connection

Dynamic Personality Traits

Kinship Older Adults – p12
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**WHO WE ARE...**
Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. is a nonprofit support organization. We minister to the spiritual, emotional, social, and physical well-being of current and former Seventh-day Adventists who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals and their families and friends. Kinship facilitates and promotes the understanding and affirmation of LGBTI Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three countries.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn or even mention homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God’s children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

**SUPPORT KINSHIP**
Seven-day Adventist Kinship operates primarily on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBTI Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)

**KINSHIP**
PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA
or visit Kinship’s website at: www.sdakinship.org.
The Jesus Mark Knew

Mark begins with the preaching of John the Baptist, a voice announcing Jesus from the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance. The truth comes from the edges of society. Jesus’ reality is affirmed and announced on the margins, where people are ready to understand and to ask new questions. The establishment at the center is seldom ready for the truth because it’s got too much to protect; it has bought into the system. As Walter Brueggeman says, “the home of hope is hurt.”

Remember that John the Baptist’s message of repentance was an invitation to a turned-around life, letting go—downward mobility, as some call it today. John wore a garment of camel hair, and he lived on locusts and wild honey—he identified with the poor and marginalized, as we see Jesus doing. John is so free from his own agenda, religious and cultural system, and ego. He’s able to point beyond himself. He’s not trying to gather people to himself—which is why he becomes the proto-evangelist—pointing beyond himself and his own ministry.

One can only conclude that Mark began in this way, not just because it was historically true, but because it mirrored his own journey. Some scholars today, especially with new information from the Gnostic Gospels, think that the anonymous man who “runs away naked” in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:50-52) is very likely Mark himself. He is quietly admitting that he also “deserted him” (verse 50) and ran from suffering and humiliation. His “nakedness” is not just his but ours too.

Adapted from The Four Gospels; http://store.cacradicalgrace.org
Sometimes I feel discouraged,  
And think my work’s in vain,  
But then the Holy Spirit  
Revives my soul again.

Karen Wetherell

Often I relate to the words of this well-known spiritual. Today I found a story I have often read but not associated with my own life.

At the end of the time when Moses led the Children of Israel to the Promised Land, God told him to pay the people of Midian back for what Balak had done to Israel. God told Moses he would then join the members of his family who had died. Israel went to battle against Midian with 1,000 men from each of the 12 tribes. Phineas the priest went along with them. They have a successful, horrid massacre killing all the men (including Balaam, who had tried to curse them but was only allowed by God to have blessings come out of his mouth). They burned Midianite towns, capturing all the women, children, and animals and later, killing the children and all women who had had sex.

Battle over, Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh came to Moses with a plan. They had not yet crossed the Jordan to conquer Canaan but found the land on the east side of the Jordan looking pretty good. They thought, “We have a lot of women, children, animals, etc., and this land is looking like a nice place to settle.” Some of what they have accumulated must have just come from the plunder of Midian so I can only imagine the amount of livestock in their possession. They approached Moses with a request to settle their families and their belongings where they were.

It appears they had thought this plan out as they approached Moses, because the first words out of their mouths are reminding him of what they have just accomplished. “We hope you are pleased with us.” As they explained their request we come to the first place in the story where these folks are misunderstood. It appears as if Moses assumed the worst. He spoke to them as if they were cowards. He spoke as if they were trying to get out of hard work, as if these tribes want the easy life, as if they were willing to avoid carrying their load. He even compared them to the spies who counseled the people not to go and take the land the Lord had promised to them. And then the leader of God’s people called these men a bunch of sinners! He told them they were making God angry. Was Moses speaking for God at this time? No! Was he mistaken regarding their hearts and motives? Yes!

After listening to his diatribe, the spokesmen for these two-and-a-half tribes very kindly responded: “We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, but we will take up arms, ready to go before the people of Israel, until we have brought them to their place. And our little ones shall live in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return to our homes until
each of the people of Israel has gained his inheritance. For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance has come to us on this side of the Jordan to the east” (Numbers 32:16-19). The tribal leaders even went so far as to say they were willing to lead the charge. These are not the words of cowards. Moses accepted their terms and they all lived happily ever after. Oh wait, there is another story.

After Moses’ death Joshua took over. He led the people in battle, sought the Lord’s guidance, and succeeded as long as he followed God’s plan.

Finally, the time came to cross the Jordan and conquer Canaan. Joshua sent his officers out: “Go through the camp and tell the people, ‘Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the Lord your God is giving you for your own’” (Joshua 1:11). He then spoke to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh: “Remember the command that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you after he said, ‘The Lord your God will give you rest by giving you this land.’ Your wives, your children, and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan; but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them until the Lord gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the Lord your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise.” Not only do these spokesmen reaffirm their promise to fight, they go on to cross the Jordan in front of the rest of the Israelites, just as they had agreed.

When the first phase of Canaan’s conquest came to an end, Joshua called the spokesmen for the two-and-a-half tribes once again. He let them know he was pleased with their fulfilled promises, blessed them, and sent them on their way.

On their way to Canaan, priests stepped into the Jordan with the Ark of the Covenant, the water parted, and Israel crossed the river on dry land. When these guys headed back home, we aren’t told how they got across. Did God part the water again? We don’t know. But we do know, when they got to the Jordan, they come up with this great plan to build an altar. This put the rest of the Israelites in an uproar. “The whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them” (Joshua 22:12). Why? Because once again, they made assumptions. And guess who was chosen as a spokesperson for the other tribes? Good ol’ Phineas. Along with Phineas, they sent the head of each of the tribes settling on the West side of the Jordan.

What is the first thing they say? “How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this?” Remember Moses calling them a bunch of sinners. Again, these are the leaders of God’s people. Again, they are not speaking for God.

Once again, after listening patiently, the spokesmen gently explain. “The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the Lord, do not spare us this day. If we have built our own altar to turn away from the Lord and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it, may the Lord himself call us to account. No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, ‘What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? The Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the Lord.’ So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord. That is why we said, ‘Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices. On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, You have no share in the Lord.’ And we said, ‘If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord’s altar, which our ancestors built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you’” (Joshua 22:22-29).

They did not build this altar to worship other gods. They built this altar for the exact opposite reason. Should the Israelites on the west bank ever claim that these two-and-a-half tribes have nothing to do with the God of Israel, this altar was to be a reminder that He was their God, too!

There is a balm in Gilead
To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead
To heal the sin-sick soul.

Why have I quoted this famous spiritual? Because guess where the Reubenite, Gadites and half-tribe of Manasseh wanted to settle. You may have figured that out by now: Gilead. So when I sometimes feel discouraged, when my spiritual leaders admonish me and say they are speaking for God in their harsh words against me, I remember this story and know it is not my God speaking. And I know that there is a balm in misunderstood places, in Gilead. ▽
We would like to introduce you to...
...some of us who are in Kinship’s leadership positions

Naveen Jonathan
I was born in Silver Spring, Maryland, the first American born into my Indian family. I grew up as an Adventist in the Washington DC area and attended Adventist schools my entire life: Sligo, Takoma Academy, Columbia Union College, and Loma Linda University. My work includes being an Assistant Professor of Psychology and Director of the Frances Smith Center for Individual and Family Therapy at Chapman University. I am a licensed marriage and family therapist in private practice in Santa Ana.

When I am not working I enjoy traveling, shopping, music, television, movies, reading, and aviation. My favorite color is green. I like music from the eighties, movies like *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, books like *The Unknown Errors of our Lives*, and Thai food. I tend to be really busy with work and commitments to the American Association for Marriage & Family Therapy. In my free time, I love to travel up and down the California Coast. I am a big beach guy and just love the water and the sand.

In terms of my spiritual journey, my conversations with God in prayer are most important. I learned about Kinship by doing an internet search. This amazing community has given me friends with whom I love to fellowship. I also love the mission of Kinship. It’s the reason I have been involved in leadership roles such as the IMRU Coordinator, Kampmeeting Coordinator, and the current Vice-president of the organization.

My work for Kinship now focuses on the work of the Member Services Committee, which I chair, and on which I work with four other incredible leaders. We examine the services provided to our members, consider how to improve them, and monitor those services to make sure they are running smoothly. We are looking for people who are willing to be chapter leaders and regional coordinators all over the world. We continue to research and develop ways to support our current leaders and coordinators and to provide them with tools they need to fill their positions.

Member Services is the first group people contact when they are interested in Kinship or when they have questions about our organization. Yolanda, Linda, Floyd, and Ruben are remarkable people; and I am blessed to share this team with them.

Floyd Poenitz
I grew up in a predominantly German farming community in south central Texas. We only spoke German at home and I learned English when I went to school for first grade. My grandfather had converted to Adventism after he arrived in Texas from Germany, and my mom became an Adventist after she married my dad. Grades 1-12 were in public school; and then for college I attended Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas. My public school years were much more conservative than the Adventist college experience. It was then that I learned that Adventism came in a variety of flavors.

For the past 15 years I have been self-employed full time as a massage therapist. I enjoy doing genealogy research for my family. I love people and I love to study them to help me understand why we act and react as we do. Languages and European cultures fascinate me. I enjoy listening to German oldies and Volksmusik. I am also an avid fan of two-stepping to American country music.

My favorite color is blue. I don’t know why; it just always has been the color I prefer. My favorite movies are...well, that’s easy; anything that shows a shirtless guy (LOL). I like reading about religions and belief systems through the years. But my favorite book/series is the WICKED (as in OZ) series. There is so much more to that series than just a casual read. It is crammed full of political and religious statements and provocative thinking. I think the series should be a required read for everyone. I like Italian food. The best pizzas in the world are in Germany, in Cologne to be specific. My actual favorite item to eat is a cheese sandwich with lettuce, tomatoes, and mayo. Well, the fries with mayo in Amsterdam are pretty delicious, as well.

I first heard about Kinship during my freshman year in college. Someone put a flyer under all the dorm room doors. Out of fear, I promptly threw it away and forgot about it. Later a gay friend told me...
about an ad in the back of the local gay magazine. That is when I first made contact. Kinship has been very helpful. This organization gives me a structure where I can give back to my gay Adventist friends and those coming after me.

I’ve been with my partner Jeff for over 8 years. If it is ever legal to get married in Texas, we will make it a legal relationship. We met at the local gay country bar.

The most important thing about my spirituality is my relationship with God and the decision to be thankful for each curve in the road with which He blesses me.

When I think about the Kinship community I am impressed with how much we need each and every member and ally to complete the diverse picture we represent. Together we can make a difference.

Here are some of the things that come to mind regarding what I do for SDA Kinship. As part of the Member Services Team, I am responsible for managing the member database. This includes processing new members, notifying the appropriate coordinators, sending out membership lists to the coordinators, creating labels for mailings, and working with the webmaster to make sure that all data is in sync. I work with Ruben and Naveen to facilitate communication between the coordinators in the United States (U.S.) and to provide the needed info from the database to help them work with the coordinators in making the U.S. regions more active.

As chair of the International Growth and Development committee, I work with all the coordinators outside of the U.S. to promote a Kinship presence in all areas of the world. My focus is to create leadership teams where we have pockets of several members in a geographical area. This focus also includes working with the leadership teams as well as pastors and educators around the world to create a supportive straight alliance. Sometimes this translates into creating a straight advisory group to assist Kinship with growth and promoting education where possible. I work to ensure that all leadership teams have access to all the resources Kinship has available and to strengthen the systems that help us all work together as one organization.

I create electronic forums to help members to communicate with each other and keep in touch via cyber methods. With technology shifts, our KinNet discussion forum has morphed into Facebook groups and Twitter announcements. I answer and distribute all incoming electronic mail that comes to Kinship from the website.

Working with Carrol Grady and Sharlett Reinke, I promote the Friends and Family portion of SDA Kinship by assisting in the Someone-To-Talk-To informational booth at large Adventist conventions.

[Editor’s Note. Floyd would not write this but Catherine believes his personality and ability to deal with those who disagree with Kinship help break down barriers and promote dialogue.]

Other opportunities include being Region 5 (Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas) coordinator, member of the Connection proofreading team, advisor for the Kampmeeting Committee, consultant to the director of Kinship Youth Services, and member of the Publications Committee and Web Team.

Brian Durham

I am a fifth-generation Adventist who grew up in a completely Adventist family. I did not realize there were other religions until well into elementary school. My family resided in Southern New Jersey until we relocated to Maryland when I was 9 years old. I attended Blue Mountain Academy and Columbia Union College. I am currently working as a Software Application Trainer for George Washington University where I am also a doctoral student in Education: Curriculum and Instruction.

My hobbies and interests include sleeping, travel, friends, and learning. My favorite color is orange. I like contemporary Christian music, anything from the ‘80s, and country. My favorite movies are The First Wives Club and Mary Poppins. My favorite book is B-Boy Blues. My favorite foods are Pad Thai, Chicken Parmesan, and General Tso’s Tofu.

I learned about Kinship in 1996 during my years at Columbia Union College. Kinship is a place I can go where people understand the complexities of being Adventist and gay. Through it I have made the many friends who have stuck with me through various trials.

I am the proud father of Caitlynne who turned one at the beginning of March.

As I think about my spiritual journey I am struck by the principles behind the Ten Commandments. They fall into two distinct categories: “Love for God” and “Love for your neighbor.” So, logically, all Christian values and beliefs should fall into these two groups. I love to think of the simplicity of God.

I’ve been treasurer of Kinship for almost two years. I have worked hard to make sure that the finances of Kinship remain clear and concise to all of our members.
I was born in Denver, Colorado. My parents weren’t Adventists when I was born, but my mother became an Adventist when she was pregnant with my younger brother. Because both of my parents were active in the church choir, many members assumed my father was a member. When I was preparing for baptism, I refused to be baptized until my father could join me, the beginning of my work as an evangelist.

I attended Mile High Academy and was in its second graduating class. During my senior year, I was asked by the principal to serve as chaplain for the student association. Because I had never done any public speaking I was scared to death but agreed. During that year our Week of Prayer speaker challenged us to come forward if we would be willing to be a pastor. I went forward. I was willing but was planning on being a heart surgeon. I felt safe from any real possibility of pastoring. The following year that all changed when I asked for a sign of what God wanted me to do. I served in that profession for many years.

I currently work as a financial consultant and a social justice consultant. I manage investments for clients and I’m preparing to write grants. I enjoy studying my family history. I love music and it has become a source of income as well as an interest. I have always been interested in health and now work to understand how I can stay healthy. I love to travel and have been to 48 states and 27 countries.

Purple is my favorite color. It is the royal one. My grandmother told me I was related to English royalty and my spiritual heritage tells me I am a child of the King of the Universe.

I heard about Kinship for many years before coming to my first event. Even though that event was a disaster, several years later I attended an afternoon at Kampmeeting to hear about the clobber texts. I’ve been attending since. Because Kinship has been a real blessing to me, now I want to pass on that blessing to others.

My husband Peter and I were married in 2008 after nine years in our relationship. I have a son and three grandchildren. My journey has not been simple, but every experience has been an adventure that has helped me to mature. I am very grateful for my husband, my family, Kinship, and my church.

I’m working on connecting with students and faculty to help develop Gay-Straight Alliances and Safe Place programs. I am also focused on creating an anti-bullying program for those in Adventist elementary schools and academies. I stay busy with several positions at the Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church and with four (and sometimes more) choral groups.

...grew up in Hemet, California. She attended Loma Linda Academy and La Sierra College, where she graduated in 1967. Her first marriage was to David Hegarty who is now the senior staff organist at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco. She has two grown children from her second marriage, a grandson who was born on the Eve of Rosh Hashanah in 2010, and another grandson who was expected on Passover 2012 but was born on April 2.

Floyd Pönitz in Region 5 (Texas) was her first Kinship contact. She says, “I think the most important things about Kinship are that we offer a safe haven for gay Adventists and ex-Adventists; make resources and education on gay issues available for members, families, and church members; and provide spiritual and emotional support.”

As Kinship’s Communications Director, Jacquie coordinates Kinship’s internal and external communications. This means she, with a lot of technical savvy from webmaster Linda Wright, edits and distributes the electronic Kinship eNews you get each month, as well as chapter and regional electronic newsletters, including her own Region 8 News & Views (northern California) under region coordinator Obed Vazquez. She also assists in proofreading for the Connection, designs the program booklets for Kampmeeting, and, together with editor Catherine Taylor, monitors the media releases required for publication of articles and photos in the Connection and Kinship’s newest electronic newsletter for Adventist clergy and educators, “Who Cares? We Do!”

Jacquie and her partner Linda Wright have lived together in the San Francisco Bay Area since 1996.
and had a commitment ceremony during Kamp-meeting 2004 at Menucha, near Portland. In January 2009, they adopted a Chihuahua named Barley who goes everywhere with his two moms, including Kin-ship meetings.

Catherine Taylor

My port of entry was Valley Forge, Pennsyl- vania. At the time of my arrival women were not allowed to remain on active duty in the military after child- birth; my mother was made a reserve army nurse. Because of her “job shift” and an ob- vious need for support, my aunt and uncle picked us up and moved us with them to Newport News, Virginia, when I was two days old. I lived there for the first three years of my life. There I was “imprinted” with my love of the Boston Red Sox as my uncle listened to them on radio (guess where he spent his childhood) and of dramatic storms (I spent the visit of Hurricane Hazel with my nose pressed to the window in fascination, to my family’s consternation). When my mother moved herself and me to her home area of California it became quite apparent that her role as a single mother was hard on both of us. I didn’t realize it clearly at the time, but I spent the rest of my child- hood yearning to go “home” to Virginia.

My family was an ecumenical mix of Abrahamic faiths: Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith. The last, my grandmother’s faith tradition, had beliefs very similar to Seventh-day Adventists (without the seventh day or Ellen White). My mother told me she liked working with Seventh-day Adventists because those doctors did not access the hospital pharmaceutical cabinet for their personal needs or interests. That may have been why, in a time the public schools went to half-day sessions, she investigated Bakersfield Junior Academy as a place for me to attend.

It turned out that Mrs. Maxim, the first-grade reading teacher, had the best program in Kern Coun- try. Thus I met Adventists. My first sense of them is my very young appreciation that they would not make me eat meat (a food I hear I’ve hated since infancy). I also remember the awful taste of their meat analogs. I remember swimming parties at doctors’ houses, the kindness of Mrs. Maxim and Mrs. Kizzlar, Busy Bees polishing shoes for children in some foreign country, talking with fellow students on leave from a remarkably interesting place called Thailand, the class issues between doctors’ children and the rest of us, and my love of the Bible Story books my mother got from a man who appeared at our door one day.

When I was almost 10 my mother married and we moved to a Los Angeles beach suburb. I attended public schools from that point on. I received my de- gree in history/bi-lingual education from UCLA and my masters degree in social work from the University of Connecticut. With a few breaks over a ten-year period I continued to attend, then be a member of, local Adventist churches.

I am a family therapist who works with foci on systems, trauma, the development of benevolent contexts, and resiliency. My Adventist lessons on health and natural remedies come in handy on a regular basis. I find it fascinating that so many of my clients are relieved to discover and enthusiastically utilize nutrition options we thought were burdensome when I was younger. I have supervised staff working in school systems, developed outdoor therapeutic programs, worked with a client program that made a movie, taught workshops at the Smith College Social Work summer conferences, and taken those clients to international conferences to present their projects. Generally I have “Forest Gump-ed” my entire career (so I guess that had better be listed as one of my favorite movies in a paragraph or two). I feel blessed. Right now I work in an interesting private practice clinic with great people and a chance to work with a diverse population, including the military families who are so much a part of this area.

I like gardening, swimming, dog walking, bicycle riding, traveling, reading, playing word games, writ- ing, editing (good thing since I edit this newsletter), teaching biblical topics, cooking, having long-winded and wandering conversations with friends over good meals, and tai chi. I guess Kinship might be consid- ered a hobby and/or interest. Even in my non-pro- fessional world, I am fascinated with the notion and process of creating benevolent contexts, and this is certainly what we are about.

My favorite color is green—any kind of green ex- cept for the lime green that reminds my family of the color my mother turned when she had hepatitis.

Music, oy. I like the Hallelujah Chorus, Pachelbel’s Canon in C Major (once it quit running on com- mercials), Grieg’s In the Hall of the Mountain King, and Ravel’s arrangement of Mussorgsky’s composition, Pictures at an Exhibition. I like the Beatles—every- thing they ever wrote. I like the Moody Blues and Pink Floyd, Santana, U2, Jefferson Airplane/Starship, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell, Bonnie and Delaney,

Books – that’s a bit difficult to explain. When I was six years old I read a horse book called *Grey Eagle*, clutched it to the location of my future bosom, and promised myself that *Grey Eagle* would always be my favorite book. So there, promise kept. Other childhood favorites were *A Wrinkle in Time*, *Horton Hears A Who* and anything about animals where the creature did not die in the end. The Bible is my favorite collection of books. I am constantly taught there. I like *Ministry of Healing*, the *Narnia* series, the *Brother Cadfael* series, *The Physician* by Noah Gordon, *The Shipping News*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, historical mysteries, Hamish MacBeth. I become so drawn into stories that I have to screen what I read. I yell at Pilate to listen to his wife, at Othello to believe Desdemona, at Spock to avoid that door. I devoured everything by William Faulkner. Oh yes… *Three Cups of Tea* and *Stones into Schools*. (I liked them too, but I presume you know the author has been discredited for considerable fiction presented as truth in these books.)

For reasons you will understand if you read the preceding sentences, going to the movies with me can be an iffy experience. I talk to the screen and the characters on it. Seeing *Old Yeller* taught me to vet my movies. Hence, I have not seen *Titanic* or *Dancing with Wolves*. My favorites: *Chariots of Fire*, *Field of Dreams*, *Casa Blanca*, Schindler’s List, *Star Wars*, *An American President*, *Billy Jack*, *Lord of the Rings*, *October Sky*, *The Bird Cage*, and *La Cage aux Folles*. My schedule is so odd that my primary theater these days is an airplane. Oh, I like those dreadful B movie series like Sherlock Holmes and the Three Musketeers. I think Meryl Streep is one of the best actresses ever but I am careful with her because once I almost drove off the road weeping while coming home from *Silkwood*.

My favorite foods are blueberries, corn on the cob, roasted pecans, guacamole, carob covered peanut clusters – basically bird seed.

I first heard of Kinship in 1981 when a colleague of mine poked her head around the partition to my cubical and said “There’s this ad in the back of *Ms Magazine* that says something about an organization for gay and lesbian Seventh-day Adventists. Isn’t that you?” Lyn Ennis put a face and a welcome to the organization when she traveled from wherever she was living at the time to my house in Massachusetts. Bruce and Eddie, Craig Scott, Terre Flowers, David Thaxton, and Ron Lawson expanded the welcome at regional meetings and Ron finally got me to a Kamp-meeting in 1991. Through them I met Larry Geraty whose Biblical scholarship was invaluable to me, who so needed the texts. To end my isolation, confusion, self doubt, and guilt while sending me on a journey toward wholeness and community, is a debt I cannot repay. It is a grace.

I met my wife Karen through Rom Wilder, who had been the editor of the *Connection* when I was writing articles for her. We live with my aunt and uncle and two dogs in southern Virginia. I have a mix of amazing friends from church, work, community organizing days, and from Kinship. My little congregation in New England used to fold the *Connections* while having prayer meeting. The quite conservative congregation with whom I worship in Virginia is somehow figuring out a way to wrap me into their midst. That’s a story in progress so may write more about it a later time. Thanks to Floyd Poenitz, Dave Ferguson, and Mitch Henson my congregational membership is tucked safely into the welcoming arms of the Glendale City Church.

The most important thing about my spiritual journey is to understand more deeply the character of God and to share my understanding with others. I enjoy seeing what doors God opens up.

What I do for Kinship... Because of the *Connection*, I am one of the most public faces in this organization. Most of you probably already know what I do. Along with editing this newsletter that is beloved to me, I am a reporter for the monthly *eNews*, convener of the Book and the Beach and Vermont mini-Kampmeetings, co-coordinator for Region One, writer of *Eden’s Gifts* (the little Bible study pamphlet on the clobber texts), and vagabond who enjoys visiting and supporting Kinship events and endeavors.\[top]
Kinship Youth Interests – Ronoldo Appleton

I continue to welcome young adults to Kinship and offer resources. Recently, I sent out emails to region and chapter coordinators in the United States and Canada, each containing a list of members in the respective region. I asked each coordinator to contact each member and hopefully engage him or her, as well as consider planning youth-oriented programs in his/her region or chapter. I hope to get some feed back about this in the near future.

In April, I will send similar messages to non-North America coordinators. At the last board meeting I requested that we include programs specific to Kinship’s youth membership. This is not to exclude “non-youth” but rather to attract youth to Kampmeeting. Since then, I have asked Region 2 member, Reggie, to lead a night of line-dancing at Kampmeeting, which would stand as one of such programs. We are working on ways to attract more young adult members to Kampmeeting.

Church Relations – Terry Rice

We are working on building a Safe Places program for Adventist schools. The film Seventh-Gay Adventists is premiering now and we are enjoying the conversations that are happening at the screenings.

Webmaster – Linda Wright

After almost a year of unsatisfactory website performance we changed our website hosting to a completely dedicated server run by a company in San Diego. The real problem was that we had too much traffic for the shared VPS server that we were on. As the website has developed and our viewers have increased, the technical demands have skyrocketed! Since the change in late January 2012 we have had 100% uptime and greater speed for sdakinship.org which has resulted in a much improved viewer experience on our website and has made things much faster and better for Floyd and me!

As part of the website redesign and rebuild we are now using an event booking component that is working well and is providing good tracking of registrations/payments for events and sends notifications for each registration to the event planners. Brian and I are working on an improved payment system that will either eliminate PayPal or at least provide another payment option.

The electronic voting has gone really well the past 2 years and we expect it to continue to do so. We are striving to make all of our members able to participate in the election process so that they can feel a part of the organization.

Since January 2012 we have sent out 26 electronic newsletters/announcements to our members in the form of eNews, Connection announcements, and regional newsletters. We continue to look for ways to provide more and better support via the website, and welcome your thoughts and ideas.
Women of Kinship – Karen Wetherell (Women’s Interests)

I am currently working on planning women’s weekend before Kampmeeting. We will be staying at the Embassy Suites in Alexandria, Virginia, and going on a Potomac River boat cruise that stops and tours Mount Vernon. Since the boat cruise does not run on Mondays, we are planning to arrive on Friday evening, have worship on Sabbath, and gather for the boat tour on Sunday. Monday will be a free day for everyone to go to the National Zoo, Smithsonian, or whatever interests them.

The women’s chats have been going very well. Cheri Lacey is now the hostess. She does a great job and is very positive and encouraging to all who come. She has a topic prepared every week and sometimes we discuss that and sometimes we end up talking about something that comes up in the chat. We frequently have women appear that we have never heard from before. It is a great way for them to get their feet wet in the organization, as everyone else in the chat room is wonderful at welcoming them and reaching out.

The women’s Facebook page does not seem to be quite as active as it was when first started. I am still so appreciative that this is such a safe, supportive place also for women to reach out. There are often women we don’t hear from or don’t know that well that come here and tell us what is on their hearts and ask for encouragement or counsel, and the response is always tremendous.

Walla Walla, Washington Chapter – Terry Rice

On March 27, 2012, Walla Walla Valley Kinship hosted a presentation from two members of SDA Kinship International’s Church Relations Team. Dr. John Wallace, church relations representative for Australia, shared an update on what is going on in Australia and the progress made there, and the challenges of the Australian Seventh-day Adventist Church during the national political campaign regarding same-sex marriage. I gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Kinship Advisory Council held in Loma Linda, California, on February 3, 2012.

Kinship Older Adults

Ren Reynolds, coordinator

Traditional research on personality traits has assumed that such traits are stable over the life course. Thus, if one were neurotic as a young person, one would remain nervous and “stressed out” over the life span. Or if one were disorganized, sloppy, and undisciplined in their 30s, they would remain the perpetual slob. The five personality traits centering this tradition are extraversion (outgoingness), neuroticism, conscientiousness (the anti-slob-factor), agreeableness, and openness to experience.

However, recent thinking and research challenge this tradition. The interest here is in the possibility that these traits are dynamic, not static, and can change, albeit slowly, over the life course. This new line of thinking has important implications for aging, and especially for issues of health and longevity. Various studies have reported on research linking personality traits with health. Such research suggested, for example, that conscientiousness, in particular, is positively related to both health and longevity, while neuroticism will have negative consequences. And, if you happen to be low in conscientiousness and high in neuroticism, you might consider yourself as more or less “doomed.”

The current thinking gives reason for optimism: we can change our personalities! In this major study, over 7,000 non-institutionalized U.S. residents be-
Fearless Faith—Believing Without Fear

**European KINSHIP Meeting**
August 30 to September 3
Odenwald – Germany

€ 273/€ 233 p.p. (single/double bedroom; full board)

Our special guest and lecturer is Johann Gerhardt, M.Div., D.Min., Professor emeritus of Friedensau Adventist University. Dr. Gerhardt is a renowned theologian, teacher and author in European Adventism. Before his retirement in 2011 he served as President of Friedensau Adventist University.


*(Kinship Older Adults)*

Scores on these personality traits were correlated with three health measures: self-rated health, self-reported blood pressure, and number of days limited at work or home due to physical health reasons. Across all three measures higher levels of conscientiousness predicted better health outcomes; higher levels of neuroticism predicted poorer outcomes. Higher levels of extraversion predicted better self-rated health and fewer health-related work reductions. Higher levels of openness predicted fewer work-related missed days. Higher levels of agreeableness (the “nice” factor) predicted poorer health outcomes. In addition, however, the study also provided evidence that long-term change in these personality indicators was also related to physical health. Many people did improve in the positive personality traits (conscientiousness and extraversion); and, consequently, they also rated themselves as having better health. This relationship leads to questions related to change itself. Why do people change over time? Who changes over time? How might individuals learn to lessen their anxiety, for example, or become more socially outgoing, as they age? How can people be encouraged to be more caring of their physical health and less likely to do harmful things to themselves? Interestingly, how might some people benefit from learning to be a bit less “nice”? It seems that being too agreeable has some costs as well as benefits. This research opens up many challenging and important questions.


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You are Invited to

**Book and the Beach Mini-Kampmeeting**
Kinship at the Ocean! – September 20-23, 2012

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

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

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

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

**Where**
Old Oregon Inlet Road
Nags Head, NC 27959

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

**Payment due** On or before September 8, 2012. Payment secures your reservation!

**More information** Email Catherine at bookandbeach@sdakinship.org

Sleep - Here's an important strategy to live younger and longer: get enough sleep. Insomnia – or even just getting less than 6 hours of good sleep a night – increases your risk of heart disease, stroke, and viral infections, but snoozing 6½ to 7½ hours can make your RealAge younger. Did you know humans die earlier without sleep than they do without food? Fortunately, food may hold the solution to getting the ZZZs you need. A couple of hours before bedtime, curl up with one of the following sleepy-time snacks that get your brain to release sleep-friendly chemicals.

Almonds - A handful contains muscle-relaxing magnesium and sleep-inducing tryptophan, which increases the brain's level of feel-good serotonin.

Bananas - Beneath the peel is a trifecta of soothers: serotonin, magnesium, and melatonin, your body’s natural sleep regulator.

Skim Milk - Mom was right – a warm glassful will help you sleep better. The milk's tryptophan has a sedating effect. Plus, its calcium that helps your brain use that tryptophan.

Oatmeal - Oats are rich in sleep-regulating melatonin. If you drizzle just a little honey on top, it tells your brain to turn off orexin, a neuropeptide linked to alertness.

Whole Wheat Bread - A slice of toast dotted with banana slices releases insulin, which helps tryptophan get to your brain. There it changes into serotonin and whispers, "Sweet dreams."

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Six Must-Eat Foods for a Healthy Heart

To help lower cholesterol and high blood pressure, and prevent inflammation and arterial aging, eat these delicious foods:

1. **Strawberries** or just about any other colorful fruit or veggie you can find. Why? Because fruits and vegetables like red grapes, cranberries, oranges, plums, and tomatoes are bursting with flavonoids – antioxidants that help quell inflammation. And that's a good thing, because inflammation is one of the many processes involved in heart disease. Eat them fresh – sliced or whole. What could be easier? Aim for 2 1/2 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit a day.

2. **Rye bread** or any other grain product made from whole grains. Whole-grain breads and cereals, brown rice, quinoa, flaxseeds, and whole soybeans are full of heart-protective fiber and magnesium that can help keep your cholesterol and blood pressure in a healthy range. Try for six or more daily servings of whole grains.

3. **Avocado** or other healthy vegetable-based fats. Use mashed avocado, olive oil, and nut butters in place of unhealthful fats. Mashed avocado makes
a good sandwich spread if you mix it with a little salsa. And olive oil is a great butter substitute when you’re sautéing veggies. Use nut butters and peanut butter in place of butter and cream cheese. Substitutions like these are delicious ways to bring down "bad" LDL cholesterol and boost the "good" HDL kind. Just remember to limit portion size as you would with any other oils or fats.

4. **Salmon** or other fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids. A strong body of research shows that eating fish (as long as it’s not fried) helps lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, arrhythmia, high triglycerides, arterial plaque buildup, and inflammation in your arteries. Opt for three portions per week of oily fish rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

5. **Nuts** not only make healthy nut butters, but they make a great snack, too. And eating nuts regularly can cut your risk of heart disease by 20% to 60%. Almonds, pistachios, and especially walnuts are loaded with heart-friendly fats and are a great source of vegetable protein. Just stick to one handful per day to keep your calorie count down.

6. **Dark chocolate** — see, you don't have to avoid sweets entirely. In fact, a little dark chocolate every day is good for your heart. 

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

Plan your travel! Pack your bags! Head for Northern Virginia and Washington DC!
It is almost time for our annual gathering, Women & Children First, July 13-16.
We're having the option of a longer time together because our primary group
adventure will be a six-hour Visiting Mount Vernon by Boat tour on Sunday.
We're continuing our tradition of group time on the water. Remember Lake
George? Washington state? Catalina Island?

We will be staying at the Embassy Suites in Old Alexandria, VA. The fee will be $250/person
since we will be there two extra nights. All rooms have king beds so whoever books first, that doesn't have a designated roommate, will be
assigned the bed and the second person in the room will get the sofa bed couch. We will
have SS/Church Sabbath morning. Sunday we will be taking a Potomac River Boat
Cruise that will stop at Mt. Vernon where we can get off and explore. There is a Metro
station directly across from the hotel, a masseuse 2 blocks away, an IMAX theatre, and
more.

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