



connection

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 33 No. 4, April 2009

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To be nobody but yourself, in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle that any human being can fight -- and never stop fighting.

-e.e. cummings

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WHO WE ARE...

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

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three countries.

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

SUPPORT KINSHIP

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

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA
 or visit SDA Kinship's website at:
www.sdakinship.org.



From the Editor



April 7, 2009. The Vermont State Legislature just overran the governor's veto to make us the first state to legalize, through legislation, my right to marry. It is a gray rainy day in the middle of a week of gray rainy days. Normally something akin to rainy-day affective disorder would be overtaking me. Right now I may as well be living in the orchid show at a botanical garden.

I love this state for many reasons. We have spent more money on mental health than prison systems. We don't allow a McDonald's in our state capital. It is green, except when it is white. The state police are polite to us when they stop us for speeding or driving inconsiderately. The mail carrier puts doggie biscuits in my mail box three times a week, and she knows the number of dogs who live here. The crematoriums hand out a gratis quart of maple syrup when you pick up the ashes of your loved one. Our biggest city overwhelms most of us with a population of 70,000. The Department of Motor Vehicles Driver's Guide carefully describes cattle, sheep, deer, and moose so that novice drivers won't hit an animal unaware. And, on top of it all, this legislature of a state with only 800,000 constituents, this legislature made up of representatives who go door to door during election season because they believe they should take the responsibility to talk to us face to face, this legislature of people who are made up of an overwhelming majority of heterosexuals just made a collective decision based on decency and fairness. I have never been more proud to live anywhere than where I am at this moment. What does it mean to have a culture where politicians base their law-making decisions on decency? It's not that there are an overwhelming number of remarkably wealthy and influential gay and lesbian railroad barons and baronesses. The Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force has worked hard for many years. They accepted the civil union compromise waiting for Vermont to be ready for this step. And then they just kept working. We are a small state with a tiny legislature and a very small Vermont Freedom to Marry Task Force. Despite that, I can tell you now, news of this decision will float all over the world. Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

If you live in Africa or Malaysia... or California... or near the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and you feel discouraged or afraid, I think this is an important quote to remember. We do not know the power of our influence. We do not know where something that looks like failure may lead. The Millerite movement looked like a bunch of poor fanatics who should have harvested their potatoes. The day after Stonewall looked like the queens had blown it again. We Kinship folk come from an odd mixed legacy. We Kinship folk come from a legacy of the impossible. Don't give up. "Never doubt that a small group of dedicated people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Beyond and as part of that, take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine

c-thru

can you see through this
skin
that I have made
transparent for you?

does it bother you to see me
laid bare like this
with my life brought into
the sunshine
the light shining on the
parts you find ugly
the liver spots
the man in my arms
the book unbelievable?

a woman wrapped in a
rainbow flag once sang to
me
to be the one to walk in the
sun
and to show my true colours

and I longed to heed the
music and open my heart
as faggots cheered with
fists in the air

now I long no more as I
walk and show

and I am happy

except for knowing that as I
flame
I burn the ones I love.

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I was born in Malaysia to middle-class Chinese parents in the late 1960s. I attended non-Adventist Chinese schools through elementary and high school, and completed my undergraduate studies at an Adventist Bible college in East Asia. I was employed in denominational service for a number of years before I became self-employed.

I can't pinpoint a specific time when I discovered I was gay. I do remember times in my childhood when I would feel a rush of warmth through my body whenever my father hugged or bathed me. When I hit puberty my curiosity about these feelings drove me to explore the world of sexuality. I became increasingly aware of my attraction to people of my same gender. Try as I might, I have never been attracted to the opposite sex. Because I lived in a shamed-based culture in which sex was never discussed, I did not talk to anyone about my attractions. I repressed my homosexual feelings. I read books about homosexuality; they were anything but helpful. I kept to myself during high school. In college I hung out mostly with the boys. When someone asked if I was gay, I would fiercely deny it.

Building a *Whole* Life

Adam Lee in an interview with Ruud Kieboom

When we were children my parents took my siblings and me to a Catholic church on Sundays. I grew up believing in God and Jesus Christ. In my adolescence I read myself into the Seventh-day Adventist Church and convinced half my family to convert. I became actively involved in church life and even took up duties on the pulpit. Needless to say, my sexual identity was being repressed further into the recesses of my soul. After completing theology training, I entered denominational service for a number of years. My greatest setback was the absence of a life companion to share the burden of ministry. As a result of that lack, I suffered from burn-out. In my mind, being a Christian and having homosexual feelings were mutually exclusive. Publicly, I was

an exemplary Adventist. Privately, I was grappling with issues of my own sexual needs. My double life left me deeply unfulfilled.

Courtesy of the growing Internet technology of the mid 1990s, I began chatting with like-minded people all over the world. One day, at the turn of the 21st century, I stumbled upon Ron Lawson's story on the God's Love-Our Witness website. I started writing to Ron, but it was not until January 2003 that he recommended Kinship. Ron assured me that the KinNet forum was very safe. I visited the Kinship website and, to my surprise, found gay and lesbian Adventists embracing their homosexuality as acceptable to God. Thinking this would be the perfect venue in which to share my

repressed feelings without fear and embarrassment, I signed up and was accepted as a member on Feb. 8, 2003. Through my interaction with Kinship, I came to accept my homosexuality as a gift of God and count myself blessed to be a part of this global community.

Here in Malaysia with a Muslim majority, it is difficult for LGBTI people to maintain a sense of self worth. In this culture, where sex is a taboo subject, even public display of affection between heterosexual couples is frowned upon. Society is largely homophobic. Civil laws criminalizing homosexual acts between men are still in effect, although rarely enforced. Effeminate men, tom-boys, and transgender people have been discriminated against and marginalized by society. Many PLUs (lesbians and gay men are called People Like Us in Asia) fear that self-disclosure would jeopardize their livelihood.

The predominant religions are Abrahamic ones that uphold traditional family values while condemning homosexuality. God's gay and lesbian children are thus driven from their churches and excluded from the saving grace of Christ. My country has a very long way to go before we can see the dawn of equal rights and legalized same-sex marriage.

In spite of the social stigma dealt out to the LGBTI community, I see an evolving social trend toward greater tolerance and acceptance here. As in many places all over the world, increasing numbers of young people have been inspired by gay pride and are marching out of their closets in droves. In 2005, a young man in Malaysia made history by coming out on satellite TV to a Chinese audience numbering in the millions. A year later a young Christian man disclosed his homosexuality on national media after being trapped in a painful marriage for nine years. The books he has published about his life and his understanding of queer theology are making a visibly positive impact on the gay Christian community. I personally draw strength from these courageous souls.

Being gay is the most natural thing in the world to me now. Since I have embraced my homosexuality, I have changed careers and now work with languages and translations. I am good at this and enjoy it. I have never been happier. I love being gay. If I could make any changes in my life, I still would choose to be gay.

I am currently in a long-distance relationship. I will

tell you more about this the next time I write. I live alone in an area with a sizeable gay and lesbian population. People are aware of our homosexuality but it seems to be a non-issue. Gay bashing is unheard of, although authorities occasionally raid gay businesses. The strongest reaction you might see is contempt on the faces of prejudiced ones. The best thing that happened to me last year was the discovery of a new gay Christian group connected to the Metropolitan Community Church in our capital city. I have found good fellowship with fellow travelers on the journey. I am empowered to grow spiritually in this open and nurturing environment. I find such nurturing missing in the Adventist church. Since I have not come out to either the Adventist church or my family, I have not yet encountered any hostility. I am developing a healthy self-image. Very soon I will be able to overcome my fear of disclosing myself to the people who count the most.

I want to be able to live out my life freely and openly as a gay man. I want to be able to share my joys and tears without reservation. I hope to connect myself more closely with God so I will be equipped to love God and the people for whom Christ died. I want to continue to make myself useful to God by reaching out to others who are struggling to find themselves in the LGBTI community. I also hope to be more loving in my relationships with my friends. Most of all, it is my dream to see a Kinship chapter started in Malaysia so that gay and lesbian Adventists or ex-Adventists may find a safe haven to call it their home. I fear for those who can find no support and eventually give up on hope and life. Please include me in your prayer that my hopes and dreams will be realized soon.

Unity in diversity must not remain just a slogan. It must be lived out by a people of faith in the spirit of unconditional love and acceptance for others different than themselves, be they gay or straight. Thank you for your support and encouragement in my journey. ▽



Be who you are and say what you feel
because those who mind don't matter
and those who matter don't mind.

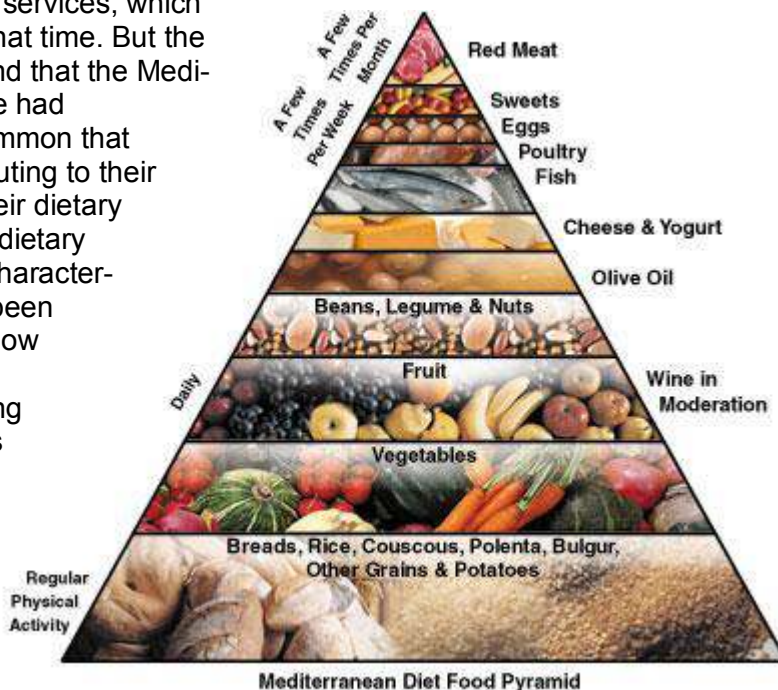
-Dr. Seuss

Health Tip of the Month April

In a recent four-year Spanish study, people who strictly followed a Mediterranean-style diet lowered their odds of developing diabetes by a whopping 83 percent! And the protection was there even in people with diabetes risk factors, such as a family history of the disease, high blood pressure, older age, higher body mass index, and a history of smoking. It's not clear why, but it seems that Mediterranean-type foods somehow thwart insulin resistance and inflammation. In the 1950s, researchers found that the adult life expectancy for people living in the Mediterranean regions (Crete, part of Greece, Southern Italy, and other countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea) was among the highest in the world. They also found that rates of coronary heart disease, certain cancers, and some other diet-related chronic diseases in this region were among the lowest in the world.

The health of the Mediterranean people didn't appear to be due to existing medical services, which were limited at that time. But the researchers found that the Mediterranean people had something in common that might be contributing to their good health—their dietary patterns. These dietary patterns share characteristics that have been associated with low rates of chronic diseases and long life expectancies in many studies conducted throughout the world. There is no one typical Mediterranean diet.

Many countries border the Mediterranean Sea and variations in the Mediterranean diet exist between these countries. However, according to the American Heart Association, traditional Mediterranean diets have the following characteristics in common: an abundance of fruits, vegetables, breads and cereals, potatoes, beans, nuts, seeds, olive oil as the main source of fat, moderate amounts of fish and poultry, small amounts of red meat, moderate amounts of dairy products (mostly cheese and yogurt), low to moderate amounts of eggs (zero to four times per week), using fresh fruit as the typical daily dessert, and a low consumption of sweets (often honey), no more than several times a week. ▽



Recipe of the Month

Try this refreshing grain salad as an accompaniment to grilled chicken, fish, or tofu. Chilled, it's also great for picnics. Look for quinoa or whole-wheat couscous in the natural-foods section of supermarkets or in specialty stores. This recipe makes six servings, about one cup each. It takes about twenty-five minutes to prepare.

- 1 1/2 cups whole-wheat couscous or cooked quinoa (a high protein grain)
- 1/4 cup orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated orange zest
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups boiling water (if you are using couscous)
- 1 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 cup chopped scallions (4 scallions)
- 1/4 cup chopped pitted Kalamata olives (12 olives)
- 1 navel orange, peeled, sectioned, and diced
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

1. Stir together couscous or quinoa, orange juice concentrate, oil, mustard, thyme, orange zest, and salt in a large bowl.
2. If you are using couscous, stir in boiling water, cover, and set aside until the liquid has been absorbed, about five minutes. If you are using cooked quinoa, you do not need the water. (Quinoa can be prepared by mixing one part quinoa (thoroughly rinsed) to three parts water, bring water to a boil, boil for five minutes, turn off heat, and leave for thirty minutes.)
3. Fluff the couscous with a fork. Add parsley, scallions, olives, diced orange, and lemon juice; toss to blend.

Nutrition Information: Per serving: 206 calories; 7 g fat (1 g sat, 5 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 32 g carbohydrate; 5 g protein; 5 g fiber; 358 mg sodium; 205 mg potassium. Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (78% daily value), Fiber (20% dv). Exchanges: 2 starch, 1 fat (mono). 2 Carbohydrate Servings. Make-ahead tip: Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 hours. ▽

SDA Kinship International Board Meeting

March 14 & 15, 2009 – Glendale California.



Okay, stop! Do not turn that page! *This is your community. We are not boring. The business is important. This is not the section to recycle. First of all, we want to make sure you know that you are always welcome at a board meeting. They are open, and we appreciate the thoughts and suggestions of Kinship members. Since many of you cannot afford the time or travel costs to join us, we want to use our report to give you a little of the flavor of our weekend as well as to let you know about our discussions and decisions.*

This spring our board meeting was held in the home of Dave and Peter. They moved furniture, set up tables, prepared and ordered food, shifted their schedules, housed travelers, and were remarkably welcoming. Some board members live within driving distance. Some motor a few hours. Some flew in from the East Coast. Ruud and Kees arrived from the Netherlands. One of the reasons we met in Southern California is that many board members who live out of the area and might incur hotel expenses in other locations, have nearby family members. This helps save the organization money. A benefit for winter-weary travelers is

that California is warm and green this time of year. We were appreciative.

We arrived early Sabbath morning to find food on the table. Our meeting began at 8:30 with a chance for each person to share a little of what is going on in their life. We wanted to use relationship to build our community, not just tasks. And, indeed, the lives of our leadership team are packed. The partner of one is just now getting a work visa and will be able to return to the States. Many of us have physically fragile parents. Many work situations have become tenuous or non-existent. Some of us have become new grandparents. ➤

Some of us have adopted new pets. Some of us are healing from illnesses or injuries. Some of us are working fifty-hour weeks in our "day jobs." Some of us have friends or family members who have died recently. Some of us are celebrating anniversaries. Some of us are enjoying new homes. Some of us are preparing to move. What is remarkable is the commitment to this volunteer organization in the middle of so many life transitions.

Community Business

Fred has developed a system to streamline bill paying.

We have hired a consultant to work with the organization around book-keeping and finances until we can elect a treasurer who is a Kinship member.

We are looking for coordinators in Regions 3, 4, 6, 7, 9. Johann Lubbe will become a coordinator for South Africa. Jonathan Coo will become coordinator for Kinship members in Asia. New chapters are being started or reinstated in Sacramento, California; Portland, Oregon; and Lincoln, Nebraska.

We plan to have the leadership directory posted on the regional coordinators' Yahoo! discussion group and to set up monthly WebExes so we can share what we are doing. These will be open to international coordinators.

Yolanda, Fred, and Isis have recorded a presentation *Becoming a Coordinator*. This presentation will be available to any members interested in becoming a chapter leader or region coordinator.

The membership committee is re-organizing services to help Kinship members access information and support more efficiently.

La Sierra University and Union College are using *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives* in some courses. Therefore, the book is now available in the college bookstores.

In December the Kinship's



communications team sent out a press release focusing on our book to the Gay Journalists Association.

Our redesigned website is ready to be launched!

Floyd, as head of the International Development Committee, is working on ways to support members in becoming more active, finding translators for materials, and developing ways to improve how we manage finances when we're working in international settings with many currencies.

We are setting up a new accounting system.

Kampmeeting: Naveen is getting feedback that Kinship members like the shorter week schedule. We will be at Emory University in Atlanta for Kampmeeting 2010. We will investigate the University of British Columbia in Vancouver for 2011.

Dave attended the Gay Christian Network conference. He represented Kinship with a table showcasing *My Son Beloved Stranger* by Carrol Grady and *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*.

Dave met with representatives from the School of Divinity in Boston.

In November Dave talked with the Union College Peace and Social Justice Group about the needs of LGBTI students. He sent 20 books for them to use in their discussion group.

The board formed a governance committee and a nominating committee.

There was a discussion of ways that Kinship can be a positive presence at the General Conference session in Atlanta in 2010.

We met with straight allies who are working to develop a documentary film about being gay and Adventist. ▽



Pictures:

Bob
Fred
Carrol
Floyd
(and Kees)
Obad
Ruben
Ruud

We would like to introduce you to:

Some of Our Leadership Team



Naveen Jonathan grew up in the Takoma Park, Maryland, part of the Washington, DC area. He has attended Adventist schools all of his life: Sligo Elementary, Tacoma Academy, Columbia Union College, and Loma Linda University. He is currently finishing up his doctoral degree in Marriage and Family Therapy at Loma Linda. Any of you who have slogged through a doctoral program can offer him your understanding, support, sympathy, and hope.

Naveen says he found Kinship when doing an internet search for a gay-affirming Christian group. "I was really happy I found one that was Seventh-day Adventist." He goes on to say, "I think the most important thing Kinship does is to provide support for those who are journeying through the process of coming out. The ministry that Kinship provides is invaluable to current/former Seventh-day Adventists." For the last three years Naveen has been Kampmeeting Coordinator. He created a team approach to the position and has been part of a wonderful heritage of coordinators who continually improve our experience at Kampmeeting. He says, "I thoroughly enjoy organizing this event, and I want to thank my excellent committee for their help. I am grateful to be working with such a wonderful group of people."

Outside of Kinship, Naveen works as a licensed marriage and family therapist and school counselor in California. He is currently employed with Catholic

Charities of San Bernardino/Riverside County and also teaches at Alliant International University, Chapman University, and Pepperdine University in Southern California; and at California State University East Bay and John F. Kennedy University in Northern California.

We think all of these activities would leave him with no extra time to sleep, but Naveen says he is very interested in furthering the work for family therapists across the state of California and the nation through his affiliation with the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy (AAMFT). He is doing research on same-sex couples and gender issues. And, as if all this wasn't enough, he enjoys traveling the world, hanging out on the beaches of Orange County, attending all sorts of cultural events, and playing with his cat. To the best of our knowledge, Naveen speaks several Indian languages and dialects and French.



Yolanda Elliott is another native of Maryland and graduate of the Adventist educational system. She attended Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Maryland, and Columbia Union College in Takoma Park, Maryland. She has owned and operated a small assisted living facility called "Yolanda's Home" since 1985 in Maryland. Yolanda loves her pets and all light-houses.

She heard about Kinship when she was attending college but didn't get involved as a member, past receiving the *Connection*, until 1995 when she attended her first Kampmeeting. Then she jumped into the organization with energy, focus, enthusiasm, and a sense of graciousness that makes people around her feel comfortable and appreciated.

She has been Region 2 coordinator for the last thirteen years. As regional coordinator, Yolanda created our most active and involved group where you can find regular vespers services, a Pride Day contingent for the Washington DC march, Valentine's dinners, pool ➤

parties, and game days. Once a year Region 2 volunteers at Winter Haven, where local churches take in the homeless at night and provide showers, dinner, and breakfast, and send them on their way during the day with sack lunches. Region 2 participates by providing a hot meal and sack lunches.

Yolanda has also served the Kinship community as vice president and women's coordinator. As women's coordinator, she developed Kinship's Women and Children First weekend as part of the Kampmeeting introductory festivities. She also spends a lot of time helping to find appropriate sites for Kampmeetings.

Yolanda says, "The friendships and relationships we gain in Kinship are important to me. I want to be there for LGBTI Adventists who are coming out and who need support when dealing with reconciling sexual orientation and faith. My Kinship family and my biological family are extremely important to me. I love living with my sister again, after many years."



Bev Winsted grew up in Madison, Tennessee. When she was nine years old she studied the Junior Voice of Prophecy lessons and became a Seventh-day Adventist. She graduated from Highland Academy and completed her degree in nursing from Southern Adventist University. She was married for twenty-nine years and has two grown sons and two grandchildren. Jack is five and Sadie is three years old. Bev and Pauline have been together for sixteen years and celebrated their civil union with Kinship in Vermont in 2003.

When you meet Bev you will think she has so much energy and seems so youthful that she must have first gotten married when she was ten. Bev is a physician assistant and a partner in an organization that has several geriatric care facilities. She specializes in wound care and is developing protocols for the best prevention and treatment of wounds.

She says, "Having many questions led me to

Kinship. This organization has been so good and helpful. The fellowship with Kinship is important because Adventism is in my bone marrow. In the year that I have been secretary, I have taken board minutes, attended meetings, and taken part in conference calls."



Jacquie Hegarty grew up in Hemet, California. She attended Loma Linda Academy and La Sierra College, where she graduated in 1967. Her first marriage was to David Hegarty who is the senior staff organist at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco. She has two grown children from her second marriage.

Floyd Pönitz in Region 5 was her first Kinship contact. She says, "I think the most important things about Kinship are that we offer a safe haven for gay Adventists and ex-Adventists; make resources and education on gay issues available for members, families, and church members; and provide spiritual and emotional support."

Jacquie coordinates Kinship's internal and external communications. This means she develops and distributes the electronic Kinship eNews you get each month. And that means she has to figure out ways to have members of the leadership group get their news and reports in on time. We understand this is not always an easy task. Jacquie also produces the regional electronic newsletters. This translates to: getting copy from regional coordinators; choosing the colors, format, and style that will "brand" each region; proofreading, getting updated email lists from the Kinship office, and delivering our electronic news by a deadline. She assists in proofreading for the *Connection*—again, no easy task. She is continually working on developing and refining policies and procedures for Kinship's communications team. She designs the program booklets for Kampmeeting and, together with Catherine Taylor, monitors the media releases required for publication of articles and photos. She has edited the *Region 8 News and*

Views since 1996.

As if this was not a full time job, outside of Kinship, Jacquie works for a local non-profit organization as executive assistant, database administrator, and web-master. She also serves private web clients, again primarily nonprofit organizations. Jacquie and her partner Linda have been together since 1996. They recently adopted a two-year-old Chihuahua named Barley who just quietly attended his first Kinship board meeting.



Dave Ferguson (left) grew up in Denver, Colorado, where he attended Mile High Academy. He went to Union College in neighboring Nebraska and completed seminary training at Andrews University.

He says the qualities of Kinship that are most important to him are our support for people who are coming out and our work to “continue to move the denomination towards love and acceptance of LGBTI members.” Dave first heard about Kinship through word of mouth at church. He attended Kampmeeting in 1995 for one session, Madelyn Haldeman’s presentation of *The Scriptures and Homosexuality*. Since then, he has been an active member of Kinship for many years. Dave is now the church relations director, serving as a liaison between SDA Kinship and the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He invites speakers to Kampmeeting, is chairperson of Kinship’s Advisory Council, and develops relationships with other LGBTI organizations. Ideally, he would like to develop programs for outreach to Seventh-day Adventist pastors and educators, building bridges of understanding with the denomination.

Dave works as a financial planner with lots of investors. Dave was recently invited to join the Board of Reel Life Media, an outreach ministry to the iPod generation. At Glendale City Church he is deacon, choir member, chair of the planning committee, and president of the church endowment committee. Dave is the proud grandfather of Dylan and Holly. He is partnered with Peter, “my husband and the love of my life.” ▼

Advertising Opportunities!

Grow your business! Make new contacts! We at Kinship are constantly thinking about ways we can strengthen our community and utilize the remarkable resources available here. If you would like to advertise the work you do or consulting you may offer, please feel free to contact us. Ruud is a remarkable layout artist and can take your copy and work with you to make a splash! Or you can send us your work in a “camera-ready” format. Our rates (in U.S. dollars) are: 1 column inch for one month at \$25.00 or for three months at \$60.00; one-quarter page for one month at \$50.00 or for three months at \$130.00; one-half page for one month at \$100.00 or for three months at \$255.00; one full page for one month at \$200.00 or for three months at \$545.00. For more information and rates, feel most welcome to contact Catherine at connectioneditor@sdakinship.org.

Vermont Passes Marriage Bill over Governor’s Veto!

On April 7, 2009, Vermont Legislature voted to overturn Governor Douglas’ veto and recognize marriage equality for all. This is a monumental victory for Vermont and LGBT equality. Vermont is the first state to recognize marriage equality through direct legislative initiative. Vermont joins Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Iowa as the fourth state to recognize equal marriage rights.

*If you keep on believing what you
always believed,
You will keep on thinking what you
always thought
And you will get what you
always got anyway*

-Unknown

Kinship Elections

- Hear ye, Hear ye! We want you!

If you are interested in helping to build this great community! if you would like to use some of the gifts that have been given to you to help develop Kinship; if you, your partner, or family is willing for you to share some board meeting and project time with Kinship, this is your time and this is your opportunity. This year Kinship members will be electing our organization's president, vice president, director of women's interests, and director of church relations. If you are interested in any of these positions, please feel most welcome to contact the chair of the nominating committee, Bob Bouchard, at president@sdakinship.org before May 1, 2009.

Kinship Kampmeeting 2009 – Naveen Jonathan

Have you registered for SDA Kinship Int'l Kampmeeting yet? Kampmeeting will take place in Seattle, WA, July 15-19, 2009. Online registration for Kampmeeting is now available on the Kinship website. Please visit <http://www.sdakinship.org/km2009.htm> to register and to obtain the most updated information about Kampmeeting.



Please note that you can take advantage of the reduced rates for the full Kampmeeting! On June 1, 2009, the rates will go up by \$50 per person for all room types, so hurry and register now at the new, lower rates! For more information, please feel free to email kampmeeting@sdakinship.org. See you all in Seattle!

One of our Kampmeeting workshop presenters, Kenneth Burr, just published a great book on gay spirituality, entitled, *Coming Out, Coming Home*. I just finished reading the book and it is excellent! I was quite blessed by the words in this book and feel it is very appropriate for those who are current or former Seventh-day Adventists. I am excited that Ken will be presenting at Kampmeeting in Seattle. It will be a wonderful presentation.



You can find his book on http://www.amazon.com/Coming-Out-Home-Spirituality-Therapy/dp/0789038439/ref=ed_oe_p.

Transgender News – Shared by Janis Walworth

Finally, a good bank! Its advertisement teaches transgender inclusion. You might find it interesting to take a look at the YouTube posting of an Argentinean bank advertisement that is simply jaw-dropping and touching. What an interesting take for an advertisement—a bank being generous to you and, at the same time, making you reconsider your own bigotry and lack of compassion. It is definitely worth the seventy-eight seconds it takes to view it. View it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEaGbTr8B2o>

A Solemn Appeal – Letter to Our Fellow Believers

Catherine Taylor reports that an Adventist from North Carolina sent a letter to all the Adventists in her cyber address book urging them to sign this letter. Catherine happened to get the mail because she is a known Adventist. If you have not yet taken a look at this site, we think you might want to take part in the signing of the letter. Go to <http://asolemnappeal.org/>.

European Advisory Council – Mike Lewis

15-17 May, in Dunblane, Scotland, we will be meeting with pastors, church administrators, educators, and Kinship members to develop ways to support LGBTI Adventists and former Adventists. Pulling this first such European meeting together has been full of miracles. Now we ask that you pray for us. We will report on our weekend in the May/June issue of the *Connection*.

Kinship Netherlands – Ruud Kieboom

The first Dutch Kinship meeting is planned! Nine LGBTI Adventists from the Netherlands have expressed an interest in gathering together on May 24 at the home of Ruud and Kees. We plan to take some time getting to know each other and sharing our experiences. Most of the people who are planning to attend say this is the first time they have heard of SDA Kinship. Some wrote that they are hesitant because it is very scary to come. Please keep all of us in your prayers as we continue to encourage them. The hope is that this will be the first meeting of many. We want to create a space where more people can find their way to Kinship and come to peace with both their orientation and their faith.

Australian Kampmeeting 2009 – Noel Thorpe

Mark your calendars! Reserve your holiday time! Book your flights while the rates are down! Join us down under for our wonderful gathering 25-27 September. Our theme is "Incurably Gay and SDA." You can find more information on our website at <http://sdakinshipaustralia.org>.

European Kinship Meeting 2009 – Mike Lewis

Airplane fares are down at the moment. This is the perfect time to book your flight to London so you can join us for our 22-25 October gathering. Daniel Duda will be our speaker. His work as an administrator and pastor in the Trans-European Division touches Adventists in many countries. Each Kinship gathering has its own special feel. This yearly meeting has brought people from such different places as Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Scotland, England, Kenya, The Netherlands, France, Spain, Germany, the United States, Norway, Canada, Australia, and South Africa. It is a place where, despite the effects of the Tower of Babel, people who speak many languages find common laughter, common hope, and common ways to communicate with each other.

Kinship Europe Holiday 2009 – Catherine Taylor

There is such a thing as good temptation. Good temptation is when Kinship Europe invites you to enjoy museums and shopping in St. Ives, harbor-bottom walking in Mousehole, spectacular views of Mounts Bay, leisurely dinners at sunset, cliff walks, art galleries, Tresco Gardens and helicopter rides, clotted cream teas, Eden. We are in the process of reserving cottages for our stay. Please feel invited to join us! For more information, you can contact us at kinship@xs4all.nl, kinship-uk@scotmagic.co.uk, or connectioneditor@sdakinship.org.

Kinship's Website redesigned – Floyd Pönitz

The new website is in the last stages of testing and will be rolling out soon. If you get a strange looking message in the near future from: sdakinsh@box457.bluehost.com, please just ignore it for now. It only means that your account on there is being activated. You will be ready for the new system once it is "live" and you will be given a NEW password (that you can change).

All Kinship members will be getting a user name; not just those who have elected to be on KinNet over the years. So I hope this will bring our community closer together.

Twitter – Floyd Pönitz

Kinship is now tweeting on Twitter. This is a trial to see if this tool will be useful for us. It is just another way for us to communicate to our members. If you are on Twitter, we can be found at: SDAKinship.

Region 8 Santa Cruz Weekend

Over the weekend of March 20-22, a hardy group of Kinship members headed for Santa Cruz for the monthly Kinship meeting. Several arrived Friday night, others arrived on Saturday morning, while still others arrived for the afternoon meeting. Those arriving Friday night stayed at the Rio del Mar beach house with our host Peter Stickney and enjoyed the peace and quiet of the lovely house with its glass-enclosed upper room revealing breathtaking views of the Pacific Ocean.

On Saturday morning we met some of the others at the Santa Cruz Adventist Church where we attended Sabbath school and the second service. We selected this church because it was Cathi's (one of our members) childhood home church and it meant a lot for her to have us visit there with her. The church service was led by a layperson who did a "Bible study." It was an interesting idea not usually carried out during "church"—a question-and-answer format with Bible texts supporting the answers. Several Region 8 members participated with their Bibles. It was all pretty much basic Adventist doctrine, no "fire and brimstone." Our rather large group, consisting of 16 people, was obviously together and we were asked what brought us to Santa Cruz.

After the service we headed for the beach house for our potluck lunch and afternoon meeting. We had lots of time to visit with each other before and during our amazing spread of food, with new friends and old friends. And then we took a walk down to the beach, reaching the Cement Boat permanently anchored at the end of the dock. After the invigorating walk, we held a more formal meeting during which we shared our stories, receiving lots of encouragement and affirmation.

Some left after our meeting, while others stayed and had popcorn and watched movies. On Sunday morning, the weekenders enjoyed hearing Rev. Deborah (the one in "The Bible Tells Me so" video). In total we had 18 people, representing quite a cross section of our community—gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight. All in all, it was a great weekend in Region 8!

We plan on having a long weekend again in Redding in August 2009 and there are even rumors of having another one in the southern portion of our region (date to be determined)—can you say Pismo Beach?!—hosted by two wonderful new members, Denise and Silvia. So stay tuned! ▽





Remembering Virginia Cason (Ge-Ge)

In our Kinship community there is a group called “Friends and Family.” Many members of that group have been outspoken and impassioned advocates for those of us who are LGBTI Seventh-day Adventists. Few have been more supportive than Virginia and Walter Cason.

We are deeply saddened to hear that Virginia passed away on Wednesday, April 1, in Vancouver, Washington. Virginia was the daughter of H.M.S. Richards, Sr., one of the first Seventh-day Adventists to utilize the radio to share the gospel. Despite the fact that she grew up in a well-known Adventist family, or perhaps because of it, Virginia was not afraid to advocate for those who were marginalized by her church.

Virginia and Walter are one of three couples who were interviewed on the DVD, *Open Heart/Open Hand*. They spoke about their experiences as parents of gay and lesbian children. They were personally supportive of individual Kinship members during their difficult times of coming out. Walt and Virginia would use Kampmeeting time to encourage new Kinship members to accept themselves as they were. Our thoughts, our gratitude, and our prayers are with the Cason family during this time of grief.and from her daughter Laura Cason:

My mother was nicknamed Ge-Ge by her next younger brother H.M.S. Richards, Jr. He couldn't pronounce Virginia. This was the name always used by her family and friends.

Grandpa was the only preacher on radio when he started in 1929. His broadcast was later named The Voice of Prophecy. Mom spoke at more than forty Adventist retreats. Some of them were women's retreats, some were for ministers, some were for ministers' wives, and some were conference-sponsored retreats like campmeeting.

Mom began to talk from the pulpit about having a gay son, my brother Marshall, who died from AIDS, and about her lesbian daughter. At the time, I did not know I was part of the sharing. She spoke of the need for Christians to show more of God's unconditional love. I

don't believe anyone in Adventist circles had previously openly addressed AIDS or gay and lesbian Adventists from the pulpit. I imagine no one dared to discourage her because she was the daughter of H.M.S. Richards. She was also a widely enjoyed and appreciated speaker. Grandpa would have been proud of her.

After her talks Mom was usually mobbed by audience members she described as “really hurting” because of the ignorance or neglect of fellow church members or pastors. Some had even been shunned by their congregations and discouraged from attending services. Mother was appalled by this and spent countless hours responding to phone calls, letters, and e-mails from Adventist families struggling to learn how to minister to and accept their gay kids. Mom told me innumerable

stories about people who had shared their deep pain at being ostracized by their church. She told me of pastors who somehow felt that having a gay child doomed the entire family.

Mother's goal was to open eyes, to increase understanding, to share the great news that God loves and accepts ALL who love him. She spoke of the special call of Adventist Christians, who have long focused on education and health, to become Good Samaritans who comfort and care for those touched by AIDS and their families.

From the very first time she heard of Kinship, Kinship was close to the hearts of both Mother and Dad. I know she enjoyed the times she was able to attend Kampmeeting.

Here is a poem I got from Mom while I was attending Walla Walla College in 1972. *It is so Mom!*

So, sweetheart—
 Here's an armful of roses
 And hats in the air –
 Cannons and fireworks,
 And a crown for your hair.
 Cause you've made my life happy,
 You've made my eyes shine!
 I know – all daughters are treasures,
 But, not as priceless as MINE!
 My love is forever,
 Mother



The measure of a life, after all, is not its
 duration, but its donation

- Corrie Ten Boom

connection▼

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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.

Women & Children First 2009

July 13-15, 2009

This year's Women and Children First Event is being held in beautiful Mount Vernon, Washington, USA. We will be staying in the Best Western CottonTree Inn which provides spacious rooms, a full breakfast buffet

(includes scrambled eggs, sausage or bacon, biscuits and gravy, Belgian waffles or French toast, hash browns, fruit, a variety of bakery items, yogurt, hot and cold cereal, and much more), pool, and free high-speed internet access. Children 17 and under are free in room with one paying adult. Dogs are allowed with a \$25.00 refundable fee.

Arrival and check-in will begin at 3 PM, Monday, July 13. We will eat dinner together at 6 PM and have a group welcoming session at 7:30 PM.

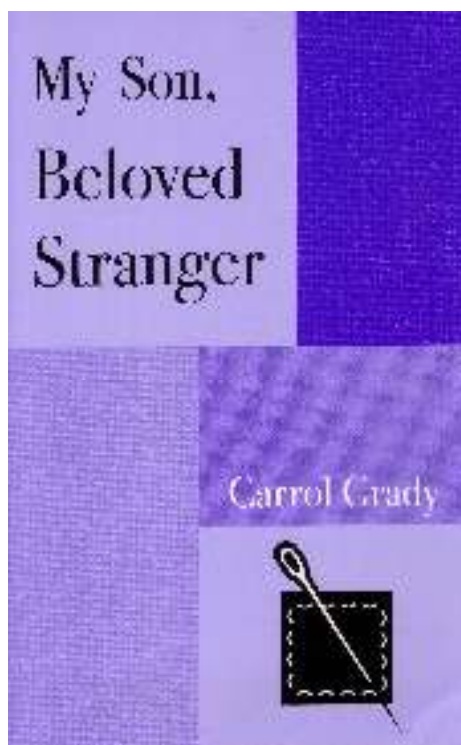
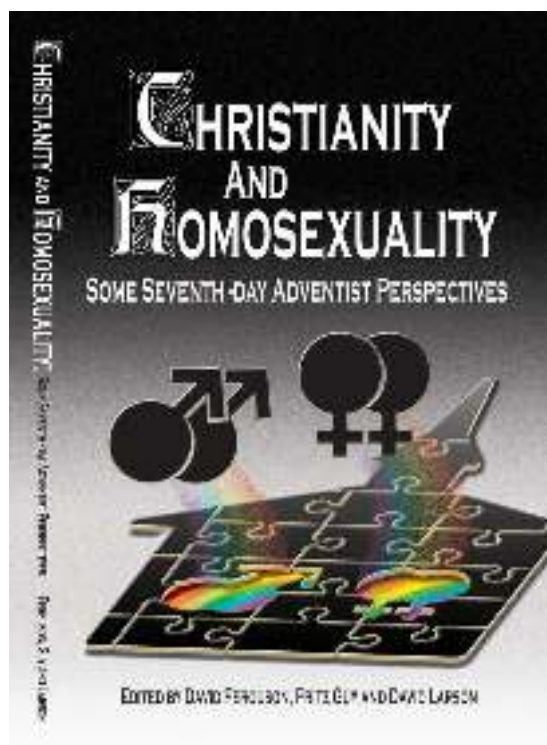


Tuesday morning, July 14, we will enjoy breakfast together, then drive to the town of Anacortes (about 18 miles) where we will board a boat for a 4-5 hour Whale Watching Cruise! We hope to have spectacular sightings of Orca whales, and other ocean mammals and birds, and simply enjoy each other's company!

The cost of Tuesday's lunch is not included in the registration fee, but a catered box lunch is available to those who wish to pay \$11 per person with vegetarian or non-vegetarian options. You may prepay for this option when you register. Alternatively, you may bring your own lunch. Tuesday evening we will eat dinner together, ending a delightful day!

Wednesday morning we will enjoy a leisurely breakfast and take advantage of the pool, jacuzzi, etc. before checking out at noon and heading to Talaris Conference Center in Seattle for SDA Kinship Kampmeeting 2009!

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS JUNE 15, 2009



connection ▼
These books and the DVD
can be ordered online at
www.sdagayperspectives.com

