

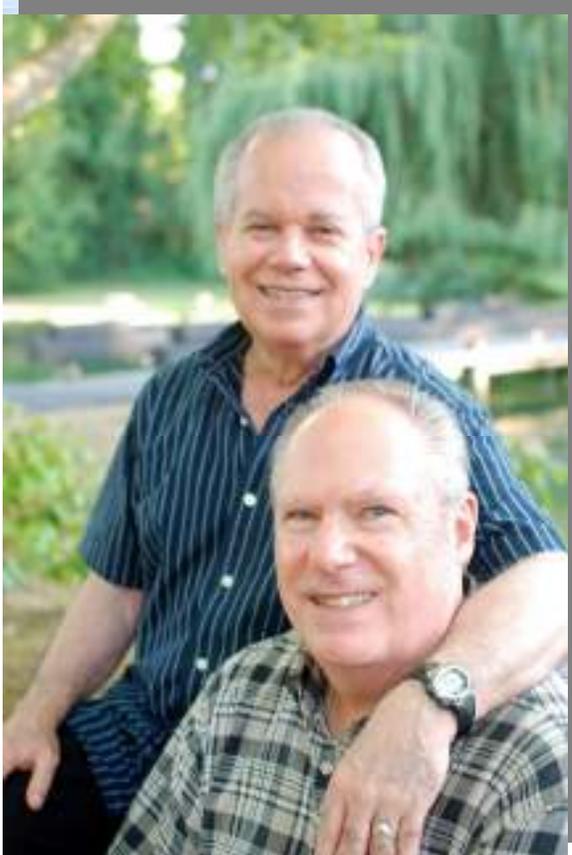
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The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 34 No. 5 – June 2010

Pilgrimage

to Santiago de Compostella

(pages 8.9)



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Elections**

**KINSHIP
OLDER
ADULTS** (page 14)



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WHO WE ARE...

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a non-profit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, 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) nonprofit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three 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 that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

SUPPORT KINSHIP

Kinship operates primarily on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBTI Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to SDA Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA

or visit SDA Kinship's
website at:
www.sdakinship.org.





From the Editor

When we were ten years old, Stuart Deikel changed my world forever. There were no major incidents. Nothing would have hit the news. I had arrived in Torrance, California, and the first public school with my mind full of Busy Bees and fifth grade Great Controversy stories describing persecution at the end of time. On the foursquare court, the baseball diamond, and the tether ball circle, Stuart nonchalantly introduced me to Yeshiva school, Passover tales, circumcision descriptions, and stories of his aunts and uncles and cousins who had not left Germany, and who had died in the decade before either of us was born. Conceptually, I might as well have fallen through the wardrobe into Narnia. Stuart changed my thinking, my interests, my sense of history, and my understanding of humanity and inhumanity, and gave me a treasure of the richness of Judaism that continues to accumulate as I grow chronologically gifted. He didn't try to convert me, religiously or politically. We didn't get married and live happily ever after—well, at least not to each other. He just told me his story. He thoughtfully and humorously lived his pre-adolescent and high school life with great flare. After graduation I never saw him again, yet he traveled with me. Through college history classes, as I got to know the families of my Jewish lovers, as I sat at Seders, as I studied the Old Testament, as I read about Eichmann, as I followed Israel, Stuart's ten-year-old self was the tour guide of my mind. I knew he had become a conservative rabbi in Los Angeles. I knew his congregation must adore him. And when, at a high school reunion six years ago, I found out that Stuart had died of ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis), I walked out into the marina parking lot and wept. As I write this now, the tears seep out of my eyes. Of course this intro is part eulogy. More than that, it is a description of the power of story and how a life can change the world of others. This is an encouragement to those of you who do not know how you affect the lives of those you meet and touch and talk to, just by being you. There is power in an open life, and you may never know its limits. Take good care of yourself, for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine



We Would Like to Introduce You to...



Algeria Meszaros was born in California and has lived in the San Fernando Valley (22 miles north of Los Angeles) her entire life. She is an alternative health consultant and the mother of one

daughter. She enjoys traveling, tennis, music, cooking, and decorating.

"My parents, a couple of years after they married, moved to the United States from Mexico. When I was a child, my father would gather leaves from a plant that grew wild in the fields and hills around his ranch in Jerez, Zacatecas. My grandmother would dry the leaves and give it as a tea to women who couldn't get pregnant. My father would put mud packs on the stomach to bring down a fever, and for colds he would make tea from the orange trees in our yard. Visits to the doctors were rare, and growing up this way is how my interest in alternative medicine began.

"I studied to become a master herbalist at Global College of Natural Medicine, and afterwards continued my studies in homeopathy. To treat illness and disease I use different alternative methods such as homeopathy, hydrotherapy, reflexology, and biomagnetism. A colleague in Mexico has successfully treated AIDS and HIV patients with alternative medicine, and I would like to do the same.

"Unexpectedly, I found SDA Kinship on the internet last year. I joined a couple of months ago and hope to make a difference and improve the quality of life for someone with my work." ▽

In New England they once thought blackbirds useless and mischievous to the corn. They made efforts to destroy them. The consequence was the blackbirds were diminished; but a kind of worm, which devoured their grass, and which the blackbirds used to feed on, increased prodigiously. Then, finding their loss in grass much greater than their saving in corn, they wished again for their blackbirds. (Sent to us by Ren Reynolds) ▽

“A Child of the King”

Steve Marlow

A familiar hymn tells us we are “A Child of the King.” Before Easter 2009, I was with my friend Al late one night at Waffle House. We were talking about his upcoming baptism. I told him baptism is like adoption papers. He would become a member of God's church, a part of God's family that encompasses the universe with God as the Father. I reminded him that once God signed his adoption papers they were recorded in heaven and would become irrevocable.

However, Hebrews 10:25 tells us we need spiritual fellowship with human believers. It is important to find a community of believers to fellowship with, and to share spiritual food with each other. And it is important to share periodically in “the meal of thanksgiving” (the Eucharist), the bread and wine, the body and blood of Jesus.

Part of the hymn says we may be exiled from home. There are some who have encountered loss, social exile, so to speak, perhaps from church, family, or friends. The hymn concludes that, even so, we can still sing (shout), “All glory to God, I'm a child of the King!”

No one can take away our adoption. We can still go on God's errands. No matter what community of believers we find fellowship with, we can share God's message to those around us.

In Micah 6:8 God says there are three things His children do: they do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him. The last part is the most difficult as we have to read His 66 letters to learn how to love Him and our fellow humans as He loves us.

When anyone tells me I am unworthy of God's love, I can say, “I've been adopted, my name's written down, an heir to a mansion, a robe, and a crown.” And I can shout, “All glory to God, I'm a child of the King!” Alleluia! Alleluia!

Kinship Elections!

The Kinship Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee are pleased to present the membership with a preliminary slate of candidates for the 2010 Board of Directors:



Secretary:
➤ Ruben Lopez

Treasurer:
➤ Brian Durham

Director of Communications:
➤ Jacquie Hegarty

Director of Youth Interests:
➤ Rey Rivera, Ronoldo Appleton

Director of Diversity:
➤ Angel Rivera

According to the Bylaws, the slate will not be finalized until July 7, 2010. Prior to that date, members who have a passion to serve or minister to others within Kinship may still come forward and present their qualifications to the Nominating Committee. Potential candidates must meet the Bylaws' criteria for the position as posted on the Members Only / Board Documents portion of the Kinship website. Expressions of interest should be submitted to the Nominating Committee Chairperson at nominations@sdakinship.org.

Please read about our candidates in this issue of the *Connection* and on the Kinship website. Also, keep an eye out for “meet-the-candidate” opportunities online during the next month. Since this year's election will be held electronically, we are looking forward to having *all* Kinship members participate in this important process!

All eligible members will receive voting instructions and will be able to complete their ballot online. Those who attend Kampmeeting will have an opportunity to complete either an electronic or paper ballot. Stay tuned for the details!

Secretary – Ruben López



I became involved with Kinship in 2007 when I became IMRU? Coordinator and was voted into the position by the members. Since then, I've been advocating for the younger Kinship members during board meetings, as well as making sure they have a safe and comfortable place in Kinship. Born and raised in southern California, I graduated with a BA in psychology. I've been involved with student government at the community college level, as well as serving on a committee dedicated to setting up learning communities and other services for the community college. I currently work at the Museum of Latin American Art in the Education Department.

Position Statement: Since being involved with Kinship for the past few years, I always wonder how I can do more to help my fellow members. I started working with our younger members because I was a younger member. As that is no longer the case, I feel that my talents could be put to use as secretary. I'm detail-oriented, organized, and tend to think one step ahead to make sure things are moving smoothly. I hope that these skills will help Kinship continue to grow.

Interests: Knitting, crocheting, textiles, reading, music, movies, collecting records, museums, and spending time with friends and family.

Treasurer – Brian Durham

I am a fourth-generation Adventist who attended Adventist schools all the way through college. I am currently working on a doctorate in Education. I am actively involved in Region 2 and have participated in several Kampmeetings and mini-Kampmeetings. Professionally, I have been working for George Washington University as an Accounting Analyst, managing 18 different multi-million dollar budgets. I am directly in charge of ensuring correct payroll processing, allocating and processing payments, approving requisitions and purchase orders, presenting updates on budgets, and reporting results to the deans. I evaluate each budget to ensure that they are operating in a viable manner. I also meet with each of the faculty to make new budgets for each year.

Position Statement: Kinship has always been a second family to me. It has given to me in so many ways over my 15 years as a member. I feel a call that it is time for me to give back to Kinship. I believe in the focus of Kinship and know that, as an organization, we are actively supporting our members. Kinship members are welcome to contact me directly with any questions at brian@durhammail.com.



Interests: Travel, sports, entertaining, friends, and family.

Director of Communications – Jacqueline Hegarty



I was raised in a Seventh-day Adventist home and attended Adventist schools from second grade through college, graduating from La Sierra with a B.A. degree in music and a minor in secretarial science. I have taught business on the secondary level and piano students of all ages in both private and group settings. I homeschooled my two children from preschool into high school, developing their own custom curriculum. I worked at Microsoft (Dallas) as a service engineer, providing telephone technical support for Microsoft Publisher in Windows 3.1 and Windows 95. I am currently an Executive Assistant, database administrator, and webmaster for a local public hospital foundation; and webmaster for Glendale City Church.

Position Statement: If re-elected to the position of Director of Communications, I will continue to work closely with the President, Kinship Board, and regional coordinators to improve all electronic and printed communications ➤

➤ **(Jacqueline Hegarty)**

between Kinship leadership and members on regional, national, and international levels. I will also seek to maintain and improve press and media outreach on behalf of Kinship.

Interests: Web design, curriculum development, creative writing, reading.

Director of Youth Interests - Rey Rivera



I'm a third-generation Seventh-day Adventist, born in Massachusetts and raised there until age 11. Then I moved to Jupiter, Florida, until February 2010, when I chose to move to Berrien Springs, Michigan (home of Andrews University). I've always been into church, even after two churches have already barred me from *any* form of participation in their congregations. But that doesn't stop me from being active in ministry, as I see it as working for the Lord. I'm studying elementary education and music, and may possibly add religion, just for kicks.

Position Statement: I'm here to offer support for other young Adventists who, like me, are going through or have gone through the process of coming to terms with oneself as both a member of the LGBTI community and as an Adventist. My gifts include the ability to connect with others, being able to see others' points of view, and communication and leadership skills.

Interests: I'm all over the place when it comes to interests! Among those the most important are: playing instruments (guitar, piano, cello, Puerto Rican cuatro, etc.), singing, composing music (mainly worship music), kayaking, arts and crafts, puppetry, and traveling.

Director of Youth Interests – Ronoldo Appleton

Recently graduated from The College of Wooster in Northeast Ohio and living in New York City, I am working on establishing myself as a classical singer. Jamaican, born in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I sang in church, preached on children's and youth days, attended Pathfinders, and eventually became deputy director. Then I went away to college, came out, and butchered all my parents' dreams. Now I welcome the opportunity to exercise my leadership skills and minister in a different way as the next SDA Kinship Director of Youth Interests.

Position Statement: Shortly before I became active with SDA Kinship, I remember seeing the Kinship entourage at the Capital Pride Parade and jubilantly shouting to my friend, "Those are my people!" That is my mission, because we are indeed each other's persons. In IMRU? we are additionally knitted together by our ages, which brings somewhat similar generational experiences, struggles, desires, aspirations, and frame of mind. As such, part of my aspiration is to foster the connections we already have with each other and encourage new ones through various regional and localized means, so that we all have someone or two to talk to and someone or two to listen to; and that we can be a fort to those who, in searching, come to us. I also hope to honestly, diligently, and dedicatedly represent the interests of our subgroup within the larger SDA Kinship family.

Interests: I am most interested in activities that involve *people!* I love a lot of things: movies, the beach, travelling, wining and dining, and other cultures; and these become more invaluable when they provide opportunities to share time and moments with other people.





Director of Diversity - Angel Rivera

I am a couture bridal gown designer in New York City. I have been part of Kinship for the past year and love every moment of it. I have a passion for bridal design and love making a person's dream come true for their special day. I am of a Hispanic background and understand cultural differences.

Position Statement: I want people to see that we may be different in some aspects but not in all of them. I would like to educate people on different cultural traditions, but also have people see that they are not alone. I come from a Puerto Rican family so I understand the different ways family and churches react to a person coming out to them. I understand how unaccepting people can be and the harsh things that are sometimes said in churches.

Interests: I love all things bridal and making a bridal gown. I love learning about different cultures and seeing new things. I love spending time at the beach with my partner and soaking in the beautiful creation God has made. I find family and friends very important and enjoy spending time with both. ▽

Book Review:

"As My Own Soul: The Blessing of Same-Gender Marriage"

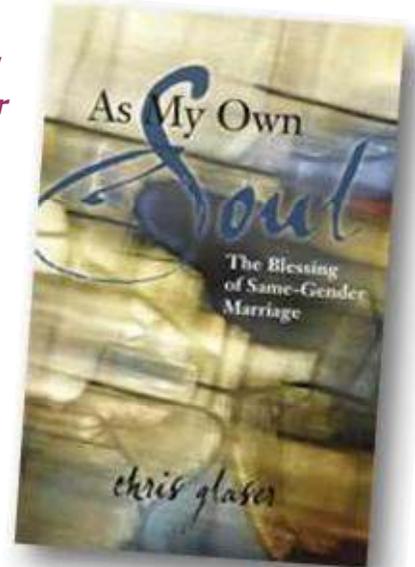
By Chris Glaser

Ever wonder why marriage for same-gender couples generates such passion? Why is it so important to gay people? And why is it felt as an attack on "traditional" marriage by others? Writing accessibly for the general reader, author Chris Glaser narrows it down—first to taboos around sexuality, then to taboos around the sacred.

Glaser presents the many contexts in which the conflict plays out, beginning with the present civil and religious contexts, and retrospectively in the biblical and historical forms and meanings of marriage. The reader comes away with a better grasp of the issues at stake, as well as the persons and the personal behind the "issue." Especially the chapter "Sex and the Body of Christ" prompts a reconsideration of Christian attitudes toward the body and sexuality.

Glaser contends that the public debate on same-gender marriage has proven a blessing for the institution of marriage itself. His own conclusion of what marriage is—regardless of the genders involved—may surprise you.

"What we want can be simply put: we want to belong. We want to belong to each other in marriage. We want to belong to our congregations in ministry. We want to belong to our vocations in service. And we want everyone to belong, even those whose privilege grants them immediate access to blessings we can only pray for, work for, struggle for, and sometimes die for."



CHRIS GLASER is the author of 11 books including *Coming Out to God* and *The Word Is Out*. He has served congregations in California, Connecticut, and Georgia, and worked with ecumenical campus ministries at Yale, Penn, and the University of Southern California. He is a respected theologian and popular retreat leader, and is pastor of Virginia Highland Church in Atlanta, a Baptist and United Church of Christ congregation. Read Glaser's full biography at <http://www.chrisglaser.com/info/biography.htm>.

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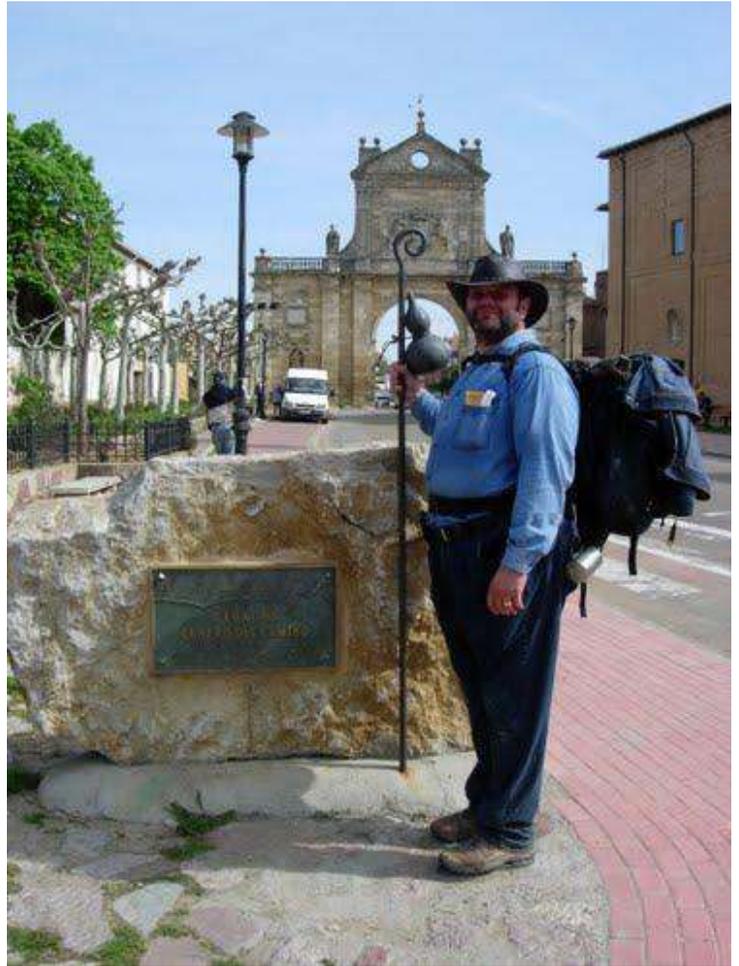


Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella

This spring Joachim has taken on a personal spiritual journey. We'll include some of his letters in the June and July Connections.

Joachim Duerling

Here is the donkey carrying his backpack to Santiago de Compostella. On April 5 I took the night train from Cologne to Paris. From there I made my way to St. Jean de Pied de Port. The pass was closed so I didn't arrive at Roncevalles until April 8. I slowly headed for Pamplona. I could see part of the old cathedral, but hardly any of the other beautiful buildings, because the city is renovating itself for the events of 2016. In Eunate I had a youth hostel all to myself. The atmosphere that evening was beautiful. The hostel mother spoiled me, and it was hard to leave the next morning! Physically I am doing fine and feel well. I have great companions, and each day I meet new people. So far I have traveled 120 kilometers.



April 14: I just arrived at Fromista. Tomorrow I will be halfway through my journey. A typical day for me begins like this: Yesterday, in Castrojeriz, I woke up at 7 AM to a friendly *Buenos Dias* from Restie. I packed my things, ate my breakfast (some very sweet cakes, lots of café con leche, and an apple), and left the rustic hotel. I left my raincoat here. It was very good at not letting precipitation in. However, it was also very good at not letting perspiration

out. I found myself drenched but not from the rain. I still had my Pellerine with me, but my backpack load was much less.

The morning mist lay heavily on the landscape. It felt like water from the Meseda —picturesque but so heavy I slowly became drenched. I hiked up hills for two kilometers. Those of you who know me are well aware that I am not a climber. I reached the top at last. The mist was even thicker. Fortunately, sign posts and yellow arrows showed me the way. Other than those, I could not see where I was going.

The mist began to clear. I could pick out the St. Nicholas church, ten kilometers behind me. Two kilometers ahead was the village of Itero de la Vega where the sun managed to make an appearance. The soil of the Meseda was so soft and sticky from the rain that I carried at least a pound of it on my shoes and pant legs. I refilled my water bottle at Itero. On this kind of trip it is very important to take in enough fluids.

I had another 14.5 kilometers to walk under the midday sun. It was time to hang my coat on my backpack. On the 8.6 kilometer trek to Boadilla del Camino there were few trees to shadow my path. It seemed like a very long walk. At 1:30, I reached the well at Boadilla. I turned the well wheel and got the



water to refill my container for the last 6.1 kilometers of the day's journey. Before leaving the town I got to visit the pillory mentioned in the guide book. It was beautiful! A local woman tried to explain something to me in Spanish. I could not understand her. She didn't understand that I could not understand her. I politely said farewell and continued on my way. I followed the bed of the Canal of Castilla while the sun smiled upon me. I did not find this to be a pleasant smile.

At last I reached *Fromista*. Old acquaintances from Austria and Sweden happily greeted me at the church square. I said hello and then found a hostel where I could wash both myself and my laundry (by hand). I wrote in my diary then headed for the shops and the old Roman church. That evening I had cozy conversations in many different languages, amazed that our traveling friendships have stayed intact.



April 20: Today I would like to write about an important thing: The *Albergs*. Without them, I would not be able to go on my journey; and every night

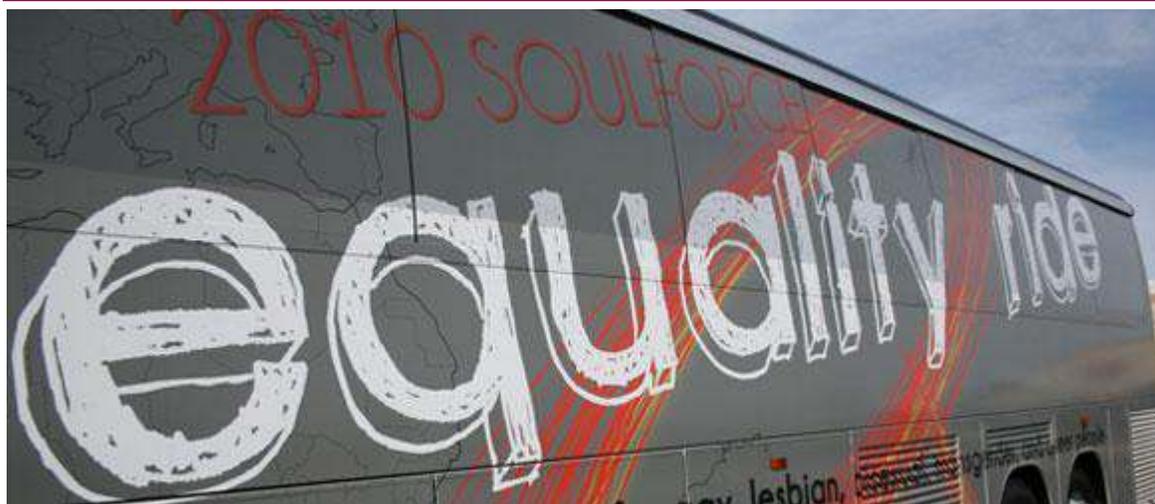
after my walks, I am happy to find a hot shower and warm bed. *Albergs* are hostels, and "hostel fathers" or "hostel mothers" are called *hospitaliero* or *hospitaliera*. The quality of the accommodations is excellent. I always have a fine bed with clean showers and bathrooms. I keep in mind that I am a pilgrim and a modest traveler. With that mindset, I rarely encounter problems. There are hostels with washing machines and dryers, like in Leon, the place I am staying today. There are hostels where you have to wash your laundry by hand. In some *Albergs* they cook for you or offer you a breakfast. In others you cook for yourself or go out for dinner. In many places they offer pilgrim menus for about € 8.00 to € 12.00. As a pilgrim, one is grateful to find so many people who voluntarily work in these hostels. Don't expect a five-star ambience for these prices. I do enjoy meeting fellow pilgrims in various hostels on the route.



Sometimes a day brings me little surprises. Yesterday a Swiss couple offered me a dinner. I enjoyed and appreciated it. On the menu was bacalau, a dried fish with garlic sauce. Adjacent to today's hostel is a school of music, and I enjoy live music. Some days ago people sat together in the *Alberg* in the evening and enjoyed the sunset in the *Maseda*, accompanied by a concert of frogs and storks flapping, and a flock of sheep with bells in the distance, like in a fairy tale.

I hope that my positive experiences with the *Albergs* will continue. I still have 18 stages ahead of me and am looking forward to what is to come. If you have loads of time and speak languages like English or Spanish, working in an *Alberg* will certainly be an unforgettable experience.

I'd better go to bed now. ▽



Soul Force in Nebraska

Dave Ferguson

On April 21, Soulforce visited my alma mater, Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Soulforce was founded by Dr. Mel White to help members of the LGBT community receive equality in their faith communities. It was established on the principles of non-violence characterized by Ghandi and Dr. Martin Luther King, who both were also seeking equality for groups of people. For the past five years, an annual part of Soulforce's mission has been to visit conservative Christian campuses where LGBT students were not fully accepted, and were often sent to reparative therapy or kicked out if their sexual orientation was discovered. Soulforce has been actively involved in every denomination that has moved forward in their acceptance of LGBT members.

When I arrived on the Union College campus, one of the first things I heard was a conversation that indicated the students had been actively exploring the Soulforce website to learn about the organization. That was a positive indication to me that something was happening on the campus. The Peace and Justice Club focused their annual week of events on diversity. There were presentations about sexual orientation to

the faculty and then to students. There was worship with local gay alumnus and Kinship member, Robb Crouch, and parent coordinator, Sharlett Reinke. The Religion Department had a panel discussion on homosexuality.

The day that I was on campus, I was invited to meet with the president of the college and the chairman of the board. I expected that to last for 10 or 15 minutes, just to show they were trying to be accommodating. Our visit lasted for over an hour, and both of the men were very cordial and asked good questions. I was told that one of the religion faculty members asked his/her class how many of them had a family member or significant person in their life who was gay. Two-thirds of the students said they did. This is an astounding number in the conservative Midwest. It is even higher than the last time the question was asked in a survey in the Pacific Union 15 years ago, when 48% answered yes.

I was also able to meet with a friend who is a member of the religion faculty and a representative of the alumni association. I asked about the possibility of establishing a gay alumni chapter and was encouraged to submit a proposal for review, since chapters are usually localized and this

would be world-wide. I was also able to meet with members of the College View Church to talk about ways to involve gay members and students in the life of the church. Stephen Eyer was in Lincoln with the hope of filming some of the day; but since he was not allowed on campus to film, he was only able to film at other events during the day. He did get some good interviews recorded.

Unfortunately, since there were concerns about disruptions to the meetings, only students and faculty were able to attend the meetings Soulforce had on campus. These meetings consisted of a worship and promotion of the college, lunch with campus hosts, a meeting with administration, and a time for discussion between students and the Equality Riders from Soulforce. Following this, Kinship hosted a pizza supper for the Equality Riders and local Kinship members and allies. At this point, everyone felt positive about the day. The students were happy for the 160 who turned out during a school day to talk about the issue of sexual orientation. Many students were prepared to support other students as allies and would like to be part of a gay-straight alliance on campus. A number of faculty members indicated an interest in becoming allies and

Local Wisdom - Relationships

By Maude and Mabel

Always remember to laugh, and never miss an opportunity every day to tell your partner how much they mean to you.

Soulforce

part of a Safe Space™ Program. They were prepared to push the administration for training on creating public safe places on campus.

The Equality Riders, while feeling positive about the day, were hoping for more commitments from the administration. The administration was concerned that they had already gone beyond what some of their constituency would tolerate, in moving this discussion forward. Faculty responses ranged from feeling that both sides just talked past each other to feeling that some positive steps had been taken. Certainly, the open letters that went from the president to all parents, students, and alumni, both before and after the visit, were the most open discussion of sexual orientation that I have seen from any Adventist campus. No one can say that this was done behind their back. This could provide a positive way to re-engage those on campus for the school year.

Only time will tell what backlash might occur or whether this will be a positive step forward that will result in more acceptance on the Union College campus. It was certainly the best example we have seen, to date, of a campus working to live by biblical principles. ▽

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Region 7 Blue Mountain Chapter

On April 17, the Washington Children's Home Society's LGBT advocate group, Triple Point, promoted a documentary filmed on the campus of Whitman College in Walla Walla. "Straightlaced: How Gender's Got Us All Tied Up" (2009) interviewed youth from all walks of life and shared the pressures society puts on straight and gay youth alike. The film was very well received and helped trigger some healthy conversations about gay issues.

To help promote this film among our Kinship circle, some of the younger Kinship attendees and I put on a simple hot dog supper meal at a picnic table at Pioneer Park. Eight people, including some from the Walla Walla University's GSA Facebook group, came out to attend. The fact that I was the only Adventist in the group didn't prevent everyone from having fun. For instance, while I provided real beef hot dogs to eat, everyone ventured to try out the vegetarian sausage links instead. This ironic choice also revealed to me how overly respectful these attendees were,



as they knew this was an SDA Kinship event.

Here in Walla Walla, I find it inspiring to see LGBT people of many faith traditions and backgrounds helping and supporting each other's efforts to bring awareness to the cause. I encourage those who have Kinship chapters, especially where numbers of LGBT people are few, to include others who are not Seventh-day Adventist. You'll be surprised to find how sensitive many are to provide that atmosphere that fosters faith and that embraces sexual identity in Kinship events. And try to get your Kinship group to support PFLAG and other gay rights causes, and you'll see the support reciprocate to things you want to see done through your own group. ▽

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

St. Teresa of Avila
—sent by Robb of Australia



World News

* We wanted to share the website of another group promoting equality in faith communities: <http://www.religiousinstitute.org/faithfulvoices>



Cape Town, May 18, 2010

—The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) and the Malawian organization, the Center for the Development of People (CEDEP), condemn today's conviction by a Magistrate Court in Blantyre, Malawi, of **Tiwonge ("Tionge") Chimalanga and Steven Monjeza** for "unnatural offences" and "indecent practices between males" under Sections 153 and 156 of the Malawi Penal Code. The Court is expected to sentence the two on May 20 and issue the full judgment within three weeks. Chimalanga and Monjeza face up to fourteen years in prison with the possibility of hard labour.

"By ignoring basic standards of evidence, this ruling undermines Malawi's commitment to the rule of law and jeopardizes the human rights of all Malawians," said Chivuli Ukwimi, Health and Human Rights Officer of IGLHRC. "In a context of escalating persecution of LGBT Malawians, this decision damages life-saving efforts to address HIV and AIDS."

Monjeza and Chimalanga have been held in Chichiri Prison in Blantyre since December 28, 2009, when they were arrested after a traditional engagement ceremony attended by family and friends. Following their arrest, Chimalanga was forced to

undergo an involuntary anal examination, and both were forced to undergo an involuntary psychiatric evaluation. The two were repeatedly denied bail—a decision severely criticized as unjust by the Malawi Law Society. There have been reports of the Court allowing the couple to be subjected to humiliating treatment during the trial, including being mocked for their relationship by trial attendees and being forced to clean up vomit after one of them became ill.

Today's ruling is part of a broader pattern of mounting pressure and persecution on LGBT people by authorities in Malawi. This persecution has come from the highest levels of government. On April 23, President Bingu wa Mutharika reportedly denounced homosexuality as "un-Malawian," "evil," and "disgusting" and linked it to corruption, violence, theft, and prostitution. Days later, on April 26 and again on the 27th, police appeared at a conference on the inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) populations in HIV/AIDS programming. Police demanded the names of conference organizers, seized copies of the conference program, and inquired about specific individuals believed to be in attendance. Police refused to present a warrant or

justification for the intimidation.

Speaking after today's decision, Dunker Kamba, Administrator of CEDEP, said, "This judgment is going to drive the gay community further into hiding. It is not only a ruling against Steven and Tionge but the whole LGBT community in Malawi and Africa."

These incidents violate the Constitution of Malawi and the human rights treaties to which Malawi is a party. The continued discrimination and persecution of people on the basis of their perceived sexual orientation or gender identity threatens to undermine the right to privacy, the right to non-discrimination and equality before the law, and freedoms of assembly, association, opinion, and expression that all Malawians are entitled to enjoy. ▽



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— *Letters to the Editor*

The Marriage, Homosexuality, and the Church report

Hi: I have been reading the online [Adventist] Review of April 15, the *Marriage, Homosexuality, and the Church* report. I recall a few notes made in *Connection* regarding the conference. I now appreciate the restraint and the non-inflammatory remarks that were made regarding it. I really do not see where this was what one would call a *conference* at Andrews [University] on October 15-17. It appears to me that it was mostly a reading of position papers, rather than a sitting down and beginning the discussion from scratch and hammering out the issues in a friendly study debate.

It is interesting to see the Kinship bashing that was done in the *Review* articles (plural). The one article accused Kinship of being "the pro-gay group, Adventist Kinship." Wayne's article accused Kinship of having "distorted theology, and a gay agenda to capture unsuspecting individuals with a lure (notice the term *lure*) of sympathy and pity (notice the words *sympathy, pity*)." And he said the Kinship agenda was "pressing for gay rights and justification rather than seeking a correct interpreta-

tion of God's Word."

From the reporting, the position papers appeared to be presented in a very controlled program agenda with little room for a broad spectrum of ideas and challenges for the audience to think about, consider, and hash out during breaks. In a controlled environment such as this, I wonder if the audience participants came away bewildered and confused. It would have been interesting to have been there myself to observe the dynamics of the program.

Although there was a call to be "accepting" of gay visitors to church, I don't see how the average member in the small churches (most Adventist churches have under 200 members) will see a call to be inclusive of gay visitors and embrace them unconditionally. This still leaves a lot of gay Adventists hesitant to attend church if they are known to be gay. Even in Adventist churches in this day and age there are a lot of members who are not biblically literate, including quite a few in my own church here in Macon. When I make a remark about

something that I consider general knowledge, I realize that it was the first time people in the group have ever heard of what I just said. So we have a lot of Adventists whose only knowledge on a lot of topics is what they hear from the pulpit; and they believe if the preacher says it, it must be true and only true as far as he reports on it.

As I see it, the *Review* articles only made Adventist churches less hospitable to anyone who would be tagged as gay prior to their attending. And if one stated they went to SDA Kinship fellowship weekends, they would be even less hospitable; or that person would be encouraged to cancel any further association with anyone connected with that organization because it was espousing false theology and misinterpreting God's Word.

It looks like Kinship has a lot of work ahead of it in helping Adventist gays to see that it is a safe and nurturing place to be.

Steve in Macon

KINSHIP OLDER ADULTS

Ren Reynolds

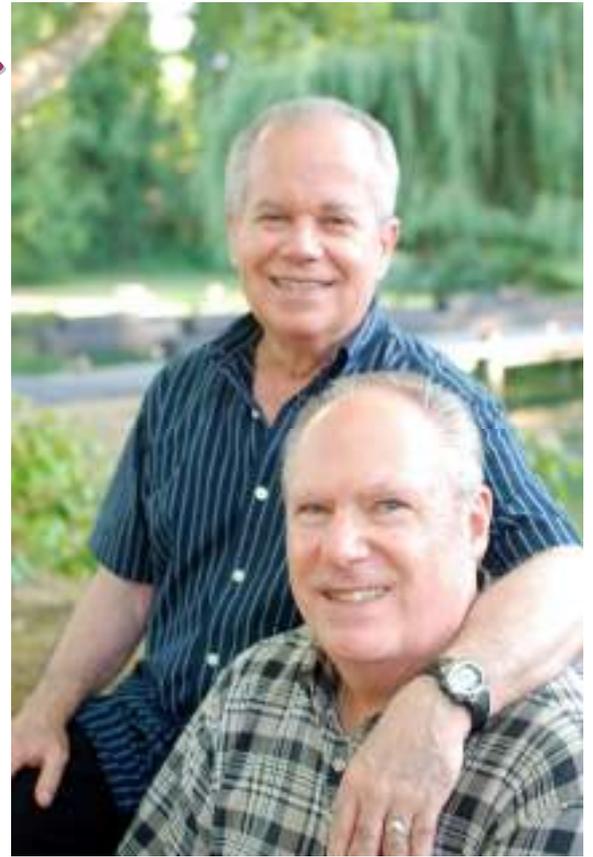
Seasoned researcher Laura Carstensen has long been identified with research on emotion and aging. In this review, she and her colleague Susanne Scheibe synthesize the research on emotional processing and regulation; that is, how people deal with experiences that have a high emotional significance. Stereotypically, older people are often thought to be sad, depressed, and lonely. However, this assumption is deeply flawed. Despite challenges from cognitive, physical, and social sources, most older people, for most of their remaining years, are well-adjusted and emotionally well-balanced. Older people tend to be happier and more emotionally stable than their younger counterparts.

Research suggests that, on average, older people tend to pay more attention to positive news and less to negative information. This finding has been found for attention, memory, and decision-making tasks. The exception to this positivity bias is when older people are exposed to an immediately threatening situation; then the bias is not found. In terms of emotional regulation, older people score higher than young adults on three of four aspects of the emotional intelligence test. These factors are facilitating, understanding, and managing emotions.

Much of the elder advantage lies in the manner in which they select their environments and prepare for emotionally intense experiences before they occur. Possibly this imaginative rehearsal is a reason why older people are less responsive to



many emotionally arousing events than younger people. (They are not less affected, for example, when confronted with the loss of a loved one. Here, older people express more sadness and are as physiologically aroused as younger people). Older people tend to prefer social situations with familiar others, and to spend less time with strangers, and to avoid confrontations and situations that are hostile; and they seem to take more complex views of troubling situations than younger people. This helps them to



reduce conflicting emotions. One might say they are more likely see the world through rose-colored glasses, which may impair their ability to detect deception and fraud.

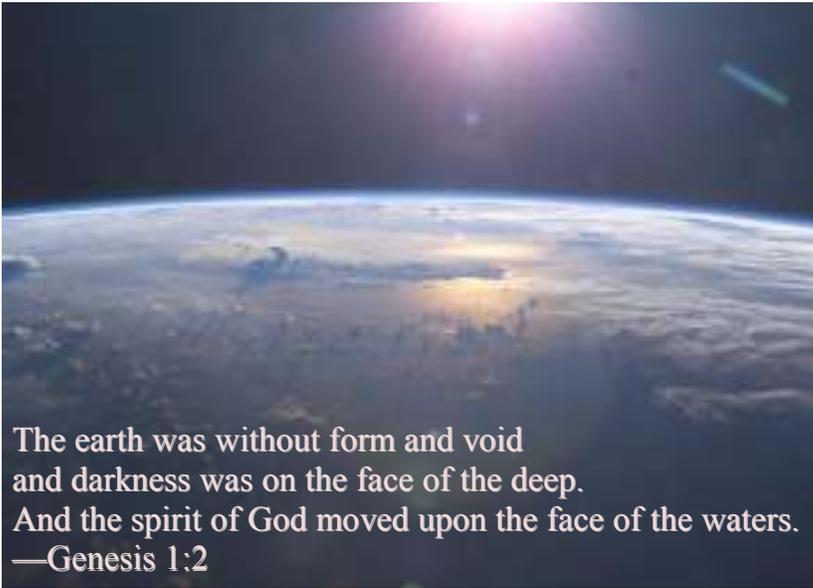
One possible explanation for this positivity is that, because of their long experience at emotional regulation, older people become increasingly skilled at dealing with intense situations. They may also become increasingly motivated to use these skills as they sense that "time is running out." Given that the future trajectory is shorter, it becomes more important to enjoy every day, and not suffer the day for some longer-term goal, as younger people often do when they are working toward some future reward, such as an advanced degree. Only when confronted with imminent death does this upbeat attitude tend to decline.

Overall, the emotional life of older people has much to recommend it; and it is something that younger people might envy and look forward to as they age. ▽

*From: "Emotional aging:
Recent findings and future trends"
by Susanne Scheibe and Laura L. Carstensen.
Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences,
2010, 65B, 135-144.*

Inspired Possibilities

Keisha McKenzie



The earth was without form and void
and darkness was on the face of the deep.
And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
—Genesis 1:2

I read the second verse of Genesis as a challenge to imagine “nothing.” There’s nothing to see here, and nothing to see by—no light or substance, nothing but water, Spirit, and movement. The water ripples gently while the Spirit hovers overhead, and all is silent. This is a planet-sized zero; and in the midst of this zero, God is. Before land, life, or any recognizable thing has emerged, the Spirit of God moves. Everything starts in this formless place; and because God is here, anything is possible.

The Hebrew word translated “spirit” in Genesis 1:2 is *ruach*, a word that can also mean “wind” or “breath.” When *ruach* appears in the Bible, it almost always signals God’s presence. God breathes, and divine breath brings life. In John 3, Jesus says, “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes.” We can see the products of wind and Spirit, but can’t trace the source or end of either. We don’t know what the blowing wind or moving Spirit might become, but we can recognize their presence with us now. That’s how it was in the beginning, when there was nothing but God and infinite possibility. Everything emerged out of the uncharted and unknown, everything including us.

“And so is everyone that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8). We are formed in God’s image and unfolded by Him. The Spirit that once moved over the waters now moves through us; and, like the once-formless earth, we are fluid in the hands of God. As the void held space for God’s designs, so we become what He imagines. As He moves on us, we’re inspired with new possibilities for ourselves and our world.

But possibility may come with uncertainty, just as the primeval void came with darkness. Formless spaces can be liberating and also uncomfortable. I’ve been caught in ➤

connection

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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.

nighttime power outages: there's a minute or two before candles are found and lit or I grow accustomed to the dark—and that minute or two is almost paralyzing. Shadows overtake everything and what was once familiar becomes strange. The trunk at the foot of the bed becomes an obstacle, roommates become intruders, and the coffee table becomes a death trap. Sudden movements are not recommended, and neither are stairs.

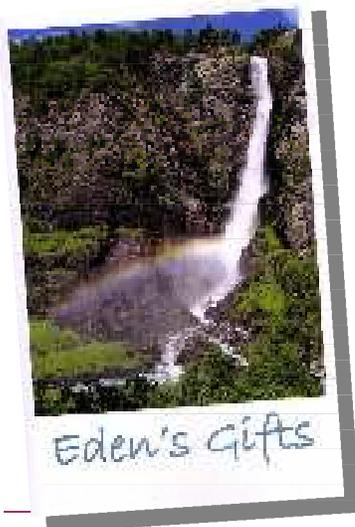
Yet that dark space is the perfect time to breathe deeply. The moving Spirit of Genesis is also the Breath of God that connects Adam to the Creator. According to Romans 8, this connection cannot be broken by life, death, or any made thing. We are entangled with God, with Earth, with all life, and with each other. At times we might feel outcast, but we are never isolated. Our breath connects us to one another because we share the same oxygen source, and the Spirit-Breath of God connects us at a deeper level to all creation and God Himself.

Earth supports our physical connections, and our social relationships highlight our other ties. We are citizens in society, residents in our neighborhoods, family members in our homes. In Kinship, we are connected not just by our humanity but also by our common experiences in Adventism. The Spirit moves, we breathe in and out, and we're reminded that we'll always be a part of something larger than ourselves.

A formless void once became a teeming planet because God inspired matter. Our uncertain spaces aren't too dark for Him today. We can breathe deeply now, trusting our connections, becoming inspired through the Spirit, and opening to the possible. ▽

"The only reason we don't open our hearts and minds to other people is that they trigger confusion in us that we don't feel brave enough or sane enough to deal with. To the degree that we look clearly and compassionately at ourselves, we feel confident and fearless about looking into someone else's eyes."

—Pema Chödrön



You can order this free leaflet from Katgurian@aol.com



Register now at sdakinship.org



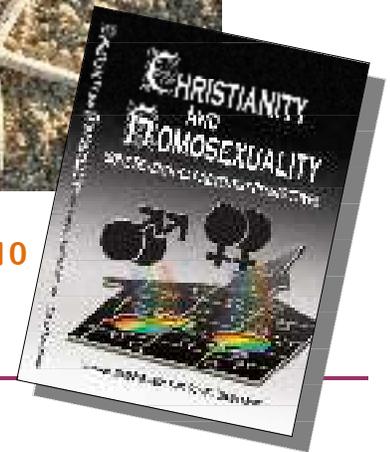
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