

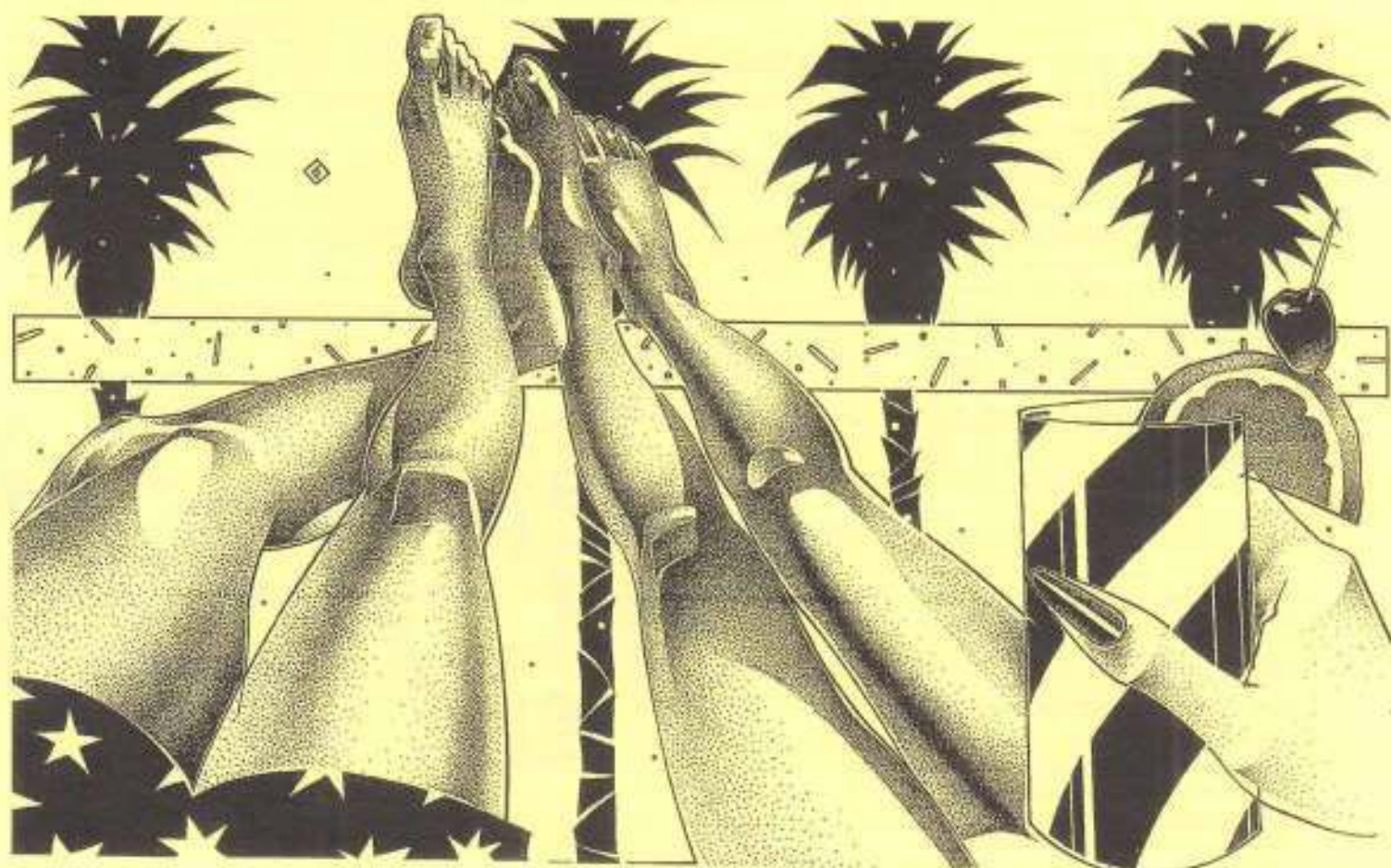
CONNECTION

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

Summer ...

Pride ...

Kampmeeting '99 ...



SDA KINSHIP INTERNATIONAL, INC.

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little parade sometime
in March 1999.

Who we are...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a support group which ministers to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well being of Seventh-day Adventist lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and their families and friends.

SDA Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of homosexual and bisexual Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation.

Founded in 1976, the nonprofit organization was incorporated in 1981 and has a board of 15 officers and 10 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes well over a thousand people in 16 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 gay or lesbian has its roots in a misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

Kinship operates solely on contributions from its members and friends.

SDA Kinship supports the advancement of human rights for all people.

Support Kinship

Kinship depends on you. Kinship is supported solely by contributions. Help us reach out to more gay 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.

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Heterosexual Questionnaire

BY MARTIN ROCHLIN, PH.D.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
 2. When and how did you first decide you were heterosexual?
 3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
 4. Is it possible your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
 5. Isn't it possible that all you really need is a good gay lover?
 6. Heterosexuals have histories of failures in gay relationships. Do you think you may have turned to heterosexuality out of fear of rejection?
 7. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how do you know you wouldn't prefer that?
 8. If heterosexuality is normal, why are a disproportionate number of mental patients heterosexual?
 9. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
 10. Your heterosexuality doesn't offend me as long as you don't try to force it on me. Why do you people feel compelled to seduce others into your sexual orientation?
 11. If you choose to nurture children, would you want them to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they would face?
 12. The great majority of child molesters are heterosexuals. Do you really consider it safe to expose your children to heterosexual teachers?
 13. Why do you insist on being so obvious, and making a public spectacle of your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
 14. How can you ever hope to become a whole person if you limit yourself to a compulsive, exclusive heterosexual object choice and remain unwilling to explore and develop your normal, natural, healthy, God-given homosexual potential?
 15. Heterosexuals are noted for assigning themselves and each other to narrowly restricted, stereotyped sex roles. Why do you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
 16. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
 17. With all the societal support marriage receives, the divorce rate is still spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
 18. How could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual, considering the menace of over-population?
 19. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed with which you might be able to change if you really want to. Have you considered aversion therapy?
 20. Do heterosexuals hate and/or distrust others of their own sex? Is that what makes them heterosexual?
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Our Bodies, Our Bibles, Our Adventism

BY JIM MILLER

Ronald Hendel wrote an interesting and far too short article titled, "Our Bodies, Our Bibles", in a recent *Bible Review* (Apr 1999, p 14). He contrasted Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. Judaism is very concerned with our physical selves: what we eat, drink, wear, how we wash, etc. Likewise Jewish tradition is closely involved with the body of the Scriptures, detailing how the writing materials should be prepared and how each letter should be shaped, numbered and placed in the text. When Jewish scholars interpret the text every letter and nuance is brought to bear on the understanding of Scripture. In contrast, until the Renaissance Christianity was characterized by Paul's dictum that the literal letter kills but the Spirit gives life. This Christianity thrived on ignoring and denigrating the body and the plain meaning of the text, preferring ascetic devotions and attention to the "true" spiritual meanings behind the text. During the Renaissance and Reformation Christianity regained an interest in the physical body. The artwork of the Renaissance is very physical and sensual, and new interest in the text led to an abundance of studies in textual criticism and the plain meaning of Scripture.

At the end of the article Hendel gives all of one paragraph to the new players in this drama, women's bodies — feminist readings of Scripture. But then, the whole article is but a few paragraphs on a single page.

But if the Reformation restored Scripture's text and the physical body in Christian thought, what of the Adventist Church which is even more "body oriented" than most forms of Protestantism? Like the Jews, Adventists have food laws. Adventists have also long been concerned with healthful living and bans the use of tobacco and alcohol. Adventist doctrine about the state of the dead affirms the integral part the body plays in our personhood. What's more, much of our body-centered thought is mediated through the writings of a woman, Ellen G. White.

The Bible, which is so central to Adventist thought, is acutely aware of our bodies. The food we eat, the blood in our veins, the breath in our nostrils, the corpses we may or may not touch and the emissions of semen or menses are all carefully considered. Our emotions are described in terms of our visceral "gut reactions." In Hebrew "compassion" comes from the word for "womb", and in Greek it comes from the word "intestines." In Hebrew, to feel compassion is to feel emotion in your womb, even if you have none, and in Greek it is to be moved in your bowels. Which makes one wonder: if we are created in God's image does God have a womb or intestines in which to feel compassion for us? Does God respond to us in a visceral way?

Anyone who has entered Adventism from another church background probably remembers how the Adventists kept bringing new and astounding things out of the Scriptures, leaving the novice with the ongoing shock of "What's next?" What will a careful and complete reading of Scripture reveal this time?

In almost every area of Christian lifestyle and thought the Adventist pioneers reworked everything down to its roots giving us a

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"The Bible ... is acutely aware of our bodies."
.....

radically different set of doctrines and practices from most other forms of Christianity. But in one particular area Adventist thought is merely cloned from Evangelicals and other Protestants. That area is sexuality. It is interesting to consider what Adventist practice might look like if we took the same approach to sexuality that we took on other issues.

Consider the Adventist position on polygamy, borrowed from other Evangelical

mission boards. When a polygamist (male by definition) converts and joins the Adventist church, we require that he divorce all but one of his wives — even though the New Testament never outlaws polygamy and the Old Testament certainly allows for it. In the New Testament the only restriction on the polygamist is that he cannot hold church office. Some point out that these texts on “polygamy” actually refer to those who have divorced and remarried, but it is treated as polygamy just the same. Apparently we find that polygamy is far worse than the sin of divorce. Tell that to the “extra” wives.

do not hold women unclean for one-quarter of each month or a man unclean for the day following an emission of semen. One wonders what the biblical motivation was behind such careful attention to these particular body fluids. Was this the first lesson on “safer sex”?

Adventists live longer than non-Adventists, something usually attributed to dietary guidelines. One wonders whether careful instruction in body fluids from a biblical standpoint might have led to a vast reduction in sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the Adventist community — and an

and made information on body fluids and sex widely known throughout the developing world. When the age of Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) came Adventists might have had a lower incidence of the disease worldwide and would have already pioneered teaching programs which could have halted or slowed the advance of AIDS throughout the developing world (and perhaps in the West as well).

Of course “conservative” instruction on body fluids would also need to teach about long-term relationships. The reasons for monogamy or safe sex are not simply because all STDs are dangerous (AIDS is not the only one to fear). But most Evangelicals can rattle off the basic ideas of how two people become one. Adventists could have been the ones to bring in the physical and make sure everyone understood how important body fluids can be before the world desperately needed this information.

Teaching about body fluids might also prompt Adventists to consider why the Old Testament never speaks directly against female homosexuality. After all, no

..... *“Adventists live longer than non-Adventists”*

Or, if we applied our present position on polygamy to divorce and remarriage we would require that the remarried put away their second/third spouse as a requirement for joining the church — or a requirement for remaining in the church. For if one divorces one is still married in the eyes of God. That means no second spouse, whatever secular law might say. Following this dictum further the Adventist church should have no problem requiring that a divorced heterosexual church member remain celibate for the rest of his/her life. Yet, it is doubtful that heterosexual Adventist church members will take their sexual relationships and responsibilities that seriously. But this discrepancy also gives us pause to consider: what are the Bible basics of sexual expression?

We might ponder two gender-specific body fluids — semen and menses — mentioned in Scripture. The only other body fluid controlled biblically is blood. Typically, the Adventist church does not follow biblical regulations on how ritual cleanness and uncleanness should be handled. Adventists

even longer life expectancy. Yet, it is not clear that Adventists suffer any more or less from STDs than their Christian or non-Christian counterparts.

It is interesting to consider that Adventists apparently concentrate more on the dietary prohibition of pork consumption than upon these body fluids. Yet, even

..... *“... the Old Testament never speaks directly against female homosexuality”*

the “pork issue” is not without debate. These days some Adventists will defend pork consumption on the grounds that pork consumption prior to refrigeration was unsafe and “unclean” — but okay now. What if certain “liberals” between 1950 and 1980 argued that antibiotics made all sexual activity “clean”? Those who stuck to teaching Biblical principles of body fluids and sexuality would have promoted a natural way to avoid STDs, antibiotics or not,

semen is involved and blood need not be involved, nor menses. It is too simplistic to state that the Torah does not speak on female homosexual relationships as a matter of patriarchal indifference to women. The Old Testament is very detailed in other aspects of the female body and its fluids. It took centuries for the rabbis to outlaw female homosexuality, and

See “Bodies” on page 11

GAY AND LESBIAN PRIDE MONTH, JUNE 1999

A PROCLAMATION

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Thirty years ago this month, at the Stonewall Inn in New York City, a courageous group of citizens resisted harassment and mistreatment, setting in motion a chain of events that would become known as the Stonewall Uprising and the birth of the modern gay and lesbian civil rights movement. Gays and lesbians, their families and friends, celebrate the anniversary of Stonewall every June in America as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month; and, earlier this month, the National Park Service added the Stonewall Inn, as well as the nearby park and neighborhood streets surrounding it, to the National Register of Historic Places.

I am proud of the measures my Administration has taken to end discrimination against gays and lesbians and ensure that they have the same rights guaranteed to their fellow Americans. Last year, I signed an Executive order that amends Federal equal employment opportunity policy to prohibit discrimination in the Federal civilian work force based on sexual orientation. We have also banned discrimination based on sexual orientation in the granting of security clearances. As a result of these and other policies, gay and lesbian Americans serve openly and proudly throughout the Federal Government. My Administration is also working with congressional leaders to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit most private employers from firing workers solely because of their sexual orientation.

America's diversity is our greatest strength. But, while we have come a long way on our journey toward tolerance, understanding, and mutual respect, we still have a long way to go in our efforts to end discrimination. During the past year, people across our country have been shaken by violent acts that struck at the heart of what it means to be an American and at the values that have always defined us as a Nation. In 1997, the most recent year for which we have statistics, there were more than 8,000 reported hate crimes in our country — almost one an hour. Now is the time for us to take strong and decisive action to end all hate crimes, and I reaffirm my pledge to work with the Congress to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

But we cannot achieve true tolerance merely through legislation; we must change hearts and minds as well. Our greatest hope for a just society is to teach our children to respect one another, to appreciate our differences, and to recognize the fundamental values that we hold in common. As part of our efforts to achieve this goal, earlier this spring, I announced that the Departments of Justice and Education will work in partnership with educational and other private sector organizations to reach out to students and teach them that our diversity is a gift. In addition, the Department of Education has issued landmark guidance that explains Federal standards against sexual harassment and prohibits sexual harassment of all students regardless of their sexual orientation; and I have ordered the Education Department's civil rights office to step up its enforcement of anti-discrimination and harassment rules. That effort has resulted in a groundbreaking guide that provides practical guidance to school administrators and teachers for developing a comprehensive approach to protecting all students, including gays and lesbians, from harassment and violence.

Since our earliest days as a Nation, Americans have strived to make real the ideals of equality and freedom so eloquently expressed in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. We now have a rare opportunity to enter a new century and a new millennium as one country, living those principles, recognizing our common values, and building on our shared strengths.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim June 1999 as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. I encourage all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that celebrate our diversity, and to remember throughout the year the gay and lesbian Americans whose many and varied contributions have enriched our national life.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Reflections on President Clinton's June 1999 Press Release

BY BEN KEMENA

It is difficult for me to express my feelings about this White House press release. It is very special to me — pardon me if I'm a bit incoherent as I ponder the Stonewall anniversaries in my own life. Sometimes, in the reverie of memory, it is difficult to be much more than *verklemt*...most of our journeys have been poignant odysseys.

In 1969, I did not know I was gay — as a fourth grader — but I surely knew that I was different. I was lovingly taught and nurtured by a wonderful teacher and Kinnet member — Vickie. I am surely graced by her love, acceptance, and vision. Who knew that my partner and I would be so blessed as to eventually live in the same city as Vickie and her wonderful partner, Myrna. It is a joy — and to my view there are no accidents...!

In 1979, I knew I was gay. I came out in San Francisco that June — I was attending summer school at UC Berkeley worried that Ronald Reagan would be elected and reinstitute draft registration. It was a fantastic time for me, as a teenager and before something known as HIV and AIDS, as I discovered a safe and accepting environment. The process of "coming out" scared and relieved me. I wandered back and forth between closets and honesty, but it was a very important step in "growing up" as a gay man.

In 1989, I was immersed in the simple acts of survival and human decency. My life was terribly disjointed — honest with most friends and closeted at work, home, and church. And in the midst of this balancing act, I was deeply in grief as so many I loved died of HIV. Depression, loneliness, loss, addiction, denial, and fear of discovery were my constant companions. I did not think I was ready to "grow up," but it was surely time to integrate my life (and face the consequences of my deceptions) and learn to love again.

In 1999, being gay is who I am — not simply what I do — and I have met the life partner of my dreams, Michael. I am more whole than I have ever been. Lies and deceptions about my identity are few and I have the energy to consider helping make this world a better place. The entry stub in my wallet from Matthew Shepherd's funeral reminds me of the work to be done. But what pride I feel to have had a US President mention gays at his inaugural — and to honor the 30th anniversary of Stonewall.

For some, the entire idea of "gay pride" might seem antithetical or inconsequential to our present reality. But as I think of those I have loved and lost, as I think of my own journey, and most importantly, as I ponder the sacrifices of so many that have brought gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered and questioning to this bright day — I am so proud (and yes, relieved) that love is never in

vain. And I'm to a point where I don't care how that love might appear to others — it is precious and valuable in its own right whether in drag, straight corporate uniform or something in-between.

I get tired and sometimes, I wonder if the struggle is worth it — but it surely is. If I have learned anything in twenty years of life as a gay man, it is remembering that all people are made in God's image with a spiritual birthright that challenges each one of us to live and love well. And that is the witness that changes hearts (if only our own). ▼

A Meditation

"So spend time every day listening to what your muse is trying to tell you." Bartholomew

We are all, each one of us, incredibly creative people. If we think we aren't, we have not been listening to our muse — that wonderful, playful, prayer-filled, inner voice.

After years of being tuned out, how do lesbians, bisexuals, transgendered and gays tune in? How do we become intimate with our Savior and our God-given muse?

First, we have to commit ourselves to listening. Then we need to ask ourselves some personal questions: What brings me serenity? What gives me delight? When do I feel deeply satisfied? When do I feel most in tune with myself? Where do I find a redemptive Savior? What am I afraid of? What are the standards that I want to live by? How do I submit?

For some, our very identity can be an excuse to isolate and feel sorry for ourselves. But eventually, we must arise. We must allow ourselves to awaken artistically and spiritually. What do we have to lose? In the face of our identity, we need not scold our efforts falling short of an impossible standard of perfection — we need only aspire to our dreams and spiritual visions. So listen carefully!

"God grant me the patience to listen to my muse and follow her suggestions.

Help me remember that I am, by nature, creative and artistic and spiritual."

by Ben Kemena, paraphrased from *The Color of Light* 1988

Gay Pride in 1999 -- What Does It Mean?

MUSINGS FROM KINNET

June 1999 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York City — a turning point in the gay rights struggle in the United States and arguably, the world. Given this anniversary, the question below was conceived and considered by a Kinnet member:

Gay pride means
different things to
different people.

"Another Gay Pride Week is approaching. Shall I get excited? I don't know. Every year when this time of a year comes I am left with strange and mixed feelings. What is really Gay Pride? What's its purpose? Is it to manifest our presence on this planet? To let everyone know that we exist and that we fight against the suppression that is being imposed on us from the outside (straight) community? Maybe.... I can see (that) even on Kinnet we are getting excited about "gay parades" that will take place in different regions at different times. What really happens during those parades? Personally I don't understand gay parade at all. Who are marching in it? Is this what (gay people) are all about? Sex and weird behavior? Is this what we are proud of? The whole "Pride" idea is rather strange to me. Do we have "Straight Pride Week" and the "straight parade"? No. Why do we have to expose our sexuality to this extent? But if we must to manifest our presence in society, shouldn't it be something more uplifting and useful? I am gay. I was born

.....
*"What is really Gay
Pride? What's its purpose?"*
.....

this way and I am glad that I was able to accept myself. But why be proud of it (in this manner)?" Alex

The responses to Alex on Kinnet were quite interesting and thoughtful. Here is a sampling of comments made to Alex by Kinnet members:

"Focusing on Gay Pride should really be a year-round daily activity. Personally I think I am usually more 'proud' to be gay when I'm at work being myself as a gay man than when I'm celebrating at Gay Pride. Celebrating Gay Pride in a parade once a year is an easy task, although very important to the gay community. We are truly in our element,

.....
*"Focusing on Gay Pride
should really be a year-
round daily activity."*
.....

surrounded by our peers with very little to fear. Dealing with the day to day 'pride' (among) the 'majority' is something to be truly 'proud' about." Derek

"This whole behavioral ball of wax is a difficult call for me. On one hand, I believe no more should be required of us than of anyone else in society. On the other hand, because behavior has its consequences, I believe we might do well to call ourselves to the most exemplary of standards in order to achieve the measures of respectability and acceptance we so much desire and deserve. I guess the bottom line for me is that it is good (for the gay community) to strive to conduct our lives with integrity wherein we ask of ourselves the kinds of things — fidelity and commitment in particular — which the straight community asks of itself with varying degrees of success. We should celebrate the many successes we have; we should pick one another up and go on whenever we fail to meet our goal." Vickie

"I would like our (gay and lesbian) lives to be seen as just another normal way of being who we are. As long as we project the image of being a bunch of weirdos without morals, then we will never gain acceptance in society as a whole. We'll continue to be seen as a group with an agenda of trying to devalue the family and American society, whereas many of us have family lives just like the rest of society—with the only difference being that both adults are the same gender. ...I tell my students when they ask why there is a Black History Month or a Women's History Month, but no White History Month or Men's History Month that EVERY month is White Men's History Month ... just browse through any history book and see who most of the stories in there are about!" Jan

"If society at large were tolerant of a couple of guys walking down the street holding hands, there wouldn't be this in-your-face radical sex stuff. The reason gay pride parades have the extremes is because society refuses to accept the common, every-day affection of so many glbt relationships. The media almost never shows the conservatively dressed political groups, the baseball teams and bowling leagues or the gay dads and lesbian moms, because they are so 'boring.' Long before I was out of the closet I was able to make these points to straights who commented on the extreme elements of gay pride parades—even at church." Jim

"Yes, gay pride is hedonism at its best. Because I grew up in a conservative Adventist home, these prides seem as foreign to me as an episode of the "Twilight Zone." While I feel uncomfortable, I understand that gay pride parades are social and political satire at its best. This type of

satire should make us feel uncomfortable. Gay Pride isn't about Gay Pride. It is about a repressed minority group, thumbing their noses at society. The message is "screw you!" As gays become more accepted and these events become popular entertainment for the masses, we need a new message." Jack

"Personally, I'd like to see all people, straight or gay, abiding by reasonable standards of public decency and decorum, always with some degree of latitude and tolerance for reasonable departure from it by a few who will always be on the cutting edge of social change. As for behaving so people will like us, I think that works to some extent but, like blacks and

..... *"Gay Pride isn't about Gay Pride. ."*

other minorities have discovered, it has limited effect in that those who don't like us won't no matter how behaved we are. Thus I'd put it this way: we should behave decently simply because it is the decent thing to do—especially for ourselves." Larry

"I have joined the dykes on bikes (with my clothes on) in the San Francisco parade in 1985 and marched with Kinship for the first March on Washington DC. I will never forget the feelings of affirmation that almost overwhelmed me on both occasions. However, all parades should be G or PG rated so that our children can participate or spectate. Unlike, television, radio, internet, etc, we are unable to 'change the channel' during a parade." Pam

"The media does not always focus on the extremes. Last Saturday was Tulsa's first Pride Parade. Since I work with and for

the media, I know that the bizarre was not the focus. At least that was the case here in middle America. Maybe we have different ideals than other parts of the country. Sure, there were half-naked men and drag queens but the main point of the news story was one focusing on ordinary, normal looking people who happened to love members of the same sex. The interviews, I might add, were rather sentimental. They expressed the same compassion for their partner as any heterosexual person would feel and show to theirs. Members of PFLAG were also highlighted, showing a great amount of respect for even the protesters. I recorded and saved all the clips from each of the major networks, and that was the general idea behind them all. Overall, I think the celebration brought a whole new awareness to this area - a rather positive one. The support of the viewers was better than expected." KK

"I agree that gay pride should be a year-round celebration. I agree with this statement is theory... but we have already seen that this is not and cannot be true. Why? Well, let's look at Black History Month for example. Should black history/black pride be celebrated all year long? Of course it should. But in February, the rest of the country get's to have it shoved under their noses. So it is with gay pride. Shouldn't (gays) be 'proud' all year? Of course we should, and we are (I hope).. but in June we take the opportunity to shove it under the noses of everyone who, the rest of the year, try to pretend that we don't exist. It's the 'normal reaction' from an oppressed minority group — a kind of 'we're NOT going to let you forget' thing. Personally, I don't agree with that line of thinking. I would much rather see Kinship floats, and PFLAG floats in regular parades (such as the Thanksgiving parades, 4th of July parades, and all

See "Pride" on page 10.

the rest) rather than trying to separate ourselves further. It's the classic: 'you have to accept me — I want you to accept me — I'm the same as you...but I'm going to hold my OWN festival and my OWN parade'...it's kind of hypocritical." Keaven

"Today was Los Angeles Gay Pride Celebration (1999). I have been reading the reactions to people in regards to what they feel is wrong with gay pride days. Coming from a very fundamentalist church, it is easy to revert back to things we perceive to be wrong in the community. Granted there are some things that as Christians we should not be participating in. HOWEVER, as Christians it is our duty NOT to pass judgement on others without knowing them or their heart and motives. The crowd along the way was very receptive to the float and the music (of the Christian gay church I marched with). It was especially interesting when we got to the point in the parade where Fred Phelps little group was picketing. The crowd went wild when we came by clapping, cheering and singing along. Phelps' crew was speechless. This made the entire parade worthwhile in my opinion. We were a witness to the Phelps' group, that yes, we can be Christian gay/lesbians. It was also a witness to the crowd that we will not be trampled under some extremist Christian thinking, and that we are there for them (our gay/lesbian brothers and sisters) to share God's Love and Word. There were also MCC church floats, Episcopal church floats and Dignity floats in the parade. All of them were cheered along the route. The gay community is turning in record numbers back to faith. It is something that really confuses the Evangelical Christian movement that has condemned us. I think we have all become numb to the impact we really do have on our community and to the impact we make on our fellow Christians. We are so tired of being condemned, that we have internalized that condemnation and we therefore feel we cannot truly love God, or that He truly loves us as His children. We need to stop pointing fingers at our own community, and instead, join hands together (regardless of our respective faiths) and be a light. God has an awesome work in store for us. We need to do our part in helping Him along!" Gary

"Like someone said — 'homophobic people will not accept or like us no matter what,' — so I say: 'let it all hang out!' Gay Pride is more about partying, feeling community, letting our hair down and just enjoying who we are in all the many differing ways we do that. If a guy wants to walk around half-

naked — hey that's not me — but I can fully enjoy and appreciate someone who isn't afraid to say to society's broom stick brigade: 'up yours!'" Will

"Sometimes, I think the gay community — a minority community — must reserve times whereby it is allowed to celebrate for its own sake. There is a time for outreach and education — but there are also times to simply be. I think there are times when our outreach must be sensitive to majority community that we are reaching out to. But there are times when simply 'being' is cause for celebration — if only for surviving! Remember — being gay is not about what I do — it is about who I am. So many anti-gay folk out there would reduce me to what I do — without any mention of context — as opposed to looking to the whole of me. Yes, I find it regrettable that the media would focus on gay pride celebrations searching for the extremes — but I still have to ask: who is this party for? For me, gay pride is for gay folk and those that can be gay-supportive. I realize that there are boundaries of taste and decency that should not be discounted....but I also think it's in the eye of the beholder." Ben

Editor's note: Kinnet membership can be obtained by contacting Floyd Poenitz at email address: floyd@flash.net

is there one thing you did
first with me

is there one thing i can remember
and know you share that same memory
with me alone

tell me what it is
and let me frame it

or let me put it like a poison
or mildly like an irritant
on the tips of darts and arrows
which i have ordered
never to stop reminding you

by Larry Hallock

Baltimore Background

Kinship Kampmeeting will be held on the Homewood Campus of Johns Hopkins University in July 1999. With that in mind, some may be interested in a little background about the area and city.

Maryland was the seventh state to ratify the United States Constitution in 1788. Founded in 1634 on the banks of Saint Mary's River, the original European settlers to Maryland intended to establish a safe haven for Catholics — who were facing increasing religious persecution in England.

In 1729, Baltimore was established by an act of the Provincial Assembly. In 1797, the city was incorporated with a population of 20,000 residents. During the war of 1812, the British unsuccessfully attacked Baltimore. Francis Scott Key wrote "The Star Spangled Banner" while watching the bombardment from a warship anchored in Baltimore harbor.

While sometimes overshadowed by Washington DC — 39 miles southwest — Baltimore thrives as a city of 703,000. It is home to the nation's oldest Catholic cathedral. It also hosts Johns Hopkins University — location of Kinship Kampmeeting — along with the Peabody Conservatory of Music and the Maryland Institute College of Art. Baltimore's Inner Harbor is a source of city pride and location of the National Aquarium and "Old Ironsides" — the USS Constitution.

The average high temperature in July is 87 F — and the average low is 66 F. Kampmeeting facilities are air-conditioned — but expect humid summer weather on the shores of Chesapeake Bay.

The officers and board members of Kinship issue a warm welcome to all and hope to meet many of you in Baltimore. It should be an uplifting week of fellowship, contemplation, relaxation, and fun. Travel safely. ▼

"Bodies" from page 5

then they had to rely on a legal "catch-all" device. Lev 18:24-28 mentions "all of those abominations" practiced by the Canaanites, and when the rabbis wanted to outlaw a sexual practice without any other legal basis they would fall back on this text to justify their laws.

Of course, such devices reveal the crux of the matter for homosexual Christians. The so-called "gay clobber texts" unravel on review.

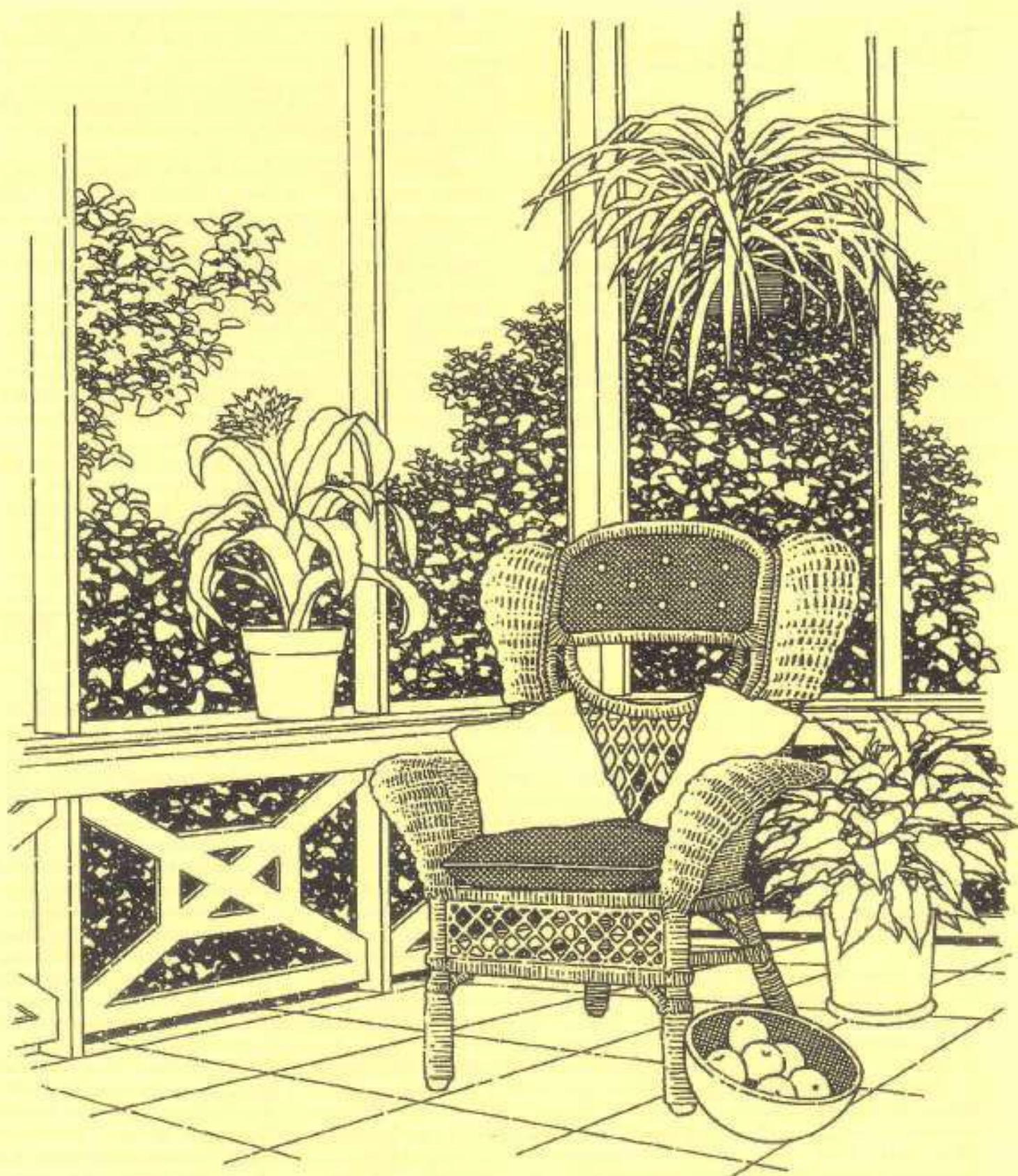
Jesus stated that the law of Moses was legislated for the hardness of our hearts (Matt 19:8; Mark 10:5). Should any of this pragmatism enter Adventist thought on sexuality as it has in so many other areas? How do we deal with Paul's pragmatic state-

ment on human sexuality (1 Cor 7:2-5) in which marriage is treated as a way to stop promiscuity? Paul suggests that Christian physicality and passion are better served by Christian relationship than promiscuity.

For gay Christians, Paul's advice would not work unless it also allowed for same-gender relationships. If only Adventism would pay attention to the likelihood that the vast majority of church members will not remain celibate for life. The Christian homosexual, like the divorced or widowed heterosexual, will always be part of the Christian experience, one way or another. Unfortunately, few heterosexual Christians linger over Paul's text to fully absorb its implications — if only because it is embarrassing. Paul's pragmatic statement on human sexuality implies that every mar-

riage is a public declaration of raging hormones which would be out of control if not contained within a marriage contract. Paul makes the physical body far more explicit in the church than many of us are comfortable with.

I have this strange and wonderful fantasy that the Adventist church would apply the same radical reading of the Scriptures to sexuality the way it has to other areas of belief and lifestyle. But the church is huge, multi-cultural, and has difficulty moving in any direction. I can see the fear written on those who realize what could happen if we really did open this Pandora's box. The Adventist church will probably never apply radical biblical study to the issues of sexuality the way they have with other issues, but what an intriguing idea. ▼



The chair is empty ... we miss those that are unable to join us this year for Kampmeeting.
Please join us next year in Hawaii.