Beginnings
Peace in 2009
On Being Right?
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 SDA 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.)

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA or visit SDA Kinship’s website at: www.sdakinship.org.
From the Editor

I wish you a Happy New Year. I don’t wish you New Year’s resolutions. I don’t believe in them. I have come to believe that all of these well-intentioned plans for what we will miraculously do for the next twelve-month period are designed to increase both procrastination and weight gain, encourage frustration, tempt us to abuse some substance or another, and stress our relational and spiritual life.

I do believe in hope. I also believe in one-day-at-a-time, even though sometimes that’s a bit too long a time period for me to focus when I need to make some changes. I believe in God. I have seen too many changes in my life happen because Someone other than me was in control. And I believe in miracles. In fact, as I am typing tonight, I just skimmed the articles in this issue, realizing every single one of them is, in some way, about a miracle.

I have no idea what the next fifty-two weeks will bring. For that favor, I am grateful. I can barely handle packing for tomorrow’s trip. What I am sure of is that more of you than I will ever know will become inspired and do things that are normally beyond your power to accomplish. I know that in times too dark for normal beings many of you will encourage laughter, clarity, or action. I know that you will find love in the midst of oppression and bias. I know you will raise children who are less judgmental than I am. I know you will care for elders who may not understand you. I know that you will choose to light a candle rather than curse the darkness.

I know these things, not because I have the gift of prophecy but because I have the gift of having had contact with so many of you; because I have the gift of knowing you are already doing these things. So for this New Year I do not wish for you resolutions. I wish for you hope. I wish for you love. I wish for you courage and laughter and persistence. I wish for your safety on dangerous roads. I wish for you miracles. And, either here or in Heaven, I look forward to hearing your stories.

Take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine

Kampmeeting – Naveen Jonathan

The Kampmeeting 2009 Committee has announced the rates for Kinship’s annual signature event to be held next July in Seattle, Washington. Double occupancy, the most popular option, is $500 per person, which includes lodging and meals for the entire four-day Kinship Kampmeeting. Complete rate information may be found online at http://sdakinship.org/km2009.htm as well as in the chart shown below.

Kinship’s 30th Kampmeeting will be held July 15-19, 2009, at the Talaris Conference Center in Seattle, the solitude of a Northwest retreat with the convenience of an urban location. Application forms will be available early in 2009.

Women & Children First, the Kinship Women’s annual two-day retreat, is scheduled for July 13-14, 2009, in a location near Talaris. For questions and other information, please feel free to contact Kampmeeting Coordinator Naveen Jonathan at kampmeeting@sdakinship.org.

KAMPMEETING RATES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Adult # Per Room</th>
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Commuter Rate: $75

| Lunch Only | $50/day |
| Dinner Only| $56/day |
| Lunch & Dinner | $68/day |
| All Three Meals | $75/day |
| Sabbath Dinner Only | $40 |

CHILDREN AGES 0-4: No Charge

CHILDREN AGES 5-16:

| Lunch Only | $12/day |
| Dinner Only| $18/day |
| Lunch & Dinner | $30/day |
| All Three Meals | $37/day |
| Sabbath Dinner Only | $18 |

Give yourself a great gift this year. January is a great time to sign up for Kampmeeting Klub if you have not done so already. This is the easiest, most painless way to assure that you will have the funds on hand to attend Kampmeeting 2009.

Here’s how it works: If you sign up before January 31, 2009, you and the Kinship Office agree on the amount you want to have by June 1, 2009. Then you agree to pay 20% of that amount by credit card by the end of each month for five months. By June 1, you will have saved the full amount! Sign up for Kampmeeting Klub today at http://sdakinship.org/kampmeeting_klub.htm.
Most things in our lives begin when we aren't looking and indeed have no idea they have even begun. My sister began praying for her daughter's husband (OK, they're a bit old-fashioned about the gender!) as soon as her child was born.

Do you know when the decision about your major in school or your career began? Maybe you think you majored in German because your best friend was taking it, so you did and loved it. But maybe it began when you were an infant and your mother played a German lullaby album for you all the time - an album which got lost when you were two, so you didn’t consciously remember it! And that was the beginning of your love of the German language. See what I mean?

Since we really don’t know when most things began, there are probably a lot of things going on in your life right now that you aren’t aware of. When the snow is deep or the sky is gray, when you’re faced with exams or evaluations and you wonder when something excellent is going to happen, it might already have begun.

Beginnings (1)

Jeremy Brown

I worked for an AIDS service organization in Walla Walla, WA. As part of its HIV prevention efforts we had a syringe exchange program. That year there was a syringe exchange conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and I decided that it might be beneficial for me to attend. Boy, did I not know what was in store for me.

There were amazing workshops from a variety of presenters. One group that drew me to their discussion was a faith-based organization who ran a syringe exchange in the South. I wanted to make sure I got to their room in time and arrived early. Sitting at the table was this cute guy I had noticed in other seminars. He seemed somewhat reserved; but, not being a shy person myself, I ignored all the other chairs and sat right next to him. He didn’t talk. I sat there thinking, “Okay, what can I say to break the ice?” Finally I asked him for a glass of water.

What I didn’t know was at the same time Tom had been thinking, “Okay, what can I do to begin a conversation with this guy? I don’t want to seem lame. Should I ask him if he wants a drink of water? No, that is dumb… Oh, he just asked ME for a drink of water. Why don’t I have any nerve? What should I say next?” I kept looking over at him trying to catch his attention thinking of another way to break the ice because the water angle didn’t get me too far. Should I say something about the book he was reading? How about asking about some of the handouts that the group has out for us to read?

Tom was thinking, “Okay, do I want to offer to hand over some of the handouts the presenters have given us for the upcoming presentation. Nah. OH NO, now he’s had to ask me for the papers. Ugh… what an idiot! Whew, the workshop is beginning.”

Meanwhile, I was thinking, “I hope I haven’t been too forward.” Well, the presentation ended and I decided to invite him to go out with a group of us who were going to dinner on the opening night of The Laramie Project and out dancing afterwards. So I invited him to go out with us. (He later confessed that he had lined up a series of great books for the week and was enjoying spending the evenings alone reading through them.) He said YES! As we talked at the workshop and at dinner, both of us somehow, independently came to the conclusion that the other was in a relationship back home. Besides, I realized how silly my interest in him was since this was only a conference AND there were three time zones that separated us since I was in Washington state and he was in Vermont.
For the rest of the week Tom joined our group for meals, for discussions, for outings. We were never alone but had a chance to talk about experiences and ideas, about dreams and value systems. We enjoyed becoming friends. If I had thought he was single I would not have felt as comfortable just getting to know him and might have felt like I would have needed to “be someone else.”

Saturday was my last day in Minneapolis. I asked Tom if he had ever been to the Mall of America. I asked him if he wanted to go there with me. This was the first time that whole week that we were able to just hang out and talk without a horde of friends and chaperons. We walked around one floor of the ridiculously large shopping mall (they hold 5k races in the mall!) and realized we had been so engrossed in our conversation that we had lapped the floor several times and not gone into a single store. Somewhere along that multitude of commercial offerings we also grew to realize each of us was single. It felt so great to have already gotten to know this great guy, but it was also bittersweet that the conference was over. We promised to stay in touch and exchanged personal information, and we both felt an excitement that we had never experienced before.

From the first night I returned, we spoke every night on the phone and I flew out to visit him a couple of times in the lovely state of Vermont. After a year and a half of a cross-continental relationship, Tom came out to Walla Walla to attend my graduation from Walla Walla College and meet my rather large extended family. I had come out to many of my relatives but not all of them.

Tom is a great guy and he charmed my aunts. One of them asked me how I could fix him up with her daughter. This reaction gave me pause for thought. I talked to my cousin and told her that her mother wanted to get her together with Tom. The only difficulty is that he is my boyfriend. “Oh,” she said. “Well, that won’t work now, will it?” Somehow she let her mother know that Tom was already a member of the extended family but not one that would be directly connected to her.

I made the decision to move to Tom’s stomping grounds in Burlington, Vermont. I got a separate apartment (we are not like that joke about lesbians that asks, “What does a lesbian bring on a second date? A U-Haul”). We wanted the chance to get to know each other better before we began to share a house. Two years later we purchased the little place we have now and began our family: two cats and a dog. It has been eight years now. We have talks about beginning a family that includes human children…but that’s another story of beginnings.
From the beginning of our relationship, we both knew we eventually wanted to have kids together. When Elena turned thirty-two, she began hearing her biological clock ticking with intense desire for a child. Thankfully, we were then in a stable place in our relationship and in our lives.

We considered adoption but were terrified by stories of some friends who had adopted a child and then had the child taken away three years later by the biological grandparents. We did not want to take the chance of that devastation. Also, at that point gay couples were not allowed to adopt children in Colorado; to adopt, one of us would have to apply for a child as a single person with a platonic "roommate." This deception sounded like an awful way to begin a family. In addition, we both felt like we wanted to experience pregnancy, childbirth, and having a newborn baby. We also decided we wanted to use an anonymous donor to make sure there were no external persons to interfere with our happiness as a family. We wanted to have the opportunity to start fresh with a family of our own.

We both wanted to experience pregnancy, so we talked about who should go first. Although Erin is a few years older, she is also quite a procrastinator and is generally not aggressive in beginning any new adventures. Thus, we both decided that Elena should be the first to try to get pregnant. We talked with friends who had gone through the process and read lots and lots of books. Our first step was to seek out cryobanks online and to review their profiles of anonymous donors. The lists started with basic information such as height, weight, hair, and eye color. Then, it expanded to personality traits, interests, and full medical background (three generations back). Most importantly, we got to feel like we knew a little bit about each donor as we read their questionnaires that asked questions such as, "What did you like to do when you were a kid?"

Since Elena was to carry the baby, we wanted to find a donor that was as similar as possible to Erin. We narrowed our choices to five different donors, then separately reviewed and ranked each one in order of preference. Amazingly enough, when we compared our lists they were exactly the same! We had found our donor and were ready to get started!

We started off doing home inseminations ourselves, having our donor’s sample shipped on dry ice across the country and timing it all with home ovulation kits. The first time we inseminated at home, Elena soon developed a fever and threw up. We both got very excited thinking we were pregnant - but it turned out to be a horrible stomach virus. We tried three more home inseminations with no success. It was a stressful emotional roller coaster. We also soon found out that our donor’s samples were in short supply because he had stopped donating. We made the costly decision to purchase all the available supply. This is the general recommendation and we certainly didn’t want to go back to Step One, choosing a new donor. We also decided that trying to do this at home on our own was too stressful and that we needed professional assistance.

Luckily, there was a reproductive endocrinology clinic nearby that offered donor insemination (also known as intrauterine insemination). Looking back, we realize going to this clinic was a horrible experience. The first time we went to the clinic for our insemination, we were kept waiting a long time. Finally, the nurse came over to us and said, "Now don’t freak out, but are you sure you sent all your samples here? We can’t find them." Needless to say, we were in tears with worry until they finally found them. We had a total of seven inseminations at this clinic with no pregnancies. Every month was full of hope and tears and despair. We kept trying because we knew how much we wanted to be pregnant. We would have the excitement of thinking "this could be the time" and then two weeks later Elena would menstruate and we’d be devastated once again.

After two and half years of this, Elena happened to get a new job working for Kaiser Permanente. We decided to take three months off from our efforts to become pregnant while Elena adapted to her new job and our new insurance kicked in. Elena also took this time to start acupuncture treatments, which are known to help with fertility. With Elena’s new insurance, we
now had the opportunity to go to the Kaiser Permanente Reproductive Endocrinology Clinic, which was a welcomed change. The doctors there were amazing and took a great deal of care in timing the inseminations perfectly. As such, we got pregnant immediately on the very first try! The pregnancy was a wonderful experience and our beloved Chloe Sage was born December 25, 2005.

When Chloe turned one year old, we started talking about preparing for a second child. Since the first one had taken 2 1/2 years, we wanted to get started again soon. This time, it was Erin's turn to get pregnant! We still had six samples left from our original donor; rather than trying to find a new donor similar to Elena, we decided that we wanted to use the same donor for both children. Even though the donor is remarkably similar to Erin, Elena decided that having a "super Erin" baby would be downright wonderful!

We returned to the Kaiser Permanente Reproductive Endocrinologists to start the process again. Because Erin was 35, she had to go through additional medical tests and met with a geneticist to discuss possible age-related complications. The doctors concluded that Erin had evidence of "decreased ovarian function" and said that her chance of getting pregnant was "as low as 5 to 10 percent." Elena knew how ridiculous these warnings often are and said confidently, "Don't listen to them!"

The first insemination (timed to Erin's cycle) was a few months later and just happened to fall in the middle of a planned family ski vacation with Elena's family at Keystone, Colorado (about two hours outside of Denver). We ended up getting up bright and early to enjoy a fun road trip back to Denver to the clinic where Erin was inseminated. We then turned around and drove back up to the mountains - where we both enjoyed a delightful day of light skiing! It was awesome! And, amazingly enough, Erin got pregnant this first time! Nine months later, on October 30, 2007, our beautiful second daughter, Tegan Skye, was born.

We've thought about having a third child, but have decided that we are done. Our family feels perfectly complete and we can't imagine being any more blessed than we already are. As we have gone through the process of getting pregnant, we've learned a lot about how babies are an absolute miracle. We used to think that getting pregnant was a simple equation of putting eggs and sperm together. Now, we know better. Getting pregnant is not science. Rather, the creation of a new life is a miracle of God that only happens when it's meant to. We feel incredibly grateful that we have been blessed with two miracles who bring us incredible pride, joy, and boundless love each and every day.
When I first saw her name—Linda HMP—and read in her AOL profile that she was a partner in Hegarty Music Press, I knew instantly who she was. She was the mysterious “former student” that a visiting organist had told me about, the woman who was assisting David Hegarty at his concerts and with the sales of his music. David Hegarty was my first ex-husband, the gay organist, who had come out six years into our picture-perfect marriage. We had divorced seven years to the day of our storybook wedding on August 20, 1966. And now, 20 years since we had seen each other last, our lives were about to cross again.

I began emailing Linda HMP under my pseudonym, Juliana Harvard; and we were both delighted to find another Adventist mom with teenage children who had spent our lives serving with church music, Pathfinders, and children’s Sabbath schools. During the next weeks, through subtle but strategic questioning, I found out exactly which Linda she was (the one from the school where David and I had taught our first year out of college), and got to know her as a beautiful, gracious person with a unique artistic flair and a gift for empathy and compassion. She got to know me as Juliana Harvard, an amateur church organist and pianist, who was going through a horrendous divorce from my children’s father.

I became obsessed with wanting to “come out” to David, and also wanting a chance to brag about the two major accomplishments in my life—my two children. I asked Linda HMP lots of questions about David based on my having been “a fan of Mr. Hegarty” for many years, having played his music for church services. Linda was glad to fill me in on the details. We also shared details of our own lives—our jobs, our children, our struggles in coming out, our reconciliation of spirituality and sexuality. In the course of our cyber conversations, Linda and I fell in love, without ever having exchanged photos and without her knowing my real identity.

Then I became careless. Or perhaps it was deliberate, the dropping of little clues here and there that I knew more about David than just a casual “fan” would know. Linda became suspicious, began printing out my emails and sharing them with David. For instance, how would the remote Juliana Harvard know that David was shy about talking on the phone? Linda insisted that she arrange a phone call between David, her, and me so that I could finally “meet” the musician I admired so much!

I planned carefully for the phone call to take place on August 20, 1994. I was ready to “come out” to both David and to Linda. Words cannot begin to describe the deep emotions that all three of us felt during that memorable phone call. Linda especially was both astounded and elated to discover that the Juliana Harvard she had fallen in love with was really the “Mrs. Hegarty” of her junior year in boarding high school when she had been a student secretary in the music department and had worked for Mr. Hegarty.

And the rest, as they say, is history. In 1996, my teenage daughter and I moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and set up housekeeping with Linda in the island city of Alameda, just across the Bay from The City. Now our three teenagers are grown and have lives of their own. And in 2004, Linda and I were married in the eyes of God and in the presence of our Kinship family at Menucha Kampmeeting (in Oregon) on—you guessed it—August 20!

And David played for the wedding.
Nearly all LGBTI Adventists have one thing in common – the need to connect with other LGBTI Adventists.

You can change this by starting a Kinship chapter in your area. Contact the Kinship office for more information at office@sdakinship.org.

Books
Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives and My Son, Beloved Stranger can be ordered online at www.sdagayperspectives.com.

Public Relations Cards
These 4" X 10" rack cards have information on one side about our book, Christianity and Homosexuality, and can have Kinship regional information on the other side. They are perfect to have in any gathering place for LGBTI people, such as pride parades, or other public events. For more information you can contact us at communications@sdakinship.org.

The Connection editorial team often shares with our readership public service announcements that come to us during discussions our leadership team has on-line and at board meetings. When we print that information, our practice is to give credit to the people who have found it and brought it to our attention. When we did this on page 12 of our October/November issue we spelled Ruben López’ name incorrectly and have just found out that he would have liked to have given permission to have his name credited as the one who found and shared the public service announcement.
Christmas has passed, and Christmas cards are by now likely in the recycling bin. Many Christmas cards expressed the thought, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). I hope that thought did not end up in the recycling bin along with the cards.

During the Second World War, near the Christmas of 1943, when Anne Frank, her family, and four other people were in hiding from the Nazis, Miep Gies, one of the courageous people hiding and feeding them, brought them a cake. Miep had saved ration cards for months for the ingredients. They reminisced about the cake Miep had brought them the previous Christmas. “Remember the words on the cake last year? It said ‘Peace in 1943’.” As they gathered around this new cake, they read “Peace in 1944.” Everyone became very quiet. Peace had not come in 1943 and they were still in hiding. “It’s got to come sometime, you know,” Miep said to encourage those nearly demoralized people. The moment is doubly poignant because only one of the eight in hiding lived to see peace.

Hitler’s Nazis are long gone though anti-Semitism is not. Fred Phelps continues his outpouring of venom against homosexuals. Darfur is still a hell hole and the enormity of the genocide in Rwanda is not forgotten. I confess before God that we Seventh-day Adventists were guilty of our part in the Rwanda murders. Many Adventists were merely people who did not murder on the Sabbath. What justification did they find to participate in genocide? Murderous Rwandan Adventists may have been indoctrinated, but they were not converted. In this we, in turn, failed the murderers; we are not without fault.

Frequently in troubled times, people look for a Scapegoat. For Hitler’s Nazis, it was the Jews, the supposedly “lower races” like Poles, Slavs, and Blacks, plus Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals. The demonized were not people; they were “parasites.”

“Mother,” a little German girl was overheard to ask her mother as Jews were herded off, “who are these people?” Her mother replied “These are not people; they are Jews.”

(‘Kristallnacht,’ Martin Gilbert, page 267)

In the autumn of 2008, I attended a symposium in Oshawa, Canada. The theme was “Should I Fight?—Conscientious Objection and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.” This subject was of partic-
ular interest to me because it was one of the tenets of Adventism that appealed to me when I became a convert in 1973. I have not heard much on this tenet in more recent years. It became a part of me in the same way as the Sabbath and the teaching on the State of the Dead. Before I was baptized, I read a book about Desmond Doss, a Seventh-day Adventist conscientious objector of World War II. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desmond_Doss)

The symposium in Oshawa addressed the question from different points of view. Some speakers felt Adventists who bore arms should automatically be removed from church membership. Some imagined with horror the possibility that we could be lobbing grenades at fellow Seventh-day Adventists---a rather narrow view. Some maintained there are instances when force is justified; a "just war."

After 9/11, I remember the rhetoric that the US should “bring justice” to Afghanistan and (later) to Iraq. This should be read as inflicting punishment. In that time, it was difficult to “talk peace” while others heatedly “talked war.” The invasion of Afghanistan could be justified by some as a response to the terrorists of 9/11; but there seemed to be no justification for invading Iraq, so lies were published. These lies were repeated so often that they manufactured consent for invasions that might otherwise have provoked protest. After many casualties on both sides, the lies are no longer remembered. Sometimes, however, the justification offered is not a lie. What do we do with our principles then? Is there a just war? What is there in human nature that gives us permission?

Please consider the following. When Adam and Eve sinned, what did they do? They justified themselves and blamed each other. “The woman that you gave me, she gave me of the fruit and I did eat.” Eve blamed the serpent. Adam and Eve, who were guilty of wrong-doing, resorted not only to blaming, but far more serious, they attempted to distance themselves from wrong-doing. This is true denial and alienation.

By contrast, when Israel at Sinai melted gold to make a golden calf idol, what did Moses do? He begged God, “But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (Exodus 32:32). Moses’ appeal to God nearly reduced me to tears during a recent sermon. If God could not forgive Israel, then Moses preferred non-existence. Moses could not be convinced to exterminate the guilty. A similar attitude is found in the prophet Daniel as recorded in Daniel 9:4-19. Daniel did not run for cover, but identified fully with the guilt of Judah. This attitude was so highly valued that it received special praise in verse 22. Moses and Daniel trusted God enough not to distance themselves from wrong-doing. Their loving attitude did not seek self-justification. Their profound love cast out fear.

God led by example in that “God made Him [Jesus Christ] who had no sin to BE SIN for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Here was an exchange. God Himself did not distance Himself from wrong-doing. He loved the world and the people in it (John 3:16). He so identified with humans, even to becoming one with them, even sharing in their death, in the hope that we could be reconciled to Him.

Alienation and hostility can only be maintained when we distance ourselves from the wrong-doing of others. We can only maintain a propaganda war if we demonize others, establish distance from the wrong-doing of others, and deny our own sins. We can only scream about Muslim extreme fundamentalism if we forget about our centuries-long Christian fundamentalism. I pray we could say with Mahatma Gandhi, “There may be a cause for which I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill.” There can never be peace as long as we distance ourselves from the sins of others, believing ourselves to be in the right when we “bring justice” (punishment) to others. Instead of believing the rhetoric that leads to violence, we should sabotage our own violent instincts by confessing our own wrong-doing. That may not be politically expedient, but Christ calls on His followers to seek His kingdom. The principles of that kingdom are vastly different from those of this world.

In these times of economic troubles it is our earnest prayer to see Peace in 2009. Please be sure to check out (and join) Seventh-day Adventists who work for peace, such as http://www.adventistpeace.org and the environment, such as http://adventist-environment-advocacy.blogspot.com/.
Oh me of little faith. I have told you the stories of how this three-year series of weekends began. (I don’t want to bore most of us; but if you haven’t heard the tales, feel most welcome to write to me at connectioneditor@sdakinship.com.) It’s clear God has opened a multitude of doors to make our gathering possible.

But I knew that the US economy had gone so far south it was washing up on the shores of New Zealand. I knew that many of the people who had attended in previous years had other commitments or financial constraints. I knew that one of the people I had asked to present had a husband recently diagnosed with brain cancer. I also knew that there were people who had made reservations to attend twelve months before and six months before. I had enough faith to know that I wanted to honor their commitment. I remembered the times I had talked to Yolanda three weeks before the Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting when she was wondering if anyone would show up. I remembered talking to Ruud, Mike, and Floyd three weeks before European Kinship Meeting when they were wondering if we would have speakers. David, who co-coordinates US Region 1, is a man of enormous faith; and he had no doubt our plans would be blessed. I prayed and decided God had some activities, purposes, and reasons in mind of which I knew nothing…as well as some that had floated through my cranial material.

I got up from praying, increasingly committed to the retreat but asking God if I could somehow have a Gideon’s fleece. At that moment – really it’s true – the phone rang. Lloyd was calling in his usual excited fashion and wanted to make sure I knew that he and Steve were planning on being with us. No one had called about the retreat for weeks. Well, okay then, one fleece quickly delivered. Some extraordinary parental friends of Jerry McKay and me had stopped by Vermont on their way to a cruise and sounded like they might want to join us, “if we won’t rain on your parade.” Rain? They are a couple whose only showers are those of blessing. (For those of you who haven’t been drowned in Adventist culture, that was a clumsy pun on a hymn title.) I asked Jerry to give them a ring. They confirmed, as long as it didn’t snow, hail, or sleet on the travel day.

My friend Marsha said she would be willing to do her presentations on The Bible as Literature. This is a great series that makes the Bible even more
alive. Jerry wrote and asked if there was some way he could help. Voila! – Saturday evening vespers. I wrote to our group and said we were instituting our first annual Saturday evening Sharing Circle and movie night. David shopped for some of the...well, there are some prizes you will just have to attend to understand.

There are some things I did not know and probably don’t know the whole story yet. Thor and Kevin moved schedules and illnesses to be there, between hospital stays. Glenda and Keith packed up hope and grief for their journey and came away with some healing, new relationships, and plans for the future. Pam and Theresa arrived as part of their first-year journey to get to know Kinship. David began to share more of his remarkable and genteel leadership skills. Ken became a tour guide to show Steve a local area where his ancestors had stopped on their US migration route. Keith and Jerry pitched in as official group photographers. Robert made sure we took some time to visit the migrating geese on Sabbath afternoon. For those of you who think these mini-Kampmeetings are “regional” gatherings, it might be interesting to know that we included people from Washington state, West Virginia, Ontario (Canada), Delaware, Maryland, and Washington DC as well as those from New England. Wherever you live, you are most welcome to join us next year. We’ve already ordered the raptors. Project Joy has us in their date book. We’ve scheduled the wagons. We’ve got our speakers. We’re looking forward to seeing you.

Bean eaters weigh as much as 6.6 pounds less, according to John La Puma, MD. This makes sense when you consider beans are full of fiber and protein but low in fat. One serving will keep you going far beyond the need-to-munch hour but only make a minor dent in your calorie intake. You’ll find protein, fiber, and foliate in beans, as well as antioxidants. The darkest-colored beans have the top antioxidant content. Here is a recipe that is both tasty and healthy.

**Roasted Corn, Black Bean, and Mango Salad**

You can make this simple, fresh salad up to 8 hours ahead of time.

**Ingredients**

- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 cups corn kernels (from 3 ears)
- 1 large ripe mango (about 1 pound), peeled and diced
- 1 15-ounce or 19-ounce can black beans, rinsed
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 small can chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, drained and chopped
- 1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

**Preparation**

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in corn and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 8 minutes. Transfer the corn mixture to a large bowl. Stir in mango, beans, onion, bell pepper, lime juice, chipotle, cilantro, cumin, and salt.

Life is not the way it’s supposed to be. 
It’s the way it is.

The way you cope with it is what makes the difference.
On Being Right?

George Babcock
– at Kinship Kampmeeting, Reston, Virginia

This morning my granddaughter Grace informed Chuck Scriven, “Did you know that Grandpa is part horse?” He had not yet been enlightened as to that fact. He thought maybe I got down on all fours and let the children ride on my back. I used to do that until January when I had my foot rebuilt. The doctors took out some of my tendons and implanted horse tendons. This horse has been very difficult to train, and my wife Fern says I have become very interested in hay and oats. The doctors told me I would not be able to walk for two years. They cut my heel bone in half, twisted it around, and screwed it back together. My toes still don’t feel like they quite belong to me. God is good. I graduated from bed to a Lazy Boy reclining chair to wheel chair to walker and now I have the cane. I’ll get rid of it in a few months.

A couple of weeks ago I read a statement that blew my mind: “We sin most when we are right,” or at least when we think we are right. This statement pictures the scribes and the Pharisees. They crucified the Lord of Right. I think of this in terms of church behavior.

I recently wrote an article for the Seventh-day Adventist Review about homosexuality. I have a pretty good idea of how the brethren think. When I am being critical of the church I am not being critical of the General Conference but of myself and the church that is in all of us. I sent my article to Steve Chavez and asked if this was suitable to be published in the Review. I also asked him if there was something I could change to make it suitable for the publication in that journal. If that magazine wouldn’t let me publish, I asked Steve where he would suggest I publish my thoughts. Steve wrote back, said the article was powerful and that the administration would never let it see the light of day. I expected this and gave the article to Chuck Scriven. It will be coming out in Spectrum, the magazine published by Adventist Forum.

Have you ever in your life said to yourself, “I will never do…” and, lo and behold, you end up doing it? Have you ever said, “I will never live in such and such a place”? I think the Lord listens to what we say and often makes us do what we don’t want to do. It’s good for our character. I never wanted to live in Pakistan. I also said I would never stand up in front of a group and talk about homosexuality. Well, there I lived and here I am.

We are narrowed by the limitations of sin. We are children of a flawed family. That inheritance leaves us short of where we want to be and short of where we need to be. It leaves us with episodes of unnecessary caution, self-pity, and pain. It also causes us to hunger for something better, truly desirable. Paul writes, “Who will save me from this body of death?”

Jesus gives us the right to become the children of God, not men or women of natural descent but of the family of God. This is supernatural. We are no longer associated with the decision of human beings but of the Supreme Being. We are children of the Godhead, all three members of the Deity.

Experiencing the alternative is not easy. It is very hard to stay in touch with our true identity. We need to discipline ourselves to keep living truthfully. We hear so many voices that tell us to “go here,” “buy that.” They pull us away from the gentle Voice that speaks to our hearts. The spiritual life requires a constant claiming of our right to be children of God. The sixth day of Creation was climaxed as God created humanity. Then He proclaimed that His work was complete and completed. When God rested on the seventh day He was celebrating not only the end of Creation but the birthday of Creation. We humans only celebrate anniversaries of births and relationships once a year. Wouldn’t it be neat if we had Valentine’s Day once a week? Think of all the love and cards and candy. We’d all die with lots of love. If Thanksgiving were once a week we might all die of fat.

My theological thinking has been self-taught. I have never spent one day in the seminary. Even so, somehow I became an ordained minister. The college
wanted me to be president of the seminary so Neal Wilson ordained me. I got kicked out of my home when I was baptized at age thirteen. I had asked my folks for their permission. They refused. The best way to get me to do something was to tell me I couldn’t do it. My concerns about the Seventh-day Adventist Church have nothing to do with doctrine but with how the church treats people.

Christ and the Spirit of Prophecy call us Christians because we are united in our love. Once I learned that a widow who was highly respected in her church congregation and who donated large sums to the denomination had a son who lived in Oakland who was dying of AIDS. He requested that I contact him. I was astonished to hear that this lady even had a son. She had never mentioned him. He left home in his late teens and then phonned his mother, told her he was gay, and pleaded for her understanding. She told him he was no longer her son; he was already dead in her eyes. For the next fifteen years he wrote his mother two letters a month and sent her gifts on the appropriate holidays. She returned them all. When he phoned she would hang up. He asked me to talk to his mother and get her to come and see him. When I got home from my trip I visited his mother and urged her to go. My request fell on deaf ears. The certificate listed AIDS as the cause of this young man’s death. I think it was complicated by his broken heart.

My daughter Sherri was born into a fourth-generation Seventh-day Adventist family. She is a talented academic and professional. When she was younger she worked two summers at the General Conference. Then she spent a year as a student missionary. During that year she called me and asked me to visit her on Ponapei. That is one island in the middle of the Pacific you don’t arrive at by accident. Five days into our visit Sherri finally told me she was a lesbian. I was stunned. I took her into my arms and we cried together. I told her I would never stop loving her, no matter what happened. After her graduation she found employment in Ohio. She also found a wife whose father is a member of the Methodist General Conference. Sherri invited Jill to visit her local Seventh-day Adventist church when a General Conference speaker was scheduled. That speaker stopped his talk in mid-sentence, focused on Sherri and Jill, and railed at them about the sin of homosexuality. I am amazed Jill ever attended our church again. Sherri has no idea today where her church membership is. She has never been told if it has been dropped. It would be difficult for Jill to become a member of my faith, even if she wanted to.

I tell parents to never stop praying for their children and I tell them to never stop loving them and acting on that love.

God works in ways we do not understand. We are not to set ourselves up as judges. We cannot represent Christ to our children if we reject and judge them. Jesus says “to love one another as I have loved you.” The love of Christ will testify to the world that we have been with Jesus. When we are able to radiate that love, the whole world will be lighted with the glory of the Lord. It is then that the world will take notice of our message. Those who profess to serve God must follow Christ’s example. In every act we must show love to others. Not until then will the church have the power to change the world.
Australia is a country about the size of the United States. It has just over 19 million people in it. The United States has about 15 times more people. Most Australians live near the ocean in cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, (the capital of Australia), Adelaide, and, in the west, Perth. You can look for these on the map or globe.

The weather is usually good. Not much snow in winter. The center of Australia is mostly desert. It’s called the Outback. There is a place called Alice Springs and it is in the center of Australia, in the Outback. The Outback is very hot in the summer (remember Australian summer is America's winter). Today the temperature is over 100 degrees Fahrenheit! **HOT**!

The people in Australia are friendly and speak English the way you and I do, except they have different accents and say things like "G'day" for hello and "bloke" for man or guy. They call their friends "mates," and the women and girls are called "sheilas." The Australians love sports especially swimming, Australian football, and Cricket. Australian football is like Rugby except they get more teeth knocked out! **OUCH**! Cricket is like a combination of croquet and baseball. You have to see it to believe it.