
connection

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



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The Family Business Issue



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Who we are...

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

Founded in 1976, the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the US. Kinship has a board of up to 15 officers and 13 regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes several thousand people in 20 countries.

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

Support Kinship

Kinship operates solely on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBT Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to SDA Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below (VISA and MasterCard also accepted).

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Speaking to the Church in Love

A devotional reflection by Fritz Guy at the Kinship Advisory, November 8, 2003

"As God has called you, live up to your calling. Always be humble and gentle, and patient too. In love put up with one another's failings. Spare no effort to maintain in the bond of peace the unity the Spirit gives. There is one body and one Spirit, just as there is one hope held out in God's call to you. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all people, who is over all and works through all and in all. . . .

"We are to speak the truth in love, so we will fully grow up into Christ. He is the head, and on him the whole body depends. Joined and held together by each constituent part, the whole thing grows through the proper functioning of each part, building itself up in love" (Eph. 4:1-6, 15-16, adapted from the Revised English Version).

The apostle was writing "to the people of God who live in Ephesus and are faithful followers of Christ Jesus" (1:1b). He was addressing them as a group of believers—not as an organization, much less an institution. It is good for our spirituality as well as our theology to remember that first of all the church is people; people who share an understanding of who God is, what God does, and what God wants. It is people who share a way of life, and who find in their worship and fellowship a spiritual home. It is people who can "live up to their calling," who can be "humble and gentle, and patient too," who can "speak the truth in love," who can "fully grow up into Christ."

Only secondarily is the church an institution (although some of its leadership and its bureaucracy are tempted to forget this). The institution serves the people, not the other way around. It is the



people, not the leadership or the bureaucracy, who actually are the church. To use the apostle's own metaphor, it is the people who are "the body of Christ."

Institutions are just not very good at humility, gentleness, and patience. In fact, many of the things that bother us about the church, most of its blunders, are the result of its being an organization. Any organization, any institution, wants to control, and tends to run over individual differences. This doesn't make organizations and institutions evil; it makes them dangerous. It is the price we pay for the benefits of organization.

Even if we think of the church as a family, which we should (Richard Rice's book *Believing, Behaving, Belonging* is well worth reading on this), we need to remember that all families are sometimes dysfunctional. We can think of a syllogism, with a major premise, a minor premise, and a logical conclusion:

All families are sometimes dysfunctional.

The church is a huge family.

Therefore the church is sometimes hugely dysfunctional.

The institutional prosperity of

the church is not the same as its spiritual prosperity. But, unfortunately, it is the institutional prosperity that gets most of the attention. One reason is that it is so much easier to quantify. In spite of the difference between the church as a fellowship of believers and the church as an institution, the apostle's inspired advice seems relevant also—perhaps rather surprisingly—to the organized, institutional life of church. For the church is not just one big organization with some 13 million members, relating to the world. The church is also a whole family of organizations that relate to each other. One of these organizations is Kinship, a kind of church within a church. So let's see whether we can hear in the apostle's advice for the Ephesus Christians some advice not only for Kinship members individually but also for their role in the larger Adventist family.

I believe that one of the things that Kinship does for the larger Adventist community is to "speak the truth in love." This is one of the ways "God . . . works through all and in all": through Kinship God works in the larger community. Kinship has been doing this for a long time; at least since the first Kinship Kampmeeting in 1980, when it invited three of us teachers from the Theological Seminary at Andrews University to be its guests. There is several kinds of truth the larger community needs to hear, not just once but repeatedly:

- It needs to hear the truth about what it is like for some of its children to grow up both Adventist and gay. My most vivid memory of that 1980 Kampmeeting is of listening with fascination,

Continued overleaf

amazement, and dismay to the personal stories of Kinship members.

- It needs to hear the truth about why those who have grown up Adventist and gay choose to stay in a family that has generally not accepted them, or treated them very well. It almost seems as if their religion is as unchangeable as their sexuality.

- It needs to hear the truth-as much truth as anyone has-about why the reasons people are gay in the first place. So long as Adventists believe that sexual attraction is simply a matter of choice we will be unable to be the kind of spiritual home we need to be (and gay Adventists need us to be).

- It needs to hear the truth about the Scriptural references to homosexual behavior. This of course is part of a larger Adventist need to understand the nature and purpose of Scripture in general.

- It needs to hear the truth about the much misunderstood idea of "gay marriage." We need to hear, for example, the kind of experiences and feelings that are expressed in the October issue of Connection. The extent and depth of Adventist misunderstanding and fear about this subject was evident in the article "Marriage Under Siege" in the Adventist Review in early October. Next month I will have been married to the same person for 49 years, and I just do

not understand how the legal status of someone else's relationship could be a threat to my relationship to Marcia. Nor do I understand why I as a straight Adventist should have a choice about the expression of my sexuality, but my gay Adventist brothers and sisters should not.

These are some examples of the truth that Kinship men and women can speak and help the Adventist family "fully grow up into Christ." But it is truth that needs always to be spoken in love. Without the love the truth won't be heard. Indeed, without love this truth can't be heard, because for many people it is so different, so strange, so unbelievable. Like everyone else, Kinship people have the moral right to speak the truth with or without love-in frustration, protest, and even anger. But without love the speaking is mostly a form of catharsis. To be heard by the people who most need to hear it, to make the kind of difference that needs to be made-for the good both of those who speak and those who hear-the truth needs to be delivered by the vehicle of good will and genuine care. And this is what Kinship has been doing, for its own good and for the good of the larger Adventist family. As a member of that family, I want to say Thank You. Kinship may not be perfect, but is a blessing that at least some of us recognize.

Welcome to the Family Business Issue!

My embarrassed apologies to previous editors; I've generally filed this particular edition for future perusal. I like stories. I like action. I like art and poetry. Business?? Well, I am learning it's importance. So if you are reading this issue while you have the flu and have watched all the movies in the house, everyone else has gone to work and you can't find anything else to occupy your attention; if it's been 13 months since you got this in your mail box, don't feel bad. I understand.

That said, I'm looking forward to introducing you to some of the people who help make us run, the decisions that keep us functioning as an organization, and the plans you may enjoy in the future. Fritz Guy, who spoke the previous article has been a friend of ours at La Sierra for a very long time. We're going to let you take a recent look at most of our board members. I asked everyone, at least three times, to let me know what they are up to in their life now, what their work as a board member includes these days, and what their plans are for the time in the positions this year. Those who didn't answer me after those three times have had their info created from my imagination. If that doesn't teach them, I'll enjoy even more creativity in the future.

We also wanted to fill you in on at least some of the business items we worked with at the last board meeting. There are some ideas in the works that will need your participation

Greetings of Joy

We wish all of you a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year! We are celebrating the holiday season in the countryside where we have snow and cold weather.

The 27th of December we are going to marry. In Sweden it is called registered partnership and gives us all the rights that married people have. The chairman of the Falköping council will lead the ceremony. She told us that she is extremely happy to do this for us. Afterwards our closest friends will join us for a dinner in our home.

Reino & Ingemar

The Folk Who are Responsible to You: Board Members



Bob Bouchard, Kinship President

Bob Bouchard currently serves as the President of Kinship. He lives in New York City and has been a member of Kinship since 1980. Bob attended Greater New York Academy and Andrews University before getting a law degree at New York University Law School. He is currently Vice President for Sales, Marketing and Product Development at the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). Bob has been involved with Kinship since 1980 in various ways: as Connection editor, regional coordinator, board member and president (1982-1988 and 2000 to present). When you have time to talk with him and after you have discussed present business, you might want to ask him about his days at Andrews and about Terri's sartorial splendor. Bob has a real gift for bonding us. He'll wait while we begin a heated conversation, then come in with a quiet, cogent, sometimes humorous solution.

Taylor Ruhl, Kinship Vice-President

"My work as vice-president during the coming year will continue to focus around Kinship's relationship to three important groups. First is the National Religious Leadership Roundtable (NRLR) which is the organization for group's like Kinship including those representing Methodists, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Mormons, etc. Second is the Friends and Family Group (SDA-FFLAG) coordinated by Carrol Grady. Third is the Kinship Advisory Board for which I serve as secretary.

"In March I will attend the next meeting of the NRLR and I continually read their list serve and pass on to the Kinship Board and KinNet those items of particular interest. I also monitor and contribute to the list serve for SDA-FFLAG both representing Kinship and listening for Kinship. I also participate in the list serve for the Kinship Advisory Board and attended its annual meeting on November 8. The Advisory Board is an invited representative group of straight advisors who are people of influence within North American Adventism. The group establishes its own agenda which primarily addresses incremental means by which Kinship's work can be fostered. The Board especially tries to educate Adventist pastors, teachers, and administrators to be better informed on GLBT issues.

"As always my job includes supporting the work of the Kinship President as needed. Taylor is University Librarian at the University of La Verne in Southern California. He and his partner, Leif Lind (Kinship Church Liaison) have been together for 6 years. Taylor and Leif also maintain professional careers in church music."

Taylor keeps an eye on the GaySDA discussion board with the same thoughtfulness and hospitality that he uses to host real people in Maryland or in California. He is passionate in his protection of and care for all of us.





Karen Lee, Kinship Treasurer

Karen Lee Wylde lives in Martinez, CA with her partner Shelby Smith Wylde and their three boys. Karen is a (mostly) full-time stay-at-home mom who also works as an accountant at home and at Shelby's office. Karen has been a member of Kinship for 6 years. She has served as Region 8 coordinator and has been Treasurer for the last 3 years.

As Treasurer, Karen is the "Chief Financial Officer" for Kinship. As such she is responsible for keeping accurate books and records, collecting and receiving all monies, handling all financial billings and disbursements and issuing cash receipts to those who donate to Kinship. She also is responsible for preparing and filing all state and federal tax returns and providing members with an accounting of all finances and proposed major expenditures. Members receive updates on Kinship's financial standing in periodic Connections publications as well as at Kampmeeting.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, of which Karen is a member, accept and vote on submissions from various members and others requesting funding for projects. Karen encourages anyone who has a passion for a specific work, which will further the goals of Kinship, to ask the board for financial support. Board meetings are held at Kampmeeting and twice at other times of the year. If a request is made near the time of Board meeting, it is considered during their proceedings. If there is an urgency and the full board will not meet for some time, the Executive Committee (made up of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Connections Editor, Treasurer and two other members) will decide whether to issue financial support.

Meticulous people are often perceived as shy or reclusive. Karen is a wonderful conversationalist and thoughtful listener.

Bruce Harlow, Secretary

"I was born and raised in Utah as a 4th generation Adventist. I spent 20 years in the SDA school system -- Jr. Academy in Salt Lake, Champion Academy, SMC, and Loma Linda -- followed by 25 years working for the Adventist Health System. I currently manage information systems for Hinsdale Hospital's home care and hospice divisions.

"I came out to myself in late 1996 and shortly afterwards, came out to my wife of 17 years. After a few months of deliberation, we decided that an amicable divorce would be the path most likely to maximize happiness for each of us, and having no children made it less complicated. Not long afterwards I met my partner, Paul Weldin, through an online support group. Over the course of several months we met in person, became housemates, fell in love, and moved to Chicago where we remain. He has 3 grown children, 21-26.

"Kinship was incredibly helpful to me during the first year after coming out as I'd never known another gay SDA (that I knew of!). When I saw the position of Secretary was open, I thought this could be a way for me to try to give something back to the organization. It's still too early in the year for me to have an "agenda," but I hope to be able to use my natural compulsiveness and organizational skills to good effect in this position."

Bruce has a great sense of humor, sneaky good fun, and we're always amazed at how well he comes up with the notes of our, occasionally, rambling thinking sprees.



Fred Casey, Office Manager/2004 Kampmeeting Coordinator

A member since 1995, Fred's usual role is to wear more than one hat. In fact, The Cat in the Hat was probably named after Fred's ability to have many jobs, juggle them with grace, and even exhibit a sense of humor while doing it. Fred is our office manager. This means he fields the incoming phone calls, maintains Kinship's member database while coordinating member information with the Region and Chapter Coordinators, helps edit the Connection, refers new members to the appropriate Coordinators within the organization, mails out welcome packets, organizes a variety of services, and prepares membership information for Board meetings and Kampmeeting. This year he is also planning and coordinating our 25th Anniversary Kampmeeting. We've been hearing some of his ideas and know you will enjoy receiving the benefits of all of his work. Fred has lived in Sarasota, Florida since 2001 with his partner of nearly 7 years, Nélio Barros. They welcome any and all who wish to stop by for a visit.



Robb Crouch, Director of Public Relations

Robb Crouch lives in Lincoln, Neb., and has been a member of Kinship since 1997. A lifelong Adventist, he graduated from Des Moines Adventist School in Iowa, Sunnysdale Adventist Academy in Missouri and Union College in Nebraska. He is currently director of communications at a university foundation. Robb assists Kinship with various communications activities, including Web site coordination, advertising, printed materials, graphic identify, writing and fund raising.

Yolanda Elliott, Region 2 and Womyn's Coordinator

Yolanda Elliott resides in Clarksville, MD with her partner of 6 years, Joyce Reece. She has provided assisted living for 5 residents from their home since 1985. Yolanda became involved with Kinship after her first Kampmeeting in 1995. She was previously vice president, but is currently Region 2 and Womyn's Coordinators. She is committed to getting more womyn involved with Kinship through the Lavender Letter newsletter and the annual Womyn's Weekend as well as a password protected area of KinNet just for womyn. She also wants to keep Region 2 the active region that it is right now with our annual mini-kampmeeting at Rehoboth Beach, monthly socials, vespers and Sabbath lunch at a local restaurant or potlucks. Some other special socials include the fall fling that included a hayride and bonfire and we are looking forward to our Christmas party in December. Yolanda wants to give back a little of what Kinship has given to her and that is why she stays involved in this wonderful organization. Ask her was ssssssssst means. Have her tell you what it's like to try to organize some of her weekends. Let her tell you about her new puppy.





Mark Driscoll, Member at large

Mark brings southern graciousness and quiet sharp thinking to his time with us. His goals are to help us organize our Kampmeeting venues very far in advance and to get some grants to help us run more efficiently.

Floyd Phoenixitz, KinNet Coordinator

Floyd designed and masters KinNnet, our electronic, online, way of communicating with each other. He does this with gentle grace. Have Floyd talk to you about Germany, bluebonnets, Texas, sex, spirituality, and leadership styles. You will never be bored.



Leif Lind, Church Liaison

Leif brings the flavor of Norway, Canada, Africa, Maryland...and...well, you'll have to find out for yourself...to us. He works to coordinate speakers for Kampmeeting, meet with church leaders to create more of a dialogue between us and them. His gentleness brings an atmosphere that cannot help but be Biblical to any interaction and the twinkle in his eye lightens our spirits.

Catherine Taylor, Connection Editor

With the invaluable help of Ted, Karen, Karen, Fred and amazing contributors Catherine edits our newsletter. She is obsessed with the notion of relational spirituality, benevolent contexts, building communities, enhancing the voices of our organization, travel as a form of work and warm weather as a hobby. She does live in the Southern Tundra where Karen gets fiscally nervous whenever she catches Catherine researching travelocity.com. Catherine's focus for this year is to put out an issue of the Connection about every five weeks and to include as many of your stories, activities, and reactions to events as she can collect and fit into our columns.





Eric Gilleo, Member at Large/IMRU Coordinator

Eric is a native New Englander who has spent a great deal of time and energy providing this outreach to more youthful GLBTI people connected to Kinship. Since the editor is a fogey and Eric has been very busy, you might want to contact him to find out more about IMRU. In his spare time Eric also is the coordinator for Region 1 activities.

Samuel Pang, Executive Committee

"Samuel & his husband, Andrew, recently had a traditional church wedding ceremony in July 2003, and now that civil marriage will become legal in Massachusetts on May 17, 2004, they plan to have a civil marriage ceremony next summer. Samuel remains dedicated to the mission of Kinship, having been a member of Kinship since 1983, and currently on the Executive Committee of the Kinship Board. His vision for Kinship is that Kinship will continue to provide support to those within the SDA church who are struggling to come out of the closet, as well as gently educate the members of the SDA church regarding homosexuality, as he believes that ignorance is a major factor in bigotry."



Karen Wetherell, Member at Large

Karen is a fourth generation Seventh Day Adventist who grew up, literally, in the back yard of the General Conference Building. She was married to a SDA corporate Vice president for 24 years and has been involved in the education, publishing, and hospital work of the church for all of that time. Three years ago she came out to herself, her family, and most of the rest of the planet in a surge of enthusiasm. She lives in Vermont with a curmudgeon writer. Her goals for her work with Kinship this year include: working as chair of the finance committee to increase the fiscal efficiency of our organization, prepare our books for an audit, working with the rest of the finance committee on investments. She is quite interested in making the finance committee more active. Those of you who understand these things will have to ask her for more details.

Sherri Babcock, Executive Committee

Sherri has given of her energies to Kinship in a variety of ways: Kampmeeting Coordinator, Finance Chair, Vice-president, Thoughtful Muser. She currently chases both robots and a toddler around her life. One is a design she is creating for hospitals in Ohio. One is a design she and Jill are helping to grow for the future classrooms of the same state.



Though not officially on the Board...

There are many more people who create the team that is helping Kinship provide options, opportunities and services to a variety of populations. Ruud coordinates Kinship projects in Europe. Noel works for GLBTI people of Seventh Day Adventist backgrounds in Australia. Roy, is the President of HAD, our sister organization in Germany. We have recently asked Carolyn to coordinate information about and services to Intersex people in our organization. Sandy has agreed to do the same for transgendered and transsexual members of Kinship. As most of you know, Carrol Grady founded Someone to Talk To, a forum for Seventh Day Adventists with Gay, Lesbian or Bi-sexual children. Noel wasn't able to write for us this issue but we thought we would include introductions or more information about some of the other support available here.

"What you always wanted to know about Ruud"

Some of you know me already from KinNet's discussion board. You may have also met me at one of the European Kinship Meetings. To some of you I have written personal e-mails. Lately I have been writing some little articles for The Connection. Catherine is sure you might like to know me a little bit better. So here I go!

My official name is Rudolf Peter Jan Cornelis Kieboom, but I prefer that you just call me Ruud (not Rude!). I was born in 1953 in the eastern part of The Netherlands near the German border in a little town called Venlo. When I was almost three, my parents moved to my present home town Den Haag (The Hague in English). My father was transferred as part of his work in the military. I was raised in Den Haag, I got my education here. Now I work here at the office of the State Council of The Netherlands

as an application manager.

I have been aware of being gay since I was young though I didn't really know that is was homosexuality that caused my interest for other boys. It wasn't until my thirties (1985) that I came out after an impossible love with my best (straight) friend. He helped me to accept my orientation. In 1987 I met my husband, Kees. Kees has been a translator of Hebrew literature. He has been a teacher of Greek and Latin. At the moment he is finishing his studies of classical languages at the University of Leiden. In 1994 we started to live together and had our relationship registered. In 1998 we had the possibility to marry (registered partnership) with the same rights as matrimony. Next year we will celebrate our 10th anniversary! We are planning to come to Kampmeeting, in Menucha, next year and we would like to meet even more of you in person!



Kinship Europe

Last year in Sweden (with Reino Korhonen) and this year in The Netherlands I organized two European Kinship Meetings. Lately some more Europeans have joined Kinship. I am trying to be their contact person for Kinship. In this way I hope a group will be formed

of members that will meet on a regular basis, to develop friendships, to have fun together and (most important) to help and support each other when needed. It is my wish that this group will have interaction with Kinship International. I would like for us to have combined meetings in the future, or attend each other's meetings. Up until now I haven't been very successful in setting up a group in The Netherlands. I did write some articles in the Dutch church magazine Advent. No one has responded yet. But who knows, it took me years before I contacted Kinship, though I knew of it's existence.

It is my plan to be active in making contacts with pastors in Europe, with the help of a pastor in The Netherlands. In this way I hope to contribute to a more positive understanding of lesbians and gays - and homosexuality in general - among church leaders in Europe. Lately I contacted a Belgian pastor who was very supportive of my efforts for gay adventists in The Netherlands.

Next year we will have another European Kinship Meeting in Den Haag, and I hope to meet some of you there too. Just ask the others who participated this and last year (the editor, Floyd, Bob) and you will regret you weren't there as well.

See you next year!

Roy Raetzer

I hope that HAD can reach more GLBTI Seventh Day Adventists or former Adventists. We have a problem with this effort because we don't have the financial foundation of American Kinship. I know there are more gay SDA's out there, I know there are gay SDA's who know about HAD but don't want to be in the group. I hope somehow we can reach

these people. I would like to print flyers, etc. to reach more people, to give info to str8s and I wish we could find ways to talk with the church here in Germany on a friendly and open position. For a start I wish the church would at least accept a group like HAD. Maybe it would even be a good idea to have leaders of the church at our meetings to show them that we are not as strange as they think we are. I want the church leaders to see that we are simply human beings who believe in God like they do. I hope for HAD to get



chances to get invited by youth groups of the church or even other church groups to talk about us, about being gay and about HAD. Sometimes I dream that groups like HAD would not be necessary anymore because the environment and church accepts all gays. Well, so much about my hopes. About me: I'm 34 years old, an unemployed accountant, gay-married to Pieter from South Africa. We are married in church since '99 and legally (registered partnership) here in Germany since 2001. We live in a small village in the south of former East Germany, state of Saxony. The people in the village accept us but in church we are not very welcomed. Because of this we are not active anymore. I don't even attend services. Our families accept us. We are 100% out. You can read more about us on our website at: <http://www.Raetzer-Botha.de>.

Love, Roy

David Ferguson, Advisory Board

Dave coordinates this group made up of thought leaders from the organized Seventh Day Adventist Church who are favorable to Kinship and some Kinship leaders. They are working



on ways to create a better conversation between Kinship and the church. Dave also works with us on finding solid and appropriate investments. Dave has been a member of Kinship for years. He is also connected to the Los Angeles Gay Men's Chorus. He's been a resource for many of us interested in health. You can ask him about Sea Silver yourself.

Someone to Talk To...

Carrol Grady is a minister's wife and mother of three sons. In 1988, while working at the General Conference, Carrol and her husband Bob learned that their youngest son is gay. After working through the typical shock, denial, guilt and grief, Carrol wrote a book about her family's experience, *My Son, Beloved Stranger*, published in 1995 by Pacific Press. This was part of her therapeutic process, and she also wanted to help other parents living with this isolating knowledge realize they were not alone.



In the eight years since, Carrol has seen God open many doors for her to help families and share what she has learned with others. She started a newsletter, *Someone to Talk To*, which has reached well over 500 families. For the past three years she has also had an online support list for families and friends of gays and lesbians. She has been invited to speak at churches, women's ministries gatherings, college chapel services, and a number of larger meetings, such as a Family Life International Convention. She has had a booth to advertise her ministry at several large church meetings, including the 2000 General Conference in Toronto. She continues to write and has had four articles about homosexuality published in *Adventist Review*, *Ministry*, and *Women of Spirit*. She is a member of the Kinship Advisory Board and has a website at www.someone-to-talk-to.net where her book and newsletter archives can be found, as well as a reading list, relevant articles, personal experiences and frequently-asked questions. Plans for the future include continuing these activities and editing a book of stories by people who have been in gay-straight marriages.

Carolyn Parsons, Intersex Coordinator

I was born at Bongo Mission Hospital in central Angola to missionary parents; just as my father had before me in the late thirties. I was an energetic inquisitive little tomboy, or so



everyone assumed. When I was about 11, I started to look and act more like a boy until one day my sister told my parents that I looked like a boy down there. That was the start of a journey first to my grandfather's consultation office then to many other consultations at the Red Cross Memorial Children's Hospital near Cape Town, South Africa. I was photographed and X-rayed and poked and injected until one day they took me into surgery to remove my partially descended testicles and perform a clitorcomy.

A few years ago, after searching for information and asking my parents, I found out what had been kept from me for over 25 years, that I had a male gene pattern of 46XY but am partially insensitive to testosterone. Since then I have been coming to terms with my intersexuality and my sexuality. I identify socially and politically as a woman and I am attracted to women; but when asked to define my sex, I prefer to be defined as intersexed.

In the months ahead, as Kinship Intersex Coordinator I hope to:

1. Gather resources to educate the SDA LGBTI community about intersexuality, work that gladly has already been started within Kinship.

2. Help develop a strong support network for intersexed people within Kinship.

3. Eventually, help educate the larger SDA community about the issue of intersexuality.

My email contact (for publication) should be kinshipintersex@hotmail.com.

Sandra Ann Hoffercker, Transgender Coordinator

I was born on August 26, 1953 in Wilmington Delaware as Richard A. Hoffercker, Jr. to a couple of very proud parents, Renda and Richard, Sr. I grew up in Newark Delaware, going to school for all 12 years in our small suburb of Christiana. I first realized my gender discomfort at about five years old and often complained to my mother that I didn't want to be a boy. She was concerned enough to take me to a counselor who after several sessions with me, assured my mother that I would "grow out of it eventually" and that she could let me act out my desires to be a girl with little to worry about.

Sworn to secrecy by my mother to never let my father know, I spent my pre teen years quite comfortably able to be a girl almost at will. Debbie, who lived next door, was such a good friend through these years and who aided and abetted my transgenderism by sharing and passing on her wardrobe, benefited by having a playmate that could play either the mommy/sister/girlfriend or the daddy/brother/boyfriend role. But I could tell that outside of the closeness with my mother or Debbie, the rest of the world looked askance at the little boy that seemed so girlish. This was never more obvious than during those first few years of school where I was pushed around and teased for being the sissy.

Soon I began to feel the pressure from my father to do more "boy" type things and get involved in sports. He just "knew" I was a natural athlete, so I pushed myself hard to make him happy and became one of the lead track runners for our school and did very



well in tennis also. This gave me a sense of pride and acceptance that I never before had. I met Mary in 10th grade and over two and a half years grew to love her and she also loved me and we were married in 1972 after she was finished with school. We had two children during the next sixteen months and bought our first home.

In 1976 we began looking deeper into spiritual matters and praying earnestly for God to show us His will in this. A Seventh Day Adventist book salesman stopped at our home soon after making this prayer and after several weeks of great Bible studies, we were soon baptized and joined the church. Since then I too have worked as a colporteur and taught at one of our church schools and an academy, before becoming professionally involved in aviation.

In 1997 I told Mary of my gender identity disorder (GID) that I, for fear of losing her, had hidden for so many years. She was very unhappy and asked me not to make it part of our life. I tried, but it was like water piling up in a

dam. Over the years the pressure to be my true self was more than I could hide away and we divorced after 28 years. This was one of the saddest moments of my life. My children pulled away from me during this time because they felt betrayed and that I had been dishonest with them. I did my "real life test", living my first year as a female in 1999 and in 2000 underwent sexual reassignment surgery. This was one of the happiest moments of my life.

Today I live in Florida and have my own business working as a contract pilot flying airships in many different countries around the world. I am thrilled to be a part of Kinship and honored that I was asked to coordinate the transgender outreach for our organization. I feel this ministry can be quite a haven for Christians that are struggling with the spiritual aspects of their lives while trying to solve gender issues. It is such a scary event in a transgendered person's life to "come out" because we are not just out to those we tell, but we are out to society. How we fit in at church, work, with family and friends, even how the government views us can be an enormous deterrent to living in ones preferred gender role. TransKinNet is a wonderful tool where as a group we can discuss a wide variety of issues covering the spiritual, emotional and physical problems faced by transgendered individuals trying to fit into the society that they are a part of. It is so comforting to know you are not alone facing these problems. I also want to encourage workshops at Kinship Kampmeeting that would focus on transgender issues, presented by Christian counselors who specialize in working with the transgender community on a full time basis. In short, Kinship has a bright future in its outreach ministry to Christians struggling with transgender issues, so if you are transgendered or just wondering if you are, you are not alone. Contact us!

The Marriage of John and Lee

John and Lee are the pseudonyms of a couple we in Kinship love dearly. Because of their connection to the church they preferred not to use their given names. We wanted to share their story in this issue because their impact on our organization is so strong they might as well be board members.

I think there were probably several reasons why we decided to get married. The first is our desire to make a form of commitment that affirms the bond between ourselves. The second is to affirm before our families and friend the importance of our relationship. We wanted them to know that we take our relationship very seriously. Marriage has been an option only available to straight couples. We wonder if there are more break ups in the gay world because of it is so difficult to make a public commitment to each other. We also wanted to get married to let the immigration officials know that we take our relationship seriously. It's a bit like stacking the deck. We felt like we had already made the commitment. This ceremony was just the confirmation.

We were married in the Hartford, Vermont United Church of Christ Church. Our service was performed by the minister there. It was his first wedding service ever because he had made a vow that he would not perform any wedding service until gay and lesbian people have equal rights. Needless to say, he is "family". We wanted to be married in a church because we wanted to demonstrate the spiritual importance of our commitment. A group of about twenty friends and guests attended. We had flower arrangements and planned the entire ceremony. We had candles. We marched down the aisle in matching suits. We had congregational singing, a

processional, hymns, an organist. It was pretty much like a regular wedding service. In our service the wrapping of the ministerial stole was the final blessing. It was a concrete object lesson of wrapping the Spirit of God and our hearts around our relationship. It was symbolic of the recognition of the union that has been created and of the bonds of love that keep it together. We went from the church to the Simon Pearce restaurant and had a very special lunch

The service was very important to Lee. We don't know if this is why John chose to have the ceremony but we've never had a moment's doubt that the relationship is permanent. One of us was the initiator but it was very meaningful to both of us. The ceremony has given us more confidence as we talk with others. We have a way to show them that our relationship is as definite and concrete as everyone else's. The service says we have done everything we can. It has been instrumental in helping others to recognize the permanence of our relationship.

We were one of first 50 couples to take advantage of this opportunity. I highly recommend it. Symbolism is important. It affects us at a sub conscious level. One of the first things we decided that nothing; job, career, projects or any person would come ahead of our relationship. Don't take a step like this without serious consideration. If you want a divorce you have to live in Vermont for two years. Don't take it lightly. But realize that it does cement a relationship.

I think it's very helpful to make your wedding a very special occasion. Don't just go to the town clerk and get someone to sign your papers. Create a celebration. It's a statement to yourselves and other people.

And our decisions were...

During the third weekend in October we met for two and a half days. Here are some of our discussions and decisions.

We have created a site selection committee for Kampmeeting to find locations and accommodations at least two to five years in advance of each particular Kampmeeting.

We agreed to fund a once a month edition of the Connection, when the editor can get them organized and mailed. We also agree to do two to three issues a year with color covers.

Re: Kampmeeting 2004 (August 15-22, 2004) - Fred will begin to write articles for the Connection letting members know some of the opportunities and events that will take place. We have found two young women who are willing to develop a Kampmeeting Children's Program so that we can become even more family friendly. They are working to create a mix of Vacation Bible School and other activities. We are also working to create a "children's room" next to the meeting area that will include nap beds, toys, books, and quiet space so families can have both children and the ability to attend events. We also want to focus on creating scholarships for Kampmeeting so we can continue to expand the number of people to benefit from this amazing experience.

We are resuming our ad in the Advocate.

We will apply for grant monies to increase the efficiency of our office staff. We are researching other sources for grants and will discuss this more in March.

There were more reports and

discussion that happened but we didn't want to truly put you to sleep reading all of our minutes. But, we are responsible to you and if you have questions please feel free to contact us.

Speaking of contacting us...

We've been having quite a bit of discussion about ways you can reach us in an efficient and confidential manner. Dave G. is willing to set up our system so you can reach us at president@sdakinship.org or connection@sdakinship.org for example. We will let you know when this is up and running.

U.S. Chapters are Here

At the recent SDA Kinship Board Meeting held in Springfield, Vermont, the Directors boldly voted to develop local chapters in specific geographic or metropolitan areas. This means efforts will be increased to provide support to smaller areas where there are greater concentrations of members. Travis Roe has accepted the task of coordinating these development efforts. If you have an interest in leading a chapter in your local area, please write Travis at office@sdakinship.org. Travis will help you form a local chapter with the support and tools you will need.

Currently, there are active and chartered chapters in South Florida (Jacob Demetrius, Coordinator) and Gulf Coast Florida (Fred Casey, Coordinator). North Carolina is in the process of organizing a chapter under the apt leadership of Beverly Winsted. There are chartered but inactive chapters in Denver, San Francisco, San Diego, Inland Empire and New York City --

although Eddie Acosta and Bruce Tichenor are working on getting the New York City Chapter going again.

Special Projects...

Seventh Day Adventists have an odd way of voting. We call it donations. And we're giving you a chance to participate in our "ballot" over the next few months. There are a couple of things we just cannot do without you. We want more people and more families to be able to come to Kampmeeting. We have a number of students who would like to attend. We have a growing number of parents and children. We have members with various degrees of financial resources. We would like everyone to have an opportunity to enjoy, revel in, learn from, and relax during Kampmeeting. To do this we need more scholarship money. If you would like to contribute to the scholarship fund, please mail your check in the enclosed envelope and mark it for scholarships. We are also trying to continually improve the quality of our publications. This year we're aiming for more editions and more color. If you would like to contribute to that "cause" please feel free to make a note and pitch in 1-10,000 dollars. We can also always use support for the general fund and you are most welcome to help with that. If you need more return envelopes, send your request to Fred in the Kinship office at office@sdakinship.org or by calling (866) 732-5677 toll free.

So that's the local news...

If you want to know more about the work we do or the dreams we have, please feel free to contact us.

Business Plan: Isaiah 58

*Is this not the kind of fasting I have chosen;
to loose the chains of injustice and
untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the
hungry
and provide the poor wanderer
with shelter?*

Even though Bob didn't read this text when we began our board meeting last October, I have come to believe that this is the opening thought of almost every action we contemplate. Oh sure, it's mixed in with "what are they going to feed us for lunch". "my, aren't they good looking?", "where can I do something really interesting in rural Vermont on a Saturday night" and all the other human cogitations that go on quietly in the frontal lobes or back recesses of our minds when we are faced with two days of doing business with people we often don't get to see more than three or four times a year. But what has made Kinship valuable in my life is the number of times I have seen the Isaiah 58 "mission statement" alive in the actions and generosity of our members and leaders.

We have looked at injustice as it has happened to us and as it has devastated the lives of those who touched our heart. And we have chosen to march, write, laugh, live, organize, and create an environment that calls for and most often insists on justice. It's not always easy. We have people who cling to the church with the Velcro of their souls. We have people who won't step foot inside the structure of an organized religion, even for their own funeral. And yet we have made a commitment that the canopy of this organization will work to make a place where there is safety and justice for an entire

continuum of differing viewpoints. I can't even imagine how it has been done so well and for so long. I am quite aware that we have had political wars. I remember hurt feelings. I have heard stories about long nights of discussions about languaging. But many of these events and memories would not have even occurred in an organization that did not call for the "fast" of justice and generosity.

*Is it not to share your food with the
hungry
when you see the naked, to clothe
him,
and not to turn away from your
own flesh and blood?*

Are there ways we can still work on this? What are the levels of hunger that strike our members and the people who can legitimately call us home? What are the ways that GLBTI folk with Seventh Day Adventist backgrounds still feel vulnerable and exposed, unsafe in many of the contexts of their lives? How can we create programs or Internet boards or materials that will affect them? This is the real soul of why business meetings in Kinship happen. This attitude fills out the numbers, and the timetables and the project deadlines.

*If you do away with the yoke of
oppression
The pointing finger and the
malicious talk*

Ah, that's an interesting goal if ever there was one. First, how do we avoid the pointing finger and the malicious talk among ourselves? How do we create environments that allow for diversity and insist on safety at the same time? How do we allow for personal differences, relational and political divorces, growth and

development strains and all the other vicissitudes of working with human beings and still act in respectful and caring ways? Second, how do we address an organization that often systemically causes harm to the people we love. How do we show this organization, by our actions, the way we think people should be treated? How do we avoid the "West Bank Syndrome" of doing unto others what has been done to us? Those are also conversations I hear at Kampmeeting and at every board meeting. It's not an easy goal but it comes with a great promise:

*then your light will rise in the
darkness,
and your night will become like the
noonday.
The Lord will guide you always
and will satisfy your needs in a
sunscorched land.
You will be like a well watered
garden,
Like a spring whose waters never
fail.*

When we think of the boredom of business and the exhaustion of organizing, it might help us to remember the reasons, the promise, the poetry, and high mountain tops of this part of our heritage.

Blessings.
Catherine



Listen to the Exhortation of the Dawn!
Look to this Day!
For it is Life, the very Life of Life.
In its brief course lie all the
Verities and Realities of your Existence.
The Bliss of Growth,
The Glory of Action,
The Splendor of Beauty;
For Yesterday is but a Dream,
And To-morrow is only a Vision;
But To-day well lived makes
Every Yesterday a Dream of Happiness,
And every Tomorrow a Vision of Hope.
Look well therefore to this Day!
Such is the Salutation of the Dawn!

Kalidasa, the Indian Poet and Playwright

