

Let us introduce ourselves...

Welcome to 2010! What a great way to start the new year, with our first issue of our newsletter! We are BE Group, Bridge Evidence Group, an organization that seeks to evidence a bridge between the broader LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) and Christian communities. Bridge Evidence Group was founded April 2009 and has a four member board consisting of Greg Gough, Jeremy Bouma, Diane Hartig and Dr. Becky Kuhn. We are a diverse group of individuals that have come together around our experiences regarding tensions between the

broader LGBT and Christian communities. We want to establish a means of communication for ongoing activities and the business of our organization through this newsletter. We hope to include short, challenging articles from friends of BE Group, as well as comments and feedback from those of you who are willing to contribute your thoughts to the discussion. We look forward to sharing how we grow as an organization and as individuals and we look forward to hearing from you about your growth as you journey with us.

“When you judge someone you have no time to love them”

- Mother Teresa

“Judgment gets in the way of listening and truth and relationships.”

- Dr. Nancy McKay

Polarized Discussions

-Greg Gough

My name is Greg Gough and, along with other individuals, I founded Bridge Evidence Group in April 2009. The thought and passion for such an organization goes back further than that, probably to the time that I was making my own journey through issues of sexuality and Christian faith. Almost immediately, I discovered that an external, very polarized discussion emerged in my life and this made it rather difficult to be authentic with myself, with my church and with others. I feel that I have always been able to be authentic with God about any matters in my life and He certainly has provided for me and showed up in my life. However, as time carried on, questions of faith in God and relationship with God and church were made to be secondary to believing the right script

concerning my faith and sexuality. All of these formulas for change and methods for reform, with regard to my sexuality, became primary discussion topics. Discussions about the appropriate interpretation of scriptures and placing interpretations in the appropriate context became the most common conversations. I began to volunteer in pastoral care to the LGBT community and discovered story after story where individuals experienced the same things that I had. So many simply wanted a place where they could come to know God and have community with others that desired the same. Bridge Evidence Group desires to create these spaces for LGBT people. My hope is to create new stories where faith and relationship with God and others is primary.

Check out this church...

-Diane Hartig



"It's not my business to decide how good you are for me, how valuable you are, in what the world can see, only that you try to understand me and have the courage to love me for me."

-M. Ciccone
-S. Pettibone



There is a tradition among Christians of celebrating the Sabbath, a day of rest. Or at least, folks say it's supposed to be a day of rest. But you know traditions – they morph into various forms through time.

When Jesus walked the earth, he talked about the Sabbath. He said it had originally been made for man, and not the other way around. So you find Him over and over again acting in ways that some considered a violation of the Sabbath – crazy things like healing and letting his followers pick food to eat. Just a living, breathing illustration that man isn't supposed to be a servant of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is supposed to serve man, to be life-giving in the form of real rest.

Throughout the bible you find life addressed in a bunch of ways. God seems to be obsessed with life. Or maybe, more accurately, God seems to be obsessed with us.

This appears to be the kind of thinking behind why the evangelical Highlands Church in Denver has chosen to create space for LGBT people in ways not typical of an evangelical church. According to the Denver Post (Nov. 22, 2009), over a number of years Pastor Mark Tidd witnessed "the real lives of gay Christians who were persuaded that same-gender attraction was a disorder and genuinely tried to embrace celibacy or live as heterosexuals.

"There were devout Christians who tried this and found it spiritually and

"All manner of people who were not acceptable by the religious standards of the first century found the wide embrace of God in Jesus Christ."

psychologically crippling," Tidd said, "If homosexuality is against God, then abstinence ought to be life-giving. These people were not flourishing. The results were broken spirits, despair and depression."

Pastor Tidd found resolution in creating an inclusive space in Highlands Church. Said Tidd, "All manner of people who were not acceptable by the religious standards of the first century found the wide embrace of God in Jesus Christ."

While some will applaud and some will decry how Pastor Tidd responded to the needs of gay Christians in his church, the motivation for a move was out of an orientation towards life, towards rest, towards sabbath. So, while we may agree or disagree about the many facets of inclusion, keeping ourselves obsessed with life can be a good foundation on which to move forward when it comes to how we interact with each other in engaging with difficult concepts and realities.

Fourth Quarter 2009 Financial Statement

Total gifts:	\$1275.00
Total expenses:	\$1003.82
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Fund Balance:	\$271.18

Bridge Evidence Group is a 501(c)(3) organization that is committed to financial transparency and accountability.