

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

Connection

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Covid And The Closet

Has the pandemic helped to create a path for LGBT+ Christians to be more open?

The Unclobber Project

Learn more about Kinship's project to reach hearts and minds

2021 Elections

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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 3,000 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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Editor's Note

The year 2020 was a very complicated year for the entire world: wildfires in the United States and Australia, contested elections in the United States and in other places, and worldwide protests against racism, all while navigating daily life amidst a global pandemic. Many of us have made it thus far, and 2021 will have its challenges as well. As I look forward to 2021, I am hopeful for vaccines and I am grateful for the increase in technology that has helped us remain connected even when in different locations.

The *Connection* magazine is a place for members to share their stories with other members. It's also a place to promote useful resources for our membership, highlight events that have happened, and learn about major Kinship projects. Kinship's theme for 2021 is "Loved and Affirmed." I

n this issue and in future issues this year, we hope that each person reading will know that they are loved and affirmed by God, and to have the bravery to love and affirm themselves, exactly as they are, right now. You do not need the permission of the church, your family, a partner, or

anyone else. And as we learn to love and affirm ourselves more each day, it will help us love and affirm others in our community as well.

Through it all, Kinship remains a community, and Kinship is committed to affirming our members' identities, advocating for LGBTQ+ people in Adventist spaces, and working to create a better world.

As we move into 2021, whether you are physically alone, quarantined, dealing with the realities of a global pandemic, serving on the frontlines in hospitals, schools and grocery stores, know that you are loved. Your life matters. Your story matters, and we invite you to share it with us.

Reach out and connect with us, on Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom, and email. You are not alone, and your Kinship family is here.

Justin Mezetin, Director of Communications



Covid and the Closet

WRITTEN BY BRADFORD BLACK

"So, you're religious...how does that work?" The question, posed by nearly every guy who bothers to read my dating profile, used to make my eyes light up with excitement, a chance to share the good news of God's all-embracing love. Now after years on the market, it often reads like a death sentence to an otherwise fun conversation. The complicated relationship gays have with religion is no secret — without it, you wouldn't be reading this issue of the Connection today — but a cold response to my faith has never stopped Jesus from riding shotgun in my search for a mate. He and I are a package deal. To our friends and family, we find it easy to be open about what we value, the objects of our affection, and the truths we believe in.

In many churches, this sort of proclamation is celebrated and encouraged. We are exhorted to never be ashamed of the gospel and to let our light shine before the world, while other forms of revelation are conveniently forgotten. We forego confessing our sins to each other for fear of being judged, censured, or disfellowshipped. Even in our more raw testimonies, we sanitize and scrub them of too much detail, making them suitable for children's ears, and hopefully featuring a hallelujah-worthy happy ending. The resulting church becomes more a home for robots than the redeemed, each one going through the motions of community, all while carefully guarding significant issues of the heart.

This was never Jesus' design, His way, or His will for us; and thus it cannot prosper. This past year has seen record outflows from the LDS and Jehovah's Witnesses, and I wonder if Adventists have not also suffered similar losses. The statistics are grim:

after welcoming worshippers to return, most churches are reporting 10-40% of their prior church attendance figures. And considering online attendance, despite an initial surge, post-Easter 2020, only 18% of pastors reported that their online attendance was higher than a typical in-person week. The shutdowns offered a welcome escape hatch for souls who were long disenchanted with the sham that church had become. No longer pressured to perform, saints have been free to explore who they really are, and what they believe, free from outside influence. For some, that has meant a complete divorce from a life of faith; and for others, merely a reassessment of priority. We've all seen what life is like without our weekly assembly, the stilted programming and pageantry. We've gotten used to Zoom, and might even prefer the extra hours of sleep it affords. Without the hustle of the morning, for the first time, Sabbath actually feels like a day of rest. This period without traditional church has both spoiled and awakened us, and as churches reopen across the world, a battle will emerge between those eager to return to church as it has always been, and others who feel emboldened to make radical changes.

Let's face it, in-person church attendance is likely going to diminish greatly. In every age category, weekly church attendance has dropped over the last twenty years. For those who do return, especially the young, greater demands for authenticity will emerge, a revolution which could spark a revival. And for LGBT Christians in particular, COVID serves as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to renegotiate our place in the church, and how we wish to present in this fast-transforming space.

Having lost our church connections for an extended time should imbue each of us with a holy recklessness. We need no longer live under the illusion that we have anything worthwhile to lose by living openly in the freedom God has given. Why should we tolerate the fakery, the counterintuitive and counterproductive traditions of men, the unChristlike dominance hierarchies, and the avoidance of real issues? We can rejoin our faith communities, liberated from the fear of loss, of silencing, and of exclusion. Radical authenticity will be the painful cross that restores abundant life to the church. Churches will either become spaces where all Christians — gay, straight, transgender, homeless, abused, fornicating, porn-addicted, debt-burdened, or grieving — can be themselves and be seen as Christ sees them, or they will not be sustainable.

Depending on your nationality or the culture you're enclosed within, this kind of structural transformation may seem daunting or just plain impossible. You may have spent your entire life concealing this less acceptable aspect of your testimony. The idea of your

identity being openly known might make church feel even more hostile than it already does. But if you weren't alone, perhaps you'd feel differently. Michelle Aguilar wrote, "Fear is contagious. Fortunately, so is courage. Learning to become fearless will touch everyone around you, and best of all, you'll find it's a gift that keeps on giving." This coming October, I will need your help in organizing a *Coming Out Sabbath*, a chance to share your story with your spiritual brothers and sisters. As we each choose faith over fear, faith in the power of the Holy Spirit to heal our broken churches, I believe we will see the true revival and reformation God desires for the Body of Christ. As a post-COVID bravery opens closet doors around the globe, Christians everywhere will learn anew what our communities were made for — to love, to uplift, and to embrace with the gospel.



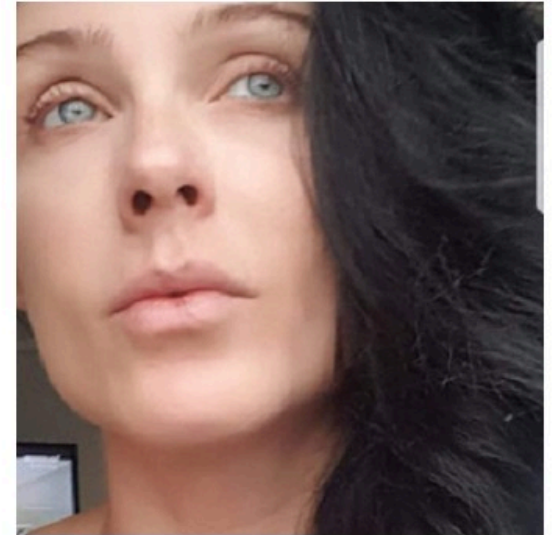
Bradford Black is a Region 2 Kinship member and humanitarian aid worker living in London. He spent the last year traveling through Brasil and Mexico.

He will be organizing a "Coming Out Sabbath" event this October. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting project.

Interview with a mother of a LGBTQ child in Brasil

WRITTEN BY LEO LIRA

Cynthia Massote, 41, is a mother of a 16-year-old girl. She is a biologist and a businesswoman. Here she will share with us a few things about her own experience as a LGBTQIA+ mother. She also has another child, Yan, who is autistic.



Leo: When did you first realize your daughter was LGBTQIA+, and when did she begin telling others? What was her early coming out experience like?

Cynthia: Well, I've always known she was a palette full of colors. I'm not sure about when she started telling others about her sexuality. These days kids don't need to do a big reveal on it. They are way more open-minded, and they accept other people's individualities. Her early coming out moment wasn't a big thing for me. Once she had been understood, loved, and respected in her family, she began talking about it as the natural thing that it is.

Leo: Are you in the LGBTQIA+ community? How is the family education? In your opinion, how important is it to be out with these different people around her and in these different environments?

Cynthia: I'm not in a specific community. I'm in a community where people must respect and love each other. I don't have LGBTQIA+ friends. I simply have friends. My daughter has always been around good people with beautiful hearts. She learned she should never judge love. She is loved!

Leo: It's common for kids to be "out" to their parents. How has it changed from the past?

Cynthia: Peoples' hearts and minds may have changed, but there's still a long road ahead of us.

Leo: As a mother, how did you handle your daughter's orientation; and what was your biggest issue related to it?

Cynthia: I have no issues towards her being who she is. I'm afraid of ignorant people and violence. I want her to live life to her fullest, without limiting herself and her ability to love.

Leo: How comfortable are you with your daughter's identity as an LGBTQIA+ person?

Cynthia: She is loved. She is a beautiful human being. What's wrong about it?

Leo: Has your daughter ever suffered any kind of bullying at school or inside the family? How did she handle it? How did you deal with it?

Cynthia: Yes. She identifies herself as pansexual. She has already dated boys and girls. Her first love was a boy named Thiago, from her school. When he found out who she really is, he – as a religious boy – decided to end things up. At that time, she had things to vent about and got really close to a girl also from her school.

They used to open up about everything to each other, and this girl came out to Yasmin and said her parents didn't like their friendship and they ended up coming across the truth about their daughter being LGBTQIA+. They decided to blame my daughter for this and came to my house for a conversation. I did not tolerate that, and they listened to some "nice" things from me and regretted coming. Of course!

Continued on page 9

Interview continued from page 8

Leo: What's your greatest fear related to your daughter's sexual identity?

Cynthia: My greatest fear is intolerance and violence as a result of it.

Leo: As a parent, do you worry that your daughter's appearance, style, dress, or the way she walks may affect how people see her?

Cynthia: No, she is free. People will always tell. I only worry about her feelings. I'm afraid of not being here for her whenever she needs me.

Leo: How do other parents see you?

Cynthia: Some see me as a crazy woman. Some as a role model, and there those who see me as a human being trying to help the ones I love survive in this world.

Leo: What words of wisdom would you share to another parent?

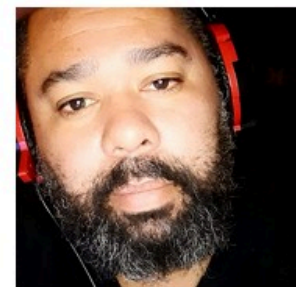
Cynthia: Communication and respect are the foundations of successful parenting.

Leo: Describe a little about yourself and your daughter.

Cynthia: We love each other. Best friends forever. She is always there for me, my helping hand, and I'm always there for her. My hero, my idol, a piece of me.

** - The interview and article were originally created in Portuguese, and translated into English for a wider audience.

Leo is an educator and member of Kinship Brasil. He hopes his interviews and articles will both inspire members and showcase stories and contributions from Brasil and South America.



**FAMILY & FRIENDS
ROUND TABLE CHAT**

Third Sundays
12:30 pm, ET | 11:30 am, CT | 9:30 am, PT

Facilitators
John & Carolyn Wilt
family-friends@sdakinship.org

RSVP at: bit.ly/KinshipFamilyRoundTable

SDA Kinship invites family members to join our Family and Friends community, led by John and Carolyn Wilt. The goal of the program is to provide a safe space for family members who want to connect with others going through a similar journey of having an LGBTQ+ family member.

Each month there is a Zoom Roundtable allowing member to share their stories, any concerns or issues they may have, and exciting news they would like to celebrate. Everyone is welcome to join. It occurs every third Sunday at 9:30 AM PT / 12:30 ET

RSVP for the Zoom at bit.ly/KinshipFamilyRoundtable

Learn more about Family and Friends at sdakinship.org/familyfriends

A Kinship Connection Retrospective

WRITTEN BY CATHERINE TAYLOR

I was editor of the Connection from 2003 to 2016.

To say “there were joys in the work” is one of the understatement of my life. Thinking of you all recreates a gusher of appreciation.

I am immeasurably glad that, through our newsletter, I got to have contact with Kinship members and allies, church leaders, college libraries, educators, lawyers, counselors, theologians, program developers, etc. on six continents. There must have been a reader on Antarctica, at some point. I apologize that you are not coming to mind. I am glad we got to share spiritual thoughts, church joys and angst, relationship stories, coming-out journeys, recipes, travel tales, news items, activity announcements, photographs, wedding tales, baby announcements, aging issues, hiking reports, HIV sadness, poetry, and health suggestions; in short, the varied stories of our community.

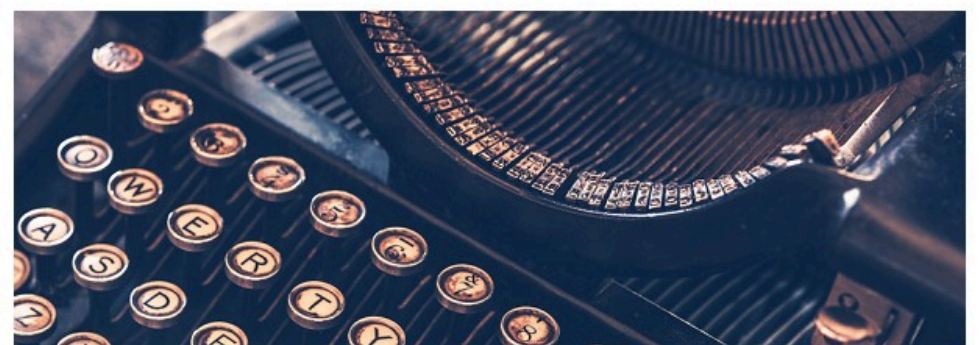
I worked with an amazing group of regular writers and reporters; David, Larry, Andy, Andrew, Ben, Rom, Floyd, Carol, Alex, Carrol, Rene, Jerry, Mitch; what appreciation I have for you. I remember mornings when I was up at 5AM EDT, so I could communicate with San Francisco, Australia, The Netherlands, Kenya, and Russia. That experience alone would have given me a sense of the way we had wrapped our accepting community around the world. Thank you all for putting up with me harassing you to meet deadlines, and then putting up with me editing your hard thought work.

More appreciation goes to the Connection’s rather astonishing production crew. Jacquie and Carrol, thanks for your persnickety patience, research, and good humor as you proofread with ethical and grammatical clarity.

To this day, I don’t want to put something before public eyes without you taking a look at it. Ruud and Ted, you made us beautiful. What remarkable layout people you are; truly artists with heart. Doolittle’s Printserve was our printing house for at least a decade. They filled our interactions with quality product, personal interest, and caring. Floyd, thank you for the consistent way you got mailing labels to me so we could get the work of this crew out to our community. I hope I told you, one or thirteen times, how much your reliability lessened the stress of pulling the last pieces together.

There were few lows but they were substantive. I was editor at a time when the focus of the Kinship leadership in regard to the *Connection* was how they could spend increasingly less money on something I believe was the most consistent contact we all had with each other. I can only imagine how difficult it was for the leadership to deal with someone hovering over our newsletter like the mother hen I am. The anguish I felt when Kinship’s leadership chose to end paper copy mailing, even to places and people who do not have easy access to electronic mailings and notices, led to my resignation.

Those last memories are hard ones for me but they don’t erase the gift of being part of such an amazing project for a substantive chunk of my life. Writing this makes me realize how appreciated you all, readers and production team, are. I cannot help but end this report as I did my editorials*Take good care of yourselves for you are infinitely valuable.*



RESOURCES CORNER

FIND HELPFUL RESOURCES RECOMMENDED BY KINSHIP



ENOUGH ROOM PODCAST

Dan and Jo [last names?] are an interracial gay couple and live in Sydney, Australia. Their conversational style is very approachable, and the way they share and feed off of each other keeps you engaged throughout each 20-30 minute episode. Their first episodes share part of their story, and they respond to a letter from an Adventist which covers the typical FAQs and conventional Adventist talking points. Other episodes include conversations with

other LGBT Adventists and another Adventist podcaster who is their friend, even though they may share a different perspective on LGBTQ issues. This is a great resource for the Seventh-day Adventist community at large where everyone can learn about LGBT+ people and hear more personal stories and perspectives.

Dan and Jo are members of Kinship in Australia, and also spoke for Kinship's November Kinship Worship. We thank Dan and Jo for adding more voices and constructive conversation to the spaces that intersect LGBTQ experiences, Christianity, and Seventh-day Adventism. Their podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts, and you can find them on Facebook @enoughroompodcast and Instagram @enough.room.



Description - We are a gay Christian Adventist couple who believe that there is enough room for all in the family of God, no matter what our differences may be. We share stories and voices you may not always hear within our churches. We pray this creates positive conversations of hope and we pray that you may find a place here to be known, to be loved, and to be.

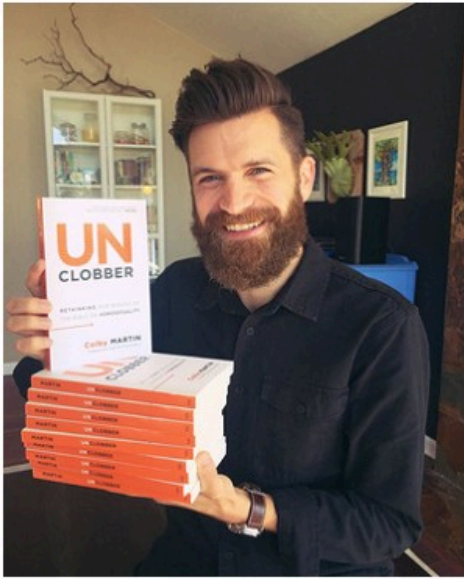
Connect

Facebook @enoughroompodcast
Instagram @enough.room

Find more resources on our website at: sdakinship.org/resources

SDA Kinship aims to curate and maintain a list of helpful resources that support our members. If you create or find new resources that can be helpful, please share those with us by email at info@sdakinship.org

THE UNCLOBBER PROJECT



UNCLOBBER

UnClobber tells of the personal journey of Pastor Colby Martin as he researches the Bible's six "clobber texts"—the only places in Scripture that might plausibly address sexual orientation—and comes to a new understanding of how the church can relate to members of the LGBTQ community from a biblical and compassionate framework. Pastor Colby Martin isn't the first to learn this, but his story and biblical interpretation communicates the message in a deep, balanced, and accessible way.

Kinship has sent over a thousand copies of UnClobber to Seventh-day Adventist pastors, teachers, and church leaders, as an outreach project. Our aim is to educate members and leaders in Adventist communities, and promote more dialogue within Adventist spaces about LGBTQ issues, and hopefully change some hearts and minds within local churches. We also want members and families that have LGBTQ loved ones to get this book, so that they can learn how to read and interpret the Bible in a more affirming and loving way.

Ways you can support the UnClobber Outreach project:

- **Pray** that people will allow the Holy Spirit to open their hearts and minds and that it will result in more loving actions within the local churches, schools, and communities, toward the LGBT community.
- **Send a free book** to people in your family or pastors and teachers in your community who you think would receive value from reading the book.
- **Order a free book** for yourself.
- Books can be ordered at **sdakinship.org/UnClobber**
- Connect to our online Facebook group to share your thoughts and ask questions **bit.ly/unclobberfacebook**

Learn more about the project at **www.sdakinship.org/unclobber**

42ND | ANNUAL KAMPMEETING

Loved & Affirmed



July 9-10 & July 23-24



Pastor
Alicia Johnston



Pastor
Paul Anthony Turner



Reverend
Brandon Brazier

For more information, visit sdakinship.org/kampmeeting



Connect With Kinship

SDA Kinship continues to work to connect our members in communities where they feel most comfortable. In this time of quarantine and staying home, we continue to invest in various ways to stay connected. Here are a few of the options we have available:

WhatsApp Groups

- Kinship Spiritual
- Kinship en Espanol
- Kinship Women
- Kinship Brasil
- Kinship France
- Kinship Russia



Facebook Groups

- Kinship Main International Group
- Kinship Family and Friends
- Kinship Men
- Kinship Women
- Kinship Young Adults
- Kinship Seniors
- Local and Regional Groups



Zoom Video Chats

Kinship asks members to use their knowledge and experience to engage, encourage, and enhance our community. Email us to lead a webinar, discussion, or group chat for Kinship members; and we can help you find a time and advertise it to our members.

zoom



If you would like sign up to lead a Zoom meeting or join our private Facebook or WhatsApp groups, please email info@sdakinship.org

Find more information about the various groups and communities you can join within Kinship at sdakinship.org/community

President's Message



Here in the United States, June is Pride month. For more years than I can remember, but probably close to 20, Kinship Region 2 has participated in the D.C. Pride Parade—until last year when it was postponed because of the pandemic. Each year before that, my region has rented a large pickup truck, decorated it together, and given out candy and flyers along the parade route. Not one year has ever passed without someone with an Adventist background coming up to us, amazed that an Adventist LGBTIQ organization like Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International exists!

Many of our members also tell us that they are grateful Kinship exists. When I attended my very first Kampmeeting in 1995, I had an overwhelming feeling of belonging. I was among my people, my family; I was home. That year I met so many new friends, and I have kept those treasured relationships for all of these years since then.

Some Kinship members have been in the organization for many years, while others have just joined, bringing our membership to over 3,750 members! Kinship has been a refuge for so many people over the years; we've leaned on it for support, education, advocacy, and a voice for those who haven't been able to speak for themselves. Kinship has repeatedly pushed back against the denomination's harsh rhetoric and treatment of LGBTIQ people.

But I think the most important role Kinship provides for our members is community. We all deserve to feel like we belong and to feel at home and that is what Kinship still does for me.

Because of that feeling, because of the deep impact that Kinship has made on me, I have accepted various leadership positions or run for office in Kinship since my first year in the organization. Other members encouraged me to get involved, and I wanted to make sure other people could experience what I had. I want others to feel that connected, too.

I've shared before that this last year or two has been a very difficult time for me, and I've struggled to maintain the same energy I've had over the last 26 years in the organization and over the last nearly 26 years of service with the Kinship board. I need to step down as president of this organization that I love so much, but I'll still be around and ready to help others.

Kinship needs you. As many of us on the international board continue to work to make Kinship meet the needs of our members, we need more help from those of you who have the talents and energy to join the board to keep Kinship growing and thriving. If Kinship means something special to you as it does to me, and if you can see why the Adventist LGBTIQ community still needs this place of support, education, and advocacy, please consider running for an office or as a member-at-large to help work on a special project. Kinship needs you. Will you help?

If you are interested in volunteering with one of our leadership teams or on a special project or if you want to learn more about running for a position in Kinship, contact us at info@sdakinship.org! Isn't life about giving back to others as others have given to us?

Yolanda Elliott, President

OPEN POSITIONS

- President
- Secretary
- Church Relations
- Director of Women's Interests



2021 ELECTION SLATE

Below you will find the candidates approved by the Kinship Board to be on the ballot for the 2021 Kinship Elections. They have included short biographies, information and their position statements.

Please review each person carefully, so that you may know choose who you think would be support Kinship's future direction.

Additional Notes:

- Members are allowed to suggest additional names to be added to this slate. The nominations committee would then review the applicant(s), and the board to vote on whether additions can be included on this slate.
- Please email nominations@sdakinship.org if you would like to add any additional names, by Monday June 28, so the board can review and approve.
- Electronic voting will be available for all members* July 2 - July 18, 2021.
*Only women can vote for Director of Women's Interests.



FLOYD POENITZ

Running for President

ABOUT ME

I live in the Dallas, Texas metroplex with my husband, Jeff. We have been together for 17 years and married for 6 years. We have an 11 year old dog named Butch who is our primary focus.

I am a 3rd generation Adventist who attended Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas and Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen in Austria. I realized at an early age that I am gay, but after college got married heterosexually to allow God to change me. That didn't happen and after six years divorced.

After many years of life's roller coaster journey, I am proud of being a gay man with an Adventist heritage.

EDUCATION

BA in Business Administration with minors in theology, marketing and German

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Languages, genealogy, travel, religion studies, sharing SDA Kinship with any who will listen.

Kinship Member for 30+ Years

Position Statement

SDA Kinship has been around for over 40 years now. I would like to bring in a fresh new approach to sharing our mission and vision with the SDA world. I feel the key is getting members involved and making SDA Kinship more closely match our diverse membership, thus making SDA Kinship a relevant and important part of the lives of our members.

We must bring Kinship alive for our younger generations as well as continuing to be a refuge for our older members. Together we can accomplish this. We must worry less about what the church thinks of us and concern more about what our members' needs are.

Previous Positions

Region 5 Coordinator, Member-at-large, International Growth and Development, Vice President

In the early years, I initiated the move from postal only communication to email and internet groups to facilitate member connectivity, and also encouraged the move to create a website as a hub for members to build community as well as a way to broaden our scope worldwide.

I worked with the Building Safe Places team to share what it means to be LGBTQ with church leaders and allies in Europe and California.

Other Relevant Skills

- Customer relations and teamwork from 3M as a customer service coordinator
- Critical thinking and management skills while at Microsoft as an Office Product Manager overseeing large teams of employees.
- Currently self employed balancing work and volunteer activities - refining time management skills



JACQUIE HEGARTY

Running for Secretary

ABOUT ME

Wife, mother, grandmother, and pet co-parent. Semi-retired web designer and proofreader/copy editor. Author of book "Adventist Vegetarian Diabetics."

EDUCATION

B.A., Microsoft Customer Service Engineer Training

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Writing, blogging, admin for diabetes groups on Facebook

Kinship Member for 28 Years

Position Statement

To maintain board and executive committee meeting minutes, to update the Kinship Leadership Directory as required, and to chair the Governance Committee for maintaining amendments to Bylaws.

Previous Positions

Secretary, Director of Communications, eNews editor, Region 8 News & Views editor. Currently serving as proofreader/copy editor for all written communications published by Kinship

Other Relevant Skills

- Spent career years as administrative / executive assistant
- 10 of those years working for a healthcare foundation non-profit



STEPHEN CHAVEZ

Running for Director of Church Relations

ABOUT ME

I'm an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor. Now retired. I served the church for 45 years as a pastor and writer/editor.

My wife, Linda, and I have been together for 50 years and we have two grown children.

EDUCATION

B.A. Religion. La Sierra University (1974)
M. Div. Andrews University (1977)

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Running
- Motorcycles
- Music, film, reading
- History, culture

Kinship Member for 15+ Years

Position Statement

Kinship's relationship with the church has improved much over the last 40 years. But there's a lot of room for improvement. I want to help break down barriers and build bridges.

Previous Positions

Linda and I have been active members of Region Two for nearly 20 years

Other Relevant Skills

- Comfortable with public speaking
- Experienced writer/editor
- Background in counselling
- Background in chairing meetings and boards



JACKIE JOHNSON

Running for Director of Womens' Interests

ABOUT ME

Hello, my name is Jackie Johnson. The most significant influence in my early life was coming to know Jesus at the age of 12. Later my oldest sister introduced me to Seventh Day Adventism, and at 18 I was baptized into the Seventh Day Adventist faith. Not too long thereafter, I married an SDA and we had two beautiful daughters. After they grew up and left home and had children of their own, I decided it was my time to further personally grow which resulted in my joining our local conference Women's Ministry committee. For nineteen years I participated in outreach, mini-missions, retreats, as an area coordinator and leader. As I was working alongside these wonderful women, I became aware of an emerging development within me, something I had suppressed for a long time, that is, an attraction to a woman.

Long story short, I am now married to an SDA woman, am a member of kinship, and continue to love the Lord.

EDUCATION

CLASS - Christian Leaders, Authors, & Speakers Seminars

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Spending time with my family
- Photography
- Camping
- Hiking
- Planning Gatherings

Kinship Member for 5 Years

Position Statement

My vision for the women of Kinship is to see every person know they are loved by God who created them. To know this is one thing, but to hold it in one's heart, so that no one can separate us from it, no matter what they say or do to us, is my calling.

Previous Positions

I have hosted Zoom Meetings.

Other Relevant Skills

- I'm a people person.
- I enjoy talking and listening.
- Held the position of Chaplain in Adventist Motorcycle Ministry for 4 years.



DEBBIE HAWTHORN

Running for Director of Womens' Interests

ABOUT ME

I served Kinship and Kinwomen for several years until the break up of my marriage. At that time I resigned as I needed time to look after myself and was not able to give to others. I feel my experiences in the last couple of years have given me a new calm and loving mindset towards others.

I do my best to live like Jesus wants me to, by showing love towards others.

EDUCATION

Grade 12 and Life

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Motorbikes
- Cats
- Nature
- Photography
- Quilting
- Crafts
- Spending time with family and friends.

Kinship Member for 12+ Years

Position Statement

I will encourage the Kinwomen to continue to be the great supportive group that they currently are and I personally will continue to support and be there for all of our wonderful KinWomen no matter where they are in their personal lives.

I will also support the board in all ways and continue to bring the Kinship 'message' to those who are open to hearing it.

Previous Positions

- Chapter Leader
- Regional leader
- Director of Women's Interests

Other Relevant Skills

- I have served on several boards
- Was an Officer with the Navy League Cadets giving me leadership training and practice.

More Ways to Volunteer With Kinship

Even if you are not running for the Board, we still need people to help us spread our message of acceptance, affirmation, and belonging for LGBTQ people in Adventist spaces and beyond. Kinship is a completely volunteer-led organization and needs help from its members to successfully complete its mission.

Here are a few of the opportunities where you can invest your time and talent to support the mission.

Communications Team

Volunteer to support Kinship communications to our diverse membership around the world on any of the following teams:

- Social media
- Video production
- Writing articles for the Connection magazine and blog
- Translating content for our worldwide audience
- Web and app development
- Captioning videos to make them more accessible
- Organizing external content and resources to help share with our members

Member Services Team

Volunteer to support specific member groups and communities within Kinship on any of the following teams:

- **Regional Coordination:** Host Zoom meetings to get to know other members in your area, demographic, or shared interest group
- **Hospitality Team:** Send welcome emails to new members as they join Kinship
- **Church Outreach:** Join an advocacy team to reach out to local Adventist churches and communities to encourage dialogue and create more inclusive spaces.
- **Community Outreach:** Connect with local organizations to find local volunteer opportunities

**Find more information, visit
sdakinship.org/volunteer**



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SEVENTH-DAY
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