

*"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*

## About putting first things first....

**-Greg Gough**

I recently listened to a sermon on homosexuality that triggered the thought in me, "Why do I feel so negative about myself, my orientation or even who I am, after listening to this?"

My experience regarding sermons, messages and action in the church surrounding homosexuality has left me with lots of negative perspectives and feelings regarding what God thinks of me and what the church thinks of me. And that leads to negative perspectives and feelings on what God thinks of the gay community and what the church thinks of the gay community. It took me some time to realize this – time, and some experience in a church setting that does not negatively frame homosexuality. I've noticed that I feel more welcome and accepted because

there is nothing negative that needs to be counteracted.

I don't believe it is ever the intent of a church to negatively frame a group like the gay community or negatively frame being gay, but sometimes when there is no positive framing it is nearly impossible for LGBT persons to feel welcome and accepted in a church community. I believe that we can all positively frame sexuality and orientation and talk out of living in blessing and life, rather than living out of law, condemnation and death. Any theological perspective, whether anti-gay or gay affirming, can give reason for someone to feel negative or positive about God, the church or even themselves. We should keep this in mind when these conversations and opportunities come up.

## Learning to listen...

**-Diane Hartig**

My name is Diane Hartig, and I serve as the Assistant Director of Bridge Evidence Group. Most of my life I had no contact with any gay people (that I knew of). In 2002, through a series of events that included the death of a former student, I began taking a long, hard look at relations between the church and the LGBT community, wanting to find that place that most reflected God's heart. I couldn't look at those relations without looking within, at my own attitudes and assumptions.

I found I had a lot to learn. That most of all I had to learn to listen - very carefully. I had to dispense with the

labels and assumptions that I had found so easy to use in identifying people, and to instead do the difficult work of trying to really hear and understand.

Bridge Evidence Group is part of the fruit of that listening and learning. It is my desire to see people relating to each other differently, in ways that bring life and blessing, rather than in narrowly defining others in ways that may make us feel more comfortable in preserving the distances we keep.

Christ did not keep distance. *That was, and is, and will be, his heart.*



## Karaoke Competition

On April 6, 2010 we began a Karaoke Competition in Grand Rapids, MI as a means to bring people from different communities together. BE Group is running the event, and it's been a great experience! We've been able to raise additional funds, as well as have many conversations with people about the work that we are doing and will do. If you are interested to know more about this, please get in touch with us!

## Walk The Divide

This summer we will be hosting a bridge walk in Grand Rapids, MI as a means of bringing people together and raising funds. This walk will provide an opportunity for people to connect as they walk and talk with each other, stopping at significant places throughout the walk and discussing both the things that divide and the things that bring together. The walk will culminate in a shared picnic meal at a local park.

We are really excited about this opportunity and would like to see lots of people join us! Please look for more information on this and get in touch with us if you'd like to know more. If you do not live near Grand Rapids, MI, that doesn't mean you can't participate. We would like to work with you to facilitate a walk in your community.

## T-Shirt ... Evidence

We would like to encourage donations toward the work that we do by providing a gift of a Bridge Evidence Group (BE Group) t-shirt for a minimum \$50 donation. We intend for the t-shirt to represent your commitment in relationship with others as being evidence of the bridge between the Christian and LGBT communities. Please get in touch with us regarding this opportunity! We have a limited supply of t-shirts.



## First Quarter 2010 Financial Statement

Previous balance	\$271.18
Total gifts:	\$1699.00
Total expenses:	\$858.35
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Fund Balance:	\$1111.83

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

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*"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

