

connection ▽

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. October 2004 Vol. 28 No. 8



Welcome to European Kinship Meeting 3!!!

We arrived from Paris, eastern Germany, Scotland, western Germany, eastern Texas, western New England, southern Norway, fiord islands, London, Sweden, very western California, and, of course, the Netherlands. We represented Australia, Spain, Brazil, Portugal, France, Britain, Germany...

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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 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).

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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.

...the United States, Norway, South Africa, Sweden, Finland, and, of course, the Netherlands. We used planes, cars, trains, trams, buses, feet and bicycles to get there. And then we were "home" to our Kinship weekend bungalows, hugging and bubbling over with excitement to see each other, in four or five languages. Some of us have been in Kinship for decades. One of us discovered our community two weeks before he hopped the plane to Amsterdam. Ruud spent an infinite amount of time making sure we had the right accommodations and meeting space, shopping for food, finding speakers, finding time, finding singers, finding patience and maybe even finding some sleep during the last week. And thus, our long weekend in heavenly places began. In this issue we're going to show you pictures of our meetings, our cooking, our

eatings, our walks by the waves, our laughter and our tour of Amsterdam. We want to thank Joachim and Ivan for being guest photographers. Ivan bicycled to the train station to make sure we all had CD's of his shots. Joachim crossed cyberspace and language barriers to get his work to us. We're saving Mike's wonderful communion gift for next month's issue. We'll share with you excerpts from our Friday evening vespers, Sabbath morning devotional on the sand by the sea, and Sabbath "sermon" where Terje shared his talk on homosexuality given at the Oslo, Norway church. We will include our usual "interviews" so we all have a chance to get to know another part of our family. Before we get started on our weekend tales, we want to give Ruud a chance to fill us in on the story of Kinship Europe.

Through Ruud's Eyes...

Kinship Europe: A Small History and a Quick Tour

I think there have been Kinship members in Europe since the time our community was founded. I tried to find when the first European became a member but all I could definitely track down was that the first person to withdraw from membership did so in 1984. Over the years we have had 52 people apply for membership. At the moment we have forty-four members from or living in Europe including:

England, Germany, Scandinavia, The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Portugal, Italy and Croatia. I know there are many people I haven't met yet that consider themselves part of Kinship. One of the first members I got to know was Reino Korhonen Kullervo from Sweden. He wanted to meet other European members and suggested we have a meeting in Sweden. He and



his partner Ingemar Fagerlind offered their home and I began to find out what it meant to organize an international gathering. I missed some of my beauty sleep; but not too much. Our first meeting was in July 2002. Bob Bouchard was kind enough to come over, encourage us, and give us some good advice about how to get Kinship going in Europe.

In Germany there is a large group of GLBTI SDA's who are members of our sister

organization HAD. In November they are planning to have a meeting in Darmstadt where they hope to meet with church members and officials when they visit a gay friendly church during Sabbath Services. The church in Scandinavia is very conservative. Some time ago, the son of the President of the church there came out. We're hoping this may change the attitude of this

leader and the union board. Within the last couple of years there was a lecture on homosexuality in a Seventh Day Adventist Church in Oslo by a pastor and a psychiatrist. They startled the audience by stating that other orientations were only variations of the main stream and should not be considered either sickness or sin. This has stirred up quite a discussion in the Norwegian church magazine! Most European Kinship members live in Great Britain. Mike Lewis is working to find pastors who are gay friendly so that he can open up a discussion of the issue in the UK. He has offered to organize the forth European Kinship Meeting during 2005 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Jozef from Belgium introduced me to a pastor in that country who says he doesn't agree with the views of the church on homosexuality and is grief stricken over the way the church deals with its GLBTI members. He has welcomed Kinship and has offered his help as an outreach to GLBTI people in the church. I've already been able to put someone from Belgium in contact



with him. Recently this pastor was elected president of the Flemish Conference of the Belgian Seventh Day Adventist Church!!

The Netherlands is different from many European countries and from much of the United States. It is possible to come out to the churches here and keep your congregational positions, membership and friendships. Of course there are local churches throughout Europe where this is true. When an immigrant group to the Netherlands protested homosexuality at the Easter youth rally, the president of the Dutch Union Board would not let words like disease or disorder be used. At the end of the discussion, one of the young members of that group stood up and came out! In the near future there will be another meeting on this issue

organized by the youth department. I will be invited as a representative of Kinship. The Dutch church magazine, Advent, has published all but one of my articles. ▼

European Kinship Meeting #3

Friday Evening

I bring you all warmth and love from our church community. I want you to feel at home. I wish for you a very pleasant weekend with a lot of joy. There is always laughter when Ruud is around. And it is nice for you to be able to keep laughing. For a short while The Haag is capital of Europe. Since our prime minister is in the hospital it has been suggested that Ruud would take his place. Ruud declined because he has to lead out in these meetings.

–**Wim Altink:** Pastor of the Den Haag Church

Vesper's Devotional Wim Willems

Wim is a retired employee of the Dutch government and a member of Ruud's church.

God is calling us; offering a covenant, a covenant that comes by hearing. The covenant comes when we worship idols no more because God's deliverance sets us free from false pretensions and false imaginations. Shiver when you hear the voice of God's call. The song of it makes me a servant. God is calling us to answer. The Lord speaks to us and we answer "Here I

am." The Lord addresses humanity; "I am who I am. I show myself as you will see Me." God turns religion upside down because God offers, not dogma, but living experience. We must experience the one and only Hashem: "I will be the way I will be. I am made to do what I do." We must experience El Shaddai: the Almighty God Who is Lord of Hosts. We must experience Elohim: "when I show my grace." We must experience Adonai: Lord of Lords. God says to us, "My name has the sound of my peace. I am the name which calls the names. I am The Name that reveals

destinations."

Just like the Name of our Creator, the names of Biblical persons describe their life and character. Abraham was "father of many". Isaac brought "laughter". Jacob, "the heel keeper" or "deceiver" becomes Israel, one who "wrestles with God." Familiar names are confessing names; expressing our life and our destiny. Our names call us to a special vocation or task. Listen to your name. Do what it says. I am called William: the man with the spirit, the man who fights; the man who keeps strong. I try to live this calling. But when we find out that

our names are given us by God the meaning is even clearer. God says "I know your going in and your going out. I know the good of your life. I know your destiny."

In God, creation is never finished. Everything is still under construction. Everything is designed to be renewed from moment to moment. Each generation must learn this lesson. When we don't walk together with God; when we don't experience His name changing re-creation, the community suffers. Our ideals become faint. We begin to lose our understanding of God. We must come to live the love of a God that searched the universe for us. That is what leads us to a new life. Then we can experience

Shabbat. We stand up and live again. We experience a life of rest and a life of action. Justice is something you can't give, only something you can do. Jewish wisdom literature says "He who saves a life, saves the world. He who takes a life, destroys the world." This is the value God places on humanity.

God chose Israel, not because He loved them more, but because He had a task for them to do. God's name means, He is always here with us. God speaks most loudly when we act out His image by living the acts of love He describes. We do His name by becoming His word; by constantly being a part of creation and re-creation. When the heart grows

proud it loses its creativity. The word, in all languages, can only become active when it is given the way God meant it to be. The Bible has one word for saying and doing. What you say is what you do. One can not exist without the other.

In the midst of the community of God, He calls us to go to a land together; to be hopelessly devoted to one another. It is that life that proves God's love. God can make this true. He can place His Name in us. We can realize His qualities in our lives. I tell you that God is able to make this true. Blessed is His name. Blessed are you in His name. I wish you all a fruitful and happy inspired weekend. God bless you all. ▼

Sabbath Morning Beach Devotional: Day of the Covering

On September 25, 2004, the ram's horn "shofar" sounded across the ears and minds of observant Judaism, as it has for more than three millennia. This echo of sound and time and hope has been the beginning of Yom Kippur or "Day of the Covering" since the Israelites were wandering the desert on their way to becoming a nation. To understand this holiday we need to begin to understand the very word which names it. Seventh Day Adventists have called this 24 hour period The Day of Atonement and the room on which it focuses, The Most Holy Place. In Hebrew, the word Kippur means "to cover." The cover of the ark, "kipporet", showed in a concrete object lesson, that mercy was the covering of the law. The room was named for mercy and the day was named for mercy and the services and the yearly calendar centered on a covering, a room, and a day dedicated to the mercy of the character of God.

The origin of the holiday has dark roots. Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, priests of Yahweh, got

drunk, took human-made fire and went before the Holy Shekinah laughing at the self sacrificing Glory of God. In their selfishness they could not stand in the presence of Infinite Light and were destroyed by it. The Pillar of Fire



that designated the presence of God, moved from the tent in the center of the congregation and stood outside the encampment. The people were terrified. They

were learning the lesson of Eden that connection with God means life and separation from the Source of all life brings its cessation.

The Day of the Covering was given so that Israel would remember the way to and commemorate the journey back to a oneness of relationship with heaven. On the day of the covering there was a series of object lessons that ceremonially cleared the sanctuary of sin and placed it on the head of "the scapegoat" who represented the adversary. Those object lessons are important ones and if you want them described in more detail you could write us or talk to a person who can explain them. But, they are not the focus of this devotional. I want to focus on the role of the people who were the vitally concerned support group for the High Priest.

There were several components to the role of the children of Israel during Yom Kippur. First they had to understand the need for the service. Anyone who was not aware of the vital link between God's presence in their life and their very existence as an individual and a nation could not clearly see the need for the day of mercy and

would put the rest of the nation in jeopardy. The story of Aaron's sons was a clear reminder. Secondly they needed to prepare. Ten days before Yom Kippur the trumpet sounded the beginning of Rosh Hashanah. Trumpets were used both as a warning and a call to worship. During this time, the trumpet signified both. The people physically and relationally prepared to come under a canopy of mercy. In the sanctuary itself, the priests were cleaning off a year's worth of the results of sin; the blood and fat of offerings splattered across the golden walls of the Holy Place as part of the sacrificial services. The people were clearing their tents of anything that might represent sin and their relationships of anything that might separate them from each other. On Yom Kippur the people were to surround the sanctuary and, by faith and careful listening, follow the high priest as he performed the ceremony that cleansed the Sanctuary and brought in the safety of a new year. This is quite a feat if you consider that the congregation needed to remain about one third of a mile from the tent of meeting and approximately 1, 500,000 people were pressed together, listening so carefully that they could hear the golden bells on the bottom of the high priest's robe as he went about his duties. On this day, the people were told to wear simple clothing to indicate their understanding of the significance of these 24 hours. This particular edict was in direct contrast to the rituals of the pagan gods with which Israel had been surrounded for the previous few centuries. In a time of great need or importance, pagan peoples either attired themselves in sackcloth and ashes or in embroidered costumes for debauchery. The sackcloth was to appease an angry deity. The elaborate costumes were preparation to engage in the Canaanite fertility revels. Yahweh wanted to set His people apart from either camp. To stand in front of Him in simplicity was all God

asked. He didn't need groveling or finery. He needed the people to know that it was their heart in which heaven was interested. On this day alone, the people were also asked to put off their jewelry. Now this is an interesting notion. Jewelry had much the same function in ancient times as it does today. It denoted worth. People often wore their bank accounts on their bodies. Second, it was used to beautify. Third, ear rings were used to denote ownership. Today we have learned that survivors of assaults often use makeup and jewelry to cover themselves protectively so we cannot see their vulnerability. On that one day God particularly wanted the people to know they had enough worth and enough beauty to stand before heaven as they were. He wanted the people to know that on this day, no one was owned by anyone but God. And I imagine He wanted them to know that standing before the Holy One, they were safe to be vulnerable. Finally, the people were asked to fast from sundown to sundown. This short time was to give clarity of thought and focus as they immersed themselves in a day dedicated to the covering of the mercy seat.

Many Seventh Day Adventists believe that Yom Kippur represents the time of judgment and that we are living in the era that the Day of the Covering was designed to represent. If so, that would give meaning to both some classic Adventist beliefs and to parts of our journey as a community. If we were to be part of an historically parallel journey then we would first need to understand the need for cleansing in a church. As a group we have been particularly aware of the dark sides of an organization that marginalizes and often dismisses vulnerable members of its body. We see all the ways it acts towards its members that are not in following with the teachings of its proclaimed Leader. We also, I think, see our own vulnerabilities and frailties. The next step in this historical journey would be to put

away anything that separates our self from God and from others. If we were going to do that Biblically, we would be following the precepts of the law. Law, in Hebrew, Torah, means all the teachings; Exodus 20, Isaiah 58, Matthew 5-7, I Corinthians 13. Given how difficult it is for me to be loving toward people who treat us like pariahs, as well as with people who are just averagely annoying, I can see why it is said that in the last days, God's Spirit would need to be poured out in greater power than ever before. We would need to congregate together in ways we haven't even imagined. Think of the kind of unity, and good humor, it would take for 1, 500,000 people to stand for an hour or so to hear the sounds of a priest doing their work. That's the kind of togetherness it will take for all of us to follow the workings of heaven. It's interesting to me that the Yom Kippur message isn't about reading more or working harder. It's about being closer, to heaven and to each other. The ancient people were told to fast. And in Isaiah God says to Israel and to all of us "Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen; to loose the chains of injustice to set the oppressed free...to do away with the pointing finger and the malicious talk?" To me this sounds like the mandate of the Kinship community. Because of that, I think we are in a unique and perhaps unexpected position to teach the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and maybe some others, about the meaning of the mercy seat. Finally, it's a powerful principle that God wants us to know that we can stand before heaven safely; that we are worthwhile, valuable, beautiful, owned by no one but God, and invited to stand under that canopy of mercy. What an amazing gift the holidays of autumn bring to us. And what an opportunity we have to present to those around us the lessons of an ancient people in this modern day context. ▼

The Oslo Seventh Day Adventist Church Panel on Homosexuality

Terje Folbakken

I'm a clinical psychologist. I was part of a team that talked about the question of "Whether gay and lesbian people should have partners or live celibate lives" at a church hearing in Norway. (I'll share an outline of my speech, but first I need to put on my Harry Potter glasses so I can see.) The panel had four Seventh Day Adventist pastors. I think the experience was somewhat shocking for them. And, it was the first time this issue has been discussed in such a manner in Oslo.



"it is not good for man to live alone". Based on this belief found in Genesis, do you think it is good for homosexuals to live alone? How credible would it be for a pastor to tell a homosexual this

advice when they can rarely live without a mate for as much as a year?

- 7) Do homosexuals with partners live in sin? Should they have a church office?
- 8) Given that Ellen White says that self righteousness is a sin, do you believe that a self

righteous person is living in sin? Are self righteous people allowed to hold church office?

As we went through these questions, the pastors were not able to give clear reasons for the way the church has treated gay and lesbian people.

I don't think the pastors have had good information, either clinically or theologically about homosexuality. I tried to share with them some of what I know. I told them that nobody chooses to be gay. They can choose to accept themselves honestly, or not. No one can be seduced into being gay or lesbian. I talked about the texts in the Bible that are used against homosexuals. I explained to the group that when the Bible says a man should not sleep with a man as he does with a woman, the text is talking about men whose normal orientation would be heterosexual. Other texts were talking about idol worship. I also talked to them about the Christian belief that we are to follow God's plan for our lives. For many people, after much prayer asking to be made heterosexual, it is becoming clear that God is not going to change them. If being homosexual is God's plan for some people, how can we tell them to go against heaven's plan? I asked them how many of them chose their heterosexual orientation based on their theological views. I asked the pastors if they prayed,

I asked the panel several questions.

- 1) If a twenty three year old woman approaches you, as her pastor, and tells you she is a lesbian, what kind of counsel would you give her? How would you respond to her?
- 2) Would you include advice to stay celibate?
- 3) Do you believe that anyone can live celibate?
- 4) How would the belief that homosexual people can live a celibate life fit with Paul's New Testament teaching in I Corinthians 7: 8, 9 that if a person cannot exercise self control, it would be better for them to be married than to be inflamed with passion.

The Pastors seemed paralyzed at this point in the conversation. I went on to ask them.

- 5) If, based on this New Testament counsel, it is clear that not all heterosexuals should remain celibate, what would make it possible for all homosexuals to remain celibate? Do you think that homosexual people have more spiritual strength?
- 6) Seventh Day Adventists place a great importance on pastors having wives. When a Seventh Day Adventist pastor loses his wife, he is often remarried in a short period of time. We believe that

very sincerely, with fasting, how many of them thought they might be able to change their orientation and become gay. Seventh Day Adventists are known for believing there is healing in prayer. Don't they think God could change them? The pastors told me they had never thought about the issue from this perspective. I believe that this double standard about partnerships leads to a church pattern of living in facades. The pastors said it is not my business what they and their wives do in the privacy of their bedroom, yet they somehow think they have the right to investigate our homes. It's easy to tell someone to live by certain standards when you, yourself, are exempt. The church pastors had to admit they were telling people to live in a way, they, themselves do not want to live.

As a Christian psychologist, I advise people to enter into a conversation with God. I tell them to lay their life before Him. I tell them that it might be possible that the way God will lead my clients is different than the way the church might lead them. Everyone is unique. No one is created exactly the same. If we are to choose God

as our primary pastor, we have to take the risk that He will answer us specifically and individually. God often confronts our settled views and asks that we alter them according to His information and plan for us. Accepted truths are not always a meaningful contribution to our lives. We need to understand the morality behind the Biblical laws. For some, the best morality might be in being celibate. For some it might be in being monogamous.

I am concerned that young people working out ways to live with their orientation will be pitied and easily abused. At the present time I think pity is a big part of pastoral care for gay youth and no one wants to be pitied. Pitied people are victimized people. Pity lets us look down on others. Pity often leads to a sense of self righteousness. It can lead to a dehumanization of others. Rigid value systems have a lack of flexibility that leads to more suffering. Because of this I am completely convinced that religion leads to inhumane treatment. This is what I want to change ▼

Interviews:

We've been asking people who attend both European Kinship Meeting and Kinship meetings in the United States "What are the most important parts of your spiritual journey?" During EKM3, we also asked "What have you enjoyed most about being here this year?" Because we flowed over with many languages we are indebted to our translators and everyone's patience for these opinions and stories. Thank you to Stefan, Roy, Georges, and Floyd.

David W: The most important thing about my spiritual journey is my personal relationship with God and being



connected with people and with nature. Each day I want to see more of how I can be of better service to other people. This fits the focus of my work; helping people to live a both healthier life style and more joyful experiences in life. I need to give myself time to develop my own

passion; traveling and enjoying all the different spas in the world. Some of the gifts of being here include: meeting people of all different nationalities, old friends like Willy and learning more about each individual's life and experiences in other countries.

David D: My relationship to God is more important than my relationship to the church or to other people. If



I would join a Seventh Day Adventist congregation I don't know how they would react to me or to my orientation. That is why it's important to focus on God. My family is the next important part of my spiritual journey. They have

taught me about relationship. They have been the first contact I have with God and with spiritual life. Family is where we learn every thing about spiritual life. This year I enjoy knowing that I am not the only homosexual in Germany or anywhere else. It was important for me to find HAD (Kinship's sister group in Germany). I know I am not alone. Seventh Day Adventists are always home; all over the world. Now we have Kinship and now we have closer family all over the world. Since I have never been to the US, European Kinship is my contact. It's very exciting to see the American people coming here, even for such a short time. One day I think we should extend our meeting to the same length of time as the US Kinship Kampmeeting. I think we would have a bigger turnout. A week long Kampmeeting would be wonderful. European Kinship is not quite big as US Kinship and sometimes I wonder why it is not so big yet. We think there will be more in time.

Continued on page 10...

I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

—Helen Keller

Behind our Looking Glass:

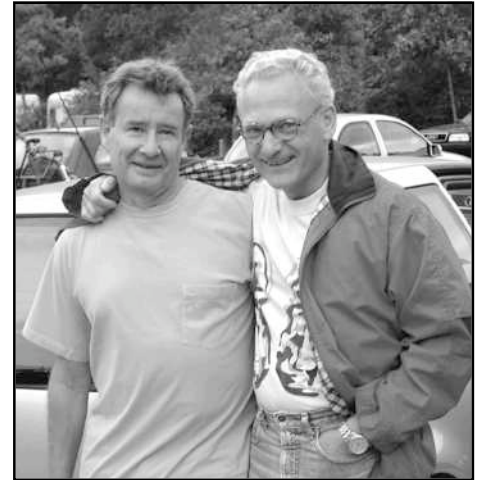
Organizing EKM3

It is not easy to organize a gathering like the European Kinship Meeting. My first experience of this kind was in 2002, when Reino and Ingemar from Sweden offered their home as our venue. 2003 was the first time I organized both the program and the housing. By this year, I felt like an old hand.

Last year I researched both youth hostels and conference centres. I finally decided that a bungalow park would best suit both our needs and my vision for our time together. The park is near the North Sea with comfortable houses that include a sauna! And - very important - it is situated only a few miles from my home. It's near proximity gave me the opportunity to look around the grounds and talk to the management face to face as I explained our meeting and the food arrangements (no pork please!). I could just jump on my bike and have easy access to people when we needed to sort things out.

I am never sure of the number of people who will attend the meeting. I make educated guesses when I hire the bungalow park. For the second meeting I hired two bungalows for 16 people. Then I had to hire an extra bungalow because there were more people registered than would fit into the two bungalows! This success gave us a chance to work with some growing pains. Because of the number of people attending we couldn't use the living room in our houses to gather and to worship. I negotiated a meeting room and a new price for Friday and Sabbath. To my relief, we were offered meeting rooms on either side of the restaurant in the middle of our holiday park. I chose the place with the most privacy, even though the chairs weren't as comfortable as those in the other rooms. The room was a good choice; the chairs weren't...

I chose for another meeting room this year. It was spacious with comfortable chairs and tables we could use. I thought the only disadvantage would be the large windows that would be less intimate than last year's space. It wasn't until Friday night, as our meeting began, that we realized the connecting restaurant was packed and playing loud music. On top of that, the kitchen doors were in the corner of our meeting room so staff had to wander through our sacred area. It was impossible to create the atmosphere we had planned for the opening of the meeting and the opening of Sabbath. When I explained this to the assistant manager, he was very understanding and offered us a third meeting room for the next day. The new room offered more possibilities because it had a microphone and a light system. The disadvantage was that we couldn't begin our evening meeting until an hour after



we had scheduled it and had to reorganize our original programme. There was a wonderful spirit during the meetings and no one complained about these inconveniences. Our group even appreciated the extra free time on Sabbath afternoon because it offered us more time to talk to each other.

Organizing takes lots of energy and time. For months I am busy with all kinds of details. Things change or turn out differently than expect. I'm not surprised that it was difficult to go to sleep on the first night of our weekend. Even so, everything was worthwhile. I enjoyed our meetings enormously. Both the cooperation by the management of the meeting place and the help and understanding of our wonderful participants enabled me to have the great time I had. The mental support of the church in Holland is a blessing. The help and support given by my local congregation also lightened my load. Some of my fellow members attended the weekend or participated in the programme. And these were straight people!

It gives me great satisfaction to see people enjoy what took so many months of preparation. Everything coalesces in the three or four days we spend together. I am grateful to everyone who took part in the programme and everyone who attended and enjoyed and didn't blame me for the things that weren't perfect. I am glad Mike is doing the organization for next year's meeting in Scotland. He has asked me to help with the programme. I am more than willing to do that. I am also enjoying the thought that the entire responsibility is not mine for next year. I can relax and enjoy myself even more than this year! Thank God for Mike!

I need to mention one more thing. I have a wonderful husband who inspires me with his love and affection. Even though he doesn't have much to do with organizing the meetings, he seems to give me support and suggestions at just the moments when I am beginning to feel overwhelmed. And, he is sooo good at shopping! He spent a lot of time buying the food we ate in our bungalows over the weekend. Kees, I love you so much! ▼

On The Issue of Marriage:

The Seventh Day Adventist magazine, Liberty, founded to protect the separation of church and state just published an issue on Gay Marriage. The on line URL for the magazine is www.libertymagazine.org if you would like to read what the editors and their writers said. We would like to encourage you to respond to this issue. The editor's e-mail address is steeli@nad.adventist.org.

On the other side of the coin, Naveen brings us news from the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists.

Hello Everyone,

I am a Marriage and Family Therapist Intern on my way to licensure. I attended AAMFT (American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists) National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. AAMFT is the governing body that creates and governs the laws, ethics and field of Marriage Family Therapy here in the United States. AAMFT is also looked to by the federal government when dealing with issues that involve marriage, family, children and relationships. For a long time the organization has been sought after by the government to take a stand on the position of homosexuality, same-sex relationships and same-sex marriages. However, the organization has chosen to remain silent about this matter.

During the convention, the board made an official announcement that they have come to a unanimous decision on this issue. AAMFT strongly is in favor of same-sex relationships and marriages and GLBT individuals. The organization first outlined its position that homosexuality was not a pathology or disease. Secondly it stated much research on the fact that same-sex couple relationships are healthy, do last and have permanency. Third, it supported the concept that same-sex marriages should be decided by each individual state. Fourth, it stated clearly that it will not take any position with the United States government on enforcing any kind of a ban or action against same-sex marriages. Fifth, the organization will set a press release to the public as well as the government on the actions taken by the board in Atlanta. Sixth, the organization will not tolerate any discrimination of heterosexism inflicted upon the GLBT community. Seventh, any therapist member who is known to discriminate a GLBT individual on any of this has the potential to lose their membership in the organization. The attendees, on the whole, gave the board a standing ovation. We know the battle is not over yet and the AAMFT board will hear a lot of dissent because of their position. I, As a member of the AAMFT GLBT MFT Caucus along with my other colleagues are asking as many individuals as possible to write to the board of members thanking them for their support of homosexual individuals, same-sex couples and their marriages. Listed below are the AAMFT's mailing address and email address.

American Association of Marriage Family Therapy
112 South Alfred Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 838-9808 - phone
(703) 838-9805 - fax
central@aamft.org - email

You do not have to be a member of AAMFT, an MFT or a mental health professional to write a letter of support. I strongly urge you to speak your voice of support for the board on taking a positive stand on this matter.

Thank you for your support,
Naveen Jonathan



Interviews (cont)...

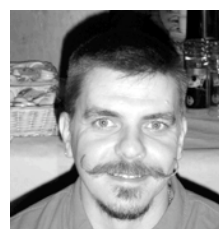
Joachim: Reading the Bible is very important to me. I want to take the



things I learn in the Bible and make them more real to myself and to the people around me. I want to show in my life, the love that

God shows. I Corinthians 13 is my personal focus. I am glad to have a church in Bremen where I am capable of sharing my Christian life. (This town is 65 miles south of Hamburg.) I am enjoying seeing that I am not alone with being both homosexual and Christian. I like the new ideas and new expressions I find in Kinship. This is a chance to revise my own thought and to get a wider horizon and to get exchanges and to talk. I am just glad to be here. I am enjoying the group and the time here.

Stefan: The focus of my spiritual life is to have a real deep



relationship with God. I want to talk with Him each minute of my life. I want to stay in contact with God, get new ideas and

get new batteries for my life. Without the Holy Spirit I could not express my thoughts to other people. It is vital for me to have this contact with God all the time. It is important to me that I have a Christian partner and share a Christian life. I like having a spiritual life together with someone. This was a huge dream for me that came true when I met Joachim five years ago. It is important to both of us that we are accepted as a gay couple, beloved by the sisters and brothers of our church. There are no borders between us and others in our church. I am glad that my family accepts my partner and me. They

are Seventh Day Adventist and it's wonderful to not have to be careful of how we talk or the words we use. We have a family at home and a family at church. We are welcomed everywhere. This is an amazing thing.

At Kinship Europe I like meeting different cultures and hearing different languages. I like experiencing the fact that everyone is friends. I like the real community. I enjoy the warmth of the meetings, good feelings, great inspiration, good talks. We can be open and talk about everything. We can help those who have threats in their lives, their churches, their work and their families.



Georges M. I want to be very close to God. I want to give humans value in everyday life. Essentially, to feel God with

me every day and to give love and peace and goodness to the people around me is my priority.

I have loved all parts of Kampmeeting. First, the speakers talked about the acceptance of homosexuality by God. I know how important it is to understand this truth. Our social education tells us that we are very far from God. I've never felt that. I've always felt this was a social image transmitted by humans. During Kampmeeting I've felt that God loves all people without distinguishing our orientation. He accepts all of us. I enjoy my relationship with the different participants. I have appreciated the relationship. They are very important to me. I have appreciated the sharing of thinking and feeling. Friendship is important to me.

Con tinued on page 12

Resources of the Month:

Heart Strong is an organization that works to support Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex students in religious schools and home schooling contexts. Their web site address is: www.heartstrong.org

Someone to Talk To is an outreach ministry to friends and families of GLBTI Seventh Day Adventists. Their web site address is: www.someone-to-talk-to.net

Arlene Taylor is one of our wonderful Kampmeeting speakers. She is a specialist on brain function and differences. Her website is www.arlenetaylor.org

Evangelicals Concerned, Inc supports GLBTI people from a variety of faiths. They can be reached at Evangelicals Concerned, Inc., 311 East 72nd Street, New York, New York, 10021 Transsexual, Transgender and Intersex History is a web site that shares the stories of some of the pioneers of this movement. www.transhistory.org ▼

US News:

Ren Reynolds has agreed to coordinate information and services for more chronologically mature members of our community.

Darin Olsen has agreed to coordinate information for Region 4.

SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA KINSHIP CHAPTER BEGINS

Please join us!

Please join your Kinship friends for a Southeastern California Kinship Chapter gathering. Any Kinship member is welcome, but this is meant to be geographically convenient for those in the Southeastern California area.

WHAT? Light supper provided, movie, table games, conversation.

WHERE? The home of Leif & Taylor Lind-Ruhl. 1000 Creekside Drive. Redlands, CA. Phone 909.792.3736.

WHEN? Saturday night, October 9, 6:30 pm.

RSVP? That would sure help! Call the above phone number or email taylorruhl@earthlink.net ▼

Report from Australia:

By Noel P. Thorpe, September 20, 2004

I would like to thank the people that made the effort to come to the meeting with Joy Butler in Sydney on Sunday. Joy is supportive of us and as a busy person who gave up her time to hear our story, I thank her. This was our first time effort at having a speaker from the SDA church in Australia. ▼

Report from the Philippines

By Jonathan Coe, September 26, 2004

I volunteered to be the contact person for Kinship Philippines/Asia after leaving the U.S. in 1999 and coming home to my native country in the year 2000 (after a 6-month musical experience in Bangkok, Thailand). My first contact with SDA Filipino Gays started when I visited MCC Manila (now MCC Philippines). After giving a testimony about my background as a pastor's kid and coming out to my parents, two SDA Gays approached me. One was a former member of Glendale City Church and the other was a missionary's son who happened to be a colleague of my father. They invited me to their weekly Bible study and there I met more SDA Gays or SDAs who are friends of Gays. They introduced me to the gay district of Manila in the "MALATE" area (Orosa and Nakpil Streets). We hang out there every Saturday

night. Every now and then, we would meet more FILIPINO SDA GAYS. The circle grew bigger. I even met schoolmates from elementary school who happened to be gay. Unfortunately, most of our members in the SDA KINSHIP PHILIPPINES REGION are in the closet because most of us are sons of pastors and missionaries. I am probably the only one who is not afraid of being "caught" because I do not directly work for an Adventist Institution. My position (on being out of the closet) might be different if I worked for an Adventist Institution. Rest assured, the "new members" who have contacted me have been open to me because everything is kept confidential and it takes a new member a long time to get to know the group because we want to make sure that we do not out anyone in the church. I am lucky that I have found an SDA Church that is not judgmental. I attend the Manila Adventist Medical Center Church and I am the pianist for the church choir. I don't flaunt my gayness neither do I announce that I am gay but my choir members know about it and they are very open minded.

The Philippines consist of 7,108 islands when low tide and 7,107 when high tide. Manila is in the biggest island (LUZON) located in northern Philippines. Other gay SDA Filipinos have contacted me from the other islands and some of them have visited us in Manila. SDA gays from other Asian countries used to contact me when my contact number was in the Kinship website but unfortunately, the website now says that there is no contact person in the Asian Region, and even if you click the Philippine Region, no contact info can be found. I hope this can be corrected because the internet is widely used here in the Philippines and Asia. I am glad that the Connection lists my contact info, however, this only goes to members of Kinship. Fred Casey has been very helpful in updating the membership record of Kinship Philippines. I hope that someday we could have our own Kampmeeting here (perhaps in Boracay Beach Island) or maybe we could someday join a Kampmeeting in Australia. As for now, we gay Filipino SDA's enjoy the up-coming gay happenings of the Philippines: Halloween party in Malate, Easter party in Puerto Galera Beach, and the annual Gay Pride Parade which now happens in December.

HOPE YOU ALL VISIT MANILA!

Editor's Note: We've asked our wondrous Webmasters to put Jonathan's contact information on Kinship's Website. By the time you receive this issue, you should also be able to find Jonathan online. ▼

Letters to the Editor:

September 14, 2004

I want to comment on the Connection article I got yesterday. It was wonderful and very interesting. I really love reading the interviews and getting to know the other's perspective of life. This is how I often time learn is by reading the other's thoughts. I am looking forward to more of that.

Denise

September 15, 2004

I just got my Connection, and as always, this one seems even better than the previous ones. The pictures are so colorful and clear, and I enjoyed immensely the article "A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH", especially the affirmation in it that each gate of the new city will be named for each of the 12 disciples, and that we with all our differences (as were the 12) will have a gate to go thru and into the city. Everyone's sharing words were also an inspiration. Thanks to you and Karen for such a good job!

Ed

Scott T: The most important thing for me is to know that I am



accepted, always accepted by God. I understand that God will be in charge of my future journey, whether or not

it's with the official church. At this point in my life I don't know where the official church fits in. As I'm living in London, I miss my Australian church where I really feel part of that family.

I have enjoyed meeting other GLBTI Adventists. This has been my favorite part of the weekend. It's been especially valuable to see the number of couples here. That's refreshing in a society of promiscuity and one night stands. This gives me hope that there is a viable path for me. Seeing the couples makes me feel like I could mix my gay life with church. Up until this weekend I didn't think monogamous partnerships were available. You all have affirmed my faith. I am realizing that it's okay to have my orientation and still be part of the greater church of God. I know that we are all loved by God and He wants the best for all of us. I've felt at home. I've laughed. I've felt included. This was my first Kinship anything. I've not really been in a place where I could connect with Kinship members. I've seen a variety of relationships.

Clinger: I know God by difficult ways. God is very important to me



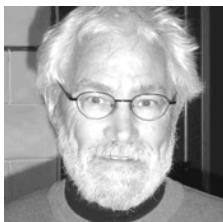
because He is the basis of my faith. I motivate my faith in order to be present in the church. My faith is most important

because without faith I have nothing and I am nothing.

I love all the things about Kampmeeting. I didn't go to Kampmeeting for four years and to be here is a dream. I don't want the

dream to end. The Kampmeeting is important because I could be gay here. I learn many things here and I'm trying to assimilate a lot of things despite the fact that English is spoken here. From the time here I am trying to get more friendships.

Terje: I am very happy to be invited here. It is only recently that I have



found the wholeness between being a good Christian and being a homosexual. Now I feel more whole. This was

very, very difficult earlier in my life. My growing understanding has been rewarding for me. For me, it is important that God is defined as a relationship. The Trinity is defined as three Persons. The love between the persons of God is very, very important. That is why relationship is so important. God is so close, as those Three Persons, that they are one.

Two things stand out for me about this weekend. The last supper was so beautiful. I love how it was conducted. Secondly, I am having very new feelings about being both Adventist and homosexual. I was not afraid to talk about myself. I was not on guard the whole time. I think my presentation in Oslo was strict and correct. Here I could be more private, I could joke more, and I could be freer to talk about sex.



Kampmeeting Corner...The Road to St. Louis

Isis, Kampmeeting Coordinator 2005

Hi everyone! By now, as we return to our daily routines, Kampmeeting Blues might be setting in. I have a remedy for you to fight them off...by planning to attend Kampmeeting 2005 in St. Louis! Kampmeeting 2004 in Menucha was beautiful and spiritually filling. Join me in thanking Fred for coordinating our Kampmeeting 2004 experience. You did a wonderful job!

As I promised at Menucha, and as we move forward with planning for 2005, a survey has been created to solicit your feedback. The survey will be posted on the Kinship web site for completion for those with e-mail access and a paper version has been included in this Connection for those without e-mail. For those with e-mail, you should have received the link by the time of this publication or soon thereafter. The deadline to complete and submit the survey is October 30th. I really need your input, so please participate! Your individual responses will remain confidential, although the aggregate results will be shared and utilized to plan for St. Louis.

As we journey to St. Louis, I'll be providing you monthly updates in the Connection, as well as St. Louis Trivia. Before I bid Adiós, please start looking for a baby picture of you! I'll provide more information in the future! Mark your calendars for July 10-17, 2005!

St. Louis Trivia: Did you know that Vincente Minelli directed the movie, Meet Me in St. Louis (1944)? He married Judy Garland in 1945 and they eventually had a daughter, Liza.

Plan on Meeting Me in St. Louis! ▼

Connection Corner:

This year our focus is on "Building Community". We would like to thank you for the variety and quality of articles many of you are beginning to send in. Right now we'd like to put out some specific requests. Our November issue will focus on "Sacred Rituals: Weddings, Baptisms, and Communion. If any of you have stories or thoughts about these issues, we would love to see you in print. Our copy deadline will be October 23rd. Our December issue will be on celebrating, and surviving, holidays. We would love to have your ideas, stories, recipes, and pictures. Our copy deadline for this issue is November 23rd. Our January issue will focus on GLBTI families. We want as many of you as possible to write to us about why you've chosen to raise children, the ways you have built your family, the gifts and challenges you've found in raising your family, pictures, etc. Our copy deadline for this issue is December 23rd. The focus for our February issue is on our Regional Gatherings. We would love to hear and see in pictures some of your activities and events. The copy deadline for this issue is January 23rd. You may be noticing a pattern in the copy deadlines. We also want to give you options about how you receive the Connection. Many people like paper to read in their hands. Some people like to just read the Connection online. If you would like have your name taken off the hard copy mailing list, please contact me at katgurian@aol.com. ▼

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.

—Sandra Day O'Connor

Health Notes:

Ren Reynolds

Macular Degeneration and cataracts are two of the age-related problems we sometimes face. If you can find books and articles as you go past the health food and vitamin counters you may find increasing numbers of hints about diet that can help you stave off Macular Degeneration, if it is primarily caused by aging. I've read and been told that eating broccoli and kale almost daily can help stave off this medical problem that causes blindness. I am coming to believe that diet may help. At the very least, do not turn your nose up at this suggestion. Kale is often used for mealtime at places like Weimar Institute, where health is a business. If you dropped by my house today, I could serve you either steamed broccoli or kale.

Cataracts can occur at any age, but ophthalmologists report that they are most often caught in your eye exams as you wander through your sixties. I've been told that certain amounts of sun exposure might account for when they occur and even how fast they grow. I have also heard that "ripening" of cataracts is a myth. Any of you folks with a medical background reading this are welcomed into discussion.

The best advice I can recommend is that you eat a balanced diet daily with at least five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables. A good juicer is helpful but cooked/steamed and raw foods are needed to keep you going—if you get the drift. For example raw carrots provide one set of nutrients while cooked carrots present you with another and both are necessary.

And as Julia always said bon appetite. ▼





Book of the Month

The Preacher's Son

By Marc Adams

Windows Books

Marc Adams was only six in 1974 when he became a born-again Christian under the --iron fist ways-- of his fundamentalist, Baptist preacher father. His father had put in Marc the fear of God during a Sunday night service in Pennsylvania. Marc struggled during his high school years with his homosexual feelings, then dominating all of his senses. Once joining Liberty University in Virginia, an escape to him from his father's rules, Marc was sure he would find there a way out of his gayness. Jerry Falwell would be his guide out of his troubles, so he thought.

"The Preacher's Son" takes one thru the journey of a Christian gay man with all the insecurities and experiences one lives through in trying to assert his sexual orientation, trying to find peace in one's soul in the process, most of the time against all odds. I'm sure many of you may be touched by Marc's life story as I was. I found in it a number of similar experiences I had to live through during my coming out years.

—Ed Vieira



Wish You Were Here



Meet us at
European Kinship Meeting 4
Dunblane, Scotland
23-26 September 2005