

connection

The Journal of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. November 2004 Vol. 28 No. 9



Sacred Rites: More building Blocks of Community.

Come Lord Jesus, remain our guest.
Stay with us as this day begins and ends and, as at Emmaus,
Reveal yourself to us and share with us this feast.

Be with us.

We are strangers no longer.
We are friends with you and with each other.

Be among us now.

We are young and old together.
You are with us from eternity past to eternity future.
Be close to us that we may be close to You.

(From the Communion Liturgy at European Kinship Meeting 3, September, 2004)

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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 26 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.)

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Welcome to November! South of the equator you are reveling in the riches of flowered spring. North of the equator, many of us are getting ready for snow, sledding and feasts. In the United States, November is a month of Thanksgiving; of remembering the blessings that have overflowed our year and the friendships who have gifted it. In this issue we will focus on the rituals and rites that remind us of the blessings, gifts, hope, and glue that hold together communities. In Kinship this year we have had a Kampmeeting wedding, baptism, foot washing ordinance and two Communion services. We want to bring you pictures and stories from both the U.S. and European rituals. In this issue, we would also like to welcome Romilda Wilder as a guest writer. She was our Connection editor a few years back and we are enjoying working with her again. We would like to welcome Bruce Boyd as a first time contributor. Bruce is one of the coordinators of Region 9. We are quite excited to be getting reports from Kinship members in several countries. As our community becomes increasingly international, one of our top priorities is to bring us all together with stories, news, and pictures from each other.



A Wedding Now It's Been Ten Years...

By Linda Wright

I first met Jacquie Hegarty when she was 21 and I was 16. I was a junior at the boarding academy where she and her husband David came to teach for the year following their college graduation. I worked as a student secretary in the Music Department. Mr. Hegarty taught organ and piano, so I got to know him quite well. Mrs. Hegarty was the girls' dean. Somehow, I managed to stay out of trouble in the dorm and didn't have the same opportunity to spend time with her. I was sad when they left at the end of that school year. I wrote Mrs. Hegarty a full-page letter on notebook paper telling her how much I missed her. We all moved on with our lives. A few years later I heard that the Hegartys had divorced.

I started nursing school but never finished. I married a handsome non-Adventist man. We had a son together. Our marriage was never quite "right," and I couldn't figure out why. I was active in my local Seventh-day Adventist church. With my son, I became involved with Sabbath School, church school, Pathfinders, and many church music activities. I stayed active with the alumni association of my academy. One year I decided we should invite David Hegarty to be guest organist for Homecoming. I had heard he was gay and lived in San Francisco. It wasn't hard for me to find him. I re-established a friendship with my former academy music teacher, now on an adult level. We both had lost track of Mrs. Hegarty. David told me he heard she had re-married, moved to Texas, and "had a bunch of kids."

After nineteen years of marriage, I finally got up enough courage to put an end to the misery my son's father and I were causing each other. I knew I could never be the wife he needed. I still didn't know why. David Hegarty invited me to visit him in San Francisco, and I fell in love with The City. I moved there in 1992 and started a business with him, Hegarty Music Press. The sole purpose for our endeavor was to publish and promote his prolific compositions. He became my best friend and soul mate. I could talk to him about anything.

In July of 1993, David and his new lover Len went off for a holiday. I was alone for those few days with time to think about my own life. I knew I could never live with a man again; yet, I didn't want to spend the rest of my life alone. For the first time, I allowed myself to acknowledge who I really am. I laughed and I cried and I danced! I joined the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Chorus. I became part of the gay community, not just as David's business partner, but as a lesbian in my own right. I fell in love with a gorgeous female soloist at the Lutheran church, where I played the organ on Sundays. Though she claimed to be at least bisexual, the relationship was never reciprocated. We remained friends, but I had to move on.

At this point in time I hadn't figured out a way to reconcile my orientation with being a Christian, much less a Seventh-day Adventist. I found a discussion group on America Online (AOL) that had just been started by an older gay man who lived near Atlantic Union College. I immediately posted, expressing my dilemma. I was answered by Juliana Harvard, another Adventist

mom, like me. She also had grown up in the church, raised children in the church, and had been totally consumed with church music, Pathfinders, and children's Sabbath School. She encouraged me--no, urged me--to get in contact with my local Kinship chapter; and she insisted that it is possible to be gay and Adventist!

Juliana and I emailed frequently. We began to talk on the phone. She was going through a grueling divorce from the father of her two teenage children. He was an Adventist and an elder in their local church. Unlike me, she had been a stay-at-home mom and had home schooled her children. She had even founded an Adventist home schooling support group and published a newsletter that was circulated across the United States.

Though we had not even seen pictures of each other, Juliana and I were falling in love. Because David was my very best friend in the whole wide world, I told him about Juliana Harvard. I told him she was an amateur organist who had played and loved his music for many years. I even began to print out and show him the emails from her. He read them with interest and said that the writing style seemed very, very familiar.

Juliana's music, her interest in David's compositions, her "familiar" writing style, and perhaps, some not-so-subtle hints, roused my suspicions and my curiosity. I began to nudge her to talk on the phone to David, "since she was such a big fan of his work." David, quite deliberately, helped us agree upon August 20, 1994 as the date for our phone conversation. That particular day was the 28th wedding anniversary for him and Jacquie Hegarty. We were both suspicious that the alleged Juliana Harvard was actually the former Mrs. Hegarty. When David talked to her on the phone in my apartment that night, I knew we had found the long lost "little dean." I also knew that I had found the woman of my dreams.

Like David, she was someone to whom I could bare my soul. Even better for me, she is a woman!

Some weeks later, at a San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Chorus talent show, I sang, "You're Nearer," a song I had learned from David. I dedicated it to "my best friend and business partner who has shared many things with me, the most recent of which is his ex-wife." The crowd cheered! I sent a plane ticket to Jacquie so she



could fly to San Francisco for a long weekend to meet me and to be reunited, spiritually and emotionally, with David. When I put her on the plane back to Texas on Monday morning, my heart felt like it was being ripped from my body. I knew I had to see her again--and again. We began a 16-month long-distance relationship, with daily emails, phone calls, and weekend visits as often as we could afford them.

Jacquie's divorce was final in November of 1994, just days before she started working at Microsoft in Dallas. She began the job with her "new" legal surname of Hegarty. I didn't believe she would ever leave her beloved Fort Worth and the Texas bluebonnets in April--but she did. In January of 1996, after her last horrendous divorce court date, and when her

contract at Microsoft had ended, Jacquie and her daughter moved to Alameda (across the bay from San Francisco). I had rented a lovely old Victorian flat for the three of us.

The last nine years have flown by! My son, who had stayed with his father in North Carolina, graduated from high school and moved to California with his girlfriend. At one time we had four teenagers, including Jacquie's daughter's boyfriend, living with us in a three-bedroom apartment with one bathroom. During the holidays, Jacquie's son and his girlfriend, who became his fiance and then new bride, would come out from Texas to visit. We have survived the children's experiments with substances, their snakes and lizards and rodents, incessant video games, their fist fights and verbal assaults upon one another, calls from the high school principal's office and the Alameda Hospital Emergency Room, visits from the Alameda Police and Alameda Fire Departments (when the back porch burned down from an un-extinguished cigarette), and lost keys incidents too numerous to mention.

We have been involved with Region 8 Kinship during most of this last decade, primarily assisting whoever was the regional coordinator. We have seen our group grow and change over the years. We have watched members and relationships come and go, marched with Kinship in San Francisco Pride Parades, and have worked in a booth for Kinship during the Pride celebrations. I have long since solved my dilemma about being a lesbian Seventh-day Adventist Christian. I have discovered that even if "they" take you out of the church, "they" cannot take the church out of you. No one can keep me from being Adventist, if that's who I choose to be. More importantly, no one can stop God from loving me and caring for my life. He even brought me a life partner.

Like all relationships, ours has had its ups and downs, but our

love for each other has remained constant and strong and unconditional throughout the changing circumstances of life. Our children have grown up and moved out. Believe it or not, they have become independent, responsible young adults and productive citizens. We claim at least four children between the two of us, by blood, marriage, or partnership. We are proud of all of them! We also claim a surrogate grandson, the third and youngest child of a couple who came to our church in 2001. We sat with the baby when he was a newborn. From age six months he spent nearly every weekend with us. Our entire house and back yard looked like a preschool for three years! We firmly believe God placed him into our lives for those first years of his life. With his blond hair and blue eyes, little Ole looks exactly like my own son did at that age; and we felt that God has given us a taste of what it might have been like to raise a child together. The family recently moved from the Bay Area, but I know we will continue to be a part of Ole's life.

Our own mothers passed away when they were exactly ten years older than Jacquie and I are now. I don't know if we'll have another ten years--or less or more--together. I do know that every moment we spend together is precious and cherished. Every moment we spend in the diverse pursuits of our individual lives and careers all the more enriches what we each bring to our relationship.

In the summer of 2004, we obtained our official California Certificate of Domestic Partnership from Kevin Shelley, Secretary of State. On August 20, 2004, at the 25th Anniversary of Kinship Kampmeeting, held at Menucha near Portland, Oregon, Jacquie and I stood up before God and our Kinship family to publicly affirm our private commitment to each other, not just for "as long as we both shall live" but for all eternity!



A Baptism

From Barbara:

Greetings to all from Tennessee. When I first got together with Brenda I attended an End-time Prophecy Seminar. I became a believer but was denied baptism because I was a lesbian. Over the years I would be denied again and again. I was told that the Seventh Day Adventist Church is like the Boy Scouts; they can keep out anyone they want. I mentioned this to Fred Casey before Kampmeeting. At Kampmeeting I mentioned this to our guest speaker. Together these two people, with a host of others, worked to make my baptism happen. My grammar has changed. I no longer say "I worship as a Seventh Day Adventist." I can now say "I AM a Seventh Day Adventist." There is no question, nothing can be said to change it or deny it. I AM a Seventh Day Adventist. I AM a child of GOD. I wish you peace during your days and gentle rest during your nights

From Brenda:

Barb's baptism has allowed me to find forgiveness in my heart toward my church. It was so difficult for me to watch my church refuse to embrace her. Each new baptism I witnessed was a reminder of the pain of watching her accept Jesus, and the 27 fundamentals of the church, and yet be denied. We had previously attended Metropolitan Community Church. Barb was a member. I was a friend of the church. Because the Sabbath was always an issue for me, I would not join as a member. We both felt we wanted more depth to



our study of the Word. We attended an End-time Prophecy series, and Barb accepted my church and my beliefs, only to be denied.

At one point, I went before my church pastor and asked how the church could deny baptism? I contended if they espoused the belief that by beholding we become changed they could baptize her and pray for that to occur. Prior to Kampmeeting this year Barb and I discussed where we could go to feel comfortable as we worshiped. The SDA church was an option that was just too painful. A local Episcopal church would at least accept us for who we are. I was still having great difficulty with worship on Sunday. Since our return from Kampmeeting, the past two Sabbaths we have attended a local SDA church. We sat together as members. There have been no baptisms yet. However, I feel as though I can now let go of the pain associated with that. It is so awesome to have some faction of our church put into practice the



Kinship News

Australia: *Noel Thorpe*

The meeting planned for Brisbane, the 5th of December is off, but we are having a meeting in Brisbane on the 6th February 2005, Sunday at 11am. Dr Wendell Rosevear OAM, will speak on Youth Suicide and Dr Dianna Pitchford will speak on Women's Issues. The meeting will have a nondenominational religious focus. A light luncheon will be provided afterwards. Gold coin donation gratefully appreciated. RSVP BY the 31st of January.

Brazil: *Itamar Matos*

I am very happy to have an opportunity to write about our organization in Brazil. We are growing every day. Four years ago I contacted SDA Kinship. I have difficulty understanding English but got in touch with several Brazilian friends who speak English and who were already members of Kinship. I began to receive the Connection and selected articles that I thought would be most helpful to Brazilian readers and translated the articles into Portuguese so I could share them. Two years ago we created an online group with the name Gays Adventistas (<http://groups.msn.com/GaysAdventistas>). Today we have more than 220 registered members. Not all of them participate actively in the discussions but we know we are reaching many people with our messages. We have Cristiano Valrio's support. He is a member of Kinship in So Paulo. We are creating a web site totally in Portuguese (www.irmandadeasd.org), and we have been translating some articles that we found in the official Kinship web site. We are considering dividing Brazil into

A Foot washing

Seventh Day Adventists invoke a communion tradition that is different than most Christian churches. Following the story of the Last Supper, our church founders came to believe that we should emulate that example of Jesus in a complete way. Taking the time to bring a bowl of water, kneel

Baptism (continued)...

true meaning of baptism like Kinship has done. I can now look at the church as a whole and recognize they are on a spiritual journey. I hope and pray that, as time progresses, fewer and fewer people will be denied their rights to baptism and to belong to a church family. Thank-you Kinship for all your efforts, the ceremony was beautiful, the acceptance even greater.

We would like to welcome Barbara into both our Kinship community and the Seventh Day Adventist church. And we would like to reaffirm our commitment to support you in the good moments and the ones that rattle our souls. ▼

before someone, and wash their feet became an opportunity to say I am here to serve you. It became a time to re-connect or build relationships that may have been distanced, shattered or not yet strengthened. Foot washing is an opportunity to lay aside our facades and touch the soul of the person before us. Kinship is dedicated to laying aside the facades that keep us from coming before God and each other in a whole and unique way. It would make sense that we would include the foot washing service as part of our communion with God and with each other. Our foot washing this year was part of a candlelight baptism and vespers. We kept our candles lit as we walked up the hill to share the bread and the wine. ▼

regions similar to the ones Kinship has in the United States and we are looking for coordinators in each one of these areas to help us. This October something very important happened. We had our first official meeting with some members in So Paulo. They went to church, shared lunch at the house of one of the members and, later that afternoon, went to the Park Ibirapuera, where they discussed religion and homosexuality. In June we had the largest Gay Pride parade in the world. More than 1,500,000 people marched in that parade. During the parade Cristiano, Elisngela and I wore shirts with the Logo of Kinship and our e-mail addresses. We distributed pamphlets. During next years Gay Pride march we plan to be using more Kinship shirts and distributing more pamphlets. We also plan to make a banner so everyone can see us. We are planning meetings in So Paulo and in other cities of Braslia. We see Gods hands blessing us. We believe the work of SDA Kinship in the world is growing. Blessings!

Europe: Ruud Kieboom

In Scotland, Mike sent along this message to Ruud. "Hi! I am planning to have a BIG meeting with my Church Pastor in the next couple of weeks (as soon as our diaries allow us time together). I want to open up to him and inform him about EKM4 (as it will be in his territory). Please pray for God's blessing and intervention on this critical step that I am about to take."... In the Netherlands, Gerard approached Paul Tompkins, who is a member of the European Division, to ask him to become part of the European Advisory Board. Pastor Tompkins said that he does not want to be a part of the Advisory Board but believes that "the best approach is for each Union to be contacted separately where there is a Kinship group who wish to form in their

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Two Communion



Blessed are You, O God
For You have brought forth grain from the earth from which we make
bread
Blessed are You, O God
For you have created the fruit of the vine which we have harvested
In the beginning you watered the earth so that men and women might
have food and drink
You gave food and drink to your servants
to strengthen them on their journey
You called Moses and your people out of bondage
And refreshed them in the wilderness
You gave Mary and Joseph and Jesus their daily bread to share within
their home
Here at this table you offer us bread and wine for our journey
to nourish us as sons and daughters
As Jesus offered thanks for the gifts of the earth
so we offer You our thanks for these symbols of Your love
We thank you for Your broken body
Your spilt blood, Your sacrifice, Your heart-rending passion
Your devotion, Your all
Here, with our bothers and sisters
We praise you from the bottom of our hearts for Your unending
greatness
Here we have come, from many countries, many cultures, many
backgrounds
We are all different, we are all diverse
But we all come together with You and in You as You have called us
Here, surrounded by Your love, we praise You for that love
So, in the devotion and love of Jesus for all His followers
We praise You for the love shown between You and this Kinship
group.
Accept our praise and thanks for they are our offerings to you tonight.
(From the liturgy offered at European Kinship Meeting 3)
We would like to thank Kendra in the U.S. and Mike in Europe for being
our guides during this year's Kinship communion rituals.



My Teacher

By Rom Wilder

A good teacher learns from her students. My first year of teaching was in a one-room school in Illinois with 12 boys in grades three to seven. I probably learned the most that year. That year I was the greenest. A beginner. An enthusiastic and caring beginner, but quite green nevertheless.

My fourth year of teaching I had a few children who stood out in my mind because of their unique needs. I recall a third grade boy who stood at his desk instead of sitting down. Looking back I wonder if it was because he was short. At the time I thought it was because he went home to a bad, sad situation every night, and maybe standing "at the ready" made him feel safer. There was a third grade girl who told of a woman in her neighborhood who was drunk all the time and went to buy alcohol with no clothes on except a coat. She was a child who bubbled over and exaggerated, so I asked her 4th grade brother whose quietness and realistic views on life made him quite her opposite. He confirmed her story. A few weeks later this same little girl asked me why God made alcohol. I didn't have an answer. She went on to say, "Remember how I told you there was a woman in our neighborhood who went down to the store to buy alcohol and only wore a coat?" I said I did. "That was my mama," she said more quietly than I'd ever heard her speak.

There were several who stood out because of their goodness and the seeming normalcy of their lives. I think of six children especially. They sometimes spoke out of turn or giggled when it wasn't perfectly appropriate. (Yes,

even 4th grade boys giggle.) But they worked and played hard and did it with civility most of the time (Remember: they were 8-10 years old!). Two boys were particularly tenderhearted. Even though they were "normal" students, there was a tenderheartedness about them that has stayed with me the 36 years since I've seen them. One had a name so unusual I can only find four with his last name in the national phone directory. The other one came back into my life a couple of weeks ago.

Someone sent me an article about a man who had been the only American to remain in Rwanda when the uprising took place in 1994; a genocide where 800,000 (yes, eight hundred thousand) men, women, and children were massacred in 100 days. This man had received an honor, ten years later, for being a caring humanitarian, for doing the right thing. I read the article. The name of its subject was the same as one of those "good" kids. What he had done didn't surprise me because it was how he had acted as a child. Doing a bit of research (isn't the internet wonderful?) I was able to find out more. Sure enough, it was that tenderhearted little guy I'd remembered so well. I sent him an email. An hour later he phoned my office. Yes, he remembered his 4th grade teacher.

Yes, he remembered his 4th grade teacher. Red hair and a Karmann-Ghia, right?

Red hair and a Karmann-Ghia, right? "Isn't that what boys remember", he asked? I smiled, remembering his smile and his giggle, his serious face, his tears.

Last night my order from PBS arrived; the DVD "Ghosts of Rwanda" - a two hour documentary about the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. I had purchased it because the child whose giggle still remained in my head, whose anger at me when he thought I was unfair, whose sadness and tenderness showed on his face so clearly as a nine year old - grew up and was interviewed for this FRONTLINE program about the genocide.

A good teacher learns from her students. As I sat there watching and listening to the people who had put their lives on the line, who had done 'the right thing', tears filled my eyes. I was hit in my belly by the realization that so few came to the aid of a people being hacked to death with machetes. I was hit in my belly because, in 1994, I didn't ask anyone if there was something I could do. I was hit in my belly by seeing the same face and gestures on a caring man that I'd seen on a caring little boy so many years ago.

Why had this not hit me before? Why had I passed posters pasted to telephone poles - posters about Rwanda - without much thought

except "why are people messing up the telephone poles?" Partially, at that time in my life I didn't have extra energy, physical or emotional, to give for a cause. (Poor excuse.) Mostly it was because Rwanda was far away, and it was happening to 'them' -- not to me. Rwanda became personal when I found out my student; the little fellow with the contagious giggle who had laughed and cried in front of me in 1967 and 1968 had been there. Shame on me for not making it personal before now. It should be personal simply because of the inhumanity of the situation.

At 61 I'm not too old to learn. Once again I am learning from my student. He is reminding me, by his having done the right thing; that I have to do more than talk the talk. I talk justice, I talk humanitarianism, but what am I doing about it? What can I do? He says genocide begins by putting another person down for any reason, about anything. Put-downs are the seeds of genocide. The excuses we use to do nothing to help the vulnerable are also the seeds of genocide. Religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic level, physical appearance, mental acuity, and so many more things must cease being barriers and excuses for not getting involved and not caring. We need to personalize all of it somehow.

I am grateful for my teacher, a tenderhearted child who became an adult willing to sacrifice everything to do the right thing. I'm grateful for his personalization of a horror I could get rid of ten years ago by turning off my television. I apologize to him for becoming too lazy and self-centered to walk the talk any more. I know he will forgive me. That's also a part of who he is. ▼

Give me a fruitful error anytime, full of seeds, bursting with its own corrections. –Vilfredo Pareto

More scenes from **European Kampmeeting** 2004



Kinship News (Continued)...

country/territory. The reason for this is that there would undoubtedly be a different response from the various entities in Central and Western Europe and also the other Unions that comprise the TED. If Unions subsequently wish to ask for division advice, or possible coordination, then that could take place via the Union administrations at a later stage." Ruud and Kees were hosts to Kiyimba Brown, our coordinator for a Kinship group in Uganda this week, when Kiyimba was in the Netherlands for an HIV/AIDS conference. He was invited by the Dutch Humanistic Organization for Development and Cooperation to attend the congress. Kiyimba works for children where one or both parents have died of AIDS to help the children be placed in homes of relatives instead of in orphanages. The Dutch organization is a financial supporter of his work.

Germany: Roy Ratzer

From 12th to 14th of November HAD will have its fall meeting in Darmstadt (near Frankfurt). Darmstadt is the location of Marienhoehe and we plan to attend the Sabbath service there. The weekend will give us an idea about the future of HAD. We have to decide if we will keep the group registered and play by the rules set by the state to meet in certain formats or if we de-register the group and just meet from time to time. We are going through a developmental stage where many members of HAD are not as interested in the organization as they once were. This could be the result of more equality for lesbians and gays, even though we are not yet one hundred percent on the same footing as heterosexuals. It could be because some of our members have given up on the Seventh Day Adventist church and

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Supporting Good Soldiers

By Bruce Boyd

Kinship, as an organization, has given very little formal attention to military matters. For me the reasons are obvious. Few Seventh Day Adventists men or women choose to join any branch of the military service because we do not believe in killing other human beings. Since killing is one of the chief activities of warfare, a military career is not the usual choice of observing Adventists.

Despite this, there are young Seventh Day Adventists in military service who have joined for their own variety of reasons. Some of them are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered and merit the attention of this community. Many of our older Kinship members spent time in the military back in the days of universal draft. Most of them remember how military policies toward those of us of variant orientations or gender identities affected them during their time of service. How would they have handled the current "don't ask; don't tell" policy that forbids gay and lesbian soldiers to declare their orientation or to act on it? I continue to be aware that the United States military policy affects all of us, even if indirectly.

My research indicates that about 10,000 military personnel have been discharged under the "don't ask, don't tell policy" since it took effect. I have heard of cases where commanders and fellow soldiers have spied on off duty colleagues,

rummaged through their personal journals or taunted them into the admissions that lead automatically to a discharge from military service. Because of a tiny shift in military policy, the discharges are, at least, no longer dishonorable. Researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara who analyzed military discharge data between 1998 and 2003 found that among the 6,273 soldiers fired by the military during the years of legalized discrimination, many were highly trained and competent men and women. Eighty-eight were linguists, including several Arab language specialists. Forty-nine were nuclear, biological or chemical warfare experts. Ninety were nuclear power engineers. One hundred and fifty were rocket missile and artillery specialists. Three hundred and forty were assigned to the infantry. The senselessness of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy is underscored as the military continues to eject personnel whose skills are in high demand now, and in the foreseeable future. The individual costs become apparent when many of the discharged military experts are not able to find jobs compatible with their skills and professional training. I understand that they often have to work in low paying jobs that have no connection to their skills.

The rationale for this mean spirited policy is that openly homosexual soldiers would undermine unit cohesion. Straight

men and women would fear sexual intimidation from their gay and lesbian colleagues. The trust necessary among buddies in combat would be eroded. If this is true I wonder how straight American troops are able to serve among European troops who are not separated by sexual orientation. Since the European Union does not practice homophobic isolation and the United States is begging NATO to come to our aid in Iraq, how could NATO units join us in any future operation?

I would like to see Kinship work towards ending this form of homophobia that plagues our country. These destructive policies affect us all, even if indirectly. Any form of homophobia should be a legitimate concern of our organization. ▼

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

—Sun-Tzu

Kinship News (Continued)...

see us as an arm of that church. It could be because many members have private stressors in their lives; families, job related issues, health, etc. I am happy to report that at least one new guy would like to attend. He found out about HAD from our website. I think there are others who have not yet found us and I am looking forward to seeing the old members too.

Philippines: Jonathan Coo

Because October 31 fell on a Sunday, MALATE--the gay district of Manila--celebrated its Halloween Party on a Saturday. The event was hosted by OUT!, the first gay-oriented television show in the Philippines. There have been many "firsts" in the year 2004 for the Philippine Gay Scene. We also started our "first" Gay Men's Chorus and "first" gay magazine, entitled ICON.

Uganda

We would like to welcome this new group! It is composed of about 100 Seventh Day Adventists or former Adventists. There are also members from other churches. They have meetings several times a year in the capital city of Kampala. The gatherings are always in the homes of members because the crime of being gay or lesbian in Uganda carries with it a life sentence in prison. It is possible to live with your partner if you do not say out loud that you are in a homosexual relationship. Kinship has sent the group our literature covering the issues of homosexuality and the Bible. The group is also looking for speakers to help them with this issue. They would love to have visitors from Kinship. When Kiyimba was in the Netherlands Ruud interviewed him, with pictures. This interview will be in next months issue.

Region 1: Catherine Taylor

On December 11, Samuel and Andrew will be hosting a meeting.

Well be gathering at 2PM for a walk in the Minute Man National Park, having vespers at 4:30 followed by a potluck supper. Those who would like are topping off the evening with the Holiday Concert of the Boston Gay Mens Chorus. If you are interested in joining us, we welcome you to contact Catherine at connectioneditor@sdakinship.org

Region 2: Yolanda Elliot

Region 2 has accepted the challenge! Last year, we each were challenged to bring \$100 worth of non-perishable foods to put into the Oakland's Presbyterian Church's Food Pantry. This church has allowed us to hold our monthly vespers services in their sanctuary for more than five years. They never ask for anything. Because this church is an extremely active church whose focus is to give back to the community, (they feed 20 families every month), we decided to give back to them. Last year Region 2 gathered more than \$750 worth of non-perishable food items for the church food pantry. Now, once again, we have the opportunity to become part of the circle of giving. We will bring our food donations to the church during our next vespers on November 12. In December's Connection I will let you know what we were able to accomplish. On October 30-31, Region 2 spent part of the weekend in Williamsburg, VA. It was an opportunity to see some Colonial sights and enjoy the atmosphere of this beautiful area. Jim invited us to his home for a continental breakfast to begin our adventure. We wish you all could have been there with us!

Region 4

Chad is working to organize a gathering in this region. He has published his ideas on Kinnet and would love to have any of you who are interested to contact him. For more information, you can on the Region 4 posting area on Kinnet.

Region 5: Floyd Poenitz

Region 5 is going to have a

gathering at Obed Gonzalez's house on November 13th. I'm not sure if there will be a meeting after that this year. It's difficult to schedule anything during the hectic holiday time. Jerry R. has moved back to Dallas from Houston and is hoping to work on helping to get more activities planned for 2005. Several of the local Kinshippers are going to participate in the annual Halloween Street Party in the Oak Lawn area of Dallas.

Region 7: Betty Hale

Portland Metro Area meeting details--Sabbath, November 27. Let's meet for church and have a potluck afterwards. The church I attend meets on Sabbath and has two musician pastors who are former Seventh Day Adventists. They are gay-friendly (which would make it different from most SDA churches), but otherwise has recognizable SDA format. There will be good contemporary Christian music with older, more familiar songs thrown into the mix. Service starts 11:00 AM (Sabbath School at 10:00), Bridge City Community Church, 2816 SE Harrison Street, Milwaukie, OR. More info at: www.bridgcity.org After service, somewhere between 12:30 and 1 PM (Gay Standard Time) we would like to invite you to a potluck at 9504 SE Stanley Ave., Milwaukie, OR. Plates, cups and cutlery will be supplied. Veggie and non-veggie dishes are welcome. I'll make a pie or a cake. Feel free to call me with more suggestions. After we enjoy a wonderful Kinship potluck, I'd like to plan more social outings for the future. What interests you? Theater? Roller-skating? Art Galleries?

Region 9: Bruce Boyd

Region 9 met on Sabbath, October 23 at Bruce's home for potluck lunch and discussion of pertinent issues. Some of us attended a play that evening about a professional baseball player who has decided to come out. On December 11 we will resume holding our traditional Christmas pageant at Glendale Central Adventist Church. ▼

The Invitation

Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Native American Elder.

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for. I want to know if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon.
I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it. I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own; if you can dance with wildness or let ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning it to be careful, be realistic or to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul.

I want to know if you can be faithful and therefore, trustworthy. I want to know if you can see beauty, even if it is not pretty, everyday and if you can source your life from the Divine God's presence. I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine and still stand on the edge of a lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!".

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone and do what needs to be done for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are, how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Health Notes of the Month:

People who work out with confidence derive greater benefits from exercise, research suggests. And people who perceive exercise experiences positively are probably more likely to stick to their fitness programs compared to people who approach exercise with negative feelings...In a study of older adults, the study participants who had an interest in cultivating their spiritual lives tended to experience fewer hospitalizations and require less long-term care compared to peers who weren't spiritual. Develop your spirit in the manner that fits your beliefs, be it attending religious services, meditating, or spending quiet time in nature...Frequent fruit eaters experience less weight gain over time compared to people who report low fruit consumption, a new study concluded. If you're watching your waistline, keep on hand a fresh supply of the season's best apples and pears, which are high in fiber and taste, low in calories, and keep well...Evidence suggests that nutritious foods work best when combined with other nutritious foods. Maximize the disease-fighting potential of your foods by including a variety of healthful options at mealtime. Vitamin-rich fruits and veggies, fiber-rich whole grains, fish or lean poultry, and heart-healthy fats are good staples to include in most meals...Early research indicates that tomato juice may reduce blood platelet clumping in people with type 2 diabetes. Blood platelet clumping could contribute to heart attack or stroke under certain conditions, and diabetics are at increased risk for such heart problems. If you add tomato juice to your diet, go for low-sodium varieties...Short, frequent mini-workouts throughout the day may lower your triglycerides as well as one long exercise session, results from a study concluded. Exercise reduces the spike in blood fats that occurs after consuming a high-fat meal. Try taking three 10-minute walks throughout the day when you can't make it to the gym...Antioxidant compounds in grapes may help reduce cholesterol levels and other blood fats, a new study reported. The chemical cousins pterostilbene and resveratrol, found primarily in grape skins, appear to have cancer-fighting and anti-inflammatory properties as well...Getting too much or too little vitamin A may increase your risk of bone fractures, a recent study revealed. To reduce your risk of excess, load up on foods rich in beta carotene, which your body converts into vitamin A as needed. Good foods to try include carrots, sweet potatoes, and cantaloupe. ▼

Websites of the Month

Both Ed and Naveen suggest we take a look at this one -
<http://www.gaychristian.net>,

Ren offered this for our perusal:
<http://www.spiritrestoration.org/Church/Homosexuality%20and%20the%20Church/Claiming%20The%20Promise%20-%20Book%20review.htm>

When in faith we take hold of His strength, He will change,
wonderfully change, the most hopeless, discouraging outlook. He
will do this for the glory of His name.

—Testimonies Vol. 8, p. 12

Connection Corner

Catherine T – Connection Editor

Floyd Poenitz is a most wonderful consultant. As we are working to make the Connection reflect the international family of Kinship, he reminded me that most of the holidays mentioned in our newsletter are based in the United States. He kindly shipped me the websites for two calendars that list worldwide holidays. I excitedly turned to November so I could publish them in this issue. November 1 had 13 international holidays. As I looked further I found the Celtic New Year, Liberian Thanksgiving Day, Independence of Cuenca in Ecuador, Will Rogers Day, Green March Day in Morocco, Prophet Mohammed's Birthday in Malaysia, Her majesty the Queen's Birthday in Nepal, Army Day in Zaire, Battle of Vietnieres in Haiti, Garifuna Settlement in Belize, Labor Thanksgiving Day in Japan, and National Heroes Day in the Phillippines. The list I am sharing with you leaves out thirty major November holidays. I got a little overwhelmed because I knew I couldn't fit them all in. What I would like is to hear from you. Tell me what holidays are important to you and to the country where you live. Tell me a little about them. I will put them in my Connection Holiday File and share them each month they occur. My e-mail address is listed on the Connection Contact page. Many many thanks for making us more relevant....On another note; we would like to hear how you celebrate your December holidays. Our copy deadline is around the 23rd of November, so please write, even if it's only a paragraph...On a third note, if you would prefer to receive the Connection only via internet and not on paper, please feel free to write us. We are trying to make our arrivals as reader friendly as possible. ▼

Devotional...

Mountain Of God

Rising out of the dry southern floor in the Desert of Sin, a mountain range reaches up to touch the tips of stars. In clear desert air heaven and earth are neighbors. Placed between two branches of the Red Sea the area is barren and arid. Despite its name (which, in Hebrew, means desolation) and its geography, the history of Mount Horeb flows with the promise and hope and passion of the great I AM.

Biblical literature first approaches Horeb as Moses herds sheep. He has been in exile from Egypt and from his chosen people almost four decades. He has married the daughter of a judge and a prince. He has scouted the wadis. He can smell the location of streams of water. This shepherd can find grazing lands for the animals that clothe and feed Zipporah's people. He knows the outline of the mountains, the curve of the horizon, the signs of the seasons, and the growing things of the Sinai. He sees the Creator's hand in the very hills. It is with a practiced, professional and curious eye that he is drawn to a bush wreathed in fire, but not consumed by it, to find a conversation with God. From that conversation Moses is catapulted to a very different stage; he becomes re-united with his family, his people and with a destiny he thought he had left behind in the sands of Egypt.

Following several royal conversations, ten plagues, the first Passover, an exodus, and a Red Sea crossing, Moses again approaches the mountain of the burning bush. Horeb looms into the vision of thousands upon thousands of Israelites to become their home for more than a year. In its shadow, near its quaking, under the fire that lights the voice of Yahweh, the children of Israel continue their journey from nomads to slaves to nationhood. On Horeb the impossible happens, again. Water flows from a smitten rock to end the thirst of thousands of created beings. Fire flows across the top of the mountain and Moses is not consumed. The hand of God reaches down and touches two tablets with Ten Words. Moses talks with God for six weeks without food or drink and comes down glowing with light and pulsating with strength. The people fall, and they rise again. The sanctuary service that will be the center of their worship for more than a thousand years takes form. And the people move on.

One more time Horeb will rise in the written journey of the Israelites. Elijah has stood alone on Mount Carmel, defying the prophets of Baal. His faith has allowed fire from God to consume a sacrifice - and the wood, stones and water upon which it was placed. His faith has allowed God to send rain upon a drought

shriveled land. His faith has led him running down a mountain to guide Ahab's chariot home. But in emotional exhaustion, Elijah's faith has faltered and he has run for his life from the raging Sidonian princess who became queen of Samaria. On one night's sleep and a meal from heaven he continues south, running across a desert to the other mountain that has held the fire of his God. And there, with the worn out brain chemistry that leaves him in a suicidal exhaustion, Elijah asks for a vision. Elijah is used to stories of the fire, of the earth quake, of the windstorms. He is capable of great drama, himself. But what he needs is a vision of God that will feed his soul. "And the Lord said to him, 'Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by'." He knows this story. He could recite the history of Moses. He has a lesson or two still to learn. "Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire, came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his cloak and stood at the mouth of the cave." I Kings 19: 11-13. At the moment when Elijah felt most defeated, his meeting on the mountain of God, his continuing vision of the gentle perseverance that is the character of God began him on a journey that ended in a chariot of fire.

What is there in a place that touches the lives of the men who stood on its slopes so powerfully, that the final time they are mentioned in the Bible is next to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. What was it about this place that transformed them? What power does this place have that its story can cross deserts and oceans and time to touch us and shift our hearts? Horeb rises in a place of desolation. How many of us have had times when we felt barren, arid, thirsty, deserted, abandoned and alone? Its floor touches the Desert of Sin. Since sin is, by definition, separation from God, how many of us have felt separated from the Deity by our own failings or those of others. What a powerful object lesson we have, that this place is the very place where Heaven shows its strength. It is here, in the desert, that God causes water to flow. And it is here that God first showed Himself as the Water of Life. It is here that the Word, shares His words. It is here that God lights up the sky with the same fire whose tongues fell upon the disciples in an upper room at Pentecost. It is here that earthquakes rock our lives and reconfigure our

sense of ourselves and our journey, so that we can go on. It is here that God feeds us food that will not perish. It is here that God speaks to us gently. Too many of us have a thousand reasons to feel discouraged. Too many of us have been abandoned. Too many of us wonder if there even is a God. The amazing and startling lesson of Horeb is that this is the very place where He wants to meet with us, hold us close and turn us loose to fly toward Heaven. Welcome to the Mountain of God. ▼

CT

Resources

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

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

Evangelicals Concerned, Inc supports GLBTI people from a variety of faiths. They can be reached at Evangelicals Concerned, Inc., 311 East 72nd Street, New York, New York, 10021 ▼



connection ▼

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Kampmeeting Corner...

The Road to St. Louis

By Isis M.

Kampmeeting Coordinator 2005

Thanks to everyone who submitted surveys! As of October 25, 2004 over 100+ surveys have been received! I'm looking forward to tabulating and analyzing the results! We are still in the process of finalizing the accommodations and I'm actually going on a site visit in early November. As soon as this information has been finalized, I'll let you know where we will be staying. As another reminder, if you haven't done so, please find a baby picture of you! I'll provide more information in the future!

St. Louis Trivia: Do you know why St. Louis is called Gateway to the West? Lewis & Clark started their expedition west from St. Louis.

Plan on Meeting Me in St. Louis – July 10-17, 2005. ▼

Menucha Scrapbook

More photos from Kampmeeting 2004

