The Time has Come! (p9)
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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 an organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people.

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. SDA 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
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

Tonight I am writing to you from England. People are still sitting at the dinner table behind me, laughing and talking in four languages. The European Kinship Meeting has ended. The "holiday" part of this yearly time has begun. In the last six weeks, Kinship leaders and members have had a board meeting in San Francisco, enjoyed a mini-Kampmeeting in North Carolina, created a well-attended Australian Style Kampmeeting, respectfully and gently protested the conference at Andrews University designed to count-er the positive effects of Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives, and traveled from eleven countries to attend the European meeting in Saffron Walden, Essex, UK. Daneen, Stephen, and Lily continue their three-month journey to create the documentary film “Seventh-Gay Adventists.” Linda has announced the theme for next year’s Kampmeeting in Atlanta. Ruben and Floyd have processed the requests for and welcomed several new members. And the list goes on. I am startled by the depth and variety of events that are happening in our Kinship world. It’s hard to keep up. The electronic and print media are increasingly important for us to stay in touch with and support each other. Beginning with the January issue the Connection will be changing to a primarily electronic publication. Those of you who would like to continue to receive it in your postal mailboxes need to let us know before that time. Those of you who would like to donate to support the Connection’s printing and mailing costs are encouraged to do so. We are working to be more ecological, economical, and colorful! As so many parts of Kinship are growing and changing, we want to invite you to let us know what you would like and how you would like to be involved. Your voice is what we need to build Kinship in ways that are useful for you. This issue includes Rom’s regular columns, reports on the focus of our board meeting, shares some thoughts from The Book and the Beach weekend, introduces you to more members of our Kinship family, and reprints a newspaper article written about one of our family members. We hope you enjoy it. More importantly, we wish for you to take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

A String Too Short to Save

Rom Wilder

Last night the winter clothes came out. I'm fonder of wool-sweater weather than I am of the seasons of cotton t-shirts. By adding layers, you can warm up in winter. In summer you can only take off so many layers before you are fired, arrested, or sunburned in places you didn't know you had.

This winter I'm retiring a wonderful, but beyond repair, worn-out sweater my sister lovingly and generously knitted for me. After knitting the sweater, Giny had enough yarn left to knit Lynn, my eccentric partner, a single sock. Lynn loved that sock. It was full of symbolism for her and was quirky enough (being a loner sock) to make it a forever treasure.

The sweater itself had to be mended and shorn up in weak areas over the years. The time finally came that it had to have new cuffs. I mentioned to Lynn that I could only think of one way to save the sweater. "Not my sock!" she cried in horror. But her good heart won out over her sentimental attach-ment and love of the unique solo sock. The sock provided the yarn for the cuffs.

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No more repairs can be made to this sweater, but I cannot bear to give it away or up. There's a lot of good wool yarn in it in places that didn't much wear. I think I'll unravel it and knit a single sock for Lynn. That way she and I will both have part of the sweater we loved.
As you have read in our regional note, electronic board eNews, on KinNet and in the Connection, our Kinship community has a remarkable number of programs and events happening. The focus of this board meeting was the development of our budget to support our programs, and discussions of ways to make them stronger. In this section we are going to share a bit of our worship talk and the plans of our board members for their work this year.

Worship
- Summarized from Marcos Apolonio

“To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh… Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness”’ (2 Cor. 12:5-10).

The Contemporary English Version reads this as, “My kindness is all you need.” The Greek ARKEO is translated into Portuguese as basta, enough.

In the times when I have struggled, my understanding of God told me that when I asked, “Please, give me something,” He was saying “That is enough. My grace is enough for you.” Deep down I was thinking, “It’s not enough. I am struggling so much and I feel so bad; I need more. I need to have something to have peace with this.” I wanted more.

One day I opened the New English Version of the Bible and was amazed to find that the word translated there is sufficient. It’s very subtle but there is a difference between enough and sufficient. If you ask the treasurer how much money is available and they say enough, we are often concerned. But with sufficient, we are more comfortable.

I went to the roots of the text to see what God was thinking. Sufficient acknowledges the need but promises that we are not going to want for more. It covers everything. It is ample. Sufficient lets us know that resources are adequate to the situation.

Whatever the issue or event with which we are struggling, God says, “My grace is sufficient.” It will cover everything and more. Listening to that word matches the love of God about which we have always heard and the God of love I have known. That word sufficient empowers, validates, and encourages me. I feel heard.

I don’t know your problems. In our home, we have been dealing with many, many things. Obed asked me if I thought the avalanche would ever stop. We all have so many problems, and there is much we do not understand. The good news is that God’s grace is sufficient—more than enough. God will give us the support, sufficient grace, to help us to go through whatever we are dealing with right now.
Board Meeting - Dreams and Visions

Obed Vazquez  
– Director of Diversity

I would like folks to know that a concerted effort is being made to reach ethnic and racial minorities with the message that there is a place for them within our spiritual community.

David Thaxton  
– Secretary

I am committed to keeping accurate records for Kinship. I am also willing to be used wherever I am needed. I want to build up this worthy organization.

Page McDaniel  
– Campus Outreach

I plan to develop more safe places within sometimes hostile environments for LBGTI Seventh-day Adventist college students.

Naveen Jonathan  
– Vice-President

As I chair the Member Services Committee, we will work to create more effective ways to meet the needs of our community members. Please know you are welcome to contact me with suggestions or areas where you see we can improve our programs or offerings.

Dave Ferguson  
– Director of Church Relations

There are two projects that will be my focus for this year:

A Solemn Appeal is a project in which all Kinship members can become actively involved. Invite all your friends and family members to sign the letter at www.asolemnappeal.org. It is very important that we develop a significant list of names.

Seventh-Gay Adventists is a film project (www.sgamovie.com) designed to reach outside the world of conservative Christians. We will keep our members informed about this project. Please feel most welcome to become involved!

Karen Wetherell  
– Director of Women’s Interests

I am developing ways to assist the women of Kinship to be more connected to each other, to know each other better, and to understand that every Kinship woman, all over the world, is important. My hope is that each Kinship woman will be able to find friendship, encouragement, compassion, support, blessings, and love. Keep an eye out on our website (www.sdakinship.org), monthly electronic newsletters, and the Connection for our plans and activities.

Bob Bouchard  
– Chair of the Finance Committee

Kinship continues to depend on your financial support to fund our outreach. In this year of financial stresses, your contributions are particularly important. If you can increase your present donation, it would be very helpful. Thank you for whatever support you can give to your community.

Ruud Kieboom  
– European Coordinator

Together with a German pastor we are organizing a dinner meeting in Frankfurt on the 5th of December. With this meeting we want to revitalize the former HAD group (Homosexual Adventists Germany) that has fallen apart after the coordinator stopped her work. Our first goal is to reach out to the people in the Frankfurt area and to find out what their interests are. If this effort is successful we will extend our group with people from other parts in Germany. The people will be invited personally by mail and through a German newsletter that Floyd Poenitz is going to distribute among them.

In May 2010 we will have our second Advisory Council meeting in Dublane, Scotland. The group consists of pastors and educators from various European countries, who have key positions in the church.

This year we have started to meet in The Netherlands, and we now have a group of 10 people that are meeting three to four times a year. Last meeting was in October; the next meeting will be in January or February in The Hague at the home of one of the members. Some of them have joined Kinship already.

From October 21 to 25 we had our 8th European Kinship Meeting in Saffron Walden, north of London. ➢
We had more than 20 participants from various European countries and visitors from as far as Brazil, Kenya, and the USA. We were blessed with the presentations of an outstanding speaker.

At this meeting we planned our locations for several years of the European Kinship Meeting:
- 2010 – Belgium or the Netherlands;
- 2011 – Paris, France;
- 2012 – Frankfurt, Germany;
- 2013 – Prague, Czech (?)

Marshall for 16 years. "He is a good Christian and very supportive. I also have great parents who volunteered to have Kinship meetings in their home. I have a totally accepting family. I have been a part of Kinship since the first Kampmeeting in Payson, Arizona. I got connected with the founding group through Errol Chalmers. The most important thing about Kinship is the future. I want those who follow us to be able to fully and safely express their whole being. The most important thing about my spiritual walk today is my personal connection and relationship with the friends who can share with me."

Terry Rice spent his childhood and educational career in Collegedale, Tennessee, graduating with a BA in Religious Education. He earned his MDiv at Andrews University. He is finishing up an internship as a chaplain resident at the University of California in San Francisco. When he is not in school or working, Terry enjoys camping, racket ball, holistic small groups, networking, hiking, world travel, young adult ministries, singing groups, biking, advancing social justice issues, supporting contemporary Christian groups, and teaching, Terry’s parents emigrated from Australia to the United States. His father, mother, and stepfather are educators. One brother is an educator and one is studying nursing. Terry wrote that the most important thing for him about Kinship is that “it offers me community with those who share the same LGBTI issues as I do. Kinship integrates my Adventist identity with other identities I embrace.”

Christian Bryan attended a public elementary school and Golden Gate Academy in Oakland, California. "I work as a personal trainer now. I also had a mission post as a teacher for English as a second language and have worked as an office assistant. I enjoy being a personal trainer because I am passionate about exercise, particularly weight lifting. I enjoy cooking gourmet meals, baking, and traveling. I am just beginning a new relationship. I found Kinship by googling "gay Seventh-day Adventist" and Kinship popped up! It has been great for me to be part of a group of spiritually minded LGBTI Christians. I love the sense of community, fellowship, and keeping a Christian perspective. The most important thing for my spiritual journey today is to be true to myself and real with God and others. I live my life by the “Golden Rule” with the focus on loving God and my neighbor as I love myself. Being transsexual has helped me be more open-minded of other people and of their spiritual journey."

We can never live in the past as if it were our true home....
And it is a good thing that God draws this veil over the past even without our asking.
In so doing, He allows us to live today for tomorrow with just the few memories we need of what was.
- Karl Barth
Over the weekend of October 15-17 a conference called “Marriage, Homosexuality and the Church” was held on the campus of Andrews University. This conference was sponsored by several church organizations, particularly the Religious Liberty Association, the Biblical Research Institute, and the Seminary. Organizers stated that the reason for the conference was twofold: to provide a response to the book, *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*, and to respond to those who were part of the group Adventists Against Prop 8 (a voter initiative in California designed to repeal same-sex marriage). The conference was not intended to present a balanced view of the topic of homosexuality. It definitely lived up to that goal. The presenters included conservative scholars, several of whom were asked to write response chapters for the book, but who declined the invitation.

**Dave Ferguson**

Let’s start with the Ugly. I actually expected more of the ugly than there was. The most Ugly was not from an Adventist presenter, but from Dr. Robert Gagnon, associate professor of New Testament at Pittsburg Theological Seminary. He is a Presbyterian and often presents the minority dissenting viewpoint about homosexuality at their General Assembly. In spite of the fact that he is a New Testament scholar, he drew very heavily on Old Testament references, especially Leviticus, to declare that homosexuality is an abomination to God both for Jews and for Christians. Those who were anxious to have someone say what they wanted to hear loved his presentations, in spite of the fact that members of his own denomination do not agree with his views.

The Bad included testimonies from someone who claims to have changed his orientation and a man who claimed that he has now been celibate for six months. The presentation from Dr. Yarhouse, who was there to share research on reparative therapy and who presented his views to the American Psychological Association (*APA*) this past summer, must have been disappointing to many. He indicated that he is not sure of anyone who has actually completely changed from a homosexual orientation to a heterosexual one, though he does know there are some who have moved down the continuum and have become less homosexual and more focused on becoming “Christlike.”

The Andrews administration refused to let the Seventh-Gay Adventist team film any of the conference and sent a warning out to students not to speak to anyone with a camera. However, there were a number of people willing to be interviewed.

Surprisingly, there were some good aspects to the conference. We were able to identify several faculty members who are prepared to provide safe places for students who are gay on the AU campus. Because members of our group all wore pink carnations, we had a number of people ask us why we were wearing the carnations. Their curiosity gave us opportunities for conversations.

I talked personally with several of the conference organizers. They indicated that while they felt it was important for their segment of the church to respond to *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives*, they only see this conference as a first step. They agreed that we need to begin more discussions and that future discussions should include members of Kinship. If this happens, then the book and this conference will become a valuable first step in creating the dialogue we have been requesting with the denomination for many years. Let’s pray that that happens.

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**Reactions to Eden’s Gifts**

In the September 2009 issue of the Connection we printed an article about the Bible and the clobber texts. We got responses from three continents and thought we’d share some of them with you.

**From Tennessee**

Cool stuff with your Connection article this month! It would be a great prompt for a group discussion. Maybe one of these days I’ll be able to hang out with you guys again and chitchat about ideas like yours. Maybe during one of the scheduled chats on the Kinship website we can dialogue about it.

**From Malaysia**

Thank you for “Eden’s Gifts” in the September issue. It was very helpful! I have forwarded the issue to all my MCC friends in Malaysia. Keep up the good work! Hugs, Adam

**From Norway**

I read with great interest what you presented in “Eden’s Gifts.” Historical research has shown that homosexuality has not been regarded as unnatural in all times and places. I see it as part of God’s creative idea, wanted and loved by the Creator as much as heterosexuality. I think it is a useless and perhaps harmful thought for gays and lesbians to look at themselves as not being of the original idea. Willy Lantz
I have made a decision. I will no longer debate the issue of homosexuality in the church with anyone. I will no longer engage the biblical ignorance that emanates from so many right-wing Christians about how the Bible condemns homosexuality, as if that point of view still has any credibility. I will no longer discuss with them or listen to them tell me how homosexuality is “an abomination to God,” about how homosexuality is a “chosen lifestyle,” or about how through prayer and “spiritual counseling” homosexual persons can be “cured.” Those arguments are no longer worthy of my time or energy. I will no longer dignify by listening to the thoughts of those who advocate “reparative therapy,” as if homosexual persons are somehow broken and need to be repaired. I will no longer talk to those who believe that the unity of the church can or should be achieved by rejecting the presence of, or at least at the expense of, gay and lesbian people. I will no longer take the time to refute the unlearned and undocumentable claims of certain world religious leaders who call homosexuality “deviant.”

John Shelby Spong

The Time Has Come!

I will no longer listen to that pious sentimentality that certain Christian leaders continue to employ, which suggests some version of that strange and overtly dishonest phrase that “we love the sinner but hate the sin.” That statement is, I have concluded, nothing more than a self-serving lie designed to cover the fact that these people hate homosexual persons and fear homosexuality itself, but somehow know that hatred is incompatible with the Christ they claim to profess, so they adopt this face-saving and absolutely false statement. I will no longer temper my understanding of truth in order to pretend that I have even a tiny smidgen of respect for the appalling negativity that continues to emanate from religious circles where the church has for centuries conveniently perfumed its ongoing prejudices against blacks, Jews, women and homosexual persons with what it assumes is “high-sounding, pious rhetoric.” The day for that mentality has quite simply come to an end for me. I will personally neither tolerate it nor listen to it any longer. The world has moved on, leaving these elements of the Christian Church that cannot adjust to new knowledge or a new consciousness lost in a sea of their own irrelevance. They no longer talk to anyone but themselves. I will no longer seek to slow down the witness to inclusiveness by pretending that there is some middle ground between prejudice and oppression. There isn't. Justice postponed is justice denied. That can be a resting place no longer for anyone. An old civil rights song proclaimed that the only choice awaiting those who cannot adjust to a new understanding was to "Roll on over or we'll roll on over you!" Time waits for no one.
I will particularly ignore those members of my own Episcopal Church who seek to break away from this body to form a "new church," claiming that this new and bigoted instrument alone now represents the Anglican Communion. Such a new ecclesiastical body is designed to allow these pathetic human beings, who are so deeply locked into a world that no longer exists, to form a community in which they can continue to hate gay people, distort gay people with their hopeless rhetoric and to be part of a religious fellowship in which they can continue to feel justified in their homophobic prejudices for the rest of their tortured lives. Church unity can never be a virtue that is preserved by allowing injustice, oppression and psychological tyranny to go unchallenged.

In my personal life, I will no longer listen to televised debates conducted by "fair-minded" channels that seek to give "both sides" of this issue "equal time." I am aware that these stations no longer give equal time to the advocates of treating women as if they are the property of men or to the advocates of reinstating either segregation or slavery, despite the fact that when these evil institutions were coming to an end the Bible was still being quoted frequently on each of these subjects. It is time for the media to announce that there are no longer two sides to the issue of full humanity for gay and lesbian people. There is no way that justice for homosexual people can be compromised any longer.

I will no longer act as if the Papal office is to be respected if the present occupant of that office is either not willing or not able to inform and educate himself on public issues on which he dares to speak with embarrassing ineptitude. I will no longer be respectful of the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who seems to believe that rude behavior, intolerance and even killing prejudice is somehow acceptable, so long as it comes from third-world religious leaders, who more than anything else reveal in themselves the price that colonial oppression has required of the minds and hearts of so many of our world’s population. I see no way that ignorance and truth can be placed side by side, nor do I believe that evil is somehow less evil if the Bible is quoted to justify it. I will dismiss as unworthy of any more of my attention the wild, false and uninformed opinions of such would-be religious leaders as Pat Robertson, James Dobson, Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, Albert Mohler, and Robert Duncan. My country and my church have both settled and this issue is now settled for me. I do not debate anymore with members of the "Flat Earth Society" either. I do not debate with people who think that we should treat epilepsy by casting demons out of the epileptic person; I do not waste time engaging those medical opinions that suggest that bleeding the patient might release the infection. I do not converse with people who think that Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans as punishment for the sin of being the birth-place of Ellen DeGeneres or that the terrorists hit the United Sates on 9/11 because we tolerated homosexual people, abortions, feminism or the American Civil Liberties Union. I am tired of being embarrassed by so much of my church’s participation in causes that are quite unworthy of the Christ I serve or the God whose mystery and wonder I appreciate more each day. Indeed I feel the Christian Church should not only apologize, but do public penance for the way we have treated people of color, women, adherents of other religions and those we designated heretics, as well as gay and lesbian people.

I have been part of this debate for years, but things do get settled and this issue is now settled for me. I do not debate any longer with members of the "Flat Earth Society" either. I do not debate with people who think we should treat epilepsy by casting demons out of the epileptic person; I do not waste time engaging those medical opinions that suggest that bleeding the patient might release the infection. I do not converse with people who think that Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans as punishment for the sin of being the birth-place of Ellen DeGeneres or that the terrorists hit the United Sates on 9/11 because we tolerated homosexual people, abortions, feminism or the American Civil Liberties Union. I am tired of being embarrassed by so much of my church’s participation in causes that are quite unworthy of the Christ I serve or the God whose mystery and wonder I appreciate more each day. Indeed I feel the Christian Church should not only apologize, but do public penance for the way we have treated people of color, women, adherents of other religions and those we designated heretics, as well as gay and lesbian people.

The battle in both our culture and our church to rid our souls of this dying prejudice is finished. A new consciousness has arisen. A decision has quite clearly been made. Inequality for gay and lesbian people is no longer a debatable issue in either church or state.

Therefore, I will from this moment on refuse to dignify the continued public expression of ignorant prejudice by engaging it. I do not tolerate racism or sexism any longer. From this moment on, I will no longer tolerate our culture’s various forms of homophobia. I do not care who it is who articulates these attitudes or who tries to make them sound holy with religious jargon.

I make these statements because it is time to move on. The battle is over. The victory has been won. There is no reasonable doubt as to what the final outcome of this struggle will be. Homosexual people will be accepted as equal, full human beings, who have a legitimate claim on every right that both church and society have to offer any of us. Homosexual marriages will become legal, recognized by the state and pronounced holy by the church. "Don't ask, don't tell" will be dismantled as the policy of our armed forces. We will and we must learn that equality of citizenship is not something that should ever be submitted to a referendum. Equality under and before the law is a solemn promise conveyed to all our citizens in the Constitution itself. Can any of us imagine having a public referendum on whether slavery should continue, whether segregation should be dismantled, whether voting privileges should be offered to women? The time has come for politicians to stop hiding behind unjust laws that they themselves helped to enact, and to abandon that convenient shield of demanding a vote on the rights of full citizenship because they do not understand the difference between a constitutional democracy, which this nation has, and a "mobocracy," which this nation rejected when it adopted its constitution. We do not put the civil rights of a minority to the vote of a plebiscite.

I will also no longer act as if I need a majority vote of some ecclesiastical body in order to bless, ordain, recognize and celebrate the lives and gifts of gay and lesbian people in the life of the church. No one should ever again be forced to submit the privilege of citizenship in this nation or membership in the Christian Church to the will of a majority vote.

... it is time to move on.

... it is time to move on.
into it. I am unwilling to argue about it or to discuss it as if there are two equally valid, competing positions any longer. The day for that mentality has simply gone forever.

This is my manifesto and my creed. I proclaim it today. I invite others to join me in this public declaration. I believe that such a public outpouring will help cleanse both the church and this nation of its own distorting past. It will restore integrity and honor to both church and state.

... a new day has dawned ...

It will signal that a new day has dawned and we are ready not just to embrace it, but also to rejoice in it and to celebrate it.

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Seventh-gay Adventists

In the previous Connection I introduced you to our reasons and some of our goals for making this film. If you missed our article, please feel free to access our website, www.sgamovie.com, to understand our goals and our reasons for making this film. Stephen, Lily, and I have begun a three-month filming tour of the United States. You can track our travels if you access us on Facebook, but here are a few notes from my electronic journal so you can “track” us.

Daneen Akers

Sept. 20:
We're leaving today on a 3-month, 10,000-mile production trip to document the stories of LGBT adventists across the U.S. Want to help make this film happen? We need prayers, funds, and introductions to LGBTI adventists (current or former) who might want to participate. Check out www.sgamovie.com and our Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Seventh-gay-Adventists/108723178221?ref=ts.

Sept. 28:
Filmed March Fourth Mardi Gras marching band at Tour de Fat in Golden Gate Park yesterday.

Sept. 30:
We interviewed a 91-year-old, life-long adventist in Portland today whose son was married for 25 years before he finally came out. She expressed how deeply she cares for him and explained the importance of parents in the church showing unconditional love for their children.

Oct. 2:
Portland: You rock! We had a great experience: genuine, honest, and inspiring conversations (on and off camera), great Lily care, and a very helpful donation to the film.

Oct. 6:
It's 23 degrees in Missoula, Montana... thinking that we should not have packed in a San Diego heat wave! Many thanks to the brave souls who talked to us in Walla Walla. We should be in Lincoln [Nebraska]--if we don't freeze--by the weekend.

Oct. 12:
What a great experience in Lincoln, NE. We got some incredible, very moving footage and met some incredible, very moving people. It did snow—seems to be our modus operandi. 😊 My heart aches for the individuals we talked to who want nothing more than to be a part of the church they love: haystacks, Rook, and that Sabbath morning rhythm.

Oct. 13:
On our way to Andrews University. If you know of anyone in the Berrien Springs/greater Chicago area who would like to be a part of this project, please spread the word.

Oct. 14:
Whew! Thank you, Anita in Iowa, for saving our Bacon, er, Stripples. We came really, really close to running out of gas!

Oct. 15:
Seventh-gay Adventists is on the front page of the Journal Star, a Nebraska paper, today:
http://journalstar.com/news/local/article_d7eacb8c-b914-11de-9de1-001cc4c002e0.html
Adventists worship on Saturdays. They don't eat meat. Their children attend SDA schools and colleges. They gather at camp meetings. Become close as a community.

Robb Crouch misses all that.
The 39-year-old Lincoln man heard about the filmmakers through an advocacy group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered adventists called Kinship. And on Saturday, he sat down to tell Daneen and Stephen his story.

He told them about struggling with depression after he came out in 1997. About his fears of losing his family and his job. And his desire to change the church he grew up in -- and misses.

"It was really amazing to know that Daneen and Steve and the company behind them are interested in giving our community -- gay adventists -- a voice," Robb said a few days after his interview with the filmmakers.

"It will enable us to share who we are with a larger audience."

In Lincoln, the filmmakers stayed with the mother of a gay man, a woman who spent years feeling alone with her secret.

They interviewed local SDA faculty members. They talked to gay church members and to gay students still not ready to come out.

A theme has emerged from all of their interviews here and across the country.

"Everybody said they prayed mightily to be changed," Daneen says. "They knew how hard it would be for their families and their churches."

And they couldn't make sense of the notion of love the sinner, hate the sin, because that was who they were -- the way God, it seemed, had seen fit to make them.

"You can't believe that God rejects part of you without feeling damaged," says Daneen. "It affects you in profound ways."

So they filmed gay adventists talking about attempting suicide, about feeling alone and alienated.

"Struggling so hard to reconcile their faith with their..."
Struggle to match church, homosexuality

sexuality," Stephen says.
"They just want understanding within the church and compassion."

That's what they hope the film accomplishes. Change in the church. Change in people who see their gay friends and neighbors telling their stories.

In making their documentaries, Stephen does most of the camera work. Daneen asks questions.

She sat across from a gay man last weekend, and listened to him talk.

It's not about sex, he said. It's about love.

"He longingly misses his church. He aches for his church."

His heart cracked open long ago. 

Cindy Lang-Kubick is a columnist in Lincoln, Nebraska. This article is copyrighted and was reprinted with permission from the Lincoln Journal Star.

US Region 1 & Region 2 – Catherine Taylor

Both regions would like to invite any of you from any region to join us for First Night (New Year's Eve) in historic Williamsburg. We will be having dinner at a colonial inn and spending the rest of the evening seeing some of the remarkable acts and presentation that are all part of bringing in the Southern New Year. We will be reserving rooms at group rates at a local inn. Our plan is to spend New Year's Day seeing the local sights and having Sabbath worship together. For more information you can contact Yolanda at [Region2@sdakinship.org] or Catherine at [Region1@sdakinship.org]. We're looking forward to seeing you there!

US Region 2 – Yolanda Elliot

During the National Equality March™ (October 11, 2009) for LGBTI people, Yolanda was interviewed by "The Daily Show." You can access her talk at: [www.thedailyshow.com/watch/tue-october-13-2009/queer-and-loathing-in-d-c-radical-gay-agenda].

US Region 7 – Stephanie Spencer

We are developing a survey to be mailed to all members in our region. This survey will give us a better idea of their needs and wants. I have had some lovely chats via e-mail that fill my soul.

I will be calling all members in Region 7, both active and inactive, to introduce the chapter leaders in our region. Gerald coordinates the chapter in Portland, OR. Marcus coordinates the chapter in Seattle area, and Cate and Page have the chapter in Eastern WA area. Please feel free to contact anyone of us if you have comments, or questions. You can reach us at [region7@sdakinship.org]. We look forward to meeting you all soon. We invite you to log onto the SDA Kinship website and update your profile so we know the best way to reach you. We’re looking forward to seeing you soon!

I have learned through bitter experience the one supreme lesson: to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmitted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmitted into a power...

- Mahatma Gandhi
How to Log in to *KOL* (Kinship OnLine)

**Floyd Pönitz and Ruben López**

The Kinship website—and particularly the members-only section (called *KOL* for Kinship OnLine)—is improving daily!

For now we need to start testing the site for usability and what kind of load it will handle. So we need **you** to log on whenever you are online and sitting at the computer, or even if you are logged on and not sitting in front of the computer.

The chat room is open and ready for chatters to connect with each other. A few weeks ago, the women scheduled their first chat on the new site, and the load was so great that the server crashed. That isn't a good thing, but it is good to know so we can get it fixed.

There was another women-only chat the Sabbath after that, using a different chat system, and it worked beautifully! So if you are a woman, please join in the scheduled chats (Kinship women will be notified by email and/or on KinNet). A password will be sent to all women; and if you don't get one, check with Linda (or us) and we'll get one to you so you can join in the fun.

The **first** step in joining in all the fun is to **log in**. If you have **never** logged on, or if you logged on and forget your password or your username, don't fret. This new system will remind you of it. Just go to www.sdakinship.org.

Click on the blue button in the middle of the screen and it will take you to the Kinship website.

Once you see the main Kinship page, look at the top right side of your screen. There you will fill in your username (the same one you use on KinNet) and your password (probably NOT the same one you use on KinNet). Then click the green icon.

**If this is your first time**, or if you **forgot your password** that was emailed to you, click on the yellow key and question mark (?) icon and you will be taken to a page to fill out.

Tell it what you forgot (username, password, or both), and fill in your email address that you have on file with Kinship and fill in the security code shown on the page as instructed.

Then **immediately** check your email inbox for an email with a temporary password. If it isn't in your inbox, check your spam folder as it often it ends up in there.

Well, that should be enough to get you started. We'd strongly recommend that you save this article for future reference until you are familiar with logging in. More info will be in upcoming *Connection* issues and *Kinship eNews*. We want as many folks as possible to start logging in to our/your website: www.sdakinship.org. Let's make it a site we are proud of!

**Use the new password to log on** (fill in your username and your temporary password and then click on the green lock icon). In some instances you may have to do this twice (yes, that is a bug that is being worked out). Once you are on, it will automatically take you to the **Kinship OnLine Members Area** page, and at the top where the login info was, it now says "Hi [Your Name]."

**If you have any questions**, just let us know; and we'll see you all online soon! 

Contact Floyd at kinnet@sdakinship.org

Contact Ruben at imru@sdakinship.org
Eighteen members attended last weekend! This was the largest group we have ever had. Our meetings were wonderful. We had many new attendees. Here are a few thanks for the effort people put in.

"Thank you for the welcome and I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the Kinship meeting this year. Looking forward to more meetings in the future." —from a New Zealand member.

"Hi Noel, Thanks for organising the weekend." —Patty, Women's Coordinator, Kinship Australia. “Thank you. I would like to thank you—the meeting has given me hope. Yes, I will be back next year.”

Our main speaker was Bronwyn Reid. She was born in Sydney and brought up as a Catholic. She spent her early childhood in Kings Cross where her mother Peggy ran the Metro Minerva Theatre and was a loyal friend of many in the gay community. Her father Johnny Reid spent 40 years working in Kings Cross for the underprivileged and homeless as well as running illegal gambling casinos, where he got Bronwyn her first job as a croupier. Both parents gave her a lifelong legacy of concern for social justice and a genuine care for those on the "outer fringes.”

After leaving her Catholic Convent school, Bronwyn travelled in South East Asia and, on returning to Australia, moved into the inner city squats in Darlinghurst, where her first son Benjamin was born. After searching for meaning and purpose in the counter culture and arts community, and protesting with Greenpeace to stop the whaling industry, she longed for a deeper understanding of the "bigger picture." She read the New Testament and discovered that Jesus is who He said He was and the One for whom she’d been looking.

Bronwyn walked into Woollahra Seventh-day Adventist church and joined a Bible study class in Old Testament and New Testament History. She was baptized in 1980. In 1983 she moved to Avondale College and completed her first teaching degree. Bronwyn taught English in the Highlands of PNG and returned to Avondale to complete a second teaching degree.

She married Stephen Koncz in 1987 and had two more children, Jordan and Jessica. After studies at Avondale, Bronwyn worked as an HIV/AIDS Educator in Hunter Region during the late 80s to stop both the spread of the virus and the homophobia that was virulent at that time. She then worked for two major New South Wales Health Services as Director for PR, Marketing and Fundraising, and raised over a million dollars for Gosford Hospital Children’s Ward.

Bronwyn completed an MA in Theology at La Sierra in the United States and trained over 350 clergy from all denominations to effectively deal with domestic violence in their churches. She completed her degree in Relationship Counseling in 2000 and has been in private practice working in the Central Coast / Hunter Region. Bronwyn loves to sing and dance. Her focus in life is "To comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable."
The Book and the Beach

Catherine Taylor

- September 25-27
This mini-Kampmeeting in Nags Head, North Carolina, was developed to give people a chance to discuss some of the questions or issues raised in various chapters of Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives. We gathered from as far away as Boston, MA, and Macon, GA. Half our group had never attended a Kinship event before. We spent the weekend walking the beaches, singing (what a group!), challenging the waves, and, of course, talking. We cooked, ate, and cleaned up family style. Everyone pitched in. One of my favorite memories was a group discussion/process of how to use the barbecue grills with cooking chicken. It took so long Ronaldo started practicing his operatic scales downstairs. We ate at 8:00 PM instead the expected two hours earlier, but it may always be a memory that brings a smile to my face.

We wanted to share with you some of our comments and thoughts on just one of the questions we discussed. You can get a sense of how our conversations traveled.

Where did the Seventh-day Adventist involvement with change ministries go wrong? Where did the change ministries go wrong?
The person heading it [Quest] was a predator. He abused people who were desperate enough to try his program. The church didn’t do any research to see if changing orientation is actually a possibility. They gave carte blanche to spend the money to change us but didn’t come up with any procedures on how it would be done.

One of the people that was in charge wasn’t affiliated with any particular Adventist group to evaluate his program and so it turned out to be a “house of horrors.” People were giving money but weren’t looking out how the money was being used.

First of all, by thinking we could change, by making incorrect assumptions about gay people.
“This thinking affected how my family treated me. To escape, I left home at 15 to live with my aunt. I never lost my faith even though my family didn’t think I was doing right. At least I am happy and healthy which is more important.”

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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.
"I think the church went wrong because it didn't/doesn't understand the character of God. God likes diversity. The clobber texts were about the abuse of power, not consensual relationships."

"Many of us prayed to be straight and God said “NO.” If He says no, maybe there is a reason for that answer. We, as a group, have to stand up and tell the church that we are being treated as abusive. It would be against God's plan for us to be silent. I didn’t think of God as my personal friend. I didn’t protest because I didn’t think I had a right to."

"I like the thought about the character of God. I/we often spend more time emphasizing fear of God rather than the love of God. This sort of negative energy affects how the doctrines are presented and the way members treat each."

"I think it has helped to be part of a black community that has dealt with black liberation. I go to the New York City Forum. Someone said there that, in the midst of everything, maybe we are all connected universally towards something better. I hope this is the case."

"I never experienced the horror stories I hear others tell. Maybe that is why I still go to church. I have a family that is very, very supportive of me. When I was partnered they accepted him and were warm to him. For me, as long as I have the support of my family, I don’t need anyone else to support me. When I was introduced to Kinship, I found a whole new family to support me. I believe God made me this way and He did it for a reason."

"The whole idea of fear drove me away from the church."

"Twelve-step programs teach us to be humble. We learn to understand that we do not have all the answers and “Who am I to tell you how to live your life?”"

Ben Kemena’s chapter talked about the timeline of what we have learned about homosexuality. On Alfred Kinsey’s scale there is a lot of variability. We live a very complex world. I remember hearing how we were considered mentally ill. When I’m confronted by uptight heterosexuals, I think they are just back on the educational timeline and don’t have a grasp of the issues yet."

"My family went to church. One day my daughter, maybe 6, came running in the house with a friend. She said get the Bible and show them where they’re wrong. The Adventist church I went to was arrogant. I think Satan causes the arrogance. Satan’s people can get people to hate homosexuals and get people to hate themselves. I got angry when people told me I could not go to church or couldn’t have God anymore."

"Now I know in part, and I will grow to know more fully."

"I think I allowed the evangelical conservatives to keep me out of church. I have just now decided to change that!"

"It’s wrong for me to allow you to treat me as inferior. I don’t see myself as being inferior to anyone. I can affect more change from within. That’s the way I look at my church. I think it’s good that they see someone who is gay and still positive for Christ. God says He will not put more on me then I can bear because He is there bearing it with me. I can get through anything. I don’t know if that makes me a springboard, that I’ll always bounce back, but sometimes I feel that way. This is my mission.”