

connection.

SAFE CHURCHES

WHAT MAKES A SAFE CHURCH?

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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) nonprofit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three countries.

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.

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 the address below or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)



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or visit Kinship's website at: www.sdakinship.org



From the Editor

Safe places

I have worked in animal shelters, with battered women, with abused children, with military families recovering from war zone experiences, with "critical incidents," with Seventh-day Adventist campmeetings where people were learning how to have understanding conversations with each other as they recovered from various losses and abuses, and with Kinship and our LGBTI community. Safe places are my obsession. They have defined my spiritual journey. I met the Adventist church as a child and found in it a sanctuary. I survived a dark night of the soul when I realized Adventism was made up of human beings (not golden retrievers) and that these human beings could be grenades, spreading shrapnel in their wake. Part of the way I survived my "revelation" was studying the Old Testament and looking at the principles, policies, and practices God put down to keep us, the animals, the plants, and the earth safe. I spoke about it at an Adventist Forum worship in New York City last October and meant to have the paper from it in this issue. It's not done yet; but if you are interested, it will be in the May *Connection*. One of the things I have most appreciated about Kinship is its work in making a safe community and using its resources to create safe places for LGBTI Seventh-day Adventists around the world. This issue talks about a component of that work: safe congregations. Steve Marlow from Macon, Georgia, and Reinder Bruinsma, the retired president of the Dutch Union of Seventh-day Adventists, wrote short pieces describing some of the context. There is another article talking about the difficulty of being gay or lesbian in Africa. There are notes from or about six Adventist congregations that are consciously working to make their environs a safe place to worship. If you know of other safe Adventist places of worship, please feel invited to let us know at Connection@sdakinship.org. We will be delighted to publish them. This is an ongoing conversation. On the way to helping create safe places it is very important for us that you take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine

Letter to the Editor

✉ Thanks for the current *Connection*! It was really great. I sent off for information on how to obtain a copy of "Taking a Chance on God." I enjoyed the perspective of "change" from Pastor Mitch Tyner. This can be very traumatic to a pastor. Suggestions aren't always wanted or appreciated. Change for Peter and later Paul (who later went toe-to-toe with Peter) were also very difficult when their leadership was called into question. I noticed Smuts van Rooyen is at Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church. I was aware of his reputation when he was at Southern years ago. He is very brave, and I hope he is still receiving accolades from the brethren for his edgy stance of being welcoming to all. —Steve



—From *Floyd Poenitz*

The French Seventh-day Adventist Life and Health is publishing and distributing Carrol Grady's book, *My Son, Beloved Stranger*.

[<http://www.viesante.com/mon-fils-cet-inconnu-que-j-aime-editions-vie-et-sante,fr,4,C02101.cfm>].

—From *Dave Ferguson*

In the video, "The Gay Moralism," Dr. John Corvino destroys almost every anti-gay argument in under 8 minutes. You can access the video at:

[<http://www.back2stonewall.com/2011/02/video-gay-moralism-dr-john-corvino.html>].

—From *Linda Wright and Karen Wetherell*

The women of Kinship have a Facebook page! Linda invites every one of us who is both a member of SDA Kinship International and Facebook to join. If you would like to be part of this group please feel free to contact Linda at

webmaster@sdakinship.org. ▽

Your question about safe churches got me thinking about my recent, short, and rocky blip with my pastor here in Macon, Georgia. I wonder if there is a difference between “safe” pastors and “safe” members. Do the members affect the pastors or would members reveal a more accepting attitude if pastors were more accepting of people? Can an unsafe church become a safe place if there is a change in leadership to a pastor who is less judgmental and more interested in the relationship his congregation (individually and corporately) builds with God?



WHAT MAKES A SAFE CHURCH?

In my church there was an unbaptized member who wore a nice silver cross around his neck. He received it from his sister at a time when he was critically ill in the hospital and wore it in memory of that event. During a Bible study the pastor's wife got into a verbal confrontation with him

about wearing the cross. At his baptism the pastor made a long comment about him giving up jewelry.

Baptism is our adoption by God; our adoption papers are filed in heaven. Then we select a group or groups of people here on Earth with whom to fellowship. But what makes them safe? ▽

—Steve Marlow

Be an opener of doors for such as come after thee, and do not try to make the universe a blind alley.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Dutch Union of Seventh-day Adventists

Reinder Bruinsma

The attitude of Dutch Adventists towards gay men and women varies greatly—from total acceptance to total abhorrence, and everything in between. On the whole, one could probably say that the feelings against homosexuality are strongest among first and second generation immi-

grant members, but it would be incorrect to say that all Caucasian Dutch members are more relaxed about the issue or are mostly at ease with having openly gay members.

However, I would say that there is some movement in the standpoints. Generally speaking, Dutch society has become more open towards homosexuality, and this ➤

SAFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES

Glendale City Church, Glendale, California

Our Kinship community knows the Glendale City Church is a safe place to worship. This status did not happen overnight or by accident.

In the 1940s the congregation and pastors began seeking to minister to marginalized groups and seeking to be diverse in their approach. In the 1980s, at beginning of the AIDS crisis, pastoral staff consciously began ministering to victims of HIV/AIDS, even when pastors of many denominations were refusing to visit them in the hospital. This led

to them conducting funerals when others refused.

In the early 1990s one of the victims of AIDS made a substantive bequest to the church endowment program. The story of this donation changed hearts and minds in the congregation.

A gay couple knew that the pastor was having some struggles and was considering leaving the ministry. They rented a limo and took him and his wife for a weekend getaway. As the number of gay church members grew, the church board took an action to invite

them to become actively involved in the congregation. Knowing that some conservatives might try to create problems, the board voted that the church would cover any legal expenses for gay members whose positions in the church were challenged. The church also had a position that they would never act in such a way as to become a flash point for protesters because that would make it difficult for gay members to feel comfortable coming to worship at the church.

— Dave Ferguson

***Editorial Note:** I have visited this church several times and find the Sabbath school discussions interesting, the worship services thoughtful, and the people open and kind. This is the kind of place you can bring both your grandmother and your lover. [CT]*

Safe churches:
To be continued on
the next pages

➤ Dutch SDA Union

inevitably does also have influence on church members. I have the impression that the issue is nowadays more openly discussed in the church, that more church members are willing to concede that homosexuality is not simply learned, or culturally induced, behavior and that more fellow believers are hesitant to say that gay people have no right to experience their sexuality

in response to their orientation.

In some local Adventist churches gay members probably still prefer not to be open about their orientation. But there are churches where gay members are not just tolerated, but appreciated. To have some openly gay members in a local church, who deal with their orientation in a forthright but non-provocative way, and who actively try to

participate in the life of the church, would in my estimation be an important factor in gradually changing attitudes. It may well be that many will still have theological questions; but it would seem that the best way forward is to let the theology be dealt with in the context of real life situations (as Jesus did), rather than work the other way around. ▽

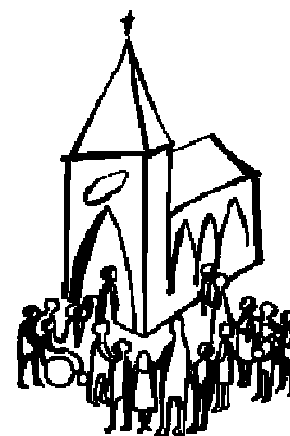


Reinder Bruinsma

***Editorial Note:** Ruud Kieboom has attended the Adventist church in The Hague where he and his partner Kees Meiling were accepted and appreciated, and where Ruud's gifts were utilized. [CT]*



◀ Glendale City Church



SAFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES

Second Wind, San Francisco, California

My wife Shasta and I started Second Wind five and a half years ago. We had a hunger to create a spiritual community where people gather to share their stories, experience a sense of belonging, and find personal passion for a deeper, more intentional life.

Christianity and fundamentalist religion have a tarnished reputation in San Francisco (deservedly so in many ways). We wanted to develop a positive and progressive voice for God here. Every community has a "DNA"—a culture or personality that is shaped by the values and beliefs of the collective. Second Wind was formed out of a true sense of acceptance and honor for all people and all faith journeys.

Our name *Second Wind* continues to shape our experience and passion to be a safe place for all. Here people are graced with second chances and new

beginnings. Here people who have given up on God or themselves or their dreams or the church can find a second Wind/Breath/Spirit of love, acceptance, transformation, and hope. Here we see a God that is big enough for all of us. We see a God who is bigger than any one of us. Here we see a God who is expressed by all of us in unique and diverse ways.

Second Wind is a spiritual community. We are also a resource center that offers personal and relational growth for San Francisco neighborhoods and beyond. As a spiritual community, we offer weekly Saturday morning services with conversations about a host of topics. Our goal is to have these discussions impact our discovery of who we are and help us understand how we can make a positive difference in the world.

Second Wind provides a variety of meaningful social and service opportunities. We also aim to have fun. Many of the workshops, classes, and seminars center on topics of personal and relationship growth. We are developing ways to make these available to more people who hunger for a life transformation.

A Christian psychiatrist said, "There are two things in life you cannot do alone: be married and be spiritual." Community holds high value for us. We share meals. We enjoy parties with each other. We go on field trips as a group. We offer retreats. Together we attend events in downtown San Francisco. Together we participate in service projects with non-profit organizations in our area. We take time and find ways to support and encourage each other.

We are situated in one of ➤



ARK, Zoetermeer, Netherlands

ARK is a Seventh-day Adventist fellowship focused on allowing people to respectfully discuss issues and topics that are not always in the worship of more traditional Adventist churches. This is why many former members of the traditional Seventh-day Adventist congregations visit ARK. The group invites guest speakers, including Kinship members and non-Seventh-day Adventist persons. LGBTI people are welcomed. Kinship was part of the ARK booth at Open Day 2010,

the Dutch Campmeeting. Heterosexual members of ARK have attended as allies and have been guest speakers at European Kinship Meetings.

ARK is the abbreviation of *Adventistische Regio Kerk* (Adventist Region Church) and serves members of local churches in a wide area around its location in Zoetermeer near Den Haag (The Hague).

If you are in the area and would like to attend, please feel free to contact Ruud at kinshipnetherlands@sdakinship.org.

➤ Second Wind



the most expensive cities in the country. Being self-supporting in this environment is a huge challenge. Our faith is continually stretched. God continually blesses us through the faithful and generous gifts of those who share a belief in the significance of a non-traditional, deeply spiritual, urban safe place for people of all stripes and sizes. We are here “to excite dreams, experience belonging, extend compassion, and explore God” (from the Second Wind mission statement). Shasta and I feel honored and blessed to lead this community of amazing, passionate and visionary people!

—Greg Nelson

Editorial note: When I visited Second Wind in November of 2010 I enjoyed being met with food and beverages. I also appreciated the openness Greg and Shasta showed to hearing different points of view during their discussions. Kinship members are part of the leadership team for Second Wind. [CT]

Adventist Forums (AF)

AF is an international non-profit organization of Seventh-day Adventists. It publishes *Spectrum* magazine. Its stated aim is to create community through open conversation. Local groups of the association are known as local Forum chapters. It was founded by Adventist graduate students in the 1960s and is known for its generally “progressive” Adventist perspective. In New York City the Adventist Forum is led by Kinship member Ron Lawson, who has invited Kinship members to be speakers at their Sabbath morning worship services. Their services are at 11:30 AM on Sabbath in St. Mary’s Church on 126th between Amsterdam and Broadway. Kinship’s Region One will be having part of its April 16, 2011, gathering here.



The Dallas (Texas) First Church



Dallas First Church is gay-friendly. The pastors (husband and wife team) are supportive, and the congregation doesn't have a problem with gay couples attending and being a part of the church family. No one has spoken to me about it, and Jeff and I have attended there for over seven years now. The subject of homosexuality has not come up or been preached about for many years and certainly not by the current pastoral team. This church is the “mother church” of Seventh-day Adventist congregations in the area.

— Floyd Pönitz

SAFE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCHES

Springfield, Vermont, Christian Fellowship of Seventh-day Adventists

So what is it that makes my chosen place of worship a safe place? I'm not sure I can put my finger on all of it, but I think it is because we love God and each other. It is a place where we have agreed to support and encourage each other, realizing that we are all children of God.

We currently are at company status in the denomination. This has an interesting effect on being a safe place, as being

a company means that all membership is in the conference church. In addition, the conference executive committee votes all membership issues, not the local members. With that understanding, our fellowship has taken the stand that we are open for all who wish to worship our God. With the belief that all are sinners and need a Savior, we welcome any who are on a journey with Jesus to attend our



fellowship. Our only concern is that all who attend support the others attending and avoid hurting them intentionally. If unintentional hurt happens, we will work to restore the relationship with the love and forgiveness of Christ. Mutual respect, even when we disagree, is crucial.

— Marsha Brummel and Kenneth Brummel, Group Leader ▽

A Woman Called

Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. —Judges 4:4

In the ancient world, women rarely played leading roles in society. Deborah is a notable exception. Prophet, judge, leader of Israel; God used her to conquer the enemies of His people.

As her story opens, Deborah sends for Barak and says to him, *"The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you; Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands."*

Jos Anderson

Sisera and his nine hundred iron chariots terrorized the Israelites, including Barak. He would not go to battle unless Deborah went with him. *Very well, Deborah said, I will go with you. But, because of the way you are going about this, the honor will not be yours. God will hand Sisera over to a woman.* True to her prediction, a woman, Jael, welcomed Sisera to her tent, killed him as he slept, and won the battle for her people. God honors those who obey His calling.



Have you been unjustly treated because of your gender? Women have received less pay for equal work. They have been denied promotions for which they are qualified. They are refused ordination by Seventh-day Adventist administrators. They have found it difficult to believe God's voice or His gifts that make them leaders. But God is not biased. He loves equally. God calls you.

Deborah's story and her song are important ➤

Eden's Gifts

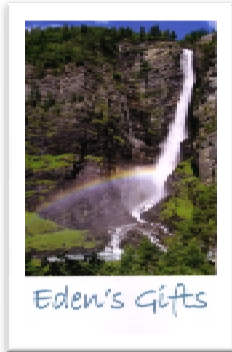
I have to tell you my story about Eden's Gifts! Yesterday, I went to the drugstore and left my book, The Ice Princess by Camilla Läckberg (the French translation of course!). I read all books written by Stieg Larsson and I like them very much. A few days ago I began this first book by Läckberg, another Swedish author. It's a detective novel and I'm always impatient to get back to reading it.

Yesterday evening, after having dinner with one of my sisters and her partner, I was looking forward to going to bed and reading what will happen next in my book. I was very disappointed to realize I had left my book in the drugstore. On top of that, I had to think about what book I could read on the train as I went to work.

This morning I had an idea. I took Eden's Gifts with me. Normally it's a bit difficult to me to read a book in English. I need to concentrate and I don't understand everything. English is not my mother tongue. ✨

I began reading Eden's Gifts this morning and finished it at 1 PM! I understood almost everything and it made me feel good! Thank you so much for this little booklet, Catherine! ☺ My next goal is to translate it into French. I would really like for a lot of Adventist people to read Eden's Gifts!

Blessings, Elodie Souil ▼



We would like to introduce you to:



Andrea M. Lee Roundfield (right)

I was born in Motown, Detroit, Michigan, in 1968. My parents met in their early college years at City Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Detroit. My family is connected to Seventh-day Adventist royalty. The short story of my long life is: While attending Columbia Union College, I met the man who would become my husband and the father of my now 19- and 20-year-old sons. He is an Adventist who graduated from Pine Forge Academy and attended Oakwood College. Both of our boys are away at college.

I earned a B.S. in Organizational Management from CUC, an M.S. in Educational Technology from AIU, an M.S. in Urban Education from Mercy College, and I am currently a doctoral candidate at Walden University in Educational Leadership (Ed.D.).

I teach high school students, in New York City, with severe and multiple disabilities. I love my work. I am also considered an adjunct professor, though currently not "professing." My hobbies include cycling, reading, and camping. There are more but I can't think of them, because I should be writing!

My favorite color is green. My favorite musical genre is world music; and some of my favorite artists are Angelique Kidjo, Goapele, Sara Tavares, BeBe & CeCe Winans, John Stoddart, Vicki Yohe, Kenny Chesney and Rodgers, Chuck Mangione, and Kem, to name just a very few. My favorite books are: *The Alchemist*, Nora Robert's *The Bride* series, and *textbooks*. (This should have been my very *first* response since I am behind schedule—ugh.)

I don't recall how I found out about Kinship, but I think it was from my college roommate long after we both had left CUC. The documents were definitely helpful in supporting my comfort level about discussing my sexual orientation ➤

➤ A Woman Called

lessons for all of us who find ourselves in impossible situations. If Deborah can grow up in a misogynist culture to rule a nation and lead an army, we today need to keep our eyes open to see how God is leading us. How we respond to our calling determines not just our honor, but Heaven's. You can be a Deborah. The more you follow God's leading without reservation or doubt, the greater will be your reward from above.

Focus on the Author of Love who has found you worthy. ▼

➤ **We would like to introduce you to:**

with my mom and stepfather when I came out. Also, when I miss the fellowship with other like-minded folks I have been able to come back to Kinship to confirm that I do indeed belong somewhere.

Life these days is joyous. I recently became engaged to the beautiful and talented Dahlia, who is also an Adventist.

Staying spiritually connected and attending church regularly is a challenge for me. Often-times, on the weekends I simply do not like leaving my home. I enjoy the solitude and peace of my home life. I work in NYC; enough said. I have a wonderful church home, Marble Collegiate in NYC, which is part of the Reformed Christian Association. It is an open and affirming church for people of all faiths and beliefs.

It's good to have a place to call home, even if I only sneak in and out at times. When my doctoral work is completed I hope to engage more.



Tom Durst

I was born and raised in Beloit, Wisconsin. It was my home area until 1957. My family has all passed away so I probably won't be visiting there again. I went to a two-room school for my first eight grades. I attended Adventist boarding schools in Wisconsin

and Indiana for the last three years of high school and graduated from Indiana Academy in 1955.

I had same-sex attractions from my earliest childhood memories and longed deep within for intimacy with another male. This never happened. I wrote my personal testimony for my website. If you are interested you can read more at <http://www.tomdurst.com/>. I didn't come out until I was fifty-five. I don't have a life partner but do have some wonderful male friends.

Over the years I was a teacher, massage therapist, and office and computer worker. The last ten years I spent at a Jesuit university. I am living a quiet retirement. I go to the gym regularly, read, and spend a lot of time in prayer and meditation. This is my life blood. I enjoy talking with people and seeing the divine

in them. I enjoy classical music, Christmas carols, and Christian hymns. I watch re-runs of old classics from the golden age of television. I eat simply and mostly read books that will build up my spiritual life.

A retired Seventh-day Adventist pastor told me about Kinship. I enjoyed KinNet but have not been able to successfully navigate the new website.

The most important thing to me is to live a life close to God. I think that kind of life is the only adequate answer to life's perplexing problems.



Betty O'Leary

was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and graduated from the public school system of Charlotte, North Carolina, where she lived most of her life. She works as a customer service associate in a Massachusetts *Lowe's*. When she is not on

the job, Betty enjoys hiking, bike riding, going to the movies, dining out, canoeing, horseback riding, hanging out with friends, and bird watching. At the Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting we learned she does some very interesting animal-support volunteering at a wildlife rehabilitation center. She likes listening to contemporary Christian music and says her favorite color is peach (or any yellow-orange color). Both of Betty's parents have died. She has one brother, one sister, and a friend who is like a sister to her. Betty found out about Kinship at church from two Kinship members. Then she reserved a room at Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting and met more of us. Then she decided she would like to come back. Betty wrote that Kinship had been helpful to her because it "helped me understand that being gay is not a sin and then it is possible to be both Christian and gay at the same time." The most important thing for her on her spiritual journey is "to be in God's will for my life." She is not out to her family or most of her friends yet.

Theresa Ricks

was born in Prince George's County, Maryland, grew up there, and graduated from the local schools. She is a ranch keeper and also enjoys letter writing, praying, studying the Bible, creating useful things from scraps, help-

ing friends and neighbors, visiting friends, sculpting tree parts, and "spending tons of time with my partner Pam." Theresa's favorite color is purple. When asked about her favorite music she wrote, "Truthfully, I love nearly all kinds of music; anything that uplifts my soul and doesn't stress me." Theresa says, "I was one of three children who were raised Baptist. When I was ten they converted to charismatic Pentecostalism. Both my parents and my sister will have nothing to do with my brother and me. They say, 'The Lord will not allow association with them.' My partner is a gift from God, literally brought to my little log cabin in West Virginia seven years ago. Pam is God's answer to my request that He would bring me His choice of someone to love. Our friends run the full spectrum of society. We love them all and love to visit with them."

Pam found Kinship's website information on the computer. "We attended the Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting and made several lasting friendships there. We belong to Kinship's Region 2 but attend the Region One Mini-Kampmeeting in Windsor, Vermont, as often as finances allow. Kinship has helped me by showing me the priceless Christ-like love shared by the people I meet at Kinship gatherings. Pam and I cherish opening up the *Word* in complete safety. My spiritual growth flourishes in the company of gay friends and gay-friendly people who truly want to worship Christ. I want to learn as much as I can about God's unconditional love that reaches way past societal barriers. I want to



help my friends and neighbors learn about Christ's love and salvation.

"Thank you, Kinship coordinators, and all who do their best to bring us together year after year. Thank you for all the help we receive as you share insights about God's word."



Vernon Davis

was born in St. Helena, California. He went to Foothills Union School, Pacific Union College Preparatory School, Pacific Union College, DeVry Institute, and University of San Francisco. After teaching for ten years, he now works in IT Compliance as a Privacy Compliance Program Manager. When he is not involved with his profession, Vernon likes working out, cycling, travel, and photography. He speaks French and enjoys French music, books, and movies.

Vernon has a twenty-four-year-old daughter who is finishing graduate school at California Polytechnic Institute. His twenty-two-year-old son is a senior at La Sierra University. Vernon researched and found Kinship online. He says that Kinship has "provided fellowship, support in my spiritual life, and a new life mate." The most important things for Vernon on his spiritual journey are strengthening his relationship with Christ and having a mate to share that journey with him. His favorite color is blue; and Vernon enjoys listening to classical, pop, and contemporary Christian music.



Norma Hult

I know most of the Kinship group in Sacramento and the San Francisco Bay Area. I was raised as a Seventh-day Adventist and graduated from Lodi Academy and La Sierra University. I wanted to go into the ministry; but, in those days, no woman could take theology classes. I

struggled with my attraction to women but thought if I got married I could fix myself. After 20 years (actually well before that), my marriage failed. We both went to Terminal Island Federal Prison in southern California. By then I knew I was a lesbian and needed to accept that.

Since then I finally became a hospital/hospice chaplain. I am retired now (75 years old). As a free-lance writer, I am writing my life experience in a book, *Rescued From the Edge*. It will be published as soon as I finish writing and editing. I love Jesus and look forward to His soon return. Love you all and wish you love and blessings. ▽

LGBT Africans Face Blackmail and Extortion on a Regular Basis

JOHANNESBURG, February 15, 2011—

Antiquated laws against same-sex sexual activity as well as deeply ingrained social stigma result in the all-too-frequent targeting of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people in Africa for blackmail and extortion, said the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) in a report launched today.

The report, *Nowhere to Turn: Blackmail and Extortion of LGBT People in Sub-Saharan Africa*, illustrates how LGBT Africans are made doubly vulnerable by the criminalization of homosexuality and the often-violent stigmatization they face if their sexuality is revealed. Based on research from 2007 to the present, the volume features articles and research by leading African activists and academics on the prevalence, severity, and impact of these human rights violations on LGBT people in Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe.

“The tragic reality is that blackmail and extortion are part of the daily lives of many LGBT Africans who are isolated and made vulnerable by homophobic laws and social stigma,” says IGLHRC’s Executive Director, Cary Alan Johnson. “The responsibility clearly lies with governments to address these crimes and the underlying social and legal vulnerability of LGBT people.”

The report’s authors vividly depict the isolation, humiliation, and manipulation to which LGBT people are subjected by blackmailers and extortionists and describe the threats of exposure, theft, assault, and rape that can damage and even destroy the lives of victims. Vulnerability to these crimes is faced on a regular basis and families and communities are not safe havens. For example, according to research conducted in Cameroon and featured in the report, “the bulk of blackmail and extortion attempts were committed by other members of



the community—33.9% by neighbors, 11.8% by family members, 11.5% by classmates, and 14.1% by homosexual friends. Police were often complicit in this—either by ignoring or dismissing it or, in 11.5% of cases, directly perpetrating it.”

Nowhere to Turn explores the role the state plays in these crimes by ignoring blackmail and extortion carried out by police and other officials by failing to prosecute blackmailers, and by charging LGBT victims under sodomy laws when they do find the courage to report blackmail to the authorities.

IGLHRC urges states to take concrete steps to reduce the incidence of these crimes by decriminalizing same-sex sexual activity, educating officials and communities about blackmail laws, and ensuring that all people are able to access judicial mechanisms without prejudice.

For more information, please contact: Chivuli Ukwimi (IGLHRC, in Cape Town) (27) 79-443-3938, cukwimi@iglhrc.org, Jessica Stern (IGLHRC, in New York) (+1) 212-430-6014, jstern@iglhrc.org, and Sam Cook (IGLHRC, in Johannesburg), scook@iglhrc.org. ▽

Editor’s Note: As we go to press there is a two-week “boot camp” being held in Africa to help its participants strengthen their skills to make African countries safer for LGBTI people.

2011 Campaign Launch for the International Day Against Homophobia

MONTRÉAL, February 14, 2011—

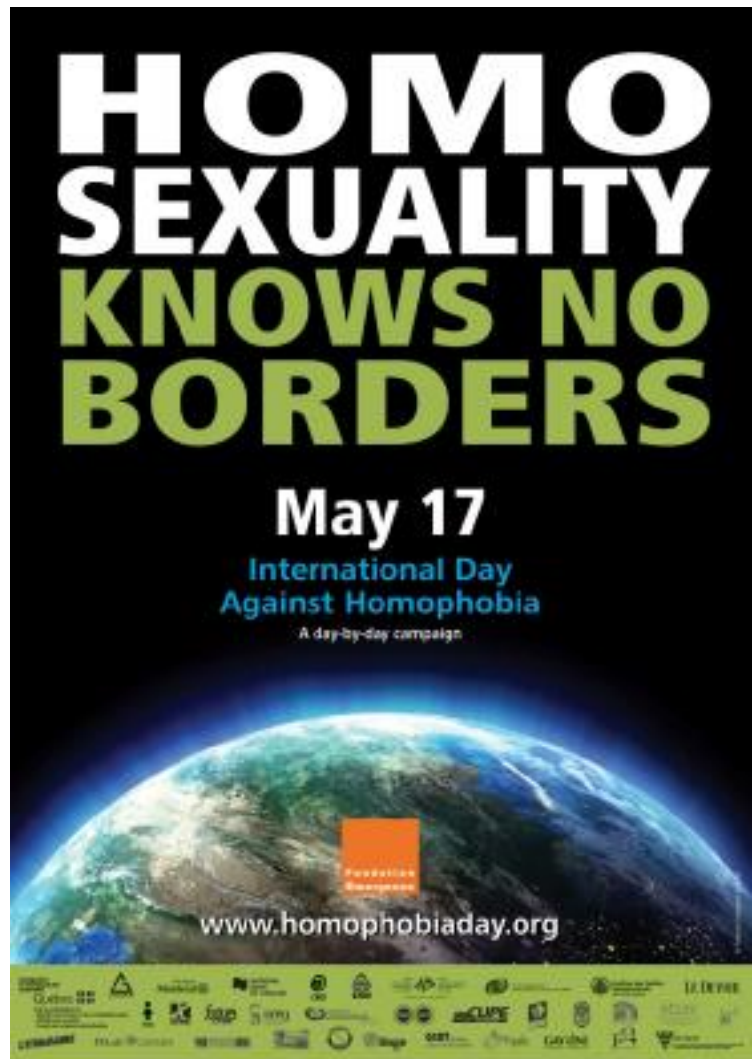
Taking advantage of Valentine's Day, Fondation Émergence has officially launched the 2011 Fight Against Homophobia Campaign, which will reach its highpoint on May 17, with the holding of the *International Day Against Homophobia*. The campaign is entitled *Same-sex Couple: A Story of Love*. The couple in question is depicted, humourously, by two goldfish imagined to be of the same sex. The goal of the campaign is, on the one hand, to dispel narrow perceptions of gay and lesbian relationships in which being gay or lesbian is basically supposed to be about sexual relations and, on the other, to show that life as a couple among gay men and lesbians is a lifestyle recognized by the most advanced of societies.

The printed promotional material for the campaign, offered for free, includes a poster and a pamphlet, available in English and in French. They can now be ordered from Fondation Émergence by using a form provided at the www.homophobiaday.org and www.homophobie.org websites. Promotional banners, strips, and boxes are also offered for people who wish to use them on websites, in blogs, and in social networks. Lastly, downloadable versions of posters are offered in 17 languages.

The *Same-sex Couple: A Story of Love Campaign* provides the occasion to show that same-sex couples have always existed, and that many famous people have had a romantic love life with someone of the same sex. For example, we can name Leonardo Da Vinci and Salai, Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud, Marguerite Yourcenar and Grace Frick, Julia Lemigova and Martina Navratilova, Portia De Rossi and Ellen DeGeneres, as well as Drake LaBry and Adam Lambert.

Information accessible to everyone makes it possible for people to understand that same-sex couples, just like opposite-sex couples, go through good and bad times. The topics dealt with in this information are the dawning of love, sharing roles between the couple, sexuality, domestic violence, rights, aging, gay and lesbian parenting, and gender identity.

Fondation Émergence invites all the media, important figures from civil society, governments, community organizations, and all people to participate in the 2011 Campaign by setting up initiatives, by organizing activities, and by distributing promotion materials in their communities, on websites, in blogs, and in social networks. ▽



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LITTLE SPIDERS

Rom Wilder

We've all seen the comic strip of Linus and his security blanket... the pitiful pictures of the blanket in the dryer while Linus sits...watching...waiting for it to once again be in his hands. I'm sure Linus couldn't give you all the reasons why his blanket is important to him, and what I find so wonderful is that he doesn't have to. Children are usually allowed to have what seem to be unreasonable needs and fears...and they're usually allowed to express them. A healthy small child will scream or cry if you take away what matters to him.

The difficulty comes later... when we have absorbed all the unwritten laws of our culture that tell us as adults we really ought to be reasonable about our needs and fears and we ought not to scream and cry when we lose something. Because of the burying of feelings, many of us find ourselves not only without a way to show our grief, but also without the ability to recognize the losses.

We have memorial services when someone dies—a gathering for rituals which heal more than we could guess—but we have no cathartic rituals to mourn the loss of jobs, homes, or relationships, much less the losses that come with age. There is no gathering of loved ones to mourn with you your inability to run up the stairs; no hymn of comfort for you when you give up your car and driver's license. If your beloved



is dying you might get extra hugs of support from your friends, but who weeps with you when you can no longer write letters or weed your garden.

I see brave people daily: people who courageously graduate from a cane to a walker, who struggle to hear a simple conversation, who shyly ask a clerk to double bag their purchases so that nobody will be able to read through the thin plastic those reassuring names: *Depends*, *Attends*, or *Serenity*. There is no rite of passage when you're losing control of your bladder, but it's a loss and people grieve it, one way or another.

After my father died I found

myself brushing my teeth longer and more thoroughly than I ever had. For weeks I wondered what was behind this "ritual" I was performing each morning. Sometimes it made me late to work. I was almost ready to call a shrink when I realized what was happening. This was something over which I had complete control. I had no control over my father's death. I had no control over all the feelings surrounding his death, but I did have control over how I brushed my teeth. Now when I find myself brushing my teeth longer than

usual, I listen to the things inside of me to hear what it is I feel I've lost control of.

A few years ago I found a card which said: "There have been no dragons in my life, only small spiders and stepping in gum. I could have coped with dragons!"

It seems to me it is the small losses, the daily blows, which wear us down. There doesn't seem to be appropriate or acceptable way to grieve these "small" losses.

We Americans take great pride in our "melting pot" mentality; but in melting down the unique rituals, ceremonies, and rites of passage, we have robbed ourselves of healthy release and relief.

Kinship Older Adults
—Ren Reynolds, Coordinator

Too many people are hurting from losses which we don't know how to confirm, affirm, or handle. Maybe it is time for us to reinvent the wheel and find time to gather ourselves together to share and grieve these losses. Maybe it's time to pour some of the melted rituals into new and meaningful molds — molds of acceptable and healing ways to express the feelings we've so carefully denied or controlled. Whether we actually do this alone or in groups, it is important to find ways of healing those gashes in our hearts and psyche where something has been taken away from us, places where we've lost what once was so much a part of the person we considered ourselves to be. ▽



Réunion Européenne de Kinship | Septembre 9-12 | European Kinship Meeting

European Kinship Meeting 2011 will be located in a self-catering cottage, located in Auvers-sur-Oise! We have eight bedrooms with four beds and a bathroom each. The meeting room is a place where we can have our meals and discussions. A terrace lies outside, next to the kitchen. Everything is on the ground floor. We have access to a private parking area. The train station is only a ten-minute walk from our cottage. We are planning to enjoy the trails along the river, horseback riding, and a connection to the village and to the city of Paris. Auvers-sur-Oise is a community 27.2 km (16.9 miles) from the center of Paris. During the 19th century, a number of painters lived and worked in Auvers-sur-Oise, including Paul Cézanne, Charles-François Daubigny, Camille Pissarro, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, and, of course, Vincent van Gogh. Daubigny's house is now a museum where you can see paintings by the artist, his family, and friends. As you walk along the river from Auvers toward Pontoise, you can see a number of views which figured in the paintings of Pissarro.

You can register on www.sdakinship.org

Bienvenue - Welcome

connection ▽

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Our Family Tree



Join Us on the Queen Mary Ocean Liner / Hotel!!

This year's pre-Kampmeeting event will take place July 17 and 18. We have booked 30 staterooms on the luxurious Queen Mary, docked in the Long Beach, California, harbor. A mere US \$ 150.00 per person guarantees you lovely accommodations, two complementary

breakfast buffets, a chance to wander an historic ocean liner, transportation to Catalina Island, and a chance to meet or have a reunion with wonderful people. We are looking forward to seeing you! You can register at sdakinship.org (Events | Women & Children First) or you can send your registration check to our office at PO Box 69, Tillamook, Oregon 97141-0069. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Karen, our Director of Women's Interests, at women@sdakinship.org. ▽