“That which distinguishes the people of God from worldlings is their sympathy for others, their tenderness, their meekness and lowliness of heart: they reveal they wear Christ’s yoke and are recipients of the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

—Ellen G. White, The Youth’s Instructor, December 6, 1900
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**Chaplain**

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**Who We Are...**

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

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

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

**Support Kinship**

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

**Seventh-day Adventist**

PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141, USA

or visit Kinship’s website at: www.sdakinship.org.
You are Invited to Book and the Beach Mini-Kampmeeting

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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:

From the Editor

Ruud and I have a very gentle ongoing argument. Yes, that’s possible. He believes that when... (Whoops, we should probably take a short parenthetical moment here. For those of you who do not know Ruud Kieboom, he is the remarkable Dutch layout guru who has made the Connection beautiful for the last five years.) Anyway, Ruud believes that when Kinship has a Kampmeeting or Board meeting or Mini-Kampmeeting we should focus the following issue of the Connection on the relevant planned event. I tend to think of myself as pragmatic and believe we should focus on items for which we have the printed word. Without exception, in my memory, we have worked out compromises. This issue is a case in point. Logically we would have filled these pages with messages and photos from the Kampmeeting ending some weeks ago. Only two speakers sent me a Word copy of their presentation. They are here. Pearl and Karen have provided about a thousand photos. This issue we are going to begin sharing some of their wonderful pictorial depictions of our community. At the same time, two events relevant to Kinship members have captured our attention. A column in the Adventist Review discussed the film, Seventh-Gay Adventists; and a team of Kinship members and allies headed to Nashville for the North American Division K-12 Teachers’ Convention. They had reserved a booth to focus on stopping the bullying of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex students in Adventist schools. Those stories are here. Next issue we’re planning to share with you stories from the European Kinship Meeting, Kampmeeting Kenya, and The Book and the Beach. We’ll see what happens. Meanwhile, amidst all the events and issues, the most important thing for both Ruud and me is that you take care of yourself, for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine
Creating Experiences of Hope: What Your Contributions Can Do

By Keisha McKenzie
Director of Development

While at Kampmeeting this month, I heard many voices in my head. They were the voices of everyone who attended Kampmeeting: the many members and guests who’d connected with each other, opened their hearts, and shared their stories, and every member I’d ever met in my local regions or in past meetings.

I remembered the person who said, “Kinship gave me a space. Kinship said, ‘This space is for everyone.’” I remember another one saying, “This is a sanctuary for wholeness... We can be real here.” I heard Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words: “Every man is heir to a legacy of dignity and worth.”

In Kinship I see a diverse family unfailingly dedicated to recognizing our dignity, declaring our worth, and giving us space to speak for ourselves and advocate with our brothers and sisters around the world.

This is important work. As an organization, we have a critical witness to a denomination and world in which difference has meant conflict rather than strength or creativity. One of our members responded to this condition by writing, “We need to get beyond fear and live in a world of hope, acceptance, humility, and honesty.” We have lived experience here, of what it means to unconditionally embrace people, whatever their nationality, orientation, gender identity, politics, and spiritual or secular beliefs.

Hope. Acceptance. Honesty. Dignity. These things are at the heart of who we are; they’re what we want to increase with every local meeting, every retreat, every program, in every region, and in each of us.

You’re reading this today and connecting online because you’re already a part of this family. Every gift you and I give to Kinship programs, every ounce of passion we have for the cause, every soul and funding group we’re connected with outside Kinship... all of these resources help us to create that experience of hope, acceptance, and dignity for all.

Kampmeeting attendees received the 2012 donation and pledge form in their programs, but you can also set up one or several gifts on https://www.sdakinship.org/donationform.html or by emailing the office at office@sdakinship.org.

I had an epiphany last year: I am freest to give of my time, skills, and money in relationships where I am encouraged to be my whole self and am never taken for granted. This revelation helps to explain why, even though I joined Kinship as a student and have been in between jobs this summer, I started sharing my resources with the organization during my first year, and have continued to every year since.

You, too, are individually and unconditionally precious to this community—you who’ve been here 30 years, and you who stepped into the circle this month. With your presence, your financial gifts, and the gift of your time, you’re writing more of your personal story here. If you want to be an advocate, this is a group of people who advocate in community with our lives and through each local and international program. If you want others to feel the warmth you felt at your first Kampmeeting, an extra $60 per month in the general fund over the next year would give one other person that experience. If you’re concerned about the experiences of our relatives outside North America and Europe, we want to support the work that Africans, South Americans, and Asians are doing in their own communities. You can build with them through your regular giving.

I’d love to talk with each of you about the story you’re writing with your time and contributions. I want to work with you to nurture new members and create a more just world. Please join me in contributing to Kinship through this next year and let’s see what we can accomplish together.

Email me, Keisha, at development@sdakinship.org
From our new documentary film, *Seventh-Gay Adventists: A film about faith on the margins*, times more likely to commit suicide than other youth.

On one hand, it's definitely the very best we could ever expect from the Adventist Church's official magazine, and I'm actually very appreciative of Andy using his column to highlight the film. He begins with several positive points about the film. He says it's well done and that we are "skilled storytellers," that the tone of the film is gentle, that the people featured in the film are just people who happen to be gay, that their stories are resonating deeply with audiences, and that many Adventists are starting to wonder how a God of love could ask people not to have the blessing of a loving relationship in their lives.

The very fact that the *Review* is talking about this film gives me great affirmation that the film is achieving one of our primary goals, which is to spark conversation through the lens of real stories about a topic where silence and "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" have been standard practice (at best). Just yesterday an Adventist evangelist wrote me on Facebook to ask what "LGBT" stood for, and I was reminded how very unaware the church generally is about this topic. Clearly just talking about the intersection of faith and sexuality at all is a good thing.

On the other hand, if this is the very best that the Adventist Church can officially say about its LGBT members, it's no wonder many of them never darken church doorways, and it's no wonder that every single gay Adventist who has ever come to one of our story booths has admitted to seriously contemplating or attempting suicide. As one man put it, "The church was my entire life and identity, and I equated God with the church. If the church could so easily condemn me and so easily liken me to those who commit atrocious crimes against others, God must truly despise me. It would be better if I just didn't exist." Reading [Nash's] column reminds me where he got those harmful ideas.

When it comes to this topic in particular, words (and questions) matter. A lot. When LGBT youth are four times more likely to commit suicide than other youth their own age, and when that number doubles to eight times more likely to commit suicide if they come from a rejecting family (as opposed to just a rejecting society or church), we must hold our church leaders and columnists to a higher standard of care when it comes to choosing how they describe gay individuals who are in loving relationships. We cannot continue to casually compare gays and lesbians in committed relationships, as Andy appears to do in his final paragraph, to murders, slanderers, and those who embrace greed, ruthlessness, and heartlessness. If we wonder where the righteously indignant roots of homophobia come from, look no further than columns like this.

Please understand that I do not think Andy is homophobic, and I do not for a moment believe he condones violence against gay people. In fact, I think Andy is a genuine conversation partner who is just at the beginning of this question. But we have to start admitting that words have consequences. In the same way that traditional patriarchal interpretations of Pauline writings (many from the same books that the "clobber" texts against LGBTI people are found) and the Genesis account of creation and the fall have been used to justify the oppression and subjugation of women in the name of "male headship," these texts and the attitude that says, "It's not me who says this, it's God" are a root cause of violence, self-loathing, and the extreme marginalization that LGBTI people in the church face.

My disappointment isn't that Andy would have produced a different type of film had he spent the last three and a half years making a film about LGBTI Adventists; we expected that from the official church spokespersons, and we genuinely respect his perspective. Making space for difference is very important to us. After watching the film, Andy told us that he felt a lot of compassion for the people in it, and he went on to say that he wasn't sure what quite to do with that compassion. That struggle really comes through here in this column, and what he resorted to is what the church has always done on this topic: remind readers of a "clobber" verse and use it as an excuse not to engage on a human or pastoral level.

I don't expect a church spokesperson like Andy to suddenly embrace same-gender relationships with open arms and new doctrines, but I do ask them to wrestle with this more. Please—these are real people, real fami-

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lies, real pain, and real questions. Let’s admit that the days of easy answers are over. Please wrestle with your compassion. Maybe it’s God’s way of trying to lead us to a new perspective in the way that we have moved to new understandings of truth on other matters of morality and how we treat each other. I also ask church representatives like Andy to stop speaking as if gay Adventists haven’t wrestled with scripture. They have, they do, and these moments are among the most poignant and moving in Seventh-Gay Adventists.

The number one thing that straight Adventists, both conservative and progressive, had commented about after screenings is the spiritual depth and sincerity of the people profiled in the film. The people in this film do not dismiss scripture flippantly. It’s a very easy tactic to dismiss those who disagree with us by saying that they don’t value scripture. Or, as Andy termed it, gays who are celibate and abstaining from relationships clearly “love scripture more.” I’ve yet to meet a gay Adventist, celibate or partnered, who could easily fit those neat labels of “loves self” and “loves scripture.” Trust me as a storyteller, there wouldn’t be a film if gay Adventists didn’t value scripture, their church, and their relationship with God above all else. That’s why this film’s premise is interesting in the first place. As one of the main subjects of the film says, “People are kicking us out of the church all the time, but we aren’t going anywhere. We pay a very high price to keep our faith.”

I’m not asking Andy to put aside his theological interpretations; we need each other in order to dialogue. In fact, there’s a main storyline in the film that’s there to respect the traditional voice in the church, and I wish Andy had mentioned this. It involves the genuinely loving and inspiring relationship between a gay Adventist and his older brother who is an Adventist pastor. They do not see eye-to-eye on this topic, and they realize that they have a deep, important theological divide. But there’s a respect between them and a humbleness. Instead of dismissing the other as someone who doesn’t respect scripture, they embrace, in the film’s case, literally. They make a genuine attempt to navigate these tricky and complex waters together and respect that they each are responding to God genuinely but differently. There is such hope there, such love, such divine grace being played out in these brothers’ lives. I can only hope what’s possible for them is possible for the church at large. Maybe we can put aside the fences that say who is in and who is out and just seek Jesus together. That’s my biggest hope.

The big thing missing in the film for Andy is a story of a celibate gay, what he describes as the “truly heroic stories.” He spends a lot of real estate touting the website and platform of Wayne Blakely, whose story appeared in the Review a couple years ago, and whose self-described “gay lifestyle” comprised 37 years of promiscuity, brokenness, and addiction that anyone would agree was in need of redemption whether he was gay or straight. (About the “gay lifestyle” term Christians often bandy about, there is no one gay lifestyle just as there is no one heterosexual lifestyle. Peggy Campolo sums it up nicely: “Madonna and I are both heterosexual; we do not share the same lifestyle.”)

Andy takes us to task for not including Wayne’s story, even though, according to Wayne, he approached us about including him in the film. This isn’t the forum to talk in-depth about the process of filmmaking, but suffice it to say that filmmakers rarely find the stories of people who are looking to launch their brand to be compelling, authentic, and genuine experiences with which audiences will resonate. What Andy doesn’t mention (though he knew) was that when Wayne wrote us hoping to be featured in the film, he had been celibate for six months—less than a year! Even if we intended to promote celibacy for an entire class of people, featuring someone who had only been celibate for six months after 37 years of the sort of promiscuity that would leave anyone empty would be rightly termed, “Not enough sobriety.” It would have been an insult to all of the gay Adventists who have attempted celibacy for years, decades even.

Actually, the truth is that we did include celibate gays in the film, just not current ones. Every person in the film followed that path at one point. One even spent five years in “ex-gay” therapy and was once declared heterosexual. (I’m curious if the “ministry” he was a part of still includes him in their success statistics.) Early in the process of making this film, we did go looking for stories of celibate gays who had been at it longer than six months, but we eventually realized that this film wasn’t about those who were abiding by the church’s prescription. That’s a very different story. I would never underestimate the challenge of celibacy and resigning oneself to a life without a partner by your side—that is a very hard path as well—but just look at how Andy treats a celibate gay compared to those in our film. One he spends the better part of three paragraphs promoting, and the others he compares to murderers and the “ruthless.” Even if this wasn’t Andy’s intent, and I have a hard time personally believing that it was, it’s definitely how his column reads. (We also eventually eliminated the stories in the film from gay Adventists who were purely “former” Adventists and had left their faith. Again, that’s not where the real conflict is.)

What I would hope to see from Andy and those in his position is a willingness to engage on a human and pastoral level. For example, how and where should gay Adventists worship and take their children to Sabbath School if they want to share their faith with their children? What should a church that is lucky enough to have an LGBT Adventist brave enough to walk through their doors do, particularly when that person wants to share their time and talent with the church? What should the response of a parent of a gay child be? Andy is a pastor, and I know that he has gay students in his classes and Sabbath services. These are real questions, and it’s disappointing to me as an advocate on this topic and as the parent of a young child to see representatives of my church duck real engagement on a truly important issue of our time.
I'd like to ask that we just start with a listening space. At some point we have to discuss hermeneutics, but given our history, we need to start with a very intentional listening campaign. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer says, "Listening is the first thing we owe the oppressed." Let's start by acknowledging that this is hard and that the church has been incredibly unchristian in its treatment of LGBT people and entirely hypocritical about singling out gays for special (in this case, harsh) treatment. What has always amazed me as someone entrusted to gather Adventist LGBT stories, is the enormous love and grace most gay Adventists have for their church.

I wish Andy had stayed for the post-screening discussion of the film; due to a scheduling conflict, he had to duck out right as the credits rolled. His column similarly ducks out right when true engagement and listening might begin. Here's how Andy concludes:

"What other tendencies named in Romans 1 would supporters of a gay lifestyle also encourage struggling people to live out? Worshiping created things? Greed, envy, murder, strife? Gossip, slander, insolence, arrogance? dishonoring parents, heartlessness, ruthlessness? Why is it only this tendency [homosexuality] that's now OK to practice? Because it doesn't hurt anyone else? Or because it hurts only those who practice it?"

As a retired Adventist pastor with a gay son wrote me shortly after Andy's column was published, "To those of us so deeply involved in trying to help the church rise to a much needed new level of compassion toward LGBT people, Andy Nash's article feels like a punch to the solar plexus."

While I recognize that Andy's series of questions are meant to affirm the church's status quo and its theological paradigms about homosexuality, I am actually deeply appreciative of these questions simply because they so clearly show why the church continues to come up empty on this topic. For many Adventists, lumping every non-celibate gay and lesbian into this list and equating loving same-gender relationships with those who would commit murder or endorse strife, insolence, heartlessness, and ruthlessness... well, it just isn't adding up anymore. The old paradigm isn't working. More and more Adventists just know too many gay people now to lump them in the same pile as those who exploit and hurt others. We wonder if we're missing something. And we know we haven't treated our gay members as equally beloved sons and daughters of God.

Does a God of love condemn the love, support, and nurture of every gay relationship? As even Andy admits, "It's a hard question that more and more Adventists are asking." We might not know quite what to do with our theology and policies, but we know that we must forge a new path, together. One that doesn't duck out of real engagement. We must listen. We must love. And we must wrestle. Most of all, when faced with real people and real stories, we must wrestle.

**Addendum:**

This article generated a huge number of responses, some helpful, some entirely skippable (as is typical with blogs). But the one that has been at the very top of the comment pile for almost three weeks now (thanks to so many people liking it) is from the father of one of the main subjects in the film. He's a devout Adventist leader and a loving dad. His comment is one I've returned to several times over in these past few weeks because he so beautifully captured the entire goal of the film. I'd like to quote it in full. It's one I'm planning to print out and post over my desk when we get home.

"My name is Ron Carlson. Anyone who has seen the film knows that our family is featured because our son is gay and Adventist. As the dialogue about this topic continues, as I'm certain it will, and probably should, please remember that we are talking about people, not proof texts. I know what the Bible says. I am not rejecting its teachings. I just hope the many people who will bat around opinions, strong convictions, simple answers, sarcasm, joking, etc., will keep in mind that the real subject is people, men and women who have grown up Adventist, attended our schools, were baptized on Sabbath morning somewhere, believe the Sabbath, look forward to the coming of Jesus, may be vegetarian, yet, in spite of knowing how most people in the church feel about them, they still want to be Adventist. If you ever get the chance to meet a gay who still embraces Jesus and wants to be an Adventist, please listen to them. Don't lecture, listen. You may not change your Biblical belief, but you may realize the true dilemma they face and that they are not rebellious, perverts, reprobates, or hypocrites. They do not have a political agenda nor are they part of any conspiracy. They are sons and daughters, siblings, grandchildren, true friends, who are caught in a very confusing predicament which they did not choose nor ask for, but they still want to worship with us. Please do your best to show grace in what you say and what you write. Thank you."

That's really what it's about. These are people, not proof texts. And let's just take the chance to listen.

Daneen Akers is the co-producer/co-director of "Seventh-Gay Adventists" (http://www.sgamovie.com). If you want to journey with gay and lesbian Adventists wrestling with questions about their faith and sexual orientation; if you want to enter a listening space; if you want to laugh at haystacks, Pathfinders, and the quirks of our Adventist heritage that make this community of belonging about so much more than a set of beliefs, email Daneen at daneen@daneenakers.com about a screening in your area.
Anti-Bullying Advocates Bullied by Church

By Ryan J. Bell, Senior Pastor, Hollywood Seventh-day Adventist Church

When Carrol Grady received a phone call telling her that her organization, Someone to Talk To, was being disinvited from having a booth at the North American gathering of Seventh-day Adventist teachers because “this convention is not the right venue for your group,” she was shocked and distressed. With only one week before the start of the convention this was painful news to absorb, to say nothing of the expense already incurred personally by her and her volunteers.

Someone to Talk To is a ministry to Adventist families and friends of gays and lesbians. Grady is the 76-year-old founder, “I found it difficult to understand how this venue was not right for our group,” she says, “when we are a ministry directed toward young people who are often the target of bullying in our schools and one of the themes of this convention is bullying and harassment in schools. What students and teachers often need is simply someone to talk to.” Grady wrote a book, My Son, Beloved Stranger, and ultimately founded this ministry after walking with her own gay son through the challenges of being gay and an Adventist Christian.

Grady immediately wrote an e-mail to Larry Blackmer, North American Division Vice President for the Office of Education, asking for the courtesy of an explanation. Blackmer replied saying that several unnamed people complained about her organization’s support for gay marriage. Other education officials then allegedly voted to ban her booth from the convention.

Grady’s website does indeed express sympathy for marriage between same sex partners as a vital part of their mental, emotional and even physical health, should they choose marriage. While not attempting to be thorough, the opinions expressed on her website are backed up by research. Still, Grady says, the booth was not about promoting gay marriage, but about preventing bullying for all students, including gays and lesbians.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church’s official position is that, “sexual intimacy belongs only within the marital relationship of a man and a woman.” This places Someone to Talk To’s viewpoint outside the official church doctrine. Other Adventist leaders wonder whether every booth is being submitted to the same scrutiny.

"Are all the booths being screened for doctrinal purity?” asks David Ferguson, recent past Church Relations Director of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship, a ministry that provides a safe spiritual and social community to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex current and former Seventh-day Adventists around the world. "Are other organizations being excluded based on their beliefs about the age of the earth or the ordination of women?"

The convention website does indicate that there are rules for exhibitors to abide by but fails to make those rules available.

Being a gay, lesbian, or bisexual teenager in the United States is risky business. While the greatest mortal threat these teens face is from themselves, studies suggest that all of us bear the responsibility. According to The Trevor Project, gay, lesbian, and bisexual teens are four times as likely to commit suicide than their heterosexual peers, and when combined with rejection from family and other important adults in their lives, the suicide rate for LGBT teens skyrockets to eight times the rate for those coming from supportive and accepting families, according to the Family Acceptance Project.

Schools are a particularly dangerous place for gay teens. According to the 2009 National School Climate Survey, nearly 85 percent of LGBT teens report being harassed in school and nearly two-thirds report feeling unsafe in school because of their sexual orientation.

Grady and her team decided to go to Nashville in spite of the ban on their booth, to talk with individuals about their ministry and hand out their materials, but Grady now says she has been informed that security will be prohibiting the distribution of material in the convention facilities. "They can't stop us from talking to people,” she says. "If they want our material we can go outside and give it to them off the property."

In conjunction with these events, Adventist filmmakers, Daneen Akers and Stephen Eyer are screening their recent documentary, Seventh-Gay Adventists: A film about faith on the margins, on Tuesday in a nearby venue not officially connected with the Teachers’ Convention (http://sganashville.eventbrite.com). Akers is being told by teachers that an email was sent from re-
Connection

The teachers were told that Tuesday evening would be their only free evening to rest or explore Nashville. Some were also planning to see ‘Seventh-Gay Adventists.’ Now, in several conferences, teachers are being summoned to a mandatory meeting. Some see this as a direct attempt to block teachers from seeing the film which portrays three Adventist couples (two gay and one lesbian), products of Adventist education themselves, as they express their love for the Adventist church and its teachings and their struggle to belong.

Dr. George Babcock, Principal of Hinsdale Adventist Academy in Hinsdale, Ill., finds the timing of the ban on Grady’s booth and the sudden change of the convention schedule to be more than coincidental. In his own school, a non-discrimination policy that he pioneered two and a half years ago, expressly forbidding discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation or gender identity/expression,” has recently come under attack by angry parents and other constituents. Pressured by the Illinois Conference administration, the statement was overturned last week and replaced with the standard North American Division non-discrimination policy which does not address discrimination based on religion, physical handicap, or sexual orientation.

“Carrol Grady has literally become an adopted mother and grandmother to hundreds of gay and lesbian Adventists who have been rejected by their families and the church. It’s hard to imagine not wanting Carrol’s message and resources to be available to educators. She’s all about loving all of our kids, including our LGBT kids and stopping bullying in schools,” says Akers. “Just this week I received emails from two Adventist young people who are contemplating ending their lives because they are at the point of total despair.” Anti-bullying advocates like Grady, Akers, Eyer and Babcock see bullying in schools as a matter of life and death and are using their voices and relative influence to bring a reluctant denomination to face this reality squarely.

Editor’s Note: Dr. George Babcock’s article on bullying in Adventist schools can be found at http://www.whocaresnewsletter.org/august-2012vol-2-no-2/confronting-bullying-in-adventist-schools.html.

Impression from Kampmeeting 2012

International News

Same-sex Partnership in Vietnam?

The Vietnamese government is the first Asian country to consider the possibility of allowing same-sex registered partnerships. This action by the Ministry of Justice of Vietnam completely surprised gay rights activist groups even though no one knows if the “suggestion” will survive long enough to be brought into the national assembly next year. Supporters say that even this first step is an important victory. At the present time, according to the Vietnamese Justice Office, the new law could help with issues related to property ownership, inheritance, adoption, and relational conflicts.

Source: NRC-Handelsblad, Dutch Newspaper/IM

Impression from Kampmeeting 2012
Carrol’s Criminal Caper

Last October, when I read about the NAD K-12 Teachers' Convention coming up this August 5-8 in Nashville, I thought, “This would be a great opportunity for a booth on gay/lesbian bullying in our schools.” So after an okay from Kinship, I reserved a booth space, and registered my name, organization (Someone to Talk To), and the information that we would be offering materials and resources for teachers who have gay or lesbian students in their classrooms. This information was available online for at least nine months for anyone involved in the convention to see.

Imagine my shock, therefore, when I received a call a week before the convention was to begin, not from the NAD administration, but from the woman with Expo Group who was handling the exhibit hall, saying, “I’m so sorry to have to disinvite you from having a booth. I have been told that this convention is not the right venue for your group.” I couldn’t even think of what to say to her, I was so surprised and disappointed.

I quickly notified the five other people who were planning to go and help with the booth: Dave Ferguson, Floyd Poenitz, Sharlett Reinke, and Claude and Donna Steen. I also let members of the Kinship Advisory know what had happened. And e-mails began to fly back and forth.

I wrote a letter to Elder Blackmer, Education Superintendent of NAD, expressing my shock and disappointment with the way this had been handled, and asking them to reimburse us for our hotel and airfare expense. (The Expo Group had already said they would refund the booth payment.)

But after more discussion and prayer, we decided to tell Elder Blackmer that they did not need to pay for our expenses, as we were going to come independently and just talk to people we met in the hallways and give out our materials. I immediately got a reply saying, “The Expo Group has handled the situation of the Kinship Advisory to let you keep coming.” I thought, “This would be a great opportunity for a booth on anti-bullying in our schools.”

We had thought of wearing them at the screening of the film. We had thought of wearing them at the convention, but decided that might be too confrontational. I think the t-shirts got our point across in a gentle spoof showing the ridiculousness of fearing a 76-year-old grandma who just wanted to see gay and lesbian students protected from bullying.

We all felt that it was well worth our while to go, as we made some great contacts. The Huffington Post column spread quickly on Facebook and other social media, which certainly reached a much wider spectrum of people than we could have through our booth. So I believe this has helped push the conversation forward. We just need to keep getting our message out to as many people as we can.

If you have experienced bullying in an Adventist school and are willing to share your story, please send it to carrolgrady@hotmail.com so I can add a page on bullying to my website. Thank you! —Carrol Grady

Editor’s Note: Pastor Bell’s article can be found at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ryan-j-bell/anti-bullying-advocates-bullied-by-church_b_1744987.html.
You have just read Ryan and Carrol’s articles.

We’d also been told that at least one conference
had intentionally scheduled a meeting in what
had been free time in order to keep teachers from
coming to the SGA screening.

Carrol, who has become an adopted mother and
grandmother to many LGBTI Adventists whose own
families can’t embrace them, knows from countless
emails and phone calls just how difficult it is for stu-
dents who are gay or who are perceived to be different.
In our story booths, we’ve lost track of how many peo-
ple have told us that they don’t think they’d be alive
today if Carrol hadn’t been there for them. There are
great resources, like The Trevor Project, that do incredi-
ble suicide-prevention work; but dealing with this as an
Adventist is a unique situation that someone like Carrol
can help kids navigate. As you might imagine, it was a
hard few days at the convention feeling very much on
the outside, and we weren’t sure what to expect at the
screening. However, we were absolutely blown away.
The screening was phenomenal. Not only was it sold out
and full of teachers, administrators, and other church
employees, but the audience had a tremendous energy.
It’s right up there as one of my favorite screenings now.
I’m not sure all that happens to create a certain group
dynamic, but this one was just profound. First, teachers
are highly pragmatic. They don’t have patience for the
abstract, purely theological arguments that have
happened around this topic. They know their students
deal with this, and their students want to talk about it
whether or not their church does. We also had several
family members of people featured in the film in
attendance (they all work for the church as teachers,
pastors, and administrators), and that was just a really
special experience for the audience to hear from them.
We were reminded anew of why we’ve gone very slowly
with the release of the film and focused on these
community screenings and conversations first. ▼
Salads

Last time you had a salad for your main meal, did you leave the table hungrier than a wolf in a cabbage patch? Sure, a big bowl of greens is good for you, but you'll be raiding the refrigerator an hour later if it doesn't have more going for it than that. Yet if it does, a salad can be seriously satisfying, even for you carnivores out there.

Sure, salads keep you looking good in your Speedo or tankini and give your brain and body a big-time nutrition bump: You're significantly more likely to get your fill of vitamins if you're a salad hound, according to a joint UCLA/Louisiana State University study (we don't have a clue how those two got together). What's more, feasting on veggies (plus some lean protein) helps you fend off cancer, osteoporosis, stroke, and ordinary aging.

Before you start loading up the crisper, keep in mind that the best salads are real meals: lean protein, complex carbs, and healthy fats. The worst? They're usually restaurant salads masquerading as health food but actually oozing fat and calories. Take a Chili’s Southwestern Cobb Salad: Without dressing, it has 650 calories and 32 grams of fat. With dressing? A Speedo-busting, heart-stopping 970 calories and 60 grams of fat.

For the best salads -- the kind that make your taste buds zing, your belly smile, and your cells young -- toss these ingredients into your bowl:

- **Big and little greens:** We probably don’t have to tell you that richly colored greens (baby spinach, arugula, romaine, watercress, radicchio) are the foundation of a great salad. They're packed with nutrients that inhibit cancer and help bones stay strong. But don't stop there. For a clean, bright flavor -- and a serious phytochemical boost -- add some fresh herbs. Go for mini powerhouses like mint (filled with cancer-busting monoterpenes), basil (packed with inflammation-fighting volatile oils), or cilantro (it goes after bad cholesterol).

- **Powerful proteins:** Protein keeps your stomach busy for a long time. It responds by telling your brain that you're full. Smart diet move. Instead of sodium-socked deli meats or full-fat cheese, aim for lean fixin's like 3 ounces (about the size of a tin of Altoids) of canned salmon, skinless chicken or turkey breast, chopped egg whites, low-fat cheese, or cubed tofu. A quarter cup of walnuts or a half cup of lentils, chickpeas, or beans will also kick up your protein count.

- **Major flavor boosters:** We've got no beef with the old salad standbys, like carrots, tomatoes, and cucumbers. But to really punch up the flavor, toss in asparagus, corn, black beans, zucchini, Portobello mushrooms, red and purple peppers, or baked sweet potatoes. Even better, lightly roast the veggies in a little olive oil first. The deep smoky flavor is to drool for.

- **Complex carbs that aren't oil-soaked croutons:** Anytime you're cooking up some brown rice, barley, or whole-wheat couscous or pasta, make extra and save it for your salads. Ditto for quinoa (it's like fluffy rice but high in both protein and fiber) or chia (a grain that's a good source of healthy omega-3s). Crave crunchy croutons? Toast and cube some rye bread.

- **Dressings that aren't fat phobic:** Your salad needs some heart-friendly omega-3 (or omega-9) fats to help your body soak up fat-soluble vitamins like A, D, and K, and it needs disease-fighting carotenoids such as lycopene and beta carotene. Enter real dressings. It's hard to beat balsamic vinegar and a little olive or walnut oil. Swirl in some mustard, ginger, or herbs; if the seasonings are likely to overwhelm the olive or walnut oil, switch to canola oil -- it's less expensive. If you prefer store-bought, check labels to avoid inflammation-encouragers (most other oils, added sugars). Your goal: a dressing that's thin and slippery enough to coat your salad easily. Drizzle on about half as much as you think you need (roughly 2 tablespoons for a meal-sized salad; add extra balsamic if needed). Then, toss like crazy to coat every last lettuce bit. Dig in.

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**Self-exaltation is behind the practice of noting the shortcomings in others.**

Ellen G. White, Review and Herald, May 12, 1896
Walking Away from Alzheimer's

Forgetting things? Can’t remember where you put that dang whatchamacallit? Listen up. We have something for you that can do what no drug on the market can: improve your memory and even ward off Alzheimer’s. It won’t cost you a dime. Ready?

Walk out the door. (Wait! Finish reading this first.)

Yep, it’s that simple. Put one foot in front of the other for 30 minutes a day and you’ll cut your risk of memory loss and Alzheimer’s disease, the ultimate memory thief, by 50%, according to a new study. Even if you already have early signs of cognitive decline or Alzheimer’s, walking 5 miles a week could put the skids on that.

7 ways to prevent Alzheimer’s Disease

More research is needed to confirm whether there is a causal link between these seven key risk factors and Alzheimer’s. But there are plenty of other good health reasons to make the following changes:

1. Get moving. Inactivity is linked to greater Alzheimer’s risk, so take a daily walk. Walking every day can prevent your brain from shrinking, too.

2. Don’t smoke. If you do, quit. Smoking may up the likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s disease.

3. Eat more bananas. The potassium in this cheap and plentiful year-round fruit can help lower your blood pressure by as much as two to three points! And low blood pressure at middle age may help prevent Alzheimer’s disease.

4. Go to bed. Getting a good night’s sleep can lower your risk of type 2 diabetes, so get your ZZZs because new research suggests that developing type 2 diabetes may up your chances of getting Alzheimer’s.

5. Walk outside. People who exercise outside versus at the gym or inside the home have less depression. That’s good news for the brain, because depression may increase the risk of Alzheimer’s.

6. Take a class. Higher education is linked to lower rates of Alzheimer’s.

7. Drop a few. Becoming obese at middle age may be connected to higher Alzheimer’s risk.

So how does a walk around the block turn aging brain cells into whiz kids?

Strolling makes your brain bigger. And with this organ, size does matter. Increased blood flow to your neurons from even mild aerobic activity prevents the brain shrinkage that occurs with age and accelerates with Alzheimer’s. Walking sends fresh oxygen and blood straight to the parts of the brain that keep you witty and clever enough to actually remember a punch line.

Boosting brainpower isn’t the only benefit. Walking perks up your mood, adds energy, cuts your chances of diabetes, and sparks your sex life (keeping blood flowing to that other organ where size may or may not matter). Even slow walkers have fewer heart attacks and strokes than couch potatoes do.
The Intercollegiate Adventist Gay-Straight Alliance Coalition (IAGC) was just founded (spring of 2012). On June 16-18 the IAGC had our first annual summit meeting to discuss, plan, and implement strategies on our campuses. Our goal is simple. We aim to bridge the gap between our Seventh-day Adventist faith-based institutions and the LGBTIQ students who are in attendance.

We are creating a network of official and unofficial gay-straight alliances from different Adventist campuses to provide resources, programs, and support for individual campuses and the U.S.-based university system. We plan to have our yearly schedule include a mission trip, educational scholarships, and the development of educational tools and resources.

LGBTIQ issues in the form of bullying, harassment, and discriminatory student policies come up on our campuses every day. Each student leader at our summit meeting had personally experienced and witnessed harassment. Living in Adventist realms twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week is a unique experience. We literally eat, breathe, and sleep Adventism. Yet Adventist educational institutions have only recently begun to admit that they have LGBTIQ students. Student policies are generally outdated and clearly discriminatory. Homosexual students have been punished, ostracized, or expelled simply for being open about their orientation. We at IAGC believe that this is an issue of student equality, not an issue of the church’s stance on sexual orientation and identities. When an entire group of people is being neglected or ostracized, it affects the whole community. IAGC wants to address this issue by building bridges of understanding and awareness.

Despite the administrative Adventist attitude toward its GLBTIQ members, we believe Adventist education is an incredibly important part of our life and perhaps even our salvation. As my mother always said, she wishes her children to be “safe and saved.” Although a degree from an Adventist institution does not solidify a “gold ticket” through the pearly gates, a spiritual environment where the students and faculty have the same morals and beliefs can be a nurturing ground for students to grow.

Currently the IAGC has representatives from Pacific Union College, Andrews University, Walla Walla University, La Sierra University, and Southern Adventist University. Despite our personal youth and the newness of our organization we believe our passion, creativity, organization, and drive will ensure long-lasting results.
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 welcome to contact Catherine at katgurian@aol.com.

Fearless Faith—Believing Without Fear
European KINSHIP Meeting
August 30 - September 3
Odenwald - Germany