



The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 38, No. 10, December 2014



Pharisees, Sabbaths, and Same-Sex Marriage

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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 a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit 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 2,500 people in more than forty-three countries.

Seventh-day Adventist 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.



PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA
or visit Kinship's website www.sdakinship.org/resources
for information about

- Find a Gay Friendly Church
- *Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?*
- *Living Eden's Gifts*
- Previous *Connection* issues
- ... and more.

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www.sdakinship.org/regions-groups

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SUPPORT KINSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist 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 Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to SDA Kinship Int'l, PO Box 244, Orinda, CA 94563 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.)

RESOURCES

www.someone-to-talk-to.net
www.buildingsafeplaces.org
www.itgetsbetterforadventists.org
www.sgamovie.com
www.facebook.com/sdakinship
... and more

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE INFINITELY VALUABLE

From the Editor

Telling you to avoid sugar would be futile. So, maybe add some exercise and water and a vitamin or three.

I revel in the holidays. My Katie used to think that all the lights in our small town were for her December 20 birthday. I still like them and smile at the memory of her enraptured, two-year-old face, pressed against our car window. At the beginning of each December I wonder what the Dutch will do for Sinterklaas and the Scandinavians for St. Lucy's Day. There is an amazing light show at our Norfolk botanical gardens; it includes fish, flowers, and spiders. I love the music. Ruud tells me I am not allowed to use the word *love* so much. He says love is for relationships. He's right... but I love holiday music. I enjoy hearing from people whose return addresses appear in my mailbox only once a year. I live in an area where I get Romanian and Czech specialty foods: plums and millet. Yum! Amid all this I know that December can be stress-ridden and lonely. I know people all over the world will read this, but I don't know your circumstances. I hope that there are people in your geographic or cyber world who honor your dreams and care for you, with all your beauty and warts. I hope that you will find some blessings—gentle, unexpected, or blazing in vision and surprise. I hope that you will be able to plan your time so that you are not too exhausted or depleted. Mostly I hope you will take care of yourself and remember that you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine



*From the Connection Team to you:
A Merry Christmas &
a Happy and Blessed New Year!*





The Dogs Who Modeled Empathy

By Andrew Dykstra

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’

“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’

“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’

“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them listen to them.’

‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’

“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead’” (Luke 16:19-31).

We won’t learn about the geography of Heaven from this parable. The flames are not a literal place and neither is Abraham’s bosom. Jesus told this tale to privileged, complacent people whose pride was placed in their ancestral connection to Abraham. The parable preceding it describes the corrupt steward. In vs. 14 Luke says the Pharisees loved wealth. They had sneered at that previous parable; they are likely the focus of this one. Unlike many of us, Jesus used strong words and stories in a sincere hope to turn the Pharisees from a path of destruction.

The rich man represents the Pharisees. Despite their public good works they created a huge chasm between themselves and the poor of Judea. It was in caring for the poor and vulnerable that the true lessons of Heaven’s citizens were taught. “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get to Heaven.”

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said,

‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’ Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands? And he said, ‘The one who showed mercy toward him’” (Luke 10:30-36). But for the priest, the Levite, and the Pharisees, there seemed to be a great chasm, isolating them from need.

In these two stories Jesus draws a shocking parallel. A hated Samaritan saved the dying traveler; dogs, in compassion, licked the sores of a street person. The “unclean” showed more empathy than the Pharisaical leaders of God’s people.

The kingdom of Heaven turns our cultural assumptions of privilege upside down. The first will be last and the last first. In God’s realm every resource is shared with all who need. “Come, you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come; buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isaiah 55:1). “On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink’” (John 7:37).

Did Jesus get through to the Pharisees? Did Abraham get through to the rich man? Does God’s truth get through to us today? ▼

Blessings of This Year

Kampmeeting USA



Talk to Myself?

In a Pig's Eye!

“We need you to settle an argument for us.” The middle-aged female was very attractive and very defiant. I glanced at the handsome man sitting beside her and raised my eyebrow. He shrugged and looked away.

“Perhaps you need to hire an arbitrator,” I suggested, loathe to step into the center of a domestic spat.

“Oh, you can do it,” the woman said. “I know you can. And my name is Florida, by the way. I forgot to tell you that. You know, Florida, like the state.”

“I believe you’re the first person I’ve ever met named Florida,” I said. “I like unusual names.”

She smiled and continued. “We don’t really need an arbitrator. We just need a *brain opinion*. You see, Frank here says he thinks something is the matter with my brain. When I have a problem to solve, I tend to talk out loud. He’s always saying, ‘Don’t talk out loud. People will think you’re a nut case!’”

“Well, I don’t talk out loud when I’m problem solving,” her husband said. He glanced at me and then locked his eyes on the floor. “I grew up being told that talking to yourself was bad enough. Answering yourself could get you locked up.”

“My guess is that there are several areas of confusion going on here,” I said. “Let me give you a few bottom lines—the male brain likes the bottom line—and then I can enlarge on them.” I proceeded with an explanation that seemed to interest Florida and Frank alike.

- Male and female brains are different in both wiring structure and processing function.
- Males tend to talk to themselves silently and internally. The more stressed a man is, the more likely he is to clam up. Males come to a conclusion silently and only state it if and when they are ready.
- Females are more likely to talk to themselves verbally and out loud. In fact, the more stressed a woman is, the more likely she is to talk almost nonstop. Females come to a conclusion most effectively by speaking aloud.

Frank and Florida looked at each other. “All human beings talk to themselves. Period. Some are unaware of that, however. Self-talk is just a label for what you tell yourself.

“In fact,” I told the pair, “you’re talking to yourselves right now—holding a private conversation, if you will. Just sit quietly for a minute, perhaps close your eyes and listen. Pay attention. You’ll soon pick up on your self-talk, although you may not want to disclose what you are saying.”



You talk to yourself almost constantly, so learn to talk in the most effective way possible.

It makes a difference!

—A. R. Taylor

Frank burst out laughing. “You’re absolutely right. I was saying, ‘How in the world did I end up in your office?’ and ‘She’s probably going to side with my wife!’”

“That’s what thoughts are,” I said. “They’re private internal conversations. Fortunately, most of us have some type of governor that prevents us from blurting out every private internal conversation, every thought that crosses our minds. When that governor fails momentarily...” I decided not to finish that sentence.

Florida squirmed in her chair, so much so that I pondered what the last thing had been that she had blurted out unintentionally.

“It’s a given that human beings talk to themselves. The bigger concern for me is that many people talk to themselves in unhelpful ways, speaking negatively instead of positively. It’s important to learn to listen in on your own conversations and develop a communication style that helps program your brain for success.”

“Tell me more about self-talk styles,” said Frank.

“You could have said *please*,” Florida murmured.

“Male speech is very direct and uses the fewest words necessary to get the message across,” I said, looking at Florida. “Female speech is much more indirect and tends to use many more words to get across the same message. I understand male speech—am working on becoming gender bilingual—and did not consider Frank’s request in the least rude.”

“Sorry,” said Florida, her face coloring. “Obviously this is a whole new area I need to investigate.”

“Think of your brain as divided into three functional layers, much like gears in a transmission. They work together and yet in a sense they are separate. Your self-talk—thoughts *and* words—create internal mental pictures in the 3rd brain layer, the portion of your brain that contains conscious thought. Think of this pro-



cess as creating a map for your brain to follow. The subconscious 1st and 2nd brain layers do not use language, but they can perceive the pictures that filter down to them. Your subconscious mind follows the pictures and usually does its best to push you toward behaviors that help in what they perceive you want to accomplish.

“Moreover, the brain deals easily with positives, a one-step process. What you say and think is the picture you get. Negatives are a

greater challenge—a two-step process. Your brain creates a picture, but the word *don’t* indicates that you actually want something else to happen. Now the brain has to guess, in a sense, how to alter the picture. It may or may not alter the picture accurately, or the subconscious layers may miss the *don’t* altogether and just follow the first picture.”

“Oh, my!” exclaimed Florida. “When I told the kids, ‘Don’t run into the street’ their brains first created a picture of running into the street. Sometimes their brain altered the picture in time and sometimes it failed to do so.”

“You’re a fast learner, Florida,” I said, smiling. “How could you give them that directive in a more brain-helpful way?”

“Let me see...” she began.

“She’s doing it again!” said Frank.

I nodded. “Remember, the female brain processes most effectively aloud. I’m glad to know her brain is thinking. Women often come to a conclusion only after they have talked it out aloud. One lady even told me, ‘I don’t know what I’m thinking until I hear myself say it.’”

Frank burst out laughing. Florida laughed, too, and then continued. “Maybe I could say something like, ‘Play on the driveway,’ or ‘Stop at the curb,’ or ‘Stay in the yard.’”

“Exactly,” I said. “That gives their brains a one-step picture to follow. There is no need for their brain to convert anything. The same thing goes for adults. Avoid thinking about, talking about, or picturing what you do *not* want to have happen. Picture in your mind’s eye exactly what you want to achieve and what that looks like. Once the picture is in place, focus on what you want to have happen and always use positive self-talk.”



Dr. Daniel Wegner calls this the *white bear phenomenon*. When you think or say, “Don’t think about the white bear!” a representation of a white bear goes into working memory and that’s all you think about. And that instruction certainly doesn’t tell you what *to* do; just what *not* to do. When you are talking with yourself, it may also be more helpful to use the pronouns *you* and *your*.”

Frank’s head snapped up. “What’s this *you* and *your* business? Wouldn’t saying *I* be better?”

“You can use the word *I*. In that case you would need to say, ‘I, Frank’ or ‘I, Florida’ to make sure your brain knows exactly whom you are talking to or about.”

“The word *you* depersonalizes things slightly and emphasizes

that *you* are collaborating with *your* brain and giving it directions, which can be very helpful. You are the only person on this planet who can change the way you think or the way in which you communicate with yourself and others. In general, human beings tend to communicate with others in the style they use with themselves. When I hear individuals speaking negatively to others, I know that’s the style they use with themselves. I imagine their brains must become very tired and discouraged from being spoken to so negatively.”

Florida showed a positive reaction to this new information. “Seems to me now that there really was no argument for you to settle. Thank you very much for taking time to talk with us. I just needed a new brain-based perspective!” The couple rose to go.

“Make that two,” said Frank, smiling and extending his hand.

For a split second I thought Florida might say, “You could have said *thank you*,” but she didn’t. Yes, indeed, she was a fast learner.

And as she practically applies what she just learned—on a daily basis—I believe that not only will her self-talk improve but also her communication with Frank and her children. That’s a win-win.

©Arlene R. Taylor PhD ▼

Blessings of This Year

Kampmeeting USA



More

Blessings of this Year



Sakiyah – North Carolina

I am thankful for a more clear understanding of and personal experience with God's grace. He has always loved me and continues to in spite of my utter failures with many of life's learning experiences. I know He should have given up on me a long time ago! I'm thankful for my life and good health. A few months ago I almost died from an infection I contracted while in the hospital recovering from major surgery. I thought I would never get better. I found myself not making any promises to live a better life, only that I would live a life, with His help, that daily pleased Him. I realize that my promises to do good and be good are useless and impossible. I am thankful for my home and His daily provision for my temporal needs. I just want to love Him more, love others, and live to the fullest the life He has given me.

I'm thankful for my former husband whose friendship is much better now than it ever was in our 25 years of marriage. I'm thankful for my children. They mean the world to me. My love for them and knowing how much they need me in their lives

has kept me motivated to live and be the best person I can be. It's such a blessing to see the unconditional love I have towards them be reciprocated when I need it most. I am thankful for my extended family who chose to love me when I "came out." My coming out has caused my extended family unit to become closer. Now we talk about everything and anything. I love the relationship we have now. They viewed me as straight-laced and so spiritual that they were relieved that I, too, was human and struggled with my own personal issues just like everyone else.

I am thankful for my extremely stressful job working with children. I may not ever know the impact that I am having on their lives as their counselor, but I am thankful for the opportunity to have a positive influence.

I am thankful for Kinship.



Jerry McKay – Canada

I have a number of things to be grateful for this year, but I am most grateful for one ongoing blessing.

Two years ago, we started to notice that mom was having difficulty with her memory. She volunteered to stop driving, which she loved to do. Then she started to hint at not wanting to look after the house on her own much longer. We did our best to keep her in her home as long as we could, but the question my sister and I knew we had

to address was where to move her and when. Everyone has to make decisions that hold unknowns and face choices we have no control over. When things come together well we are appreciative. I am grateful for the mystery of synergy. I want to believe that things do work out better when God is invited into the process even when the need or outcome is actually sad or difficult to make.

After scouting out suitable senior residences, we decided to move her this past June. Although mom had indicated she wanted to move, she often did not remember visiting the residence and liking the one we had chosen.

We did our best to choose a room we thought she would like. We chose a second floor room with a balcony that faced west so that she would get more sun in the dark winter months and that overlooked a quiet street with lots of trees. We painted the walls the same colours as her living room.

It was impossible to predict how she would react when the day came to move and how well she would adjust to the new surroundings, a new routine and people she did not know. Despite all of these positives, I think the first month was harder for me than for her. Although doing my best to care for her, I still felt like a villain when moving her from her charming little house to a bachelor apartment.

As it turned out, mom likes her new place and has no desire to return to her house. She has adjusted well and frequently expresses how much she likes the balcony and the trees. As well, we could not have known that three months after she moved in, her closest friend would unexpectedly have to move in. He ended up below her in the room that was our second choice.

I know my mother's attitude was an added blessing. Nevertheless, my gratitude is to God for any part He had in bringing things together so well in such a timely way.



Rebby Kern – North Carolina

This year has gone by quicker than I could remember which year to write down on my documents. This past year I moved across the country after graduation from La Sierra University, started a new job in LGBTQ activism, and have met so many new friends along the way. I'm especially grateful for many things:

I am grateful:

- To be working with Campus Pride to help in creating safer, more LGBTQ-friendly college campuses
- To see more states with marriage equality
- For the health of my family
- To feel more at home here in the south; I'm calling Charlotte my new home for another year!
- For my new position as the Director of Youth Interests with SDA Kinship

There is another great year ahead and I know more opportunities and blessings await.



Jeffrey Williams – Texas

I was blessed with many things this past year. First, I am blessed to be celebrating 11 years with Floyd. He has made and continues to make me very happy every day. Second, I was blessed to have had the opportunity to travel to Hong Kong to pre-

sent my doctoral project at an international nursing research congress meeting. Of course, I was even more blessed as Floyd got to travel to Hong Kong with me.



Marygrace Coneff – California

I am thankful for my father who is helping me get well by growing wheatgrass for me. It is a cumbersome process and he is doing this for me. He uses it, too; but he wants me to get my health back, and I appreciate all his efforts.

I am also very thankful for the privilege of serving with Kinship members. I have never felt so loved, supported, and accepted, while being able to spread the message of God's love to some very special places, like the Seventh-day Adventist Church!

I am grateful for the film *Seventh-Gay Adventists!* It made my life so much easier because I could show it to others and they could put a face on people who are LGBTI and allies who support these people. And I am so thankful that Stephen and Daneen allowed me to hear their story and helped me in responding to people who were mean and nasty online. I am continually learning how to respond in love while watching them respond.

Theresa Ricks

Each morning we ask the Lord to order our footsteps. We also thank Him, recounting some of the ways He has caused us to connect to His plans. Like a warm, soft comforter wrapped around our shivering frames on a bone-chilling night, so it feels to be made a part of His timing. My words are insufficient. Our daily connectedness to His movements all around and beyond our reach is treasure indeed!

Today's buzz word is "survival." In my reckoning, just surviving isn't good enough. I want the entire wad, so to speak. To



Ronaldo Appleton – Baltimore via Jamaica and New York City

1. A very strong community.
2. Kinship and my supper club community that sprung out of Kinship. This group provides respect, support, love, and non-judgemental embrace.
3. My family and their unconditional love and care. In spite of our differences, we share much love and caring for each other.
4. My niece and nephew are amazing. I love them like crazy. My niece is eight and my nephew is five.
5. I have been learning a lot about myself. I have some special friendships that help me grow in this process.



spiritually and practically prevail, no matter the odds hurled against us. We have to back in the luxury of God's care. God's care is better than money in the bank. Way better than a pantry full of eats, closets full of clothing, a dry roof over our heads, or whatever you name, are the evidences that the living God of all the Universe is ordering our footsteps. That Pammy and Theresa are daily being factored into His Divine Plans, warts and all.

- Timely foretelling, considerate warnings, heads-up, and all such helps have been

guides in themselves.

- Questions prompted and answers given by the Holy Spirit pertaining to health, ways to pray effectively, ways to garden,

ways to approach matters that matter, etc.

- Provisions provided. Ample supplies, fuel, resources, manpower, machinery, ideas, innovations, creativity, and all

such forms of help have been showered on us.

Just an overview, scratching the surface really, in answers to your request. Consider these God-living “bytes.” Ha!

The Bear and the Blessing



By Pamela Neal

I nurtured my bee hive for five years. My other attempts at beekeeping had been miserable failures. I decided that I was the world’s worst beekeeper when three of my four hives flew away to find a better apartments. Thankfully, one hive decided it liked the quarters I had provided for them and they stayed with me. I was grateful. I tenderly fed them sugar water in the spring and was delighted to see them in my garden pollinating my plants. I tied their hive down so it wouldn’t

blow over in the high winds of winter. I made sure they were as warm as possible in the winter and as cool as possible in the summer. I always made sure they had fresh water by their hive so they could thrive to the utmost.

I increased the bee hive to a five story high-rise luxury apartment. In early summer I made arrangements with a neighbor man to help me extract the honey on a Wednesday and share the honey with him. I had four supers.

Early the next morning, my neighbor stopped by and said, “Pam something has knocked the top of your hive off.” He put on my bee suit and went out to a bunch of angry bees and put the top of the super back on. The next morning I went to check the hive and the top was knocked off again. I put my bee suit on and out to a bunch of angry bees and put the top back on again. Friday morning I went out to check the hive again and this time the top two supers were knocked off. Not only were they knocked off, but the supers had been torn apart and the frames loaded with honey were scattered down a wide path. By this

time it finally dawned on me that it was a bear who was destroying my hive.

I immediately called my neighbor, a great hunter, to come and kill this bear that was attacking my hive. He said, “I can’t kill this bear; it isn’t bear hunting season. They will take my hunting license away from me and maybe even put me in jail. You should call the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) and get a special kill permit.” So I did just that. When the DNR officer came to the house to check the damage, I was telling him how ridiculous it was for the laws to protect bears and keep people from defending their property and themselves. He said, “I will give you a special kill permit.” I gave the permit to my delighted neighbor. However, even though he stayed up several nights to catch it; the bear didn’t show his face again. I guess after he ate all my honey he went on to bigger and better hunting grounds.

The blessing from this adventure came when the DNR paid me a big chunk of money for my hive and all the honey I could have sold. I used the funds for dental work. Two blessings in one event. ▼

Blessings of This Year

Kampmeeting USA



Morality

is doing what is right
regardless
of what you are told.

Obedience

is doing
what you are told
regardless
of what is right.

—Anonymous



What is KINSHIP?

By Floyd Poenitz

That is a question that the Kinship board asks itself over and over again. Each of us has a different answer to this question, depending on where we are that day. My best answer to that question is that **SDA Kinship is a community.**

We are not a church. We don't have a set of governing rules and doctrines. Yet at times for many members we are more than the local church where your membership is.

We are not just a gay organization. There are a ton of them, including Christian groups like Gay Christian Network. But you can't replace being a Seventh-day Adventist with a "gay experience" or even a "gay Christian experience." As Seventh-day Adventist Christians we share a common language, mindset, and journey. I love being with gay friends and even gay Christian friends, but when I'm with gay (and I use that term in the generic form) Seventh-day Adventist friends, I don't have to explain myself. I don't have to explain why I'm vegetarian, why I don't work on Saturdays, and so many more things that, even if you don't "adhere" to them, you understand and respect those who do.

Kinship wants to make it easier for those who come after us, than it was for many of us before now. We want to educate the church members what it truly means to be LGBTIQxyz. We aren't cookie cutter members who are all the same and who pretend that nothing is wrong. So some members in the organization do advocacy work.

Kinship is a safe spiritual haven for those who hold tight to the teachings and beliefs that they hold so dear, even though the church says you have no right to believe or to be a part of the church. If your heart tells you to hang on to them, then Kinship is a safe place to do so.

Kinship is the community that you can call home. There is a lot of diversity here, but no one is alone. Not everyone may agree with you, but we all support you exactly where and who you are, regardless of sexual orientation, gender, expression, etc. SDA Kinship is your home, and if there is anything we can do to help you feel more at home, please let us know.

You can write to us at memberinfo@sdaskinship.org or connectioneditor@sdaskinship.org. ▼

Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang except the best.

—Henry van Dyke, poet (1852-1933)

Money

By Karen Lee

There, got your attention.

Would you like to know what happens to your donations? In an effort to answer this question, we will start by posting financial statements quarterly in the *Connection*. If, at any time, you have questions regarding our finances, please email me at treasurer@sdakinship.org.

Our income statement through September 30, 2014, shows a net loss of \$20,063.23. This means we have been very active in our events and projects. Any donation to turn this loss around is much appreciated!

Thank you for your time, talent, and financial support!

Karen Lee, Treasurer

Income	71,036.43
Expense	91,099.66
Net Loss	(20,063.23)

Fund Balances as of 9/30/14

General Fund	18,306.28
Endowment Fund	120,249.76
Kampmeeting Fund	(12,465.95)
IAGC Fund	(1,500.00)
Women & Children Fund	4,741.26
Europe Fund	(839.31)
Safe Places Fund	50.00
Region 1 - North Atlantic	(938.32)
Vermont Mini KM Fund	(1,635.00)
Region 2 - Mid Atlantic	(692.88)
Rehoboth Mini KM Fund	(423.15)
Book & The Beach Fund	973.37
Region 3 - South Atlantic	265.37
Region 4 - Great Lakes	481.00
Region 5 - Great Plains	110.97
Region 6 - Rocky Mountains	163.87
Region 7 - Pacific Northwest	1,176.88
Region 8 - Central Pacific	1,137.36
Region 9 - Southwest	-
Total Equity	129,161.51



Pharisees, Sabbaths, and Same-Sex Marriage

By Benny Hazlehurst

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Bible Readings – Genesis 2 and Matthew 23:1-12

I often find myself feeling sorry for the Pharisees. So often they are portrayed as the “bad guys” in the Gospels. The legalistic “sticks in the mud” who upheld their religious traditions at all costs. But it is easy to forget that they were highly committed, faithful followers of God. They tried their best to be faithful to the Word of God as they understood it. They sought to “hold the line” against the secularising effect of Roman political power, in a time of rapid and bewildering change.

Their problem was, however, that in their zeal to be faithful, they often got hold of the wrong end of the stick! Over and over again, we find them in conflict with Jesus because (quite simply) they kept missing the point. By focusing on enforcing the form and letter of the Law, they became incapable of engaging with the Spirit of God's Law.

Food laws are a good example. Their focus on clean and unclean foods led to a theology which implied that it is what goes into your body which makes you unclean, whereas Jesus pointed out that it is not what goes into your stomach, but what comes out of your heart that makes you clean or unclean. They had gotten the wrong end of the stick.

The Sabbath is another example. The Pharisees spent so much time and energy upholding the Sabbath that they transformed something which God intended as a blessing and made it into a burden. The institution they upheld had become so rigid and unyielding that even healing someone on the Sabbath became an issue of contention.

So how did Christ respond to them? He refused to be held back by their rigid interpretation and pointed his hearers back to the purpose of the Sabbath. “The Sabbath was created for man, not man for the Sabbath,” He said. For the Pharisees, what God intended as a means to an end—that we should have time for rest

and recreation—had become the end in itself. While the Pharisees saw the “end product” of Sabbath Law and made that pre-eminent, Jesus pointed to the intention of God in ordaining the Sabbath rest. The two are very different.

Today, we too can fall into the same trap when it comes to understanding marriage.

It is in the account of Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 that we find our first paradigm for marriage. Although not the only place in Scripture which helps us form our theology of marriage, it is the foundation which is taken up by both Jesus, when questioned about divorce, and Paul in his advice to husbands and wives in Ephesians 5.

In the account we had read to us, we observe Adam and Eve coming together in joy to “complete” one another, becoming “one flesh” in a wonderful and unique way. If we simply follow this observation, then surely marriage must be between one man and one woman and precludes any possibility of same-gender marriage. “God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve” is the sound bite employed by some. And if we add to that the command in Genesis 1 to “Go forth and multiply” the traditional paradigm is complete—one man, one woman, for children.

Yet if we merely look at the “end product” in Genesis 2, without seeking to understand God's intentions, we run the same risk as the Pharisees whose limited view of the Sabbath ended up so far out of kilter with what God had intended.

So let us look deeper into this passage.

As anyone who has studied Genesis 1 and 2 will know, we actually have not one, but two creation accounts in these opening chapters of the Bible; and the two are very different, both in form and in intention.

Genesis 1 is concerned with the action of creation. From “Let there be light” to the creation of land, plants, fish, and animals we take a step-by-step journey through the creative power of God, culminating in “Let us create humankind in our own image.” Last of all, men and women are created in the image of God, to look after God's creation and to be fruitful and multiply.

(It might also be worth noting here, that while being very successful at the second of these injunctions, we are woefully failing in the first).

Genesis 2, on the other hand, is very different. For example, the order of creation is different. Adam was created first and then placed alone in the Garden which God plants for him. Then the animals are created, each brought to him to name, and finally Eve is formed.

So why are both these differing accounts there, side by side, in the opening chapters of the Bible? Did the writers not notice the discrepancy between the two accounts? Is it a mistake?

The answer of course is “No.” The two accounts are there because they each tell us something different about God’s Creation.

Genesis 1 tells us of the majestic power of God on the macro scale—the wide sweeping brushstrokes of creation.

Genesis 2, on the other hand, brings us right down to the personal level. It is about relationship: our relationship with God, our relationship with the world, and our relationships with each other.

When we find Adam created first and placed in the garden of God’s blessing, he has everything he needs to feed his body and a pure untainted relationship with God to feed his spirit. Yet there is still something missing.

Then God says, “It is not good for the man to be alone.” There is still a need for another relationship to complete the paradigm of life in all its fullness.

So God created the animals, but still no suitable partner was found until finally God created Eve as the one who is “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh” and Adam rejoices in the one who completed his need.

In their coming together that “one flesh” is re-united in what we call marriage and we can all relate to that yearning desire for the one who completes us—the one with whom we fall in love and express that love in faithful commitment. While we must recognise that not everyone finds their life partner, there is always that hope, that possibility, of meeting the person who “completes” us.

Genesis 2 is not about procreation either. The command to be fruitful and multiply is found in the first account of creation, not in the story of Adam and Eve. And the key to understanding this second story of creation is found not in focusing on the end product—Adam and Eve—but in the central verse of the entire chapter, verse 18, when God says, “It is not good for the man (Adam) to be alone.”

Here we find the purpose of God in Genesis 2, the meeting of the need which he created in humankind for that special relationship which “completes” us in the same way that Eve completed Adam in the Garden.

But not everyone falls in love with someone of the opposite sex. What if the person who we fall in love with, who completes that God-given need within us, is of the same gender? Does that negate the fundamental human need which God addresses in Genesis 2?

Those who are drawn to people of the same gender still have the same God-given yearning for that relationship which will bring that sense of fulfilment, that sense of completeness, that re-unit-

ing of “one flesh” in God’s creation.

By focusing on the “end product” in Genesis 2 (male and female) rather than the need which God is addressing (relationship), we risk making the same mistake as the Pharisees did with the Sabbath, i.e., getting the wrong end of the stick.

When they elevated the Sabbath to monumental proportions because they thought it was something greater than our human needs, Jesus had to correct them by reminding them that the Sabbath was created to meet human needs, not to be an end in itself.

When we elevate marriage to the same monumental proportions and restrict it to our observation of Adam and Eve as male and female, we need to be reminded that marriage was ordained by God to meet a human need, not to be an end in itself. Some will find this radical and challenging, but it is just as Biblical as the challenges which Jesus brought to the Pharisees.



Is it not possible that the yearning to find the one who “completes” us is the same for everyone—gay, straight, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?

Is it not possible that God’s response to that yearning is also the same for everyone, irrespective of their sexuality: the opportunity of marriage for all, with the person who “completes” them, no matter what gender they are?

Until we are prepared to look deeper, and frame our theology of marriage around God’s purposes in Genesis 2, rather than just the “end product,” we too run the risk of following the Pharisees by completely missing the point. ▼

<http://benny2010.blogspot.co.uk/>

If the Creator had a purpose in equipping us with a neck, He surely meant us to stick it out.

—Arthur Koestler

Health Tips of the Month

More News about Sugar

A study of postmenopausal women found those who drink a lot of sweetened beverages have a 78% greater risk of estrogen-dependent type I endometrial cancer (the most common form), compared to women who don't consume such liquid sugar bombs. And we've known for a long time that anyone who drinks a lot of sweetened beverages is at increased risk of obesity, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes. Drinking one can of sugary soda a day can increase your diabetes risk 18%, and added sugars fuel the growth and spread of prostate and breast cancers.



So what's our trick for giving beverages a flavor boost and a touch of sweetness so they're part of your healthy choices? Cinnamon. It tastes and smells great, and one study found taking a 500mg capsule of cinnamon twice a day for 90 days significantly lowers A1C levels (a measure of your blood sugar levels for the past 3 months). Cinnamon also lowers lousy LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, increases good HDL cholesterol, and decreases BMI and weight. Try it in coffee or tea, on cereal and whole-grain toast, and add it to casseroles, stir-fries, and roasted veggies. For a healthy winter dessert, check out Dr. Oz's Cinnamon Apple Sauté à la Mode (<http://www.doctoroz.com/recipe/cinnamon-apple-la-mode>). It's a sweet taste with no downside. Bon appetite!



Asthma and Your Overall Health

Controlling your asthma means avoiding triggers, using your meds as directed, and following your asthma action plan. It also means taking care of your overall health to keep your immune system as strong as possible and to give yourself the energy and

clarity you need to stay on top of your asthma. Several healthy habits can help you do this, research shows. They'll also help reduce your risk of asthma symptoms.

Five Ways to Get Healthy

To manage your asthma well, you need your whole body to work for you, not against you. That means doing everything you can to stay healthy. Your daily habits—from what you eat to how you sleep—are key. Here are five ways to improve your health and get better asthma control.

1. Watch what you eat. Avoid food triggers you may have: sulfites in wine, shrimp, pickles, and dried fruit are common ones. Also, consider adding inflammation-fighting foods to your diet, such as fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants.
2. Control your weight. People with asthma who are overweight tend to have more airway inflammation and more severe and persistent symptoms. If you're carrying extra pounds, losing a few may help you breathe more easily.
3. Get regular exercise. Once your asthma is well-controlled, you may be able to exercise without symptoms. To help shed pounds, reduce stress and boost sleep quality. If you suffer from exercise-induced asthma, ask your doctor about taking medication before you're active, exercising indoors, or avoiding exercise when the pollen count is high.

4. Deal with stress. The link between stress and worsening asthma symptoms has long been established. Stress and anxiety don't actually cause asthma, but they can make symptoms worse—or even trigger an attack. Strong emotions can also make you hyperventilate, which can narrow your airways.



5. Get a good night's sleep. Acid reflux during sleep can trigger night-time asthma attacks, and people who have unstable asthma are more prone to developing sleep apnea. Treating your sleep conditions may help you achieve better asthma control.

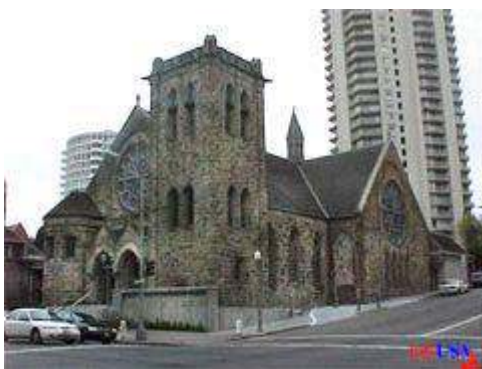


Blessings of This Year

European Kinship Meeting

Church 1.0 in San Francisco

Many of us are being blessed with **Church 1.0**, our experience in exploring our spirituality and worship with Pastor Marcos in San Francisco. We meet at the Unitarian Universalist Church in San Francisco (1187 Franklin St, San Francisco, CA 94109), **Saturday mornings between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.** We invite you and your friends to join us when you are in San Francisco.



If you are unable to attend in person every week, you can watch our meetings online live **Saturdays 12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.** and interact with us by sending comments and questions (<http://new.livestream.com/accounts/5213395>).

We welcome you to engage in dialogue and worship with a group of people passionate about God, love, life, justice, and community. Or you can watch re-broadcasts when convenient and let us know your opinion. Re-broadcasts will appear on this site (<http://citychurch-online.org>) at 3:30 & 10:00 p.m. (Pacific Time) Sunday through Friday and 1:30 p.m. (Pacific Time) on Saturday.

Consider attending and/or spreading the good word that you can worship in an affirming, accepting, loving, and challenging place. You can join CHURCH 1.0 on Facebook as well at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/church1.0/>. ▼

Blessing of This Year

EKM Holiday



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