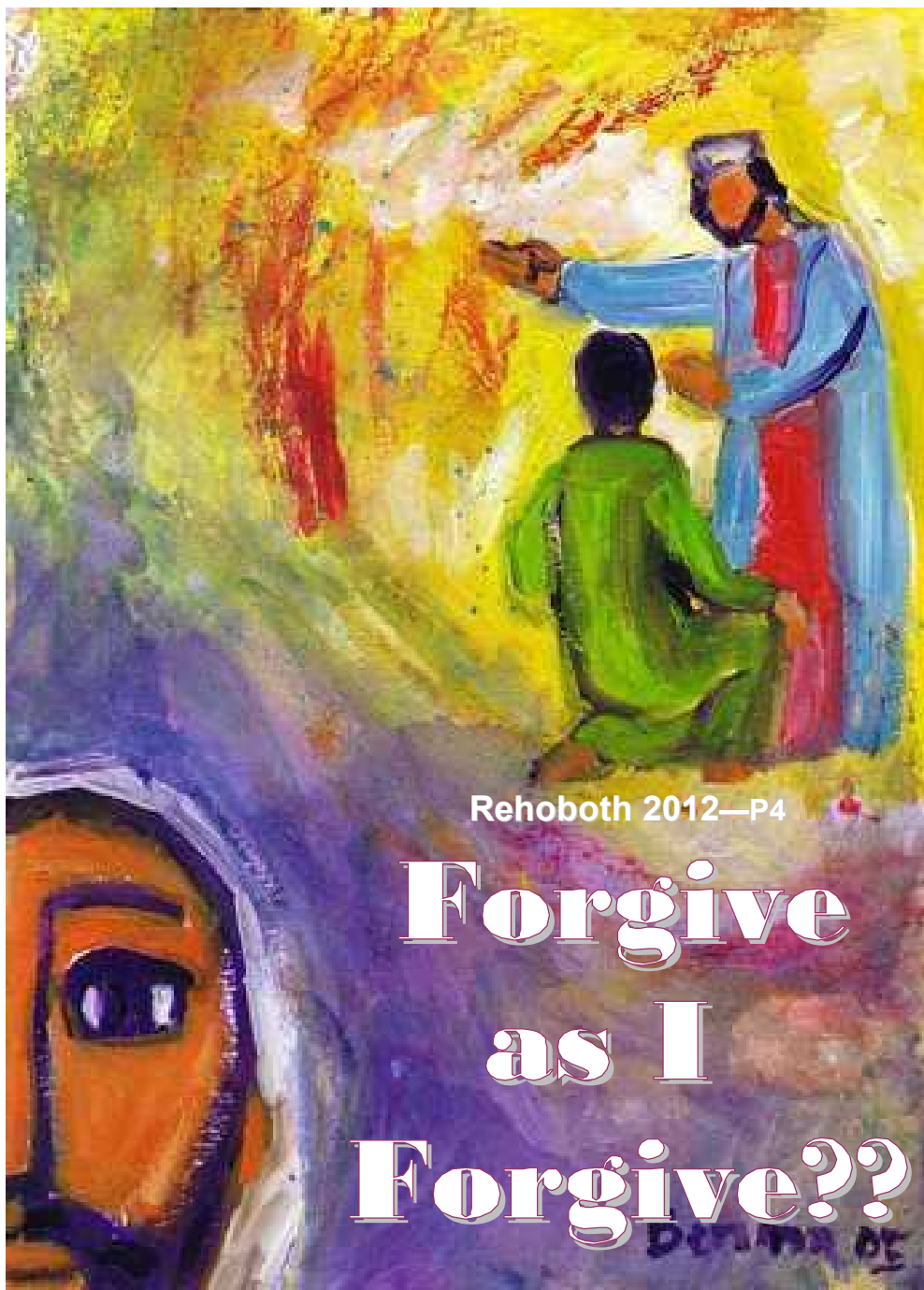


connection



Rehoboth 2012—P4

**Forgive
as I
Forgive??**

In Memorium—P14



*Richard
Hoffman*

1942—2011

Movie Premiere—P13

SEVENTH-*G*AY ADVENTISTS
A film about faith on the margins.



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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



The last three weeks of my life have been, what we call in the American vernacular, *doozies*. A beloved cat died. The next day, one of my beloved uncles died. Now the oak tree in our front yard is dying and I just arranged for it to be cut down. I remember basking under the boughs of this oak as a little girl, thinking that Goldilocks and the Three Bears lived there. I work full time, need help with yard weeding, and recently came across an advertisement for a organization that pairs a team of developmentally delayed adults with people who need raking, weeding, or mulching. Last week they piled out of a king cab pickup truck and lightened our day and our yard (from unwanted plants). The same day the vacationing Romanian father-in-law of a fellow church member was able to begin giving our home a much needed paint update. He doesn't speak English and I don't speak Romanian. (Well, now I know the Romanian word for vacuum cleaner.) We are communicating via his son-in-law (when around), gestures and the gift of tongues (brought to us by Google Translator). My wife and I live with my other beloved uncle and 92-year-old auntie who has severe arthritis and Alzheimer's disease. She still thinks she does all the cleaning, cooking, yard work, painting, wallpapering, and shopping. Auntie goes into panicked rages if she thinks someone is taking over her domain, so we generally sneak around like substance-abusing teenagers to wash the floors. There is no sneaking around with our Romanian painter. Dealing with Auntie's reaction is preparation for sainthood, hopefully. As I am typing, Delta Airlines just popped up to say it is time to check in for my flight to Bellingham, Washington tomorrow. I am not packed and I have an eight-hour work day ahead of me. There is no way I have time to edit the June newsletter and get it to the proof readers and to Ruud (who has to do the layout this week because he is having the audacity to leave on a vacation). And yet it is done. I woke up at 3:46 this morning, hauled myself to the computer, and became entranced again with the thoughts and stories and work I find in these pages. You continue to be a gift to me. If you have this much of an effect on a newsletter editor with low mental bandwidth this week, think about how much of an effect you have on those around you. As I often say, your stories and your courage and your lives create changes you may never even know about. I am honored to be part of your community. Take good care of yourself, for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine

The annual pre-Kampmeeting Event Women and Children First Weekend July 13-16, 2012

Plan your travel! Pack your bags! Head for Northern Virginia and Washington DC! It is almost time for our annual gathering, Women & Children First.

We're having the option of a longer time together because our primary group adventure will be a six-hour Visiting Mount Vernon by Boat tour on Sunday.



We're continuing our tradition of group time on the water. Remember Lake George? Washington state? Catalina Island?



We will be staying at the Embassy Suites in Old Alexandria, VA. The fee will be \$250/person since we will be there two extra nights. All rooms have king beds so whoever books first, that doesn't have a designated roommate, will be assigned the bed and the second person

in the room will get the sofa bed couch. We will have SS/Church Sabbath morning. Sunday we will be taking a Potomac River Boat Cruise that will stop at Mt. Vernon where we can get off and explore. There is a Metro station directly across from the hotel, a masseuse 2 blocks away, an IMAX theatre, and more.

Start planning now to be a part of this exciting event! If you want to know more about this event or other KinWomen Events, please contact the Director of Women's Interests, Karen Wetherell, at women@sdakinship.org! ▽

Forgive as I Forgive??

By Ellen Rowan

The scoundrel owed him \$10. Had owed it for months. Every time he caught a glimpse of him, irritation mounted. When he came into view this time, the senior servant's temper flared. He grabbed him by the lapels of his coat and demanded his money. "You were to have paid me months ago. I demand payment. Now!"

The junior servant began to beg, "Give me just a little longer. My mother's been sick again. Give me till payday and I'll pay you every cent."

Why put up with this man's irresponsibility? He had not lived up to the terms of their agreement. So the senior servant hauled him off to debtor's court and he was sentenced to prison *till he should pay*, but we all know that a menial service person can't pay off debts while he sits behind bars.

There are a lot of ways of doing-in a person who treats us unfairly or doesn't live up to his or her word. A lot of good it did this man to exact revenge. It didn't get him his \$10. A lot of good our vengeful acts do us. They don't change the past; they only make us less human-less than what we were meant to be.

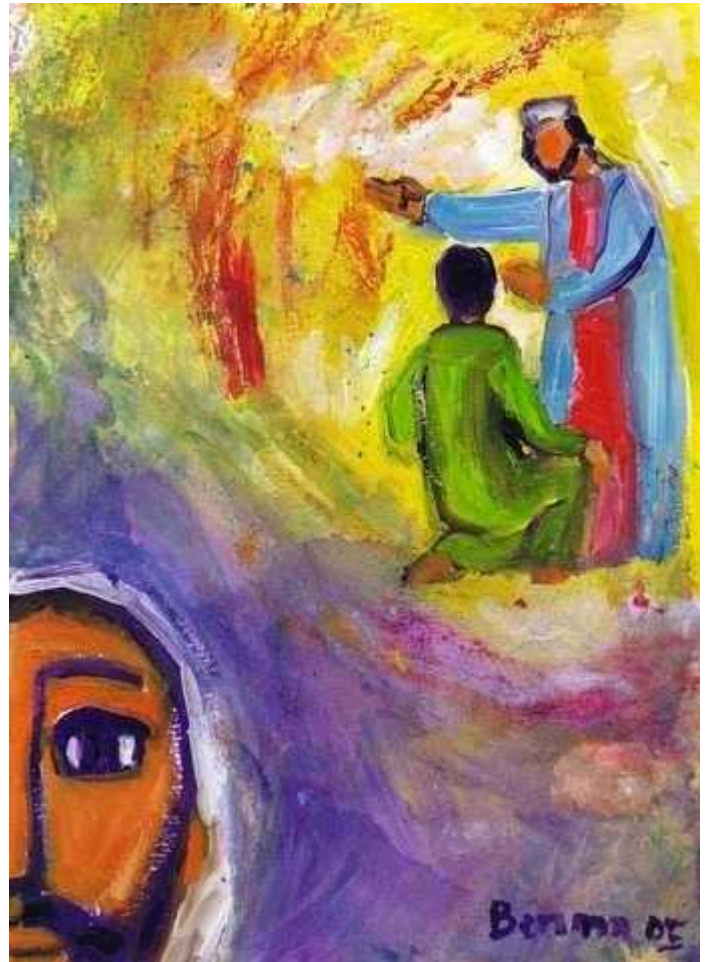
I have complaints with this fellow's behavior on the basis of just this much information, but we know more. We know the whole story.

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?'

"Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.' Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

"At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.



"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart"

(Matthew 18:21-35).

We know that this man himself had had an enormous debt, something like \$100,000. He'd been in terribly hot water. He'd been about to be sold as were his spouse and children and all their possessions so the master could get what he could out of a bad situation.

He himself had fallen to the floor begging, pleading, and promising the master things he never could have lived up to. If his impatience with the under-servant was related to this begging—and it may well have been—it goes to show that we can seldom abide in other people the things we dislike about ourselves even if it is many times worse in the self than in the other person. If the senior servant had spent years in prison for his own debt we might halfway understand his harshness toward the man who owed him a pittance. God, save us from reformed smokers. You know the attitude: *I paid the price, so you must, too*. But he hadn't paid. He'd been forgiven!

It happens all the time, my friends. We human beings are so prone to expect mercy for ourselves. We believe we deserve it but think other persons don't.

What a tragedy that the under-servant was cast into debtor's prison for \$10. But what a deeper tragedy is expressed in the unforgiving man's blinding self-absorption and hostility toward what was so much a part of himself in others. It is hard to believe people this unjust can be blind to what they are doing. Selfishness blinds people to the nature of vengeance. There are reasons the state doesn't let us take care of personal justice. We have an impartial judge and/or a jury of our peers to execute justice for us because what we would choose to do would usually be, in reality, outrageous vengeance.

The point of the gospel story is that our refusal or inability to forgive others their sins against us is nothing short of absurd, when we are the recipients of so much grace. We are all in need of forgiveness from God and from each other. And we have all received much forgiveness from God and many others throughout our lives. As we have received, so we are to give; and we have received great mercy from the Lord. We are forgiven!

Every time we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," we are

saying, "God, treat me the way I'm treating others. Show me the mercy I show them." We have this reminder of our need to share what we have received and to see that others enjoy what we enjoy.

Until we forgive even the most horrible offenses against us, we are not free. We are not whole. We are permitting something to limit or control us, which does not have to limit or control us. Until we forgive we are the loser.

I know that I'm talking some big time stuff here. I know some of you are victims of sexual assault or character assault; gossip that cost you jobs, church positions, or relationships. Perhaps even murder has touched your family.

Forgiveness isn't letting people off the hook. We may still need to report behaviors to appropriate authorities. We may still need to take legal action. We may need to withhold our trust until it has been earned back. We must have enough sense not to trust someone who's stolen us blind, molested us or our children, defamed our character or our soul. We are to be harmless as doves, but we are also to be wise as serpents, and I'm afraid we too often forget the "wise as serpents" part.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are two different things. We reconcile when the other person is repentant and, when over time, trust is rebuilt. Reconciliation is an ideal, worthy goal. But it is not necessary.

It is for the sake of our souls and psyches that we must learn to forgive. It is a choice to refrain from vengeance of any kind. It is a moral decision, not one based on feelings. I have to pray for grace to truly forgive. I have to confess to God that what I might really like to do is "get even." I have to practice saying out loud "I forgive you." We may say this to the person who's offended us or we may say it only in our mind. I have found that saying the words melts a knot inside myself and allows tears and love to flow again. Being forgiven by me may change another person's behavior or attitude but that possible shift is not my responsibility. Forgiveness means I accept the fact that I cannot change the past and I move on. Forgiveness means that God will help me refuse to let my life be ruined by someone else's thoughtless, careless or evil act. ▽



Fearless Faith—Believing Without Fear

European KINSHIP Meeting

August 30 to September 3

Odenwald – Germany

Register at: <http://sdakinship.org/nl/ekmmain/ekm2012.html>.



SDA Kinship Meeting in Australia

By David Coltheart

Twenty-two Kinship members recently attended a daylong meeting which included the preview screening of *Seventh-Gay Adventists*. We came from Cooranbong, Sydney, Queensland, Melbourne, and the Sunshine Coast for fellowship and worship at the Morisset Multi-Purpose Centre on Sabbath morning, 31 March. Some participants were parents and friends of LGBTI Adventists. We were also privileged to welcome other LGBTI Christians from the Newcastle area who joined us for the day.

Sarah, a friend of SDA Kinship, led the group in singing. In a sharing circle many attendees shared their experiences in what became a time of joyful affirmation, thanksgiving, and praise.

Our discussion focused on worship styles in the Bible. Ross explained sanctuary services, first in the wilderness of Sinai, and later in the temple in Jerusalem. They emphasized the separation of people from God. Lepers and other ritually unclean people were banished outside the camp; Gentiles were on the outer edge; women remained in the courtyard designated for them; Jewish men could only enter certain courtyards while only priests could enter the Holy Place. The high priest alone could enter the Most Holy Place and only on that day of the year. We examined examples of the laws and ceremonies listed in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy and saw how these laws reinforced the concept of separation. The prohibitions of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 fit within that category. Israel itself was to be separate from all other nations.

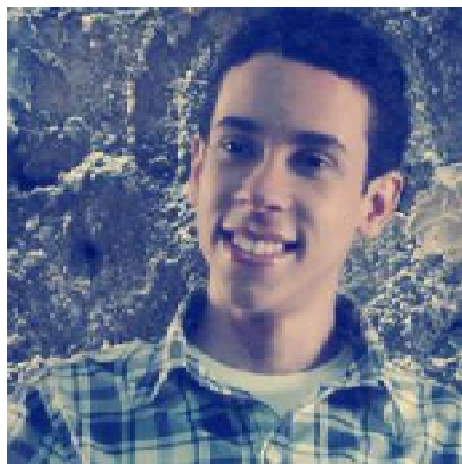
We talked about a different model that is presented in the New Testament. There the wall of separation has been broken down. Everyone is equal in God's eyes and has unlimited access to God through Jesus Christ. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise"



(Galatians 3:28, 29). We concluded our study by looking at the story of the woman who touched Jesus' robe (Luke 8:40-48). This story demonstrates that Jesus sought out the outcasts, including prostitutes, tax collectors, Gentiles, and the ritually impure. Jesus suffered "outside the city gate" so that we can "go to Him outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:12,13). Even though gays and lesbians may be relegated to the same status as outcasts, banished "outside the camp," they are the very ones Jesus seeks and accepts today. He comes to us "outside the gate."

The group gathered for a potluck lunch featuring haystacks (an American tradition imported into Australian Adventism), followed by chocolate cake and ice cream.

The afternoon screening of *Seventh-Gay Adventists*, although supported by SDA Kinship, was not strictly a Kinship event, but rather an unofficial part of the annual Manifest Creative Arts Festival sponsored by nearby Avondale College. Over 160 people attended the free screening, and the majority of those stayed for the question and answer period with Daneen Akers and Stephen Eyer, the husband-and-wife team who produced the movie. The day ended with soup and buns provided by SDA Kinship for everyone who wanted to stay and talk. ▽



Elvys Pereira

Well, I'm still a young boy, 19 years old. I live in Brazil, Northeast Brazilian, with all the beaches, hot seasons, and beautiful people. I was born here, and grew up in a conservative Pentecostal family. My sister and I were baptized as Seventh-day Adventists in 2010. I had a nice childhood with friends and a great back yard. I attended the same school for fourteen years. There, I was both popular and bullied continually. Somehow I am fine today. I study English literature in collage and work at the university library. The people here are wonderful.

I learned photography from my father and love it. I upload many of the pictures I take onto Facebook, and have received good feedback. I also love cooking, hanging out, and singing. I'm an active young boy! My favorite color is blue. I like R&B music. My favorite movies are *War of the Worlds*, *The Forgotten*,

Signs, *Precious*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Martian Child*, *Take Shelter*, *The Fourth Kind*, *Prayers for Bobby*, and *The Dream Boy*. I love all the books Dan Brown writes. At the moment I am reading *Gone for Good* and *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*. I am vegan.

I found Kinship on the internet. I typed in "Ellen White – homosexuality" and there you were, on the top of the list! That's one of the nice things that happened earlier this year. I had been hurt inside and was thinking of leaving the church. The Kinship newsletter encourages me strongly to keep on. I have. Thank you!

I live a pretty normal life. I transferred my membership to the Glendale City Church and now feel religiously safe. I am not out to anyone in my family, except my very supportive sister. I believe that God is love, so loving and caring for others is the most important thing in my spiritual life.

I think the way to make things better is for us to "raise up our flag"!

Terry Rice

I was born in San Francisco, California. While I spent a little time in Los Angeles, most of my childhood years were in the Adventist college subculture where my dad taught at Southern College in Tennessee. We moved to Beaumont, Texas, where I excelled in public high school choir. When my parents divorced, my mother and I went back to Tennessee, where I attended Southern Adventist University. Since then I've lived a well-traveled life. I spent at least three years each in central Florida; Berrien Springs, Michigan; and Fresno, California. I am now in my third year in Walla Walla, Washington. Oh, I also had a one-year adventure in Beijing, China, and Taipei, Taiwan. From there I returned to San Francisco where I started the process of "coming out." I now have my own house in Walla Walla with a number of active ministries to keep my single life busy and fun.

I work full-time as a chaplain at Walla Walla Community Hospice. I am Director of Church Relations for Kinship. I sketch and paint, play guitar and racquetball, back pack and camp, snow ski, pray, host friends at my home, garden, read the Bible, sing in choirs, play piano, and love to travel!

My favorite color is blue. My favorite music includes contemporary worship songs, Celtic, classical, bluegrass, rock 'n' roll, and relaxing music. My favorite foods are Indian curry and rice. My mother and grandmother always made this dish for my birthday.

While visiting the spiritual community, "Second Wind," I learned about Kinship from Obed and Mar-

cos. They invited me to join this community. That was the year I came out and was wondering how God would use me in ministry. I had graduated from the Andrews University Seminary and knew my options would be limited in the church. Kinship has allowed me to remain true to my integrity and convictions. You have introduced me to a wonderful community of people who are now my extended family.

I like to stay active. My social life consists of having dependable straight church friends, "kinship" gay friends (not just SDA Kinship), and gay-straight allied friends. As a single man, I find fulfillment in having many friends whom I can support and whom I can call on for support, love, and belonging.



The most important thing about my spiritual journey is to follow a path that increases my faith in God and makes a difference in the lives of those who share similar challenges. I desire to catalyze a community of many divergent backgrounds in the name of love and friendship.



Terry Phillips

I was born in Puyallup, Washington, July 6, 1949. My Dad was a career military man in the Army. Yes, I am an "army brat"! As a kid I lived in San Pedro, California; Munich, Germany; Seaside, California; Kaiserslautern, Germany; and Columbus, Georgia. I finished my last two years of high school at Georgia-Cumberland Academy and just celebrated my 45th class reunion there.

I am the fourth of six siblings. I enjoyed my youth but knew from before grade school that I was different. I had no idea what it was till junior high school when I discovered the name that identified me as "homosexual." How cruel it was to be pegged as a homosexual, while not having chosen to be one. I was always chosen last to participate in grade-school and high-school physical education events. I was kind of a klutz: uncoordinated, and with low self-esteem. The one bright spot for me was being able to participate in choral groups where I could use my talent as a singer. In academy I was actually chosen to be in the advanced choral group, as well as in college and beyond.

Every Week of Prayer in academy found me up front crying my eyes out as I asked God to take away my sexual orientation, make me straight, and help me to be attracted to girls. I dated girls because that was the thing to do to cover up my real desires.

I went to Pacific Union College (with Taylor Ruhl and others who are now Kinship members) and then to Southern Missionary College where I finished a two-year degree in nursing. I worked a year in surgery before being enrolling in the Madison Hospital School of Anesthesia. There are a few of us in Kinship who are anesthetists.

I have been "passing gas" for almost 40 years now. Anesthetic gases, that is. I've worked in Nashville, Tennessee; McMinnville, Oregon; Malawi, Africa, as a missionary at Malamulo Mission Hospital; Guam, U.S.A., at the Guam Adventist Clinic; Portland, Oregon; Newport, Washington; and finally, White Salmon, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, for the last nine years. Since coming out nine years ago, I have enjoyed my profession. Before coming out I was burned out and dying, living in the closet all those years. Life is wonderful now!

I love to sing in choral groups. For the last seven years, I've been singing with the Portland Gay Men's Chorus with several Kinship members. I enjoy getting to know my sweetheart and all about him. Stephen is a wonderful man who I met on *Match.com*. Never give up, my friends! I enjoy traveling and seeing new places, cruises, road trips, and visiting family and friends.

My favorite color is yellow. It is bright and cheery, and lifts my spirits, as well as those around me. I love the gay choral movement. There are amazing choral works for all kinds of occasions, both entertaining and uplifting. My favorite movie is *Pay it Forward*. I've been blessed over the years and have chosen to be a giver and uplifter by paying it back over and over in real life. My favorite book is *Me* by Ricky Martin. His story is inspirational and candid. We as gay men can all identify on one level or another with his story and life, albeit not as celebrated or famous. I enjoy dining on vegetarian Mexican, Italian, Indian, Thai, and Chinese food.

When my gay son, Sid, came out of his closet in 1998, my now-former wife, Kathy, became involved with Carrol Grady in her ministry, *Someone to Talk To*. They decided to take their ministry to the General Conference session in Toronto, Canada, and had a booth there. Several gay men assisted them and Kathy fell in love with them. She discovered that they were members of SDA Kinship and they invited us to attend Kinship Kampmeeting as the supportive straight parents of a gay son. Soooooo, we did. It was wonderful for me to be a part of the group, but *not* out as gay. I loved the music and stories and the camaraderie of the group.

Our fourth Kampmeeting was in Vermont. We had been enjoying a wonderful week until Thursday afternoon; a couple presented a talk and discussion on affirmation. After hearing their stories and filling out the survey they shared, it became quite clear to me that now was my time to kick my closet door down. How liberating that was for me. The sixty gay and lesbian Kinship members there were loving and accepting of both of us. It was a moment in time that will never be forgotten and is relived in my mind over and over again.

SDA Kinship became closer family to me and con-

tinued to be a blessing and friend to Kathy as we both continued to attend Kinship Kampmeetings. Lots of encouragement from Kinship friends helped my transition to be smooth and healthy. In time, Kathy found her Jim, and brought him to the San Francisco and Seattle Kampmeetings.

My journey has taken me to the place I am today. I'm not Adventist any more. Metropolitan Community Church fills the void that the Adventist church used to fill. I enjoyed Kampmeeting in California last year but don't expect to be there this year. I am too busy working and being involved with the Gay and Lesbian Choral Festival in Denver this year.

My life has been blessed with the addition of a very fine man to love, Stephen. *Match.com* introduced me to him in early January and we have been together ever since. We are compatible and loving and find that we are just made for each other in every way! Way to go, *Match.com*! Yay!

We have enjoyed trips to Palm Springs and a recent trip to Las Vegas for me to do some continuing education. While there, I arranged for a nice dinner at the Top of the World restaurant at the Stratosphere Hotel. As the eatery rotated 360 degrees and we enjoyed the fabulous sites of the city and surrounding mountains, the sun went down and the lights twinkled on. The view was breathtaking and oh-so-romantic. I had bought a card that said "Marriage" on the front cover as well as a lovely message. I asked Stephen to read the message but not open the card. I said it was for a gay couple that was getting married. I asked him if he agreed with the message. Stephen went on at length about how definitely true the message was and that if he ever married he would practice the qualities mentioned on the card. Soooooo, I asked him to open the card and read more. Inside I had written that I agreed with the card's sentiments and believed he would also. I

wrote him how much I loved him and asked him to marry me. I wrote a YES and a NO and asked him to circle his answer and hand me back the card. Through my tears of joy I saw YES circled and Stephen sitting opposite me with the biggest smile ever.

Washington State passed gay marriage legislation recently. In June we are legal to marry. We have planned an August 25 wedding in Vancouver/Portland to celebrate our love and commitment to each other and are inviting all our friends and loved ones to attend. You are my Kinship family and all are welcome to come and celebrate with us if you can make it to the Northwest at that time. Let me know if you can come. Call me at 971-221-4800 or email me at terryjphillips@earthlink.net and let me know how many to plan for.

Stephen has worked as an Operations Agent for Southwest Airlines for ten years. I see many free flights on Southwest Airlines in my future. ☺

The most important thing for me on my spiritual journey is to stay connected with God in my own unique way. I assured Kathy's dad, a few weeks before he passed away in his sleep, that God and I are still good friends. My journey may not look the same as many of yours who remain in the church. I choose not to be judged by the church and live a good life separate from it. I am blest in so many ways as a result. I don't judge you who choose to stay and hope for a better day. Perhaps in staying you will be able to help others who need their eyes opened and may need to come out of their closets as well. I look forward to keeping in touch with many of my Kinship friends over the years ahead. Please come for a visit to God's country in the Pacific Northwest. I do want you all to meet Stephen someday. You will love him, too. ▽

**Information and
Registration at
www.sdakinship.org**



UK Kinship members speak up about same-sex marriage

The British government is considering same-sex marriage for England and Wales this year, and some Kinship members have been sharing their thoughts. The proposal will introduce a civil marriage option so that LGBT citizens can have the same rights and social privileges that heterosexual citizens have. Before introducing this new policy, however, the government has also opened up a survey that members of the public can answer to help the government understand how ordinary people feel about the policy details. Kinship members have been taking action.



In March, the Kinship board learned about statements against marriage equality that local church administrators have made to the government in the church's name. Some British members worked together to write a formal response. Representatives of the SDA Kinship board signed our statement, and a local member delivered it to the British Union Conference in April. SDA Kinship doesn't lobby national governments, however; so individual members have been responding to the British government's survey as private citizens.

Members in the UK and around the world have different convictions about relationships and marriage. One UK resident, originally from continental Europe, believes that churches should not have any legal authority over marriage, whether for heterosexuals or for LGBT people. Another respondent wrote that churches should not be forced to perform marriages that conflict with their beliefs, but also should not interfere with secular policies. Kinship has no official policy on civil marriage and respects members' rights to hold their own opinions on this subject. Members agree that it's important for LGBT people to speak up when they can and not allow the church to forget about us.

The UK consultation will close on June 14, 2012. Until then, British citizens can respond to the government's questions at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/equal-civil-marriage/>.

So what do *you* think? Are you married now? Would you seek civil marriage if it were available where you live? Share your views with other members in the SDA Kinship International Facebook group, or write a note to the *Connection* editor, Catherine (connectioneditor@sdakinship.org). ▽

Generosity: Share your Stories

"True generosity is not an occasional gesture to the poor and needy; it is a state of being which should permanently reside in the spirit of each person."

—Mercedes Neal

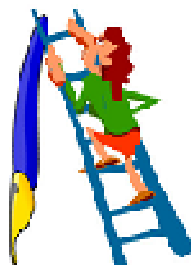
At a dinner last month, one of my friends asked me, "What was the most profound experience of generosity you've ever had?" Lots of scenarios flashed through my mind as I thought. One came from a short trip that I took with two close friends four years ago. One afternoon we sat on the porch and talked about our lives, sharing stories and asking silly questions. Another scene came from the end of my internship, when I was getting ready to move back home and Region 2 threw a goodbye party for me. I was overwhelmed with love and friendship that day.

As my friends and I went round the table sharing our experiences of generosity, I realized that none of our memories had much at all to do with money. All of the stories were about our relationships with people we loved and causes that we were passionate about. It was enough to fill your heart.

But if you only read the newspapers, you might get the idea that generosity's all about money. The billion-dollar endowments are what get headline attention. Massive foundations and philanthropists get buildings and scholarships named after them. All of that has its place; but the root of development and fundraising is people connecting with other people, matching each of our desires to help with places and ways to serve and the resources we need to get things done.

All of us, regardless of our economic status, can live every day with a generous heart, and I bet if you sat for a little while you could tell me a few generosity stories of your own.

I'd love to hear your stories: What was the most generous experience you can remember? What inspires gratitude in you? Next time I'd like to share some of your best stories. Please email your memories and thoughts to the Director-at-large, Keisha McKenzie (development@sdakinship.org). ▽





In Memoriam *Richard Hoffman*

Richard Hoffman at 1984 Kinship Kampmeeting

Richard Hoffman and I both lived in Chicago, but we first met in Arizona at Kinship's first Kampmeeting in 1980. We remained friends until his death on September 27, 2011, after a year's battle with cancer. He was 69.

Richard was a graduate of the Chicago's School of the Art Institute with a four-year degree in design. In both his career and his personal life, he was the kind of person who created opportunities and made things happen, often as an independent contractor or consultant. Over the years he designed products from wall-paper and coffee cups in his own beautiful home where he spent his last years on a quiet natural lake in Michigan. There he bought a restaurant that he named after his mother and operated for a decade. At the time of his death he was working on several small inventions, shepherding them through the patent process.

Richard attended several Kinship Kampmeetings. In 1984 he suggested having an "Everyone's Birthday Party" at dinner time. With his usual flair, he decorated the place with materials he'd brought from home. Some attendees will remember the hand-painted aprons he offered at the Bizarre Bazaar.

Richard Hoffman was an only child, the son of staunch Seventh-day Adventist parents, and is survived by no known relatives. He leaves Morris behind, a stray cat he befriended when she gave birth to kittens on his property. Richard rigged up a small heated "cathouse" outside his front door for Morris' comfort in the winter. He also leaves a few friends who will remember him as one of the kindest, most thoughtful, and generous person they've known —illustrations of which I could recount with numerous stories. His ashes will be buried this month in his parents' graves.

If you'd like to honor kindness and generosity in Richard's name, it could be done (without the requirement of a donation) by sending a personal note of thanks to Richard's hospice nurse: Nancy Preston, c/o Hospice At Home, 4025 Health Park Lane, St. Joseph, Missouri 49085. Hospice workers cannot be thanked enough, and Nancy was great. Of course, if you insist, a tax-deductible donation to the hospice could be sent separately.

Larry Hallock ▽



Busting Bad Behaviors

©Arlene R. Taylor PhD

Entering the lobby, I walked right into high drama. The principle actor was a slim young woman who was fairly vibrating with emotion. "That's insulting, demeaning, sexist, racist, and you *will* pay for it!" she screamed, her long pony tail racing in circles.

Noticing me, individuals in the group began melting away until only the drama queen was left. Hands on her hips, ponytail still swinging, she glared in my direction and fairly spat out the words: "I expect you're going to put me down, too!" When I remained silent she continued, "Did you hear what that b_____ said to me? Did you?"

I shook my head. Negative.

"Well! She told me to get my s_____ together! That's what!"

I refrained from smiling. It was difficult, however, based on the performance I'd just witnessed.

"If she'd said that to you, what would you have done?" the young woman demanded, staring at me expectantly.

"I don't know what triggered her comment," I responded. "At this stage of my growth and development, however, I'd probably try to figure out what I could learn from it before I *did* anything."

"You are pathetic!" was her response, although her posture relaxed ever so slightly and her hands fell from her hips. "What could I possibly *learn* from it?"

"What would have been your response if the comment had been 'Grow up,' or 'Get your life together?'" I countered.

"Easy," the young woman replied. "I'd just have flipped her the bird and told her that I am grown up!"

"And?" I persisted.

"I'd have said that I am getting my life together—as soon as I figure out how to do that, I suppose."

"She didn't say either of those things," I said. "Rather, she gave you a metaphor, which certainly got your attention." *No matter that the language was rather primitive*, I thought. Walking over to a comfortable chair, I removed my coat, sat down, and pointed to a nearby chair. The young woman strolled over nonchalantly and slumped into it.

"She got my attention, that's for sure," she said.

"What's a metaphor?"

"A metaphor is a type of story that can help people better understand a specific situation in their lives. Here's an example." The young woman leaned forward in her chair.



"Scruffy is a rather large, somewhat unkempt, and very untrained hound that lives down the block from me. His owners, for whatever reason, have devoted little if any time and energy to teaching the hound how to be a valued member of society. Consequently, this rather lovably pooch runs wild in his corner of the world. He flattens freshly planted flowers, scratches paint off fences and doors, pees on gate posts, digs holes in gardens, and poops anywhere and everywhere without regard to where people walk or sit. He expects others to clean up his messes and generally is regarded as an unmitigated neighborhood nuisance."

The young woman actually smiled. "I can just picture that," she said. "Why doesn't someone just bust the hound or call the pound?"

It was my turn to laugh. "How might this metaphor apply to your life?" I asked.

She shrugged, rolling her large dark eyes expressively. "I'm sure and certain you're about to tell me!" she said.

"Only if you want to hear my brain's perspective," I replied.

She shrugged. I took that as a go-ahead.

"Compare yourself to Scruffy," I suggested. "Is there any possibility that you've been pooping out bad behaviors all over your corner of the world and expecting others to pick up after you? Any chance your bad behaviors have invaded the boundaries of others and maybe even interfered with their recovery? I doubt they have been resulting in positive outcomes for you."

The young woman was staring at the floor. When she finally looked up, tears glistened in her dark eyes. "Okay, I get it," she said, but only because of your meta, meta something."

"Metaphor," I repeated.

"But I still don't like being told to get my..." I held up my hand, signaling that I remembered.

"Whenever another brain shares its opinion, you always have a choice," I said. "You can choose to jump to conclusions, take it personally, and over-

react. Or you can realize it's just that brain's opinion. You can pick it up and run with it or not, learn from it or not."

"Oh, oh," she said. "That's exactly what I did, isn't it? I assumed she was intending to put me down." I nodded. "Then I took it personally and decided she hates me." I nodded again. "And then," she said, sighing, "I might have over-reacted—just a tad." Her face crinkled into a beautiful smile. "Instead of biting her head off I could have busted my own bad behavior." We both burst out laughing.

"Good on you, as they say down under. That's how you start raising your EQ (Emotional Intelligence). Next time, in a similar situation," I said, "you will respond more effectively."

"Scruffy is in training," she said, adding after a moment of silence, "Were you serious about my performance being Oscar-winning?"

"If Oscars were awarded for bad behaviors that

result in negative consequences, you bet," I said, thinking to myself, *Sometimes they may be.*

"I've always dreamed of being a drama coach," she said wistfully.

"Then go for it," I replied. "Harness some of that innate ability and put it to good use. If your brain can perceive it, you can achieve it!"

Jumping up she pulled me out of the chair, threw her arms around me, and lifted me clear off the floor. *Goodness! The woman was strong!* Setting me down, she jogged across the lobby and headed down the long corridor, her pony tail making those interesting circles.

Her words drifted back to my ears. "Drama coach. Yes! I can do that!" These words were followed by, "No more pooping bad behaviors. Bust them instead!"

It took me a full two minutes to stop laughing. ▽



As you know, the film premiered at the Miami Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. I truly had no idea what to expect. I had heard feedback from some in the art world that the film was too gentle towards the church, an often intolerant institution, for the festival world. This genre usually has more rancor. But that did not turn out to be true. The audience of over 120 responded very well to the film, even to the Adventist humor moments (go haystacks and William Miller!). They were moved by the main subjects spiritual journeys and found much to identify with in the struggle to find a spiritual home. Marcos and Obed, a couple featured in the film came with me to the premiere, which the audience appreciated. And, most importantly for me, the hopeful tone of the film resonated well in Miami. The first comment during the Q & A portion was from someone who had clearly shed tears during the screening and said he'd been raised Pentecostal but had long left the church. "I can't thank you enough for the work you are doing," he said, "I identified with so much of what these film subjects went through, and I find it so hopeful to know that other churches are starting to dialogue about how reconciliation can happen."

As for Lincoln, I couldn't be in two places at once, but Stephen was there along with David and Colin, another couple featured in the film. David went to Union College and has many family ties to the area, and this was definitely a hometown screening. The theater was packed with over 200 people--and on the Sunday before finals. As Stephen described this screening for me, I got tears and chills as he told me how the entire crowd had given David and Colin a heartfelt standing ovation at the end. David was clearly touched. He hadn't been back to Lincoln since he came out, and he was coming back this time as an openly gay man featured in a film about being gay and Adventist. But his devotion to God, his family, and his faith connected with the audience. As one Facebook comment said, "David and Colin's courage, bravery, and love for God and each other was beautiful to witness." The discussion went on for over an hour, and it felt like one of those transforming spiritual moments for a community when a new way of talking about something became possible.

One of my favorite comments was from an Adventist who said she'd been very hesitant about coming to see the film. She was afraid there would be a lot of church-bashing, but she said she left feeling uplifted and inspired to help people and find common ground. Several sent notes alluding to an idea that had been discussed that the theater had become a sanctuary, a sacred space.

It's all incredibly affirming for us that somehow the goals of the film are being accomplished—thoughtful, transforming conversations are being sparked through the lens of real stories. I know that can only have happened with a little help from the One upstairs.

Daneen Akers ▽

Health Tips of the Month

Stand Up!

If you spend most of your time sitting, say at the office all day, then lounging on the sofa all evening—can exercise make up for it? Not really, according to new Australian research. A recent study followed more than 200,000 adults age 45 and older for three years. Those who sat 11 or more hours per day were 40% more likely to die than people who sat fewer than 4 hours a day. It gets worse: Even if they exercised *after* 11 hours of sitting, the risks were the same. “In people who do a similar amount of physical activity, those who sit less will have a lower risk of dying compared to those who sit more,” says Hidde Van Der Ploeg, PhD, senior research fellow at the University of Sydney School of Public Health. Physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week, as recommended by the World Health Organization, remains the gold standard. That works out to about 21 minutes of exercise per day—the equivalent of a half-hour sitcom, minus the commercials. If you are already doing that much (or more) exercise, that’s great, but don’t stop there. “What you do in the remaining approximately 15 hours of the waking day is crucial,” Van Der Ploeg says. His advice is to look for opportunities to add more movement throughout your day. “If you’re sitting much of that time, replace some of it with standing, or even some more walking or other physical activities,” Van Der Ploeg says.



Wheat and Your Belly



When we asked cardiologist William Davis, M.D., what the worst food for your heart is, he didn’t spend long thinking. His answer: Wheat. Then he told us that it’s also the worst food for your belly. In fact, because of this, he’s actually coined a new term. “I call it wheat belly, though I could have just as easily called this condition pretzel brain or bagel bowel or biscuit face since there’s not an organ system unaffected by wheat,” says Dr. Davis, author of the new book, *Lose the Wheat, Lose the Weight*. “But wheat’s impact on the waistline is its most visible characteristic.”

If you’re carrying around excess belly flab, Dr. Davis’ advice is clear: Give up the wheat. While that may sound drastic, he says that it doesn’t mean never eating pizza, cookies, and cheesecake again. And that when you kick the wheat out of your diet, you actually quit craving wheat-filled foods. Just how powerful is this wheat-free approach? “When my patients gave up wheat, they lost an average of 26.7 pounds each,” says Dr. Davis. This isn’t an isolated finding: According to a Mayo Clinic and University of Iowa study, test subjects lost an average of 27.5 pounds each on a wheat-free diet.

Of course, you’re probably wondering: Why is wheat so bad for my waistline? The answer is simple: Because it’s not really wheat anymore, says Dr. Davis. He explains that in the 1960s, a small group of scientists in Mexico set out to make wheat easier to grow and more pest-resistant. That was good for the farmers, but bad for your health and your weight. The reason, according to Dr. Davis: Genetic engineering transformed wheat into a super carbohydrate that wreaks havoc on your body and makes you fat. And yes, says Dr. Davis, this even applies to the so-called “healthy” whole wheat that nutritionists say you should eat.

In Dr. Davis’ new book, *Lose the Wheat, Lose the Weight*, you’ll learn the history of how wheat became the single-worst food for your belly. More importantly, you’ll discover all of the health benefits that go along with dropping it from your diet. Dr. Davis says you’ll slash your cholesterol, blood sugar, and triglycerides, as well as other markers of heart disease risk—such as inflammation. Plus, you’ll get his complete guide to eating a wheat-free diet, which includes dozens of delicious recipes. It’s truly a cardiologist-approved eating plan. ▽

You are Invited to

Book and the Beach

Mini-Kampmeeting

Kinship at the Ocean! – September 20-23, 2012



With our usual focus on discussions, worship, play, and great food, we've added a group dolphin watch to our Friday field trip day!

This year we are expanding our discussion options to cover not just *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives* but *A Wind in the Door*, Isaiah, James, and the anti-clobber texts.

Book and the Beach is focused on creating a time and place for us to talk with each other. There will also be morning worships, time to sing, optional field trips to local places of interest, outlet shopping, and comfortable chairs in which to listen and share your thoughts.

Our beach house is located across the street from the ocean. Our third floor deck looks out onto waves, sail boats, and spectacular sunrises. Our rooms are airy and comfortable. Most of them have their own bathrooms. The food is homemade with great "reviews". We eat together at a tile-covered table and have our meetings in a room full of sunlight. For those with differing abilities and energy levels we have an elevator. For those with lots of sand on their feet we have outdoor showers. We have a hot tub in the back yard and hear rumors that there will be a swimming pool in place then.

Where:

Old Oregon Inlet Road
Nags Head, NC 27959

Costs:

\$ 125 per person (includes room for 3 nights, 3 dinners, 2 breakfasts, Sabbath lunch and Sunday brunch)
\$ 155 per person (as above PLUS the Dolphin Watch)

Payment due: On or before September 8, 2012.

Payment secures your reservation!

More information:

Email Catherine at bookandbeach@sdakinship.org

Registration: <http://sdakinship.org/book-and-the-beach-mini-kampmeeting/the-book-a-the-beach.html>



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Rehoboth – april 28, 2012

