 30 No. 5



“We gotta luv 'em...”

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Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. (Kinship) is a non-profit support organization which ministers to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of Seventh-day Adventist lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and intersex individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is an organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people.

Founded in 1976, the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the US. Kinship has a board of up to 15 officers and 13 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes several thousand people in 43 countries.

SDA Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn, or even mention, homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts, which are often used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBT has its roots in a misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

Support Kinship

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

SDA Kinship, P.O. Box 49375, Sarasota, FL 34230-6375, or call toll-free in the U.S. 866-732-5677 or toll from outside the U.S. 01 (941) 371-7606, or visit SDA Kinship's Web Site at: www.sdakinship.org.

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“We gotta luv 'em - ev'body got one!”

On the road with...

Carrol Grady - Washington, U.S.

In April the leadership committee for the North American Division of Seventh Day Adventist Family Ministries met and focused on their goal to “sensitise and educate church leadership (an editorial change from “membership”) on gay and lesbian issues in order to promote a less-hostile church environment...” The committee was chaired by Debra Brill, NAD Vice-president for Ministries. In addition to Willie Oliver, NAD Family Ministries director, and Ron and Karen Flowers, General Conference Family Ministries Directors the committee included a variety of ethnic origins. I note this because there are some cultures that seem very conservative and focused on the most restricted interpretation of Biblical issues. Two members of the committee seemed much more open to our concerns - Tim Lale, who is acquisitions editor at Pacific Press, and Alice Merrill, an assistant Family Ministries director in the Northern California Conference. There were some representatives from more conservative cultures who also seemed somewhat open to discussion GLBTI issues.

Sherri Babcock, Mitch Henson and I gave the same presentations we did at the January workshop. In the questions and discussion that followed, I decided that sensitivity training needed to begin with some of the committee members themselves who, having just heard Sherri's story, still made strong and pointed comments about the sinfulness of homosexual behaviour and the non-acceptance of gay marriage. They did pay lip service, at least, to the need for showing more love. I think they have a big problem figuring out how to be loving without feeling they are condoning sin.

After lunch we met in three brainstorming groups to come up with methods of achieving the goal. I think some of the best ones were: (1) providing educational materials for pastors and teachers, (2) presentations at pastors' workshops, (3) getting NAD leaders from youth ministries, education and ministerial to join with family ministries in this endeavour and (4) working toward appointing a commission, including people from varying viewpoints and those with expertise in relevant areas, to study this issue thoroughly. This last suggestion has been my dream for at least 12 years. For ten years



there was a Christian View of Human Life Committee which studied topics like abortion, birth control, euthanasia, etc., in depth, but when they were considering addressing homosexuality, the committee was discontinued.

I admire Willie Oliver for being willing to stick his neck out on this issue. Debra Brill seemed to be behind him all the way. Ron and Karen Flowers voted for this initiative and are generally supportive.

They seem to be sympathetic, although they seem to be strongly concerned about biblical issues. I am glad we've had such good scholarship with Kinship allies helping us to understand the meaning of the original texts.

The next morning I wandered around visiting some of my old friends in the General Conference office complex. After my thirteen year absence, there are fewer people that I know. I spent a long time with Barbara Lee, who is receptionist in the White Estate. Her son died of AIDS about ten years ago. She said some friends insisted the Bible says homosexuals won't be in Heaven, and she didn't know how to explain the Bible more accurately to them. She was very happy to know about the text research that is presented on *Someone_To_Talk_To*.

I spent some time with Beverly Rumble, editor of *Adventist Education*, the General Conference publication. Her advisor had turned down my article on gay-bashing in Adventist schools and she said there would be a new advisor in September. We talked for quite a while about how it could be more acceptable in other parts of the world if I made gay-bashing just one part of an overall look at bullying, so I might try to do that. I'd also like to talk to the North American Division education director and see if he might use the original article in our division somehow.

At 11 AM I had a 20-minute appointment with Elder Paulsen. He was very friendly and told me he also has gay family members. One is a nephew, who told Elder Paulsen's daughter that he probably could have stayed in his small community, married, and had a family and “made it work,” but instead he moved to a large city and is partnered with another professional man. Elder Paulsen asked me why a gay/straight marriage wouldn't be the best answer

gotta luv 'em...

for gay Adventists. I started telling him Terry and Kathy's story, and he said he thought he had received a letter from Kathy (which Mitch Tyner delivered). So I told him that I had collected many stories by people who have been in gay/straight marriages and that it is usually the whole family that suffers in this kind of marriage. I also mentioned some of the scientific research that points to biological causes of homosexuality. I hope I gave him something to think about. I also left him a sheet of "Results of the church ignoring the issue of homosexuality" and a number of stories of pastoral "malpractice."

Before flying to Atlanta that afternoon, I had lunch with Buffy Halvorsen. She joined our sda-fflag list while she was working on her MA in social work. She has a license for marriage and family counselling and has recently been

phone-counselling another woman who joined fflag because she has a gay brother. That woman then realized that she herself is lesbian. She is married to a dentist, has two teenage children and has been going through a very difficult time trying to deal with this realization.

Floyd and Mike drove from Dallas to meet me in Atlanta and help with our Someone to Talk To booth at the Black Youth Congress there. We stayed at a B&B in a very pretty part of Atlanta. It was close to the MARTA station. We took that in to the congress every day and saved the high cost of parking downtown. We enjoyed a delicious breakfast every morning and met lots of other interesting guests. And the owner was "family!" (Is it okay for me to call it that?)

I am so thankful for Floyd and Mike who helped transport all of the material and get the booth set up. I could never have done it without them. I was able to

use a display unit that belongs to SAGE, my husband's seniors' group, and it is the backdrop for a beautiful painting of Jesus comforting a mother and father and their son who (obviously) has just told them he is gay, by Darrel Tank. It's the painting on my website home page. Floyd brought a large flat computer screen and speakers and used his laptop to play the "Open Heart, Open Hand" DVD. I had a rack with four hand-outs: "Have You Walked in Their Shoes?" a booklet of stories; "Christians Look at Homosexuality," a booklet of articles by several religious leaders mainly dealing with redemptive Christian attitudes toward homosexuality; a paper about the negative effects of change ministries and another of the recent "60 Minutes" program on research dealing with causes of homosexuality. Plus I had a sheet with some of Coretta Scott King's quotes on gay civil rights. I had made about 1500 1/3-sheet flyers that said, "Do



you know a family that has a GAY SON or LESBIAN DAUGHTER? Here is where they can find Love, Help, Understanding:" Then I listed my website, on-line support group, book and the DVD. Among our neighbouring booths were Andrews University next door and Amazing Facts across the aisle.

The exhibit hall was supposed to be open Wednesday afternoon from 4-7 pm, but not very many people came through. Delegates were still arriving and getting settled. However, the bane of our experience, a "band" (drums, cymbals, keyboard and vocalist) that played at top volume almost the entire time we were there, was already in full swing! Thursday we were open from 11 am - 7 pm, Friday from 11 am - 5 pm and Saturday night from 8-11 pm.

I expected a lot of confrontation, since the black churches are generally very conservative on this issue, but was pleasantly surprised by how many people seemed happy to learn about our ministry and said the church needs to be more loving and accepting. I am not saying they are ready to accept gay marriage but many delegates were more sympathetic than I expected. We tried to diffuse those who wanted to argue about Biblical



texts by emphasizing that we were just trying to help parents and other family members to know they weren't alone and encourage them to show unconditional love to their children. My heading, "We gotta luv 'em; ev'body got one!" is what one sweet little old lady said when we were talking about how we need to love gays and lesbians. We thought maybe we should get t-shirts made with that printed on them!

I'm guessing that we had fifty or sixty really "quality" contacts with people who spent considerable time talking to us and had a real interest. Two of our best contacts were with Ron Whitehead, who coordinates the big Pathfinder Camporee every five years, and Jose McLaughlin, who was there with the Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries booth. Ron was very happy about my ministry and said I should be at the Camporee. (Hopefully he will still think so after reading my handouts!) Jose is from Lake Elsinore, CA, and asked us to put his name on the "friendly pastors" list. He said he pastors a small church and has several members who have partnered gay children that he welcomes to his church. He said if any of his members objected, he was ready to beat them over the head!

A couple of Atlanta Kinship members met us for dinner. Brenda and Pearl came over from Chattanooga to go to church with us in Marietta. We just could not take any more of the music at the youth congress!. We had lots of fun. I felt it was a very worthwhile experience. Even though I fundamentally HATE travelling and would love to enjoy a quiet life (sigh!), I have promised the Lord that as long as He keeps opening doors and pushing me through them, I'll keep going! ;~) ▼



New Arrival!!

Jill, Sherri and Grace Babcock welcomed Faith Mae into the world on March 26, 2006 at 7:57 PM. Faith weighed in at 7 lbs 6 oz and was 19.5 inches long. Mother and baby are in good health and Grace is enjoying being a big sister. Sherri has fallen in love for the third time and was delighted to have the baby born in the hospital, and not in the car! (We got to the hospital a little after 7:00 PM!) Grandma (Fern) is staying with us for the first month and helping the family adjust to the new work load!





These First Four Months

Elena Davis Stenhouse - Colorado, USA

On December 28, 2005, my partner and I drove home from St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver, Colorado with our brand new baby girl, Chloe Sage Stenhouse. What a wonderful journey it has been for the three of us! As a two-mother lesbian household, we know that our family is just not the norm in our suburban community. Even the birth was not traditional - I gave birth to her in our home, in a nice warm bath, during an impromptu, unplanned (and unassisted!) homebirth after only a three-hour labour. What a miracle that was! From the beginning, Chloe has set the stage for an amazing and unique parenting journey.

We can't imagine life without her. She is a beautiful, gentle, and mellow soul. We've watched her intently over the past four and a half months as she's changed and grown each day. We've revelled in watching her learn to roll from her stomach to her back, beginning to talk baby-talk (and talk she

does!), bestowing magical smiles to her mommies (oh, it melts our hearts!), and becoming increasingly alert, amazed, and curious about the world around her.

We're still learning how to be a non-traditional family. We are still deciding how we will explain to Chloe the process by which she arrived in this world and how to answer the idiotic strangers questions such as "Oh, does she have red hair like her father???" or "Are you two sisters?" For now, we're just enjoying our precious baby girl. Our love is what matters. Together we will work to navigate any obstacles that cross our path. ▼



Kinship News

European Kinship Meeting 5 - July 14 - 17th. Sweden

We are looking forward to seeing all of you who can attend our gathering in just a few weeks! Gerard Frenk of the Netherlands Union will be one of our primary speakers and we have people travelling from Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, the U.S. and many other countries. For more information or to register you can contact Reino at: reino.kullko@telia.com

IMRU?

The IMRU? Leadership Team would like to acknowledge Jonathan Coe for co-founding the Adventist Gay Youth (AGY) Forum along with Eric Gilleo in January of 1999. Many thanks to all those who helped found and participated in the AGY group. AGY later became the IMRU? forum when it joined Kinship International.

We are gearing up for Kampmeeting 2006! We have been making individuals aware of the application process and the opportunity to request scholarships. Several members from around the nation have been coordinating ways to get to Orlando. Region 2 IMRU?, members have gotten together and will be travelling to Orlando by van. IMRU? members will also be featured in various spots during the Kampmeeting program. Many thanks to Marcos Apolonio for giving us the opportunity to take part. On Friday morning July 7 we will talk with you about our activities and our membership. We are looking forward to visiting with

Continued on page 10...

STARTING OVER

Peter Mueller - Ontario, Canada

I have lived with AIDS for more than twelve years yet I constantly need to relearn the basics of living well. These days, as has happened often in my journey, I am picking myself up after a long period of spending time sick in bed. My partner Keith died in December and I think my grief set me up for weeks of serious illness. As my health is returning, I am discovering, again, old lessons.

1.

Get out of Bed. That's right, get up! Dust the Cheese Whiz and crackers out of the sheets and don't give in to the cosy blanket. Stop! I see you pulling up the covers and reaching for the TV remote. Don't do it! Swing those feet out over the bed and let them touch the floor. That's it. You are halfway there. Now just stand up. Come on you can do it! Don't step on the cat. He wants to be fed. meow, Meow, MEOW! O.K. O.K. I am coming.

2.

Get Dressed. Fight that urge just to put on those track pants you have been wearing for the last month. Get dressed! No, a house coat over those ratty track pants does not qualify as an ensemble. You have lounged around for too long in the same old sick clothes. Throw open your closet door and pick something that makes you feel good. I said makes you feel good, not look good. There is a difference. Even if it seems like you have nobody or no reason to get dressed, there is Y.O.U. Making yourself feel Fab and alive is the BEST reason to do it. So bust out your most fabulous outfit. YOU ARE WORTH IT! Come on don't be shy. How about that little number in the back with the glitter on it?

3.

Music. Call me a Drama Queen, (I know you are already thinking it.) I know what makes all the best TV and movies so good is the soundtrack. Create a soundtrack for your life. Pick those songs that make your body want to move, that make you happy, that transport you to a better time and place. Make a tape, a CD, a playlist on your computer or ipod. Good, now play it often and as loud as you can stand it. Personally, I am a fan of the old disco divas, but you pick what works for you. It doesn't matter if the music you like is still popular. If it affects you in

a positive way, enjoy it. I start every day with one of these, and keep them going all day. Take them with you when you travel.

4.

Eat. Well, Duh.... but Surprise, Surprise, I forgot about this one again!

After weeks of being nauseous from meds, I forgot I needed to eat. Food is essential. I am remembering that it can be fab and fun, not make me run to the toilet! Don't just reach for that old dusty can of Chef so-in-so's mystery surprise, even if those cute dino shapes are sooooo much fun. Go on treat yourself to something fresh and vital. Many stores now sell fresh cut fruit cut up ready to go. This mix can be festive and yummy. Grab a pack of ready-to-go stir fry veggies. They are inexpensive and can be used in a variety of ways.

5.

Breathe. I am talking about a little more than that in-and-out shallow breathing you are doing as you cram another double stuffed Oreo in your mouth while changing the TV channel. I am not going to say you have to do deep cleansing Yoga inhalations or Tai Chi breathing. Just do something, ANYTHING that makes you breathe a little more deeply.

6.

Move. Yes, move. You have been sitting still for too long. Take a walk, clean the kitchen (I finally noticed it needs it) Take the garbage out. Roller skate naked through the crosswalk. Anything. Don't just sit there any more. Moving will make your body feel better. It also helps get the medications working through your body.

7.

Drink. Our body needs liquid to do its work. In a perfect world you would be drinking eight glasses of crystal clear, perfectly pure, spring water harvested on the first day of summer from a source in the high Himalayas. It would be individually bottled and blessed by Buddhist monks and served in a Waterford Crystal goblet. In real life, here is a tip I learned in the country. Water should not have a colour or a smell. Short of that, feel free to drink tap,

Starting Over...

bottled, filtered, with bubbles, what ever floats your boat. As a realist I know you may need to make it into juice. The focus for me is to flush my system, move the meds around, make them less toxic and get me more functional.

8.

Play. As a person living with this all too serious illness or as your garden variety adult, many of us have forgotten our need to play. Give in to your urges to dance when your favourite song comes on the radio. Indulge your inner child. Play hopscotch. Be silly. Act carefree.

9.

Be Around People. It is easy to isolate ourselves, stay home, and be a party of one. I believe it is very important to be around other carbon based units. You do not have to interact with them. If you are able to that is wonderful but we all need to be reminded that we are a part of the human race. Try this. You might like it.

On a wonderful spring day, about a week ago, I managed to take my own advice and follow all of the above suggestions. I fought the urge to pull the covers over my head and got up. I did step on the cat, but we are both used to that. I turned on my favourite play list and danced naked around the room. I opened the closet, picked a favourite pair of faded jeans, grabbed a beloved t-shirt from the dresser. I managed to find my wondrous pair of knee high logger boots and spent thirty minutes doing the laces. I grabbed my i-pod and on old jean jacket on the way outside. I

talked to the store with the volume turned up on Donna Summer. Wow, the sunlight felt wonderful on my body. I found myself continuing to move to the music. Not sure what the people around me thought but no one reported me. I went to the dollar store and bought the biggest bottle of bubbles I could find. Back on the street, I continued my one man parade over to the grocery store and stocked up on fresh fruit and veggies. I boogied all the way home, trailing bubbles as I went.

It was still sunny when I got home. Following the above advice I busted out the BBQ, roasted some great veggies, had fresh fruit for dessert, and sat back in amazement as to how wonderful I felt. After a very difficult time I think I have rediscovered some basics of life. I know that not every day will be like this. I don't manage to always follow my own advice. But, I amaze myself when I'm able to do even a few of these things and reap some wonderful rewards. ▼



STRESS IN HIV PROGRESSION

Thor Montgomery -
Massachusetts, USA

In today's ultra high stress world, it's often hard for the average person to stay afloat. Stress and lack of restful sleep are well known causes of everything from belly pain to muscle spasms. Those experiencing high stress levels can have poor job performance and/or decline in grade point averages for students. The single greatest reason for medical school residents to drop-out of their programs is the lack of sleep caused by terribly long sleepless and stressful periods on the job.

It is little wonder that for those with HIV/AIDS, stress is, quite literally, a stone-cold assassin. It poses the single greatest factor in disease progression. While particularly aggressive strains of HIV do play a part in the decline of the immune system, stress is the single largest cause of death as well as increasing viral replication in people with HIV & AIDS.

"Accumulating evidence suggests that stress may hasten HIV disease progression by increasing viral replication, suppressing immune response, and inducing deleterious health-related behaviours." 1 As this study indicates, stress literally does to the body's immune response what a blanket would do to a beneficial campfire. It opens the door to multitudinous infections; viral, bacterial, and fungal; which can cause a person with HIV to undergo a rapid transformation from health to severely compromised, almost overnight. Because of our human variations we can't say for certain how stress will affect a particular individual.

Another issue which I encountered while researching the scientific realm for answers was that some studies seem to contradict each other but one can see parallels when you look closely. "One recent study of AIDS and ARC patients showed that personal control and levels of anger-hostility correlated with increased survival after diagnosis. Some studies contradict each other, however, showing increased immune function with anger, but simultaneously, increased immune function with stress-relief techniques."² The definition of ARC is oft-disputed and simply means AIDS-Related Complex which is like saying symptomatic HIV. The thing which caught my attention about this study was that anger actually increased the body's ability to fight disease. In much the same way, when stress was relieved, the body also showed a stronger immune response. It seems to indicate that the release of anger can be a stress relief in and of itself. It's good to know, that with in the bounds of medical treatment, a bit of feistiness could help SAVE your life.

There have been many studies on the benefits of Mind-Based Stress Relief in those of us with HIV/AIDS. "These results provide tentative evidence that MBSR may assist in improving immunity in individuals infected with HIV"³ This type of conscious stress-relief, such as that experienced in meditation or during prayer can be healing and should certainly lead the way in our fight against HIV & AIDS progression.

"Sleep complaints are among the first symptoms of HIV infection and correlate with decreasing CD4+ lymphocyte counts in otherwise asymptomatic HIV sero-positive individuals. Fatigue symptoms

are associated with increased napping, diminished alertness, difficulty falling asleep, and frequent awakening during sleep. These impairments in sleep quality may diminish immunological and cognitive-motor function. Insomnia, independent of drug or alcohol use, appears to be a highly prevalent and under-diagnosed disorder in patients with HIV-infection. It is also a common side-effect of anti-retroviral therapies used in HIV treatment healing time, that in which we are or should be sleeping."⁴

Those of us with HIV & AIDS need to take heart in the knowledge that increasing our amount of deep sleep will help our immune systems and re-charge the batteries we call our brains. This will help us manage stress which will help us build our immune systems which will help us sleep...and the cycle goes on. Don't rush. Leave early for that doctor's appointment. Laugh. Remember eternal promises. While there are many verses in the Bible that touch the lives of stressed people I love the 23rd Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." ▼

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4. "INTER-RELATIONSHIPS OF SLEEP, FATIGUE, AND HIV/AIDS" RELEASE DATE: October 27, 2003 RFA Number: RFA-HL-04-010 Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)



Kinship News...

(continued from page 6)

both old friends and those we haven't met yet. See you there! For more information about IMRU?, please email us at IMRUGroup@gmail.com.

Kinship Germany

Over the weekend of April 7-9 eight of us met for our spring meeting in the Saxon city of Leipzig. After the welcome greetings we went to the city centre for a walk and dinner at one of the many great restaurants. It was good to chat about what happened in our lives since the last meeting. Sabbath morning we continued our tour of the city at the Völkerschlacht-Denkmal (a memorial for one of the many wars in Europe). While we had coffee we discussed the future HAD, how to attract more people and other future plans. Here in Germany it seems that people are accepting of themselves and not interested in the church. Meetings do not seem to be so necessary but there are people who contact us via our website and who need our help and support.

Sabbath afternoon we listened to music from Bach, Dupré and Schütz. in the famous Thomas Church, home of the Thomaner Choir. The pastor of the church gave a short talk and we closed with prayers and music. Our picture was just taken outside of the church in front of a statue J. S. Bach. We went for more walks and dinner. Sunday morning we went to the museum of educating arts to see paintings from famous and less known painters throughout the centuries. There was a special exhibition of the 3 Tischbein painters.

Kinship Philippines

We wanted to share this picture of some of our group.



Bookmaking Opportunity

Carrol Grady and Catherine Taylor are part of a committee that has been approached by Pacific Press Publishing Association to put together of book of stories about our experiences building our lives. We would love to have your stories be part of this adventure. You can write or we can interview you. If you are willing to participate in this feel free to write Carrol at carrolg@hotmail.com or Catherine at katgurian@aol.com



Naveen's Project

Naveen is working on his doctoral dissertation in Marriage and Family Therapy at Loma Linda University. We are including his information in case you would like to participate and share the richness of our experiences.

Contemporary Couples Study

We are making a collection of stories in order to study the experiences of contemporary couples. We know all couples face many challenges in our changing society, and want to include the accounts of same sex persons. We need : Same sex partners who are in a committed relationship (Cohabiting for at least 2 years) and who are willing to be interviewed with a partner about their relationship. The study includes, but is not limited to, couples with children. You will be asked to engage in a guided conversation about your relationship-what is important to you, how it works on a day-to-day basis, and how you deal with the issues that come up. To learn more about the study call Naveen at 909-648-6493.



Spectrum Offer

In the Church and Out of the Closet. The winter issue of Spectrum, the Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums, features a report and several presentations from the conference "Christianity and Homosexuality: SDA Perspectives," held in Ontario, California, in January. Aubyn Fulton, Leif Lind, Sherri Babcock, and Ben Kemena contributed articles. We invite you to sample this issue of Spectrum. To receive a free trial copy of this issue, visit the Spectrum Web site: www.spectrummagazine.org. On the right-hand side of the home page, click the button to "Request a complimentary issue of Spectrum Magazine." You may also call us at (916) 774-1080.



Board Meeting

Fred did a wonderful job putting together power point presentations of our demographics, regional news and ways we have grown in the last year. Ted has helped us reformat the information so we can share some of it with you in this issue. We finished the first stage of our strategic planning meeting and are now in work groups to look at finances, communication, attitudes and infrastructure. We discussed the next steps to be taken after the Workshop on Homosexuality and the Seventh Day Adventist Church in January. We also discussed the possibility and options for a narrative book that talks about our personal journeys as GLBTI Seventh Day Adventists. Marcos talked about the plans for this year's Kampmeeting. We would like to thank Taylor and Leif for their gracious hospitality!





NO ONE LIKE YOU - Celebrating Diversity

27th Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship Kampmeeting, Orlando 2006

Kampmeeting Speakers

Michelle O'Mara

Themes: Conscious Communication, Ending Relationships and Healthy Boundaries'



Michele is trained in relationship counseling and is proud of the success many same-sex couples have experienced with her gay relationship counseling and coaching. Member of the Harry Benjamin Association for gender issues, and Michele is also a Certified Imago Relationship Therapist. Michele was recognized in the December 2004 edition of the Indianapolis Monthly as the "Best of Indy" gay couple's therapist.

Peterson Toscano

Themes: 'Ex-Gay Workshop' and 'Doin' time in the Homo No Mo Halfway House'

Peterson Toscano studied Theater and English Literature at City College of New York after which he worked as a teacher and the director of education at CASES, a New York City alternative program for youth offenders. In 1995 he moved to England then Zambia to work in radio production for a Christian mission. Because of the conflict between his Christian faith and his homosexual desires, Peterson left the mission field and moved to the Love in Action ex-gay program in Memphis, TN. In 1999 Peterson founded p2son productions and began performing his one-man play, "Footprints, An Inspirational Comedy." His performance work often blends creative arts with biblical inspiration. This includes leading drama workshops and Bibliodramas as well as interactive educational theater pieces like "How the Indians Discovered Columbus" and "The Golden Apple and

Golden Urn--a Retelling of the Trojan War." He made his professional acting debut in the Peter Hanke play "Kaspar" at Cafe Bustello, NYC (1989). His film credits include "Star Queen--A Star is Bored" (2002) and "Eli Parker's Getting Married?" (2001). and "Fish Can't Fly" (2005). As a gay man, his journey out of the closet has been long and complicated. After years of submitting to reparative therapy through counseling, ex-gay support



groups, and even three exorcisms, Peterson enrolled in the ex-gay residential program, Love in Action. He graduated successfully from the program nearly two years later, but in January of 1999 he finally came OUT and fully accepted himself as a gay man. In 2000 he wrote

and directed a performance poem for Judy Sheppard during her historic visit to Memphis, TN. He has served on the board of True Colors which annually organizes the largest GLBT youth issues conference in the country. Peterson currently lives in Hartford, CT and worked as an infusion teacher at the Watkinson School (2001-2004). He is on an official leave of absence so he can perform and write. Peterson attends the Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) in West Hartford, CT.

Dr. Dave Baker-Hargrove, Ph.D.

Themes: Depression (how it develops / available treatments / relationship between depression and religious and cultural discrimination for members of the GLBT community)

Dr. Baker-Hargrove is a psychotherapist, speaker, grant writer, and organizational consultant. He works extensively with law enforcement personnel in Orange, Seminole, and Osceola Counties to promote diversion from jail for persons with serious and persistent mental illness. He has presented before the Florida State Legislature and the Orange County Board of Commissioners regarding the need for increased funding for jail diversion services. He serves as both a peer grant reviewer and review committee chair for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services and is a certified trainer for Eli Lilly's Neuro Treatment Team Partners Program. In November 2001, he provided mental health support to police, firemen, and construction workers at Ground Zero in New York City.

Linda Potkovic, MA, LMHC, NCC

Themes: HIV/AIDS

Linda Potkovic is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, and is a National Certified Counselor, is a Certified HIV Antibody Testing Counselor. She is a adjunct faculty at the University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL and an HIV Education Specialist. She has served as a Panelist Assisting with teaching HSC3593 (live and web) - HIV Disease :A Human Concern and HSA4201(live and web) - Community Health - averaging 250 students/semester. She serves as the Vice-President of the GLBCC in Orlando, FL.

Harry Knox

Themes: Religion and Faith in The Human Rights Campaign

Harry is Director of the HRC Religion and Faith Program. He joined the Human Rights Campaign in July 2005. His management and advocacy experience includes having held the positions of program director at Freedom to Marry; business manager for patient services and comprehensive school health programs for the American Cancer Society, Georgia



Division; director of development at Equality Florida; and executive director of Georgia Equality. He is also a former pastor of a United Methodist Church in Georgia. Under Knox's leadership, Georgia Equality was successful in passing the state's first lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender-inclusive legislation, the Georgia Anti-Domestic Terrorism Act, and in obtaining domestic partnership benefits for employees at Coca-Cola, BellSouth, Delta Airlines, Atlanta Gas Light and Cingular Wireless. He was the recipient of the 2000 Cordle Award for Promotion of God's Diversity and Lancaster Theological Seminary's 2005 Robert V. Moss Medal for Excellence in Ministry.

Mark Adams

Themes: Reaching GLBT students in religious institutions.



Mark is Heartstrong's Volunteer Executive Director/Founder. HeartStrong is a non sectarian organization established to provide outreach to gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and other persons adversely affected by the influence of all denominations

Kampmeeting...

of religious educational institutions. HeartStrong is also committed to educating the public about the persecution of GLBT's and others at religious educational institutions. Marc Adams is the author of seven books including his award-winning and Lambda Literary Finalist autobiography, "The Preacher's Son", and five collections of poetry. Reared in a cultish, fundamentalist Baptist Christian home, aware that he was gay at the age of seven, and weaving his way through religious schools and reparative therapy, Adams began his journey to self-acceptance at age twenty-three. Marc Adams' new book, (lost) "Found", is the beginning of that journey. It is the diary of one man's journey from fundamentalism to freedom; from self denial to self acceptance.

Linda Wright

Program for Kids of Kinship Kampmeeting.

Linda is developing a special program for Kampmeeting attendees' children. Parents would, could, should go to the Kampmeeting and take their children knowing that Kinship is providing care for the kids and opportunity for the parents to attend the Kampmeeting program. Linda Wright serves the San Francisco Central SDA Church in many capacities. She is the choir director and the organist. She has served as the leader for the children division for many years. She created, organized and directs the Vacation Bible School program for the church, and has created the music program at the San Francisco



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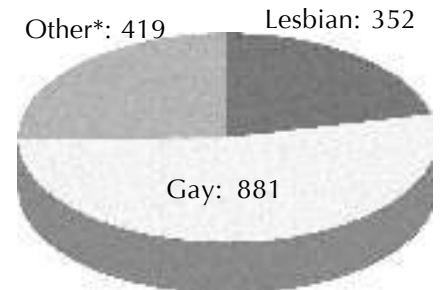
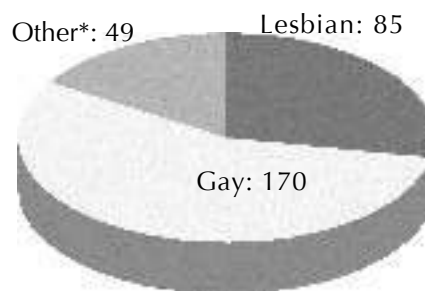


Kinship Grows

Data from Fred Casey's presentation at the April, 2006, Board meeting.

2001

2006



*Other
 Clergy 33
 Friend/Family 12
 Bisexual 2
 Transgender 1
 Intersexed 1
 Unsure/Questioning 0

*Other
 Clergy 49
 Friend/Family 31
 Bisexual 71
 Transgender 19
 Intersexed 5
 Unsure/Questioning 45
 Other 10
 Lost Contact (since 2001) 189



LGBTI Membership (2006)



Of Patterns and Beads

Kenneth James - Maryland, U.S.A.

I didn't know what to expect. Those who know both me and the nature of the weekend urged me to go. They recognized my need to be hugged, to hug; to be able to do so openly, freely, and often. It is the Kinship hug thing. For that experience alone, my participation in Mini Kampmeeting is sustenance.

Some time back, Ren told me about "patterns." She talked about how patterns change in our life. She talked about how a pattern was changing in my life. She told me to accept it; not to fight it. There are so many patterns at Rehoboth. As someone who is just now out of the closet, feeling isolated and alone, hearing and seeing the spectrum of patterns in the lives of others is a thrilling experience. Some of those patterns are complicated. Some are conflicted. Some have wear and tear. Some are a beautifully interwoven fabric of life. Each is unique.

The willingness of the people who live these patterns to share their stories . . . our stories . . . was comforting and reassuring. I needed to know that we are not alone; to know we face similar issues; to know that others have gone before. I needed to be able to cry. I needed to comfort another who cried. I needed to realize that many of you understand the warp and the weave of my pattern.

And the beads.

Stupid me.

Like some kid in a Vacation Bible School craft session I thought I was to make myself a bead necklace. What kind of hooky juvenile thing was that supposed to be?

And then I realized.

What a beautiful concept.

I made a necklace. But the individual beads I strung around my neck were made by individual people with whom I shared this weekend. The something tangible I took away was the art of each person there; a unique collection of beads from each someone . . . for each someone.

The weather was lousy. The atmosphere was heavenly.

Gay people are awesome.

