

connection

The Newsletter of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International, Inc. Vol. 37, No.6, June 2013



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Is a Good Thing

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KINSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Yolanda Elliott
 Vice President: Naveen Jonathan
 Treasurer: vacant
 Secretary: Ruben López
 Director of Church Relations: Dave Ferguson (interim)
 Director of Women's Interests: Karen Wetherell
 Director of Communications: Ashish David
 Director of Youth Interests: Ronoldo Appleton
 Director of Development: Keisha McKenzie
 Directors-at-Large: Ruud Kieboom (Europe)
 Sharlett Reinke (Parents, Family and Friends)
 vacant (Diversity)
 Membership Services: Member Services Team

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Executive Committee: Yolanda Elliott
 Finance Committee: Sherri Babcock
 Kampmeeting Committee: Linda Wright
 Communications Committee: Ashish David
 Governance Committee: Ruben López
 Int'l Growth and Development Committee: Floyd Pönitz
 Diversity Committee: (to be determined)
 Nominating Committee: Jacquie Hegarty

REGIONAL COORDINATORS, USA

Region 1 (ME, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT, NY, PA, NJ): David Thaxton,
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 Region 2 (MD, VA, WV, NC, DE, DC): Yolanda Elliott,
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 Region 4 (MN, IA, MO, WI, MI, IL, IN, OH, KY): (available),
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 Region 6 (ND, SD, NE, WY, UT, CO, NM): (available),
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 Webmaster: Linda Wright,
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CHAPLAIN

Marcos Apolonio, chaplain@sdakinship.org

WHO WE ARE...

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

Founded in 1976 the organization was incorporated in 1981 and is recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States. Kinship has a board made up of thirteen officers. There are also regional and population coordinators in specific areas. The current list of members and friends includes approximately 1,550 people in more than forty-three countries.

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship believes the Bible does not condemn or even mention homosexuality as a sexual orientation. Ellen G. White does not parallel any of the Bible texts that are used to condemn homosexuals. Most of the anguish imposed upon God's children who grow up as LGBTI has its roots in the misunderstanding of what the Bible says.

SUPPORT KINSHIP

Seventh-day Adventist Kinship operates primarily on contributions from its members and friends. Help us reach out to more LGBTI Adventists by making a tax-deductible donation to Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. Please send your check or money order to the address below or donate securely online at sdakinship.org. (You can also donate using your Visa or MasterCard by contacting treasurer@sdakinship.org. You will be phoned so that you can give your credit card information in a safe manner.)



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 or visit Kinship's website at: www.sdakinship.org

From the Editor

The Power of One

Ruud Kieboom is the layout guru who makes our *Connection* look beautiful. He also does the "advertisements" you see for the Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting, European Kinship Meeting, Book and the Beach, and the Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting. He coordinates Kinship's activities in Europe. He sings in a remarkable double quartet of handsome and talented gay men. He has worked with consistency, competence, and good humor at the Dutch State Administrative offices for three decades. He has been partnered with Kees Meiling for 25 years. He and Kees were *in loco parentis* at the wedding of a young Kinship member who had no parental support for his loving same-sex relationship. It is my totally biased opinion that if I were stuck in a snake-invested Amazon swamp, he is one of the people I would trust to get me out. (I say this not knowing Ruud's attitudes towards the Amazon, snakes, or rescue attempts.) None of these is the reason I am writing about him this morning, without his permission or knowledge. For the last two weeks I have been in Europe working on a Kinship project. During that time I have heard repeated stories from the people around me of how Ruud changed the way the leadership of the Dutch church thought about gay and lesbian relationships. He didn't do it by marching in parades—though he does love Gay Pride in Köln, Germany. He didn't do it by preaching; he doesn't particularly like to lead out in public meetings. He didn't do it by writing brilliant arguments in favor of same-sex relationships, though he has great ideas. Ruud made these changes by quietly and graciously living an open life. One story I heard was of a religiously conservative, elderly auntie who did not approve of homosexuality. When she mentioned how much she enjoyed visits by the Kieboom/Meiling couple someone pointed out to her that she was complimenting a homosexual relationship. She retorted, "But they are Ruud and Kees." Ruud's example offset her attitudes towards those she did not know. After Ruud came out to his pastor, he was asked to speak in a church meeting about his life. He did so. He and Kees continued to attend Ruud's Adventist congregation. Ruud was responsible for the church newsletter. He continued his caring friendships with those around him, including those in the ministry and administration of the Dutch Adventist Church. They respect him. The Dutch church recently asked Kinship to help train their ministers and lay pastors in ways to support the LGBTI members of their congregations. We will probably never know how much of this request is built on a long-term relationship with Ruud. I do know he has had a powerful effect. Don't underestimate the impact one person can have on a system. Don't underestimate the impact you have on those around you. Don't underestimate how important you are. Take good care of yourself for you are infinitely valuable.

Catherine



Research:

How many people are gay?

**Williams Institute Study
Estimates Gay Population in
the United States at 9 Million**



Drawing on information from four recent national and two state-level population-based surveys, the analyses suggest that there are more than 8 million adults in the United States who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, comprising 3.5% of the adult population. In total, the study suggests that approximately 9 million Americans—roughly the population of New Jersey—identify as LGBT.

Among adults who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, bisexuals comprise a slight majority (1.8% compared to 1.7% who identify as lesbian or gay); women are substantially more likely than men to identify as bisexual; estimates of those who report any lifetime same-sex sexual behavior and any same-sex sexual attraction are substantially higher than estimates of those who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. There are also nearly 700,00 transgender individuals in the United States. An estimated 19 million Americans (8.2%) report that they have engaged in same-sex sexual behavior and nearly 25.6 million Americans (11%) acknowledge at least some same-sex sexual attraction. ▼

**If you can't get a compliment
any other way, pay yourself one.**

—Mark Twain

Sometimes Inconsistency Is a Good Thing



Does inconsistency bother you? It does me. It seems to be evidence of deception or, at best, inattention. But sometimes a closer inspection of the facts reveals that it wasn't inconsistent at all.

By Mitch Tyner (at Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting)

For instance, let's look at Jesus' seeming inconsistent reaction to three sets of facts as recorded in the gospels.

The first is in Matthew 23:1-35 (NIV). Jesus was addressing his disciples and others gathered to hear him—a crowd that evidently included a number of Pharisees. In 36 verses, He is recorded to have berated the Pharisees seven times, in what is often considered the most biting passage in the Bible.

⁴ *They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.* ⁵ *"Everything they do is done for people to see..."* ⁶ *they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues....* *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.*

¹⁵ *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are."* ²³ *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."* ²⁴ *You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.*

²⁵ *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence."* ²⁶ *Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.* ²⁷ *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean."* ²⁸ *In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."* ²⁹ *"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous."*

Who were these people who merited such very strong reproof?

The name "Pharisee" linguistically indicates "those separated." The Jerusalem Talmud indicates that, in the third century BC, there were 24 sects in Judaism. The major ones were the Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots. Jesus undoubtedly knew them all but singled out the Pharisees for by far the strongest criticism.



Of these four groups, the Pharisees had most support among the common people. They were the only group to survive the destruction of the temple in AD 70 as a continuing entity. Later, they were responsible for the compilation of the Mishnah. Modern scholars consider that modern Orthodox Judaism is essentially Pharisaism.

To the Pharisees, keeping the letter of the law, both written and oral, was everything. They gave equal authority to rabbinic law—what Jesus called "traditions of men." The condition of a person's soul was of less importance. Because of their strict adherence to the laws of purity, they kept themselves separate from sinners, for fear of defilement. External appearance was more highly valued than internal experience.

Jesus singled out the Pharisees for intense criticism as opposed to the Sadducees or other groups. Snakes, vipers, hypocrites—why such very strong words?

Could it involve their reverence for extra-biblical authority? One explanation that comes to mind is that they did everything possible to *exclude* others. Their attitude was, "We alone have the truth! And we don't want to share it with those who are not fit to receive it."

The second incident occurred on the Monday of Passion Week, four days before the crucifixion. It is recorded in *John 2:13-16*:



¹³ *When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴ *In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money.* ¹⁵ *So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables.* ¹⁶ *To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"*

This incident is the only mention of Jesus using physical force. It is also the only mention of moneychangers in the Bible. John assumes that his audience understood their function, as he gives no explanation in text.

Pilgrims, during this, and every, Passover season, brought all sorts of coins to the temple. The money-changers exchanged them (for a tidy profit, shared with the priests) for Tyrian shekels, the only coin the priests would accept for the annual temple tax. In upsetting

that system, Jesus placed the entire temple financial scheme in crises. He found their activities so revolting that He at least raised a whip (whether or not He actually struck anyone) and drove them out of the temple.

So what do the driving out of the moneychangers and the denunciation of the Pharisees have in common? Could it be that in both instances Jesus was reacting to and condemning a blatantly destructive misrepresentation of the character and requirements of God?

The third instance is recorded in John 8:1-11:



¹...but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ⁶They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

The Pharisees should have taken the woman to their court, not to Jesus. Instead they hatched a plot to catch Jesus in an inconsistency: if He holds a strict line, then He has allowed them to prevail in their ungodly treatment of this woman. He has opened Himself up to trouble from the Romans, for He will be held responsible if they stone her. If He doesn't, they will claim He abrogated the Law of Moses.

They didn't count on him simply writing a list of their

own sins in the sand. In the only recorded instance of Jesus writing, that's what He did.

So why was there no lecture on the gravity of her sin? There was no need, as she made no defense. She tacitly acknowledged her guilt, and didn't need more piled on. Instead, she needed relief—and that is what she received.

Was there inconsistency between Jesus' treatment of this woman and the Pharisees and moneychangers? Not really. In both cases Jesus did what needed to be done. In each case, He delivered the treatment most likely to be effective. He gave each individual what he or she most needed. He comforted the disturbed, and disturbed the comfortable.

What can we learn from these stories?

First, that it is important to represent God correctly—not merely to preserve the *status quo* or buttress tradition.

Second, we should resist the temptation to generalize. Of the 70 members of the Sanhedrin, 5 were Pharisees, and we know the names of three: Joseph of Arimathea; Gamaliel, who counseled waiting to see if the new teachings were from God before opposing them; and Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night seeking truth. None of these would seem to fit the description of those characterized as vipers and hypocrites. There are those who oppose truth and progress today who are hypocrites; there are others who quietly seek greater truth and understanding.

Third, we must recognize that religion can be used as either a comfort or a cudgel. There's a long tradition of religion being used to justify the systematic denial of equality and human rights. To rightly evaluate that fact, we must understand the circumstances and needs that result in such a misuse of religion.

In America, for instance, religion is being used to defend the *status quo* from all sorts of change: immigration, demographic change, the changing status of previously privileged dominant groups. Resistance to LGBTI rights is one manifestation of that resistance to change.

One scholar of religion has argued that people turn to religion because "humans don't have their own bearings, and they want to be oriented.... They want to find their own place." To stay oriented and feel in place, we build walls around our homes, and less visible boundaries around our communities—and churches.

In the 1950s, that process produced places of worship that felt safe and protective. But by the late '60s that whole system was breaking down, and boundaries and sheltering walls no longer seemed to matter so much. Rather than stay safely at home, people wanted to take "journeys," "explore new vistas." If it was unpredictable and chaotic, the risks seemed worthwhile because of the payoff: an unprecedented sense of freedom. All this was understandably frightening to many people. They fought back with a struggle for spiritual discipline that gained prominence in the 1980s and that continues today. But there is no way to go back. The

efforts to do so have come to be seen as expressing concern about the wrongdoing of others more than a means of recapturing some lost sense of certainty. Some see these ongoing—and accelerating—changes as symbolic of freedom. To others, they see the key to a safe, orderly life crumbling around them. No wonder they resist change.

An example: after a young woman theologian made a presentation to the group studying the theology of ordination, another member said to her, "I'm very sympathetic to all you said. But if I accept it, my entire biblical world view crumbles." Fear, insecurity, and perceived threats so often result in unthinking resistance.

So how do we react to all this? As Jesus did: comfort the disturbed, and disturb the comfortable.

For instance, within Kinship there is a discussion as to whether the emphasis should be on providing a safe

place for the victims of homophobia or activism to prevent such harm. The proper answer is that we must do both. Those who come in need of comfort and safety should find it. Those who smugly deny the need for change should be urged to rethink their stance: comfort the disturbed and disturb the comfortable.

And finally, what about us, as individuals? Do you need comfort? Accept it from the Lord. Or do you need to be disturbed? If it is comfort we have received, it now becomes our duty to speak up when others act the part of Pharisees. It's easier to say than to do—but that's our example. ▼

Patsy and Mitch Tyner would like to express their great appreciation for the surprise 50th wedding anniversary party their Kinship family threw for them at Rehoboth Beach Mini-Kampmeeting.

We would like to introduce you to...

More Members of Our Leadership Team!

David Coltheart – Australia

I volunteered to work for Kinship because there was an obvious need for someone in my state to do so and I am the Kinship member here who is most involved. I have always appreciated the role of Kinship in both my personal life and the impact that it has on other people's lives. I wanted to get involved and give back what has been given to me over the years.

As a former pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, I still have a pastoral heart and a concern for others. I am driven to assist people who are hurting, struggling, or even falling.

I am also keenly interested in communication. For years I have been involved in magazine work in a supporting ministry and I know the power of words. I enjoy writing, and it is a personal pleasure to be the designated communication link with the *Connection* newsletter.

My goal is to keep people informed about the issues facing LGBTI Adventists. I am currently writing my autobiography, focusing on my particular journey, which in the future may assist people in facing the same issues I faced over the years.

I am keen to see the film *Seventh-Gay Adventists* distributed widely to enable us to start a conversation among the vast majority of Seventh-day Adventists outside a couple of large cities where this issue hasn't even been raised.

We have tried to send out newsletters to Kinship members in Australia and New Zealand but are working on ways to collect information to share. With the exception of Sydney and Melbourne, Kinship members in Australia and New Zealand are usually very scattered and isolated. I don't live in either city!

I tend to keep in contact with individual people via email. Although it takes time to write emails, the process builds up relationships over time and enables ongoing personal contact.

It is a blessing to be able to help other people to find peace of mind and a truly fulfilling life. It is a blessing to share my blessings and to see the way God guides our lives.

Outside of Kinship, I work full time as a project manager and technical writer for a private training company. We provide training resources on workplace health and safety, equipment operation (particularly mining, industrial, and earth-moving equipment), and site inductions. I engage in face-to-face train-

ing and often travel around Australia to meet with clients and to obtain resources. I enjoy photography, hiking/bushwalking, reading, writing, and travel.

I am very involved with my church on the Sunshine Coast, (Queensland, Australia), where I am the worship coordinator and responsible for preparing and presenting the weekly PowerPoint presentations for Sabbath school and church. I am currently caring for a group of overseas Seventh-day Adventist students who have recently arrived at our local university and need assistance in settling in to life in Australia.

My partner, John, and I have been together for six years, and I love and cherish him as the source of my stability and strength. ►



We would like to introduce you to...

Jacque Hegarty – Communications Team

I began working with Kinship because I wanted to give back to this organization in ways that would be helpful. My primary goals have been, and still are, to increase and facilitate communication between Kinship members and leadership through email newsletters and online discussion groups.

In the beginning, I helped Floyd (Region 5 Coordinator) by sending out the region newsletter, "Kinship Kalendar" (1993). When I moved to California in 1996, I became involved in helping Harry (Region 8 Coordinator) send out the "Region 8 News and Views" which we are still sending out in electronic format under the regional leadership of Obed. As my interest/expertise in desktop publishing expanded to website design, I became intensely interested (2007) in helping to create a much-needed website upgrade, and accepted the position of Director of

Communications to make this happen, along with a highly skilled communications team, including the very creative and talented web administrator, Linda Wright, my life partner. Now I am happy to just serve on the Communications Team.

The greatest blessings for me are realized every year at Kampmeeting when I am able to meet in person new Kinship members as well as long-term members with whom we have established a connection during the year.

Outside of Kinship, my greatest career passion is in creating and maintaining websites for individuals and non-profits whose goals and missions I feel are essential to our community in particular and to humanity in general. My partner, our Chihuahua Barley, our children and their significant others, and our grandchildren are the love and light of my life.



Keith Paulusse – Australia

I began to work with Kinship because I believe in the inclusive love of all people. I noted that the entrenched prejudice against LGBTI people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church was extremely discriminating and led to stigmatization and ostracizing behaviors. I want that to stop now! I personally knew four Seventh-day Adventist persons who took their own life because there was no love shown to them from the church. The first AIDS patient to die in the Australian state of Victoria was a Seventh-day Adventist man. The Seventh-day Adventist Church leadership isolated the whole family, providing no support, love, or empathy.

This was serious business because the Seventh-day Adventist Church was corroding the noble and beautiful character of Jesus Christ. Emerson said, "Evil men triumph when good men do nothing." Kinship provided the infrastructure and the communication channels through which I could reach others like myself and work together for good, love, justice, and equality. I don't think of myself as a leader but more a catalyst for personal growth and acceptance, inclusion for all.

President Obama recently said, "There is a deficit of empathy larger than the United States government's deficit." The most important

goal for me is to show hospitality and empathy and to have an open heart and listening ear for lesbian and gay people. Jesus said that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because they did not show hospitality. My house is open to all.

Every Friday night we have dinner conversations with both the secular and religious LGBTI community. These conversations are warm and invigorating. One couple met here and will be married as soon as Australia passes equality laws.

We have a movie club, a book club, and recreational activities such as bike rides. I enjoy meeting new and interesting friends.

Outside of Kinship my interests involve health and fitness. Ninety percent of my diet consists of raw foods. I enjoy woodworking. I love bushwalking. I read at least one book per week. My big project at the moment is to complete my book in time for its August publication date. I am writing about the gripping story of my Dutch family who immigrated to Australia from Zeeland, intertwining biography with history. At the book launch I will have Kinship brothers and sisters, my family, with me. -:)



Stephanie Spencer – Region 7 Coordinator

It's funny sometimes to look back and see how what God planned has unfolded. My wife, Joy, and I had discussed the possibility of being regional coordinators. I was too timid and scared to volunteer. Yolanda eased my resistance in her gentle, kind, Southern way. She told me, "It's pretty easy, actually. Just get people together. Be consistent." She also explained that Kinship is trying to get several chapters going in each major metropolis. I would not be "doing all the work." I have more work when chapters fall stagnant; but, now, my position doesn't seem at all hard or scary.



We would like to introduce you to...

I plan to organize at least three low-cost, fun events per year. I work to be consistent and make personal contacts. I have come to learn that events are a success, even if only two people show up. We marched in Seattle Gay Pride last year. We purchased business cards for our region to hand out to people. We attend events like the *Seventh-Gay Adventists* premiere in our region so we can personally network, socialize, and support. Both Joy and I believe our work is a suc-

cess if we help just one person who is struggling with Seventh-day Adventist concepts and their sexual orientation. There are too many people struggling. They think they are alone in a nightmare. All of us who have made connections inside Kinship know we are not alone. I am gradually meeting members in our area one-on-one. I hope, in time, to meet everyone personally.

I get the most blessing in one-on-one conversations and contacts, probably more than I fully under-

stand. I am blessed by the incredible family connection with most people I meet around Kinship.

Outside of Kinship, Joy and I parent our one-year-old daughter Eileen. I enjoy photography and videography. Joy loves playing computer/online games, quilting, and crocheting. We both enjoy music, the arts, surfing the net/social media, and spending time with friends and family.

Naveen Jonathan – Vice-President

Kinship means a lot to me. I am always willing to participate and serve in whatever way I can. When asked to run for the position of vice-president, I knew that I would specifically be responsible for chairing the Member Services Committee. In this position I knew I would be able to take my interest in developing connections and relationships and help do so for our community.

My goals are to recruit leaders and revive chapters and regions around the world and help them serve the needs of our members. We survey Kinship members to assess need and determine the ways we can best use our various programs and services. We keep updated database information to assure we can stay in contact. We work on connecting various members around the work with each

other. Our hard-working team stays in regular contact via e-mail and phone calls. If you have suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

My biggest Kinship blessing at the moment is working with the most amazing committee members on Member Services (Floyd, Linda, Ruben, and Yolanda). Another blessing is the opportunity to work with regional leaders around the world as

they develop programming on the local level.

Outside of my Kinship work I enjoy soccer, baseball, traveling, relaxing at the beach, training to be a "master" Indian cook, and being part of a Bhangra (Indian) dance group. ▼



KINSHIP ELECTIONS 2013

The Kinship Board of Directors and the Nominating Committee hereby present this final slate of candidates for the 2013 elections to the Board of Directors. In compliance with the Bylaws, these candidates meet the Bylaws' criteria for the positions as described therein. This year's election will again be held electronically, and we are looking forward to having all Kinship members participate in this important process!

To see the full bio for each candidate, go to <http://sdakinship.org/memberannouncements/2013-kinship-elections.html> and log in with your user name and password.

President



Yolanda Elliott

I believe that Kinship offers all our members something just as I believe all our members have something to offer Kinship. Kinship is a community that supports each other, offers a safe space for those who need it, and also is respectful of each other's journey. Whether members are currently Seventh-day Adventists or no longer a part of the Adventist denomination, this is a safe place for all. I also believe that Kinship should make compassion a core value where we treat others the way we wish to be treated: with justice, equity, and respect. I also believe Kinship members need not allow the church to treat us with disrespect. Those of us who are out and comfortable with ourselves can show others that it's possible to have a healthy and whole life ►

► KINSHIP ELECTIONS 2013

being who we are. This is a message that our community needs and the church needs, too. I have been region 2 coordinator (mid-Atlantic states) since 1996. I served as Director of Women's Interests for many years and also served as Vice-president and am currently President.

Vice-president



Naveen Jonathan

I have been greatly blessed to have run and been elected for the position of Vice-president of Seventh-day Adventist Kinship International. I am running for a third term in office. Part of the work that I have done as Vice-president is to chair the Member Services Committee. I feel that I have done that well over the past four years and have a great team of members that work very hard to meet all of the areas of leadership and tasks that fall under the Member Services Committee. I have been able to oversee each committee member's tasks and projects and offer assistance or feedback if needed. I also have actively been involved in encouraging new leaders and chapters to emerge within the organization, while supporting those that currently exist. If reelected I intend to continue the work that Member Services has been actively involved with over the past four years. I will continue with the vision I have for Member Services in Kinship to support/maintain current leaders/chapters and look for opportunities for new leadership and new areas of activity in various regions/chapters around the world. I intend to continue to explore ways that the organization can attract/retain members who identify as LGBTI and are current or former Seventh-day Adventists.

Director of Church Relations



David Ferguson

I had planned on becoming a heart surgeon prior to going to Union College but felt a strong call to ministry during my first year of college. I served as Spiritual Vice-president and learned how to organize, including overseeing the production of an album of vesper hymns and choruses. I served as a singing evangelist for a number of evangelistic crusades both during and following seminary. After seminary, I pastored for thirteen years, including two large congregations and planting a new church. Subsequent to my resignation, I spent time coming to grips with my sexual orientation and began a second career as a financial planner and manager of over thirty brokers. Soon after coming out, I became involved with Kinship as a regional coordinator and encouraged Carrol Grady to begin a ministry to parents. I become the Church Relations Director and served in that capacity for twelve years with a one-year break. I have served as interim Director of Church Relations since October 2012 and have agreed to serve once again with the understanding that a team will be established to provide opportunities to mentor others who can soon take the leadership of Church Relations.

Director of Women's Interests (co-directors)



Debbie Hawthorn-Toop

My goals are to create a welcoming, loving, caring, supportive, and inclusive environment for women of all ages and to help promote Kinship and KinWomen. I am currently the co-chapter leader of Alberta, Canada, and have also recently been appointed the Western Canada regional coordinator. As chapter leaders, my co-leader and I have taken a very caring attitude, reaching out to the members in times of sickness and sorrow, letting them know we are there and we care. We have also planned get-togethers so we could all meet in person and get a better feel of togetherness and support from each other. There are also plans in the works to get a banner made for the pride parades to promote Kinship so others will learn about us and know where to turn for support. As Western Canada regional coordinator, I am working towards the same goals. I want to work on bringing a "small-town community" feeling to our region, even though geographically the areas are very large.

Betty O'Leary



Kinship has been welcoming and a great support to me the past three years as I came out to myself. The members are friendly, and with a variety of backgrounds and experiences they are also a wealth of knowledge. They are willing to share this knowledge with others to assist others who are going through the same things. I would like give back to Kinship by being a co-Director of Women's Interests to help other women find the welcoming environment that I have found in Kinship and KinWomen. I am also currently a co-coordinator for Region 1.



Path to Forgiveness:

Seven Life-Saving Steps

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Without forgiveness there is no future. —Desmond Tutu

Eyes downcast, hands jammed into jean pockets, he paced my office. Beyond the fact that he'd announced his name as Carlton, he had paced in silence. I thought about saying, "Just give me the bottom line." But then I realized his male brain would likely do that, anyway—when it was ready.

More pacing. More silence.

Finally he delivered a series of bottom lines:

"My wife left me five years ago."

"We'd been married nearly fifteen years."

"We did everything together, a perfect match in every way."

"I've taken complete responsibility for her leaving. I didn't give her enough time."

"I forgave her right away. Must have been caught in the counterfeit forgiveness trap, though, as nothing has changed for me."

A few pointed questions gave me some additional information. He was just starting to repeat how perfectly matched they were, when I held up my hand. He noticed the movement.

"There's an elephant in the room, Carlton. Do you see it?" I asked.

Carlton turned to me with a look of bewilderment.

I explained. "You were a 'perfect match in every way' and yet she didn't value the relationship enough to be monogamous. How many emotional and physical/sexual affairs did you say she had during your marriage?"

"Several," he replied.

"How many did you have?" I asked.

He shook his head.

"You did everything together and yet she left because you didn't give her enough time?"

He nodded. "That's the reason she gave when she left."

"And you've taken 'complete responsibility for her leaving'?" I asked.

"Yes," he said.

"It makes no sense," I said emphatically. "The reason is never the reason. I repeat: There's an elephant in the room. Do you see it?"

Carlton stopped pacing. "Oh, I get it," he said. However, the widening of his eyes suggested that this was a new concept for him.

"If the reason is never the reason, I wonder why she really left."

"I wouldn't know," I replied, "but there are a plethora of possibilities. For example:



"The baggage she brought to the marriage hooked into yours. As you began to work on your stuff and get a little healthier, the baggage no longer meshed.

"She had a history of sexual relationships with multiple partners. Over time, her brain may have found monogamy boring.

"She never genuinely loved you to begin with. The marriage may have been one of convenience for her or her rewards came when you performed in public, so no glue was developed to hold you together in long term.

"You were sexually attracted to her and the resulting hormonal tsunami kept you from clearly evaluating whether or not she had the characteristics that would bode well for a long-term monogamous relationship.

"*Ad infinitum.*"

"Probably all of them," Carlton replied with his first smile, albeit a wry smile.

"It's all water over the dam, now," I said. "While it's important to identify what happened and learn from it, the question is, where do you want to go from here?"

His answer was immediate. "I need tips on how to genuinely forgive. She 'moved on' the day she walked out. I'm trying to move on but haven't gotten very far. I mean, her leaving was a big loss for me."

"First," I said, "avoid confusing genuine forgiveness with loss and the need for grief recovery. They are two separate journeys, although they may overlap at times."

I suggested he read the article on my website entitled, "Loss Recovery—Grief Recovery Pyramid," which would give him tips on how to manage losses. Grief recovery is important. For everyone. Otherwise, you risk developing a slush fund of unresolved grief. Then, when another loss occurs—even a comparatively minor loss—that slush fund of unresolved grief can come rushing forth and trigger a tsunami of over reaction. That can not only be startling for everyone involved, but extremely unhelpful."

Carlton nodded.

"Second, the process for *moving on* differs for every brain because every brain is different." Naturally, the time frames differ, as well. Moving on usually needs to involve a clear choice. If the person is saying, "I'm trying to move on," the brain may not get in gear in the way it would if the person were saying "I am moving on now" or "I have moved on."

Carlton nodded again and said, "I am moving on. Now." I smiled.

"This brings us to the path to forgiveness," I said. "Genuine forgiveness and a healthier future go hand in glove. There are some specific strategies that you can use as a guide. Think of them as seven life-saving steps:"

Step 1: Identify what happened to you.

Acknowledge the event or situation simply, clearly, and honestly. Avoid pretending either that the event or situation was no big deal or making more of it than is warranted. Take responsibility for the contribution you made, if any. Never take responsibility for anything you did not contribute. Avoid blaming others in an effort to displace some of your discomfort onto someone else. Realize that your goal is to create a future that is better than your past. Start moving from a victim stance to that of a survivor, one day at a time. A *victim* stance allows what happened in the past to control your future. A *survivor* stance allows you to create a healthier future regardless of what happened in the past.

Step 2: Outline the consequences to you.

There may be primarily negative outcomes from the event or situation, but some positive outcomes are also possible. It is important to have as accurate and

balanced a picture as possible. Mentally step away from the situation and ask yourself how others might view the event, might perceive what had happened. This can help you look at the event or situation in a slightly different way. At times it can result in your identifying positive outcomes that you had missed. Genuine forgiveness acknowledges the consequences and faces the pain. It works through the process so that the pain no longer dominates your thinking and no longer triggers anger and thoughts of revenge.

Step 3: Make a decision to forgive.

Recognize the value of forgiveness to your life and health. Think of decisional forgiveness as a behavioral intention to resist an unforgiving stance and to respond differently toward a transgressor—in your mind, if not literally in person. State your behavioral intention to stop hanging on to an unforgiving stance and to mentally respond differently. In effect, it removes the enemy outpost in your head that has been staffed by the person who hurt you. Otherwise you'll live in the past and be held hostage to the person who caused you pain. Forgiveness neutralizes the power of the person in your past and allows you to move forward. This doesn't mean you choose to associate with the person, however. You may choose to be in the same room for short periods of time (e.g., at family gatherings if the person is a relative or at holiday gatherings if the person is a friend) or you may not. It's entirely up to you. In the same way, trust must be earned. Forgiving does not mean trusting injudiciously. You may never trust the person again. Again, it's entirely up to you.

Step 4: Embrace emotional forgiveness.

Think of emotional forgiveness as the replacement of negative unforgiving emotions with positive other-oriented emotions. Emotional forgiveness, which involves psycho-physiological changes, has more direct health and well-being consequences. If you have been harboring anger and resentment, replace those thoughts and emotions with positive emotions. While it has often been said that love is blind, so is anger. Emotional forgiveness is a process of altering your one-dimensional perspective into a more inclusive big-picture dimension. If you fail to forgive, the person who hurt you still holds you as an emotional captive. Forgiveness doesn't erase what happened or make up for it or even balance the score. It does keep you from spending the rest of your life with the person who did you wrong.

Step 5: Alter your personal perspective.

Your perspective reflects your brain's opinion. Forgiveness doesn't change what happened. Rather, it is designed to alter your perspective. It's the old 20:80 rule. Only 20% of the negative effect to your brain and body can be laid at the door of the event or situation. About 80% of the negative effect involves your personal perspective, i.e., the weight you give to what happened, the importance you place upon it. You may not be able to do anything about the 20%; you most cer-

tainly can do almost everything about the 80% because it involves your own brain's opinion and you can alter your opinion. Use whatever works in your life. For example, if you embrace Christian ethics and believe that the Deity loves everyone, then ask yourself how you can refuse to forgive someone whom God loves?

Step 6: Stop continual rehearsing.

When you rehearse, you tell your story again and again from your own perspective. You may rehearse to others; you may rehearse to yourself. Usually you include only the bad, sad, angry, and hurtful aspects. In the process, you may trigger the release of adrenalin (offering a momentary shot of energy) and, as adrenalin levels increase, so do dopamine levels, which help you feel better for a short period of time. Some people actually become addicted to the adrenalin and dopamine released during rehearsal. In addition, because the brain wants congruence, while you are rehearsing, your brain will search for other memories when you felt the same way: sad, angry, or hurt. This can begin to snowball until you really feel quite rotten.

Step 7: Develop a mindset of gratitude.

As Martin Luther King put it, "Forgiveness is not an act; it is a perpetual attitude." You can create a forgiveness mentality and hone the requisite skills to

change your thoughts from negative to positive. When recalling the event or situation (as you undoubtedly will), immediately focus on something for which to be grateful. It is physiologically impossible to be fearful and grateful at the same time. When an old memory crosses your conscious mind, you may need to take a moment and move through decisional and emotional forgiveness again. Then, embrace an attitude of gratitude.

"Do you have those seven steps written down anywhere?" asked Carlton. "I'd like to be sure I remember them all. This is doable."

I promised to send them in an e-mail. With a brief smile and handshake, he was gone, his steps definitely lighter than when he had arrived.

The bottom line? The path to forgiveness is never easy. It is, however, a prescription for health. Yours.

When we react to other people, we join their dance—and why dance with a person you don't like? Forgiveness allows you to stand on the side and watch them dance. You don't have to dance with them if you don't want to. You can dance the dance you enjoy with whomever you enjoy.

—Dick Tibbits ▼

You are Invited to our Fifth Annual Book and the Beach Mini - Kampmeeting September 19-22, 2013 - Nags Head, North Carolina!

Come join us for:

Wide-ranging book-related discussions on spiritual topics, morning worship full of singing, our now-annual dolphin watch, lighthouse visits, delicious meals, family reunions and new friends, and gorgeous ocean views.

Our handicap-accessible beach house has a third-floor balcony from which you can view the ocean waves and passing ships.

Cost for room, food, programs, and dolphin watch is \$ 150.00 per person.

For more information, you can contact Catherine at Region1@sdakinship.com or at 413 325-3648



We're looking forward to seeing you!!

Building Relationships:



By Michele O'Mara

Would you rather have security or adventure? How about predictability or surprise? Safety or danger? How about dependability or risk? Maybe you prefer reliability, or is it the unexpected you like?

These are some of the many contradictory experiences that couples everywhere are trying to reconcile as they negotiate the terms of their relationships. In her 19-minute TED talk, Esther Perel, author of *Mating in Captivity: Reconciling the Erotic and the Domestic* explores what she calls a "Crisis of Desire."

Through her research, Ms. Perel identified three conditions that help increase desire among long-term couples:

When there is physical distance (separateness), you have the ability to *imagine* yourself with your partner. This is an essential component to creating longing or desire. It is not necessary to desire what is always present, always available, always known, and literally within reach or contact.

When your partner is in his or her element, doing what he or she is passionate about, he or she is *radiant* and *self-sustaining*. From this comfortable distance (not so far they are out of reach, but not so close you cannot create a momentary elusiveness), the desire for your partner is enhanced.

When there is *novelty* or surprise, desire is in-

creased. Sometimes novelty is less about doing new things, and more about revealing some new part of yourself. Desire spikes when we are able to see a new, previously undiscovered aspect of our partner.

How can you use this information to increase desire in your own relationship? As I reflect on these three conditions described by Ms. Perel, which she attributes to sustained desire, it seems to me that the key is in #2.

If you pursue your passions and interests, if you are willing to step into the parts of your own life that infuse you with energy and aliveness, you will also achieve #1 (creating separateness) and #3 (surprise your partner with unexplored parts of yourself).

The single greatest thing I am aware of that you can do to increase desire in your relationship is to take interest in, and action toward, growing your passions. This may feel like a risk, like it may take you away from your partner, instead of closer to your partner. However, like attracts like: passion attracts passion. Passionate, capable, confident, independent, and authentic people are desirous. *But only*

always.

The question you need to ask yourself is, "Is what I am doing working?" If it is not, then it is time to consider a change. What's the worst thing that can happen if you pursue a passionate, confident, fulfilled, and joyous life?

"Sex," Ms. Perel explains, "is not something that you do; it is a place you go, a space you enter inside yourself and with another or others." One of the key points she makes in her TED talk is that **there is no room for neediness or caretaking in desire**. Some of the characteristics of a robust erotic life, according to Ms. Perel, are: imagination, playfulness, novelty, curiosity, and mystery. She draws a picture of wonder, of intrigue, of happiness and play.

What can you do today to grow your passion? What is something you've always wanted to do, but never allowed yourself to pursue? If you have trouble answering these questions, ask yourself instead, what are small things that bring me joy? Gather this list of joys and make it your intention to notice the things in life that increase your energy, that give you a little extra pep in your step, that make you smile and light up. That's where it begins. Whether your steps are big or small does not matter; just move your feet! ▼

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New Time Zone Chat on Kinship

We are happy to announce a new Kinship Chat that will be catering to those in the European/African Time Zones. The first chat will be on **June 10** from 6 to 8 pm Western European time (5 to 7 pm GMT; 7 to 9 pm Central European Time). Though this chat is especially aimed at members in the European and African time zones, everyone from another time zone is welcome to join in and it is open to all members, regardless of gender or orientation. Andrea Roth in Germany will be facilitating the chats and the primary language spoken will be English.

The topic of the first chat will be:

How do you define spirituality and what does this mean to you?

If you would like to join us on June 10, login to the members' area of www.sdakinship.org and click on **Live KinNet Chat!**

► **Enter the Chat Room.** Choose a name (no password required!) and then choose the **English chat room**. And if you are the first one to enter: don't leave! We will be with you soon! ▼



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Member of the Gay and Lesbian Press Association.

You are invited to our 8th Annual Vermont Mini-Kampmeeting!

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

This year we have the opportunity to have our Sabbath worship in an Adventist heritage church.

There will be the usual morning Prayer, Praise, Promise, and Pajamas worship; Sharing Circle; and unexpected surprises. Our focus is "Building Sanctuary."



Dates: 7–10 November ▽ See you then!

For more information, please feel welcome to contact Catherine at Region1@sdakinship.org or 413 325-3648.



European
Kinship Meeting 2013

Bem Venido!

Lisboa
Portugal
August 29
September 2

And holiday week from September 2 to 9

<http://www.sdakinship.org/en/events/icalrepeat.detail/2013/08/29/908/-/european-kinship-meeting-2013.html>

