



Have you ever been asked a statement?

Have you ever been asked a statement? I mean the kind of question that presupposes and assumes several things. The kind of question used by the asker to decide which camp you belong in. The kind of question that is really a statement about what the asker thinks about you. The kind of question that is not a question at all. A handful of times I have found myself in the position of wanting to leave the room or change the subject when a question like this arises.

A large part of the reason I have found this troubling is because I believe a statement disguised as a question does not allow curiosity to reign between the parties involved. The genuine desire to know what is truly on someone's heart goes missing. When the people involved miss each other they can both leave the exchange feeling short changed and frustrated that they did not get what they sought out.

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The asking party, hoping to uncover where someone truly stands, can end up very dissatisfied and even dismissed. They may begin to assume more out of the lack of answer or information given. The other party can end up feeling defensive and pushed in a corner. They may begin to wonder what "agenda" the asker is promoting. Neither party creates the space for vulnerability and humility.

I believe it is in these spaces that the most work can be done between people that disagree, or are perceived to disagree. On the one hand you have the assumption that there is a disagreement in the first place, which can bring further divide between parties, parties that further employ other people in their campaign for support. These groups can then, unintentionally, become dismissive of entire groups of people that share an experience or circumstance. Feeling disenfranchised causes a number of responses that often push people apart even further, broadening the divide. The question is how can we create space to disallow this dynamic? How can we help others understand that we truly desire to know them as human?



“Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

—Romans 13:10



“ ‘Cause there’s so much good in the worst of us, so much bad in the best of us, it never makes sense for any of us to criticize the rest of us. We’ll just find what we’re looking for.”

A. Grant and M. Smith

Where have we been....

- Greg and Diane

...and what have we been doing?

This year we had several opportunities to work with organizations that requested a “next step” in the dynamic of understanding how to be better at talking across disagreement and pursuing a deeper understanding of people that they do not know very well. We find that people are increasingly interested in improving interactions, and seek us out as they look for ways to do this well.

We helped people in these organizations work toward understanding environments that LGBTQ youth find themselves in at home and at school. We facilitated becoming more aware of what we each contribute to an interaction with others. We strove to help create a healthier framework for development for young people who identify as LGBTQ.

Additionally, we have been able to

create space for good conversation about the diversity of perspectives on sexuality within Christianity and how we can find good common ground in order to build relationship and promote understanding.

How can you improve the conversation?

Discussion around how groups of people have interacted with scripture, and how they have developed various understandings and interpretations, has been of particular interest, and seen as beneficial for those participating.

All this has been challenging for audiences in a positive way. We hope to continue to bring the next steps necessary as time goes on.

For those who want things to be better

If you're reading this, you may have some interest in improving the conversation between the LGBT and Christian communities. We have greatly appreciated the ongoing financial contributions many of you have made and continue to make to Bridge Evidence Group's efforts. Much of our work is dependent on contributions. We are able to do more or less according to the financial support we receive. Please join in this effort. You can make contributions securely online via PayPal from our website. Or send your check or money order via US mail to: Bridge Evidence Group, PO Box 888160, Grand Rapids, MI 49588.

2nd Quarter 2015 to 1st Quarter 2017 financial statement

Previous balance	\$5167.52
Total gifts:	\$9301.56
Total expenses:	\$8394.86
Fund Balance:	\$6074.22

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