

connection

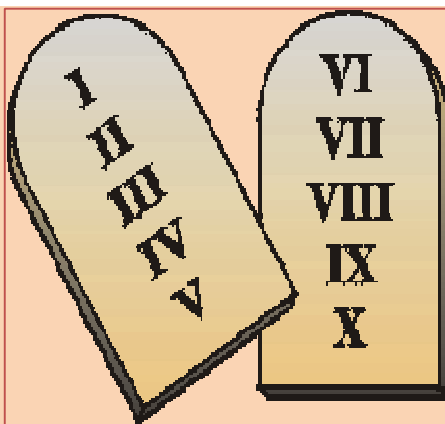
The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 38, No. 6, July 2014



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the Spring*



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Connection's Poetry Contest



***"Progress is a
nice word. But
change is its
motivator. And
change has its
enemies."***

Robert Kennedy

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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.

REGIONS AND GROUPS WORLDWIDE

www.sdakinship.org/regions-groups

CHAPLAIN

Marcos Apolonio, chaplain@sdakinship.org

CONTACT/INFORMATION

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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 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.)



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.

RESOURCES

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

From the Editor



This last week I have been working on the *Connection*. I have also been facilitating a training for all the pastors of The Netherlands Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. They asked for practical information and suggestions to help develop ways to create more open and accepting congregations. We had an amazing team and wonderful conversations with the pastors. All members of our team found our experience so thought-provoking that we cannot quite put our reactions into words yet. We're a wordy bunch so I am sure you'll hear more later. At the same time I've been reading the articles you'll find in this issue, written by people of both great courage and gentle compassion. A couple of them have risked their careers in the Adventist church to express the convictions you will find. A combination of events sent my mind back to the spring of 1968. My California-based high school American history class thought it would be interesting to follow the presidential primary race of Robert Kennedy. To say its events changed many of us is a pathetic understatement. As I type this, television images of his acceptance speech and death are screening across my mind's eye. Almost 36 years later, I just put my head on the table so I could breathe. What still surprises me is that his death didn't paralyze me or make me hopeless. Somehow, he lives on through his words. He was a complicated man but I think we can still learn from him. Words are powerful. His, and those who wrote what you will read here. I hope you find them inspiring and encouraging and practical. As you plan your next steps, take good care of yourself, for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine

European Kinship Meeting

By Mike Lewis



Plans are well underway for the upcoming European Kinship Meeting. This year it will be held over the long weekend August 28-September 1 at the beautiful old St Mark's College halfway between London and Cambridge, easily accessible from Stansted or Heathrow airports.

The theme for the weekend will be
"Aspects of Prayer."

There will be talks and activities around the subject as well as social times and a trip to two local places of historical and religious interest. And the food at St Mark's is wonderful!

We are privileged to have Rev. Cecilia Eggleston as our speaker for the weekend. She has great skill in making her talks both serious and stimulating as well as fun and relevant. Her activity sessions are unbelievably great. It's going to be a wonderful weekend! Plan to be there and meet with your pals in Kinship!



Bookings are open online and remain open until **August 1** on a first-come-first-served basis.

To ensure your place, why not book today?



Quotes by Robert F. Kennedy



"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."

"Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope; and, crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

"There are those that look at things the way they are, and ask why?"

I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

[Robert Kennedy in His Own Words:
The Unpublished Recollections
of the Kennedy Years]

"What is objectionable, what is dangerous about extremists is not that they are extreme, but that they are intolerant. The evil is not what they say about their cause, but what they say about their opponents."

Turn Inspiration into Action

By Leo Babauta

How many times have you read a great article or had an idea and wanted to make a change...but then didn't?

It's one of the biggest frustrations for people who read this: people blame themselves for not implementing a plan to change habits.

It takes a switch in gears.

I remember a boatload of times when I've been really inspired by something, but then didn't take action. I wanted to run a marathon, do a triathlon, write a book, start a blog, lose weight, get out of debt, start waking early, simplify my life. But I didn't actually do anything about it.

I was busy. I was tired. I had other things to do. But those were just excuses.

I learned a few things that worked for me; and, within a year or so, I'd done all those things I mentioned above. I took action and made them happen. The excuses got beat.

Here's what works for me:

1. **Tell someone you're going to do it.** If you just think it in your head, you're not committed. It won't happen. Start by getting up and telling someone near you, right now. Or email someone.
2. **Now carve out time.** Lots of people actually do step 1 but not this step. You have to make the time. Even if it's just 10 minutes a day, when will you do it? After what part of your regular routine? Even if you don't have a routine, there are things you do every day: wake up, maybe shower and/or brush your teeth, eat breakfast or lunch, open your computer, get off work or school, go to bed, etc. Put it on your calendar, right away.
3. **Start as small as you can.** Most people make the mistake of over-committing, because they're so inspired. But you're *less likely* to succeed if you say that you're going to work out an hour a day, or learn a new skill for 2 hours a day. Even 30 minutes a day is too much. Start with 10. Or 5. Or 2, if you're really busy. You have time for 2 minutes a day.
4. **Really commit.** The biggest reason most people fail is they're not really committed. You tell someone, and you think you're committed, but you're not. If you're really committed, write it on your blog (or start one). Post it on Facebook or Twitter. Tell 100 people about it. Put money on it. Say that you'll sing in public if you fail. Make people hold you accountable.
5. **Have reminders.** It's easy to forget when you start out. If you want to go for a 10-minute run after you wake up, you need something to make sure you don't forget: put your running shoes next to your bed or in your doorway, laid out with running clothes. Or sleep in your running clothes. Put up a big sign somewhere you won't miss it. Use sticky notes, stuck to your computer. Computer and phone reminders are good too.
6. **At the moment when you want to avoid it, pause.** There will be a moment (or a bunch of moments) when you think, "Oh, I'll do it tomorrow." That's the moment you have to not let pass idly by. Stop yourself, and just sit there for a moment, not going on your computer, just turning inward. What are you afraid of? What's stopping you? There is a discomfort you're trying to avoid. Instead, smile and start. Do it and enjoy it in the moment. You'll love it. ▼

Quotes by Robert F. Kennedy

"This world demands the qualities of youth: not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease."

"The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better."

"Few men are willing to brave the disapproval of their peers, the censure of their colleagues, and the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change."

"Fear not the path of Truth for the lack of People walking on it."

"Every time we turn our heads the other way when we see the law flouted, when we tolerate what we know to be wrong, when we close our eyes and ears to the corrupt because we are too busy or too frightened, when we fail to speak up and speak out, we strike a blow against freedom and decency and justice."

"Let no one be discouraged by the belief there is nothing one person can do against the enormous array of the world's ills, misery, ignorance, and violence. And in the total of all those acts will be written the history of a generation."

"A revolution is coming—a revolution which will be peaceful if we are wise enough; compassionate if we care enough; successful if we are fortunate enough—but a revolution which is coming whether we will it or not. We can affect its character; we cannot alter its inevitability."

You Can't Stop the Spring



By Daneen Akers

One of my favorite lines in the SGA film comes near the end. Quoting Pablo Neruda, Pastor Marcos says, *"You can pick all of the flowers, but you can't stop the spring."* To me, this has always been a message of hope, of renewal, of life after fear, even the fear of death. And this spring has been a spring indeed for those of us paying attention to this conversation about faith, identity, and belonging. Despite the attempts by some to pick all of the flowers, spring is coming. It's actually a bit hard to keep up with it all these days!

An Easter Miracle—at Three Schools

Three incredible stories happened the week of Easter. The most inspiring story comes from Andrews University, often considered the flagship Adventist educational institution. On the afternoon of Easter Sabbath, a group of LGBT students on campus presented their stories to over 600 people. So many people came to listen that three overflow rooms had to be set up. I got many notes and messages from people in attendance, and it was overwhelmingly a transformative space of listening, connecting, healing, and just being authentic together.

A faculty member told me it was the most spiritually authentic space he'd witnessed since being at Andrews. "Today, I was led by our LGBTQ students into the most significant emotional, spiritual, and bridge-building experience of all my time here. And seeing such love, care, and humility demonstrated by some of our faculty and administrative leaders, I felt for the first time...that I might finally be at home. Thank you..."

▪ Here's a great list of some of the tweets during the program that almost let you "hear" it as it happened: "A Conversation at Andrews with LGBT Students." [<https://storify.com/elielcruz/andrews-university-conversation-with-lgbt-students#publicize>].

Quotes by Robert F. Kennedy

"We can move in that direction as a country, in greater polarization—black people amongst blacks, and white amongst whites, filled with hatred toward one another. Or we can make an effort, as Martin Luther King did, to understand and to comprehend, and replace that violence, that stain of bloodshed that has spread across our land, with an effort to understanding, compassion, and love.... What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what we need in the United States is not violence and lawlessness, but is love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or whether they be black."

"We must admit the vanity of our false distinctions among men and learn to find our own advancement in the search for the advancement of others. We must admit in ourselves that our own children's future cannot be built on the misfortunes of others. We must recognize that this short life can neither be ennobled nor enriched by hatred or revenge."

"Our lives on this planet are too short and the work to be done too great to let this spirit flourish any longer in our land. Of course we cannot vanquish it with a program, nor with a resolution."

"But we can perhaps remember, if only for a time, that those who live with us are our brothers, that they share with us the same short moment of life; that they seek, as do we, nothing but the chance to live out their lives in purpose and in happiness, winning what satisfaction and fulfillment they can."

▪ Here's the news story in *Spectrum*:

[<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2014/04/20/conversation-lgbt-students-andrews-university>].

▪ And here are three reflection pieces from students: "We Are Resurrection People" by Eliel Cruz and two student reflections:

[<http://www.believeoutloud.com/latest/living-resurrection-my-churchs-first-lgbt-program>];

[<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2014/04/28/two-andrews-students-talk-about-lgbt-conversation>].

That same weekend, a small group of people gathered at Southern Adventist University for a silent demonstration during the annual Easter weekend service to peacefully remind those in attendance that God's love and the Easter story are for everyone, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people. The organizer, a Southern alum who identifies as gay, said it was about reminding people in the wake of the recent guidelines [<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2014/04/09/church-adopts-guidelines-responding-alternative-sexual-practices>] passed that families like his are torn between supporting their church and their child. His parents were also there holding signs, and I just wish I could have been there to hug them!

And earlier in the week at Pacific Union College for student week of prayer, a student spoke movingly [<http://new.livestream.com/pucchurch/bill>] about growing up both gay and Adventist and how he had had a spiritual renewal since coming to an Adventist school that included finally having peers and faculty who could love and support him. I loved the end when a crowd of students come up to hug him, pray for him, and thank him for sharing his story.

A commenter on one of the new threads caught my eye: "*It's always the students with their stories, art, and poems that change the world. They are showing us the way home.*"

Support This Work on Campuses

The students behind these remarkable moments of listening are all part of the Intercollegiate Adventist GSA Coalition (IAGC). They are now on seven campuses, although they are technically unofficial groups on all of them. But they are doing incredible bridge-building and awareness work. They are trying to raise at least \$4,000 to cover travel for their annual summit for their chapter leaders to meet together in person to plan for the next year and just build those relationships that will help them work together more effectively. Please consider a fully tax-deductible contribution now [<http://www.iagcadventist.com/#!/donate/c1ghi>]. Their summit was in June.

Two Churches and a Country Respond in Fantastic Ways to Recent Guidelines

The last newsletter I wrote

[<http://mad.ly/a075b4?pact=21841593055&fe=1>] talked about how I almost resigned my official Adventist church membership (but didn't) over those new guidelines that seemed very much targeted at further ostracizing and marginalizing an already marginalized group and had a tremendous amount of engagement. Two churches responded to those new guidelines in the most fantastic way possible. (I'm sure there are more, but these are the two that were brought to my attention.) At one church, the resurrection message was infused throughout with full inclusion: this is for all. Here's a beautiful snippet:

"This church, because of courageous leadership over the years, has said

that all people belong here, including people who identify as LGBT. And I'm happy to tell you that the General Conference has no authority over a local congregation and its membership policy. And so, while I respect our world church's interest in standing up for Biblical principles and for seeking to be compassionate in their way, our congregation here says, 'If you're lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex, you are welcome here. You can be a member here. You can teach our kids here. You matter to God, and you have the spirit of God in you. You have something to give us and we want you to give it to us. You matter. We are revealing Christ and we are affirming all.'"

The Adventist church in The Netherlands issued an official statement [<http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2014/04/24/church-netherlands-commits-itself-being-safe-place-lgbti-individuals>] encouraging their churches to be safe and welcoming spaces for LGBTI individuals. I was reminded of a story I read recently about how the Dutch are currently being hired as consultants worldwide to help cities and countries deal with rising tides due to climate change. The Dutch with their extensive canals and dams are very experienced with what is a new crisis for many others. And it occurs to me that they may just show the rest of us how it's done in churches as well!

Another church voted a statement of acceptance and diversity that emphasized learning to love well. As the church member who shared it with me said, *"We may not be able to change the world, but we can make our little corner of it better."*

"As members of the Seventh-day Adventist church, we believe that the mission of our congregation, 'Learning to Love Well,' proclaims the radical love and inclusive essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Despite recently published 'guidelines' by the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists calling for the disfellowship of LGBT church members, we welcome the diversity of humankind, created in God's image, including those of us who are LGBT. We continue to support the traditional Seventh-day Adventist policy that holds that Adventist church membership is determined locally. Our community is compelled to do this in our commitment to listen, grow, and learn better how to 'love well'." —The Leadership Team

Screening at the Wild Goose Festival

Finally, we have another festival screening to announce! *Seventh-Gay Adventists* was screened at the Wild Goose Festival at the end of June. I've been wanting to attend Wild Goose for the past few years, but we always had another screening. Apparently in Celtic spirituality, "wild goose" is a metaphor for the Holy Spirit; and this festival describes itself as being set at the intersection of art, music, social justice, and spirituality. It was four days of camping in the Asheville, NC area with speakers, bands, films, lots of art, and a lot of fellowship.

On a Personal Note

I have been deluged with emails and messages since the last newsletter, and if I haven't gotten back to you personally yet, please forgive me. I am getting through the emails slowly but surely! Clearly many more are torn, like me, between the faith I was raised in and the ideals of love and

compassion that you want to live out. The vast majority of you sent an outpouring of love and encouragement (even if your path is different) and shared your own stories.

I am reminded of what Ram Dass says, "In the end, we're all just walking each other home." Thank you for walking alongside me. ▼

Quotes by Robert F. Kennedy

"Tragedy is a tool for the living to gain wisdom, not a guide by which to live."

"Surely, this bond of common faith, this bond of common goal, can begin to teach us something. Surely, we can learn, at least, to look at those around us as fellow men, and surely we can begin to work a little harder to bind up the wounds among us and to become in our own hearts brothers and countrymen once again."

"First is the danger of futility: the belief there is nothing one man or one woman can do against the enormous array of the world's ills—against misery and ignorance, injustice and violence.

Yet many of the world's great movements, of thought and action, have flowed from the work of a single man. A young monk began the Protestant reformation, a young general extended an empire from Macedonia to the borders of the earth, and a young woman reclaimed the territory of France. It was a young Italian explorer who discovered the New World, and 32-year-old Thomas Jefferson who proclaimed that all men are created equal. 'Give me a place to stand,' said Archimedes, 'and I will move the world.' These men moved the world, and so can we."

"The future is not a gift. It is an achievement."

"Ultimately, America's answer to the intolerant man is diversity, the very diversity which our heritage of religious freedom has inspired."



Daneen Akers

Middlesex

By Jeffrey Eugenides
2002. Picador.

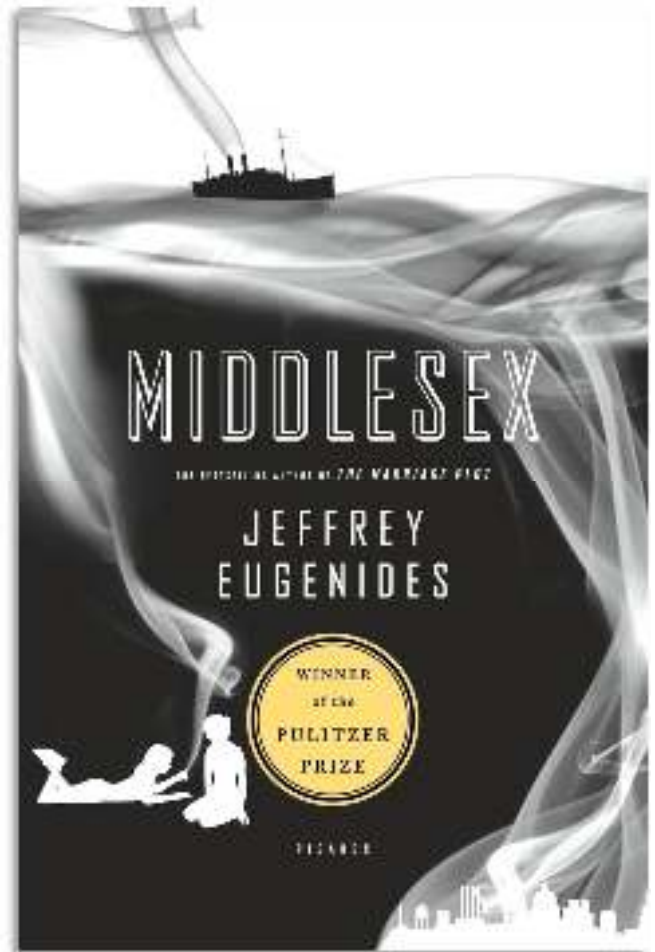
Multi-generational perspectives, physical and emotional anomalies and their complications, all portrayed from the lives of fascinating people made this story at the same time a challenging and very satisfying read for me. The topic, intersex, makes it a must read for persons interested in understanding human identity, anatomy, genetics, and sexuality. It is very well written; human emotions and behaviors are exquisitely described.

Middlesex is fiction and Eugenides skillfully employs "historical imagination" to tell a story mirroring the facts of "The True Story of John/Joan" by John Colapinto, which appeared in *Rolling Stone* in 1997.^[1] In this literary treatment of a clinical report, the story is told by the person described as being born Calliooe Helen Stephanides, referred to in most of the telling as Cal. "I was born twice:" says Cal, "first as a baby girl...in January of 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy...in August of 1974. Specialized readers may have come across me in Dr. Peter Luce's study "Gender Identity in 5-Alpha-Reductase Pseudohermaphrodites," published in the *Journal of Pediatric Endocrinology* in 1975."

Cal begins the story in the present, and then takes the reader to learn about his family, living in a rather isolated community in Asia Minor. The grandparents traveled together to America, and one particularly fascinating part of the story for me is that they settled in Detroit, Michigan.

I was born and raised in the Seventh-day Adventist stronghold of Battle Creek, about an hour's drive from Detroit. The auto industry there has always been a part of my life. Cal's grandfather worked in "The Rouge," a 1000-acre complex begun in 1917 by Henry Ford to help himself and to help build America. Cal's grandfather was stunned by the changes in his life and his perspective when he became a part of that huge industrial complex. Enduring the dark cloud, the chemical smell, and then darkness inside the factory—along with 50,000-70,000 persons working their each shift. He wanted to provide a good life for his wife, children, and, subsequently, his grandchildren.

Cal's grandfather hated his work, left the factory, and began a restaurant in Detroit's Greek Town. As he and his wife raised their family, they incorporated their unique physical and social history with their childrearing. None of us are blank slates. They kept a huge secret—they were brother and sister. All three generations were challenged as they experienced ethnic bigotry, religious fear, insecurity, and medical challenges, including depression and gender identity. Critical to Cal's story is that really important physical and emotional challenges were hidden or ignored.



When puberty did not bring the expected changes in Cal's body, his parents took him for medical evaluation.

It's important to note that in *Middlesex*, Eugenides describes Cal's fear and confusion about his body being hidden from the physician, Dr. Luce. In Colapinto's recounting of the historical John/Joan, the physician, Dr. Money, had more information and was "purposefully deceitful".^[2] In both accounts the reputation of the physician was enhanced by his inside knowledge and consequent research and publications about "gender identity." Dramatic consequences reveal the psychological harm to their patients. And pure objectivity is not possible, so these accounts reflect the personal experiences and values of the writers.

Bryn Mawr's Serendip website offers a fascinating presentation titled, "The Birds, the Bees, and 5-alpha Reductase Deficiency"^[3] offering helpful information on the difficulty of identifying and understanding how sex, gender, and identify are understood. In a recent TEDx Talk, Alice Dreger (NW University) provides some help in understanding "body types that challenge social norms." I believe, as she does, that culture defines what's "normal." This is one perspective

on intersex; physical bodies are “all over the map,” says Dreger.

Our worldview can be expanded, not just to tolerate but, to accept differences and care for and about all people in their uniqueness. This book can be helpful to folk who are interested in biology, genetics, anthropology, sociology, history, and belief systems.

Reviewer, Kay Clayton
Sociologist, Social Worker ▼

[1] M. Pottash, “The Historical and the Literary-Representations of Dr. Luce and Dr. Money.” Bryn Mawr Serendip.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/sci_cult/evolit/s05/birdsbees/

Letter from Dr. Thomas S. Geraty to His Daughter Kathleen

Dear Kathleen,

Please excuse my stationery. Here we are at Aunt Jean’s. I called you last night and left a message. We arrived at [sic] the 5:30 p.m. traffic.

I’ve read your *Walter Wink’s (Editor) Homosexuality and Christianity* and I consider it an excellent book. Thank you for sharing it with me.

Our sexual orientation is God-given, and we can’t and don’t want to change it. God loves and appreciates individuality. I hasten to assure you, Sweet-heart, that I affirm you in your sexual orientation and sexual behavior as God leads and helps you. I admire your dedication to Him and your daily keeping close to Him and wanting to do His will as you serve and help people. We as a church, nation, and as individuals need a reconciling respect, love, fidelity, and understanding of one another. All of us are God’s children. We must acknowledge the value of every person, and love will know no denominational boundaries and shall not be limited to those who think they have the truth. They are our brothers and sisters, even if they are in other churches and in other lands.



“The Bible knows only a love ethic.” I’m sorry, Kathleen, for the pain and struggle that you must have experienced, but be assured of my love and honor for you in my increasing knowledge. You are dear to me with unconditional love.

*Lovingly yours in “the blessed hope,”
Dad*

Thomas Geraty had just celebrated his 99th birthday when he died at the end of December. Geraty was an early missionary to China, president of the Middle East College in Beirut, editor of the *Journal of Adventist Education*, and dean of Andrews University’s School of Education during his long career working for the church. Well into his 90s he painted, wrote poetry, and did his daily devotions in Mandarin. He lived in China, Burma, Hong Kong, Lebanon, England, Germany, France, and Israel, as well as in the United States. ▼

...from a response to *Seventh-Gay Adventists*

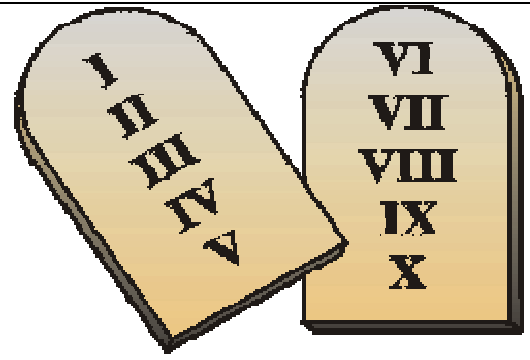
Hearthbroken. Saw your lovely film in Walla Walla. I am also a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist (back to the Battle Creek days) and am about to

package up my baby dedication/cradle roll card, baptism certificate, and JMV scarf (might keep my horsemanship badge though) and mail it to the General Conference with a

note saying “peace, out.” If, on judgment day, I am admonished for loving and welcoming my brothers and sisters, then I have missed the point. ▼

The Top Ten Reasons the LGBT Community Should Be Welcome at Church

By David Burnie



10 Judge Not Lest Ye Be Judged

Seriously, Jesus actually said that, and as a Bible-believing Christian I believe it. We do not have the right to judge the sins of others—so what gives us the idea that we have the right to exclude people based on the sins we shouldn't have judged them for in the first place?

9 Double Standard

Okay, so the Bible calls gays evil (no, actually it doesn't and we'll come to that in a minute) but it also calls liars, gossipers, gluttons, and a whole slew of others evil (and actually does!). But, hey, we let all them be part of the group.

8 Even If I'm Wrong, Where Else?

Ok, so I'm wrong (it does happen) and they actually do all need to turn straight or celibate to be acceptable to God, where else are they going to find the love and support they need to go through such a big life-change? While I would strongly preface this by saying that it's the job of the Holy Spirit and not me or you to convict people of sin and righteousness, we are still in the business of helping people overcome, aren't we?

7 They Are Already Here

You just might not know it since they haven't shared that deeply personal part of their life with you. But when we talk about "the gays" we're not talking about a group of total outsiders trying to break down our doors. We're usually talking about our sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, friends and neighbors. That should make us all think twice about the way we talk.

6 The Stereotypes Are Bullshit

Sorry for the strong language, but I don't want anyone to mistake this point. "The gays" are not a bunch of sex-crazed maniacs who want to recruit your children, have orgies in the pews, and turn the recession into a pride parade. The reality is that they live lives just as plain and boring as the rest of us.

5 Jesus Went Out of His Way for the Other –

Sure, society at large has come a long way in how we treat the LGBT community and other marginal-

ized groups—but ask them and you will find that they still feel left out, sidelined, and marginalized. That's exactly the type of person Jesus ministered to, and exactly the type of person we should be here for.

4 The Bible Wasn't Talking about These

Okay, I know this is where I will lose a lot of people who haven't left already but please try and follow me here. The Bible was written between 2000 and 4000 years ago, but the concept we call homosexuality was developed 100 years ago. What Paul and likely Moses were condemning were twisted practices where married men left their wives at home to defile slave boys in the name of false gods—and I fully believe that is a practice we should still condemn.

3 Especially Not Sodom

Repeat after me. Sodom wasn't about gays. The judgment was pronounced before the angels went to the city and faced their attempted rape. Rape and homosexuality aren't the same thing. Oh yeah, and the Bible itself says it wasn't about the gays. "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy" (Ezekiel 16:49).

2 I Am Thinking of the Children

So often the debate boils down to this: "Won't somebody think of the children?" I hear so much concern about what message we send our kids by accepting LGBT members into the church. Well, I know exactly what message I am sending them—no matter who you grow up to be, God loves you, I love you, and you will always have a place here. If you do turn out to be gay, your life is still worth living, you shouldn't have to run away from your family, and you don't have to hide from God.

1 There Are Some Truly Wonderful People in That Community

Seriously! I have some incredible friends who belong to the LGBT community and they would make an excellent addition to our churches. They are talented, smart, funny, caring people who enrich my life with their friendship and, when given the opportunity, would do great things for Jesus as part of our church! ►

► Many thanks to Ron Brayton for the reminders below.

One

Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.

Two

Marry a man/woman you love to talk to. As you get older, their conversational skills will be as important as any other.

Three

Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have, or sleep all you want.

Four

When you say, "I love you," mean it.

Five

When you say, "I'm sorry," look the person in the eye.

Six

Be engaged at least six months before you get married.

Seven

Believe in love at first sight.

Eight

Never laugh at anyone's dreams. People who don't have dreams don't have much.

Nine

Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt but it's the only way to live life completely.

Ten

In disagreements, fight fairly. No name calling.

Eleven

Don't judge people by their relatives.

Twelve

Talk slowly but think quickly.

Thirteen

When someone asks you a question you don't want to answer, smile and ask, "Why do you want to know?"

Fourteen

Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.

Fifteen

Say "Bless you" when you hear someone sneeze.

Sixteen

When you lose, don't lose the lesson.

Seventeen

Remember the three R's: Respect for self; Respect for others; and Responsibility for all your actions.

Eighteen.

Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.

Nineteen

When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

Twenty

Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice.

Twenty-one

Spend some time alone.

David is an educator in the Canadian Adventist educational system. He and his wife allowed us to print this knowing that there may be consequences for their open and accepting love.

Quotes by Robert F. Kennedy

"All of us might wish at times that we lived in a more tranquil world, but we don't.

And if our times are difficult and perplexing, so are they challenging and filled with opportunity."

"Too often we honor swagger and bluster and wielders of force; too often we excuse those who are willing to build their own lives on the shattered dreams of others."

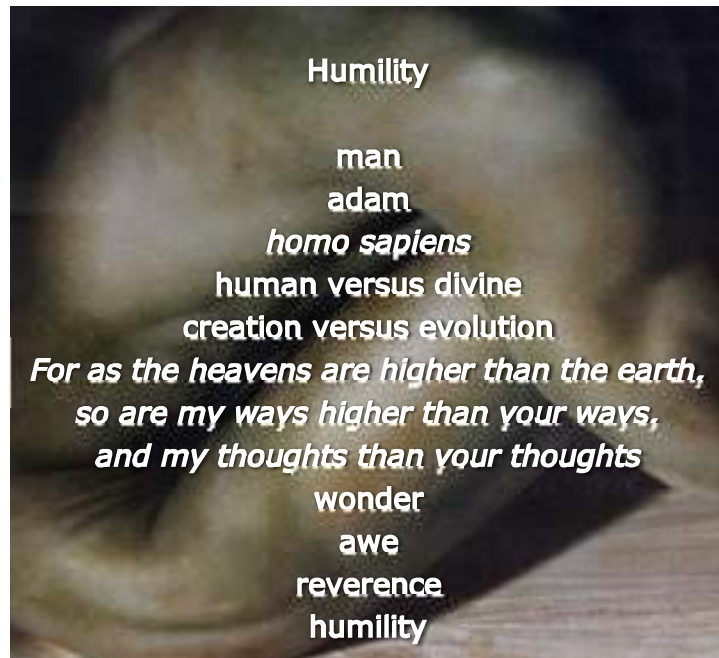


For the fifth year in a row Kinship had a booth at the Dutch Camp Meeting



Here are our first contributions to the *Connection's* poetry contest.
Thank you to Heidi and Carrol! We look forward to hearing from more of you.

Carrol Grady
Category: God



Carrol Grady
Category: God

Living in the Real World

The world I grew up in
was flat, two-dimensional,
a world of either/or:
either good or bad,
either right or wrong,
either lost or saved.

It was a safe, simple world
with inflexible boundaries,
a world of absolutes, but also
a world of intolerance
and prejudice.

The world I see today
has a thousand shades of gray
between black and white;
I see a world that is
infinitely complex,
where things are seldom
what they seem.

In this real world
only God can see the heart
and know the circumstances
of each life.
Only He can judge with
mercy and compassion.
He asks us,
with our fallible wisdom,
not to judge,
but to show love
and forbearance
for one another.



Carrol Grady
Category: kinship

The Joy of Grandchildren



What greater joy
has life to offer
than grandchildren?

To revel
in the comfort
of cuddling
warm little bodies.

To delight
in watching toddlers
tumble and play
like adorable puppies.

To recognize,
with reflected glory
a noble trait
of yours repeated.

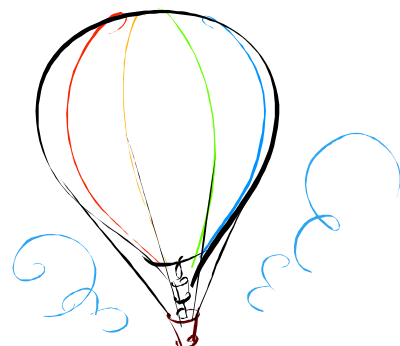
To take
inordinate pride
in teenage
accomplishments.

To bask
in satisfaction
as they take their place
in the world as adults.

And to enjoy
all these pleasures
without the distraction
of responsibility and worry!

Carrol Grady
Category: kinship

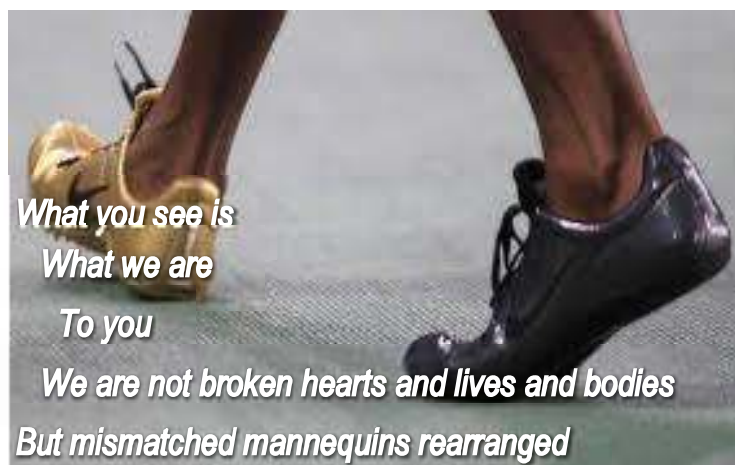
anniversary



gently drifting between earth and sky,
floating above ripe fields, silver river,
and green hills touched with autumn fire,
effortlessly suspended in a fragile basket
beneath a rainbow-colored balloon,
the serene stillness scarcely broken
by the faint whistle from a toy train below,
I nestle securely in the strong arms
of one I've loved for forty years,
as snowcapped mountains slowly blush
in sunset's admiring gaze.

Heidi Johnson

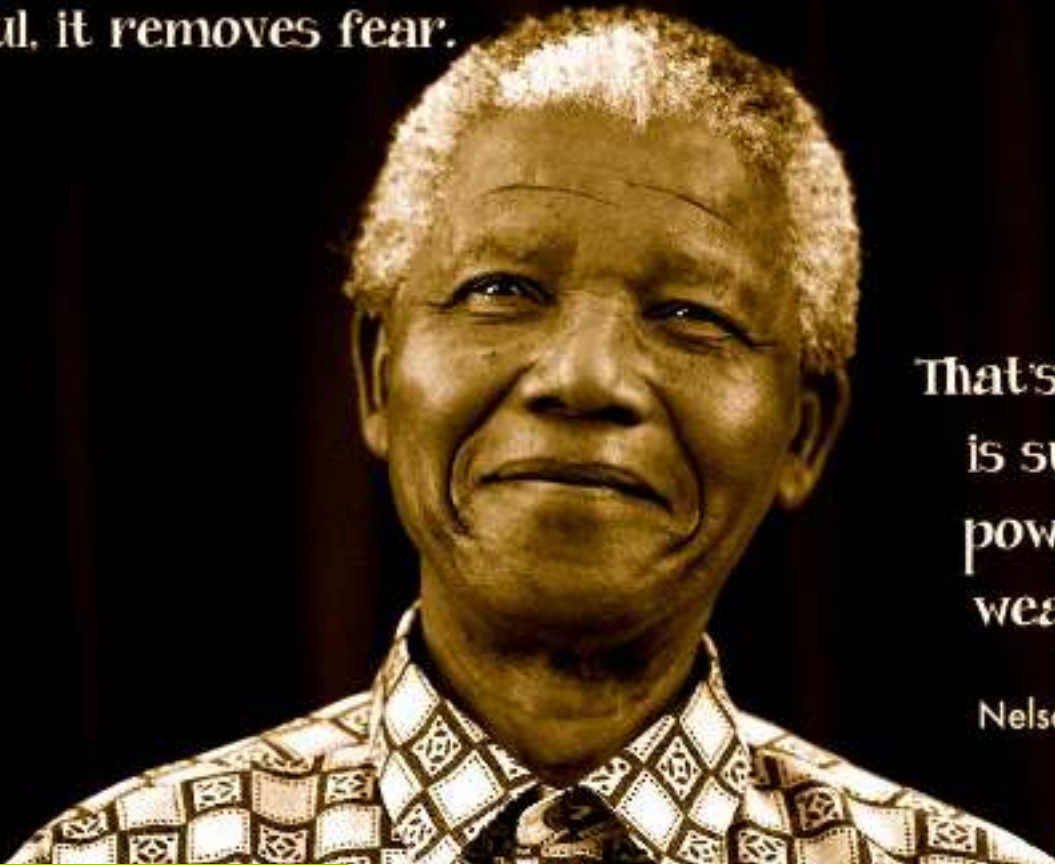
untitled poem written to my church when my black
husband and I separated



What you see is
What we are
To you

We are not broken hearts and lives and bodies
But mismatched mannequins rearranged

Forgiveness liberates
the soul, it removes fear.



That's why it
is such a
powerful
weapon.

Nelson Mandela

Forgiveness...

*is not an occasional act,
it is a constant attitude.*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Calendar 2014

The Annual Pre-Kampmeeting Event Women and Children First July 11-15

Angels Rest in Fayetteville, Georgia (south of Atlanta)

Kinship's Kampmeeting Event SDA Kinship Kampmeeting July 15-20

The Lodge at Simpsonwood, Northeast Atlanta

The Annual European Event European Kinship Meeting August 28-September 1

St. Mark's College, Saffron Walden, England

Following EKM in Europe EKM-Holiday September 1-8

Merman Farm, Tideswell, Derbyshire, England

"Visions of God" Book and the Beach Mini-Kampmeeting September 18-21

Nags Head, North Carolina

9th Annual Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting November 6-9

At the base of Okemo Mountain in Ludlow,
Vermont

For more information about these events visit Kinship's website
at <http://www.sdakinship.org/index.php/coming-events/> ▼



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SDA Kinship Kampmeeting 2014



"When Spirituality and Sexuality Collide,
Where Do You Turn?"

35th SDA Kinship Kampmeeting

The Lodge at Simpsonwood, Norcross, GA

July 15-20, 2014

www.sdakinship.org