



**“Hear, O Israel:
the Lord our God,
the Lord is one.”**



Digging in....shutting out.

- D. Hartig

What does a healthy commitment look like? What commitments do we hold that perhaps we should not hold so tightly?

Very early in my walk as a Christian, I attended a small “Jesus Only” church. Interesting place to start out. These, my brothers and sisters in Christ, were a group of people who were very committed to a perspective that one had to be water baptized, full immersion, in the name of Jesus (not Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and baptized in the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues, in order to be a Christian. As a result of that commitment to a perspective, lots of Christians were shut out.

Again - what commitments do we hold that perhaps we should not hold so tightly? What is the cost of those commitments? What are the relational costs? Who do we shut out? Who do we let in? And what happens as a result of this?

Through the ensuing years, I’ve heard many sermons in which “what is really being said here” (in scripture) was the heart of the message. Multiple preachers doing the same thing, insisting that “this is what is really being said”. I respect and appreciate diligence in checking historical, cultural and textual context, and often see this as simply revealing another layer of meaning or deepening understanding of that passage. But occasionally “what is really being said here” conflicts with another preacher’s “what is really being

said here”. And both preachers are equally committed to their perspective.

All of us are capable of embracing perspectives so tightly that we can’t allow anything else as a possibility. While I’ve used examples from within the church, the perspectives we hold so tightly may have to do with LGBTs, or politics, or the economy, or any other of a host of topics. It’s not wrong to be committed to a perspective. But what is involved in that commitment?

**Humility is vital to community.
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work necessary for
understanding.**

Humility often winds up taking a back seat to rightness. But humility is vital to community. Humility is willing to do the work necessary for understanding. Humility listens deeply, and avoids making assumptions. It acknowledges that we look at things through a particular lens. Humility says things like, “This is what I believe to be true, based on my best understanding of...” Humility says, “I could be wrong”, and is honest in that statement.

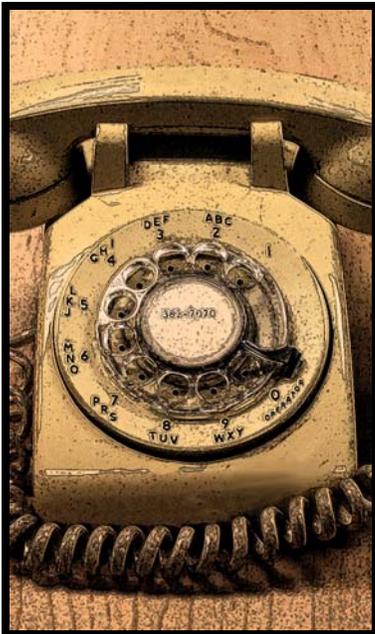
So, in the midst of your own commitments to certain perspectives, does humility thrive?

As time and people pass by

- G. Gough

"Force of habit, you could say. The way they talk you're talking away."

- S. Winwood, G. Fleming, and J. Hooker



At eighteen I was a terrified student that was just beginning my first year at Calvin College. I had not been away from home for very long periods of time and this certainly would be a change. I was also, decidedly, not honest with myself about my sexuality.

In February I took the opportunity to share on a panel of students and alumni from Calvin College about my experience as a student wrestling with sexuality. In the late nineties, the atmosphere across the country was much more hostile toward those identifying as other than straight and I remember this being impressed upon me. Much of my working out my identity was done in isolation, inside my head or occasionally on paper which I quickly crumbled and threw away.

Something I was able to take with me from my panel opportunity was an understanding of how important the role of community is in sorting out identity, in any regard. Other panelists shared about support they felt from others in the Calvin community as they were wrestling with their own sexual identity. I believe community has

played a vital role in helping LGBT folks actively work through tensions and difficulties they face daily. Community has a way of speaking value and importance to who you are as one of them. It's not removed and at a distance.

**"Now there's no point in placing the blame
And you should know I suffer the same
If I lose you
My heart will be broken"**

- M. Ciccone & P. Leonard

One thing I hope to leave to this world is a deeper understanding of how each of us in a community can speak to one another about who we are, because we are. It's not about difference and separation, but about the human experience, trials and tribulation. What might be necessary for someone to find is hidden in another that has been put there by God.

Could we ask you for financial support?

If you're reading this, you may have some interest in the conversation between the LGBT and Christian communities. In light of this interest, we'd like to ask you to contribute financially to Bridge Evidence Group's efforts to improve this conversation. Much of our work is dependent on contributions. We are able to do more or less according to the financial support we receive. If you would like to join in this effort, you can make contributions securely, online via Paypal, from our website.

"Well I feel like they're talking in a language I don't speak, and they're talking it to me."

- Coldplay

First Quarter 2012 Financial Statement

Previous balance	\$2546.73
Total gifts:	\$1150.00
Total expenses:	\$446.30
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Fund Balance:	\$3250.43

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