

connection

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. December 2005 Vol. 29 No. 11



I myself will tend my sheep
I will search for the lost and bring back the strays
I will bind up the injured and strengthen the weak.
I will shepherd the flock with justice.
Ezekiel 34: 11-16

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Who we are...

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

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

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

Support Kinship

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

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

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More Steps in the Journey

Loren Senseman

Catherine Abl, I want to share something that happened soon after the European Kinship Meeting 4 weekend that we spent in Scotland. On the Friday after I returned to Istanbul, I was headed for a garage to get the car serviced. Going down the hill from my apartment I noticed the coast road had heavy traffic. I rattled my friend Ali with a quick U-turn and headed up a back road. A Seventh Day Adventist church is on that road but was closed the last time I drove by, several months before.

At our destination, Ali went to the garage with the car. I got a newspaper and walked over to sit in our local Taksim Park. As is the custom during Ramadan, people were stretched out sleeping on the grass or benches. Eventually I found a place to sit. A man was sleeping on the next bench. Ten minutes later he sat up, looked over, nodded, and went back to sleep. Still later he sat up, looked at me, and asked, in Turkish, where I was from. I told him I lived in Istanbul but was born in the United States. He asked if I was an English teacher. I wondered "who is this person...do I know

him?" Then, to my surprise, he asked "Are you Loren Senseman?". He got up, walked over, and introduced himself as Yahya from the SDA church!!!

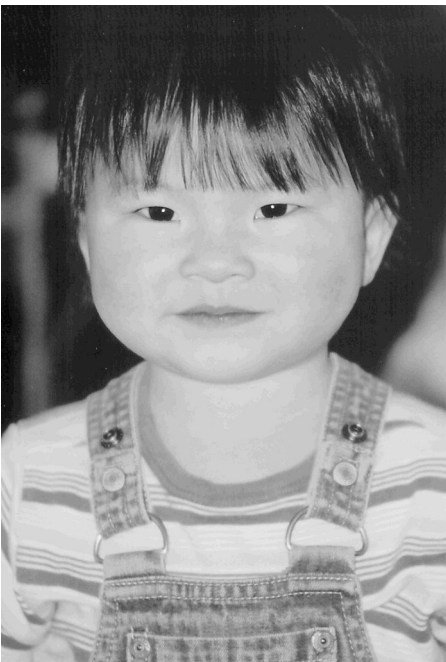
We had met eighteen months before when I had attended the Seventh Day Adventist Church. (Turks never forget when they meet a foreigner) Yahya had just gotten out of the army, and was resting until he had to go to work late that afternoon. We talked for quite awhile and he invited

me to join him at church the next day. There are 15 million people in Istanbul. The chances of meeting a Seventh Day Adventist here are next to zero. Why did this coincidence happen??? A friend has told me, "there are no accidents". I've started going back to church and have met a lot of interesting people there. Two of them are American pastors; one from Izmir, Turkey the other from Bulgaria.

Yahya is now one of my students and my journey home that started in Anaotolia (Eastern Turkey) to EKM4 in Scotland, is continuing!! I'm not rejecting the possibility that it's happening for a reason. ▼

Kinship Community Blessings

Our greatest blessing this year is our new granddaughter, Alanna Rose Grady, just recently arrived from China. **Carrol**



The blessing I most appreciate this year was a surprise. I was given a T-Mobile Sidekick II with months of service covered. I can use it when necessary for emergency contacts. May the Lord bless my dear friend who works constantly. Have a happy and blessed Season. **Denise**

I'm thankful for a gay son who led me to understanding and unconditional love before my husband of 33 years came out. I'm thankful for a str8 son who has supported me wonderfully in both of these journeys. I'm thankful for Terry's love and support; both financially and emotionally which enables me to rebuild my life. I'm thankful that he and I are still friends. He even encouraged me to be interviewed on TV and include family pictures as a way to reach

out to others of the 2 million str8 spouses in the US. I'm thankful for three darling felines who keep my nest furry and remind me it is important that I come home. I wish you all wonderful holidays with your loved ones. **Kathy**

I felt - and still feel - direct blessings from the Skies this year. I came to terms with my father's death having faith that I will see him again when Jesus comes. I woke up from the anesthesia in a hospital after a minor surgery. I was able to spend a month with my family during the summer. My ex-wife and I were able to put our daughter back in an Adventist high school. My daughter improved her attitude toward her studies. Lately she started bringing

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2005

March – SDA Kinship International Board Meeting

April – Kinship Australia Meetings with Bob Bouchard

April – Kinship Uganda's first Kampmeeting. Leif Lind was the guest speaker

May – Kinship Mini Kampmeeting in Rehoboth, Delaware

July – Kinship International Kampmeeting in St. Louis

June – Film Release: Open Hands; Open Hearts Three Conversations

June - Second Issue Release of My Son; Beloved Stranger by Carrol Grady

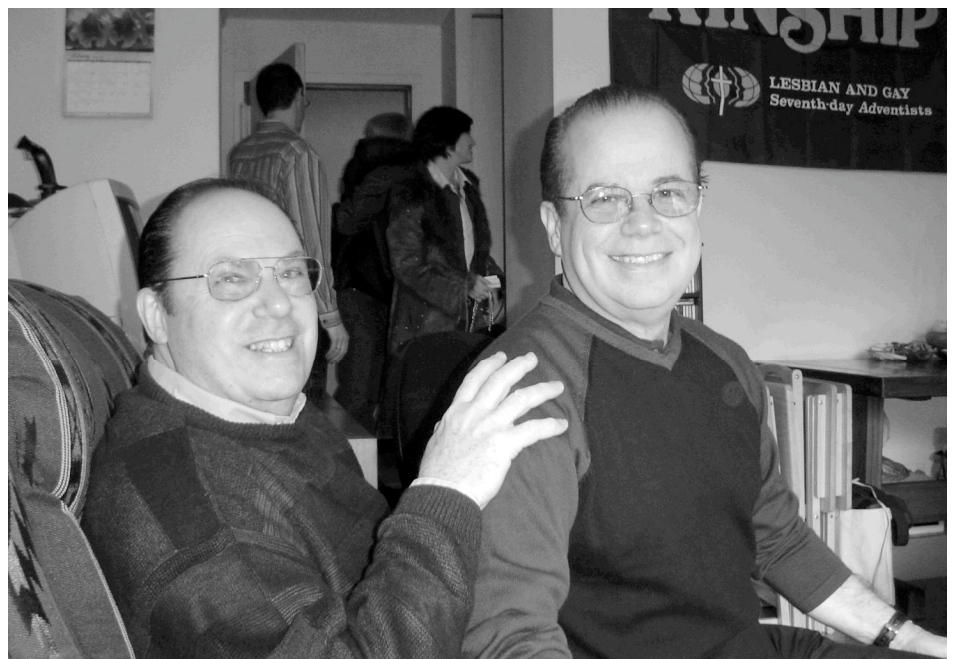
September – European Kinship Meeting 4 in Scotland

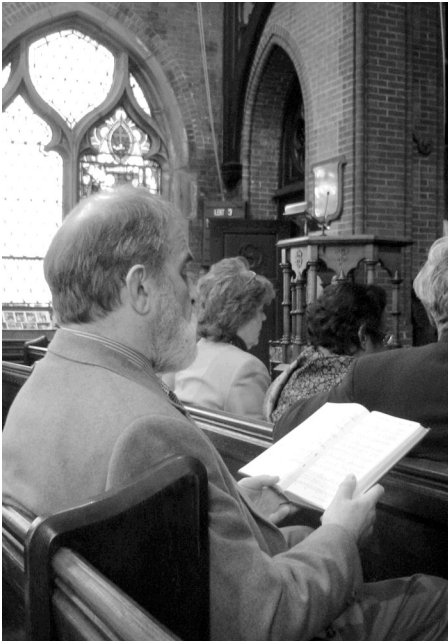
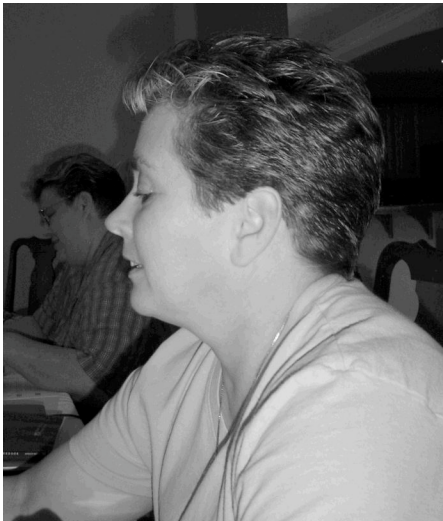
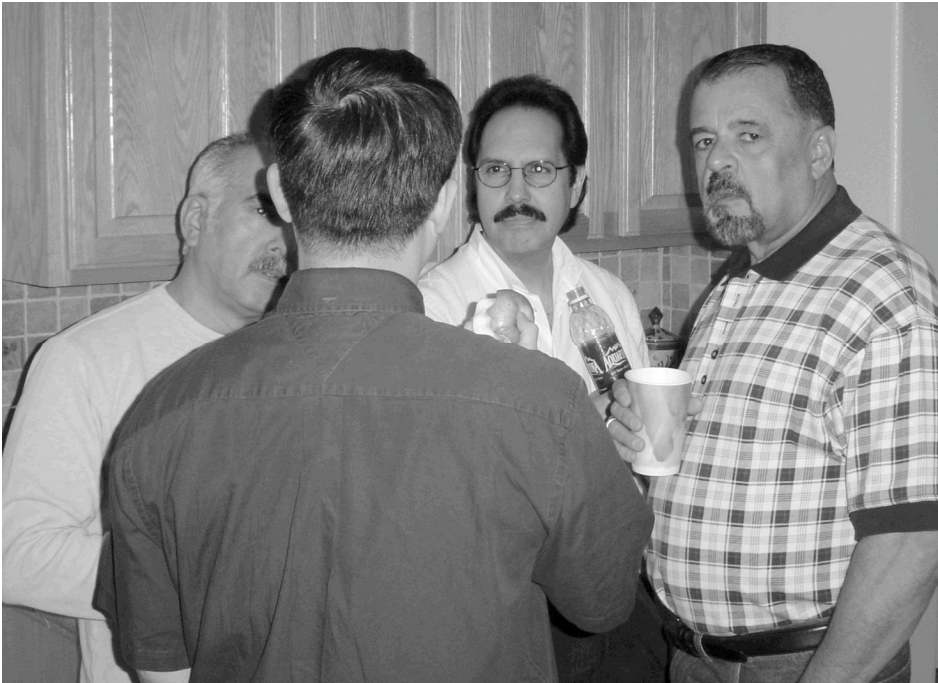
September - Annual Advisory Board in California

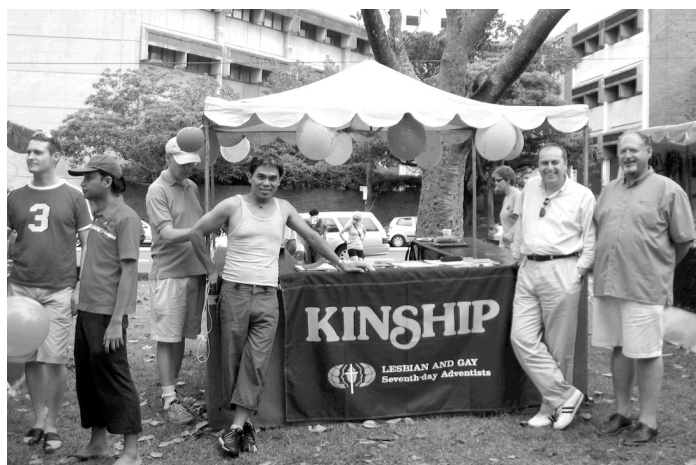
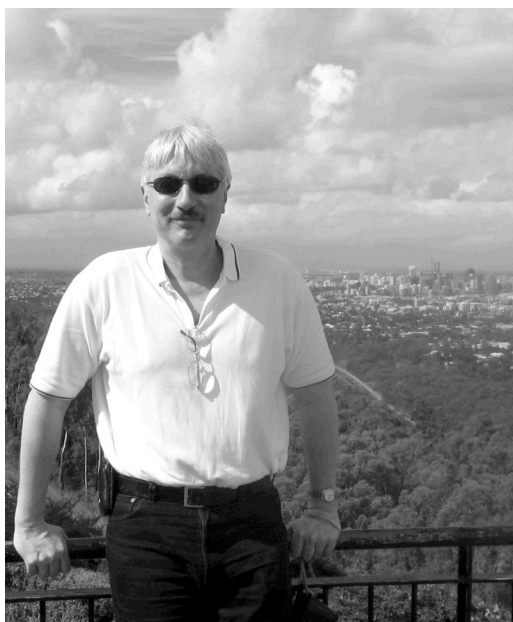
October – SDA Kinship International Board Meeting

November – Kinship Mini-Kampmeeting in Palm Springs, California USA

This issue is mostly pictures of our year and blessings from it. We wanted to have one final glimpse of the many amazing events and people who have filled our Kinship life and community over the past twelve months. We thank you for being part of so many large and small miracles that fill our hearts and grow our souls.







Blessings...

better grades (she says it's her new boyfriend - I say it's God's Grace!). I feared that I would be evicted from my apartment but God provided ways to keep me well and sent some people my way to make sure that I won't go hungry. Even though my chronic pain condition seems to be permanent I learned to accept this fact and refused to be drawn further down into depression. In December my Mom is coming to spend time with me so I won't be alone this Holiday Season. **Lexus**

My blessing for this year was to have Bob Bouchard come to Australia to visit with our Kinship members here. Bob has been known to me since 1981, but I didn't meet him in person until the 2000 Kampmeeting in Hawaii. I really enjoyed Bob's visit. He was a great help to our group. Another blessing has been to identify people inside our Australian organization who are supportive to us. I wish you all Season's Greetings and family gettogethers. **Noel**



God has brought several wonderful blessings to my life this year. I was elected to the board of directors of the American Association of Marriage & Family Therapists to represent all marriage and family therapy students and new professionals in North America. I secured my dissertation topic dealing with gender relations amongst same-sex couples and found a great advisory committee to assist me. I began a new position at my agency as Assistant to the Clinical Director, where I am learning how to manage a clinical agency. I also was awarded two grants from the state and county to assist me in writing programs on preventing child abuse and parenting for those who are divorced. The biggest blessing of 2005 is the way God brought Travis & I together. I look forward to spending my life with this wonderful man. Praise God for all that He has done. **Naveen**

I am thankful for all the love and friendship God sent my way this year. With every person that left my life He sent someone to get me through the next moments who added even more to life. I am thankful for my family, especially for my parents. They found the strength and the where-withal to take care of my youngest son for two years. I am thankful for my partner Sonya. God sent her to me in time for Valentine's Day. I am thankful for all the wonderful steps my oldest son has made toward being a more socially responsible, settled young man. I am thankful for all the people who have believed in me one semester at a time through this seventeen year Bachelor Degree process. I am thankful that this December it is finished! I am thankful that my family has missed every hurricane that came our way this year. I am thankful for Kinship and all the love and support and friendship I have found here. I am thankful for all my old friends that have stuck by me through everything, and all the new ones that haven't found me scary enough to want to leave. => I am most of all thankful that God has given me this chance to say thank you. **Dahlia**

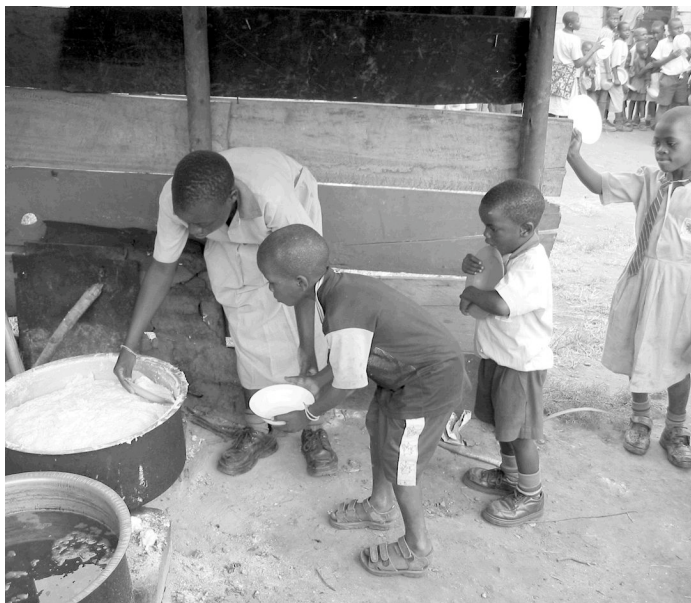
Our two most memorable blessings

of 2005 are quite mixed. First, we are thankful for "finding each other" 45 years ago (Nov. 18) and for having families, immediate and extended, that have been loving, caring and supportive of us as individuals and as a couple, all along the way. Secondly, with the passing of Mom Tichenor (Oct. 24) we are grateful that she was active, alert and able to live in her own home until the last moment. Her 94 years gave testimony of a truly Christian life to all who knew or met her. Love and Hugs, **Bruce and Eddie**



I am grateful that we had our first Kinship Kampmeeting in Africa. I am glad that Pastor Lind was able to be part of the growing ministry on our continent. Many LGBT Christian people have been affected by that event. I am blessed by the copies of Kinship's Connection that are a tremendous help in our outreach ministry in Uganda. Since I have begun to share the Connection I receive ten to twelve e-mails or phone calls each month about Kinship. Many people are pleased with the ministry Kinship is doing. I appreciate our exposure here. I appreciate Catherine's work to keep all of us updated about the larger organization. I am grateful that I am getting to know Ruud through e-mails and one visit, as a friend in this organization. I appreciate Bob Bouchard and the work he does to lead Kinship. **Joseph**

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Blessings...

I am blessed that the love of my life married me. I was blessed by all the people who were able to be there with us. I am blessed that we get to work on our home together. I am blessed that we are part of building a Seventh Day Adventist congregation that is designed to be open and accepting of all God's people. I am grateful for the birth of my nephew's son Nimai. I am glad I got to go to New York City for the first time; and got to see the "Gates" exhibit. I am so appreciative that work is much more enjoyable for me this year. I am grateful that my co-workers share a growing spiritual journey with me. I am grateful that I am getting to know Seth, who is making us a beautiful hickory table. I was blessed by the European Kinship Meeting in Scotland. And I was blessed by our Kampmeeting in St. Louis. **Karen**

I've been blessed with a good job, bosses that are willing to work around my school schedule, IMRU and the power of the internet for making new friends and reconnecting with old ones. I am grateful that my grandma finally accepted my homosexuality. I have been blessed by friends who have been there to help when I needed them and for unknown people in the community that raised money and established a one time scholarship just for me. Most importantly, I'm thankful for a God that has always been there for me; waiting patiently until I realized Its presence and how much I needed that presence in my life. Oh, I'm also thankful for my two cats Gordan and Ashworth for forgiving me when I forget to change their cat litter. **Bret**

I am thankful for my partner Victor. He is a real sweetheart. I love the the sparkle I see when I look in his beautiful brown eyes. **Carl**

There are so many things to be thankful for – every day – that remembrances can seem trite. But here goes anyway. I'm thankful for nearly twelve years with my partner; most days. I'm still not sure why he loves me (who knew I could still be such a #\$\$%a on certain days!). I'm grateful that my international friends and family don't hold our current president against me (I know it's not easy). I'm joyful that I have been in good health and have been able to climb mountains and travel abroad this year. In ways that grow more apparent, I appreciate a warm house, food availability and shared meals with friends. This year, there will be fewer gifts and more hospitality – and any money left over will go to deserving disaster relief. As I sit snuggled with my dearest and doggie in a quiet home on the high plains of eastern Colorado, I know that every day is a gift. And – I thank God that I increasingly understand the folly of taking so much for granted. **Ben**

I am thankful that I have found an osteopathic surgeon that I like in Baltimore who charges little more than half as much as the other one. I'll have my first surgery in 2 1/2 weeks. I'm very thankful for the Yahoo surfacehippy discussion group. They are so very helpful. I've read that you know you're over the hill when you enjoy hearing about other people's operations. **Heidi**

I am blessed and grateful for each and every friendship I have made this year. **Jinny**

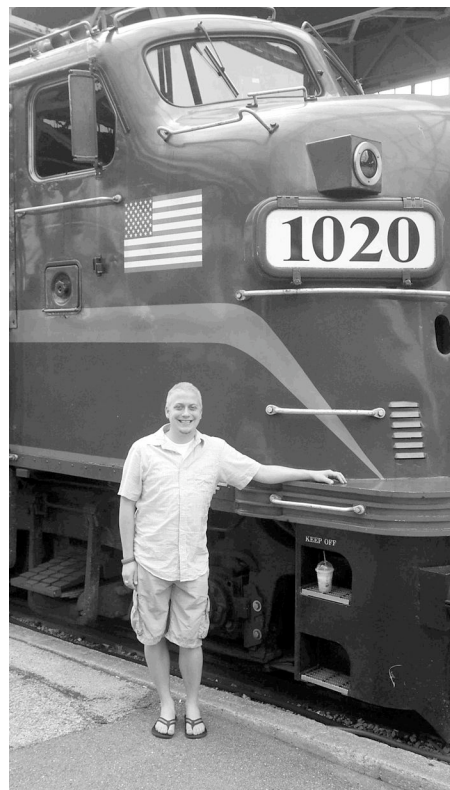
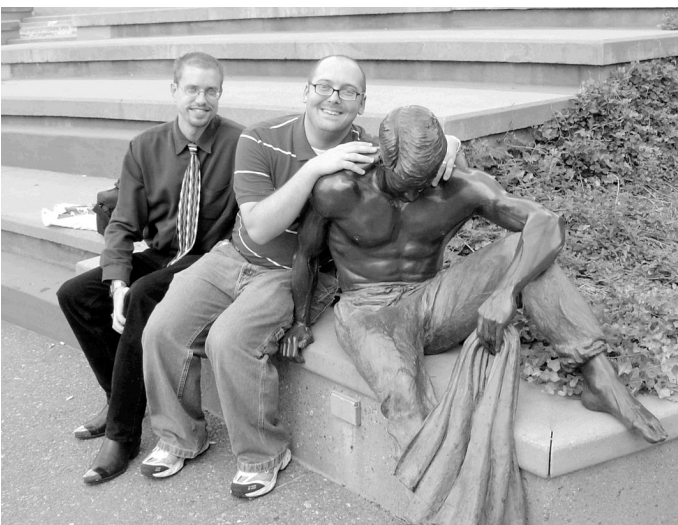
I am thankful for my friends who have been supportive and loving to me as I have been coming out to them. **Sawyer.**



I am thankful for the support my family has given me during my move back to Texas. I am grateful for Travis who has given me countless reasons to look forward to the future. **Rigo**

I am grateful that I got to meet a down to earth and awesome guy. **Shawn**

This has been a year of changes, mostly blessings. I enjoy my stability on the home front; passing the 11 year mark with my partner Vince. We moved to San Diego to a wonderful new home: commuting back to NY two weeks a month for my ongoing job. There are wonderful Kinship blessings, especially Kampmeeting and my trip to meet our Australian Kinship friends. There is happiness that the new Kinship video came out, that new leaders and energy have emerged all over the world and that the organization as a whole is thriving. God has blessed me with caring people in my life. The issues have seemed small in comparison. **Bob**





Vision Building

This has been an extraordinary year. We have had meetings in Africa, Australia, Europe and the United States. We have supported both a newly released film and a re-issued book about being the parent of a gay or lesbian child. We are sending the Connection to more than 1200 people in twenty plus countries on six continents. You've read the news about IMRU?, our component for members under thirty and their outreach education to universities and colleges. Thanks to Ren, we are beginning to build a work for members over sixty. One of our families had a baby and two more families are expecting one in the next few months. One of our members welcomed her granddaughter. (And that is just the news we know about!) Amazing growth and community building is going on there. And and and...we just cannot wait to tell you about plans for next year. Our first draft calendar of events will be out in the January issue. We would like you to continue to pray for us. We would like for you to join us in one of our adventures. We would like for you to think about ways you would like to be part of building this dream and this community; host a meeting, offer a workshop, cook a meal, contribute financially, write for the Connection, send us your thoughts and ideas, write on Kinnet or GaySDAs. It is your contributions that make this growth possible. If you want to participate, contact one of your regional coordinators. If you want to write, Catherine just cannot wait to hear from you. If you want to contribute you can go to our website to find a secure way to donate or send a check to the office. If you want to pray, well, you know that address. But the most important way you can help us build is to take very very good care of yourself and those you love. Remember, you are infinitely valuable. ▼

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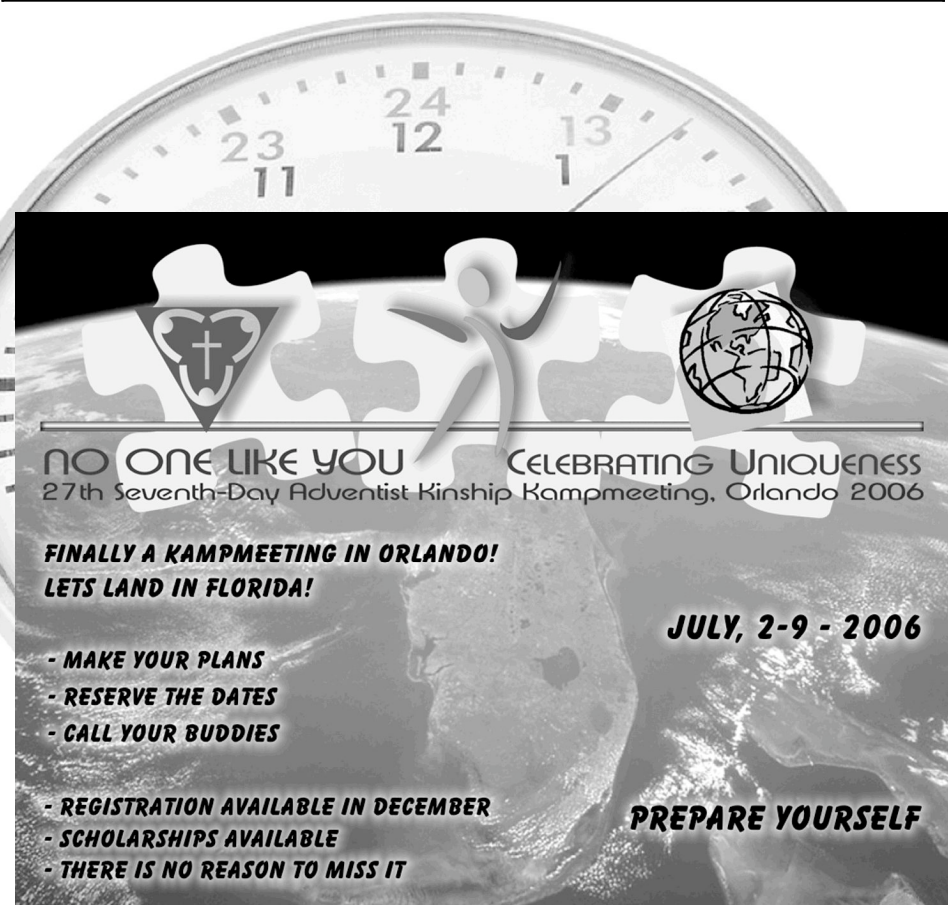
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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.



NO ONE LIKE YOU CELEBRATING UNIQUENESS
27th Seventh-Day Adventist Kinship Kampmeeting, Orlando 2006

FINALLY A KAMPMEETING IN ORLANDO!
LETS LAND IN FLORIDA!

JULY, 2-9 - 2006

- MAKE YOUR PLANS
- RESERVE THE DATES
- CALL YOUR BUDDIES

REGISTRATION AVAILABLE IN DECEMBER
SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE
THERE IS NO REASON TO MISS IT

PREPARE YOURSELF

Kinship News

IMRU?

We have had many blessings this year. At the beginning of the year a new leadership structure was adopted for IMRU? to maintain more efficiency for the members. This has worked very well. Group membership has increased to 118 participants. A member of our leadership team now holds a member-at-large position on the SDA Kinship International Board of Directors. We recognize individual birthdays and have instituted a weekly Friday evening chat on our yahoo groups page. Many IMRU? members were present a Mini Kampmeetings on both coasts as well as the Kinship International Kampmeeting in St. Louis. This autumn, IMRU? began distributing brochures from Heart Strong with IMRU contact information to various Seventh Day Adventist colleges and universities in the North American Division. We would like to thank those who donated money, time and efforts for this endeavor. We would also like to thank each of the members of IMRU? for making our group the active, energetic, supportive place that it is. We are looking forward to more great things in 2006.

Australia: Noel Thorpe

An Aussie Style Kampmeeting

SDA Kinship Australia will sponsor a symposium from the 30th of September to the 2nd of October 2006; our long Labour Day in New South Wales. The emphasis will be on Health and Well Being for GLBTI people and will include speakers on the topic from the wider community. We will be centered at the West Ryde Leagues Club in Sydney Australia.

We estimate that the cost will be around the \$70au per day and will include lunch and both morning and afternoon tea. Attendees will need to pay for their own accommodations but the Comfort Inn West Ryde is near by and has a base price of \$115au per three in a room. If you want to come see Australia, this is the time to do so. We would love to have you spend time with your Kinship Family down under. This Kampmeeting is for all of Kinship Australia. On the 1st of October we will have an excursion to Camberra, Australia's capital. Reservations need to be to us by June of 2006. We are looking forward to seeing you!

Germany: Roy Raetzer

Report submitted by Ruud Kieboom

From 28-30th of October some members from the German Kinship group gathered in the beautiful city of Cologne. On Friday night we walked through the centre of the city with its impressive dome, the site of a recent visit by the new German Pope Benedictus XVI. Shops were open till late, there was a crowd in the streets, and an atmosphere that made the evening a pleasant one. We enjoyed a delicious meal in the cosy and typically Cologne's Kneipe (Bar). The group felt culturally obliged to try at least one little glass of "Kölsch", the local brewed beer. We had a discussion about ways we can address the many languages present during the European Kinship Meetings so that more of our members can participate. On Sabbath morning we wanted to join the services of a local Seventh Day Adventist church that meets in

the garden of a house on an ordinary street. We found that the worship service had started before the Sabbath School lesson and we had already missed it. For lunch we tried the extraordinary cakes at Wahle's Konditorei. The cakes on display were a feast for the eye and a tease to the gustatory organs. It was difficult to make a choice and impossible to try a bit of all. For the rest of that afternoon we visited other parts of the city and saw the beautiful synagogue (closed to visitors on Sabbath) and a gay bookshop. A late dinner finished our little get together. Joachim is working on organizing meetings for Germany. This was his second and he is already planning one for the spring of 2006. Roy handles the mail that arrives from people who have visited the website. We ask you to continue to pray for Kinship Germany!

Uganda: Joseph Brown

Our membership has grown so much that we have decided to regroup ourselves into eastern and western regions. We have established the Lesbian Desk coordinated by Nickson Mawanda Rite. She is also responsible for organizing our next African Kinship Kampmeeting in the Spring. We would like to invite any of you who would like to teach us more about Christianity and homosexuality to feel free to come and visit us. We would like to invite you to our Kampmeeting the first week in April of 2006 in Kampala. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me at kkindu2001@yahoo.com. We wish you wonderful Christmas wishes and a Happy New Year. ▼

For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

—Isaiah 9:6