"Many LGBTQ folks like myself grew up in religious environments that were harmful. Seeing this film was a healing experience for me. It simultaneously connected me with painful experiences of my past, while bringing a sense of hope and redemption. I know a number of people who would be similarly impacted. I am already advocating that they see it the first chance they get.”
—EM
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- Region 2 (MD, VA, WV, NC, DE, DC): Yolanda Elliott, region2@sdakinship.org
- Region 3 (TN, AL, MS, GA, SC, FL): region3@sdakinship.org
- Region 4 (MN, IA, MO, WI, MI, IL, IN, OH, KY): Claire Sommers, region4@sdakinship.org
- Region 5 (AR, KS, LA, OK, TX): Floyd Pönitz, region5@sdakinship.org
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- Region 8 (NV, HI, CA zip 93600+): Obed Vazquez-Ortiz, region8@sdakinship.org
- Region 9 (AZ, CA zip 93599-): Ruben López, region9@sdakinship.org

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- Older Adults: Ren Reynolds, olderadult@sdakinship.org
- IMRU? (Young Adults Under 30): Ronoldo Appleton (USA, world), imru@sdakinship.org
- Itamar Ahsman (EU), kinshipireland_imru@sdakinship.org
- Webmaster: Linda Wright, webadmin@sdakinship.org

### CHAPLAIN
- Marcos Apolonio, chaplain@sdakinship.org

### 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 through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

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

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

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

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**Seventh-day Adventist Kinship**

PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA

or visit Kinship's website at: www.sdakinship.org.


**From the Editor**

Things are cooking! This American phrase is a way of saying there is a lot going on and most of it is exciting! Normally I worry that the July issue is going to be filled with administrative trivia and necessary business and that you all will use it for bedtime reading to lull yourself to sleep. Then I got Ruud’s article about the meeting of churches in The Netherlands, Daneen’s description of the screenings of *Seventh-Gay Adventists*, Mike’s report of a cyberforum discussion at Newbold College on same sex marriage, Dave’s news about a meeting of Adventist college gay-straight alliances, the list Marcos sent of some speakers who will join us at Kampmeeting this month, and the bios of the people who are running for Kinship offices. Wow. And this does not even include the pictures you will see of the Kinship booth at Dutch Open Day Campmeeting, notes about the upcoming European Kinship Meeting, the Book and Beach discussion weekend, and Vermont mini-Kampmeeting peeking over the calendar’s horizon. Oh, and I haven’t even mentioned the gay pride parades. We’ll try to share some photos of U.S. Region 2 and their float. Ah, yes, Kinship Australia is planning their Kampmeeting; but they are so busy I have a difficult time getting them to write. Rena in Kenya is working on Kampmeeting Africa. Ita and his team in Brazil are participating in Pride and other events. Kinship’s other Brazilian Ita is working to build connection between younger Kinship members in Europe. Those of us who felt so isolated as we came out or at different spots on our journey, are delighted that the movement continues to build as we work to replace loneliness with community, denigration with support, expulsion with safety and inclusion, despair with hope. Wherever you live, whoever you speak to, in whatever ways you share your increasingly honest and whole life, you are part of this. Keep in touch with us. Tell us your story. Use the internet. Ask for help. Offer help. But most of all, take good care of yourself, for you are infinitely valuable.

*Catherine*

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**Forum at Newbold College – Same Sex Marriage**

I just arrived home after an exhausting 1,000-mile round trip. It was unbearably busy on the trains (long holiday weekend) and in central London (with the Queen’s Jubilee celebrations in full swing). By contrast the peace of Newbold College was exquisitely beautiful and most welcome. I was glad I decided to go in person instead of being video-linked. I think it gave great credibility as well as the opportunity to look into the eyes of my fellow presenters.

I felt the evening mostly went well and I was very pleased with the way in which it was conducted, even though it was far too short. The pastor speaking alongside me made what I considered to be some erroneous points. One of the facilitators told me afterwards that he wanted to take some of them up with him, but we simply did not have time; and neither did I have opportunity to respond. That’s how it is with these types of forums. I think some of his flawed points will be quite obvious to viewers. My hosts were more than gracious; and I suspect a great deal of both spoken and unspoken empathy for our cause, so I was greatly encouraged. One of the presenters wants to talk at length with me at some stage when it can be arranged.

*Mike Lewis*

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*Mountains cannot be surmounted except by winding paths.*

—Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe
It's been a whirlwind of activity as the Seventh-Gay Adventists film finally premiered. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for those of you who came to the premiere in Miami Beach and helped make that event so successful (especially those who drove long distances!). The Saturday night before the premiere in Miami Beach, I walked for several hours, taking in the tropical scene and trying to quell my rising panic. I'd checked out the theater where our premiere was going to happen, and it was huge! I suddenly was fearful that only a handful of people would come, and this film that we've worked so hard to craft would just disappear. But I took a deep breath and reminded myself that at some point, I can only do so much. It was time to release control and let the audience take over. Of course my fears were for naught. It was a wonderful screening—a great crowd came, engaged thoughtfully with the film, and lingered to talk afterwards until the next film kicked us into the foyer. People who hadn’t heard of Adventists before talked about how much they still identified with the spiritual journeys of the main film subjects, and many affirmed what an important time in history it is to be examining this intersection of faith and sexuality. We also got a great review from a local paper; and two of the people featured in the film were in attendance, which was really special for the audience.

At almost the exact same time, Stephen was in Lincoln, Nebraska, for a private screening of the film there. That was a packed theater with more than 200 Adventists, including many faculty, staff, and pastors from the local Adventist college and church in Lincoln. A couple in the film who have deep ties to the Lincoln area came for the screening. All reports said that it was a tremendous screening with incredible energy, and the entire audience gave the film and the couple from the film who were in attendance a standing ovation. The conversation afterwards went on for an hour until the next movie was about to start, and it was one of those transforming community events that you can tell will really start sincere conversations. Many people commented about the theater feeling like a sacred space, which is an extra beautiful reflection from an Adventist because movies and theaters were taboo for Adventists for most of the denomination’s history.

All in all, it’s been an encouraging debut. It was affirming to know that two of the main audiences we envisioned for this film—the LGBT community and the moderate religious one open to conversation—both responded well and on the same day and in places as different as Miami Beach and Lincoln! And since then we’ve had two more at-capacity screenings in Vancouver, B.C., and Washington, D.C. Again and again, even though my nerves get the better of me prior to a screening, the actual screening is beyond my expectations. Audiences just open up and engage with these stories, even those who would classify themselves as traditional conservatives on this topic; there’s something about hearing someone’s soul and seeing their spiritual journey that softens us all. And there’s something about seeing “haystacks” on the big screen that reminds every Adventist in the crowd that there’s a lot more than a set of beliefs that makes someone Adventist.

The Vancouver screening was especially promising because it was a very mixed crowd. I often joke that Adventists need to see this film, LGBT individuals need to see this film, and anyone who gets the deep role of spiritual identity needs to see this film; but sometimes those are very different crowds, and framing the film for all of them in the same room has taken practice! The most powerful feedback for me that a woman (who is not LGBT) shared during the post-screening discussion was that “This film made me feel more human. I am so glad that I came.” It’s that sort of connection, despite our
seeming differences, that we hope the film continues to promote.

We’re gearing up for many more screenings this summer and fall. Our vision is to continue to go slowly with this release so we can continue to have quality conversations. A film like this in an incredible emotional journey for the audience, and the experience is one that allows a space to open up afterwards for conversations that wouldn’t have been previously possible. These are transforming spaces—spaces where you can feel the palpable energy as people engage on an entirely new level. In many ways, these post-screening conversations are why we made this film in the first place; and we want to continue to have them in a thoughtful way in communities where there are willing audiences. Of course the film will be on DVD before too long, but we’re still planning screenings at festivals and other community spaces for the next several months. And we’re relishing this time to see the film connect with real audiences in powerful ways.

We’ve just added a new "Screenings" page on our website where you can see upcoming dates and locations (just added Orlando, Portland, Leesburg, Nashville, and New York, with more to come soon!). Please contact me (http://www.sgamovie.com/contact-us/) if you’d like to help coordinate a screening in your area. And all of this requires a great deal of energy and resources. If you’d like to contribute to help make screenings and discussions happen, please consider a generous tax-deductible contribution (http://www.sgamovie.com/donate/). I know I didn’t realize three plus years ago that making a film was only half of the job. But, these days, especially for indie films like this one with a unique voice and audience, making the film is the first half of the job; screening it is the next. It’s the community coming together that made this film happen, and it’s the community that is continuing to make these screenings possible. Here are a few comments from our Facebook wall that warmed our hearts:

“Was lucky enough to attend the screening in Lincoln today and was blessed beyond belief. Thank you for creating this work of art and I truly pray that everyone sees this movie and feels all of the love that is pouring out if it.”
—Taryn Moore Rouse

“Wonderful screening tonight—thank you so much for telling these powerful stories in such a generous way. This is a film destined to make a difference.” —Ray Tetz

“Many LGBTQ folks like myself grew up in religious environments that were harmful. Seeing this film was a healing experience for me. It simultaneously connected me with painful experiences of my past, while bringing a sense of hope and redemption. I know a number of people who would be similarly impacted. I am already advocating that they see it the first chance they get.” —Eric Mason

“It was a pleasure seeing your work last week. As an openly gay man who grew up in the Seventh-day Adventist church, I deeply appreciate this documentary, the stories shared in it, and the significance of this film for the community. I have already felt the effects of this film through discussions with my friends and family members. It is pushing people to think from other angles and challenge some of their concepts of what it means to be gay within the church and SDA community. Please keep the conversation going!” —Timothy Elliott

Those are just a few of the comments. If you’ve seen the film, please drop us a note (http://www.sgamovie.com/contact-us/) or comment on our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/sgamovie). Hope to see you at a screening soon! ▼
The Kinship Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee are pleased to present the membership with this slate of candidates for the 2012 Board of Directors. In compliance with the Bylaws, these candidates meet the Bylaws’ criteria for the positions as described therein. This year’s election will be held electronically, and we are looking forward to having all Kinship members participate in this important process!

**Director of Youth Interests – Ronoldo Appleton**

**Bio:** I was born into Adventism in Jamaica and grew up doing very Adventist things, such as abstaining from a very long list of people, foods, places, and activities, while participating and leading in Pathfinders, children’s ministry, AY [Adventist Youth], and choir, just to name a few. While pursuing undergraduate studies in music at the College of Wooster in Ohio, I embraced my gay identity, began coming out, and became very involved with the gay/straight alliance on campus. After graduation I became actively involved with SDA Kinship, although I had joined years earlier. I have served as the Director of Youth Interests for the past two years. Living and working in Baltimore now, I work amongst cancer kids at Johns Hopkins Hospital; and I enjoy spending time with my Kinship family at events in the vibrant Region 2.

**Position Statement:**
My primary focus is to advocate for all our young members throughout all levels of the organization and encourage youth-engage programs and resources that cater to the unique needs of our youth. As such, I will mentor our current and future young leaders in our growing regions, especially Europe, Australia, and Brazil, and provide counsel to the Board of Directors in ways that will best benefit you, our young membership. It is also my strong desire to continue finding ways in which LGBTIQ students on Adventist campuses can be protected and to help foster solid internal networks to support them.

**Interests:**
Music and opera, movies, the beach, traveling, fine and street dining and wining, other cultures, spending time with my wonderful niece and nephew, and attending Kinship get-togethers.

**Director of Communications – Ashish David**

**Bio:** I was one of the charter members of IMRU? (then known as Adventist Gay Youth) in the late 1990s and have been involved with Kinship for a number of years since then. A native of the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, I received my BA in Communications/Journalism from Richmond: The American International University in London. Currently I work at a public relations / production company in Washington, D.C. and aspire to further my education in film and video production, as well as religious studies.

**Position Statement:**
Working in the field of public relations, I’ve gained a better understanding of the different ways for groups to communicate their message and gain better visibility. This year I participated in my first Pride parade on behalf of Kinship and was excited by the members in the crowd who acknowledged us with cheers. I would like to build on the foundation that others have built up over the years and hopefully take things to the next level with a multimedia approach via print, video, and online. Working with the other members, I’d like to see more outreach to our Adventist higher education institutions and hospitals.
Interests:
A wide variety of interests, including, but not limited to: music, film, travel, games (both field and board varieties), learning about different cultures, and enjoying a healthful lifestyle.

Position Statement:
Kinship has always been a second family to me. It has given to me in so many ways over my 15 years as a member. I feel called that it is time for me to give back to Kinship. I believe in the focus of Kinship and know that, as an organization, we are actively supporting our members. Kinship members are welcome to contact me directly with any questions at brian@durhammail.com.

Interests:
Travel, sports, entertaining, my daughter Caitlynne, friends, and family.

Treasurer – Brian Durham
Bio: I am a fourth-generation Adventist who attended Adventist schools all the way through college. I am currently working on a doctorate in education. I am actively involved in Region 2 and have participated in several Kampmeetings and mini-Kampmeetings. Professionally, I work as an Application Training Coordinator for George Washington University, where I train individuals on how to use the accounting and payroll system for the university.

Secretary – Ruben López
Bio: I became involved with Kinship in 2007 when I became IMRU? Coordinator and was voted into the position by the members. Since then, I’ve been advocating for the younger Kinship members during board meetings, as well as making sure they have a safe and comfortable place in Kinship. Born and raised in southern California, I graduated with a BA in psychology. I’ve been involved with student government at the community college level, as well as serving on a committee dedicated to setting up learning communities and other services for the community college.

A separate email will be sent to Kinship members with instructions for electronic voting. The deadline to vote is Thursday, July 19, and election results will be announced at Kampmeeting on Friday, July 20, and will be posted in the Members Area of the Kinship website shortly thereafter.

This year’s slate of officers includes Secretary, Treasurer, Director of Communications, and Director of Youth Interests. The candidates and their platforms are posted in the Members Area of the Kinship website.

Do your duty to the best of your ability, without worrying about the results, remaining calm in both success and failure.
— Bhagavad Gita, 2.48
Lead Us Beyond Acceptance!
Conference European Forum of LGBT Christian Groups

By Ruud Kieboom

On May 17, 2011, seventeen Dutch churches, including the Seventh-day Adventist Church, signed a Declaration against Homophobic Violence on the International Day against Homophobia (www.idahonederland.nl). Worldwide, this was a unique event. Since that time, these seventeen churches have gone into a process of evaluating their own responsibility for the spiritual safety of LGBTI members in their congregations. This May, during a follow-up meeting, representatives of several churches brought an LGBTI member to discuss this issue. Pastor Tom de Bruin and I participated in the forum discussion: Tom spoke from his perspective as a pastor and I from my experience as a gay Seventh-day Adventist. Tom de Bruin is a pastor in The Netherlands and has at least one gay church member. He was invited to “Building Safe Places,” a meeting with European Seventh-day Adventist pastors and educators in Odenwald near Frankfurt, Germany, in April of this year. The discussions made him aware of the urgency to make the church a safe place for LGBTI members and to fight against homophobia and exclusion of LGBTI members from the church.

The conference began discussions with the acknowledgement that acceptance is a basic right and need in our churches and in our communities. The goal of this conference was to bring an understanding that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people have their own calling and special place in the proclamation of the faith, hope, and love of the kingdom of God. We are children of God and followers of Jesus Christ, no matter what any institutional body or individual people might want to state about our sexual orientation. To quote Galatians 3:26-29 (NIV):

In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. We would like to add “neither gay nor straight...” If we are all one in Jesus Christ, there is no need for special efforts at acceptance because God already called us His/Her child before we were born. God made us to relate to and love each other.

As many of us in Kinship have experienced in the Adventist church, there was a broad range of church attitudes. Some of them fully incorporate gay and lesbian members into congregational functions and offices. Some allow gays and lesbians (usually because they don’t know what to do with them). Some neglect or expel known LGBTI members, including those who have shared their spiritual talents and gifts for years. There was a consensus that local congregations have their own cultural response to this issue, despite what the denominational administration may suggest or demand.

What is to be done? Several options were mentioned. It is important that churches become aware of the pain and agony LGBTI people sometimes experience. There was a consensus that this issue be addressed in a cautious way to avoid creating a prejudice that will shut down conversation for another decade. LGBTI church membership should also be addressed from the pulpit (not advertised, but just mentioned) so we know we don’t need to feel alone or hide our orientation. Church leaders and pastors must be willing to study the subject. This is not a matter, in my opinion, of just accepting homosexuality, but a matter of interpretation of the Bible verses in a wider range. It will be a difficult process, because it deals with credibility of what the churches have proclaimed in the past.

At the conference I realized...
what a blessing it is that we have quite a number of Adventist pastors in The Netherlands who understand and urge a change in our church’s attitude against LGBTI people. I see changes in other European Adventist congregations as well. During the preview of *Seventh-Gay Adventists* at the “Building Safe Places” meeting, a pastor’s attitude was changed. As he watched the story of two young men falling in love, he saw how love changes our face, our body language, and the glow in our eyes—just as it does with heterosexuals. The pastor said his heart was warmed to see the love of God reflected in the love of two men for each other.

### Adventist Colleges and Gay-Straight Alliances

*By Dave Ferguson*

I want to share with you one of the most exciting days I have spent in a committee meeting in recent memory. While I often get to be part of committees, and try as chairperson to be productive and stay on target, this was one of those meetings that just surpassed all possible expectations. Special thanks to the Kinship Board for providing both emotional and financial support to the event and to the Advisory for inspiring A.J. at our last meeting to move forward with this project, which will change Adventist campuses forever!

I flew to Northern California and drove to Pacific Union College to participate in The Summit. This was the first time leaders of gay-straight alliances at Adventist colleges and universities had ever met face-to-face. This year, for the first time, GSAs on several campuses actually elected officers for the coming year before the end of the current school year. A.J. also created a closed group on Facebook, which allowed these leaders to communicate with each other and begin to realize what was happening on various campuses. Nothing, but nothing, could have prepared me for the energy and passion and the organizational skills I found at this meeting.

The Friday working agenda included 15 items, and focused on addressing them all in the 9 AM to 5 PM meeting. When I arrived a little after 10 AM they were completing the wording on the mission statement for the group! Some of you have been through the process and know what an accomplishment that was! A vision statement was developed, followed by reports from each of the four Adventist campuses represented. The reports described current state of their campus, their gay-straight alliance activities, relationship to administration, long- and short-term goals, faculty support, student handbook policies, etc. The current chairman of the group has worked tirelessly on the Andrews campus. The upcoming school year will see a change to the *Student Handbook* to include positive support for sexual orientation.

I was amazed at the progress these students are making on each campus, the creative ways they are finding to make their voices heard, and the support they are getting from faculty and students, even when administrators work to follow the present denominational line. Policies were developed on how to deal with conflict resolution, bullying, demeaning behaviors toward students and faculty, domestic safety, vandalism, and harassment.

Over the next year, this group will be working to become a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. This status will allow them to provide scholarships to students involved with the GSA. A goal was set to have a scholarship of $10,000 available to students on each campus that has or is actively developing a GSA. This will obviously encourage GSAs to start and students to step forward to provide leadership. The scholarship fund will also make a statement to Adventist colleges and universities.

Gay-straight alliances plan to participate in one mission trip each year, providing an oppor-
tunity for LGBT students to meet those from other campuses and show the denomination the commitment of these students to the church. Materials will be developed that can be used by each group in dealing with spiritual issues, health, suicide, bullying, coming out, and how to be an ally. These materials will be created and shared online with space for each GSA to create their own identity.

An LGBT Adventist alumni association will be created, allowing members to support the scholarships, GSAs, mission trips, etc. PUC is planning to have a gay alumni group meeting at the next annual alumni weekend and has created a stole that will be presented to students who have provided support to the local GSA while on campus.

Screenings of *Seventh-Gay Adventists* will be coordinated on campuses during the coming year. When the film is released on DVD the group plans to show it in individual classes for discussion. These student leaders are amazing! As Daneen Akers commented to me, “The church’s status quo doesn’t stand a chance!”
We wanted to let you know about a few of the speakers who will be at Kampmeeting this month.

**Steven Eyer** and **Daneen Akers** with the *Seventh-Gay Adventists* documentary.

**Twid Widmer** is a trans woman from the Bay Area in California. This past spring she received a Masters of Fine Arts in Theatre Pedagogy from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her MFA “Performing Transition: Depicting the Transgender Experience” is a combination of performance studies and gender studies and examines depictions of transgender individuals. She also holds a BA in English Literature from Pacific Union College. She plans on continuing her education by applying to PhD programs for the fall of 2013. She likes to imagine that in the future she will sit by a roaring fireplace writing a play while curled up next to numerous cats and a loving partner.
J. David Newman has been the senior pastor at New Hope Adventist Church in Fulton, Maryland, for the last ten years. He retired on June 30 after 43 years of ministry. He is a past editor of *Ministry* magazine (published for ministers by the Ministerial Association of the General Conference) and is currently the editor of *Adventist Today*. In his long career he has been a conference departmental director and administrator, a college professor, and an adjunct professor at the Theological Seminary at Andrews University. In addition to pastoring at New Hope he has pastored in Michigan, Scotland, and Ohio. His passion is to see Jesus the center of everyone’s life and especially the center of the Adventist denomination.

Samuel C. Pang

Medical Director at the Reproductive Science Center of New England (RSCNE), is subspecialty board certified in Reproductive Endocrinology. He graduated from the University of British Columbia with a BSc (Biochemistry) and M.D., after which he completed a rotating internship and residency in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Toronto. Prior to joining RSCNE in 1993, he trained in Reproductive Endocrinology at the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). Under Dr. Pang’s leadership, RSCNE is currently one of the largest *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) centers in the U.S., noted for being among the most successful with a very low incidence of multiple gestations compared to other IVF centers in the country.

Dr. Pang has been director of the Third Party Assisted Reproduction program at RSCNE since 1997, serving couples who utilize IVF with donor eggs and/or a gestational surrogate to have children. He has helped male couples have children with donor eggs and gestational surrogacy since 1998, and almost every male couple who has done this at RSCNE has been successful. Dr. Pang and his husband have two sons through this process. Dr. Pang has also been a member of SDA Kinship since 1983.

Peterson Toscano is no stranger to SDA Kinship; he presented his hilarious and moving play, “Doin’ Time in the Homo Halfway House” at Kampmeeting 2006. A playwright, actor, activist, comic, and Bible scholar, Peterson presents his original pro-LGBTQ performances at universities, churches, and conferences throughout North America and Europe. Known for his seamless character transformations, and his original yet grounded treatment of scripture, Peterson has pleasantly shocked Bible scholars and LGBTQ people of faith with his presentation about gender-variant Bible characters. He recently premiered the play, “Jesus Had Two Daddies,” a ridiculously serious look at scripture and is writing a book about gender transgressors in the Bible. He lives in Central Pennsylvania with his partner, Glen Retief, author of *The Jack Bank, A Memoir of a South African Childhood*. Learn more at http://www.petersontoscano.com.

Jan Daffern is the pastor of an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ (http://www.erucc.org/). This congregation welcomes all, respecting a rich heritage as one of Frederick, Maryland’s oldest downtown churches, and serving at present as a leader in social action and service to the community.

Rev. Daffern received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Loma Linda University, and her Masters of Divinity is from Andrews
University Theological Seminary. She began her work in pastoral ministry in 1980 and has been in practice as a pastoral counselor since 1990. She also has a Masters of Social Work from the University of Maryland School of Social Work and holds a clinical social work license.

Andrew Marin is the president and founder of The Marin Foundation (http://www.themarinfoundation.org/about-us/staff/), a public charity working to build bridges between the LGBT community and conservatives through biblical and social education, scientific research, and diverse community gatherings. He has a BA in Applied Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and an MA in Urban Studies with concentrations in Social Change and Theology from Eastern University. Andrew is the author of the award-winning book Love Is an Orientation (2009), and its interactive six-session DVD curriculum (2011). Since 2010 he has been asked by the United Nations to advise their various agencies on issues of faith, sexuality, and cultural and theological aspects of reconciliation. Andrew has recently spoken before world leaders at the United Nations International Headquarters in both Geneva, Switzerland, and New York City, as well as to members of the U.S. Senate on Capitol Hill. His speech Homophobia and Bridging from within the Evangelical Church, given on Capitol Hill the night before the Inauguration of President Barack Obama in 2009, is archived in the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. Andrew has been featured on the BBC World News, NPR, CBS, ABC, Salon.com, GLAAD, 700 Club, Dallas Morning News, Christian Post, The Daily Beast, and is a regular guest on American’s most listened-to Christian radio program, The Frank Pastore Show, among others. He lives in the LGBT Boystown neighborhood of Chicago with his wife Brenda, and blogs on cultural issues, faith, and sexuality at http://www.loveisanorientation.com.

Support Seventh-Gay Adventists!

By Brian Durham, Treasurer

As many of you know, Kinship has quite a few projects on which we are currently working. I would like to highlight two of them that have some immediate needs.

First is the Kampmeeting Scholarship Fund. Each year Kinship sets aside a number of scholarships to assist members with the cost of attending Kampmeeting. Kampmeeting is one of our most important outreaches that provides many new members with their first connection to other LGBTIQ Adventists. This year we have already given out the funds that have been set aside to several worthy candidates. There are others that have applied, so we need your help to fund more scholarships. Any amount can be a help!

The other project that I would like to highlight is the Seventh-Gay Adventist documentary (http://www.sgamovie.com/). As many of you know, the movie is complete; but they still need help through the screening and outreach process. This part of the process is very time-consuming. Again, any donation will be appreciated (http://www.sgamovie.com/donate/).

Thanks so much, Brian

Generosity is giving more than you can, and pride is taking less than you need. —Kahlil Gabran
Dear Andrew,

I have quietly listened to your issues, concerns, and response to Adventist pastoral bigotry. I deliberately delayed sharing my reflections for three reasons. First, your experience made me revisit some of my own Adventist heritage (with a certain amount of posttraumatic stress). Secondly, I did not want to make a hasty comment. Mostly, I am so proud of you and your response to bigotry that I believe you did not need my help. You have always had my passionate prayers.

The bigotry issues within institutional Adventism are legion (race, gender, age) and equally worrisome with respect to “sexual orientation” —a term that is still forbidden to use in some Adventist clerical circles. The chilling effect of the 1999 General Conference policy statement—“no accommodation” for gay people—is now more than a decade old and has become the darling phrase of Seventh-day Adventist ecclesiastical authority. We all saw this coming in 1999. I dearly regret that you are living that result in 2012. Even though gay people are outside the fellowship of the institutional Adventist church, we must agree to disagree without becoming disagreeable. This does not mean we do not mourn or cry; but, at the end of the day, respect should remain a core value. I respect religious differences even when that means the door is locked behind me.

I see and feel rays of hope because the anti-gay church policy of institutional Adventism has not stirred the vast majority of rank-and-file Adventists in North America, Europe, and the British Commonwealth. Our power continues to dwell in telling our stories, being as honest as we can safely be, and living well. Nothing is more damning to an anti-gay bigot (Adventist or not) than seeing our lives proceed quietly and without fanfare.

I have come to understand that our moral witness, deliberate or unbidden, must remain proactive and thoughtful. We have the difficult option of developing ways to separate institutional Adventism from its impossible politics and co-opted global agendas that are so harmful and abusive. I believe we need to do this without alienating and separating us from the many good friends and allies who remain within the fellowship of the Adventist church. Many of our allies are on the fringe of Adventism. I know it is unfair that we have been disfellowshipped, cast out, and “purged” from the church while they are allowed to stay on their complicated path from inside its membership circles. That is not the fault of our good Adventist friends. Indeed, some of my most cherished friends are former Adventist pastors and lay people (as am I) Of course, our allies must understand that we have the right to stay out of harm’s way by choosing to avoid the institutional church in many areas, even as our love, friendship, and Christian joy grows with one another.

I have spent most of my life trying to understand the limits of compromise. Whenever possible, I advocate for bridge-building. I have also learned that even compromise can be practiced to excess. There are some issues where the gulf is too broad, the evil and threat too grave, to find a place to dwell in compromise. I applaud you for taking a stand on a wrenching and difficult issue.

When all of the heartache, tears, and rage subside, many of us carry the doubt of wondering whether our actions were based on hubris and/or moral defensive-ness. It is indeed difficult to move past abomination to love. The face of Christ has been misrepresented
from countless church pulpits. We can’t help but wonder whether our Savior is loving and whether our Savior loves us. I’m here, all of us are here, to tell you that you are special. God loves you and all of us. God’s presence is still active, even present in the most bigoted of Adventist churches. Never doubt your value or the foundational truth that you were made in the image of our Creator or that God “so loved the world”—no exceptions.

I urge you to remain connected to the safer places within Adventism for gay people. Your life does not need to become “a cause.” Your witness and well-lived example is enough. Despite the fact that institutional Adventism does not welcome me, I’m still welcome in many Adventist homes. I’m still welcome in some Adventist churches; I’m still welcome at Kinship. I am welcomed by many special Adventist family and friends. Even though institutional Adventism cast me aside when I was 31 years old, I have been able to find spiritual fellowship and weekly renewal with other Christian groups. Just as the Holy Spirit can be found in an Adventist service, that same Spirit is also found in other denominations. I have grown in my ability to recognize that there is no monopoly on the salvation brought by Jesus to all of us.

Maintaining a gentle spirit in the midst of frustration, suffering, and bigotry is one of our most difficult struggles. Jesus (and the life of Moses) remind us that meekness is power. “Blessed are the meek.” Those that abuse power are using the tactics of the evil ones. I ask you to keep in touch with the quiet, gentle, aesthetic, artistic parts of your worthy soul. It is a lovely time of year where you live. I can feel the breeze of the lake in my face and I can smell the mid-summer forest in my nose. Our world is an imperfect place. That is why Jesus is coming again. However, even now, our Creator continues to cradle our hearts. God will provide you love, solace, and joy. Without such providential refuge, we could not live.

You are a good man. Someday, I hope we meet face-to-face; and that will be a special day. After all, it’s not every day one gets to meet a moral hero.

Love and hugs to you,
Ben Kemena (Denver, Colorado)
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, sailboats, and spectacular sunrises. Our rooms are airy and comfortable. Most of them have their own bathrooms. The food is homemade with great "reviews." We eat together at a tile-covered table and have our meetings in a room full of sunlight. For those with differing abilities and energy levels we have an elevator. For those with lots of sand on their feet we have outdoor showers. We have a hot tub in the back yard and hear rumors that there will be a swimming pool in place then.

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

Costs:
$ 125 per person (includes room for 3 nights, 3 dinners, 2 breakfasts, Sabbath lunch and Sunday brunch)

$ 155 per person (as above PLUS the Dolphin Watch)

Payment due:
On or before September 8, 2012.

(Payment secures your reservation!)

More information:
Email Catherine at bookandbeach@sdakinship.org

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

Fearless Faith—Believing Without Fear

European KINSHIP Meeting
August 30 - 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. Register at:


Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting
Building Sanctuary
November 8-11, 2012

Come join us in our new home at the base of Okemo Mountain! We have found a place where we can have both beauty and costs that allow more to join us. This three-day weekend focused on play and Bible study will include Friday field trips, our continued study of the Sanctuary, wondrous meals, places to shop, laughter, great conversations, and a few surprises. $ 300.00 per room (plus $ 50.00 per person for three or more) covers three nights, all the food, and most excursions. For more information, please feel most welcome to contact Catherine at Kampmeeting, or at katgurian@aol.com. You will be able to register online in a few weeks.