

connection.

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 32 No. 4 – May/June 2008



Elections

KINSHIP BOARD

President: Taylor Ruhl
 Vice President: Jeremy Brown
 Secretary: Charles Shobe
 Treasurer: David Bayless
 Connection Editor: Catherine Taylor
 Public Relations Coordinator: Jacqueline Hegarty
 Church Liaison: David Ferguson
 Women's Coordinator: Carol Brown
 Kampmeeting Coordinator 2008: Naveen Jonathan
 Kampmeeting Site Development: Yolanda Elliott

BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE

KinNet Coordinator: Floyd Poenitz
 Member Services: Fred Casey
 Asian Member Development: Pearl Pangkey
 People of Color: John Edwards
 Latin American Members: Obed Vazquez-Ortiz
 Parents, Family & Friends Support: Carrol Grady
 IMRU?: Ruben López
 Technology Coordinator: Josephine Elizabeth

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Taylor Ruhl, Jeremy Brown, Charles Shobe, David Bayless, Yolanda Elliott, Jacque Hegarty

REGIONAL COORDINATORS, USA

Region 1 (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA) David Thaxton and Catherine Taylor region1@sdakinship.org
 Region 2 (DE, MD, VA, WV, NC, SC) Yolanda Elliott region2@sdakinship.org
 Region 3 (Southeast) region3@sdakinship.org
 Region 4 (Midwest) region4@sdakinship.org
 Region 5 (AK, KS, LA, OK, TX) Floyd Poenitz region5@sdakinship.org
 Region 6 (Mountain Plains) Erin Stenhouse region6@sdakinship.org
 Region 7 (Northwest) region7@sdakinship.org
 Region 8 (Northern CA, NV, HI) Obed Vazquez-Ortiz region8@sdakinship.org
 Region 9 (Southern CA, AZ) Taylor Ruhl and -Naveen Jonathan region9@sdakinship.org

AFFILIATED INTERNATIONAL REGION COORDINATORS

Australia-New Zealand: Noel Thorpe info@sdakinshipaustralia.org
 Brazil: Itamar Matos de Souza -matoso25@yahoo.com.br
 Canada: Jerry McKay ba360@ncf.ca
 Central & South America: Alexander Gomez Pasco alexgpasco@yahoo.com
 Europe: Ruud Kieboom kinship@xs4all.nl
 Germany: Roy Raetzer roy@raetzer-botha.de
 United Kingdom & Eire: Mike Lewis kinship_uk@scotmagic.co.uk
 Philippines: Jonathan Coe cancer108@hotmail.com

OTHER COORDINATORS

Intersex: Carolyn Parsons intersex@sdakinship.org
 Transgender/Transexual: transgender@sdakinship.org
 Older Adult: Ren Reynolds olderadult@sdakinship.org
 IMRU? (Young Adults Under 30): Ruben López imru@sdakinship.org
 Webmaster: Linda Wright webadmin@sdakinship.org

WHO WE ARE...

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

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 fifteen officers and thirteen regional coordinators. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three countries.

SDA 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

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 SDA Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below or donate 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.)

SDA Kinship, PO Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141 or visit SDA Kinship's website at: www.sdakinship.org.





From the Editor

Welcome to the middle of the year! Kinship has been very busy over the last couple of months.

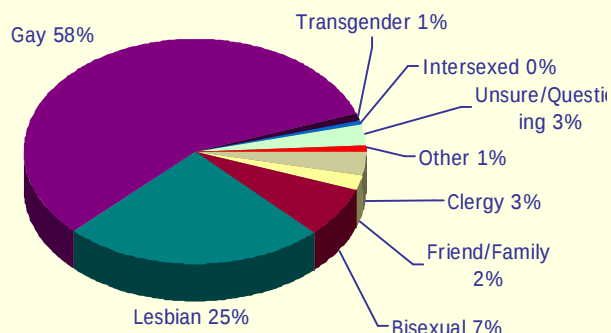
We're beginning to implement new By-laws, we're getting ready to elect new officers, we're celebrating having Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives off the presses and available for purchase, we've had a US mini- Kampmeeting and Kinship Europe Planning Meeting, we're developing new ways to use the leaflet Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?, we're almost ready for our SDA Kinship International Kampmeeting in Reston, Virginia. In this issue we want to give you a chance to understand some of the election processes. It's a bit like having a small lesson on community government.

Isis Montalvo has written a thoughtful overview and then developed three tables to help us see how the structures of Kinship can work for all of us. We wanted you to see a couple of pictures of the demographics of Kinship; so Fred Casey, our Member Services Coordinator, sent us some graphs to help demonstrate who we are. Since any community is full of human interactions we decided to begin this issue with an article about protecting relationships. While Michele O'Mara's focus is on building couples, we think the principles she shares are helpful for all the ways we are in contact with each other. We'll share just a bit of the pleasures of the weekend in Delaware, summarize the news from Europe and continue our introductions of Kinship members. You may notice some changes in our layout. This is Ruud Kieboom's first issue as our production staff. We welcome you Ruud! We wish for you many gentle blessings over the next weeks. Remember to take care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

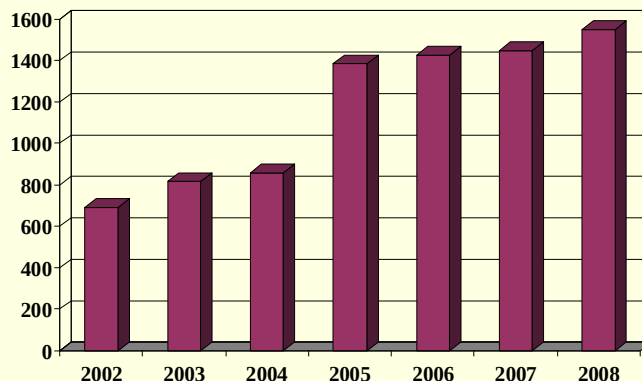
Catherine



SDA Kinship International Member Types



SDA Kinship International Membership Growth



Get not your friends
by bare
compliments,
but by giving
them sensible tokens
of your love.

Socrates

Avoiding Breakups

I am often asked if I can predict whether or not a couple will last, based on what I see in therapy. My standard reply is, "If they are in counseling with me, they are certain to stay together forever." Tongue-in-cheek, of course, I playfully tease about my magical powers to keep couple's together, while obviously no one except the couple can insure their success. I do promise my couples, however, that as long as they want their relationship to work, I'll work for their relationship's success!

Michele O'Mara

John Gottman, on the other hand, says he can predict with 90% percent accuracy which newlywed couples will remain married and which will divorce four to six years later. Gottman is a relationship researcher who has created what he calls "love labs" where couples spend chunks of time, living as naturally as possible, while being recorded. Gottman spent years gathering data, and analyzing the outcomes, and what he discovered is actually quite fascinating.

To predict a relationship outcome, Gottman looks for four major emotional reactions that he considers destructive to marriage: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling. I'll briefly describe these here, so you can begin eliminating these reactions from your relationship and increase your chances of a successful relationship!

1. Criticism (vs. complaint): A complaint zeros in on only the specific action about which you are frustrated and is a much better way to communicate frustrations than a criticism. A criticism is more global - it adds on some negative words about your mate's character or personality. *Complaint*. "There's no gas in the car. I thought you were going to fill it up - what happened?" *Criticism*. "Why can't you ever remember anything? I told you a thousand times to fill up the tank, and you didn't. You are so irresponsible." If you find that you and your partner are critical of each other, don't assume you're headed for a separation. The problem with criticism is that when it becomes pervasive, it paves the way for other, far more harmful behaviors that COULD lead to a separation.

2. Contempt: Sarcasm and cynicism are types of contempt. So are name-calling, eye-rolling, sneering, mockery, and hostile humor. In whatever form, contempt is poisonous to a relationship because it conveys disgust. It's virtually impossible to resolve a problem when your partner is getting the message you're disgusted with him or her. Inevitably, contempt leads to more conflict rather than to reconciliation.

3. Defensiveness: When conversations become negative, critical, and attacking, it should come as no surprise that partners will become highly defensive.

Although this is understandable, research shows that this approach rarely has the desired effect. The attacking partner does not back down or apologize. This is because *defensiveness is really a way of blaming your partner*. You're saying, in effect, "The problem isn't me, it's you." Defensiveness just escalates the conflict, which is why it's so damaging.

4. Stonewalling: When discussions often begin with what Gottman calls a "harsh startup," with criticism and contempt this leads to defensiveness, which leads to more contempt and more defensiveness, and eventually one partner tunes out. When one partner resorts to tuning out the other that is known as "stonewalling." During a typical conversation between two people, the listener gives all kinds of cues to the speaker that he's paying attention. He may use eye contact, nod his head, say something like "Yeah" or "Uh-huh." A stonewaller doesn't give you this sort of casual feedback. He tends to look away or down without uttering a sound. He sits like an impassive stone wall. The stonewaller acts as though what you are saying is meaningless to him, even if he hears it.

In addition to these behaviors, Gottman also points out the importance of making what he calls, "repair attempts." Repair attempts are efforts the couple makes ("Let's take a break," "Wait, I need to calm down") to deescalate the tension during a touchy discussion - to put on the brakes to prevent either partner from *flooding*. Flooding occurs when all you can think about is protecting yourself from the turbulence your partner's onslaught causes. And the way to do that is to disengage emotionally from the relationship - which puts a couple at risk for separating.

So to begin building positives out of these warning signs, I suggest the following behavior changes - as soon as possible! Use tactful and sensitive ways to bring up a problem. Tend to your conversation's pace and intensity with an intent to not allow either partner to become "emotionally overheated." Allow your partner's desires and wishes to matter - to influence how you think and feel. Maintain efforts to make up by using humor or conceding a point. De-escalate hot emotions. Make efforts to compromise. ▽

Are you voting in this coming Presidential Election?

Isis Montalvo, Nominating Committee Chair

I am proud to say that I am a registered voter. I can't say I have been a registered voter since I was 18; however as I've matured, so has my civic responsibility. Now I can say that every time the primaries come around for my political party affiliation, I vote. I also vote in every election I can. There is nothing more powerful than reading up on the candidates and deciding for myself who I want to vote for. I evaluate their platforms and their positions on issues that are near and dear to me. I also evaluate the candidate's record on how they voted on legislative issues important to me and what has been the outcome of their public service. When I vote, I have a voice. Of course I'm happy when my candidate wins, but I'm also satisfied that I did my part regardless of the election outcome.

In the United States, the Democratic Party process to nominate a candidate for president has been interesting for many reasons. The Clinton/Obama race has had many ups and downs. What I find very positive about this contest is that there has been the power of choice and neither candidate has been a "shoe-in." Each candidate has her or his own strengths and weaknesses. While a Clinton/Obama ticket might have its appeal to some, in the end, they are two leaders who want the job as pilot and not as co-pilot. The voters have been deciding along the way who they want to represent them in the presidential elections. What is unknown is what the final President and Vice-President nomination ticket will look like. We'll know soon.

A few months ago, the Kinship Board approved revised Bylaws to position the organization for the future. The Bylaws provide a framework or structure within which the organization is to conduct its business. The Bylaws outline which positions are elected to the Board of Directors, which positions are appointed and which positions are staff positions.



Standing committees are also defined. In preparation for Kinship's 2008 elections, the Nominating Committee has used the newly revised Bylaws to guide the nomination of candidates and the mechanism for the election.

Criteria for each of the positions have been established in the Bylaws to ensure that qualified candidates are elected into these positions. Having qualified candidates provides voters with the best possible choices and positions the organization to have the most qualified individuals in those positions to represent Kinship. Table A identifies the various positions, the qualifications for the positions, and some of the responsibilities. Some positions are voted only in even-numbered years, others in odd-numbered years. This is so there will be continuity in governance, reducing the possibility that all the Board members are changed at the same time. The staggered approach in electing some positions in one year and others in another year is common practice among boards. This is the reason that the U.S. Congressional House and Senate seats are voted on in a staggered schedule. For the purpose of implementation of the staggered schedule at the elections this year, some positions will only be for a one-year term while other positions are for two-year terms. Starting with the elections in 2009, all positions being elected will be for two-year terms.

After reviewing the qualifications and requirements, if you are interested in running for a specified Board position or would like to nominate someone who meets the qualifications for a specified Board position, please submit the following: the recommended name with endorsement of five Kinship members, a one-hundred-fifty-word biography of the individual and a recent picture (headshot preferred). If possible send a high-resolution digital image.



Table A (left)								
Kinship Positions[^]			Age	Kinship Member	Education	Experience	Position Terms (Years)	Elected in Year*
General Election	Officers (§Article 8)	President	≥ 25	> 1 year	College degree, certificate or equivalent	2 yrs on the BOD	2	Odd*
		Vice-President				2 yrs on the BOD	2	Odd*
		President-Elect (periodic)				2 yrs on the BOD	1	
		Secretary					2	Even
		Treasurer				2 yrs prof exp in accounting or finance	2	Even
	Program Directors (§Article 9)	Church Relations	≥ 21	> 1 year	College degree, certificate or equivalent	Current SDA Church member & preferably have been employed by SDA church	2	Odd*
		Communication				1 yr applied experience in related field		Even
		Women's						Odd*
		Youth (IMRU?)						Even
		Diversity						Even
Appointed	Directors-At-Large (§Article 10)	3 Positions	≥ 18				1	N/A
	Leadership Staff (Non-Director Positions) (§Article 12)	Office Manager Newsletter Editor Kampmeeting Coordinator						

**Due to the timing of the approved revised bylaws in 2008 (even year) and election requirement of some positions being in an odd year, some will only have a one year term initially for the 2008 elections.*

[^]Officers may serve up to 6 consecutive years in any single capacity as an officer (§8.3.3).

Directors may serve up to 6 consecutive years in any single capacity as a Director (§9.3.3).

Director-At-Large may serve up to 6 consecutive years in that position (§10.3.2).

No Officer and no Director may serve on the Board in any capacity for more than 10 consecutive years (§7.4).

The biography needs to be in paragraph form and should include a position statement. The biography will serve to educate Kinship members on your qualifications for the Board position you are seeking to serve. In the biography, please include: the potential candidate's name; the Board position being sought; age; number of years as a Kinship member; previous positions held within Kinship and/or level of involvement at the regional/chapter level and outcomes achieved; education, including college degree(s), area of specialty, and certifications; skills and professional experience(s) and/or relevant talents you possess that you can utilize in fulfilling the requirements of the Kinship Board position. If eligible, this year the candidate must be present at Kampmeeting in order to run. Each candidate will have an opportunity to speak to the Kinship members at

Voting Position on Board	Nominated by	Elected by	Gender	Committees	<i>Table A (right)</i> Voting Position on Committees
Y	Nominating Committee (NC)	Members	M/F	All, except NC	No
Y	NC			Executive	Yes
Y	NC			All, except NC	No
Y	NC			Executive, Governance	Yes
Y	NC			Executive, Finance	Yes
Y	NC	Members	M/F	Advisory Council, Kampmeeting	
	NC	Members	M/F	Communication	
	Women	Women Members	F		
	Youth (Under 30)	Youth Members (Under 30)	M/F		
	NC	Members	M/F	Diversity	
Y	President	Board of Directors	M/F		
N	President	Board of Directors (Confirmation Only)	M/F	Kampmeeting	
				Communication	
				Kampmeeting	

Kampmeeting and share her or his platform and why she or he is qualified to serve.

The process I just described is a first step to invite greater involvement of our membership by communicating the election slate in advance and providing the opportunity to bring forth qualified candidates for the Board of Directors. Our plans for the future include the creation of an electronic polling process that will allow members who are unable to attend Kampmeeting to participate in the election process.

This year we are planning to hold the elections at Kampmeeting on Friday morning to optimize participation in the election. Historically, elections in previous years were held on Thursday. If you are planning to come only for the weekend, please

consider arriving in time for the elections on Friday morning. Though you may not be interested in running for office you do have the opportunity to get involved. There are many committees in which Kinship members can participate. Some of them are current standing committees and others still need to be established (Table B). Think about your civic opportunity within Kinship by participating in a committee, nominating someone, running for office, and voting at Kampmeeting this year or voting electronically in the future.

The following positions (see the next page) are those being elected at Kampmeeting this year. Some of the positions are for one-year terms for this year only, in order to implement the staggered schedule, as explained above. Otherwise, all positions are for two-year terms.



Table B			
Committees			
Committees	Chair	Membership	Sub-committees
Advisory Council (AC)	Church Liaison	Up to 25 members, with Church Liaison as chair	
Communication (CC)	Communication Director	5-10 members including Communication Director and Newsletter Editor	Technology & Publications
Diversity (DC)	Diversity Director	3-5 members including Diversity Director	
Executive (EC)	President	President, Vice-President, President-Elect (when filled), Secretary, Treasurer & 2 Directors	
Finance (FC)	Elected by FC from committee, but Treasurer not eligible to chair	3-5 members including Treasurer	
Governance (GC)	Secretary	3-5 members including the Secretary	
International Growth and Development (IGDC)	Someone with International Background	5-8 members including Kampmeeting Coordinator, Treasurer, Church Liaison & Office Manager	
Kampmeeting (KC)	Kampmeeting Coordinator	5-8 members including Kampmeeting Coordinator, Treasurer, Church Liaison & Office Manager	
Member Services (MC)	Vice-President	3-5 members, including Vice-President and Office Manager	
Nominating Committee (NC)	Appointed and not running for positions	5, of which 3 are non-board members	

Meetings		
Meeting Groups	Chair	Members
Membership	President	All Kinship Members
Board	President	Officers, Directors and Directors-At-Large



- ✧ President (1-year term)
- ✧ Vice President (1-year term)
- ✧ Secretary (2-year term)
- ✧ Treasurer (2-year term)
- ✧ Directors
 - o Church Liaison (1-year term)
 - o Communications (2-year term)
 - o Diversity (2-year term)
 - o Women (1-year term)
 - o Youth (IMRU?) (2-year term)

So if there are no changes on the board this coming year, the 2009 elections will only be for President, Vice-President, Director of Church Relations, and Director of Women.

The current list of candidates running for office for the 2008 Elections is outlined in Table C. Director of Women and Youth (IMRU?) nominations came from women and IMRU? members respectively. Additional

names can be brought forward for those positions but only by the respective member groups.

If there is someone you would like to nominate, or if you would like to run for office, please send the required information on the election candidate by Sunday, June 29, 2009 to the Kinship Office by e-mail: office@sdakinship.org or postal mail: Nominating Committee, SDA Kinship International, Inc., P.O. Box 69, Tillamook, OR 97141-0069.

Based on the information provided in each biography, the Nominating Committee will verify each candidate's qualifications to run for office according to the newly revised Bylaws, and will include qualified candidates accordingly on the election slate. A final slate will be available at Kampmeeting for the election.

While at Kinship we are not voting for America's future – we are voting for Kinship's future. ▽

Kinship Board of Director Elections 2008

Nominations as of May 30, 2008

OFFICER POSITIONS

President

Note: Where Kinship has been blessed to have more than one candidate for a particular office, the candidates are listed in alphabetical order by their last name

☐ **John R. Edwards**



was born in Guyana, South America. A Kinship member since 1991 he dropped his pseudonym John Sam after he met "out- and- proud" Kinship members. John states "Kinship provided the opportunity for me to examine and explore my spirituality as a gay man." With social work degrees from Atlantic Union College and Walla Walla University John has extensive professional and volunteer experience. Past elected leadership positions include Member-At-Large, Board of Directors of the National Association of Social Workers-New York City chapter (9,700 social workers). Past Kinship leadership positions include Region 1 coordinator, Kampmeeting

Coordinator (1994 and 2003) and Member-At-Large. John states "It would be a privilege and an honour to serve as your President. If elected, I will use my knowledge, values and skills to: 1) Foster open dialogue and a team atmosphere among Kinship's leaders, 2) Ensure open communication between the leaders of Kinship and the members, 3) Develop financial and programmatic capacity that focus on and serve Kinship members through: A) Strengthening current programs and committees, B) Exploration and implementation of innovative ideas, C) Effective use of technology, 4) Increase the membership and diversity (age, gender, culture, ethnicity) of Kinship.

☐ **Taylor Ruhl**



writes, "Because I have a strong interest in and commitment to volunteerism and service I have agreed to run again for President for a second one-year term. I became a member of Kinship in 1997. Kinship changed my life and I want to share with others what I was given. I have served on the Board of Directors as a member-at-large, co-founder and secretary to the Kinship Advisory Council, Vice-President, and President. I prepared for my 35-year career as a leader in higher education by obtaining master's degrees in music and library science, followed by a doctorate in higher education administration. My specialty is organizational culture in non-profit higher education. Other volunteer leadership positions I have held include President of the Association

of Seventh-day Adventist Librarians, member of the Board of Elmshaven [E.G. White home], member of the Board of the Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index, Chair of the Glendale City Church Music Committee, and Chair of the Glendale City Church organ committee."

Vice-president

☐ **Naveen Jonathan**



is a Marriage & Family Therapist Intern currently employed at Caritas Counseling Services of Catholic Charities in Colton, CA. He is an adjunct professor at California State University East Bay, Pepperdine University, and Pacific Oaks College. Naveen is currently a PhD candidate at Loma Linda University. He also holds an MS degree in Marital & Family Therapy from Loma Linda University and a BS degree in Counseling Psychology from Columbia Union College. He has actively been involved in Kinship since 2004. He has served as Member-at-Large for two years as the IMRU? liaison to the board of directors. He has served on the Strategic Planning Committee, Nominating Committee, and Bylaws Revision Committee. He has also served on the

leadership team for Region 9 and IMRU? leadership team. In February 2007, he was appointed Kampmeeting Coordinator by the Board of Directors and was re-elected by the membership to serve as the Kampmeeting Coordinator for 2008.

Secretary

☐ **Vacant**



Treasurer

☐ David Bayless



was born in Farmington, Missouri, and grew up in St. Louis. He graduated from Sunnydale Academy in Centralia, Missouri, in 1980 and went on to receive a BS in Business Administration from Union College in 1985. David spent a year in Indonesia as a student missionary and moved to Southern California in 1990. He has worked for General Motors and the Riverside County Office of Education and currently is the bookkeeper for the University of La Verne library as well as the treasurer for the Orange County chapter of the Great Outdoors, a gay camping club. He has served as Kinship Treasurer since April 1, 2008.

DIRECTOR POSITIONS

Church Relations

☐ Dave Ferguson



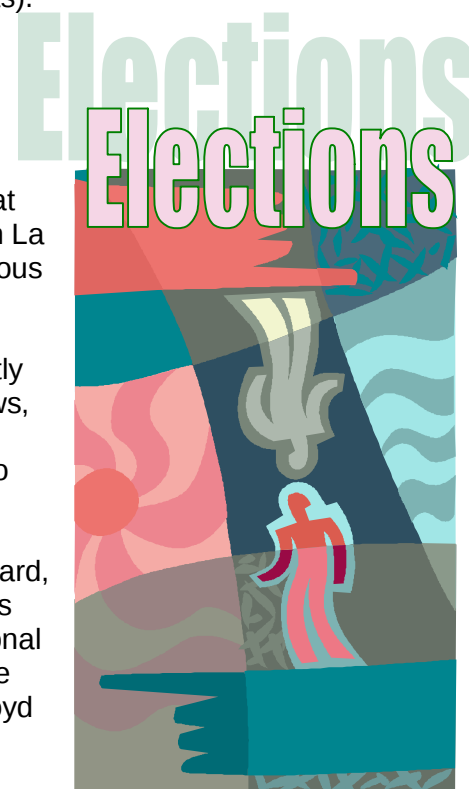
is seeking to continue as the Church Relations person for Kinship. At age 61, he has had two careers since completing college at Union with degrees in Religion and Music and an MDiv from Andrews. The first career was as a pastor specializing in Young Adult Ministries, Health Education, and Church Growth. The second career has been as a financial planner and administrator of financial professionals with a CFP and five principal licenses. Since joining Kinship in 1995, Dave has enjoyed serving as a Regional Coordinator, Church Liaison (the previous title for the current position of Church Relations), finance committee chair, member of the Kampmeeting committee, and member of the Board. During previous terms as Church Relations coordinator, he worked to establish the Advisory Council; coordinated speakers for Kampmeeting; and, as chair of the Advisory Council, guided the development of the recently released book. He is actively involved with the Glendale City Adventist church. Dave enjoys travel, having visited 48 states and 27 foreign countries, music, and time with his partner Peter and his grandson Dylan (and his parents).

Communications

☐ Jacquie Hegarty



is a mature professional web designer and desktop publisher living in Region 8. She has a day job as Executive Assistant at the county hospital foundation. She graduated with a BA from La Sierra University and has spent her life teaching, leading various groups of children and adults, developing strategies and managing projects, writing (both technical and creative), and doing telephone technical support at Microsoft. She is currently editor of the region's email newsletter, Region 8 News & Views, having produced paper copies from 1996 to 2002 and electronic version since then. She has served as Associate Public Relations Director for San Francisco Central Adventist Church, and she served as Kinship's Public Relations Coordinator for 2007-2008. She writes, "If elected to the position of Director of Communications, I will continue to work closely with the President, Kinship Board, and regional coordinators to improve all electronic and printed communications between Kinship leadership and members on regional, national, and international levels. I will also maintain press and media outreach on behalf of Kinship." She has been a member of Kinship since 1993 in Region 5 where she assisted Floyd Poenitz in producing a regional newsletter, Kinship Kalender.



Diversity

☐ Obed Vazquez-Ortiz



is currently Kinship Region 8 Coordinator, a geographic area that covers Northern California, Hawaii, and Nevada. He signed onto Kinship in 1977 when the organization was just getting underway. He lives in the East Bay San Francisco area with his partner Marcos and his son. As a Puerto Rican raised in the inner city, he understands some of the struggles of Latinos in the U.S. Having grown up in a Spanish-speaking church provided, he believes, a common experience of first-generation Latinos in the church and in the U.S. He writes, "As a sociologist, I am able to place the struggle of newcomers to the United States within an historical perspective. I feel that fitting in and feeling comfortable are key towards self acceptance and personal growth. I believe

Kinship can provide the environment where people at various stages of their coming out can feel they fit and are comfortable."

Women's Interests

☐ Josephine Elizabeth



has been involved with Kinship since 1997 and currently holds a Member-at-large Position as Technology Coordinator. This position includes managing the audio-visual support at Kampmeeting and throughout the year. JE was instrumental in Kinship acquiring its own audio-visual equipment for Kampmeeting and other events. She is 34 years old and resides in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area with her life partner and their four-legged barking "children." JE graduated with a BS in Communication with an emphasis in broadcast media. She is a video editor by trade but is interested in auto and motorbike mechanics, reading, off roading, spending time with those she cares about, nature, and all the good that God has to offer. JE writes, "I care about Kinship, as an organization, and its members. It is something that I believe in and want to give back to in any way that I can.

Being a woman, women's interests are very near and dear to my heart; and I'd like to advocate for their interests both personally and within Kinship. I also have the geographical advantage of living close to a previous and long-standing Women's Coordinator whose experience and contacts are a valuable resource."

☐ Brenda McColpin



is 47 and has been a Kinship member for about five years. She has served as a Region 3 Coordinator and as Kinship Vice-President. Other Kinship activities include being involved with the Strategic Planning Committee and attending all but one Board meeting since becoming involved with the Board in 2005. Brenda holds a BS degree in Organizational Management and an Associate Degree in Nursing. She works in a psychiatric hospital's emergency department as a Charge R.N. and connects patients with services or provides resources to connect them. She lives close to and has knowledge of the Atlanta area. She writes that her areas of personal interest are outdoor activities, and she enjoys hiking and biking with her wonderful partner Pearl.

Brenda considers herself blessed by their quiet time at home listening to music or playing with their Shih Tzus, Tucker and Tia.

Youth Interests (IMRU?)

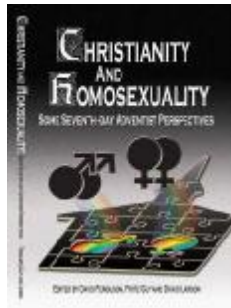
☐ Ruben D. López,



a graduate of California State University Fullerton with a BA in psychology, is no stranger to being involved with organizations. During his community college years, he was the secretary for Lambda, the LGBT (before it added the "I") student association, editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, and a member of student government. It's this previous experience that he brings in leading IMRU?. He has been a member of IMRU? and SDA Kinship since 2001 and has been more active with both since 2005. He writes, "My intentions for IMRU? are rather simple: I want to make sure the young folks of Kinship have a safe and fun place to convene. I also want the group to be more active within Kinship, and I'm currently working on more ways that can be put to fruition. I'm currently working in a human resources supervisory position for a mid-level department store. In my free time, I enjoy reading,

knitting, crocheting, and watching All My Children and One Life to Live." ▽

Publications



Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives

is off the presses and available for purchase!! You can order your copy or those for people you think would benefit from reading it by accessing the website:
<http://www.sdagayperspectives.com/>

Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It? is a wonderful leaflet, designed by Carrol Grady and Floyd Poenitz. It is easy to hand out to friends and church members. Remember, Ellen White said literature should be distributed "like the leaves of autumn." You can get copies of it by writing to Fred at office@sdakinship.org or Floyd at Region5@sdakinship.org. The leaflet can be printed from the website and is now available in Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and French.

Kinship Women - Carol Brown

I would like to encourage all of you to register for Kinship women's weekend, Women and Children First, July 10-12. Friday night we will get a chance to meet or reconnect over dinner. On Sabbath afternoon we'll explore the new National Air and Space Museum near the Dulles National Airport. It features very interesting, exciting space and aviation artifacts, an Imax Theater and flight simulators. To find out more you can view their website at <http://www.visitingdc.com/virginia/dulles-air-space-museum.htm>. We plan to have some time to relax with the pedal boats, canoe rentals and hiking trails at Lake Fairfax Park. I am looking forward to seeing each and every one of you in Reston, Virginia! You can register on line at www.sdakinship.org.

Kinship Europe - Ruud Kieboom

We are having a very busy spring! Over the weekend of May 2-5 a leadership group representing several countries met to discuss ways we can reach out to both Kinship members and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

We completed plans for European Kinship Meeting 2008 and are delighted that Frieder Schmid will be our primary speaker. We also plan to learn some of the information about working with churches that the Human Rights Campaign will share at International

Kampmeeting in Virginia. For EKM 2009 Mike Lewis has found an ancient English country home outside of London that seems like it will be both very comfortable and inexpensive. He is already asking speakers to join us there. For EKM 2010 we are researching possible accommodations in Denmark. During our meeting we were given the opportunity to have a booth at the Dutch Union Open Day for free! This is a day when the Seventh-day Adventists can gather to see what ministries are being offered by the church. Carrol Grady agreed to come. A wonderful Kinship member paid for her flight. Our office manager Fred Casey sent a Kinship banner, books and materials over to us. In next month's issue of the Connection we will bring you a report of what happened. We planned ways to use *Christianity and Homosexuality: Some Seventh-day Adventist Perspectives* in Europe. We have arranged for books to be sent to church leaders in the United Kingdom, Eire and several countries in Europe. Ruud is going to ask the Dutch Union to carry the book in their bookstore. We want to develop more ways for families of Kinship members to be involved in our organization. As part of our advocacy training at EKM in Bremen we would like to develop a strategy for working with conservative churches. We are developing a plan to meet with pastors at the Trans-European Pastor's Meeting. ▽

We would like to introduce you to...



William Mitchell was born in Baltimore, Maryland. When asked what brings him joy in the morning he says it's just good to get up! "I like being able to see another day and get to try it all over again. I am my own worst critic. I like to reflect at the end of the day on how I would do things differently. I think about how I would like to better

treat the people with whom I have come into contact." William works as a quality assurance auditor for the aerospace industry. He audits the product, the compliance with company procedures and compliance with AS9100 standards. He and Ron have been together for ten years and were married in Toronto in 2005. In his spare time William designs women's

handbags, purses and tote bags. He likes to decorate, find draperies, work with his hands. "I like to take something and make it into something else." He likes problem solving and says, "This keeps me humble because I know that this is a gift from God that I could not do on my own. Being gay is a discovery because we have been different all our lives and have had to learn to think differently, more deeply and to find more profound answers. We have to learn to be more thoughtful of others. It's important to find the positives in negative circumstances. I think it's really important for people to see that 'he didn't get really upset'."



Lloyd Solis was born in Okanogan in Washington state. His mother is a member of the Okanogan tribe and his father is Filipino and Korean. His parents met when his father worked as a laborer where his mother worked in the kitchen. He went to school in the US, Korea and the Philippines. Lloyd says "If we didn't endeavor to move for ourselves we would have

never left the mountains." He has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and History from Washington State University, a Master's degree in Public Administration from Michigan State and a Ph.D. in Educational Management. He teaches history in high school during the day and in college at night. "The first thing I do in the morning is kneel and pray. It's also the last thing I do at night. I am grateful for the things God has given me. I am working on a Ph.D. in Pennsylvania so I can see my boyfriend more often. We met at a bookstore in 2003 where we were both looking for books on Burma." Lloyd has a fifteen-year-old daughter and a seventeen-year-old son. They live in the Philippines with their mother. "I talk to them three or four times a week." Lloyd found Kinship through friends and researching the internet. He's been a member for about a year. Both of his parents and most of his relatives are traditional Seventh-day Adventists. "I cannot be open with my family yet. I think I will meet a lot of resistance and opposition. They might even sever relationships with me. We only have one family. I like being at Rehoboth. Heidi and Yolanda strongly invited me to be here, and I am glad I came." ▽

Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting

April 18-20, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Ocean breezes, perfect weather, great food, wonderful music, thoughtful devotionals, scintillating conversations, old friends, new people to meet and enjoy – it was a memorable weekend.

As always, many thanks to Yolanda Elliott for her work and for creating an environment that soothes the soul and inspires us for the next steps in our journeys. We'd like to introduce you to some of the people at the beach house, share some pictures of our weekend and let you read Regina's Sabbath sermon. We'd also like to invite you to join us next year! ▽





Angel finds Hagar in the desert

Lessons from the Desert

Hagar was stuck on the wrong side of a racial divide; woman, not valued, a foreigner, a slave. She did not feel included in the covenant God gave His people. She was uncomfortable in her own skin. Some scholars think that at the time when Abram said Sarai was his sister in Egypt and they were kicked out of the country by Pharaoh, Hagar was part of the inventory of presents given to the patriarch. She was just a possession. She didn't even have rights over her own body. She was invisible.

Hagar was a messy complication in a major plot involving her mistress. Sarai wanted a child and she used Hagar as a gestational surrogate. When Sarai did not like Hagar's reaction, she complained to Abram who told his wife "Your servant is in your hands. Do with her whatever you think best." The Bible story in Genesis 16:6 says that "Sarai mistreated Hagar and so she fled from her." One day Hagar said, "This is it. I am taking my dignity and taking my child"...that was not really even her child. Hagar made a decision to make a suicidal journey into the

desert.

Hagar may have felt invisible because she was so in her society's eyes; in God's radar she was neon bright. God met with her in the desert. It was no coincidence. Genesis 16:7 is loaded with object lessons. "The angel of the Lord found Hagar near a spring in the desert. It was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. And he said, 'Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?'" The word found comes from a Hebrew verb that means something that has been misplaced and lost. That's the way it always is. God found Hagar. He's always going to find me. That's the way God is.

The word *Shur* means the wall. It was known for the voracious crocodiles that lived there and for cobras that were so agile it seemed they could fly. No one wanted to cross the wall. No one thought they could survive the journey. Hagar had her back against the wall. Four hundred years later the Egyptians would use it as another kind of wall; no one could leave the

country without passing through it. Israel made the journey.

If you look at stories involving Hagar, this is the only time she is ever called by name. She is called "my maid." She is called "this servant woman." God calls her Hagar. The name means flight. It is her character; her identity. God will always address us by our name.

If this were a Disney moment, Hagar would have been dressed up in a beautiful gown and set free. God didn't work like that. He had a bigger picture in mind. He said, "Go back to Sarai". This command should never be interpreted to mean that anyone should return to an abusive situation. God had a purpose and a lesson for Sarai the same way He had one for Hagar.

Last quarter, the Sabbath School lessons were about discipleship. I would like to compare that concept to quantum physics: the basic elements of the universe cannot be predicted. Everything is random. In quantum discipleship, your case is unique. No one can make a box for us. God works differently with each one of us. Why did God want Hagar to go back? Genesis 16:10-12 lets us know that she was not peripheral anymore. "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count," (one blessing). "You will have a son," (second blessing). "I have heard you," (third blessing). Three is one of the Hebrew numbers for completeness. Ishmael means God hears. God told Hagar her future, even as He sent her back to Sarai. When she arrived, Hagar could say, "I have a message from God."

Do you realize what just happened here? All throughout the Bible people talked about the names of God. They chanted them. They repeated them in songs: El Shaddai, Adonai, Yahweh, El Ehad, El Emet. Writers put down what they had been told. But this woman, this slave, this foreigner, this invisible one is the only person in the Bible known to have given God a name. El Roi – The One who sees. You see everything and You see me. In this desert full of crocodiles and cobras a theologian was born. The invisible one became seen by the ONE who rules the universe.

Fifteen years later Hagar's situation became difficult again. Sarah told Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son; that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance of my son Isaac." This time Hagar did not leave of her own accord but was sent into the desert of Beersheba. When the water was gone and she was waiting for them to die God heard the boy crying and called from Heaven to comfort her, "Do not be afraid. Lift the boy up by the hand for I will make him a great nation." Hagar was able to go forward because she knew "The God Who Sees Me."

God has His eyes on you and me. He knows every single move we make, every tear that drops from our eyes, every beat of our heart and every event we experience. We are on God's radar screen every single moment of our lives. We can leave an extraordinary legacy because we are loved by the God who sees everything. ▽

connection ▽

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BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY



SDA KINSHIP KAMPMEETING 2008

"Oh, that you would bless me & enlarge my territory."—Prayer of Jabez

JULY 13-20, 2008

Why should you attend Kampmeeting 2008? Kampmeeting is a time when we as LGBTI individuals with current and former roots in Seventh-day Adventism can come together and celebrate our faith, uniqueness, and diversity. It's a time when we can fellowship and commune with our Creator through song, message, discussion, community, and many other ways.

Our theme this year is **"Building Our Community."** During this week you will be hearing from a variety of speakers, workshop presenters, and our own board of directors on various community-building activities. You will be a part of a community-building effort, whereby we can build an effective and prosperous community that will minister to the LGBTI Adventist community.

You may complete and send in the paper application that was in your last *Connection*, or you may register and pay online at <http://sdakinship.org/KM08registration.htm>.