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We must become the change we want to see in the world.

...Mahatma Gandhi

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Who we are...

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

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

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

Support Kinship

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

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

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April 19, 2006 was a rare Sabbath; probably a unique one. As part of the year long celebration of their 100th anniversary, the Glendale City (California, USA) Church chose this Sabbath to recognize, honor and appreciate their gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members. Adults and children were part of the service. Women and men were part of the service. Heterosexual people and those who are not were part of the service. People came from as far away as New England to share this day. Through the announcements, welcome, prayer time, "blessing of the back packs" children's focus, special music selections, sermon and picnic lunch a sense of joy, respect, acceptance, spirituality and community permeated the congregation. We're glad we can share some pictures and the sermon so you can experience a little of that remarkable day....



Getting the Salt out of the Shaker

Mitch Tyner

Retired Legal Counsel to the General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists.

Change is one of life's few constants. When we're young, we treasure and pursue it. When we're older, we tend to resist it just as passionately. Sometimes we forget that change is an inherent part of a good Adventist concept: Present Truth. Present truth has always been truth. It becomes present truth when it is finally noticed and receives proper attention. It is a change in our emphasis or understanding.

Change can be good or bad, exhilarating or annoying. Occasionally, change is so significant, so filled with implications for the future that we can properly call it momentous. One such change has now reached those proportions; the place of and respect for religion in our society. Many of us remember when religion provided the backbone of American society, the ethical framework that displayed our mutually held values. Religion was respected. We did not always agree on doctrinal



specifics, but we agreed that religion, per se, was a valuable thing for a community. Sadly, that attitude has changed. Today, we find ourselves in a time when religion has been both polarized and politicized.

Many are willing to forgo all we have learned about tolerance towards other beliefs. They now advocate tearing down the 'wall of separation' between government and religion that has produced so much religious freedom. It seems that we are closer to a theocracy in this country than at any time since the era of the Pilgrims in New England in the 17th century.

Membership in religious organizations is at an all-time high in the United States. During the American Revolution, only seventeen percent of Americans citizens claimed church membership. Now, that figure stands at sixty four percent. Simultaneously, many educated, sophisticated and thoughtful people are suspicious of religion. They

Salt...

consider it dangerous and threatening; something that must be controlled. Kevin Phillips, in his recent book "American Theocracy," observes,

"Few questions will be more important to the 21st century political hubris. Will organized religions be carried on the nation's books as an asset or a liability? While sermons and rhetoric propounding American exceptionalism proclaim religiosity an asset, a somber array of historical precedents - the pitfalls of imperial Christian overreach from Rome to Britain - tip the scales toward liability."

How did we get from a place where organized religion was an asset to a society to where it is seen as a liability? While multiple reasons exist, let us consider five of the most prominent - and serious.

1. *Secularism, cynicism and unbelief.* Many see these as the major culprit, but let's be clear that many secular people lead quite moral, ethically responsible lives. And it is not only secularists who do not attend church. A recently identified trend is that religious people are leaving churches because they are not fed there. They prefer to pursue spirituality alone or in small groups.
2. *Terrorism, specifically the attack of September 11, 2001.* In the wake of 9/11, people say, 'Very religious people fly airplanes into tall buildings; very religious people are dangerous.' One of the important, though little understood casualties of 9/11 is the doctrine of religious neutrality. The way we keep peace in America, in a multi-religious society, is to require governmental neutrality (and strongly encourage societal neutrality) to all religions. Many are taking advantage of the current situation to advocate the abolition of neutrality.
3. *The rise of fundamentalism.* Fundamentalism is, among other things, a flight from the insecurity that is often produced by societal change. In that sense, it is a negative response to modernity. It is also, all too often anti-rational. A bumper sticker says it well: "God said it, I believe it, and that's that." So, "Don't confuse me with facts, I know the truth." The human brain, God's second greatest gift to us, after His Son, is left out of the equation. Religious exclusivity is a component of fundamentalism: "We have the truth...we know more than anyone else...we are right." This attitude indicates that truth can be encapsulated and is something that doesn't change. This attitude is in direct conflict with the concept of present truth. This attitude leads directly to religious hostility, and is, as much as any other facet of fundamentalism, a turn-off to more broad

minded people. Fundamentalism exists in all religions, including the Seventh Day Adventist Church. One of my greatest fears for my church is that it is hurtling father and farther down the road towards fundamentalism, thereby building walls between it and large segments of the societies to which it must witness.

4. *Another cause of antipathy to religion is what I must call religious hypocrisy.* In January, on a flight from Atlanta to Little Rock, I sat next to a music dealer - a talkative one - who discovered that I am a lawyer who represents an organized religion. He told me of a pastor who ordered a great deal of equipment for his church. When given the invoice for \$12,000, the pastor asked "What's in this for me?" Puzzled, the music dealer asked what the church representative meant. The pastor replied, "Bill the church \$14,000.00, give me the difference, and we'll call this a deal." The music dealer was obviously negatively impressed with man's brand of religion, and is unlikely to respond positively to pleas to protect the special status of religion in society.

There's more. Pedophile clergy prey on those they vow to protect. Sixteen billion dollars will be embezzled from churches this year, mostly by church treasurers or other staff. There is the spectacle of feel good entertainment masquerading as so-called 'worship'. We might describe these and many, many more examples as instances of "ridiculous religion". I can only imagine what they do for our credibility, our impression on others and our claim for tolerance in society.

5. *A final and highly controversial reason why organized religion is being seen as a danger is connected to human rights.* Until recently, religion in the United States was a key element in the effort to "lift the heavy yoke" of Isaiah 58. The first abolitionists were religious people; the effort to achieve social justice has been motivated by religion and staffed and funded by religious people ever since. But in the last decade, organized religion has come to be seen as a



major source of discrimination, not part of the solution to it.

Since the Supreme Court's *Smith v Oregon* decision in 1990 took away most of the protection formerly provided by the First Amendment's Free Exercise of Religion clause, virtually all religious organizations have agreed that corrective legislation is needed. A broad coalition sought to draft mutually agreeable legislation and had considerable success - until the late nineties. At that point, the coalition shattered over this question: "Should sincere religious conviction be the valid defense to a charge of violating the equality rights of others?"

Many who advocate religious freedom will instinctively answer that it should. Let's examine that supposition. Imagine that someone has a sincere belief that his racial group is superior to all others and that he should not hire or rent to members of other racial groups. Should his sincerely held religious belief trump claims of equal access to jobs and housing? Heard this way, most will say no; religious belief must yield to equality. But, the problem that brought up the question was not about race; it was about homosexuality. One side in the discussion wants religious belief to take precedence over equal rights. Many thinking people believe that viewpoint has led to organized religion changing a centuries long position of defending human rights and shifted to a locus of attacking those very rights. I believe the Bible, correctly understood, would never lead us to attack the equal rights of others.

How should we react to these things? Not by joining those who seek political power for religious reasons; who seek to impose their understanding of morality by force of law. Our reaction must be thoughtful, principled, and Biblically informed. Two simple, core Biblical principles come to mind. Both are found in the Gospel of Matthew. The first is in chapter 7. The Golden Rule commands that we treat others as we would want to be treated. Give those with whom we fundamentally disagree the same equality rights we would want. The second passage is from Mathew 5. During his Sermon on



the Mount, Jesus told us we are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We are to be those who enlighten and preserve until the Master returns.

How do we do that? We must understand that we are in but not of the world. We must love and resist the world: love the people, resist much of the culture. We must have a constructive engagement with society. We must have a clear understanding of our own values. What do you value most? Money? Position? Power? God? Adventism? Family? Heritage? We must face ourselves, brutally if necessary, and be very clear about what we value. AND, we need to be sure that our values are in harmony with God. We must clearly and consistently demonstrate those values to the world. The world is far more likely to be moved by a silent demonstration of our values than by sermonizing.

At the time of the Rwanda genocide, Carl Wilkins was ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) director for Rwanda. When the civil war broke out, he was told to leave Rwanda for his own safety. Although he sent his family to safety, he refused to go himself. He knew he was needed in and by the people of that country. As the bullets began to fly around and through his home he went inside and found shelter behind an upturned table. For days he stayed there, avoiding the shrapnel flying all around him. As soon as the gunfire abated, Carl was out on the streets working to save the lives of untold numbers of people. Carl Wilkins didn't orate about the value of human life, he didn't seek the spotlight, he just quietly and effectively demonstrated the value he put on human life.

Being salt and light will require that we confront the charge of exclusivism. We will not be able to claim a special place or privilege because 'we have the truth.' These foci will lead us to confront current instances of discrimination, and will require that we be in the forefront of those demanding equality for all God's children. Glendale Seventh-day Adventist Church is taking a lead in these matters. Thank you for being out in front, demonstrating the way to a more consistent demonstration of essential Christianity.

We live in a time when religion is seen by many, not as the reflection of God and the epitome of humanity's highest aspirations, but rather as a dangerous egotism that must be hedged about and restricted for the good of humankind. In the midst of this, our task is to demonstrate the necessity of freedom and equality. We must show by example that these two facets of society are God-given priorities. Rarely has been being salt and light more challenging. May God make us equal to the challenge.

To be salt and light: this is our calling.



It is Written: A call to Accountability

Gerard McKay

This summer, one of the television programs produced by the Seventh Day Adventist Church aired a series promoting "change ministries". This is an open letter that Gerry wrote to the producers and the other members of our church leadership....

I am writing in response to the June 4, 11 & 18, 2006 *It Is Written* programs on homosexuality. I want to convey my disappointment with the way this subject matter was presented. You introduced the June 11 segment by saying, "Today you are going to meet a remarkable man who says that God took his life, and turned it around completely. And now he is living free." Some 25 years ago, I read the 1981 Ministry Magazine interview of Colin Cook. There I read an incredible account about a remarkable man who claimed that God had turned his life completely around and that he was living free of his homosexuality. Because of that article, I contacted Mr. Cook. What started out as a road of hope slowly turned into a decade-long journey of psychological and spiritual distress. In the mid 1980's, a former *It Is Written* host made the same claims about his guest. At that time, Mr. Cook spoke as articulately and convincingly on the subject of changing one's sexual orientation.

While I *do not* suggest that Ron Woolsey has engaged in any of the misconduct documented to have taken place at Quest Learning Centre, I find it irresponsible for a Bible-based ministry, in light of all that we have learned about sexual orientation in the last twenty-five years, to be treating the topic of homosexuality once again in such a way. Although my experience with Mr. Cook was difficult, this is not the basis for my remarks. In addition to professional training, I have had considerable access to first-hand accounts about the realities of "changing" ones sexual orientation. During my 5-year association with Mr. Cook, I also participated in several Exodus International conferences (an umbrella organization for faith-based "reparative therapy" ministries in the USA). I facilitated a Homosexuals Anonymous chapter (co-founded by Mr. Cook and sponsored by the Adventist Church) for 3 years in Toronto, Canada, and I worked at arms length with a "change ministry" in that city. I attended the Metropolitan Community Church in Toronto for 3 years (a gay affirming denomination founded in the United States). I was the President of Kinship Canada for four years. In Ottawa, Canada, I was a gay-line counsellor for five years. I have also

attended six conferences sponsored by SDA Kinship International, and two by Evangelicals Concerned.

Speaking from this experience, I respectfully suggest that there was nothing new presented in these *It Is Written* programs. Rather, the manner in which the theological and psychological issues surrounding homosexuality were dealt with by these programs was, in my view, irresponsible if not unethical. For example:

1. Theologically, your dismissal of the idea that the sin of Sodom was "inhospitality" was a simplistic reduction of what that word means to those who use it, thereby misrepresenting the issues in the story. "Inhospitality" is an expression that encompasses *all* that scripture says about the sins of Sodom. While the term does include sexual acts, the sinfulness is in the *violent and degrading* intent of the perpetrators. The violence, indulgence and human neglect, which the other twenty or so Biblical references* would have demonstrated, were not cited. It is interesting to note just how much "hospitality" does play in the story as Ellen White suggests in *Patriarch and Prophets*: "Lot did not know their true character, but politeness and hospitality were habitual with him; they were a part of his religion....Had he not cultivated a spirit of courtesy, he might have been left to perish with the rest of Sodom."

The only text selected for comment, was Jude 1:7. This text, with its reference to "going after strange flesh", was equated to homosexuality. Many scholars argue that the context can just as accurately mean desiring "angel" visitors. In any event, the issue to which this text refers is the fact that the people had "given themselves over" to their behaviour; a complete abandonment of any sexual restraint.

I fear that *It Is Written*, by using this text in this way, will contribute to the belief among its viewers (who may have never given serious study to this topic) that homosexuality *equals* an abandonment of any sexual control. While Mr. Woolsey may have "abandoned" himself to a particular "lifestyle", it is a misrepresentation of homosexual people to generalize in this way.

2. Ethically, counseling practices, including those involving pastoral counseling, recognize the client's right to "informed consent": the obligation to inform people of the realistic outcome of pursuing a particular course of

therapy. (*American Association of Pastoral Counselors - 1994 - Principle III - B*) This series of programs implies that anyone can achieve a similar outcome by following various 'steps', as outlined in your guest's book. There is evidence to demonstrate that pursuing "reparative" therapy is not likely to achieve the outcome promised. Promising someone a particular outcome, even within a faith context, could be regarded as a form of professional misconduct. I am amazed how easily religious institutions feel they are under no ethical obligation to uphold such standards.

3. Woven through these episodes is the suggestion that if a homosexual person "*wants to be saved*" Jesus will change him or her. This is a disappointing use of the faith experience. What God can do, and does do, are two very different things, which scripture frequently bears out. People are often led to despair by confusing the two. Book stores are filled with stories of "Christians" who once gave the same testimony, with the same sincerity, as Mr. Woolsey; only to tell a different story years, even decades later. Then, when these people collapse psychologically, and their marriages fail, they are blamed for not having prayed enough, tried enough, or "wanted" enough.

Fifteen years ago I had surgery for cancer. Due to the location of the cancer, Doctors were able to "cut it out", and I survived. A classmate of mine, from my high school years at Kingsway College, who was married and raising a family, died after a long battle with cancer. Would any medical professional advocate that my "recovery" story be used as a benchmark for all others? Should my pastor have suggested that my faith was greater than that of my classmate? Would anyone dare

suggest that she didn't sincerely "want" to be healed? My sister has had heart surgery four times. All were necessary, and all were successful. Many of the people she has known since childhood, suffering similar conditions, have either died or are living with considerable lifestyle limitations. Similarly, I know "Christians" who have lived with depression for years. They "want" freedom, but it has not come in the way well-meaning church members have insisted it should.

I do believe in offering people hope and in the power of another's testimony to encourage. For the last five years, I have facilitated groups for the Anxiety Disorders Association of Ontario. We provide our clients with the best information available to live healthy, productive lives. We offer them "hope" and even invite members from previous groups to share their "testimonies", but we never do so with the intent of suggesting that everyone will experience the same outcome. Most importantly, we would never ignore the testimonies of those who don't reflect the outcome we expect.

This brings me to my final point. *It Is Written* claims that it wants to present this issue in a "balanced" way. How can this be the case when only one side of the human experience is heard? I don't believe that, in the last twenty years, *It Is Written* has ever given air time to one Seventh-day Adventist who could testify to a different experience with so-called "change". With all due respect to Mr. Woolsey, he is not the first minister to claim he has "changed" and married, and he will not be the last. By contrast, I do know that, over the last 20 years, the testimonies of Seventh-day Adventists whose experience do not conform to the church's expected outcome have been dismissed outright.

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Vignette

Ren Renolds

August always had an abundance of Butter and Eggs. I know that they are blooming near the entrance to the West meadow. Look them up. Somewhere I have a picture of Elaine and I after a rain. We're holding Butter and Eggs. They always grew in this dry place near a tiny dam we used to preserve water for late in the season when water grew precious. It was late November when we had a day of board meeting there at the ranch twenty two miles above Boulder. We had Leslie with us; also I believe John, Lee, Todd, Vickie and Myrna were there. Of course there was Obed and Jim as well as Richard Nivison. The great room was filled with Kinshippers and board members. If memory serves me Obed was Kampmeeting coordinator that year. Jamie was women's director. My dad really enjoyed himself at that meeting.

Accountability...

I know, from experience, the effect this kind of program has on the Body of Christ. At the local church level, the next time the subject comes up in a Sabbath school discussion, some dear saint is certain to say, "I heard on *It Is Written* that homosexuality can be cured. This Adventist minister testified that he has changed and he is now married with children." That will shut down any further dialogue -- end of discussion. The homosexual church member will think Mr Woolsey holds secrets to resolving this issue that no one else has ever had. Armed with this information, pastors and family members will encourage the homosexual person to wholeheartedly entrust themselves to the "reparative" process. In essence, "throwing him or her self off temples", believing that God will honour their leap of faith and that angels will bear them up into heterosexuality. In their ill-informed presumptions, many fall to the ground disillusioned and abandoned. Then gay organizations and other support groups, which are frequently maligned, will

help those people put their lives back together. I have seen this happen countless times.

I do know a handful of people who, I believe, give authentic accounts of adjustment to heterosexual relationships. They acknowledge, however, that the factors that contributed to their adjustment reflect their personal situation, and they would be reluctant to suggest that everyone can reach the same outcome.

It is my hope that *It Is Written* will some day be open to discussing the diversity of experiences among Seventh-day Adventists, and other Christians, in relation to issues surrounding homosexuality.

For those who may be interested in apprising themselves of a variety of viewpoints on the complex subject of homosexuality, I commend the following web sites: www.someone-to-talk-to.net (Seventh-day Adventist); www.ecwr.org (Evangelical); and www.courage.org.uk (Anglican\Evangelical - England). I have personally met the founders of the groups represented by these sites, and can attest to their integrity.



Pictures of Kampmeeting 2006...



Homosexuality and the Theological Seminary: One Discussion

Carrol Grady

The first class of ministerial students to receive a Doctorate of Ministry in Family Ministries will soon graduate from the Seventh Day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. In July René Drumm, chair of the social work department at Southern Adventist University, taught a one-week intensive in Current Family Issues to this ethnically diverse class of pastors. She invited me to give a presentation on homosexuality.

I talked about how our family has responded to the knowledge that one of our sons is gay. I included information about homosexuality that I have learned in my years of researching the issue. I used illustrations to describe the many ways people have been deeply wounded by the church's traditional prejudice and lack of understanding regarding this issue. My presentation took over an hour. We spent another hour and a half in discussion and questions. Dr. Willie Oliver, the North American Division Family Ministries Director, was there during most of this time. My husband joined us for the discussion.

The students who responded were gracious and expressed appreciation for my willingness to share. Several of them began by saying something like, "I have heard so much information and have so many new thoughts running through my mind that I can hardly absorb it all. I will need more time to digest it." Their comments and questions gave evidence of a wide range in understanding. The three Caucasian pastors from North

America seemed the most open to new ideas. One said that he was seeing the issue of gay marriage in a different light than he had before. He planned to study this idea more carefully. Another who talked to me at length during the break said he didn't think it was the pastor's responsibility to check on parishioners to see if they were sinning.

Several of the Black and Hispanic pastors said they respected my journey but would not accept my theological conclusions. I assured them that my purpose was not to get them to agree with me; I simply chose to share my understanding and encourage them to prayerfully study this issue further. One Hispanic pastor reported to me that a psychiatrist told him homosexuals can change their orientation. I imagine that, for him, the psychiatrist had more credibility than I did. His response was despite the fact that I had spoken at length about Colin Cook, the ineffectiveness of change programs, and the damage they do.

One pastor said that it seemed to him the gay/lesbian community would not be satisfied with anything less than full acceptance of committed relationships. I answered that certainly many hoped that their committed relationships would eventually be accepted. In the meantime, most would be thankful to see and experience more love and grace displayed by the church.

Another pastor told me he had tried to be supportive of a lesbian in his congregation. She still left the church, reporting

that in general she did not feel accepted. I said that when people have seen so much prejudice, rejection and condemnation from the Christian community, we need to go the extra mile to make them realize we really want them.

The last question came from an Indian pastor who asked me how I felt when people compared homosexuals to alcoholics, prostitutes, adulterers, or thieves. I said it offended me, because I didn't think it was a fair comparison. He thoughtfully nodded his head in agreement. It seemed to me a good note on which to end.

My best (and hardest!) critic, Bob, approved of the way I handled the comments and questions. When I finished, Dr. Oliver spoke. He thanked me. He talked about the January workshop on Homosexuality and the Seventh Day Adventist Church. He described his department's initiative to encourage greater understanding among church leadership. He encouraged those who were more negative to keep an open mind and reminded them that we believe in truth that is progressive.

All in all, I think some seeds were planted. I hope they will produce fruit in the future. I don't expect those doctoral students to instantly absorb all the information it took me seventeen years to accept. One man who appeared to be the least responsive told René, "Only eternity will tell what good this week was."



BODY IMAGE AND HIV

Thor Montgomery

During the summer season of beach time and bathing suits, I have become acutely aware that I have some of the negative body image issues that can affect those of us with HIV. I have to learn to be more confident about showing skin. For our own sanity it's critical to learn coping skills to allow ourselves to be less self-conscious of the way we look!

There are several common changes in appearance brought on by HIV. Lypodystrophy is defined as "uneven fat distribution, generally consisting of proportionate extremities with disproportionate amounts of fat in the torso, especially in the abdominal region." Buffalo Hump is the abnormal accumulation of heavy upper back or neck fat. Protease Paunch is caused by the class of anti-HIV drugs known as protease inhibitors. It is very difficult to lose this paunch with diet and exercise. Liposuction doesn't work well because the fat isn't just cellulite; it's cords of hard fat that intertwines with our organs. The lypodystrophy related Buffalo Hump is usually a fatty and benign growth, often removed surgically. The surgery causes a large scar on the upper back or neck. Wasting occurs when we lose our body fat and our own system begins to devour muscle. This is especially noticeable on our back side. Since that part of our body is usually considered a sexual asset, a less than perfect backside can be viewed as a loss. Avascular necrosis is a degenerative joint disease that requires joint replacement. The surgery leaves large scars that can be exacerbated if a post

operative infection sets in. This causes even more obvious muscle damage.

These body re-shapers can so damage our self image that we avoid swimming, saunas, or dates. In the past I have been afraid to wear a sexy bathing suit, be seen naked in the locker room, or even dress in clothing that is a bit revealing. Avascular necrosis has left me with massive scars on 5 joints. Lypodystrophy gave me a buffalo hump and a fat tummy. I have gynecomastia (the enlarged male breasts that occur in 20-30% of all males at some point in our lives). It is an understatement to say that my body image has been skewed.

Here are some things I have found helpful. The Bible says "I AM FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE. Marvelous are your works and that my soul knows very well." Psalm 139:14. If we look at ourselves through God's eyes; if we re-affirm this verse daily; we can learn that God sees us as wonderful and desirable, even with the ravages of HIV. I believe it is helpful to expose ourselves to situations in which we must, by necessity, show off our bodies. We need to learn that most other people will not be repulsed by us. We need to learn that even those "others" are never perfectly beautiful. Self-confidence is a learned experience. We learn best by repetition. We can try simply standing in front of the mirror and repeating a mantra such as, "I am as God intended me to be and I know this to be true." We need to learn the value of who we are. Exercise can help us be more involved in trying to re-shape our bodies. Be careful of chronic fatigue or other problems.

I hope that thinking about our bodies as instruments of God's design makes some difference for you. I hope this

knowledge will work itself into your subconscious. Next time you see that hot bathing suit or steamy, see-through shirt, think about how God sees you; allow yourself to grab hold of these items with gusto. Everyone has something they would like to change about their body. We are no different. Our Creator loves us, just the way we are. ▼

IM RU?

The IMRU? forum has seen some changes in its leadership over the last few weeks. Male member coordinator, Jeremy Brown was elected as the new Kinship Vice-President and therefore has resigned from his position. Female member coordinator, Suzy Wise has also left her position to pursue future endeavors. The IMRU? members would like to publicly thank both Jeremy & Suzy for all their hard work on the Leadership Team for the past year and a half. As a result of these vacancies, an election was held amongst the members of IMRU?. I am happy to report that two outstanding individuals were elected to fill the vacant positions. The new IMRU? men's coordinator will be Ruben Lopez who is a Region 9 member and resides in Ontario, California. The new IMRU? female coordinator will be Gwen Castro who is a Region 3 member and resides in Loudon, Tennessee. The members of IMRU? welcome our new coordinators. In addition to the new coordinators, Naveen Jonathan will continue as IMRU? Liaison to the Kinship Board and Eric Gilleo as Membership Coordinator & Founder. For more information about IMRU?, please contact us at IMRUGroup@gmail.com. ▼



Request for Your Stories!!!

Pacific Press Publishing Association has asked us to compile a book of our stories. This is a rare opportunity and we would love for you to have a chance to share your journey. You can write with your own name or with a pseudonym. Ben Kemena has given us a construct of healthy maturation around which we can weave our narratives:

1. Sensitization - I am different.
2. Identity Confusion - Could I be gay?
3. Identity Assumption - I know I am gay.
4. Commitment - I'm okay with being gay and I am telling others.

To send your writing or to ask more questions please feel free to contact Carrol Grady or Catherine Taylor at carrolg@hotmail.com or katgurian@aol.com.

Kinship Calendar

September 2-3 - Regional Coordinator's Training Meeting. For more information you can contact Obed at obed2@earthlink.net.

September 3 - Region 5 is having a Labor Day Pool party at Floyd's home.

September 8 - Region 2 Vespers at Oaklands Presbyterian Church in Laurel Maryland.

September 10 - Region 2 Pool Party at Yolanda and Joyce's home. For more information, contact Yolanda at: yselliott@aol.com

September 16 - Region 8 will have our monthly regional meeting at Obed and Marcos' place in Martinez, starting with a potluck at 3pm and meeting at 4-6pm. At this time, we will plan out the next 10 months or so of meetings and activities.

September 29-October 1 - AUSTRALIAN STYLE KAMPMEETING will be held in Sydney. Our focus will be on Health and Well Being. All of you are most welcome!! To register or for more information feel free to write us at: www.sdakinshipaustralia.org

October 13 - Region 2 Vespers at Oaklands Presbyterian Church in Laurel, Maryland. Our guest speaker will be the pastor of the Oakland's Church.

October 27-29 - SDA Kinship International Board Meeting in San Francisco, California.

October 28 - Region 5 will participate in the Halloween Party at the Oak Lawn Street Party.

November 3-5 - Region 1 Mini Kampmeeting in Windsor, Vermont. For those of you who want to check out the venue, feast your eyes on www.juniperhillinn.com. You can find more information on our KOL website. Sherri Babcock will be our Sabbath Speaker. Dinner will be a New England Thanksgiving Banquet...and that is just for starters. For more information you can contact Catherine at katgurian@aol.com.

November 26 - Kinship Australia will participate in the Adelaide Feast Picnic Day. It is held in Rymill Park from noon to 6pm.

Kinship Australia - Noel Thorpe

We are going to begin using our web site to distribute the Australian newsletter. We will use snail mail for those who do

not have internet access. We are also looking for people who would like to utilize their skills and energies to coordinate activities down here in OZ. We look forward to continuing to meet and work to address the needs of those who are both GLBTI and Seventh Day Adventist.

LGBT Religious History Award The LGBT Religious Archives Network (LGBT-RAN) invites submissions for its second annual LGBT Religious History Award. The deadline for submissions is October 13, 2006. The award-winning paper receives a monetary gift and recognition at LGBT-RAN's annual meeting. For more details, go to: <http://www.lgbtran.org/HistoryAward.htm>



Treasurer's Report

Karen Wetherell

Instead of sharing numbers this month I would like to give you an overall synopsis of our projects and our finances. If, by chance, there are those of you who may think there is plenty of money and few needs, I apologize for not sharing information more regularly. God has blessed us enormously and created ways for us to reach many people around the world in a variety of styles. Our ability to do this is dependent on the generosity of our members and our work to develop resources.

Last year, Kinship's total expenses were \$73,585. Forty four percent of this amount went to support the production and mailing of eleven issues of Kinship's Connection to each member, around the world. For many people in our community, this is the only way they are able to have contact with us, our stories, and the information and support we are able to share. Because of the need of our members, Kinship's Board has made the Connection a priority use of resources. There are around 1300 Kinship members. The Connection costs around \$25 a year for each member. We chose to send this without a subscription price because we want to make sure the Connection is available to all. This is a cost per member so if there are two of you in the same household or if you are having the Connection also mailed each month to a parent, child or supportive church member this would amount to \$25 per person.

Other regular expenses include mailing new member packets to each person who requests them, scholarship funds to help as many people as possible attend Kampmeeting,



European Kinship Meeting, Mini Kampmeetings, Regional Meetings and other Kinship activities, and materials to support Kinship's work to educate leaders and members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. We provide sign language interpreters for deaf persons attending our meetings.

Kinship is involved in some remarkable projects right now. You may have been using the Connection to read about the Workshop on Homosexuality and The Seventh Day Adventist Church that took place in January at Ontario, California. This conference is the foundation for a book that is in production, scheduled to come out this fall. We are in the process of designing and organizing ways to make sure every thought leader in the Seventh Day Adventist church will get a copy of the book. Pacific Press Publishing Association is interested in having us collate a book of narrative stories, told by our members, about their life journeys. We are now collecting stories for that endeavor. Over Labor Day Weekend (the first weekend in September in the US) there will be an intensive two day training for Regional Coordinators. The materials from that meeting will be shared with every regional leader: domestic and international. This training

will also develop a leadership curriculum to be offered at the US Kampmeeting. It will also be available to international coordinators if they would like. Our focus is to help our coordinators build even stronger supports for our members in their regions. Kinship has grown so much that our office needs paid administrative assistance to continue to build the ways that Fred Casey's volunteer position does so much to keep us functional in both hard copy and cyber contexts. We are beginning to research possible ways to support GLBTI SDA pastors who have lost their positions in the church and need retraining to build their lives. We continue to research ways to increase the number of members who can attend Kinship gatherings.

There are certain Kinship members who make a regular monthly donation to our community either by personal checks or credit cards. Before Kampmeeting this year we realized that it was fifteen of our thirteen hundred members who made regular donations that totaled a monthly support of \$2500. We also have a few members who make substantial contributions once or twice a year. If we average our yearly expenses, the cost to provide the services Kinship offers comes out to about \$6,000 per month. It's not much if we take into account the number of members we serve and the variety of ways we are working to support them. We need regular income to be able to plan well.

At Kampmeeting this year I shared this information with our members who were present. Many were quite surprised to find out that Kinship is being

supported by around 25 members. This is only 2% of the total membership. After taking up the offering and pledges I was quite pleased to see that we now have 33 members making donations on a monthly basis. This amounts to approximately \$3200/month. There were many who talked to me about putting something in the Connection detailing our financial status. They thought it was important that the entire membership be able to realize that there is a real need to support the organization

Along with our requests for your help and support we have begun to apply for grants. The nature of grant monies is that we often need to prove that a project is functioning in order to apply for more funds. What I am trying to tell you, in my own accountant's way, is that we need the financial support of you who are our individual members. You may think that what you could contribute would not make a difference. I want you to know that if just 100 members began giving \$10/month that would be another \$12000/year we could count on for funding new projects and keeping the current ones strong. If you feel you would like to become more financially supportive of the organization you could either mail donations to the Kinship office or you could contact Karen Wetherell at treasurer@sdakinship.org and let me know how you would like to become more involved. If you would like to start a monthly donation on a credit card you can go to the Kinship website and put in your information. It goes to a secure website where I will get the data necessary to begin. Thank you for considering what you can contribute to help your community grow. ▼

Kinship Europe Holidays

Catherine Taylor

Mike Lewis offered an invitation. Kinship Europe seems to have turned the idea into a tradition. Last year Mike created a week for us in the Scottish highlands; warm homes, hiking, great food, lovely weather and remarkable storms, closer relationships. This year Reino and Ingemar opened their home, their gardens, their endeavors and their part of their country to the group of us. We fell in love. We looked at properties. We knit old relationships closer and delighted in new ones. This is a remarkable way of knowing our organizers through their country of hospitality. Like many Kinship events, the only way to really soak the time up is to be there but...we want to share a little of our journey with you and perhaps entice you to share it with us, next year. The September and October issues will journal some of our adventures and photos....

It's about butterflies really. Hundreds of them took my breath away that first morning in the cloister guest house. I knew I could not leave till the train faced the airport and the plane that will take me home. Stockholm will be another trip. There were butterflies on the fields we saw by railway. Butterflies were rescued from the kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom. There are butterflies on the roses and the bee balm that scents Reino's garden. Mariposas Obed calls them. An Hispanic symbol for those whose spiritual journey travels them in space. I think the term may have had derogatory origins but I believe we remake it as we have remade so many terms and conversations. I will come to see butterflies as part of Reino's high road of inclusivity. That's his EKM5 theme. It's his dream for all GLBTI people. It was also his gift to us. So, welcome back to EKM5 and our European holiday.

Sunday:

Whew, what a madcap day. Breakfast. Make it to the meeting. Gerard's discussion on power and spirituality will leave me thinking. More food. Okay one and all: pop into the cars, stop at the local tombs and stone circles...no...back into the cars. No lolly gagging around with photos here. Off to the bird lake. We get a film and overview of this extraordinary revitalized place and then...we got five minutes to wander around and then...off to the Cathedral at Skara. Lovely place. We had worked a way to keep Scott with us a little longer. Here, we put him on the bus to catch his plane to London. The ice cream refreshment crew takes care of necessities....then..off to the church where King Olaf got baptized in St. Bridget's spring. I wish I could remember the name of the church. It is beautifully stenciled. English story of its history on tape. We collapse into the pews grateful to listen and rest. Then...off to the Inn at Forshem, the oldest Inn in this area for dinner..delicious food and yes...they even made something great for us veggies. ...ah yes not over yet...Stefan's Cello concert. He has carried it with him over his shoulder all day. Amazing music. Whew..we find petrol for Bjorn. His fuel tank must work like pots of oil owned by the widow at Zeraphath. We head home and I think we fall into bed exhausted but I don't remember.

Continued on page 14...

Holiday...

Monday:

We move to the cloister guesthouse. Whoops, it's time to eat breakfast and check out. Great hotel. Good breakfast, very comfortable beds and less expensive than we had calculated. Adieu Hotel St. Olaf. We have an amazing, unscheduled three hour talk with Bjorn who is the president of the Swedish Union of Seventh Day Adventists. We have grown to like him over the weekend. We share our experiences and our stories. We share our Biblical understandings and exegesis. Every one, everyone in the room speaks. Nomi and Jorgen have to leave and she wants to see the bird lake one more time. We say good-bye to Mai Britt and Bjorn. Back into the cars and to the lake for lunch and our business meeting. Karen and Nomi only see each other once a year. I am glad they are making plans for next time. We hang over the railings to visit with the baby birds. Good-bye to our Danes. Shopping. Reino gives us an education about the class issues of grocery stores. There are the ones you wander in slowly to make sure everyone sees you. Have a coffee on the way out to make this certain. Great produce there. Mid range options are fine. Then there are the groceries who offer wonderful avocados and Finnish cheese but are ones where you park down the street, cover your face with your hat and skulk in, looking up and down the boulevard for people who should not spot you there. We end up in the high end. Entire cooler shelves of caviar. We don't buy that but Reino calls Ingemar to report there will be no food left on the rest of the shelves when we leave. Our



shopping for ten actually only lasts two days. That evening, Karen cooks haystacks for the crew. They are delighted. I even see pesto tortellini on the corn chips.

Tuesday:

White butterflies; starlight on the colored daylight night of the field flowers. I love those white butterflies. I could stay here for a month of quiet. Today is Karen's departure. She's almost packed. We all ooze through the first of our ninety minute four course breakfasts. She gets us moving and on our way to Skovde (pronounced Grevda with a guttural soft accent) and the

train station. We arrive early, research both real estate and the market square. I stuff purchases into Karen's carry on. We hear the whistle. It's time to board. We bundle her up the stairs. Three kisses from the Dutch. She does love those three kisses. We run along the track waving to her in the window as the train begins to move, even before she has put down her luggage. Time for refreshments again. Then Reino surprises us with fields of tiny Swedish orchids! He knows the name and history of each of them. We wander around like school children learning that what Americans call cattails are Swedish soft rolling pins. We head home to meet Gerard, Annelies, and Ingemar for dinner. The slow twilight meal. I love this once a year ritual that is a roving Brigadoon. We indulge in animated conversations about politics, safety, loving, newspapers, orientation, strawberries. It's only ten so we know we can clean up the dishes and make it to the bird lake in time for sunset. The sky is blue and scarlet twilight walking shadows back from the sun downing at the lake. It is a leisurely process here. We see a mother bird clucking the little ones out of the water. No. Not coming now. She's up to the





nest, clucking. Not like a chicken, the little ones taking their time like a small tribe of children. Finally one stalks up the marsh tiny slope and dives under the living down. The rest follow and the clicking stops as the night comes a little quieter. At home our rooms are filled with butterflies who have come in to see the light. Melanie helps the moths escape. She picks the correct light quickly that guides them to the window. We pour it open and they find the dark home.



connection ▽

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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.

I Left My  In San Francisco



Join Us For Kinship Kampmeeting July 2007



Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you did not do, than by the things you did do. Throw off the bowlines, set sail from the safe harbor, catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.

...Mark Twain