

Ishtar MSM Invites Other Sheep to Nairobi, Kenya, for Summer 2007

Emmanuel Kamau (known as "Aunty Ivy" throughout Africa), founder (1997) and director of Ishtar MSM, an HIV/AIDS prevention organization that works among gay men, has invited Steve Parelli and Jose Ortiz of Other Sheep to come to Nairobi, Kenya, this summer (July and August 2007) to conduct "safe space" groups that will focus on instruction and discussion on issues and interests pertaining to homosexuality.

A curriculum will be used that addresses homosexuality as it relates to religion, society, family members, the social sciences and psychology, and human rights. Targeted participants will be the LGBT community, their parents and friends, and any interested party. Three different locations have been chosen in Nairobi for weekly meeting places in order to reach a wider range of people within the city. The groups will run for four weeks. Kamau, Parelli and Ortiz will use the time between classes to meet and connect with individuals. It is hoped that a permanent pro-active group will grow out of these meetings and will continue to meet on a regular basis creating fellowship and addressing the areas of need particular to the group and the region.

Other Sheep is currently seeking donors to help with the Kenya Project Summer 2007 costs. Financial gifts can conveniently be made with credit cards on the website at www.othersheepexecsite.com. Personal checks can be sent directly to Other Sheep, c/o Gordon I. Herzog., 16768 Old Jamestown Rd. Florissant, MO 63034. Other Sheep is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization. Donors will receive a receipt for their contributions.



Emmanuel Kamau, as director of Ishtar MSM (men who have sex with men), has served on UN and state advisory councils and is an international speaker.

Emmanuel Kamau recently became interested in Other Sheep through contact with Other Sheep's New York City committee that works to distribute throughout Africa the book *The Children Are Free: Reexamining the Biblical Evidence on Same-sex Relationships*, co-authored by Rev. Jeff Miner and John Tyler Connoley.

Kamau, while visiting family in the United States, traveled to New York City in March of 2007 and for eleven days resided in the home of Steve Parelli and Jose Ortiz during which time he met twice with the NYC Other Sheep committee to discuss and plan for Other Sheep's 2007 summer work in Nairobi with Ishtar MSM.

Other Sheep Requests Books for Marriage Equality NY

Michael Sabatino, Communications Director for Marriage Equality NY, was first introduced to the book *The Children Are Free* upon meeting Steve Parelli, Executive Director of Other Sheep, at the June 2006 Westchester County Interfaith Pride Service, New York. Sabatino saw the potential in using the book with New York State Legislators. "The first book we handed out [to a New York State Legislator] resulted in a conversion from an undecided vote to becoming a co-sponsor," Sabatino says.

Recently, Sabatino asked Other Sheep to make a donation of 25 copies for distribution to NY State legislators. Other Sheep, on behalf of Marriage Equality NY, asked Rev. Jeff Miner of Jesus MCC, Indianapolis, Indiana, to make the donation to which he agreed. Sabatino writes: "Marriage Equality, as part of their education program, has been including a copy of *The Children Are Free* in the information package they present to New York State Legislators that have not committed to Marriage Equality." Sabatino says Marriage Equality will be able to "continue this program thanks to the generosity of Jeff Miner who has donated 25 copies of the book." He also thanks Other Sheep for their part as facilitator.

Other Sheep Theologian Speaks in Brazil

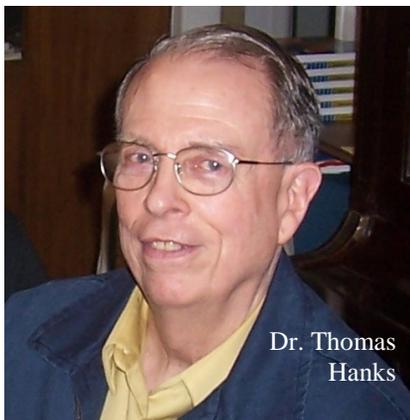
Rev. Dr. Thomas Hanks will speak in Methodist and Lutheran institutions in Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro, all cities in Brazil, May 12-22. Watch for an article on Hanks' trip in the Other Sheep Summer Report.

Queer Bible Commentary Reviewed by the London Times

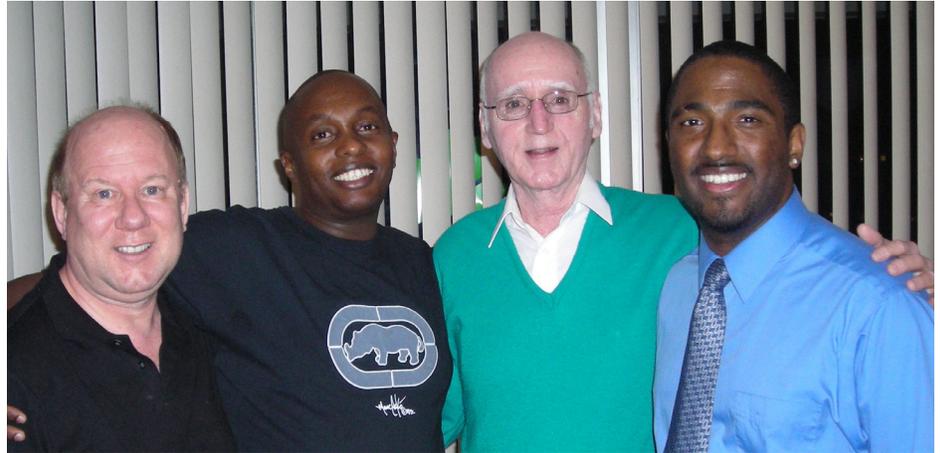
Andrew K. T. Yip, in the April 6, 2007, "Higher Education Supplement" of *The London Times*, had this to say about the fall 2006 publication of *The Queer Bible Commentary*: "This volume . . . attempts to undo the harm . . . perpetrated and sustained by traditional theology that for a long time was accepted as the exclusive truth about the Bible, Christianity and humanity. Such transgressive theology argues that theology, far from being objective and universal, is gendered, racialised, classed and "sexualized" (privileges heterosexual experiences) - an ideological construct infused with power. There is no denying that the flourishing of such theology has given a voice to Christians whose lived experiences and viewpoints were traditionally excluded.

"Written from a queer standpoint, this much welcomed commentary . . . offers illuminating contributions from a team of internationally renowned theologians, biblical scholars and religious practitioners covering every book/text in the Bible."

Rev. Dr. Thomas Hanks, Other Sheep Theologian and Director of Mission, authored the commentary on Romans and Hebrews in The Queer Bible Commentary."



Dr. Thomas Hanks



Above Photo: Left to Right: Steve Parelli, Emmanuel Kamau, Father Donald Doherty, and Jose Ortiz.

Father Doherty, after 20 years of ministry in East Africa, receives Kenyan visitor in his Bronx home

*The following first person story was written by **Father Doherty** for Other Sheep News*

Upon entering a home in East Africa, one is greeted with the words *karibu kwetu*, which means "welcome to our place." I had heard that greeting a thousand times and more while ministering in Tanzania and Kenya. I had worked in East Africa for twenty years. From 1968-1985, I had served as pastoral minister working with adults and youth in Tanzania. Returning in 1997, I did pastoral work in Nairobi, Kenya, until 2000 and was, during this time, a visiting lecturer at Tangaza College (Catholic University of Eastern Africa).

Now, much to my amazement and surprise, standing at my apartment door in the Bronx, New York, on a March evening in 2007, was a young Kenyan man whom I greeted with the words *karibu nyumbani*, "welcome to my house." What joy I felt in this unexpected visit.

My Kenyan visitor was Emmanuel Kamau, founder and director of Ishtar MSM (men who have sex with men), Nairobi, Kenya. He was accompanied by Steve Parelli and Jose Ortiz of Other Sheep and Perry Brass, gay writer and published author.

I had prepared Irish stew in honor of St. Patrick's Day, now only a couple days past. Around our evening meal, we visited. We learned about Ishtar MSM, an organization that works in cooperation with government agencies to prevent HIV infections and assist those living with AIDS, and that Ishtar MSM does so with the purpose of helping Africans identify and accept their gay orientation.

Yes, to accept their gay orientation. That is indeed a timely ministry. During the twenty years I lived in Africa, I constantly heard the party line *There are no gays in Africa* and *Where ever there may be a homosexual relationship, it is because foreigners have brought it to Africa; it was never a part of African identity or customs*. That was the party line. Yet somehow I knew this was not the case and from time to time I heard of gay Africans and of their own queer tribal words that harked back to a time before foreign influence.

Eventually I met some Africans in person who identified themselves as
Continued on page 4 "Kenyan visitor Received in the Bronx by Doherty"

Kathryn Griess, former missionary to Chile, shares her coming-out journey

Last year, while serving as a missionary to college campuses in Chile, I came out of the closet and was subsequently asked to leave ministry. Since then I've engaged in those nerve-wracking discussions in which I've tried my hardest to learn how to hold my head up and without shame speak clearly to the fact that I believe God loves me just the way I am. I've emailed, written letters, or spoken with former students, bosses and colleagues, my father and even my pastor. Each time I explained myself, I honed a little bit better a description of who I am. A few months ago, I wrote a letter to one of my best friends in which I summarized my journey thus far as a queer Christian. The following excerpts are from that letter.

Dear Jack,

I think there are two main paths that people take when wondering about challenging the sinfulness of homosexuality One is to pick apart each individual relevant verse, trying to find other definitions and exegeses and commentaries and bits of church history that will allow you to distinguish another possible interpretation.

The other major path when talking about this issue is to go the opposite direction — you simply begin to drift further away from trusting the scripture at all. . . . Is it a book you want me to read because it's inerrant or despite its errancy? Should I receive it with divine authority, as a merely human creation, or something in between?

The conclusion I *have* reached that homosexuality is not sinful is based on personal experience. . . . I'm well aware that in evangelical circles, our experience, our ideas, our heart is not to be trusted. And I understand this.

But just consider this for a moment: my entire walk with God, from conversion to becoming a campus pastor to witnessing to serving in church to going to Chile to my relationships with other Christians, all of it, has been based on what I think God has said to me, on what I believe are my experiences with Him. So why should I start to doubt that now? Either I consider the fact that the Holy Spirit is still speaking to me, crazy as the particular idea may sound, or I need to question everything I've ever talked about with Him. I see no reason to do the latter.

So that's that. Because of my personal experiences, and my ongoing and on-growing relationship with God, I believe I am not in sin.

I will continue to study in the other two paths, seeking the exact meaning of the relevant passages and the exact character of the Bible itself, but I no longer see those studies as having the potential to derail my faith or my life . . .

Kati

For the complete, unabridged text of Kati's letter to Jack go to http://www.othersheepexesite.com/Paraguay_A_New_Lesbian_Couple.html



Kathryn Griess, right in photo, was field staff for an international evangelical campus ministry in Chile up until May, 2006. She now lives with her wife, **Esther**, at left in photo, in Buenos Aires. Griess first found out about Other Sheep and Rev. Dr. Thomas Hanks "during a desperate internet search."

Emmanuel Kamau distributes *The Children Are Free* and Other Sheep material at conference in Cambodia

Other Sheep, through the person of Emmanuel Kamau, delivered packets of material to 30 participants at an international sex workers conference held in Cambodia, April 2-4, 2007, where Emmanuel was a featured speaker.

Emmanuel says, "I facilitated two sessions. In the first session, we addressed the question *Who are our allies?* In this session, when we asked the question *What do we want our allies to do for us at the local, regional and international level*, I introduced Other Sheep and distributed the packets. I told them that in every human being there is a vacuum that needs to be filled with God and so we need to have some knowledge of religion so that we can meet the spiritual needs of those members who are sex workers and Christian."

The packets contained the book *The Children Are Free* and literature on Other Sheep including Other Sheep's January-March 2007 Winter Report. Copies of the book *The Children Are Free* were provided by Jesus MCC of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Emmanuel says, "Before the conference was over, I heard a few comments that so far the book was great." Emmanuel is founder (1997) and director of Ishtar MSM, Kenya, East Africa.

Jesus MCC and Other Sheep to Publish Book in Spanish

The Children Are Free: Reexamining the Biblical Evidence on Same-Sex Relationships by Jeff Miner and John Tyler Connoley is soon to be published in Spanish as a joint project by Jesus Metropolitan Community Church, Indianapolis, Indiana and Other Sheep.



Marcelo Saenz, above right, of CEGLA discusses the book and translation with Tom Hanks, Buenos Aires, July 2006

Tom Hanks, Other Sheep theologian and director of mission, selected the translators and oversaw the translation work in Buenos Aires. With members of CEGLA, a local gay Christian fellowship, Tom Hanks reviewed the translation work for style and readability as they studied the concepts of the book together.

Editorial Epifania, a religious publishing house in Buenos Aires, will publish the Spanish translation. Editorial Epifania, not officially a part of Other Sheep, has strong ties with Other Sheep. With financial help through Other Sheep, Nestor Saporiti and Carlos Gasparini, were able to found Editorial Epifania. In 2004, Editorial Epifania published Other Sheep's Spanish translation of *Henri's Mantle: 100 Mediations on Nouwen's Legacy*.

Thomas Hanks to Present Paper on Romans 1 at SBL in November

Dr. Thomas Hanks will present a paper on Romans 1:16-2:16 in Robert Jewett's new commentary at the Society of Biblical Literature, meeting in San Diego, CA, Nov 17-20. A first draft is available on line at www.fundotrasovejas.org.ar. The paper will compare Jewett's conclusions with those of Robert Gagnon in his two books and numerous website articles.

Financial gifts may be sent to Other Sheep
c/o Gordon I. Herzog
16768 Old Jamestown Rd.,
Florissant, MO 63034
email: GIHerzog@othersheep.org

Financial gifts may be made by credit card
through PayPal
at www.othersheepexcsite.com

Continued from page 2 Kenyan visitor Received in the Bronx by Father Doherty

gay but could never publicly present themselves as such. To be a gay African was a very lonely existence for sure. There were never any articles in the papers or magazines about them. There were no television programs about gay characters. There were no activists and no support networks that I knew of.

So when the phone call came from Steve Parelli that he was expecting a visitor from Nairobi who was gay and out and proud and an activist, well I just had to see this person and hear his own personal testimony for myself. Together the five of us sat in my high rise Bronx apartment overlooking the Throgs Neck bridge – two Protestants, a Jew, and two Catholics, all from different ethnic backgrounds – listening with delight to our guest, Emmanuel, as he spoke about his wonderful work of advocacy, and of how he personally relates to gays with an essential element of spirituality, which especially excited me.

Fr. Donald Doherty, M.M. Father Doherty is a member of Other Sheep Africa Advisory Board and is a member of the Other Sheep NYC Committee to Bring to Africa the Book *The Children Are Free*

Other Sheep resource materials can be found at www.othersheep.org, www.fundotrasovejas.org.ar and www.othersheepexcsite.com and may be freely copied and reprinted. Copied materials should indicate their source and be distributed free of charge. For address removal, correction or addition, contact Steve Parelli, Executive Director, at sparelli2002@yhaoo.com or by direct mail at 2962 Decatur Ave. 5D, Bronx, NY 10458. Home/Business Phone: 718-360-0884.

Other Sheep News is published quarterly by Other Sheep and is compiled and edited by Steve Parelli. John Doner is assistant editor. Other Sheep is Multicultural Ministries with Sexual Minorities, working world wide in an ever-expanding variety of languages, cultures and LGBT concerns, to share the good news that God loves all gay, lesbian bisexual and transgendered persons just as they are and calls them into inclusive, gay-affirming, Christian