

The background of the cover is a photograph of three women of South Asian descent smiling. The woman in the foreground is in sharp focus, looking slightly to the left of the camera. Two other women are visible behind her, slightly out of focus, also smiling. The overall tone is warm and positive.

CONNECTION

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016 | VOL. 40, NO. 7

A PUBLICATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST KINSHIP INTERNATIONAL, INC.



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 LGBTIQ Adventists among themselves and within the Seventh-day Adventist community through education, advocacy, and reconciliation. Kinship is a global organization which supports the advance of human rights for all people worldwide.

Founded in 1976, the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States. 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 43 countries.

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 LGBTIQ has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

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info@sdakinship.org

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The other day, I noticed the October 9 Washington Post Parade magazine cover. It had a picture of the earth with the title "Awe" and caught my attention. The cover article talks about how feeling awe may be the secret to our health and happiness.

But what exactly is awe? As psychologist Dacher Keltner explains in the article, "Awe is the feeling of being in the presence of something vast or beyond human scale, that transcends our current understanding of things." Keltner heads the University of California (Berkeley)'s Social Interaction Lab. He studies emotions and helped Facebook to create its new "like" button emojis. The first time I ever saw the Grand Canyon, I experienced awe: I watched a bright orange harvest moon come up over the horizon. But Keltner says that awe can also be much more accessible, like watching snowflakes or fireworks. If you haven't read this article yet, Google it. It's a good article and it got me thinking about Kinship.

The same weekend that this article came out, your Kinship board and leadership staff met together for board meeting. Most of us were able to meet together in person, and those unable to travel to Maryland were still able to attend virtually. We used a camera so they could see us, they also turned on their web cameras, and about five members were able to be in the room with us while on the West Coast! The wonders of technology!

Not only did we discuss each member's and leader's reports (the minutes will be online for members soon), we also took a half day on Sunday morning for much-needed leadership training by our organizational consultant, Ann Craig. It was a valuable training on board cohesion. When our board is more cohesive, we can work much more efficiently and get more things done to help Kinship grow and thrive! I felt extremely positive about this board meeting and Kinship's future. This year, we have several new members and leadership staff on the board.

One of those new members said to me that she'd had no idea just how very hard we all

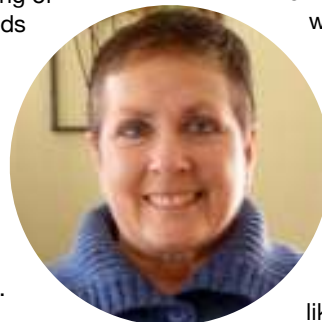
work. It made me feel really good that she saw just how hard each one of us works for the benefit of Kinship. And the feeling I got after board meeting finished was a little like the awe I spoke about at the beginning of

this message. When I see our leaders' hard work and dedication, it inspires awe in me. Each person who pours their hard work, talents, gifts, and time into Kinship out of love for this organization is awe-inspiring to me. They do this so that Kinship will continue to grow and thrive for the benefit of our members around the world. And if feeling awe is the secret to health and happiness, no wonder I feel so good!

If you want to experience awe too, why not offer your talents and gifts to Kinship? There may really be health benefits in doing so!

Yolanda Elliott
President

SDA Kinship International



YOUTH

As Youth Director, I found it exciting to see several people under 30 from both North and South America join SDA Kinship after Kampmeeting in June.



JADEN

**Director
of Youth Interests**

As both Kinship Director of Youth Interests and Spiritual Relations Officer for the Intercollegiate Adventist GSA Coalition (IAGC), I have been working on making Burman, an Adventist university in Alberta, Canada, a safe place for LGBTIQ students.

Currently, 12 professors have Safe Spaces stickers on their office doors. Safe Spaces is a joint initiative of the Alberta Teachers' Association and the Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities.

The Safe Spaces initiative includes a poster, brochure, and sticker designed to identify a classroom and/or school as a safe and inclusive space where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified, and queer (LGBTQ) students, teachers, friends, families and allies are welcome and supported.

Burman has a support group called *Will and Grace Collegiate*. We meet on Friday evenings at 5:00 in the office of a pastor at the university church in Alberta.

For details or to get info on how to connect with other LGBTIQ youth, contact me at youth@sdakinship.org.

Did you grow up Seventh-day Adventist? Do you identify as LGBT+? Are you between the ages of 18-35?

A research study is being done to examine the impact of growing up Seventh-day Adventist and LGBT+, particularly focusing on the role that families played as LGBT+ adolescents explored and expressed their sexuality and identity. You do not need to be a current member or attend the Adventist Church.

Please consider completing this anonymous survey, which will take approximately 20-25 minutes. It covers a wide range of issues in order to gain a better understanding of the Adventist LGBTIQ experience.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LGBTAdventist>



SURVEY FOR 18-35 YR OLDS

WHAT WAS GROWING UP
LGBTIQ AND ADVENTIST
LIKE FOR YOU?

#GIVING
TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 29

// Too many people are suffering alone in silence when coming to terms with their sexuality. There was a time when I too suffered in silence, so this is personal for me. Your financial contribution this #GivingTuesday will help SDA Kinship reach out to those who need to know that they are not alone. //

—CLINTON

Support at sdakinship.org

STRONG

ON GIVING TUESDAY

YOUR GIFT ON **NOV. 29, 2016**, HELPS
US CONTINUE TO SHARE WITH LGBTIQ
ADVENTISTS THE RESOURCES THEY
NEED TO BE **STRONG** IN THE FACE OF
ADVERSITY.

WWW.SDAKINSHIP.ORG





MEET PETA *(pronounced peh-tah)*

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

I am 60 years old. I live in Sydney in New South Wales, Australia. I am the T in the LGBTIQ spectrum. I completed transitioning this past July. I have been on Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) for over two years, and I have lived as a woman for that long.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE GROWING UP LGBTIQ FOR YOU?

How I identify is a longer story. Growing up in a fundamentalist Christian home made it harder to come out of the closet. I didn't grow up in the Seventh-day Adventist milieu but came into that later in the journey. I guess I thought I was gay; even at church I wanted to be a girl (I was born male). For me, it was steps instead of accepting who I am. I got married and had children because that was what society expected of you those days. I finally came out as a gay man and lived as one for 10 years or so. This was difficult for me as I was repeatedly raped by boarders in my own home. When I finally realized that I could be a woman — five or so years ago — I started transitioning.

IN WHAT WAYS DID THE ACTS OF RAPE AFFECT YOUR JOURNEY?

For me it did so much damage. It really set back accepting myself so long. It affected every area of my life. It put me back for a long time. I would have not been self-loathing and sabotaging myself. I would have found out who I was sooner and loved myself.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR ANYONE CONSIDERING TRANSITIONING FROM MALE TO FEMALE (OR OTHERWISE)?

Well, to be honest, it is a journey. You can't expect it to happen overnight. Do it slowly and then it will turn out right. Take time and learn about it. Get advice from people who have done it. Get support online or elsewhere. Join a support group. And finally, don't give up if you come across obstacles. There will always be obstacles, but this is true in all areas of life. Never ever give up.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY. DO YOU CURRENTLY ATTEND CHURCH?

I was attending church in Brisbane before I moved to Sydney. The pastor who was good to me has resigned now. So, I was looking for a church in Sydney but have not found one so far. I am not involved in any ministry and have always been a lay person. I don't consider myself a Seventh-day Adventist anymore, but I do know that I am greatly beloved by Jesus. I hold on to that.

IF YOU COULD EDUCATE OTHER CHRISTIANS ON ONE THING ABOUT THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I would tell other Christians that we want to keep our faith and we want the same things that they do. We love God and we want to be part of God's family and the church.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER

Have you been raped or know someone involved in an abusive relationship?
Visit nwnetwork.org for some valuable resources today.

JOIN SDA KINSHIP

***You can join the SDA
Kinship online
community today!***

Membership is free and all your information is kept confidential.

Visit sdakinship.org for details on connecting with people just like you, or send an email to Members Services at memberinfo@sdakinship.org for details on being a member of SDA Kinship.



#GIVING
TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 29

// I get questions all the time through our Facebook page for *Seventh-Gay Adventists* from people all over the world who want to know if I can help connect them to other LGBT Adventists. They feel alone. I am so happy that SDA Kinship exists and has such a long track record of providing safe community and resources for LGBT+ Adventists (whether currently Adventist or not). Kinship is a really fantastic resource that helps all of us—allies included!—know that we aren't alone and that we can find community and support. We all need to know that. //

—DANEEN

Support at sdakinship.org

FRIENDS & ALLIES

WHY I AM AN LGBT+ ALLY

Though, like most Adventists, I was raised without an accepting view of LGBT+ people, I have always felt uncomfortable with that theology.

Even during my young fundamentalist years when I would have repeated the rejecting talking points, I felt deep down that there was something wrong about the lack of acceptance the church taught me. In college one of my dear friends came out, left the church and the school, and I never heard from him again.

I went around to various theology professors asking them to help me understand it. Every one of them gave me the same texts (what many now refer to as “clobber texts”).

They left me feeling uneasy and unsatisfied. This was the beginning of my many-year journey toward acceptance.

When I heard about the *Seventh-Gay Adventists* film, I drove three hours to see the screening. I had so many questions! Through the film I was introduced to resources that answered many of my questions. I became an ally evangelist! I bought 10 copies of Justin Lee’s book *Torn* and gave them away to anyone who even mentioned LGBT+ issues in my presence. When I ran out, I bought 10 more.

The message of Jesus is a message of radical acceptance. Though, to my knowledge, Jesus never addressed any LGBT+ theology specifically in the Bible, He spent His entire life showing radical acceptance of people who were rejected by society. His love wasn’t a condescending love, and it wasn’t a love in-spite-of. It was a whole-person love.

This is important because many Christians seem to think showing “love” to LGBT people means condescendingly and sometimes cruelly “correcting” them. But that’s not how Jesus operated at all. His love demonstrated an acceptance of a whole, complicated person.

As it is my life’s goal to love like Jesus, how can I possibly reject people God has made: whole, complicated people who have dreams, troubles, and fears and also happen to be LGBT+.

As a woman, I have some idea of what it means to be less privileged. While I remain incredibly privileged in other ways (I am white and middle class), I have experienced many of the small and large disadvantages that come with being a woman in American society.

As our church struggles at this moment with issues regarding women’s ordination, it reminds me that there are many who are less accepted by society than I am.

As a privileged member of society, it is not only my duty but my honor to stand beside my LGBT+ brothers and sisters as they fight for equality and respect.

The message of Jesus is a message of radical acceptance.

If you are LGBT+ you deserve nothing less than to be wholly yourself. You deserve to love whomever you choose. You deserve to be loved. By God, by your church, by your family, and by the society in which you live. Thank you for allowing me to stand with you.

—Lindsey Painter

WE'RE LOOKING FOR

LANGUAGE TRANSLATORS

WE'RE EXPANDING OUR TEAM SO THAT WE CAN REACH THOSE
WHO DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH AS THEIR FIRST LANGUAGE.

SEND AN EMAIL TO
COMMUNICATIONS@SDAKINSHIP.ORG
TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN JOIN OUR
AMAZING TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS.

VOICE

ON GIVING TUESDAY

YOUR GIFT ON **NOV. 29, 2016**, HELPS
US CONTINUE TO BE A **VOICE** FOR
LGBTIQ ADVENTISTS WHO ARE UNABLE
TO SHARE THEIR STORIES.

WWW.SDAKINSHIP.ORG



FAMILY

POST SEASON

Here we are in the baseball post season again. It is amazing to watch teams make their final out...the out that sends them home. There's the cheering and high-fiving from the winning team. Then there's the downcast faces of the losing team. No matter what, one team moves on and one team goes home.

What's most interesting is the post-game interviews. No one blames the person who made the last out. Instead, it is recognized that it is a team sport. "We didn't capitalize on our opportunities.... We left everything on the field.... We are a good team, but they played better."

We is an inclusive word, highlighting the fact that they all had a part to play in the win or loss.

As family members, we have the privilege and the opportunity to have that same team ideal. We are family. We stick together. We give it our all. We love unconditionally.

The Olive Garden has this tag line: "When you're here, you are family." I suggest we change it slightly: "We are family, we want you here."

Parents and family, find God's grace to live out that tag line today.

Debbie Widmer
Family Coordinator



KINWOMEN NEW CHAT SCHEDULE

FIRST FRIDAY EVENINGS OF THE MONTH: 5-7 P.M. PST (8-10 P.M. EST)

If you are not on Facebook, please feel free to contact me for the login and password. You can join at any time and leave at any time. You do not have to be there for the full two hours. Chat is a safe place where members can share anything on their hearts.

What is said in chat is not shared outside of chat. Kinwomen can be reached at women@sdakinship.org.

Debbie Hawthorn-Toop
Director of Women's Interests

Despite everything that was going on internally, I made wary attempts at dating. My very confused state of mind affected everyone around me including Donna who continued to hold out hope for a relationship.

But her hope was constantly frustrated. I was all over the map when it came to Donna and other female friends. A seemingly insignificant event could ignite my fight or flight response.

One evening, for example, a considerate faculty member sent me into a panic. A few minutes before a worship service was to begin, I sat down next to one of my professors. Shortly after, he noticed Donna approaching. Because there wasn't room for her, he stood up and offered her his seat. I remember this incident because of a sudden, almost overwhelming surge of agitation—even anger. I appreciated his gesture, but in my mind, his action implied we were a couple. Taking place in church, this felt too public. His gracious offer brought reality too close. I couldn't manage being seen to be in a serious relationship. I wanted to get up and leave.

It was incidents like these that caused me to withdraw from Donna. When I withdrew, I would date others—sort of. When those dates triggered my anxiety, I returned to Donna. One of those “dates” reminded me of her experience with my fleeting expressions of interest.

Occasionally, I helped lead out during Friday evening worship services. My friend Judy* remembered my standing at the front next to Chris and his guitar—surprise, surprise! She remembered my asking her to accompany me to an evening vespers. She said, “It ‘sort of’ felt like a date—but not clearly one either.” She told me the consequence of that sort-of date was that a friend of hers didn’t speak to her for weeks because that friend had a crush on me. “The girls just loved you,” Judy teased, “because of your gentleness and spirituality. But you always felt beyond reach.” Her final comment was

revealing. “I always felt safe around you.” This, she added, “was something I believe I shared with several guys I dated over the years – who also turned out to be gay!”

Feeling safe around male friends that “turn out to be gay” is a common experience among women. Without any sexual attraction, there is little or no sexual tension. This

absence of sexual tension is often interpreted as a sign of a good or safe mate. Whether with Donna or other female friends, I was not trying to tease or deceive by my safe but ambiguous behavior.

Judy reminded me of one other humorous anecdote. We were part of the same student summer-work program in 1972 selling health magazines door to door in Ottawa. That was the summer we wore hideous red shirts, white ties, and white polyester pants—or white skirt in Judy’s case. According to her, she was pulling magazines out of the trunk of a car in the Westgate Shopping Plaza parking lot when a gust of wind blew her white, pleated skirt up over her bum as she leaned over the trunk. “I was mortified,” she said, “and you were so calm and cool about it.”

I have only the vaguest memory of the incident, I believe, because there was no burning angst associated with seeing Judy’s panty-clad bottom. It was a sexually neutral event for me, whereas seeing a male friend in his briefs would have troubled me and burned into my memory.

It was during of my confusing dating behavior that I lost Donna—not to an accident or illness, but as a casualty of my orientation.

In the fall of 1979, with graduation fast approaching, Donna unsurprisingly needed clarification as to the nature of our relationship and where we were headed. In a letter, she gently confronted me. She told me that she really liked me and that together we could do wonderful things for the church and the Kingdom of God. I was panic-stricken when I read her letter. I would have given anything to ignore her overture as I did with most expressions of interest from female friends. In this instance, however, I could no longer play dumb. My heart ached over the loss and pain I knew I was going to create for both of us.



FINISHED WITH COLLEGE, PART II

BY JERRY MCKAY



At CUC (now WAU) library



1980 GC Session



Donna and me

You might wonder how Donna could question our future after our friend had insisted that I was homosexual. Donna resolved the dissonance by ignoring the evidence. As she had said, "I had no context to make sense of these things." When you believe that things cannot be as they are, you continue the same course. It was out of this "cannot be" sense of dissonance that Donna sought clarification about our relationship.

I responded the only way I could. I told a partial truth. I told her that I did not feel for her as she felt for me. I had no justification for saying this, but what was I to tell her? We didn't share the same spiritual interests? Lie! We didn't share core values and the same sense of mission? Lie! I couldn't speak the truth because I was barely able to acknowledge it myself. If I had told her I was not attracted to her because she was a woman, that would have been the truth. I felt sick to my stomach as I crafted my response. At least I delivered it in person.

Donna was disappointed and left with many unanswered questions. Without any context, my answer seemed cruel. She told me that her initial response was a simple, immediate but disappointing resolve. "I guess that is what I told myself. I did wonder why. I thought foolish things like, I must not be pastor's wife material."

In that moment, I lost a dear friend, a soul mate. My actions removed any reason for Donna to maintain ties with me. If she were to have the family and future she wanted, she would have to move on. She did. By January 1980, Donna had left campus to teach at an Adventist college in Korea. We had little contact for several years after that.

Donna shared some general impressions and observations of me. "I liked you because you were a spiritual guy. A spiritual giant in my eyes. You were always kind. You were steady and always there. I am an introvert, making it very difficult for me to connect deeply with people. I had as much connection with you as I ever had with anyone." Then she made a comment very similar to Judy's. "You didn't scare me as most guys did."

**My heart ached over the loss
and pain I knew I was going
to create for both of us.**

Much of Donna's lack of fear was based on that absence of sexual tension. Donna and I had a lengthy history to support her sense of security. During our seven-year friendship, I never initiated anything physical—not even trying to sneak a kiss! In fact, there is not a woman on the planet who can say I ever tried to initiate anything physical, except holding their hand while escorting them to an approved social function. It wasn't because I was in control of my sexual desires; there were none to control. There is nothing like same-sex orientation to remove all heterosexual temptation. While Donna was safe in my presence, she was always being set up for confusion and disappointment. Absence of sexual interest or desire for the opposite sex is a core characteristic of my orientation. I did not have to work at being chaste—it came naturally. Lack of sexual interest may be wonderful for friendship, but it does not make for a good marriage.

READ THE REST OF THE STORY AT SDAKINSHIP.ORG

A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

If you are reading my story for the first time and you feel you are missing some context, I suggest you start at the beginning with the May 2015 issue of *Connection* magazine. Why am I writing my story in such detail? In short, I am answering questions while hoping to educate. Over the years, I have been asked the same questions over and over by friends, family, and church members. The answers to those questions are found in different decades of my life. I'm grateful to the *Connection* for giving me this space to share my story. Publishing as I write is a great motivator!



TREASURER'S REPORT



Dear Kinship Members,

SDA Kinship International has been affirming diversity within the Adventist community and around the world for nearly 40 years. Kinship continues to speak with and for LGBT+ current and former Seventh-day Adventists and those who support them. This is accomplished through local meetings, annual conferences, articles, books, and other media; outreach with denominational educators and ministers; letters to members' local churches; and statements on critical public issues.

At Kampmeeting in July, we made our annual call for offerings and pledges. We reached half of our goal of \$90,000. As a result, we have had to cut back programs and expenses to keep a balanced budget.

We would like to ask for your continued generosity in support of our programs. With your dollars, we are reaching out to let others know they are not alone. We are reaching out with our allies to secure more safe places for everyone.

We know that our efforts are only possible because of the contributions we receive from generous donors like you. Thank you for believing in and supporting our mission.

Sincerely,

Karen T. Lee

Treasurer

SDA Kinship International

treasurer@sdakinship.org

LOVED

ON GIVING TUESDAY

YOUR GIFT ON **NOV. 29, 2016**, HELPS
US CONTINUE TO SHARE THIS
IMPORTANT TRUTH WITH LGBTIQ
ADVENTISTS: THEY ARE **LOVED** BY
GOD.

WWW.SDAKINSHIP.ORG





AFTER A WEEKEND OF MEETINGS, THE SDA KINSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS JOINED FRIENDS FOR A VISIT TO THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. (MLK) MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

On the evening of Oct. 9, as a group, we stood together in front of the statue of MLK. The statue is the centerpiece of his sprawling memorial in Washington, D.C., themed "*Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.*" I couldn't help but reflect on the progress our community has made thus far, even in the Adventist Church. But there is still a lot of work to be done; too many people have not yet gotten from the point of despair to hopefulness. But we share this truth: We are in this together.

-Clinton Sorzano

CHURCH RELATIONS

Kinship has a list of welcoming churches on our website.

But we know we need to constantly update that list. We'd appreciate your input as members about local Adventist churches in your area. Whether you are LGBTIQ, a family member, or a friend, we would love to have you share with us information about a congregation you attend. We realize not all churches are ready to accept LGBTIQ members at the same level.

We currently have three categories. However, those categories have needed clarification. While sticking with three categories, the new definitions would be:



Dave Ferguson
Director of Church Relations

- ❖ **SAFE CHURCH:** This church wants to make sure that any LGBTIQ member who attends a service will feel safe rather than made to feel uncomfortable by statements made from the pulpit or by members.
- ❖ **WELCOMING CHURCH:** This church wants to be sure that an LGBTIQ member who attends is made to feel welcome at the church as a member and will be encouraged to continue to attend.
- ❖ **OPEN CHURCH:** This church will be open to baptizing an LGBTIQ member and encourage them to be active in the church through various levels of leadership.
- ❖ My local church is not safe.

Please send us information about your church via email to churchrelations@sdakinship.org (include church name and full address, and pastor's name and email).

When we receive your list, we will contact the pastor to confirm his/her willingness to have the church listed on our website. They will be given a choice of having the church listed either on the public site or on the Members Only section of the website.

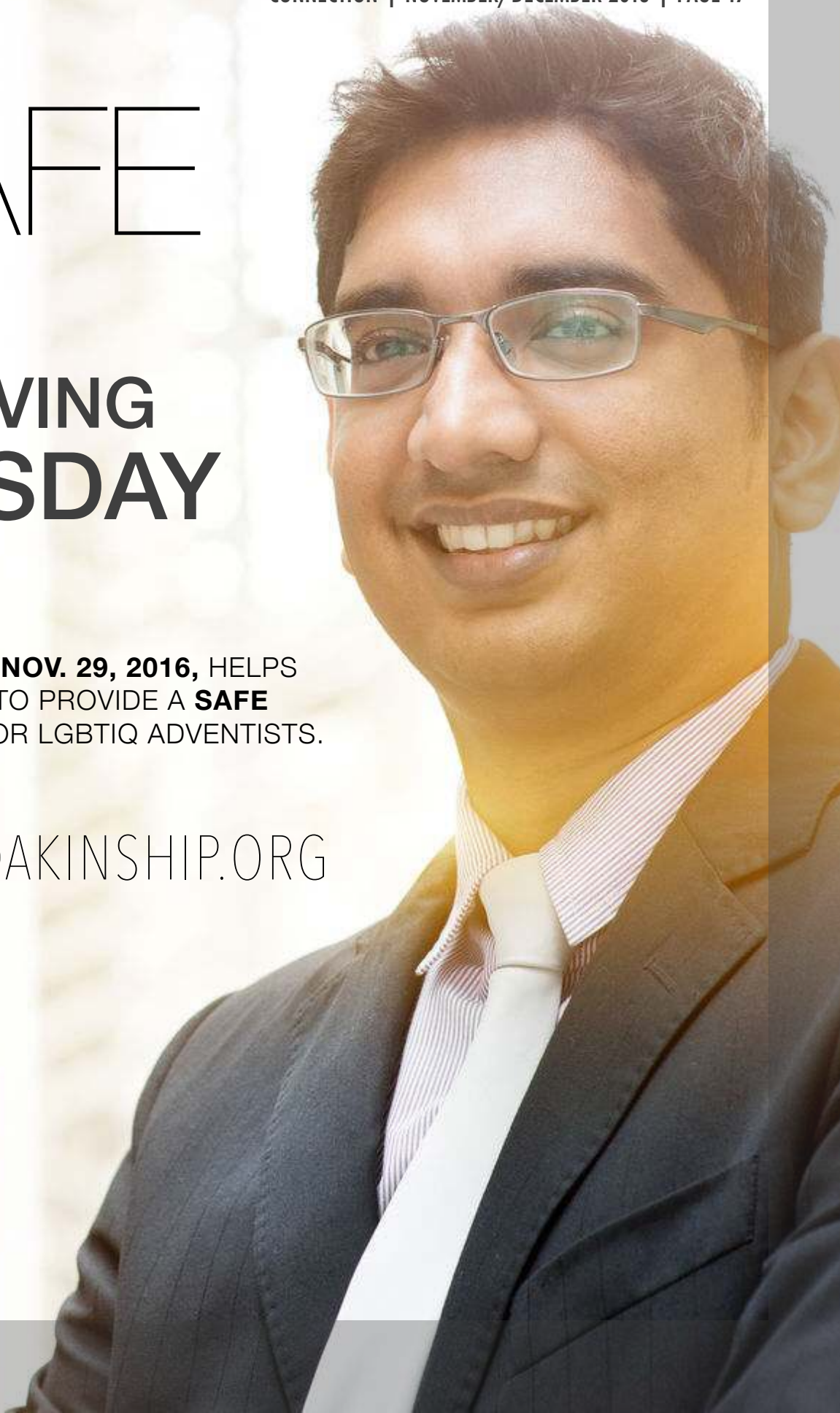
Thank you for helping us create a relevant website for all our members.

SAFE

ON GIVING TUESDAY

YOUR GIFT ON **NOV. 29, 2016**, HELPS
US CONTINUE TO PROVIDE A **SAFE**
COMMUNITY FOR LGBTIQ ADVENTISTS.

WWW.SDAKINSHIP.ORG



As a gay man, growing up in a very conservative environment is sometimes very difficult, especially if you are the pastor's son.

The fact that some of your desires and feelings are different from most of the other men in the community brings questions that challenge your sense of identity as a member of a specific group and as a human being. Being different can generate fear, guilt, and confusion. It can be the reason for physical and psychological violence, but it can also spark a search for meaning and a reinterpretation (that goes beyond the social rules) of what it is to be a man.

Lately, there has been a greater interest from liberal branches of society to revisit and rethink the concepts of gender and sexuality created throughout time. However, not only the liberals are willing to revise these issues, but also social scientists and religious people are now discussing what those concepts represent in postmodern times.

Let's take gender, for instance. Discussions on the relation of power in society first dealt with the differences between men and women, and how women have been excluded and diminished for much of history. Most recently, the differences between some members of the male community have also been discussed after many years of discrimination and prejudice against gay, bisexual, and transgender men. Not only these men, but other straight men can be excluded as well for not having the same social performance that men are expected to have.

Inside the church, it is even more complicated to face these matters. There, social performance is not only based on the imitation of other people's acts, but it is also influenced by sacred teachings and spiritual guidance from prophets and

pastors. These are usually hard to confront. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, some of Ellen G. White's writings give guidance that is specifically directed at men's and women's behaviors, and how they should act at home, with their family, with their community, and with their church.

Given these circumstances, I was intrigued by how SDA Kinship men deal with all these issues together. What is their response as a group when they think about their masculinity and when they discuss what it means to be a man? From May 2015 to January 2016,

BEING A MAN

Josue de Castro Filho is a doctoral student at the University of São Paulo in Brazil studying gender and sexuality among religious issues. In this article, he shares how masculinity is (re)constructed between the gay men who interact on the SDA Kinship Men's Facebook group.

I did a digital ethnography in the Facebook SDA Kinship Men's Group, observing their posts, comments, discussions, and reactions. I analyzed all 507 posts and this is what I found:

- SDA Kinship men break the limits the church imposes on masculine behavior with their welcoming attitudes that accept diversity and respect different ways of being a man.
- The male body, not male behavior, is very important to what it means to be a man. Although there are many discussions about what is beauty, there is no doubt that the male body is one of the core symbols of masculinity. Of 137 posts related to masculinity, 81 were about the male body, compared with 39 posts about male behavior and 17 posts about male clothing.
- When SDA Kinship men get together, they're more interested in sharing other things rather than sexuality and gender issues. Being in a safe place encourages them to be who they really are; they are not fixed on these subjects, but rather they explore other themes and personal desires. Of 507 posts, 217 (42%) dealt with other things that were not related to gender or sexuality.

After all, being a man (or a woman, I might say) isn't defined by the things you are or aren't supposed to do. Being a man involves all the innumerable possibilities that you can be with this body that gives you life.



SHOW YOUR KINSHIP PRIDE!

Order your SDA Kinship Merchandise today at sdakinship.org

T-shirt: One Heart One Love

Colors: Charcoal and Sapphire

Limited Sizes: Small to 2XL

Cost: \$25.00

#GIVING
TUESDAY
NOVEMBER 29

// Family, friends, fellowship, and fun is what Kinship is all about. This #GivingTuesday, please consider contributing to SDA Kinship International to help us fulfill our mission. We need your assistance and support to continue to build programming, create impact, and serve our members worldwide. //

—NAVEEN

Support at sdakinship.org

HOPE

ON GIVING TUESDAY

YOUR GIFT ON **NOV. 29, 2016**, HELPS
US CONTINUE TO SHARE **HOPE** WITH
LGBTIQ ADVENTISTS WHO FEEL ALONE.

WWW.SDAKINSHIP.ORG



2017 EUROPEAN KINSHIP MEETING

September 1-4, 2017 • Save the date

European Kinship Meeting takes place at the Liebfrauenberg Castle, located in the heart of Alsace, the Northern Vosges Nature Park, a UNESCO-listed Biosphere Reserve. The featured speaker is Jeroen Tuinstra, president of the Belgian-Luxembourg Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Jeroen's dream is for a church where all are welcome and safe to worship God.



France

RESOURCES RESOURCES RESOURCES

We understand what it is like to be an Adventist struggling with issues of sexual orientation and gender identity because we each had similar experiences.

And we also know that this struggle is often painful, frightening, and discouraging. Kinship is here to help and provide support.

If you are feeling lonely, depressed, or suicidal, or if you need a professional counselor who is supportive of gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender concerns, chances are we know someone in your area who may help.

Be assured that we are sensitive to your need for confidentiality. If you wish, we can also refer you to an understanding Adventist pastor, teacher, or other professional we know who is sensitive and informed about sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Above all, please know we care. We understand that you need to think through what your sexuality means, what to do about

it, what it may mean to your loved ones, and whether it is possible to be LGBTIQ and Seventh-day Adventist. We will not try to determine your conclusions if you reach out to us. We will endeavor to understand and help you while you make those important decisions about who you are and God's plan for your life.

We want to respond in the most helpful way. We are people of diverse ages and backgrounds, so please let us know the type of person to whom you feel most comfortable talking. For example, a woman rather than a man, someone who came out while being married, or someone with a similar background or profession. You may also be more comfortable talking to someone who speaks your native language.

If you are a pastor, teacher, counselor, or parent, please know that we welcome all inquiries and that we also respect and honor your need for confidentiality.



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Scan the code for these resources, or visit www.sdakinship.org.

- Find an LGBTIQ-Friendly Church
- Homosexuality: Can We Talk About It?
- Support Kinship—Make a Donation
- Previous *Connection* issues and more

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