

connection

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 34 No. 8 – October 2010



Celebrating Difference

European Kinship Meeting 2010



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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.)



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



From the Editor

It is pouring in Virginia this morning. We of the swamplands have had a summer of drought. Now we are ready for rice paddies. Thanks to my wife Karen, my car is packed, the floors are vacuumed, and we've done the shopping for Kinship's

Book and the Beach weekend that is happening at Nags Head, North Carolina. But that is not the focus of this issue.

The beginning of September brought European Kinship Meeting (EKM) 2010. People flew, drove, bussed, and took the train from France, the Czech Republic, Germany, England, the United States, Scotland, Kenya, Sweden, Finland, and Brazil to arrive at the tiny village of Neer in southeastern Netherlands. Reinder Bruinsma spent two packed days sharing his thoughts on how the Seventh-day Adventist Church interfaces modern and post-modern thinkers as it deals with issues of diversity. I thought some of you might have reactions to his presentation, so at the end of the article about his discussion we've included an email address so you can write to us and share your responses. Part of Kinship's work is to build a dialogue with the Adventist Church, and we thought this might give you an opportunity to offer your thoughts and feedback.

I wish we could share the misty mornings, remarkable living quarters, laughter, and relationship-building. I think you would have liked the Sunday field trip to Malmédy. I know that Ruud has included photos so you can get a sense of this historic town. I think you might have enjoyed being at Open Day, the Adventist Dutch Campmeeting. We occupied a booth with one of the church groups and handed out Homosexuality: Can we talk about it? Tanja, Absalom, and Melanie were troopers. They talked to friendly people, cantankerous ones, and those who were certain their viewpoint on the Bible was the one true view. We rewarded ourselves with a Dutch pancake supper. Wow, you will have to talk to Ivan and Melanie to find out the name of the restaurant for any time you are in The Netherlands. It is amazing to have a branch of the church where Kinship is an important part of their annual gathering. We're already planning for next year. I wish you could have come along on our holiday. We had a house that included sauna and jacuzzi, computer access, lovely yard, and great walking trails.

We strolled 20 km days. We toured flower exhibitions. We lounged in a historic spa. We ate in outdoor cafes. Dan developed a version of the game Concentration in which we learned Czech names for fruits and vegetables. I wish you could have been part of all of this. We've done our best to give you a feel for those ten days. We hope you enjoy it. More importantly, we want you to take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine





Pastor Reinder Bruinsma, born in The Netherlands, has served in various offices in his long career in the church. From his poor and humble upbringing in a windmill in his native Holland, Reinder Bruinsma went on to become a writer, author, school principal, church pastor, and experienced church commentator and leader who is open to being challenged by those of other faiths and points of view. He is the author of almost twenty books, some of which have been translated into a number of languages. Some of his latest publications are Faith: Step by Step (Stanborough Press, 2006); Key word of the Christian Faith (Review and Herald, 2008); and The Body of Christ: A Biblical Understanding of the Church (Review and Herald, 2010).

Pastor Bruinsma was president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in The Netherlands before retiring. He also served seven years as communication director and then executive secretary of the Trans-European Division, headquartered in St. Albans, England.

By Reinder Bruinsma

In order to understand some of the issues facing our church around concepts of diversity, I believe it is important for us to take a look at the difference between *modern* and *postmodern* thinking. The era we term *modern* rejected medieval myths, renewed an interest in the classics, embraced humanism, developed a new approach to the arts, and promoted trust in reason. The scientific method espoused experiment and exploration.

The role of theology and church weakened as the emphasis on reason grew. The motto became, "I believe what I can understand." Charles Darwin (1809-1992) wrote that science rather than religion explains our origins. Gradually secularism gained ground. There was an emphasis on harmony and structure. With the thoughts of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Friedrich Nietzsche there began to be more focus on feeling, interpretation, lack of absolute truth and morality, and emphasis on hermeneutics. We

began to think in terms of chance or contingencies instead of absolute truths. Diversity rather than harmony or unity became increasingly important. Believers began to ask questions not posed before: Why Christianity? Why this particular denomination? How much must I accept to belong to a church?

The appeal of non-denominational churches increased. *Post-modern* thinkers began to have changing views of ecumenism. We began to consider the possibilities that all traditions have value; and our goals began to focus on dialogue, understanding, and respect.

Diversity: A Christian Value

There is one God. Deut. 6:4 proclaims, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone!" Exodus 20 instructs, "Do not worship any other gods besides Me!" Eph. 4:5 reiterates, "There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism." God is unity. And yet, God is also a trinity—One Essence in three "Persons"—community, communication, relationships. The Bible shows us repeatedly that it takes a multiplicity of metaphors to talk

about God.

The Biblical view of mortals is holistic: We are unity. We have a body and a spirit that makes us a soul. We have individuality. Yet, we are diversity: male, female, intersex. We exist in a family, community, and relationships. We have a variety of occupations: farmer, prophet, teacher, and healer.

The Bible is a book of diversity; yet, there is unity in the Scriptures. There is great diversity among the authors and their styles of writing. There is diversity in sources and discrepancies in the reporting of specific events.

In the Old Testament there is both unity and diversity in the origin stories of Genesis 1, 2, and 10. In the stories of Israel and other nations there was no intention that other nations should cease to exist. God's intention was that these different nations should worship the one God. The covenant emphasizes kinship, but there is always a place for the stranger. Jesus' genealogy indicates non-Israelite women.

In the New Testament Jesus associated with men and women of all walks of life. He had compassionate dealings with Jews and non-Jews: Samaritans, the Syro-phenician woman, and Romans, for examples. He dealt with various categories of Jews. His followers interacted with a diverse group of people: Philip and the eunuch from Africa, Peter and the Roman centurion, Paul as apostle to the Gentiles. Christians were from everywhere and made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Some members of the new church thought that everyone should be the same; but the focus of Paul on diversity prevailed: we are one body with One Head, yet we differ from each other and are needed and interdependent. We have different gifts and talents but One Spirit. It is not what we are but in Whom we are.

Development of Seventh-day Adventist Church

We have changed from being white and rural to mixed race and cosmopolitan. We began in the United States, expanded to Europe, and became world-wide. In many countries we have gone from mono-cultural to multi-cultural. We have shifted from being a denomination predominately from lower social classes to one containing a wide spread of social strata. We look at issues such as the role of the church community, the extended family (social control), and the place of church in the totality of life. Different times and parts of the church have had a variety of views on divorce, condoms and other contraceptives, polygamy, sex before marriage, cohabitation, and homosexuality.

Schools of thought around these discussions include liberal, progressive, moral influence, evangelical, center conservative, extreme conservative, and ultra-extreme conservative (outside regular Adventism).

How do we decide what is more or less important? Do we use some sort of doctrinal triage? *What are the landmarks of our faith?* I propose a model of concentric circles. There are Christian fundamentals (what makes you a Christian). Then there would be Adventist core doctrines (defines an Adventist). Then Adventist secondary doctrines (fair degree of unanimity) and finally Adventist traditions. The postmodern person will make personal judgment.

Key issues at the present time are: how to read the Bible, hermeneutics, creation, women's ordination, and sexual orientation.

As the church struggles with how to address issues of diversity I have many reasons for optimism. We share many basic convictions: a high view of the Bible; basic Christian doctrines such as God, Christ, and salvation; a

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The most special part of EKM for me is the community and the friendship. I am glad that I could be here this year. This time makes me stronger and gives me rest and energy for the next year. I have gotten some new ideas about how I can find some other Czech people like me. I am learning ways to worry less in my everyday life. The most important thing for me about EKM is that everyone accepts each other. We spend time just talking, sharing our lives, our problems, and our fears. We also share the nice moments of our lives and the love we have for each other. That love is so important for me. I am very thankful for the people who helped me come this year. It has meant a lot to me. Again, big thanks!
—Dan

**Change is the end result
of all true learning.**

—Leo Buscaglia

general Protestant orientation; Sabbath; the second coming; a great controversy theme; belief in a Heavenly sanctuary; an understanding of the nature of humanity; and an emphasis on stewardship, especially health. ➤➤

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Growing up in a small village in the western part of Kenya, near Lake Victoria, was great because it gave me an experience of diversity in the community. People of different tribes and cultures lived alongside of each other. As I look back at my childhood, I can't understand why the church does not practice what it preaches about diversity. In our village we had to learn the languages of other people and we celebrated different ways of life. This enriched our community. In my family, for example, there are Christians, Muslims, and some who practice traditional African religions; we live in harmony regardless of the difference. It is time for the church to wake up and appreciate the diversity within it. The discussions at EKM this year have been a great help to me because they were about diversity in the church community. I would like us to broaden our horizons and spiritual growth. Thank you.
—**Absalom**

The only service a friend can really render is to keep up your courage by holding up to you a mirror in which you can see a noble image of yourself.

—George Bernard Shaw



How Will We Deal With Polarity and Diversity: Looking Forward

Will we maintain unity through forced uniformity or through unity in diversity? Some positive signs are: the "grand story" still works much of the time; we still utilize Ellen White; we have a strong organizational structure from the local church to the General Conference; there is frequent travel between various parts of the church; we are able to organize large multicultural meetings; we have strong publications such as *Adventist World*, mission stories, and the Hope Channel; and we have many common goals.

However, we need to look at how modern and postmodern thinkers will communicate and understand each other. We need to address theological polarization, and we need to develop ways to integrate thoughts and cultures among different communities inside the church. Will we accept and welcome diversity or will we fight diversity?

We need to create a general climate of tolerance. We need to figure out ways to engage in a positive dialogue and demonstrate willingness to learn from each other as we discuss our theological issues. We need to improve our ways of addressing the Bible and Ellen White. We need to overcome fundamentalist thinking.

There are three main issues facing the church in the next five years: creationism, the ordination of women, and homosexuality. There is a movement within the church to tighten the language of *Fundamental Belief #6*, which has to do with our understanding of a six-day creation. If we do not take a balanced view, we run the risks of strengthening an anti-science reputation, losing intellectuals in our denomination, creating crises in our colleges and universities around their freedom to develop

their curriculum, and placing the Geoscience Research Institute in an impossible situation. As the scientists from that institute have noted, there are geological patterns that can point to slow evolutionary development, and geological patterns that can point to a creation/flood story development. Since no human was there at the beginning, the decision about what to choose is an act of faith. We need to address how we will protect our understanding of the origins and sacredness of the Sabbath.

The situation around the ordination of women has become extremely messy. In Atlanta the constituents voted to ordain all deacons, including women deacons. Whether some parts of the world will do so, remains to be seen. They also made a decision to form committees to study the issues involved with ordaining women to the ministry. By 2015, no matter what is decided by the General Conference Session, the ordination of women will go forward. There are divisions and conferences that will not be able to wait any longer for the process to go forward.

The third primary issue facing the church at this time is homosexuality. In the next five years we will need to carefully consider the theological concerns (both pro and con). We will need to train our pastors to work with their gay and lesbian congregants in thoughtful, honest, supportive, and compassionate ways. We need to address legal challenges. And we need to address public relations challenges, such as the public reaction to a Seventh-day Adventist woman who was running for parliament and decried because of the church's reputation for homophobia, the refusal of the church to allow Carrol Grady and her organization that supports families of gay and lesbian people to have a booth at the General Conference Session, and the

refusal of the Toronto Vegetarian Association to allow the Seventh-day Adventist Church to have a booth at their health fair because of the church's homophobic policies.

The church could address these issues by applying pressure that would affect the careers of people, curtail educational institutions, demand some sort of "total commitment" document to be signed by employees as a sign of loyalty to present policies, censure books and publications, and guard against external influences. But how well could this possibly work?

As we head into these discussions, I am convicted that we need to protect the identity of the Adventist movement by recognizing our non-negotiable core of basic Christian beliefs and key Adventist convictions. I believe we need to remain intentional about unity and, at the same time, be intentional about creating a space for diversity.

I suggest that the church recognize the value of a postmodern climate, stimulate dialogue and study, educate our members about various issues, reflect positive attitudes towards diversity in our publications, give educational institutions freedom, and accept some ruggedness at the edges. I think it is important that our church accepts some differences between the administrative divisions on the issue of women in ministry, letting some issues be determined at lower levels for positions regarding certain geographical territories. While doing this I suggest that the church let local congregations have their own unique "flavor."

As we go into these times of change, we need to keep a spiritual mind, be willing to listen, distinguish between principle and culture, develop the tolerance for others that we want for ourselves (including when they hold opinions that disagree with ours), look for what binds us together, and



strengthen our patience and our understanding that change takes time. Perhaps we may even need to be prepared to change our own minds about some things. ▽

We would like to hear your responses to this talk. Please feel welcome to send them to connection@sdakinship.org.



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It's wonderful and great fun to see good friends again. Almost everyone who regularly attends EKM has become a friend over the last few years. Sure, we can stay in contact with others using today's methods of electronic communication; but that is in no way a substitute for meeting each other in real life. Kinship Europe has become a safe place to share important and even deep thoughts about all aspects of Christian life. It is exciting to see how our group is developing, how we have reached the point where we are now. Even though we are different in many ways, there's a kind of spiritual unity and kinship, a real family (in the best meaning of this word).

—Stefan and Joachim



The Ninth Annual Year in Ideas
roundup published December 13, 2009,
in *The New York Times Magazine*.
From a blog by Terry Nagel, 2009 ➤

Jesus said, "Judge not that ye be not judged." That is, do not set yourself up as a standard. Do not make your opinions, your views of duty, your interpretations of the Scripture, a criterion for others and in your heart condemn them if they do not come up to your ideal. Do not criticize others, conjecturing as to their motives and passing judgment upon them.

—Ellen G. White, Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings, pp. 123, 124



Kinship Older Adults

Seniors Respond Strongly to Competition

In 2008 Gary Charness, an economics professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Marie Claire Villeval of the University of Lyon compared how "seniors" over age 50 and "juniors" under 30 behaved during experimental games and tasks. After multiple tests conducted on-site with employees of two large firms and in a conventional laboratory environment, the study concluded, "We show that seniors are no more risk averse than juniors and are typically more cooperative; both juniors and working seniors respond strongly to competition." Among the study's specific findings: Seniors are more cooperative even where there is a strong incentive to free ride on the contribution of others. When they know they are teamed with juniors, working seniors cooperate more than in all-senior teams. Seniors who choose to compete in a tournament perform as well as juniors. "These results are at variance with the widespread stereotypes about seniors," the study concludes. "Seniors are perceived to be less adaptable, overly cautious, and less willing to learn. These views undoubtedly contribute to age discrimination against seniors in the workplace. We show, however, that working seniors are as reactive and productive as juniors when competing against an opponent." Because mixed-age groups outperformed homogeneous groups in the study, Charness told *The Times* that an optimum workforce at an office would have a range of ages. ▼

✉ olderadult@sdakinship.org

We would like to introduce you to:



Jeff Williams was born in Corsicana, Texas, and went to Sam Houston State University, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, and Texas Christian University. He is currently working on his doctorate in nursing. Jeff works as an advanced practice nurse and clinical nurse specialist. When he is not working he likes music, reading, and swimming. He loves to travel. We hear rumors he is also very good on the two-step floor. His favorite color is Prussian Blue. He is the youngest of six siblings with parents who divorced when he was seven. In September of 2002 Jeff donated a kidney to one of his brothers. Jeff and Floyd Poenitz have been together for seven years. He met Kinship through Floyd and says that the way Kinship has been most helpful to him has been "to teach me about a different religion and enlighten me as to the issues that all LGBTIs face within their religions. The most important part of my spiritual journey is sharing it with Floyd."

Terry Phillips was born in Puyallup, Washington, and went to school in Munich, Germany; Seaside, California; Kaiserslautern, Germany; and Pacific Union College in California. He is one of the products of the great "Advent movement." He works as a nurse anesthetist. When he is not putting people to sleep, Terry likes traveling, singing in a gay chorus, and cooking. His favorite music is smooth jazz and oldie rock. His favorite color is light blue. Both of Terry's parents are deceased. He was married to Kathy for thirty-three years and had two sons with her. He has one son who is happily gay and another who is happily married to a woman and living in New Jersey. Terry writes that "my ex-wife Kathy is still a good friend and an advocate of me and Sid." He is currently single and writes that "the Portland Gay Men's Chorus" is my new family. Terry says he found Kinship when "my wife and I became supporters of Someone-to-talk-to with Carrol Grady. We were invited to come to Kampmeeting as supporters. In 2003 in Vermont, at my fourth Kinship Kampmeeting, I came out. Kinship has given me a new set of friends and continues to expand my horizons. The most important thing about my spiritual journey is knowing that God loves me (for the Bible tells me so), and I am able to celebrate who He made me to be. God is good! Life is God!"

Terry (left) and Dan ➤

Bohdan Pajunk was born in Bruntal in the Czech Republic. He went to school in Ostrana and now works outside Prague as a cashier at Information In Store. Dan says when he is not working he likes to play a game that is something like bowling or "full collective games." His favorite colors are blue and orange. He likes all kinds of music. Dan writes that "My father is awesome; he always encourages me." He likes to spend time with his close personal friends. Dan heard about Kinship through the German Kinship website. Through a few e-mails with the administrator he found his way to Kinship Europe and got in contact with Mike Lewis. This says something for both his persistence and the many contacts that lead people to this community. Dan says that the most important thing about his spiritual journey is to "live to feel God's love for us. Kinship has made me stronger." ▼



What's Happening With the Film?

A lot is happening with the film right now. When we first decided a year and a half ago that we wanted to make a film about the experiences of gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists, we knew there were a lot of compelling stories to tell; but now that we've shot for almost 65 days, I find myself blown away by the incredible stories we're privileged to share.

We're in the middle of another intense production cycle right now. I don't know what it is about fall and this film, but we seem to be getting in the habit of being on the road filming. Almost exactly a year ago, we left on a three-month, 10,000-mile production road trip visiting major Adventist population centers, schools, and churches. It was a great trip full of lots of conversations in churches around the country, lots of incredible stories gathered in our story booth about what it's like growing up both gay and Adventist, and lots of stops at historically important Adventist sites (like Ascension Rock and the Adventist Heritage Village) that helped us get a broader sense of what the Adventist church is all about.

A year later, we're in the middle of a compressed version of that trip, only this time we're flying, thanks to an unlimited JetBlue travel pass. And this time we're doing more filming with fewer people, trying to spend enough time with people to really capture the heart of their stories. Since Labor Day we've visited New York, Seattle, D.C., L.A., and are headed to Ohio soon (whew!).

Of course, we still have Lily along, and this time she's a talking, walking wonder. She did really well on the road by car and loved meeting new people. I'll let you know in November how she does by plane. (So far, she seems to travel better than I do! At least she can sleep on a plane!)

Legal Dispute Update: A Symbol of Freedom?

I wish I had more of an update about the legal tussle over the film's title. In a blog post ("When Your Church Sends You a Cease and Desist"), I shared that we had received a cease and desist directive from the Adventist church claiming trademark infringement and brand dilution. Several letters have been exchanged, and we still feel that we have a clear First Amendment right to the title; but there's really nothing new to report.

I continue to be a bit torn about whether changing the title would result in more people seeing the film—I really don't want to offend, but no other title has grabbed our hearts; and I still find that *Seventh-Gay Adventists* does a good job describing the excruciatingly difficult challenge that LGBT Adventists face reconciling their religious and sexual identities, two core identities that are, seemingly, in conflict. And I do like the inherent question the title asks about who gets to control a label. Can Adventists self-identify? Or do they have to pass doctrinal muster? And how do labels change?

Someone I know by reputation to be a true thought-leader within the church wrote me an encouraging email lately urging us to keep the title:

"Regarding the reaction of the General Conference to the proposed title of your movie, I hope you will not capitulate. When I first heard it, I thought it was a bit too 'cutesy;' but, like you, I have come to like it. And now it has become something of a symbol of freedom within the church."

Now there's an idea! We'll keep you posted. If you have any strong opinions about the title, please drop me a note at Daneen@daneenakers.com.

The Part About Money

Here's the part I've discovered that I really don't like about producing a non-profit film. We need to ask for money... pretty much all the time! Although we are definitely planning for this film to be seen far beyond the Adventist audience, at this stage of production, it's mainly people who have a personal connection to this story who support the film.



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
A film about love, sex, and eternal life.



I am often asked when the film will be finished. I wish I could have a definite date, but the truth is that it depends entirely on funding. We are making this film for pretty much the least amount that you can and still have a quality product, but film is still an expensive medium because it's so time intensive. Of course, that's one reason why film is so powerful and emotional when finished.

I need to let you know that we are critically low on funds right now and are dangerously close to having to put the film on hold for a while until we can secure more funding. We don't want to do that because things are really starting to come together—we've been with our characters long enough now that story arcs are emerging, and the events going on in the world right now around LGBT issues continue to make this the ideal time to be starting this conversation.

Thank you to all of you who have already contributed in all sorts of valuable ways (donations, meals, lodging, babysitting, airplane tickets)—we couldn't be doing this without you.

Our plan is to finish the actual production phase of the film (filming) with individual contributions from individuals who want to see the film made and then apply for post-production grants from supportive foundations. We currently need to raise \$30,000 to complete this phase of the project.

Increasingly, the conversation about LGBT rights has focused on the underlying religious and theological issues. Churches are slowly, slowly starting to realize that they bear some responsibility for the truly destructive "Love the sinner; hate the sin" mantra that does so

much harm (and pretty much results in a demonstration that humans do know how to do hate well). I try to post related news and opinion pieces on the film's Facebook page (please join our fan page if you haven't already—and let your friends know!).

There are two ways to donate to the film:

1. Donate online via IndieGoGo:
<http://www.indiegogo.com/Seventh-Gay-Adventists-Production>
2. Send a check to
Seventh-Gay Adventists SPJ-1195
c/o San Francisco Film Society
39 Mesa Street, Ste 110
San Francisco, CA 94129

(Make the check out to the San Francisco Film Society and include **Seventh-Gay Adventists SPJ-1195** in the memo line.)

Note: All contributions are tax-deductible, and they can also be anonymous. ▽



EKM2010-Holiday-Week near Malmédy, Belgium

A Personal Letter from Jason & deMarco

For those of you who have been following our career, first of all, “thank you.” Most of you know the amazing journey that we’ve shared together over these past eight years of touring. We have made so many wonderful friends and we’ve had the opportunity to travel the world.

Whether it was by our video “This is Love” being voted “Video of the Year” in 2006 or our documentary-film “We’re All Angels” airing on SHOWTIME and recently LOGO, our work and music has reached thousands of people. We’ve received emails from countless people sharing their stories and we are constantly reminded of the importance of what we do.

If you haven’t seen our Noh8campaign pic, here it is (right). It represents that although the GLBT community has made many strides towards freedom, equality, and justice, there is much work to do and we will not be silenced.



Since moving to Houston in 2008 our life has shifted, and it was one of the best decisions we’ve ever made. We welcomed the opportunity for some balance and stability by joining the staff at Unity Church where we currently lead the youth and young adult groups and started a music service the first Friday of the month, called Celebration Service. On the other weekends, we continue to tour the country giving concerts.

Most of you also know that this past May 15, we finally had the wedding of our dreams. Many of you sent your best wishes and some of you even joined us on our Wedding Celebration Cruise. It was a beautiful experience and one we will never forget. Thank you to everyone who shared in this occasion with us, for your gifts, cards, and love.

As I have been sharing in our concerts, “first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes...” Yes, you guessed it! deMarco and I are in the process of planning a family, and our life is continuing to shift and grow in new and exciting directions.

If you have received a newsletter from us in the past, than you know about our vision of S.A.F.E. (Safe, Affirming, Family Environment). Last year a young man who I had been emailing with had been struggling after “coming out of the closet.” He had been kicked out of his home and was going from friend to friend, sleeping on their couch. He finally ended up with a friend who told him that he could stay there as long as he needed to. Unfortunately, a month later, that same friend of his emailed me letting me know that this young man had taken his own life and that she wanted me to know how much he had said that I meant to him. I knew in that moment that it is time. For several years I have had a vision for a non-profit organization that would help kids who have been kicked out of their homes, or who were in foster care because of being kicked out or rejected by their own parents, or perhaps were aging out of the foster care system and had no support and nowhere to

turn. After moving to Houston, I saw the need for an organization like this more than ever before and it fueled my dream. That dream is finally being realized with the launching of our new non-profit S.A.F.E.

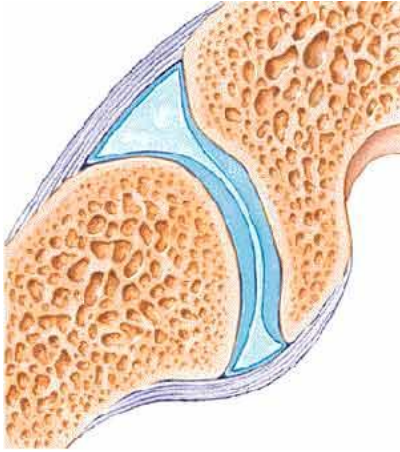
We officially received 501(c)3 non-profit status on June 22, 2010, and are in full force preparing and planning for the work that S.A.F.E. is to do. By January 1, 2011, it is our intention to open the very first “Safe Spot” in Houston which will provide a drop-in and resource center for “throw-away” youth and young adults who will be offered snacks, coffee, clothes, books, and a computer station. It is also our intention to begin forming a community of house parents and “Safe Houses” who are willing to offer transitional housing to GLBTQ young adults and “Safe Houses” run by foster parents currently certified through Child Protective Services or those wishing to get certified to foster GLBTQ kids. Our intention with the homeless community is to encourage GLBTQ kids to enter the foster care system and educate them on the benefits offered to them by the state, knowing that they will be placed with a GLBT-friendly foster home found through our organization. If you are interested in joining our online community, please visit www.safehouseforall.org. Our goal is to start with Houston and then help other cities create “Safe Spots” and form S.A.F.E. communities locally with S.A.F.E.’s mentorship and guidance.

This new venture is going to take much time and energy; and, with us beginning a family, it is the perfect opportunity for us to make this our focus while taking time off of the road to adjust to parenthood. Many of you have been along with us on our journey from the very beginning and we are so excited to get to share this next chapter with you.

As always, thank you for taking the time to read this update and for your continued support. Check out www.jasonanddemarco.com for tour updates and news. ▽

Health Tips of the Month

You already know that olive oil is chock-full of healthy fats. But here's another reason to cook with it: Olive oil might actually help "turn off" genes that could harm your heart. In a study, eating a diet with lots of polyphenol-rich olive oil helped suppress genes related to heart-damaging inflammation and oxidation. Quite the modern-sounding health benefit for an oil that's been around since the days of Homer.

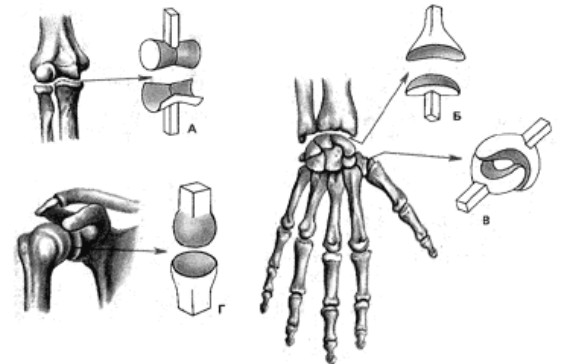


Ever accidentally turn on your windshield wipers on a sunny day? That rubbing sound is so awful, you can't turn the wipers off fast enough, right? It's similar to what happens in your joints if they're not well lubricated. Even though you can't hear them, joints that aren't oiled with thick, slippery fluid become as creaky as rusty hinges on an old screen door. While you make less of that lubricating fluid as you age, these two steps can help keep your joints moving as smoothly as a Nadal forehand.

Move it. Working out pumps more lubrication into your joints and (double your relief) releases more water into your lubricating fluid, so it spreads over the cartilage surfaces more easily. Regularly moving your joints through their full range first thing in the morning covers the cartilage nooks and crannies with fluid, your joints' healthy fats. The same omega-3s that curb inflammation in your blood vessels calm it down in your joints, too. Get the fats from salmon, trout,

olive oil, nuts, avocados, and supplements that are high in the DHA form of omega-3.

Supplements with a combo of *glucosamine sulfate* and *chondroitin* may help on two fronts. They increase lubrication and decrease inflammation (and thus pain). Over the long run, the supplements may even repair some osteoarthritic damage. We recommend 1,500 milligrams daily of Triple Flex, Osteo Bi-Flex, or Cosamin DS—brands we know have 80% to 100% of this dose. The above brands do contain shellfish (shrimp, crab, etc.) Brands that use a vegetarian source are Joint Juice and Elations.



When the mercury starts to dip, warm up your insides with an all-bean chili. Your kidneys will be happier. Why? Because all beans means no meat—and animal protein is hard on kidneys. In fact, a recent study suggests



that getting most of your protein from meat—be it poultry, pork, or ground beef—could boost the risk of kidney cancer by 20 to 30 percent. Kidney cancer, although rare, is on the rise in the United States and Europe. And it has even spiked significantly in recent years. Unfortunately, over half of the people diagnosed with kidney cancer die from it. So there are some extremely compelling reasons to think about how much meat you eat and where you might cut back. You don't have to give up meat entirely, but a little less could do your body good in more ways than one. It's possible that the sodium and nitrates in processed meats, and the heterocyclic aromatic amines that are produced when any meat is cooked, somehow set the stage for kidney cancer. One study even suggested that exposure to viruses from eating meat—like the bovine papilloma virus—may be involved in the kidney cancer process. But more research is needed. ▽



Mike Lewis

People have always moved, settled, moved short term, and moved again. We have moved short distances and we have moved thousands of miles. Absolom has moved from Kenya to Scotland. Ruud and Kees have both left Holland for Israel and then traveled back again. Reino moved from Finland to Sweden. Catherine left California for New England and then Virginia. I left England to travel to Scotland. We have traveled on foot, by camel, on the decks of ships, in cars, and in airplanes. We have traveled alone, with family, with friends, in caravans, and with an entourage.

Some of us were influenced or forced to move by other people or governments. When China decided to flood an area (for the three gorges dam project), millions of people had to move. My Japanese grandmother was taken from her home at the age of nine to settle in a foreign country so she could become westernized. Of course I am grateful because her journey led to me standing here with you. Ruth left her home in Moab to journey with Naomi. Daniel was forced into Babylonian exile because of the sins of his forebears.

Sometimes we move for reasons of self interest or as we search for something better in our lives. The Pilgrims left England and Holland to find religious freedom. East Germans left for the West to find political freedom. Jacob left Canaan for Egypt to find food and a more amenable location in which his family could grow.

Sometimes we journey to follow God's call. Abraham left his home in Ur of the Chaldees to cross the river into the land of Canaan. Saul of Tarsus left his land to go to Jerusalem to study, then left Jerusalem as Paul to spread a message of Messianic love to Gentiles around the Mediterranean area. It was only the emperor of Rome who stopped him from going to Spain. The former pastor of my church in Crieff left his home and his church in Scotland to be part of the Seventh-day Adventist Coptic Church in Egypt. When he was home recently he talked about the times when he wishes he had never left and about the times when he is certain God has led and there is much good to do in his new phase of life.

Sometimes, as a group journeys, there are parts of the group who choose to stay behind. As Joshua was leading Israel into the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, Gaddites, and half-tribe of Manasseh

chose to support their fellow Israelites in the trans-Jordan conquests but make their homes in Gilead, on the other side of that river. In Joshua 22:6 Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their own homes.

All of these stories bring me to the small tale of Barzillai in 2 Samuel 19. Beginning with verse 31 the author writes: Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. Now, Barzillai was a very old man, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim for he was a very wealthy man. The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem and I will provide for you."

But Barzillai answered the king, "How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? I am now eighty years old. Can your servant still see what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of the men and women singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the King? Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance but why should the king reward me in this way? Let your servant return that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with the king and do for him whatever pleases you."

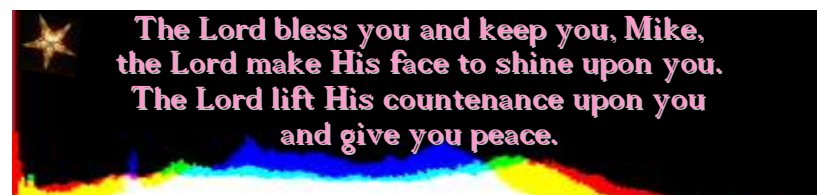
The king said, "Kimham shall cross over with me and I will do for him whatever pleases you. Anything you desire from me, I will do for you."

So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed over. The king kissed Barzillai and gave him his blessing, and Barzillai returned to his own home.

As the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh had supported their fellow tribes in a time of uncertainty and danger, so Barzillai cared for David when it looked like he would lose his kingdom and perhaps his life. In the years when his physical strength had waned Barzillai used his resources, his reputation, his power, and his authority to protect his anointed king in a time of danger. Now, as the king was safe to move on, Barzillai returned to his own home with David's blessing and, I believe, the blessing of God.

Ecclesiastes 3 says, "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under Heaven." I would add that there is a time to travel, to settle, to come together, and to return. We in Kinship came to Neer, Limburg, and The Netherlands. We settled here briefly, but now it is time to continue on our various journeys. May God bless all as we leave this place and move on under His good guidance. ▽

After many years and infinite hours of work with Kinship and inside his own church community to make life easier for LGBTI Seventh-day Adventists, Mike is taking a break from Kinship leadership to pursue some personal dreams.



connection ▽

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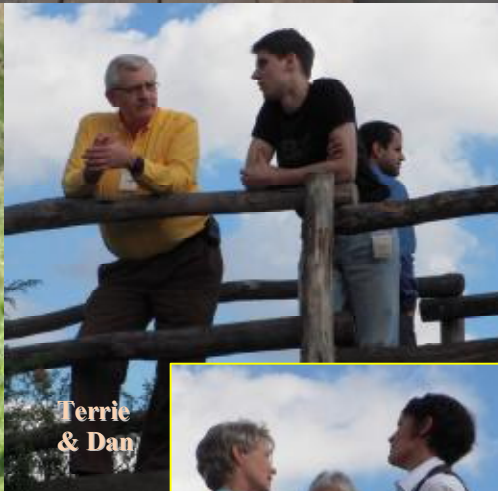
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Meeting Centre "De Braampeel"



Ivan



Terrie
& Dan



**EKM Davitrio
To
Maastricht**



Tanja & Absalom



Ingrid, Frieder & Elodie



Ruud, Dan, Ita & Mike



Catherine, Mike, Stefan, Joachim
Melanie & Martha



Kees, Reino & Joachim



Ita, Elodie
& Dan

See you next year in Paris!