In Memoriam Lee Todd [4]

What Makes God Angry?

Kinship Meetings in Germany and Australia [3,14,15]

European Kinship Meeting & Holiday [6-10]
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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) non-profit 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 2,500 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.

Contact/Information
info@sdakinship.org

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 SDA Kinship Int’l, PO Box 244, Orinda, CA 94653 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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www.someone-to-talk-to.net
www.buildingsafeplaces.org
www.itgetsbetterforadventists.org
www.sgamovie.com
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... and more
Over the holiday weekend 3-5 October, we held our annual SDA Kinship meeting in Brisbane, capital city of the state of Queensland, Australia. We invited members of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), Gay Christian Network (GCN) and Freedom2b (Australian GLBTI support group for evangelical and Christians) to join us for the day. The 27 people who attended the weekend program travelled from Sydney, Cooranbong and even from Perth in Western Australia. The meetings were held in the Brisbane MCC Church and the MCC pastor attended most of the meetings. The pastor had viewed the movie Seventh Gay Adventists several months ago and specifically invited SDA Kinship to use the MCC premises without charge.

We started on Friday evening as an informal group sitting in a circle, telling our stories. Some of the stories were quite emotional, including the continuing story of a former Adventist high school teacher who came out at last year’s Kinship meeting. His theme was inspiring. "Try as they might, they can't get rid of me - I want to stay in the church and contribute my service to God," he said.

On Sabbath morning we began with a rousing praise and worship period led by musicians from MCC. Following that, David Coltheart, former Adventist pastor, spoke on how it was possible to be both gay and Christian, sharing his own journey from denial, through acceptance to celebration. Dr Wendell Rosevear, a medical doctor in Brisbane who has an extensive practice serving the gay community, spoke on the "Freedom to be Me." Dr Rosevear is well-known in Australia for his work with HIV/AIDS and also with the both the victims and the perpetrators of rape. He was honoured in 1998 with the Order of Australia Medal for his work.

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Since we were showing the movie Seventh Gay Adventists that evening, we decided to have haystacks for lunch. Not really an Adventist tradition in Australia, and certainly unknown outside Adventist
Remembering Lee Todd

His XLR was the latest in a string of toys Lee enjoyed during and after his career at General Motors Acceptance Corporation (GMAC). The company required their executives to drive a different new car every three months. It was tough but someone had to do it.

Fun was only part of the quality friendship we shared for more than 34 years. He and I both attended the first Kinship Kampmeeting in 1980. He was always available to consult on personal and community issues. He provided a treasure trove of wisdom as well as financial assistance to friends in a bind. I’m not the only one he helped to finance another used car when the old one fell apart.

Lee valued his Seventh-day Adventist heritage and was inspired by the spiritual insights in Shelby Spong’s approach to scripture. He was an essential component of SDA Kinship during its early years when we had more enthusiastic volunteers for our various worthy projects than we had dollars to fund them. Lee contributed generously, sometimes single-handedly making a project possible. He was also a generous supporter of Lambda Legal.

James Leon “Lee” Todd was born and raised in central and northern California and attended Mountain View and Lodi academies. At La Sierra University he studied music, mastering both the piano and organ. He frequently played for church services or accompanied vocalists. When Lee took a full-time position with GMAC, he continued to teach organ and piano lessons in the evenings and on weekends. His business career eventually took him to New York City and later to suburban Detroit where he met his life partner, David Vanier.

When Lee retired in 1992, the couple moved back to Lee’s beloved California where they built a spectacular home in the mountains between Yosemite and Fresno, overlooking Coarsegold. Lee’s collections of carnival glass and crystal were beautifully displayed in the new home, along with three organs, one of them a theater version. Lee became the organist for the United Methodist Church he attended and served as treasurer of the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists.

Lee and David enjoyed entertaining and travel. They took several cruises to Hawaii, Alaska, and the Panama...
Canal. They looked forward to upgrading their registered domestic partnership to marriage when it would become legal in California. But David’s health began to deteriorate and he died in 2009 after 20 shared years.

On August 12, Lee was at home, attended by his caregiver and his pastor, when a cancer, progressing more rapidly than at first expected, took his life. His survivors include his former wife, Jaffra, his son, Randall, and daughter-in-law, Sher.

Robert Bouchard, former longtime president and indefatigable icon of Kinship, responded to the news of Lee’s death: “Very sad to lose him. A wonderful man and, of course, an important part of Kinship for many years. He always provided wisdom and calm in what were often passionate discussions within the organization. He was easy to talk to, fun to be with, and just a good friend to many of us.”

The KwaZulu Natal Declaration

I am grateful to share with you one of the outcomes from the recent Consultation on Human Sexuality, Religion and Equality forum that was held August 28-31 in South Africa.

It is “The KwaZulu Natal Declaration” which is a call for LGBTI equality from African faith leaders, scholars, activists, and civil society leaders. It is a call from African leaders to the continent and the African diaspora around the world.

The context for this declaration is shared within this blog post and the full text of the declaration is at the end of the blog.

http://www.lgbtglobalfaith.org/because-you-are-therefore-i-am/

On behalf of the African leaders and scholars who bring this call to the continent, I respectfully ask each of you to post and share this Declaration with your network, organization, and via social media.

Thank you.

All the best,

Michael

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9th Annual Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting

November 6-9, 2014

At the base of Okemo Mountain in Ludlow, Vt

Held at a rambling, comfortable Victorian home in Ludlow, Vermont, we are near one of Vermont’s most scenic ski mountains. We will have access to a wide range of historic and artistic activities.

It really is not too early to plan to join us for our weekend of Bible study, Adventist history tours, surprise adventures (you’ll see the dog sled photos in the January Connection!).

Register Now!

For more information, please feel welcome to contact Catherine at

vermontminik@sdakinship.org.
Snapshots

By Ruud Kieboom

We went under the English Channel: The Hague to Brussels, Brussels to London, in five hours. The pianist at St. Pancras International train station welcomed Kees and me with a happy melody. Floyd met us at the gate. We found Catherine at a café around the corner. Three hours before the next departure we checked our luggage and took off to wander the city. Several discussions, five lost tourists, and one map inspection later we found a wonderful, very family-friendly pub with outside tables; and we settled in for lunch. Veggie food for three of us; Kees ate something more exotic (fish and chips). We made it to the final train to EKM with a leisurely three minutes to spare.

Saffron Walden, Sussex, is home to the beautiful and historic St. Mark’s College, a place the four of us cherish after our 2009 EKM. It’s great to revisit the cozy dining hall, dorm rooms, and chapel, first built in the 13th century. Since 1993 the former monastery, former almshouse, former farm, and former home for retired clergy is used as a youth and conference center.

Our bedrooms, once home for pigs, have names like Narnia, Hogwarts, Middle Earth, etc. Some rooms have an upper balcony with extra beds. We do have showers and flush toilets. The college is working on modernization; everything is what we would call “practical.” Our meeting rooms and dining area are situated around a central inner garden with a very peaceful atmosphere. The staff is relaxed and friendly.
ike Lewis is an excellent, well-organized coordinator. He invited Rev. Cecilia Eggleston to help us explore different perspectives on prayer. Over our weekend we prayed with scripture, prayed with our emotions, prayed with our senses, prayed into stillness while drawing mandalas, prayed with imagination, prayed while walking a sacred labyrinth, and prayed with contemplative mind mapping.

Not everything was what I would call my piece of cake, or should I say my “piece of prayer,” but most of us experienced a blessing. As Cecilia mentioned, something that works for one person does not necessarily work for another. I appreciated her honesty and sincerity and the caring way she prepared the sessions.

Mornings and evenings were bookended by short worships presented by attendees. Scripture was read and prayers prayed in German, Dutch, Finnish, Swedish, Hebrew, Danish, and English. Kees opened Sabbath with a song in Hebrew that the group picked up quickly. Hearing the variety of linguistic tones and rhythms was an extraordinary experience. I especially enjoyed the sound of Finnish and the reading with a Scottish accent!

We spent one EKM day on a group field trip. In 2009 we went to Cambridge. This year we visited a unique English Cathedral city, St. Albans, Hertfordshire. St. Albans is home to Roman remains and beautiful medieval architecture. You will also find (what a coincidence!) the headquarters of the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church! Guess what? We were welcome to use the parking lot of the place. It’s not used on Sundays and there was no one in the office but the cleaning lady. We were happy to be able to park our cars within walking distance to the city center.

The cathedral dominates our view. Its architecture is a blend of many different periods, and its great tower includes Roman bricks salvaged from the ruins of Verulamium. It is best known for the shrine of St. Alban, Britain’s first Christian martyr, which continues to attract pilgrims from far and wide. We got to sit in the quire and listen to
the choir sing a beautiful Evensong. At the end of the service, Mike surprised us with a chance to see our 2009 guest speaker and other allies of the church in England! It was a wonderful and warm reunion with great conversations and a leisurely meal in a very good Italian restaurant.

It seemed like five minutes before EKM was over. After our Monday morning business meeting six people headed home and nine of us got into cars and began the journey to our traditional EKM holiday week. Next year we plan to meet in Italy. Come and join us! We look forward to seeing both old and new friends.

EKM on Holiday
Tideswell, Derbyshire, England
By Catherine Taylor

Surprising. Each year we become a family and our house becomes a home. Here’s our entrance. What you won’t see just inside is the entry corner where we throw our shoes and hang our coats. Over one week the pile becomes so high you would think 13 people have gone through four seasons. The paths we walk begin outside our door. Yes. The cows are around the corner. Each morning Joachim goes to the commons and visits with his beloved donkeys. There’s a bakery down the street. We met Mwole at the bus stop in front of the church. He arrived last to the holiday, coming in from Scotland.

We hike out the first day because we are very tired of sitting: planes, trains, buses, cars, lovely wonderful meetings; but we were sitting much of the time. Photos are of the dales. The picture you see is at a town well. Every autumn in this part of England there is a welling—a decoration of the area where people traditionally got their water. 2014 is the 100-year anniversary of WWI’s beginnings. Memories are everywhere. Here at the well, local people have used flowers and leaves to create beauty of a memory that will last weeks. A century after the event, every place we go has poignancy—family pictures, personal writings, those who came
home, and the losses that still affect their communities.

There is something homey and open about the Derbyshire we walked. Even the Chatsworth House is a dwelling for the family who bought it in Elizabeth’s time—the first one. The guides act as if they are cousins, and we hear tales of the times when family members pop into walking guest groups and comment with irony or acerbity on the origins of the portraits. Of course it is a rather large cozy dwelling—out of my reach this year. Turns out one of the Massachusetts Kennedys married in; and then, told with the poignancy we find everywhere this trip, both Kathleen and her English husband died in WW II. Here are some photos of the grounds. The current Duke of Devonshire (a county much further south and it’s a long story about the title) works for Sotheby’s, and there is art all over the property. An auction is coming up soon. If ever you get a chance to get to Derbyshire, we think you would really enjoy this place and the people who wander it.

The trolley museum. Loved it. The photos may give you a sense of the village. While there, we went to a hill-top-horizon-guardian monument to the Sherwood Forest Regiment who fought and mostly died at Gallipoli. Horrid, horrid battle from World War I that decimated too many Brits and Aussies in the stupidity of bad management. As with many of our memorials, the site itself is shrouded in misty peacefulness.

Nothing like market towns that mix cyber technology with 17th century lunch houses; Bakewell is classic. Being somewhat proper tourists we dined in a lovely place with rolling ancient wood floors that tested our balance, great food, and wonderful staff. We wandered off to a local craft market and visited the bowling court and flower gardens. There is, of course, the
requisite church in the center of the village. As I sat outside in the church yard one of my favorite visitors dropped by. Stefan and I think she got confused by the cloudy darkness of the day and came out for dinner a bit too early. After arriving at our feet, she climbed up the wall, sat next to us for a few minutes, then headed on her way. Kees was ready to go home and fix supper but we talked him, without too much difficulty, into a coffee. Wow! We accidentally found a courtyard tea shop, a table next to a fig tree, a book store with a piano playing inside, and again, wonderful people.

It poured on Sabbath. We “rested” all morning. We got bored in the afternoon and went to the Plague Museum in Eyam. It’s a tiny building in a tiny village, funded a bit by the folks at Chatsworth House and dreamed by one man who grew up in the village and wanted to share some of its history. Despite the pandemic nature of that particular plaque, the museum is mostly personal—the families affected, their stories told, their houses shown. At the end of course, there was the history of the village during WWI. Poignant: the theme of our visit. One interesting scientific tidbit we picked up: all family lines who survived the plague developed a chromosomal anomaly that leaves them immune to HIV.

We got home, propped our feet up and were surprised by a guest. Through the internet, Mwole had met a young man in the area who is part of a Muslim support group like ours. He is wonderful and told us stories of the retreat and meeting they had recently. Many of them were isolated from or cautious about coming out to their families because of the possibility that they would be maimed or killed. Despite the danger in which they live, the group’s retreat sounded similar to ours; the discussions between observant members with their prayer rugs and those who eat shrimp, the laughter, the food, the need for family and community, the hope replacing despair. He may meet us in Italy. I hope you get to meet him.

Ah, the last day. Two years in a row Mike has given us an extraordinary last day. He said there were cliffs. He didn’t tell us about the beautiful rolling pastures on the way to their edges, the boulders we would climb to get to the top, a horizon that stretched to Narnia, and the acres and acres of purple heather that surrounded us. Sitting at the computer writing these words, my hands come off the keyboard and press against my cheeks, seeing in my mind’s eye the glory of that day.

I cannot talk you into joining us. There may be aspects of your life that keep you closer to home. There may be priorities and necessities that demand attention. There may be different levels of interest. But if you can and if you want, we would be delighted to have you join next year.

I try to avoid looking forward or backward, and try to keep looking upward.

-Charlotte Bronte
the average Bible reader is quickly confronted by an apparent contradiction. After emerging from the Red Sea, Moses and the Israelites sang: “In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble” (Exodus 15:7). And yet, six verses later, they also sang: “In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed.” Burning anger and unfailing love—the two concepts can appear to be at odds with each other.

God’s anger is described as “fierce” (Exodus 32:12) and “hostile” (Leviticus 26:28). God is described as burning with anger (Judges 3:8). “I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm in furious anger and in great wrath” (Jeremiah 21:5). Sometimes his anger extends even to the apparently innocent: “My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless.”

On the other hand, God is described as being a God of love (1 John 4:8). He is “compassionate and gracious... abounding in love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6). There are dozens of texts that say that God’s love is unchanging, and His mercy is enduring, constant, never ceasing. “For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations” (Psalm 100:5). God forgives sins and extends unending, boundless love. “You, Lord, are forgiving and
good, abounding in love to all who call to you” (Psalm 86:5). “He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:10-12).

Angry or loving? For too many, the only way to reconcile the paradox has been to assume that God is capricious, alternating from love to hate, or anger to mercy, according to a whim, condemning one moment, redeeming the next. “Though in anger I struck you, in favour I will show you compassion” (Isaiah 60:10). And then God loves the whole world—all the people, all the time (John 3:16).

I would like to propose that human anger is often a feeling and is offensive or self-protective; that is, it often seeks to dominate others. I also propose that God’s anger is action against those who harm others and that, until the end of time, seeks to restore order within His creation and to bring humanity from a place of causing harm to one of healing. Historically, God has acted in judgment to limit the incursion of sin in society or among His people. He has intervened to destroy sin and sinners who are harming others (Genesis 6:17) and has withdrawn his powers over nature to allow destruction and death (Genesis 19). God’s anger is not a defining characteristic of God; rather, it is temporary. God’s judgments against the ungodly are a sign of His anger against actions that contradict His loving character and purposes. God’s anger is always provoked by sin and is a reaction to evil in the life of His creatures or His world. For this reason, God’s anger is short-lived and is extinguished when its purpose has been fulfilled.

What makes God angry? According to the wise man in the book of Proverbs, “There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who stirs up conflict in the community” (Proverbs 6:16-19). According to Isaiah 58, God is angry with those who exploit their workers, quarrel, act unjustly, refuse to share their food with the hungry, oppress others, and indulge in the pointing finger and malicious talk. According to Matthew, it is those who judge others. According to Ezekiel (16:49) God is angry with those who are arrogant, overfed, unconcerned; who do not help the poor and needy, were haughty and “did detestable things before me.” The list has also included:

* Idolatry (Numbers 25:3; Romans 1:18-23)
* Disobedience and disloyalty (Joshua 7:1; Hebrews 4:11)
* Pride, arrogance, and hypocrisy (Isaiah 13:11; Matthew 23:27-28)
* Injustice (Zechariah 7:9-12; Matthew 23:23)
* Rejection of God’s servants (Zechariah 7:12)
* Those who “have trampled the Son of God underfoot” (Hebrews 10:29-31)

God’s anger is a demonstration of His justice. Justice includes fairness and equality. Justice is concerned with determining the rights and wrongs of a case or person, and meting out the consequences of a person’s actions or choices. Justice sees that every person receives exactly what he or she deserves. Justice is served in the protection of the vulnerable.

God’s judgment is not the inevitable destiny of mortals unless we choose to continue to harm others. Jesus rescued us from the “coming wrath” (1 Thessalonians 1:10) by becoming our substitute and taking the law’s curse on Himself. Because we have been justified by faith, we have been “saved from God’s wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9).

The final expression of God’s anger is a future, prophetic event when harm, sin, and evil are destroyed and the universe is restored to its original gentle harmony. God’s justice is the act of mercy that allows the wicked their right of choice and the final antiseptic that cleanses the universe of the destructiveness of sin. It is God’s “strange work” (Isa 28:21) that occupies only a moment but has eternal consequences and is designed to bring peace and reconciliation to all of creation.

(All texts quoted from the New International Version.)

David Coltheart is a former Seventh-day Adventist pastor and evangelist who is still involved in ministry.
Former Advocates of the Ex-gay Movement Opposed to Conversion Therapy

By Tony Merevick, Staff of BuzzFeed

As advocates mount a national campaign against the practice, several former leaders of the ex-gay conversion therapy movement are now coming out in opposition to conversion therapy, or efforts to turn gay people straight, BuzzFeed has learned.

Nine former ex-gay leaders, from organizations like Exodus International and ministries like Love in Action, have signed onto a letter in partnership with the National Center for Lesbian Rights [NCLR] calling for a ban on gay conversion therapy and saying that LGBT people should be celebrated and embraced for who they are.

“At one time, we were not only deeply involved in these ‘ex-gay’ programs, we were the founders, the leaders, and the promoters,” they said in the letter. “Together we represent more than half a century of experience, so few people are more knowledgeable about the ineffectiveness and harm of conversion therapy. We know firsthand the terrible emotional and spiritual damage it can cause, especially for LGBT youth.”

The former ex-gay leaders, many of whom worked at organizations involved in the practice for several years, say they “know better now.” And many of the organizations they were involved in have shuttered or rebranded, like Exodus International, which very publicly announced it would shut down last summer. But gay conversion therapy is still practiced in many parts of the country, according to the NCLR.

Many of the signatories on the letter have previously spoken out against—and in some cases apologized for—supporting and advocating for gay conversion therapy. But for some included, it’s the most public statement they’ve made since renouncing the practice, like John Smid, who was a member of Exodus International and who served on its board for 11 years.

“We all got together and said it’s time to produce a statement that is not a statement of apology, but a statement of our beliefs on how conversion therapy harms people,” Smid told BuzzFeed. “We felt like we needed to make that statement.”

Smid said he experienced the harms of gay conversion or reparative therapy firsthand—enduring what he described as the damaging message that gay people are somehow “broken and sick and that they need to be repaired,” he said. Leading medical and psychological associations, such as the American Psychological Association, have discredited and criticized gay conversion therapy.

“In my own life, that message kept me trapped in a cycle of believing that I was emotionally ill and incapable of having a healthy life until those things are fixed,” he said. “For over two decades, I lived in that mindset. That’s why reparative therapy is so damaging. That was the message that I received and that I taught in my involvement with Exodus and Love in Action.”

On Monday, Yvette Cantu Schneider announced via GLAAD that she is sorry for her work in the ex-gay and conversion therapy movement “and is now fully supportive of LGBT people.” She, too, has signed on to the letter in support of banning gay conversion therapy efforts.

The former ex-gay leaders coming forward to unite in opposition to the practice comes as LGBT advocates such as those at NCLR and other organizations are pushing for a movement against gay conversion therapy, including in state legislatures. Just this month, Michigan State Rep. Adam Zemke (D-Ann Arbor) introduced a bill that would ban conversion therapy for minors.

“This is about the civil rights of children,” Zemke told BuzzFeed. “A lot of children look up to adults and follow their advice blindly and innocently. They’re kids—they don’t know any better in some cases. As lawmakers, we have the responsibility to protect those kids from things proven to be harmful; and
Zemke said he is seeking support from lawmakers in the chamber, particularly among members of the Republican majority, to whom he points out that GOP New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie signed similar legislation into law just last year. Action or progress on the bill, though, likely won’t happen until later this fall, Zemke said.

However, recent efforts to ban gay conversion therapy for minors in some states have fallen short. Last month, GOP leadership in the New York State Senate blocked such legislation; and in April, a similar bill was defeated on the floor of the Illinois House.

Either way, advocates and other critics of gay conversion therapy hope to expand the debate over the practice coast to coast. The letter from the former leaders comes as part of NCLR ramping up its BornPerfect campaign, which it launched last month.

“We are committed to protecting LGBT children and their families from the severe harms caused by these dangerous practices,” NCLR Executive Director Kate Kendell said in a statement. “These practices have been thoroughly discredited by every major mental health organization; and yet, every day, young lives are wrecked. We intend to stop the practices once and for all.”

The people making the statement included:

Brad Allen
Lay Leader Volunteer (2005-2007)
Church Network Coordinator (2007), Exodus International Headquarters

Darlene Bogle
Founder, Director, Counselor (1985-1992), Paraklete Ministries

Michael Bussee
EXIT (1974-1979)
Co-founder (1976-1979), Exodus International

Jeremy Marks
Founder (1988-2000)
Courage UK

Bill Pritchett
Founder, Executive Director (1986-1988), Coming Back

Tim Rymel
Outreach Director (1991-1996)
Love in Action

Yvette Cantu Schneider
Executive Director (2001-2005)
Living in Victory Ministry
Director of Women’s Ministry (2008-2011), Exodus International

John J. Smid
Executive Director (1987-2008)
Love in Action

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**Kinship Germany**

*Report from Tanja Svinkas*

I picked up David and Werner from the train station in my beautiful village of Mommenheim. We were very happy to see each other! Hans arrived next. Then Ingrid and Frieder. Over coffee and cake we talked about the Seventh-day Adventist church in general and how each of us feels about the church in Germany. Frieder talked about the work that Building Safe Places-for Everyone is doing in Germany and in Europe. After a leisurely dinner filled with great food and conversation we scheduled our next meeting for November 22. Our day was over much too quickly. We're already looking forward to next month's meeting at the home of Ingrid and Frieder!
circles, hay stacks nevertheless provided a talking point and a link to the movie that night, which features a meal consisting of hay stacks. Most of the people at our meal decided that it was a Mexican salad.

In the afternoon, Ben Cossalter, a high school science teacher and member of GCN, spoke about identity and self-esteem. Using a variety of Australian coins that each participant could examine, he spoke about our adoption into God's kingdom, our identity as Christians, and the value we have in God's eyes.

Dr. Rosevear spoke more of his personal journey, growing up in an Adventist home where his stepfather was a pastor. He recounted the struggles of owning his own identity and the quest to find freedom to love. He contrasted the characteristics of unhealthy relationships with those of healthy ones that feature acceptance of a person’s body, choices, needs, and time. He emphasized the importance of honesty and trust in relationships.

After a pizza dinner at the church, everyone enjoyed the movie Seventh Gay Adventists. Since more than half of the group were not Adventists, the movie had a different feel and context, and the questions that followed reflected that difference. Some of the group struggled with what they saw as the quirky aspects of Adventism. The Adventists present pointed out that those features are examples of cultural differences between Australia and the USA. The film was well received and everyone in the group stayed on after the movie to participate in the lively discussion.

On Sunday, many of the group met at Kangaroo Point, on the banks of the Brisbane River, for a barbecue lunch. We sat and talked for several hours, reflecting on what the weekend had meant to each of us. All of us made new friends and enjoyed Christian fellowship with people from a wide range of denominational backgrounds. Everyone agreed that there is more that binds us together than separates us.

The weekend was organised by John Wallace and David Coltheart, and already we are planning for the next SDA Kinship meeting.

Biographical Note:
David Coltheart is the communications officer for SDA Kinship Australia, and the Queensland coordinator of SDA Kinship. Members and friends of SDA Kinship in Australia, New Zealand, and the South Pacific are welcome to contact him by email at kinshipaustralia@sdakinship.org.
Impressions of EKM Holiday

PLAGUE COTTAGE
Mary Hadfield, formerly Cooper, lived here with her two sons, Edward and Jonathan. Her main livelihood, Alexandra, harvested and an employed hand George White. A 40-year-old plague victim, Mary died on 27th September 1665. Edward Cooper, aged 4, died on the 2nd August 1666. Jonathan Hadfield died on the 27th August 1666. Mary had managed two sons and 13 other children.

CHEEDALE
No footpath & likely to flood in wet weather. Alternative routes via Blackwell or Wormhill.

connection