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An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at Caromont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina

Stephen Allen Lemons
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**AN EXPERIMENT IN CIVIL DIALOGUE IN A CLINICAL PASTORAL
EDUCATION GROUP AT CAROMONT REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER,
GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA**

**A PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY
GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY
BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY**

**BY
STEPHEN ALLEN LEMONS**

MAY 9, 2015

APPROVAL FORM

AN EXPERIMENT IN CIVIL DIALOGUE IN A CLINICAL PASTORAL
EDUCATION GROUP AT CAROMONT REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER,
GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA

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ABSTRACT

An Experiment in Civil Dialogue... was designed to create a setting for civil dialogue concerning homosexuality and Christian faith. The seven-week process involved eight daylong sessions with eight Clinical Pastoral Education students. Sessions focused on a study of biblical passages regarding homosexuality. Passages were examined from a traditional and progressive viewpoint. Six guests presented from a traditional or progressive viewpoint. Participants wrote verbatims and theological integration papers focusing on pastoral care to LGBT persons/families. Research methods included focus and control group and quantitative-qualitative research. Interviews, surveys and written reflections attest that the group maintained civil dialogue throughout the process. The group came to better understand and appreciate those who held views on homosexuality that were different from their own. The participants recommended using a similar form of group process in churches.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

a. Statement of Need

Several concerns prompted this ministry project. There is a tremendous need for the theological education of clergy concerning the issues of sexuality the religious community faces today.¹ Pastors are not generally prepared to deal with these complicated ethical concerns. Few seminaries offer courses in sexuality.²

During 2013-2014 extraordinary new developments related to the emerging individual and legal rights associated with the homosexual community have taken place. The US Supreme Court overturned the federal government's definition of marriage as only describing a marriage existing between one man and one woman.³ The military began offering spousal benefits to same sex couples.⁴ By the end of 2014, gay marriage was legal in a total of thirty-six states plus Washington, D.C.⁵ Public opinion has changed dramatically concerning acceptance of homosexuality and gay marriage and these developments are contributing significantly to the need for religious groups that remain

¹ PBS, *Seminaries and Sex*. PBS. March 5, 2010, accessed November 20, 2013, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2010/03/05/march-5-2010-seminaries-and-sex/5818/>.

² Martin Marty, *Sex and Seminaries*. *Sightings, Divinity School at the University of Chicago Publications*, January 12, 2009, accessed November 19, 2013, http://divinity.uchicago.edu/martycenter/publications/sightings/archive_2009/0112.shtml.

³ Adam Liptak, *Supreme Court Bolsters Gay Marriage With Two Major Rulings*. "New York Times", June 27, 2013, accessed October 15, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/27/us/politics/supreme-court-gay-marriage.html>

⁴ Emmarie Hutteman, *Gay Spouses of Members of Military Get Benefits*, *New York Times*, August 14, 2013, accessed August 16, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/15/us/politics/gay-spouses-of-members-of-military-get-benefits.html>.

⁵ British Broadcasting Company (BBC), "How Legal Tide Turned On Same-Sex Marriage in the US," *British Broadcasting Company*, January 16, 2015, accessed January 21, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-21943292>.

opposed to gay marriage to earnestly review their positions on the subject. The United Methodist Church (UMC) has been embroiled in controversy as is observed by the UMC of Pennsylvania having fired and defrocked Rev. Frank Schaefer for performing a same sex wedding for his own son.⁶ The Reverend Dr. Thomas Ogletree, retired Dean of the Yale Divinity School and an ordained UMC Minister is facing denominational charges for performing a same sex marriage service for his son.⁷ UMC groups have formed in support of these ministers, others uphold what they see as traditional marriage.

The current change in public opinion toward acceptance of gay marriage has been difficult for evangelicals who do not support same sex marriage. These evangelicals and Conservative Catholics observe the wider culture move in a more liberal direction and they struggle with how to adjust in the midst of these dramatic changes in attitude.

Pastoral caregivers often neglect compassionate ministry to individuals and families struggling with issues regarding homosexuality. Pastors may be fearful, hesitant and lack confidence in providing pastoral care in these situations. Yet many churches have families who are struggling with how to relate to a child, grandchild, sibling, niece or nephew who is gay. This project attempted to facilitate a deepening understanding of these issues on the part of the participants. It helped the participants in seeing each person as a sexual being and enabled them to provide pastoral care to families and individuals

⁶ Laurie Goodstein, Defrocking of Minister Widens Split Over Gays, *New York Times*, December 20, 2013, accessed December 20, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/20/us/methodist-pastordefrocked-over-gay-marriage-service.html>.

⁷ Sharon Otterman, Caught in Methodism Split Over Same Sex Marriage, *New York Times*, May 6, 2013, accessed December 9, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/06/nyregion/caught-in-methodisms-split-over-same-sex-marriage.html?pagewanted=all>.

struggling with issues of sexuality. Hospital pastoral care visits provided the participants with opportunities to provide care in diverse ecumenical settings.

b. PROJECT SETTING

The setting for this project was the Spiritual Care Department of CaroMont Regional Medical Center (CRMC) in Gastonia, North Carolina where the researcher serves as the Director of Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). CRMC is a four-hundred-bed hospital that provides health services for a diversity of health needs. These services include Heart, Oncology, Psychiatry and Trauma care. The Spiritual Care Department's goal is to provide care for the spiritual needs of patients, families and staff. This project was incorporated into the curriculum of a CPE Unit during the Fall of 2014.

c. PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this project was to design and implement a curriculum for educating CPE Interns concerning the different biblical and theological views regarding homosexuality. An important element in making this goal achievable was to create: a safe environment for the honest sharing of ideas and perspectives, a sacred place where the expectation of mutuality and hospitality are nurtured, and an environment in which differing opinions are valued as being important for our understanding of one another. Specific outcomes included: group engagement in civil and honest discussion, and a deeper, respectful understanding of those who hold to a different biblical and theological understanding of homosexuality.

d. LITERATURE AND RESOURCE REVIEW

i. Organizational Expertise

CRMC is accredited by the Joint Commission⁸ (The primary accrediting agency for healthcare organizations). The Joint Commission requires their accredited institutions hire professional staff that are fully certified in their particular fields. CRMC has achieved the elite designation of a Magnet⁹ hospital; only six percent of the hospitals in the nation have achieved this status. Additionally, CRMC has been rated among the nation's top 100 hospitals for the last four years.¹⁰

The same standard of expertise required for all nurses and physicians is also required for the staff of the Spiritual Care Department at CRMC. Credentialing requirements for the Director of Spiritual Care and Clinical Pastoral Education includes the Masters of Divinity Degree, ordination and endorsement from a recognized religious body, full certification as a CPE Supervisor through the Association of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE)¹¹ and National Board Certification as a Chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains (APC).¹²

⁸ "The Joint Commission," January 21, 2014, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.jointcommission.org/>.

⁹ "American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)," January 21, 2014, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/Magnet.aspx>.

¹⁰ "100 Top Hospital Is in Your Community," CaroMont Regional Medical Center, February 27, 2013, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.caromonthhealth.org/press-release/100-top-hospital-community/>.

¹¹ "ACPE" The Association of Clinical Pastoral Education, January 21, 2014, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.acpe.edu/>.

¹² "APC the Association of Professional Chaplains," January 21, 2014, accessed January 21, 2014, <http://www.professionalchaplains.org/>.

ii. Physical Resources

The established program of Clinical Pastoral Education at CRMC provided adequate resources for conducting this project. Necessary components for an effective program such as financial budgeting, space and time support for the program were in place. The focus group that participated in this study was assembled through the normal recruitment and screening operation for the CPE program.

iii. Theological Resources

There were no shortages of published resources for conducting this project. Much has been written on the connection between spirituality and sexuality. The same is true for literature focused on Christian faith and homosexuality and other Gay, Lesbian, Bi-Sexual, Transgendered (LGBT) issues. These publications are written from a variety of theological perspectives. For example, the bibliography includes resources written by scholars holding to a more traditional view such as: the late Stan Grenz, former Professor of Theology and Ethics at Regent College; Robert Gagnon, Associate Professor of New Testament at Pittsburg Theological Seminary; and Richard Mouw, Theologian and former President of Fuller Theological Seminary. Scholars holding to a more progressive view include well-respected academics such as: James Nelson, Retired Professor of Christian Ethics at United Theological Seminary; the late Walter Wink, Retired Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary; and Dan Via, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Duke University Divinity School. My goal was to choose resources for class discussions from both sides of the debate.

In researching library databases this researcher was unable to find a D.Min or Ph.D. dissertation dedicated to the research that is discussed in this paper. Previous

projects/dissertations have addressed similar aspects of the issues and goals undertaken in this project. Three dissertations that are similar to this project are summarized below.

Notably, each of the dissertations focuses on a particular religious group. The first focuses on the Presbyterian (PCUSA) church.¹³ The second focuses on the conflict with the Episcopal Church;¹⁴ the third focuses on the conflict within the wider Protestant Church.¹⁵ Two of the three dissertations focus on qualitative research involving in-depth interviews of clergypersons. This project incorporated similar approaches in gathering research; however, the subject matter, study, and outcomes are unique.

¹³ Erwin Barron, "The Bible Tells Me So? Scripture and Experience as Sources of Authority in Debates Over Homosexuality in the Presbyterian Church" (PhD diss., The Graduate Theological Union, 2005), 1, accessed January 21, 2014, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

The researcher addressed the ongoing debate occurring in the Presbyterian (PCUSA) Church concerning homosexuality by studying two churches on opposite sides of the debate. His conclusion stated that the PCUSA Church should elevate experience over scripture as a source for ethical reasoning.

¹⁴ Daphne Estwick, "Learning to Resolve Conflicts Within the Episcopal Church: Strategies Employed by Clergy to Reconcile Differences Over Homosexuality" (D.Ed. diss., Columbia University, 2010), 1, accessed January 21, 2014, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

This study focused on how clergy members have resolved conflicts related to homosexuality within their perspective congregations. The researcher did qualitative research focusing on sixteen Episcopal Clergypersons and completed in-depth interviews and documentary analysis. The research concluded that most participants resolved conflict within the congregation working individually with parishioners. Another finding was that when the conflicted parishioner had a close relationship with a homosexual this had a positive effect on the individual's ability to resolve the conflict. A recommendation is made to educators of seminarians to provide the students with basic tools to resolve such conflicts in the parish.

¹⁵ Richard Smith, "Validating Beliefs: Liberal and Conservative Protestant Views of Sexual Morality in America." (PhD diss., Temple University, 2009), 1, accessed January 21, 2014, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

Smith's qualitative research focused on Protestant clergy and authors attempts to validate their beliefs about sexual and morality issues in their conversations with others. The researcher completed twenty in-depth interviews¹⁵ and documentary analysis. The researcher found that authors and clergypersons use various forms of validating their beliefs in addition to scripture and are greatly influenced by their own personal biases and views of gender.

CHAPTER TWO

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

An environment of safety, trust and openness was created for a small group of eight clergypersons to engage in civil dialogue and discuss the topic of homosexuality and Christian faith. As a result, the participants gained a deeper understanding and respect for the other's viewpoint.

This project involved an intensive seven-week CPE process involving eight CPE students who had been accepted into the Fall 2014 CPE program at CRMC. Of the eight students, four were Southern Baptist, two were United Methodist, one was Episcopal and one was Lutheran. Four were female; three were African American; five were Euro-American. These eight CPE students formed the focus group for the project.

Nine local pastors made up the control group for the study. The researcher met with each pastor once for a two-hour one-on-one interview and survey analysis. The local pastors represented seven different Protestant denominations. Of the nine, four were female; three were African American; six were Euro-American.

a. PROJECT CURRICULUM

The focus group met weekly for a seminar focused on Homosexuality and Christian Faith. The typical seminar day was comprised of chapel, verbatim seminar, reading seminars, seminar on Homosexuality and the Bible, Guest Lecturer, and an Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR). Table 2.1 below describes the curriculum that was used during the seven-week group process.

Table 2.1 Curriculum

**AN EXPERIMENT IN CIVIL DIALOGUE IN A CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION
GROUP AT CAROMONT REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, GASTONIA,
NORTH CAROLINA - Education Curriculum**

Week One:

Day 1: October 8, 2014

- Retreat: The first daylong session involved an off-campus retreat. The group met at the Wesley Center of First United Methodist Church, Gastonia, NC. The purpose of the retreat was for the group to form in a more relaxed setting with the hope of facilitating group cohesiveness. The following was the schedule that was followed:
 - Group forms – breakfast together.
 - Meditation, Guided Prayer Experience, and conversations of response. The meditation focused on The Song of Solomon 2:8-13, a passage of scripture dealing with the theme of sexuality. This passage communicates the deep longing that exists within each of us for communion with another – to both know and be known by that person. We are reminded in these words that we have been created as sexual beings.
 - Telling our Stories. Each participant was asked ahead of time to bring three symbols to the retreat. Each symbol was to be selected to represent who they are as a human being created in the image of God. One symbol was to represent the person's personal identity, one symbol represented the person's identity as a pastor and the third symbol represented the person's identity as a sexual being. Each person was allowed fifteen minutes to tell their stories and five minutes feedback from the group.
 - Sharing a Meal Together.
 - Overview of the curriculum for the next seven weeks. Debriefing

Day Two: October 9, 2014

- Chapel service led by group member.
- Clinical Verbatim, Theological Reflection Seminar led by group member.
- Didactic: "Human Beings Created in the Image of God" – Stephen Lemons
- Reading Seminar: Nelson (pages 8-37); Grenz (intro-Chapter1). Facilitated by two group members.
- Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Martha Baker (progressive).
- Guest Speaker Presentation: Reverend Baker
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

Week Two: October 23

- Chapel service led by group member.
- Clinical Verbatim, Theological Reflection Seminar led by group member.
- Didactic: "The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: Genesis 19:1-38 and Judges 19." – Stephen Lemons
- Reading Seminar: Nelson (Chapter 3); Grenz (Chapter 2); Wink (Preface and Intro). Facilitated by group members.
- Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Dr. Rit Varriale (traditional).
- Guest Speaker Presentation: Dr. Varriale
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

Week Three: October 30, 2014:

Mid Unit Evaluations: All Day event held off campus. See Appendix 2.

Week Four: Thursday November 6, 2014

- Chapel service led by group member.
- Clinical Verbatim, Theological Reflection Seminar led by group member.
- Didactic: "The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: Leviticus 18:22; 20:13." – Stephen Lemons
- Reading Seminar: Nelson (Chapter 4); Grenz (Chapter 3); Wink (Chapter 1 and 4). Facilitated by group members.
- Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Dr. Kent Blevins (progressive).
- Guest Speaker Presentation: Dr. Blevins.
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

Week Five: November 13, 2014

- Chapel service led by group member.
- Clinical Verbatim, Theological Reflection Seminar led by group member.
- Didactic: "The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: Romans 1:26-27." – Stephen Lemons
- Reading Seminar: Nelson (Chapter 5); Grenz (Chapter 4); Wink (Chapter 3 and 5). Facilitated by group members.
- Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Cody Sanders (progressive).
- Guest Speaker Presentation: Reverend Sanders.
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

Week Six: November 20, 2014

- Chapel service led by group member.
- Clinical Verbatim, Theological Reflection Seminar led by group member.
- Didactic: "The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10." – Stephen Lemons
- Reading Seminar: Nelson (Chapter 8 and 9); Grenz (Chapter 5); Wink (Chapter 7 and 11). Facilitated by group members.
- Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Joe Bell (traditional).
- Guest Speaker Presentation: Reverend Bell.
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

Week Seven: December 4, 2014

- Chapel service led by group member.
- Clinical Verbatim, Theological Reflection Seminar led by group member.
- Didactic: "The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: "Jesus Silence and it's Significance." – Stephen Lemons
- Reading Seminar: Nelson (Chapter 10 and Epilogue); Grenz (Chapter 6 and Epilogue); Wink (Chapter 13 and 16). Facilitated by group members.
- Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Jonathan Schnibben (traditional).
- Guest Speaker Presentation: Reverend Schnibben.
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

Week Eight:

Day 1: December 10, 2014 - CPE Final Evaluations off campus all day.

Day 2: December 11, 2014 – Exit Interviews and CPE Graduation

b. SEMINAR DESCRIPTIONS

Retreat

On October 8, 2014 the seven-week group process began with a retreat held at the Wesley Center of Gastonia First United Methodist Church. The purpose of the retreat was group formation. Following breakfast, the group leader led a guided meditation from the Song of Solomon that focused on sexuality as God's creation. A large portion of the day was spent sharing stories with one another. This was accomplished through each person using symbols to talk about one's personal, pastoral and sexual identity. The curriculum for the seven-week group process was discussed with the group. The curriculum handout and retreat schedule are found in Appendix 2.

Weekly Chapel Services

Each weekly meeting began with a 15-20 minute chapel service in the hospital chapel. A different participant led the service each week and included prayers for the patients, families and staff of the hospital. Each student was required to present a biblical based homily dealing with some aspect of sexuality. The subject matter dealt with topics such as love, sexual relationships, and intimacy with God. After the service, participants offered critical feedback to the leader concerning how each experienced the service.

Clinical Verbatim/Theological Integration Seminar

Students prepared weekly verbatim or theological integration reflections of a visit made to patients, family, staff or parishioners. Of the required verbatims/theological integrations papers, two dealt with the subject of caring for LGBT persons. Each week

one student presented his/her write-up to the group for feedback. A detailed description of what was required for the verbatim/theological paper is found in appendix 2.

Homosexuality and the Bible Seminar

Each meeting included a one-hour seminar looking at the six debated biblical passages regarding homosexuality led by the Researcher. The materials used in the seminars were taken from the biblical/theological treatment of the passages found in chapter three. Each passage was examined from a traditional and progressive perspective.

Reading Seminar

Three books were read during the seven-week group process. A weekly reading seminar was facilitated by a group member on a rotating basis. These books included *Embodiment* by James Nelson (progressive), *Welcoming but not Affirming* by Stan Grenz (traditional) and readings from *Homosexuality and Christianity* by Walter Wink (progressive). Participants facilitated group discussion on the assigned chapters.

Guest Speaker Presentations

Six guest speakers were invited during the seven-week process to present a one and a half hour presentation on homosexuality and Christian faith. Three presented a traditional view (Varriale, Bell and Schnibben) and three presented a progressive view (Baker, Blevins and Sanders). All six individuals presented biblical/theological arguments from their own viewpoint. All of the presentations took on a didactic approach allowing opportunities for dialogue with the presenter. Each presenter also shared the lunch meal with the group allowing more opportunity for dialogue.

Interpersonal Relationships Group Seminar (IPR)

The IPR group process was used in the weekly group meetings as the final seminar of the day. An hour-and-a-half was allowed for each. A full description of the seminar is found in appendix 2. This seminar was different from all of the others; the group did not have a pre-established subject for discussion; topics were introduced by the group participants. The general goal for this group was that members express their feelings honestly and openly sharing their experiences and challenges of self and others. It was an appropriate place for asking for clarification, offering affirmation and appropriate confrontation of group members. This session was important for debriefing and encouraging civil dialogue within the group.

c. MEANS OF EVALUATION

The evaluation process for this project utilized a qualitative and quantitative approach. A major focus of measurement for this project was to observe what, if any, transformation¹⁶ occurred on the part of the participants. The observation followed a two-part process as outlined in Carl Savage and William Presnell's book, Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Approach for Faith Communities.¹⁷ The state of context prior to and at the conclusion of the CPE unit was compared. "In a sense, this part of the evaluation is only a measurement process. Has there been change in activity, habits, stories told, etc.?"¹⁸ As footnoted earlier below, the definition of transformation that will be used in this project is a marked change in activity, habits, stories told, character, and

¹⁶ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000). The definition from this dictionary expresses my understanding of transformation – "A marked change, in appearance or character, usually for the better."

¹⁷ Carl E. Savage and William B. Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oates Institute, 2008), 124-29.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

relationships with the understanding that observing transformation results in not an absolute means of measurement.

A second instrument of evaluation used for this project was an interview questionnaire (See Appendix 1). Each person in the focus and control groups was interviewed individually. Each participant self-identified his/her theological position as traditional or progressive. The interview was comprised of twenty open-ended narrative type questions, which was collated for analysis and report. Questions were based on the curriculum that was used during the seven-weeks of group meetings. The twenty questions were designed to determine how each person interprets the Bible regarding sexuality. Each participant elaborated on his/her views. The interviewer asked follow-up questions for the purpose of clarity and understanding.

Thirdly, Likert scale measurement surveys were administered to the control and focus group (Appendix 1) before the seven-week group process began. This instrument provided a benchmark measurement of biblical/theological knowledge concerning the discussion of homosexuality and Christian faith. It also measured individual anxiety levels concerning discussing homosexuality and faith with those with differing viewpoints. Two post curriculum instruments (Appendix 1) utilizing a Likert scale were given to the focus group to measure any changes in attitude and beliefs after completing the seven-week process.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

a. INTRODUCTION

This project was an experiment in civil dialogue focused on homosexuality and Christian faith. The following pages address a theological/biblical understanding of both. This section begins in looking at the theological and biblical underpinnings of civil dialogue. Examples of civil dialogue are found throughout the Bible. Two passages will be examined closely: one from the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 18) and one from the early church (Acts 15). Finally, we will examine a brief history of civil dialogue in the history of the Christian Church.

Next, we turn to a biblical/theological understanding of homosexuality with the examination of six passages from the Bible commonly used by traditional Christians to condemn homosexuality. We will look at each passage from both a traditional and a progressive Christian viewpoint.

b. A BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF CIVIL DIALOGUE

By definition the word “civil” means, “polite but not friendly, only as polite as a person needs not to be rude.”¹⁹ The approach described in this paper has included intensity and passion within the realm of being civil. As Richard Mouw stated, “If I am going to be a more civil person, it cannot be because I have learned to ignore my convictions.”²⁰ Mouw proposes the term “convicted civility” to describe the combining of

¹⁹ “,” Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. “civil,” accessed December 10, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dialogue>.

²⁰ Richard J. Mouw, *Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 1992), 11.

a civil outlook with a passionate intensity about our convictions.²¹ This term worked well for what was attempted in this project.

Forms of the word dialogue are found in the New Testament and the Septuagint. The Greek word **διαλέγομαι** (dialegomai) is used in Acts 17:4 to describe the Apostle Paul's "arguing" (NRSV) with the Jews in the synagogue concerning the Sabbath. A fuller sense of the use of the word **διαλέγομαι** is found in its use in the ancient Greek and Hellenistic world. In this setting the word dialogue meant to "balance accounts, to ponder, to discuss and to hold conversation."²²

The word "dialogue" at its most basic meaning is defined as a "conversation between two or more people".²³ The first known usage of the English word dialogue dates back to the thirteenth century. The word originates from the Greek word **διάλογος** (dialogos), which combines the Greek words **διά** (diá) meaning "through" and **λόγος** (lógos) meaning "word, speech, oration, discourse".²⁴ The literal understanding of the original Greek word **διάλογος** meaning "through word" is significant. Indeed it is through words shared between individual and groups that new understanding occurs.

The late Reuel Howe was an Episcopal Clergyman and Professor of Pastoral Theology at Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia. He provides an excellent expanded definition of the word dialogue in his classic book, The Miracle of Dialogue. He defines dialogue as "that address and response between persons in which

²¹ Ibid. 12.

²² Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 155-56.

²³ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, s.v. "dialogue," accessed December 10, 2014, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dialogue>.

²⁴ Ibid.

there is a flow of meaning between them in spite of all the obstacles that normally would block the relationship.”²⁵ He continues, “It is that interaction between persons in which one of them seeks to give himself as he is to the other as the other is.”²⁶ This kind of exchange, in the midst of mutual respect was a goal of this project.

Ruel Howe begins his book, The Miracle of Dialogue with these words:

Every man is a potential adversary, even those whom we love. Only through dialogue are we saved from this enmity toward one another. Dialogue is to love, what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born. But dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring a relationship into being, and it can bring into being once again a relationship that has died.²⁷

As the title of Howe’s book indicates, authentic dialogue is a miracle. When a group commits itself to civil dialogue, the miracle of authentic community is a possibility. Authentic community can occur when there is respect, trust, and openness present on the part of all participants. In such a setting, honest dialogue may result in spiritual growth on the part of all within the community. The Quaker, Parker Palmer beautifully describes such a community in his book, To Know as We are Known.²⁸

i. Civil Dialogue in the Bible

The phrase “civil dialogue” is not found in the Bible, though the Bible is filled with teachings and examples of civil dialogue. Civil dialogue is, in fact, one of the central teachings of the Bible. The Old Testament begins with the creation stories that describe God’s dialogue with Adam, Eve and Cain. In these stories it is God who initiates

²⁵ Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Winston Pr, 1963), 37.

²⁶ Ibid., 37.

²⁷ Ibid., 3.

²⁸ Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983).

dialogue. In the creation stories, one of the reasons humans fail is because of their unwillingness to initiate dialogue with God. The theme of dialogue with God continues in stories of Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, and the prophets among others. The writer of the Gospel of John begins the Gospel with the words, “In the beginning was the Word (Λόγος – logos) and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). The message is conveyed that Jesus is the word – the very expression of God.

The Bible contains stories of God’s desire for God’s will to be communicated through dialogue. This is shown powerfully through the Old Testament. Consider Moses’ conversations with the Children of Israel and the example of the prophets communicating God’s will through human interaction. The Book of Proverbs is filled with verses that deal with the importance of wise speech and the danger of foolish talk. Proverbs 11:11 states, “By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.” This verse addresses the power of words for good or bad.

Similar examples are found in the New Testament: Jesus’ conversations with Nicodemus and the woman at the well are examples of God’s desire to communicate through human interaction. The Apostle Paul uses verbal and written communication as a way of starting new churches, dealing with church conflict and leading Christians toward spiritual growth. One theme in the Book of James is the importance of good and faithful speech and a discussion of how hard it is to achieve.²⁹

Two passages from the New Testament are ideal for a closer look at the subject of civil discourse in the Bible. In the first passage (Matthew 18:15-20), Jesus teaches his disciples about the importance of civil dialogue in dealing with conflicts among his

²⁹ See chapter 3 in the book of James. In which the author discusses the difficulty of controlling one’s speech and how speech may be used for positive or negative results.

followers. The second passage (Acts 15) is a lesson from the early church and how civil dialogue is used to settle a theological dispute.

ii. Matthew 18:15-20: A Lesson in Civil Dialogue from the Teachings of Jesus

¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18:15-20)

An introductory note is important concerning Matthew 18:15. While the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) includes the phrase “against you” (ἐἰς σέ - eis se), some of the oldest manuscripts including Sinaiticus (ℵ) and Vaticanus (B) do not include the phrase. It is not included in any of the patristic quotations.³⁰ Eugene Boring’s commentary on Matthew states, “Good arguments can be made for inclusion and omission.”³¹ There is a significant change of meaning when the phrase ἐἰς σέ is omitted. Omitting the phrase broadens Jesus’ instructions on how Jesus’ disciples are to respond to sin in general and not simply when someone is sinned against. In the treatment of this passage, this researcher will focus on the passage as translated by the NRSV translators.

Jesus first instructs the injured party to take the initiative and go to the person who perpetrated the injury. This is to be a one-on-one conversation with the hope of

³⁰ Eugene Boring, “Introduction, Commentary and Reflections on the Gospel of Matthew.” *The New Interpreter’s Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, Vol. VIII. Edited by Leander Keck, Bruce Burch, David Peterson and John Collins. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994-2004), 8:378.

³¹ Ibid., 378.

settling the issue. If that does not work, the injured party is to take one or two others as witnesses to once again have a conversation about the injury with the goal being reconciliation between the two persons.

Jesus' teaching in this passage has much to say about the importance of civil dialogue in settling disputes among individuals. When there is conflict/hurt, the follower of Jesus is to be pro-active and initiate a process of reconciliation. The pathway to this reconciliation is through conversation. Jesus' instructions emphasize the principles of civil dialogue. It is to be a private conversation as to not embarrass either party. It is to be an open and honest exchange between both individuals. The meeting is to entail conversation and listening, basic elements of dialogue.

Jesus proposes a contingency plan in case the first attempt does not work: "But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you" (18:16a). "What is envisaged is not a court of law, for the one or two others are not witnesses to the offense, but to the willingness or unwillingness of the offender to be reconciled."³² While this is a protective action, it is a message to not give up on the process of civil dialogue. In case this step doesn't work, take the next step and involve the church, says Jesus. Again, keep at it, don't give up, and keep engaging in civil dialogue. It is only after the offending party continues to refuse all attempts at restoration does the church allow the person to be separated from the community. Eugene Boring, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Brite Divinity School in his commentary on Matthew states the following concerning this passage: "Serious and Stringent though these procedures are, they are in the context not

³² W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1971), 26:220.

of self-righteousness vindictiveness, but of radical caring for the marginal and straying, and of grace and forgiveness beyond all imagining.”³³

The position of this passage in Matthew 18 is important as the preceding passage In Matthew 18 (18:10-14) is the parable of the Lost Sheep in which the shepherd with ninety-nine sheep does not give up searching for the one lost sheep. The passage immediately following is Jesus teaching about forgiveness (18:21-35). Jesus responds to Peter’s question concerning how many times should a member of the church be forgiven if the member has sinned against me (18:21)? Jesus responds by saying, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times” (18:22). Then Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant (18:23-35). There is a theme throughout this chapter: Those of us who have experienced the love of God through Jesus are in turn called to demonstrate that love in our relationships with all of humanity.

The late John Howard Yoder, Mennonite Theologian and Ethicist, was Professor of Theology at Notre Dame. Yoder developed a theology of forgiveness and reconciliation from Matthew 18:15-20. He stated, “... the practical application of forgiveness (18:15-18) is the center of the teaching of chapter 18.”³⁴ He published this theology of forgiveness and reconciliation in 1967 under the title “Binding and Loosing.”³⁵ In 1992 he published his further developed thoughts on forgiveness and reconciliation in the book Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community

³³ Boring, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, VII, 379.

³⁴ John H. Yoder, *Binding and Loosing*, *John Howard Yoder Digital Library*, in the AMBS and GC John Howard Yoder Digital Library, accessed October 10, 2014, <http://replica.palni.edu/cdm/ref/collection/p15705coll18/id/1286>, 14.

³⁵ Ibid.

Before the Watching World.³⁶ In these writings, Yoder articulated his reasons why the Christian responsibility of binding and loosing is a requirement for every follower of Jesus. Yoder points out that only twice in the Gospels is Jesus portrayed as uttering the word, ἐκκλησία (ekklesia – church). In both instances the use of the word ἐκκλησία is connected with the instructions for binding and loosing therefore emphasizing the significance of this work for the work of the church.³⁷

Matthew 18:15-20 is a strong word for all followers of Jesus concerning the need for civil dialogue. The subject of homosexuality is a charged point of discussion for the church today. Denominations, churches and families have split apart and relationships have ended as a result of disagreements, disappointments and anger over the subject. Persons on both sides of the issue have been injured. We are instructed in this passage that the pathway to loosing (forgiveness) and reconciliation is through civil dialogue.

iii. Acts 15 A Lesson in Civil Dialogue from the Early Church

The Book of Acts tells the story of the growth of the Christian Church. “The Book of Acts is largely about this movement of the Gospel from Jew to Gentile, from Jerusalem to the end of the earth.”³⁸ In Chapter 3, on the Day of Pentecost, the church grew as 3,000 Jews are filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaim their belief in Jesus as the resurrected Christ. The church continued to grow, but because of conflict between Christians and the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, many Christians left Jerusalem and Judea to settle in other areas, spreading the message of Jesus as they traveled to new areas.

³⁶ John H. Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community Before the Watching World* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Pr, 2001), 1.

³⁷ Yoder, *Binding and Loosing*, 9.

³⁸ Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*, 5th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 158.

Luke shows how Jews and Gentiles embraced the message of Christ. The Apostles struggled with whether or not the Gentiles must first become Jewish before becoming followers of Christ. If Gentiles could become Christians without first becoming Jewish, what would this mean for the Jewish Christians and the law, customs and rituals? What about God's covenant with Israel? These concerns evoked much conflict within the church. It is depicted in the Book of Acts and in Paul's Letter to the Philippians.

Acts 15 tells the story of the gathering of church council in Jerusalem. Luke still saw the Jerusalem Church as the mother church at this time.³⁹ The Jerusalem Council was made up of Apostles and Elders (Acts 15:6-7) to **ἰδεῖν περὶ** (idein peri) look into the matter that was resulting in great conflict.⁴⁰ This was not the first time that the church leaders had dealt with this concern (Acts 11:1-18). Obviously, the earlier work of the church did not settle the issue. In Acts 15 the leaders gathered to hear all sides of the argument, seek discernment, settle the conflict and promote unity among the believers.

In his commentary on the Book of Acts, Robert W. Wall, Professor of the Christian Scriptures at The School of Theology of Seattle Pacific University, states the following concerning the work of the council in Acts 15:

“It is a long and reflective process characterized by sharp and sometimes heated conflict within the church. The importance of the theological controversy for initiating a process of discernment is a literary theme of importance in Acts... While sharp disagreement between believers is always hard and must be confronted and resolved in every case, the passionate exchange of different opinions is a crucial element of any process by which a faithful people seek to understand the will of God. Reform and renewal are sometimes the Spirit-led

³⁹ Ben Witherington, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1998), 451.

⁴⁰ Robert W. Wall, “Introduction, Commentary and Reflections on the Book of Acts.” *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, Vol. X. Edited by Leander Keck, Bruce Burch, David Peterson and John Collins. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994-2004), 10:208.

results of open protest and debate between earnest believers of the same congregation.”⁴¹

Acts 15 is an excellent model for civil dialogue. Only after there has been much debate (15:7) **ζήτησις** (zétésis), do Peter (15:7-11), Paul and Barnabas (15:12) speak before the council. The council created a space in which all sides of the debate could be presented. Luke states that “The whole assembly kept silence, and listened **ἤκουον** (ēkouon) to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles” (15:12). Listening to one another was an important work of the Jerusalem Council and a necessary work for any civil dialogue.

In his commentary on Acts, William H. Willimon, Methodist Bishop and former Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, makes note that this passage is a powerful reminder of the need for strong leaders who are willing to debate civilly. “The church needs people of bold vision who know what is at stake in our arguments and who argue with clarity and courage.”⁴² The church still looks to their clergy for honesty and vision.

Another important aspect about this story is the importance of narrative. Peter, Paul and Barnabas all shared personal stories of how they had seen God work in the lives of the Gentile believers. Instead of telling the council what they should believe, they shared their own personal experience of what they had witnessed. Robert Wall states, “Open and formative debate between earnest believers within a congregational setting is largely narrative in shape, existential in substance, and practical in aim.”⁴³

⁴¹ Wall. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, X, 210.

⁴² William H. Willimon, *Acts*, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox Press, ©1988), 130.

⁴³ Wall. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, X, 211.

The council affirmed the fact that the Gentiles were becoming Christ followers without first becoming Jews. The text states that James had reached a decision in regards to what would be done concerning the conflict (15:19). James is identified by New Testament Scholar F. F. Bruce as the brother of Jesus and one who had emerged as leader of the Jerusalem Church.⁴⁴ There was a consensus among the council concerning their decision (15:25). The council heard the concerns of the Jewish Christians, who were concerned about what they saw as the offensive lifestyle of the Gentiles. This passage is a reminder of the power of listening to one another and the miracle of dialogue.

iv. Civil Dialogue in the History of the Church

The Church has not always lived out the spirit of Matthew 18 or Acts 15 in settling its disagreements. The Creeds, Great Schism, Inquisition and Protestant Reformation all testify to the failure of the church to create a safe space for civil dialogue.

One of the ways the church has historically dealt with controversies that have arisen within is through the establishment of creeds. “Generally speaking, creeds have not been written in quiet periods of history but in those moments of historical intensity when the church has been engaged by foes from without, or when its mission or life has been endangered from within.”⁴⁵ Historically, the church has often dealt with dissenting voices by labeling them as being heretic and creating a creed.⁴⁶ “The creed had the negative role of shutting the heretic out and setting the boundaries within which authentic Christian

⁴⁴ F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, rev. ed., The New International Commentary On the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 292.

⁴⁵ John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, from the Bible to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

theology and life can take place.”⁴⁷ The result has been an exclusion of some persons in the church who have desired to follow Jesus and profess him as Lord.

One example of a Catholic (universal) creed is the Nicene Creed (325 C.E.). “Creedal developments entered a new stage at Nicaea when an ecumenical council adopted a creed that was to be a test for orthodoxy and was to be authoritative for the whole church.”⁴⁸ The Nicene Creed was developed as a way to respond to the theology of Arius, a leader in the Alexandrian Church. Arius believed Jesus was not fully God. The response of the creed was to affirm in technical language that Jesus was “True God from true God... begotten not created... of one essence with the Father” (Nicene Creed). The result was that the followers of Arius (Arians) were driven into exile.

There have been times in history when the church has practiced civil dialogue effectively. The Quaker Educator Parker Palmer describes such a time in the church.⁴⁹ Ironically, Palmer writes about an environment that existed in the fourth century at the same time that the church was debating the Arian controversy:

“It comes from a collection of stories about the desert fathers and mothers, those fourth century seekers whose experience is so central to the Christian tradition... First, they lived in an age when Christianity was emerging from four centuries of persecution into official recognition as the state religion of the Roman Empire. But these desert seekers were suspicious of any alliance between truth and power. Rather than take easy refuge in the official consensus, they left the great cities and went to the wastelands of Libya and Egypt to live there as hermits, to encounter truth on its own terms.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁹ Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983).

⁵⁰ Ibid., 40.

The description of the desert fathers and mothers is an effective model of civil dialogue for the Christian church. The desert fathers and mothers created an environment of openness and safety that invited trust and the sharing of truth within the community. While there were leaders/teachers who were part of the community, they were not seen as experts but as fellow learners and teachers. The desert fathers and mothers teach us that a prerequisite for civil dialogue is the admission that what one believes may not be completely accurate. The desert fathers and mothers also teach us that the best theological reflection occurs within community. This is similar to the Quaker model of seeking consensus. This model shares a resemblance to the Baptist principles of the priesthood of every believer and seeking truth with open Bibles and the Spirit's direction.

c. A BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF HOMOSEXUALITY

i. Humans Created in the Image of God as Sexual Beings

So God (אֱלֹהִים - 'ě-lō-hîm – masculine noun) created humankind* (Hebrew אָדָם - hā-'ā-dām – masculine noun) in his image, in the image of God (אֱלֹהִים) he created them;* (Hebrew אָדָם 'ō-tōw; -Him) male (זָכָר zā-kār- masculine noun) and female (נְקִיבָה – ū-nə-qê-bāh - feminine noun) he created them (אֵלֶּם - 'ō-tōw; accusative case) (Genesis 1:27 NRSV).

In his commentary on Genesis, Walter Brueggemann, retired Old Testament Professor of Eden and Columbia Seminaries, addresses Genesis 1:27. For Brueggemann, this passage from the first creation story (Genesis chapter 1:1-2:3) shows the connection between sexuality and God. Brueggemann believes that this passage does not provide any proof that God is male or female yet clearly shows that sexuality is ordained by God as is shown in the distinction of God's creating both male and female (1:27). Brueggemann states, "Sexuality, sexual identity, and sexual function belong not to God's person but to

God's will for creation... Sexuality is ordained by God, but it does not characterize God. It belongs to the goodness God intends for creation."⁵¹ In his commentary on Genesis, Terence Fretheim, Old Testament Professor at Luther Seminary,⁵² makes the same connection between sexuality and spirituality as Brueggemann and adds much concerning what the story of creation has to say about gender roles and hierarchical order.

In his book, Sexual Ethics, the late Stan Grenz, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Carey Theological Seminary and Regent College, devotes an entire chapter to examining humankind as a sexual creation.⁵³ Grenz is in agreement with Brueggemann and Fretheim concerning human beings created by God in the image of God as sexual beings. He concurs that the creation story has the first woman and man created as equals. He goes on to say that all of this changed as a result of the Fall and the curse that followed but is no longer binding because of the New Creation:

With the coming of the Savior, the curse of the Fall can be lifted. This redemption includes liberation from hierarchy and the way in which the sexes relate. Because in Christ there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28), hierarchy can give way to a new model of relationship, mutual submission (Eph. 5:21). This new pattern for the establishment of male-female community as a whole forms the overarching not only for the church, but also for the particular expression of this community in marriage.⁵⁴

Grenz continues, "God is beyond sexuality not in that God is nonsexual, but in that God encompasses what to us are the sexual distinctions of male and female. What we

⁵¹ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis: Interpretation: a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*: (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 33.

⁵² Terence Fretheim, Walter Brueggemann and Walter Kaiser. *The New Interpreter's Bible, VI: General and Old Testament Articles, Genesis*. Edited by Leander Keck, Bruce Burch, David Peterson and John Collins. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 349-57.

⁵³ Stanley Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: A Biblical Perspective* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 18-39.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

perceive as feminine and masculine characteristics are present in and derive their significance from the divine reality.”⁵⁵

ii. The Biblical Word “Know”

The Hebrew word “yadah” is used to refer to sexual intercourse. For example, “Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain” (Gen. 4:1). “Elkanah knew his wife Hannah, and the Lord remembered her.” (1 Sam. 1:19).

The word “know” is used throughout the New Testament especially in the Fourth Gospel and in the writings of Paul. Paul uses the phrases of one knowing God or Christ and of God knowing us (1 Cor. 8:3). In Philippians 3:10, Paul states, “I want to know Christ and the Power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death.” Fred Craddock states, “Paul’s faith has at its center a desire to know Christ in full identification; to live is Christ, he has said earlier (1:21) but also union in the passion of Christ: suffering, death, resurrection (2:8-11).”⁵⁶

James Nelson, retired Professor of Christian Ethics at United Theological Seminary, states, “The sexual act at its best is the union of desiring and knowing. If I desire another sexually without wanting to have deep knowledge of the other, without wanting to be in a living communion with the partner, I am treating the other merely as object, as an instrument, as means to my self-centered gratification. But in the Union of

⁵⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁵⁶ Fred Craddock, *Philippians: Interpretation: a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Nashville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1985), 59.

desiring and knowing, the partner is treated as a self, the treasured participant in communion.”⁵⁷ This connection of sexuality and spirituality is expressed in Psalm 42:1-2

As a doe longs for running streams,
So longs my soul for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, the God of life;
When shall I to see the face of God? (The Jerusalem Bible)

James Crenshaw, retired Professor of Old Testament at Duke University, argues that the Israelites naturally associated sex with religion,⁵⁸ which also helps to explain why the Hebrew people struggled so much with the Religion of Baal. The Old Testament Prophets Hosea and Ezekiel both used the metaphor of marriage to describe God’s intimate relationship with the nations of Israel.⁵⁹ In a similar way, some New Testament writers think of the church as the bride of Christ.⁶⁰

iii. Six Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality

There is general agreement that there are at least six texts in the Bible, which address the issue of homosexual practice. These passages include the Sodom and Gomorrah story (Genesis 19:1-38), the Levite from Ephraim Story (Judges 19) and two similar passages from the purity code in Leviticus 18 and 23. There are two texts in the New Testament that specifically make mention of homosexual practice. Both of these texts are found in the Pauline passages. The 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 passage is similar to the

⁵⁷ James Nelson, *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 32.

⁵⁸ James Crenshaw, “It’s All About a Missing Rib: Human Sexuality in the Bible”, *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37, no. 3 (September 1, 2010): 267-82.

⁵⁹ See Hosea 2. Here the text shows God’s commitment to make unfaithful Israel, God’s wife forever (Hosea 2:19-20). See also Ezekiel 16:1-23. In this passage, Israel is also portrayed as God’s unfaithful wife.

⁶⁰ For example see Ephesians 5:22-23 where the author compares the relationship between husband and wife to the relationship of Christ and the church. Revelation 21:9 is also a reference commonly interpreted to be the church as the bride of Christ.

two Leviticus passages in that the reference to male prostitutes and sodomites are among a list of acts, which are stated to be an abomination (Leviticus) and possibly preventing one from entering the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). The Romans 1:24-27 passage is a passage that traditional scholars such as Richard Mouw, Professor of Christian Theology and former President of Fuller Theological Seminary, regard as the clearest condemnation of homosexuality in scripture.⁶¹

1. Genesis 19:1-38 The Sodom and Gomorrah Story and The Judges 19 Levite from Ephraim Story

The Sodom and Gomorrah story is part of the larger Abraham story in the Book of Genesis. Abraham's nephew Lot is living in Sodom with his family. Two angels visit him and Lot invites them into his home as guests. All of the men from town come to Lot's house with the intention of having sex with Lot's guests. Lot instead offers the men his two virgin daughters. The Angels cause the men to become blind and lead Lot's family to safety before God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah with sulfur and fire.

The Sodom and Gomorrah story is one that shows the results of heinous sins and severe disaster. Sodom and Gomorrah are symbols representing the worst that can happen to those who mistreat human beings and fail to show hospitality.⁶²

The Levite from Ephraim story found in Judges 19 has many similarities to the Sodom and Gomorrah story. Judges 19 tells the story of a Levite from Ephraim who

⁶¹ Mouw argues for a traditional understanding of homosexuality as sin based primarily on this passage in Romans. Without this passage, Mouw believes the other passages referencing homosexuality (including the Sodom and Gomorrah story) can be explained apart from addressing homosexuality. He argues that because of the strength of the Romans passage, interpreters should read the other debated passages as part of a larger interwoven theme of homosexuality as sin. For more details in this area see "*A Civil Conversation On Human Sexuality*" (Audio). Lecture, University Presbyterian Church, Seattle, Washington, November 11, 2013, <http://upc.sermon.tv/5211093>.

⁶² Fretheim. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, VI, 473.

travels to Bethlehem to bring back his concubine who had become angry with him and ran away. He finds the concubine and begins the journey home spending the night with an elderly man in the city of Gibeah. The men of the town come to the home of the elderly man and demand to have sex with the male guest. Instead, the elderly man offers to send out his guest's concubine and his virgin daughter. The concubine is sent out and is raped all night long. The concubine's master takes a knife and cuts the concubine into twelve pieces with a message for the people of Israel. We begin a closer examination of these passages by examining the traditional and progressive position arguments.

a. The Traditional Position Argument

The late Stan Grenz in his book, Welcoming But Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality,⁶³ argues that the use of the Hebrew word יָדָה (yadha - to know) is significant in understanding that the men of Sodom had the intention of same-sex intercourse with Lot's angelic guests (Genesis 19:5). Grenz states that, "Throughout church history Christian exegetes generally interpreted these stories as referring to an attempted homosexual assault..."⁶⁴ Grenz in examining the later biblical references to the Sodom and Gomorrah story found in Ezekiel 16:49-50, Isaiah 1, Jeremiah 23:14 and 2 Peter 2:6 states, "In short, Sodom came to be an archetype of ungodliness, unrighteousness and lawlessness."⁶⁵ While Grenz does not believe that homosexuality

⁶³ Stanley J. Grenz, *Welcoming but Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

⁶⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 38.

lies at the heart of the story, he says, “Seemingly more central in each is the importance of hospitality.”⁶⁶ Grenz goes on to state the following:

“Hence, the intent of the wicked residents of these two cities may not have been to participate in homosexual acts for their own sake. Instead, they perhaps planned to use the heinous practice of gang rape to assert their superiority over and declare the subordinate status of the strangers Lot (and the old man in Gibeah) harbored.

In short, showing utter disregard for the social rules of hospitality, they demand that the visitors submit to the most demeaning treatment conceivable. In the eyes of the narrator, (and presumably the reader), this confirmed that the citizens “were wicked, great sinners against the Lord” (Gen. 13:13).⁶⁷

Grenz examines the interpretation of the Sodom and Gomorrah story found in the New Testament Book of Jude:

...Jude ought to be read as another instance of the type of argument from nature Paul offers in Romans 1. Jude may well be using the angelic cohabitation with humans and the homosexual practices of the Sodomites evidenced in their intended homosexual gang rape as parallel instances of the wickedness of violating the sexual order God has placed in creation... The men of Sodom were guilty of twisting God’s good intention for human sexuality into a vehicle for unjust treatment of visitors to their city. In short, such violence involved perverting sexual function as God had designed it into an act diametrically opposed to God’s intent for human sexual expression.⁶⁸

Grenz sees the Sodom and Gomorrah story primarily condemning violent homosexual rape and not addressing homosexual relationships between consenting adults.⁶⁹ Mouw is in essential agreement with Grenz on the interpretation of this passage.

He states, “even if you take my view that the Sodom and Gomorrah story is about sexual

⁶⁶ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 40.

relations, the most we can say is that it is a gang rape.”⁷⁰

Not all traditional scholars agree with Grenz and Mouw on their conclusion of the Sodom and Gomorrah story. Robert Gagnon, Associate Professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, believes the Sodom and Gomorrah story addresses not only male-male gang rape but also a more general condemnation of male-male sexual relations. Gagnon believes that there is an interconnecting relationship of texts in the Old and New Testament that are connected to the Genesis 19 and Judges 19 stories. Gagnon argues that Ezekiel’s reference to the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as an abomination (Ezekiel 16:49-50) connects the Sodom and Gomorrah story to the Leviticus 18 passage prohibiting male-male sexual intercourse.⁷¹

b. The Progressive Position Argument

Dan O. Via, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, believes that the Sodom and Gomorrah and the Levite from Ephraim stories have no direct bearing on the validity of the contemporary consensual homosexual relationships. He believes that both stories are told in such a way as to condemn homosexual gang rape and to tell us something about how ancient Israel understood homosexuality.⁷²

Walter Brueggemann, in his commentary on Genesis, writes of how careful exegetes must be in interpreting the Sodom and Gomorrah text:

This text must be interpreted with extreme care. It easily lends itself to conclusions that are wooden, mechanical, and concrete-operational about the

⁷⁰ Richard Mouw. “*A Civil Conversation On Human Sexuality*” (Audio Lecture), University Presbyterian Church, Seattle, Washington, November 11, 2013. Accessed November 24, 2013. <http://upc.sermon.tv/5211093>.

⁷¹ Dan Otto Via and Robert A J. Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible: Two Views* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 55-58.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5.

reality of God. Unless interpreted carefully, this passage will be taken as support for mistaken theological notions that are uncritical and destructive. The most obvious dangers of perverse interpretations relate to (a) the stylized and stereotyped description of judgment and destruction (19:24-28); (b) the appeal to numbers in 18:26-32 which will too easily reduce God's righteous purpose to arithmetical calculation and (c) the offense of Sodom which in popular usage and perhaps in 19:5 is homosexuality. If these three factors - stylized judgment, numerical calculation and simplistic moralizing on homosexuality – are brought together according to popular understandings, the text will yield a teaching remote from the gospel.⁷³

Brueggemann argues that just as there are many scholars who interpret the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah differently, “the Bible itself did not agree that the sin was homosexuality.”⁷⁴ He makes his point by stating, “the use of the term “outcry” in 18:20-21; 19:13 argues in the direction of a general abuse of justice. (Cf. Isa 5:7 without any explicit indictment. Cf. also Luke 10:8-12).”⁷⁵ Brueggemann argues that the Sodom and Gomorrah story is not pertinent to a discussion on homosexuality today.

Jack Rogers, Professor Emeritus of Theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary and former Moderator of the Presbyterian (PCUSA) Church, in his book: Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality,⁷⁶ considers the Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-38) and the Rape of the Levite (Judges 19:1-30) stories. In his treatment of these stories, Rogers discusses the commonality of homosexual rape in the ancient world as a way to humiliate one's defeated foes. It was meant to be humiliating and violent. Rogers points

⁷³ Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis*, ed. James L. Mays and Patrick D. Miller, Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), 163.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 164.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Jack Bartlett Rogers, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality: Explode the Myths, Heal the Church* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

out that Lot does not see the men outside his house as homosexual. If he had, then it would have made no sense to offer his virgin daughters to them.

C. L. Seow, professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary, points out that the sin of Sodom is mentioned several times elsewhere in the Bible, but never in connection with homosexual acts.⁷⁷ Jack Rogers agrees with Seow on this point and goes on to argue the following:

In Old Testament references to Sodom, the sins of the city are variously described as greed, injustice, inhospitality, excess wealth, indifference to the poor, and general wickedness. In the New Testament, when Jesus refers to the sin of Sodom, as recorded in Luke 10:12 and Matthew 10:15, he was passing judgment on cities that refused hospitality to traveling disciples. A focus on the supposed homosexual aspect of the Sodom story comes only later in non-biblical literature, influenced by Greek philosophy, and also the Muslim Qur'an.⁷⁸

After a close look at the Sodom and Gomorrah Story, we now examine two additional debated Old Testament passages that speak of male-male sexual relationships.

2. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

“If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall be put to death; their blood is upon them” (Leviticus 20:13).

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination” (Leviticus 18:22).

a. The Traditional Position Argument

Robert Gagnon, argues that “there are at least seven good reasons why Lev. 18:22 and 20:13 remain relevant to the church today.”⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Choon-Leong Seow, “Textual Orientation,” in *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture*, ed. Robert Brawley (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 22.

⁷⁸ Rogers, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*, 70-71.

⁷⁹ Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 63.

First, he sees them as Part of a Broader Biblical Witness.⁸⁰ He believes that the Old Testament texts concur with Israel's opposition to male-male sexual intercourse.

Secondly, what he calls "Absolute Transcending Exploitative Forms."⁸¹ Gagnon argues that the Hebrew word זָכָר (*zakar* – *male*) is used, not the word for homosexual cult prostitute" קִדְּשׁ (*qadesh*), or boy, youth (נָעַר *na'ar*) or even "your neighbor" (רֵעִי *re'akah*). The sex rules in chapter 18, he believes, apply to the Israelite and the resident non-Israelite as well (18:26). Because the penalty is applied to both parties, Gagnon sees this as referring to consensual male-male sex.

Third, they are "Grouped With Other Relevant Sex Proscriptions."⁸² The prohibitions occur next to other sex acts that we mainly continue to prohibit today. Gagnon sees this as evidence as to why this passage is relevant today.

Fourth, Gagnon calls the description of the activity in the two Leviticus passages as "A First-Tier Sexual Offense."⁸³ He makes this assertion based upon his observation that the placement of the passages are in the midst of other first tier sexual offenses punishable by death including adultery, sex with one's mother-in-law, marriage to mother and daughter at the same time and human-animal sex.

Fifth is what Gagnon calls, "The Necessity of Sexual Complementarity."⁸⁴ Gagnon argues that the reason male-male intercourse is wrong is implicit in the description itself" "lying with a male as with a woman..." (18:22). Male-Male

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 64.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 64-65.

intercourse puts a male in the category of female so far as sexual intercourse is concerned. Gagnon argues that only a woman can complement the man sexually. He points to the anatomical differences between male and females. In reading reviews of Gagnon's work it is this argument, which has drawn the most scorn from his critics.

Gagnon's sixth argument point is, "Purity Buttressing Morality."⁸⁵ Gagnon posits that just because the Leviticus passages are part of the purity code does not give the right for one to dismiss them. This argument is directed against Via and other scholars who argue this point as to why the Leviticus passages do not apply to Christians today.

Gagnon's seventh point is what he terms, "Appropriation by the New Testament."⁸⁶ Gagnon argues that Paul appropriated the Leviticus passages into his Romans and 1 Corinthian letters. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:9 uses the same Greek word, *αρσενικοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*), found in the Septuagint translation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13. The term *arsenokoitai* combines the Greek words *arsen* (male) and *koite* (lying). This is also an argument that Richard Mouw also makes.

Richard Mouw believes the Leviticus passages treated alone do not make a strong argument for seeing this as a law that Christians need to follow today. However, Mouw like Gagnon argues that the New Testament reaffirms the Old Testament's teaching on homosexuality. Like the Sodom and Gomorrah story, Mouw believes that if all we had were the Leviticus 18 and 20 passages, it would not be enough to argue a biblical view of condemnation against homosexuality. Mouw states, "...but when it is reaffirmed in the New Testament and is reapplied in the life of the Christian community it becomes

⁸⁵ Ibid., 66-67.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 67-68.

normative for the Christian community... and condemnation toward genital intimacy of same sex relations, I believe, is continued into the New Testament.”⁸⁷

Walter Kaiser is President Emeritus and Professor of Old Testament Emeritus at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. For Kaiser, the issue of whether or not homosexuality is a sin and condemned by God is a settled issue. He is not swayed by current cultural changes or alternative textual and theological interpretations. In his commentary on Leviticus, while acknowledging and articulating alternative interpretations of the passages, he argues the traditional interpretation of these texts:

Homosexual behavior, until recently, has been regarded as unnatural, perverted, or degenerate form of sexual relations by most Jewish-Christian morality. Many would argue that this reflects limited Israelite understandings and social context (similar to attitudes on women and slaves) and texts like Lev 18:22 are not to be considered eternally binding. These issues cannot be resolved in the discussion of this text alone. For that reason the rigid condemnation and description of homosexual acts found in v. 22 will anger many modern readers who have become more tolerant of homosexual practices than they have of any critiques of it. The subject arouses violent emotions on both sides of the issue, but there can be no doubt about this text’s position on the matter. The Holiness Code does not consider homosexual activity between men (women are not considered) acceptable and judges it an abomination.⁸⁸

b. The Progressive Position Argument

Dan Via, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Duke Divinity School, argues the importance of delineating between sin and uncleanness in order for one to understand the context of the Leviticus passages. Sin, according to Via, is a “conscious, intentional, personal attitude and act. It originates in a corrupted heart, the seat of will and understanding (Gen 3:1-7; Isa 1:2-5; Jer 7:13-14; 13:10; 17:1, 9-10), it is religious

⁸⁷ Richard Mouw, “*A Civil Conversation On Human Sexuality* (audio lecture).”

⁸⁸ Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Leviticus”. *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Leander Keck, Thomas Long, and David Peterson, vol. 1, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1:1127.

rebellion against God (Isa 1:4; Jer 5:23), it is also immoral. Since the God of Israel wills that the poor and marginalized be treated with justice and concern, rebellion against God is also an offense against one's community (Amos 4:1; 5:11-12; 6:4-6)."⁸⁹

A common Old Testament understanding of uncleanness involves contact made with something that is "unclean." Something unclean is not necessarily something bad but rather something that is not in a state of purity. Among the things listed in the Old Testament Law as being unclean are certain foods, animals, dead bodies and sexual contact. "The Old Testament legal traditions, and especially the Holiness Code in Leviticus 17-26, are very concerned to identify the sources of impurity and to specify the remedies, but there is no clear theory about why these things are unclean."⁹⁰

Via discusses the possibility of the Holiness Code as a pathway for wholeness, completeness and perfection. He argues that the Holiness Code outlines expectations for an unflawed, perfect body.

"...sexual emissions (Lev 15:16-30) and other bodily discharges (Lev 15:1-12) make a person unclean, as do menstruation (Lev 15:19), childbearing (Lev 12:1-5) and marital sexual intercourse (Lev 15:18), these are a breach of the body as a perfect container. A priest with bodily deformities will profane the sanctuary (Lev 21:16-24). The quest for holiness requires that individuals conform completely to the class to which they belong. Sea creatures that do not have fins and scales are unclean (Lev 11:9-12). They live in water and belong to the fish class but they lack defining characteristics."⁹¹

Why does the Holiness Code require such things as keeping classes or types separated? Why is the farmer not to sow a field with two different seeds? Why are

⁸⁹ Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 6.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

garments not to be made with two different types of material (Lev 19:19)? For Via, the answers to these questions are found in the Holiness Code's requirement for completion, perfection and order. From this understanding he draws the following conclusion concerning the condemnation of male-male sex found in Leviticus:

This means that an individual cannot belong to two different classes or enact two different fundamental roles at the same time... A person cannot be both human and animal; a man cannot be both husband and son; a man cannot be both male and female. Hence sexual intercourse with an animal (Lev 18:23), incest (Lev 18:6-18), and homosexuality (Lev 18:22; 20:13) are condemned as defiling... The pertinent point here is that the condemnation of homosexuality in Leviticus categorizes it as a source of uncleanness rather than as a sin... And homosexual practice is an "abomination" (Lev 18:22) just as eating an unclean animal or bird is an abomination (Lev 11:13; 20:25).⁹²

Via lists four ways that the Old Testament justifies or warrants the rule against homosexual practice:

1. Homosexuality practice makes one unclean – a negative mark on the person that limits one's ability to associate with other people and one's access to God.
2. In a patriarchal society, homosexuality compromises purity in the production of male heirs to hold the land.
3. Homosexuality violates the boundaries that separate Israel from the pagan nations (Lev 18:3, 24, 27).
4. Homosexual practice in a patriarchal society is an affront to male honor. Homosexual sex is such a violation of the penetrated one's masculine honor that it should be protected from this offense at almost any cost. This would include the sacrifice of one's virgin daughter or concubine.⁹³

Via concludes his comments on the Old Testament with this question: "Should Christians accept a rule that is justified in the way that the Old Testament justifies and condemns homosexuality?"⁹⁴ While he does not answer his own question, it is clear that

⁹² Ibid., 6-8.

⁹³ Ibid., 8-9.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 9.

he expects those who follow his logic to answer “no.” Of course, for those who hold to a more traditional interpretation of Scripture, this will not be an easy task.

Via is not alone in his understanding of the Leviticus passage and its historical context. James Nelson, retired Professor of Christian Ethics at United Theological Seminary, asked the following questions concerning Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13:

“What is the principle of selection by which cultic injunctions against homosexuality acts are held valid today but at the same time most other parts of the holiness code are deemed as irrelevant? Should the death penalty be used against male homosexuality as the law stipulates? Why are female same-sex acts unmentioned? What is the link between female sub-ordination and the fear of male homosexuality, both evident in these laws? And how shall a church which grounds itself in the grace of Jesus Christ deal with the law codes of ancient Israel?⁹⁵

These are powerful questions for our culture to examine today. Nelson posits that the historical context of the Leviticus passages explains the severity of the punishment for males who participate in homosexual relations as well as why women are not mentioned in the passages. He argues that the patriarchal context of the Leviticus passage, as well as the exaggerated masculine images of the time period, are important in understanding the Bible’s condemnation of homosexuality. In Nelson’s mind, these reasons explain why, even today, there is more negative response and condemnation shown toward gay men than is shown toward lesbian women.

If male dignity was a consideration, then sodomy could not be tolerated, because when a man acted sexually like a woman he was committing a degradation – literally, a loss or grade of status – not only in regards to himself, but also by implication, for every other male. But this is not only true of the early Hebrews alone. Anthropologists have noted the strong tendency of patriarchal cultures wherever they may be, to view (especially male) homosexuality as “the unspeakable sin,” while matriarchal cultures have been strikingly different on this issue.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Nelson, *Embodiment*, 185.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

The major Old Testament texts used in the argument against homosexuality have now been articulated. Now our attention is focused on the New Testament texts.

3. Romans 1:24-27

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error” (Romans 1:24-27).

The Romans 1:24-27 passage is seen by traditional and progressive scholars as a difficult passage to deal with in the discussion of the Bible’s and homosexuality. For those arguing for the traditional position, the text is clear in its condemnation of homosexual relationships. For those arguing the progressive position, the text is dealing with a contextual issue that has no bearing on committed homosexual relationships today.

a. The Traditional Position Argument

Robert Gagnon makes a five-point argument to show that this passage implicates every form of same-sex sexual intercourse.

First is what Gagnon refers to as “Intertextual echoes to Gen. 1:26-27.”⁹⁷ He believes Romans 1:18-32 alludes to the creation stories. Gagnon specifically compares Genesis 1:26 to Romans 1:23 and Genesis 1:27 to Romans 1:26-27 to show that idolatry and same-sex intercourse constitute an assault on the work of the Creator in nature. Paul, in Gagnon’s opinion, “was looking more at Genesis 1 than at the exploitative models in

⁹⁷ Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 78.

his culture or at a presumption of bisexuality. The main concern for Paul was what same sex intercourse was not – the complementary male-female union ordained by God at creation and revealed in Scripture.”⁹⁸

Second, Gagnon points to what he calls the “Argument From Nature.”⁹⁹ His argument is that God designed the male and female body parts to fit naturally. “Same-sex intercourse is unnatural to the point of being morally unclean, degrading and indecent.”¹⁰⁰

Gagnon’s third point is “The Mention of Lesbian Intercourse.”¹⁰¹ He believes that because Paul mentions unnatural sexual intercourse of women (Rom. 1:26-27), this is proof that Paul is talking about more than condemning pederasty or cultic prostitution.

Fourth, Gagnon argues, “Coercion is Not an Issue.”¹⁰² He states:

In Romans 1:27 Paul speaks of the mutual gratification of the participants: “The males were inflamed with their yearning for *one another, male with males...*” He also declares that the judgment of God on both partners is deserved: males with males committing indecency and in return, *receiving in themselves* the payback which was necessitated by *their* straying, Paul was casting his net over every kind of consensual homoerotic activity.¹⁰³

Gagnon’s fifth point is “The Conception of Caring Homoerotic Unions in Paul’s Cultural Environment.”¹⁰⁴ He argues that Paul was aware of what we consider today – committed and caring homosexual relationships. Gagnon writes that there were Greco-Roman letters from Paul’s time period expressing glowing tributes to male-male love.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 79-80.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 81.

N.T. Wright, Retired Anglican Bishop and current Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at The University of St. Andrews, argues a traditional viewpoint concerning the Romans 1 passage. While Wright does not believe it is appropriate to apply Romans 1:26-27 to “a full analysis of same-sex desires and practices; but it is equally wrong to minimize or marginalize what Paul teaches here.”¹⁰⁵ Wright, while sympathetic to the arguments that have come from more modern understanding of human psychology, believes Paul’s words articulate clearly that Paul “regarded homosexual practice as a dangerous distortion of God’s intention.”¹⁰⁶

Richard Mouw believes that in Romans 1, Paul speaks clearly in condemning same-sex relationships of all kinds. He believes Paul is referencing God’s created order in Genesis and reaffirming God’s original created design for a male-female lifetime commitment. For Mouw, the texts that have been discussed earlier in this paper need to be read with the clearer understanding that is gained from the Romans 1 text.

b. The Progressive Position Argument

Jack Rogers argues, “...that a close and careful reading of the text, using the best methods of biblical interpretation, will reveal that Paul is making a statement about idolatry, not sexuality per se, and that Paul’s writings also reflect many of the cultural assumptions of his time.”¹⁰⁷ Rogers posits that Paul is writing about idolatry, not sexuality in his letter from Corinth and concludes “because the Corinthians engaged in

¹⁰⁵ N. Thomas Wright, “The Letter to the Romans:” *“The New Interpreter’s Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Leander Keck, Thomas Long, and David Peterson, vol. 10, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 10:435.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Jack Bartlett Rogers, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*, 76.

idolatry, ‘God gave them up to degrading passions’ (v. 26).”¹⁰⁸ Rogers also argues that Paul in Romans 1 indicts everyone; we are all idolaters and therefore all sinners:

It seems as though Paul is setting up his Jewish readers. It is easy at this point in the text for them, and for us, to feel self-righteous. Jews didn’t worship images of birds or animals or reptiles. Those were typical Gentile sins. But then Paul lowers the boom on his readers by listing sins that proceed from idolatry – covetousness, malice, envy, strife, deceit, craftiness, gossip, and slander. Idolaters could become haughty, boastful, rebellious toward parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, and ruthless. Now Paul is talking to all of us, speaking of those sins and attitudes to which we sometimes succumb when we turn our ultimate allegiance away from the true God. Paul makes this point again, in Romans 2:1. We are without excuse, especially when we judge others. Why? Because in God’s sight we are all given to idolatry. Paul is driving home the point that is at the heart of Reformation theology: no one is righteous before God. Paul has been criticizing those idolatrous Corinthian Gentiles. Now he is saying to his Jewish colleagues and to us, no one is righteous. We are all sinners. That is Paul’s point in Romans 1.¹⁰⁹

Rogers also articulates his understanding of Paul’s use of the words φυσικὴν (*physis* - *natural*) and παρὰ φύσιν (*para physin* - *unnatural*). His conclusions are different from the conclusions of Gagnon, Wright and Mouw. Rogers does not believe Paul is referring to the order of creation in his reference to “unnatural.” Rogers posits that Paul is using “unnatural” as a synonym for “unconventional” which Rogers defines as “surprisingly out of the ordinary.”¹¹⁰ He continues this argument:

The most significant evidence that “natural” meant “conventional” is that God did something very unusual by pruning the Gentiles from a wild olive tree, where they grew in their natural state, and grafting them into the cultivated olive tree of God’s people (Rom. 11:24). Since it cannot be that God sinned, to say that God did what is “contrary to nature” or “against nature” (v. 24) means that God did something surprising and out the ordinary. Paul is not talking in Romans 1:26-27 about a violation of the order of creation. In Paul’s vocabulary, “physis” (nature) is not a synonym for *Krisis* (creation). In speaking what is “natural,” Paul

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

is merely accepting the conventional view of people and how they ought to behave in the first-century Hellenistic-Jewish culture.¹¹¹

Rogers sees the Romans 1 text as articulating male gender dominance. He believes the patriarchal societies of Hebrew and Greek cultures, in which men were intended to maintain dominance over women, impact Paul's wording of the text. Because Paul understood the cultures he was addressing, he "uses the terms familiar in the Greek-speaking synagogues such as "impurity" (1:24) and "passions" (1:26) that denote erotic passions and uncontrolled desires."¹¹²

Martti Nissinen, Professor of Old Testament Exegesis at the University of Helsinki, concurs with Rogers' analysis. In commenting on the words of Romans 1:26, "Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural" Nissinen further states, "the phrase, "their women" is a clear indication of a gender role structure."¹¹³ He goes on to say that Paul's understanding of the naturalness of men and women's gender roles is not a matter of genital formation, function and purpose. Nissinen's argument goes against some traditional scholars' understanding of the Romans 1 passage. Gagnon, for example, hinges a major point of his argument for what Paul means by the words natural and unnatural on genital formation, function and purpose. For Rogers and Nissinen, Paul is addressing a culture in which men and women had designated roles in society.

An example of how easy it is to read into the text through one's own filters is seen in the phrase from Romans 1:27 "Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural..." Gagnon, Mouw and Wright all read this as referring to female-female

¹¹¹ Ibid., 77-78.

¹¹² Ibid., 78.

¹¹³ Martti Nissinen, *Homoeroticism in the Biblical World: a Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 107.

genital sex. The text does not clearly say this. If the arguments of Rogers, Nissinen, Nelson and other Progressive Scholars are correct, the text could be referring to a female taking the dominant position in the male-female sexual act or engaging in non-procreative sexual relations with her male partner going against a culture that believed women should be passive and not active during sex.

Rogers, summarizing his argument of the Romans 1, states that “Heterosexual sex can either be moral or immoral depending on its context. The same is true of homosexual sex... Paul’s condemnation of immoral sexual behavior is not appropriately applied to contemporary gay or lesbian Christians who are not idolaters, who love God, and who seek to live in thankful obedience to God.”¹¹⁴ Jeffrey Siker, professor of New Testament at Loyola Marymount University, addresses the subject of homosexuality and Christian faith by stating, “We know of gay and lesbian Christians who truly worship and serve the one true God and yet still affirm in positive ways their identity as gay and lesbian people. Paul apparently knew of no homosexual Christians. We do.”¹¹⁵

Dan O. Via, in his exegesis of Paul’s words regarding homosexuality in Romans 1, focuses on Paul’s understanding (or lack thereof) of homosexual orientation. Via acknowledges that Paul interprets same-sex genital relations as impurity (1:24). Not impurity in the same sense of the Old Testament Purity Code but as sin. Paul attributes the source of same-sex genital relations to excessive lust, “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves...For this reason, God gave them up to degrading passions” (1:24-26). Paul

¹¹⁴ Jack Bartlett Rogers, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*, 79.

¹¹⁵ Jeffrey S. Siker, “Gentile Wheat and Homosexual Christians: New Testament Directions for the Heterosexual Church,” in *Biblical Ethics and Homosexuality: Listening to Scripture*, ed. Robert L. Brawley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 143.

obviously regards homosexuality as chosen willfully by the individual and contrary to God's created natural order, "... Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another" (1:26b-27).

For Via, Paul's statements create a lot of questions. "Are homosexuals as a whole more consumed with lust than heterosexuals? In view of the high probability of the reality of a homosexual orientation, can we think of homosexuality as simply chosen? And what about "contrary to nature?"¹¹⁶ Via summarizes his position below:

Paul seems to have agreed with the generally held belief of the ancient world that there is only one sexual nature, what we would call a heterosexual nature. Therefore, what he is condemning as contrary to nature is homosexual acts by people with a heterosexual nature. His implied underlying principle is that if people choose to actualize their sexuality, their acts should be in accord with their nature of orientation. If Paul then could be confronted with the reality of homosexual orientation, consistency would require him to acknowledge the naturalness of homosexual acts for people with a homosexual orientation.¹¹⁷

Via's progression of thought is logical. It leads him to believe that if Paul could know what we know now about sexual orientation, he (Paul) would be required to acknowledge the "naturalness of homosexual acts." While this may have merit with younger evangelicals, many traditional scholars who may acknowledge homosexuality as an orientation/nature believe that acting on their nature is sinful.¹¹⁸

The late Walter Wink, Professor of Biblical Interpretation at Auburn Theological Seminary from 1976 until his death in 2012, interprets the Romans 1 passage from a

¹¹⁶ Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 14-15.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ For example, Tony Campolo acknowledges that homosexuality is an orientation and not a choice. While going as far as to advocate homosexuals living in community yet remaining celibate, Campolo believes that homosexuals acting on their nature are committing sin – a conviction that he bases on Romans 1:26-27.

progressive point of view. He makes the following point in regards to The Apostle Paul and his cultural understanding of homosexuality:

No doubt Paul was unaware of the distinction between sexual orientation, over which one has apparently no choice, and sexual behavior, over which one does. He seems to assume that those he condemned were heterosexuals who were acting contrary to nature, “leaving,” “giving up,” or “exchanging” their regular sexual orientation for that which is foreign to them. Paul knew nothing of the modern psychosexual understanding of homosexuals as persons whose orientation is fixed early in life or perhaps even genetically in some cases. For such persons, having heterosexual relations would be acting contrary to nature, “leaving,” “giving up,” or “exchanging” their natural sexual orientation for that was unnatural to them. Paul believed that everyone was straight. He had no concept of homosexual orientation. The idea was not available in his world. There are people who are genuinely homosexual by nature (the exact cause no one really knows, and it is irrelevant). For such a person it would be acting contrary to their nature to have sexual relations with a person of the opposite sex.

Likewise, the relationships Paul describes are heavy with lust; they are not relationships between consenting adults who are committed to each other as faithfully and with as much integrity as any heterosexual couple. That was not something that Paul could simply envision... And Paul believes that homosexual behavior is contrary to nature, whereas we have learned that it is manifested by a wide variety of species, especially (but not solely) under the pressure of overpopulation. It would appear then to be a quite natural mechanism for preserving species. We cannot, of course decide human ethical conduct solely on the basis of animal behavior or the human sciences, but Paul here is arguing from nature, as he himself says, and new knowledge of what is “natural” is therefore relevant to the case.¹¹⁹

Wink diverts from some progressive biblical interpreters. While he would likely agree with Nelson, Via, Rogers and other progressive scholars, he agrees with the traditionalists that the Bible condemns homosexuality. He appeals to understanding these passages similar to how Christians today interpret pro-slavery passages in the Bible:

Where the Bible mentions homosexual behavior at all, it clearly condemns it. I freely grant that. The issue is precisely whether the biblical judgment is correct. The Bible sanctioned slavery as well and nowhere attacked it as unjust. Are we prepared to argue today that slavery is biblically justified? One hundred and fifty years ago, when the debate over slavery was raging, the Bible seemed to be clearly on the slaveholder’s side. Abolitionists were pressed to justify their

¹¹⁹ Walter Wink, ed., *Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Questions of Conscience for the Churches* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1999), 36-37.

oppression of slavery on biblical grounds. Yet today, if you were to ask Christians in the South whether the Bible sanctioned slavery, virtually every one would agree that it does not. In the same way, fifty years from now people will look back in wonder that the churches could be so obtuse and so resilient to the new thing the Holy Spirit was doing among us regarding homosexuality.

What happened to bring about such a monumental shift on the issue of slavery was that the churches were finally driven to penetrate beyond the legal tenor of scripture to an even deeper tenor, articulated by Israel out of the experience of the Exodus and the prophets and brought to sublime embodiment in Jesus' identification with harlots, tax collectors, the diseased and the maimed and outcast and poor. It is that God sides with the powerless. God liberates the oppressed. God suffers with the suffering, and groans toward the reconciliation of all things. Therefore, Jesus went out of his way to declare forgiven, and to regenerate into society in all details, those who were identified as "sinners" by the virtues of the accidents of birth, or biology, or economic desperation. In light of that spiritual compassion, whatever our position on gays, the gospel's imperative to love, care for, and be identified with their sufferings is unmistakably clear.¹²⁰

4. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

"Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

This passage is a subject of much debate because of the inclusion of male prostitutes and sodomites in Paul's list of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God.

a. The Traditional Position Argument

Gagnon does not see Paul's mentioning of male prostitutes and sodomites as an isolated view. "Paul's strong opposition to same sex intercourse is no more an isolated view than his intense rejection of incest (1 Cor. 5)."¹²¹ Gagnon believes that 1 Cor. 6:9-10 clearly prohibits all male-male intercourse.¹²² He sees Paul's use of these terms

¹²⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹²¹ Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 75.

¹²² Ibid., 82.

μαλακοὶ (*malakoi* – male prostitutes) and ἀρσενικοῖται (*arsenokotai* – sodomites) as Paul deliberately connecting these verses with the Leviticus 18 and 20 passages discussed earlier. Gagnon states, “...the pairing of *arsenokotai* with *malakoi* in 1 Cor. 6:9 suggests that *arsenokotai* refers to the active homosexual partner, at least primarily... The inclusive sense further confirmed by Rom. 1:27, surely is the best commentary on what *arsenokotai* would have meant for Paul.”¹²³ For Gagnon, this passage is proof that Paul was including any type of homosexual relations in his condemnation. Concerning sexual orientation, Gagnon states, “Issues of sexual orientation would have been irrelevant to Paul because the Spirit of Christ was present within to counteract the domination of any sinful impulses operating in the flesh.”¹²⁴

Gagnon argues that the Context of 1 Cor. 5-7 sheds additional light on the inclusive sense of the Terms *malakoi* and *arsenokotai*. He argues that the vice list in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 is a continuation of chapter 5 (the incestuous man). Paul sees a close connection between incest and same sex intercourse interpreting both as being sex with the “flesh of one’s own flesh” (Lev 18:6).¹²⁵

Stan Grenz is not clear that 1 Cor. 6 condemns all same-sex relationships. He acknowledges that many exegetes disagree as to the meaning of the passage. He states: “As his subsequent discussion indicates, Paul was convinced that the only proper context

¹²³ Ibid., 83.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 83.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 84-87.

for sexual intercourse was heterosexual marriage. The Apostle apparently did not see any reason to elaborate further why homosexual behavior violated this basic view.”¹²⁶

b. The Progressive Position Argument

J. Paul Sampley, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Boston University School of Theology, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, argues that Paul’s discussion of male-male sex in this passage refers only to exploitative sexual relationships and does not speak to what would be referred to today as committed homosexual relationships. Like Gagnon, Sampley focuses on the two Greek terms found in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – *μαλακοι* (*malakoi*) and *αρσενικοκοιται* (*arsenokoitai*).” Sampley reaches a different conclusion from the traditional scholars. He states, “The first term is used, when describing cloth, to mean “soft” but in more general use it was pejoratively used in the contemporary culture to describe a man who was not adequately “manly” (cf. 16:13); in the cases of homosexual relations, it was used to describe the more passive one. Obviously, it would have been applied to the young boy involved with an older man. The second term was applied to men who engaged in pederasty or were sodomites; accordingly, the term was used to describe the more active male.”¹²⁷ Sampley discusses the commonality of men in Greek and Roman times keeping a boy for the man’s personal pleasure or a young girl for the pleasure of a woman. Sampley writes:

Sometimes the kept person was a slave, who by definition would have no choice, but there were also boys who solicited sex with elders for pay. For the most part these relationships caught no special attention. Around Paul’s time,

¹²⁶ Grenz, *Welcoming but Not Affirming*, 59.

¹²⁷ Paul Sampley, “Introduction, Commentary and Reflections on the First Letter to the Corinthians.” *The New Interpreter's Bible: General Articles and Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, Vol. X. Edited by Leander Keck, Bruce Burch, David Peterson and John Collins. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994-2004), 10:858-59.

however, certain prominent moralists had begun to note the more extreme, exploitative cases and to object to them. All of these instances consider abuses; none of those texts concerns itself with relationships in which there is not exploitation.¹²⁸

5. Jesus' Silence

What does one make of the fact that Jesus does not directly discuss the issue of homosexuality? What is the significance of Jesus' silence for Christians today when considering the idea of same sex committed relationships? These questions will be studied by examining them from the traditional and progressive perspectives. We begin by looking at the traditional position.

a. The Traditional Position Argument

Many traditionalists believe that Jesus silence does not make a convincing argument in favor of acceptance of homosexual relationships. A common argument for traditionalists concerning Jesus' silence focuses on the fact that other important issues were not discussed by Jesus. For example, Jesus never discussed incest. Most, if not all progressive Christians, would agree that incest is a sin and condemned by God.

Stanley Grenz argues that even though Jesus does not mention homosexuality directly, Jesus does condemn all sexual immorality. Grenz cites Mark 7 as an example of Jesus' blanket condemnation of sexual immorality:

²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.' (Mark 7:21-23).

Grenz includes homosexuality in his own list of sexual immorality. He states, "What Jesus meant by immorality we can only conjecture, but nowhere did he condone

¹²⁸ Ibid.

genital sexual activity outside the context of a lifelong heterosexual commitment.”¹²⁹ He goes on to state, “In fact the only other option he mentioned other than marriage was celibacy (Matt. 19:11-12).”¹³⁰ Grenz believes that whenever Jesus discussed human sexuality, he always appealed to God’s intention in creation. He cites two examples of Jesus appealing to God’s intention in creation: Mark 10:11-12; Matt 19:4-9.¹³¹

Progressive scholars in arguing Jesus’ inclusiveness and acceptance of homosexuals include what is commonly referred to as the love commandment of Jesus:

³⁰you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. ³¹The second is this, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31).

Robert Gagnon engages the progressive’s use of Jesus’ love commandment as a pivotal passage for their argument. He offers five reasons why Jesus’ love commandment should not be interpreted to mean the acceptance of homosexual relationships.¹³²

First, Gagnon argues that progressive scholars falsely equate love with behavioral tolerance. He cites Jesus’ harshness toward divorce, remarriage and adultery, “Jesus took an already narrow understanding in the Hebrew Scriptures and narrowed it further.”¹³³

Second, Gagnon believes that the Progressive’s argument suppresses the first great commandment. He states “This approach usually collapses the great and first

¹²⁹ Grenz, *Welcoming but Not Affirming*, 60-61.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Via and Gagnon, *Homosexuality and the Bible*, 51-52.

¹³³ Ibid.

commandment (Matt 22:38), love of God, into the second, love of neighbor, and then defines the latter to embrace behavior that Scripture categorically rejects.”¹³⁴

Third, Gagnon argues that making this argument overlooks the intertextual echo to Lev. 19:18.¹³⁵ He reminds the Progressives that Jesus references Leviticus 19:18 in the love commandment when he says, “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31). Gagnon finds it incongruent for Progressives to use Jesus’ love commandment as an argument for embracing homosexuality when Jesus quotes from the Holiness Code which condemns homosexuality. Gagnon concludes this point with the words:

Love never takes personally a wrong committed. Yet love often entails reproving one another in order to reclaim that person for God’s kingdom. If a child is about to touch a hot stove it is not loving to withhold warnings.¹³⁶

Fourth, Gagnon argues that the Progressives falsely see an antithesis between outreach to sinners and intensified ethics.¹³⁷ He states that even though Jesus reached out in love to tax collectors and sinners, he did not compromise his ethics and expects his followers to do the same.

Fifth and finally, the Progressive’s argument using the love commandment does not cohere with the theme of judgment in Jesus’ teaching.¹³⁸ Gagnon argues that one fourth of the sayings of Jesus are judgment sayings. For Gagnon, Jesus’ words concerning denying one’s self and following him are found in all four New Testament Gospels (Mark 8:34-37; Matt 10:38-39, Luke 14:27, John 12:25). These words are also

¹³⁴ Ibid., 51.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 52.,

found in the Gospel of Thomas (55:20). “Along the same lines: if one’s hand, foot, or eye threatens to be one’s downfall, one should cut it off; for it is better to do that than to have one’s whole person thrown into hell (Matt 5:29-30; Mark 9:43-48).”¹³⁹ For Gagnon, these sayings are among Jesus’ strongest words and clearly show Jesus’ judgment upon one who refuses to deny oneself.

b. The Progressive Position Argument

Walter Wink makes much of the fact of Jesus’ silence concerning the issue of homosexuality. He argues that while the Old Testament permitted divorce (Deut 24:1-4); Jesus forbids it (Mark 10:1-12). Many Christians are divorced even though divorce is a clear violation of Jesus’ command for his followers. Not only are divorced Christians baptized and become members of the Church, they also participate in communion and are ordained as clergy. Divorced Christians believe they are eligible for full participation in the church and at the same time exclude homosexuals from participating in the church. Wink asks, “What makes the one so much greater a sin than the other, especially considering the fact that Jesus never mentioned homosexuality but explicitly condemned divorce?”¹⁴⁰ For Wink, logic would lead the same church that accepts, ordains and marries people who have been divorced to accept, ordain and marry homosexuals.

Wink appeals to the love ethic of Jesus as an ethical guide to navigate a healthy understanding of the sexual relationships. He states the following:

So we must critique sexual mores of any given time and clime by the love ethic exemplified by Jesus. Such a love ethic is non-exploitative (hence no sexual exploitation of children, no using of another to his or her loss); it does not dominate (hence no patriarchal treatment of women as chattel); it is responsible,

¹³⁹ Ibid., 52-23.

¹⁴⁰ Wink, *Homosexuality and Christian Faith*, 41.

mutual, caring, and loving. Augustine already dealt with this in his inspired phrase, “Love God and do as you please.”

Our moral task then is to apply Jesus’ love ethic to whatever sexual mores are prevalent in a given culture. This doesn’t mean everything goes. It means that everything is to be critiqued by Jesus’ love commandment. . . . We can challenge both gays and straights to question their behaviors in the light of love and the requirements of fidelity, honesty, responsibility, and genuine concern for the best interests of the other and of society as a whole.

Christian morality, after all is not an iron chastity belt for repressing urges, but a way of expressing the integrity of our relationship with God. It is the attempt to discover a manner of living that is consistent with who God created us to be. For those of same-sex orientation, as for heterosexuals, being moral means rejecting sexual mores that violate their own integrity, and that of others, and attempting to discover what it would mean to live by the love ethic of Jesus.¹⁴¹

iv. CONCLUDING THEOLOGICAL THOUGHTS

Having examined six highly debated biblical passages that address in some way the issue of same sex genital relations, we now consider some concluding remarks.

Looking at each passage from a traditional and a progressive interpretation makes clear the passion that exists on both sides of the issue.

No matter what side one may take on the subject of homosexuality and its compatibility with the Christian faith, the love ethic of Jesus must be central. We have looked at two interpretations regarding the significance of Jesus’ silence regarding the issue of homosexuality. While Jesus may have been silent on this particular issue, he was very clear and vocal that his followers must treat one another with respect, love, and value the image of God within every person. At the very least we are called to act as a follower of Christ when we engage in conversations with those with whom we disagree. Civil dialogue and holy listening is key to our future survival as a relevant church.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 45.

CHAPTER FOUR

CRITICAL EVALUATION

The work of this project was carried out from October 8 to December 11, 2014. This chapter will critically evaluate the research that was completed during this time. The measuring instruments that were used in this research included participant interviews, pre and post curriculum surveys, reflective writing, and weekly evaluations of seminars.

a. DEMOGRAPHICS

The focus group participants consisted of eight persons who had applied for and were accepted into a unit of CPE at CaroMont Health. All eight were Protestants made up of four SBC, two UMC, one Episcopal, and one ELCA Lutheran. There were a variety of ages represented with the youngest being twenty-five-years-old and the oldest being seventy-one-years-old. Three members of the group were in the 45 to 54 year-old age group. Two were in the 55 to 64 year-old age group and two members were in the 65 to 74 year-old age group. The focus group was evenly divided between males and females (4 each). Five self-identified themselves as being of white or Euro-American heritage and three of black or African-American heritage.

The Control Group was made up of nine local clergypersons from the Gastonia area. These individuals provided a baseline sample of area clergy theological perspectives on the subject of sexuality and willingness to engage in civil dialogue. Three members self-identified as Progressive and six self-identified as Traditional. All were Protestants (SBC, Alliance of Baptists, Nazarene, Non-Denominational, ELCA Lutheran, Pentecostal Holiness, Foursquare and PCA Presbyterian). A variety of ages were represented with the youngest being 32-years-old and the oldest being 72-years-old. Four individuals were in

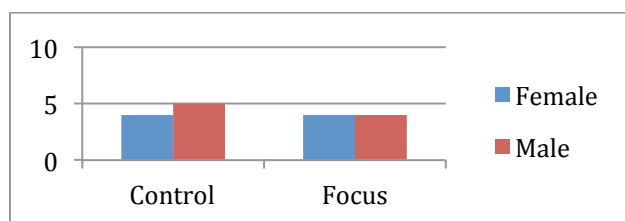
the 45 to 54 year-old age group, and three were in the 55 to 64 year-old age group. Four were female and five were male. Six identified themselves as being of white or Euro-American heritage and three of black or African-American heritage.

This researcher used the chi-squared (X^2) test formula to evaluate whether there was a significant difference between the focus and control group that would skew the results of the survey and interview data.¹⁴² Looking at gender differences between the two groups and examining the chi-squared results ($X^2 = .04$, $p > .01$) show that the gender differences between the focus and control groups are not significant. In looking at differences in theological positions regarding homosexuality and Christian faith and examining the chi-squared results ($X^2 = 1.45$; $p > .05$) show no significant difference between the focus and control groups. The same was true in regards to applying the X^2 formula to the racial make-up of the groups ($X^2 = 0.039$; $p > .05$), which showed no significant difference. The graphs below provide a visual for seeing the close demographical and theological similarity between the two groups,

The Control and Focus Groups

Gender

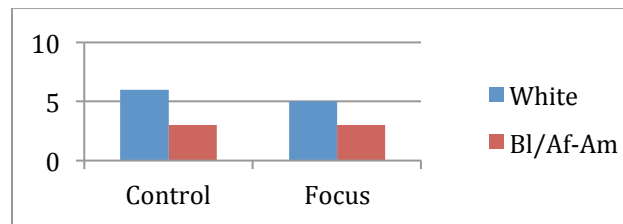
	Control	Focus
Female	4	4
Male	5	4



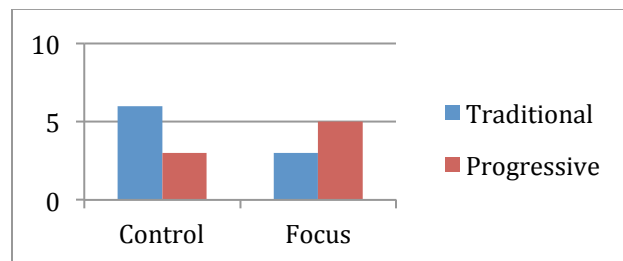
¹⁴² The chi-squared formula was used for the control and focus groups with the help of Dr. Bonnie Wright, Vice President and Psychology Professor at Limestone College, Gaffney SC. Dr. Wright and this researcher met twice to look at the qualitative data, determine its reliability and the significance of results.

Race

	Control	Focus
White	6	5
Bl/Af-Am	3	3

**Theological Position regarding Homosexuality and the Christian Faith**

	Control	Focus
Traditional	6	3
Progressive	3	5

**b. PRE-CURRICULUM AND POST CURRICULUM SURVEY INSTRUMENTS**

(Instruments may be found in Appendix 1)

Table 4.1. Pre Curriculum Survey for Focus Group and Control

Question	Focus	Control
Pre-Curriculum		
1. Which of the following best describes your biblical/theological position regarding homosexuality and Christian Faith? Answer Choices: Traditional or Progressive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant Scores: Traditional (3), Progressive (5). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant Scores: Traditional (6), Progressive (3).

<p>2. How much biblical knowledge do you have to support your theological view of sexuality?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.13 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>3: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>4: 5 (62.5%)</p> <p>5: 2 (25.0%)</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.67 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>4: 3 (33.33%)</p> <p>5: 6 (66.67%)</p>
<p>3. How much anxiety do you have about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 2.88 Standard Deviation: 1.27 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>1: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>2: 3 (37.5%)</p> <p>3: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>4: 2 (25.0%)</p> <p>5: 1 (12.5%)</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 2.11 Standard Deviation: 0.57 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>1: 1 (11.11%)</p> <p>2: 6 (66.67%)</p> <p>3: 2 (22.22%)</p>
<p>4. How much theological understanding do you have of those who hold a differing biblical/theological view of homosexuality and Christian faith?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 3.63 Standard Deviation: 0.70 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>3: 4 (50.0%)</p> <p>4: 3 (37.5%)</p> <p>5: 1 (12.5%)</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.11 Standard Deviation: 0.57 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>3: 1 (11.11%)</p> <p>4: 6 (66.67%)</p> <p>5: 2 (22.22%)</p>
<p>5. How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality that is different than your own?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.75 Standard Deviation: 0.43 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>4: 2 (25.0%)</p> <p>5: 6 (75.0%)</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.33 Standard Deviation: 0.94 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>2: 1 (11.11%)</p> <p>4: 3 (33.33%)</p> <p>5: 5 (55.56%)</p>
<p>6. How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion concerning homosexuality and Christian faith with someone who is gay, lesbian, or transgendered?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.75 Standard Deviation: 0.43 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>4: 2 (25.0%)</p> <p>5: 6 (75.0%)</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.67 Standard Deviation: 0.47 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>4: 3 (33.33%)</p> <p>5: 6 (66.67%)</p>

Quantitative Analysis

The Pre-Curriculum survey above was given to both the focus group and control group before beginning the seven-week group process. A five point, self-assessment Likert scale was used to measure the answers to each of the six questions. An explanation of each answer choice is shown above in Table 4.1.

Question 2 asked, “How much biblical knowledge do you have to support your theological view of sexuality?” The focus group (CPE Group) had a mean score of 4.13 while the control group (local clergy) had a mean score of 4.67. Only two of eight in the focus group chose a 5 (much) while six of nine chose 5 (much) in the control group. Similar scoring differences can be noted in responses to question 4, “How much theological understanding do you have of those who hold a differing biblical/theological view of homosexuality and Christian faith?” The focus (CPE) group had a mean score of 3.63 while the control group had a mean score of 4.11. Since there is no way to make positive conclusions regarding the significant differences in these scores, asking for a narrative explanation of the answer may have provided some explanation. One possible explanation for the differences in the scores concerns the nature of CPE education. The focus group was comprised of eight CPE students who are a part of the group, at least theoretically, for the purpose of learning and growing as a pastor and person.

Question 3 asked the question, “How much anxiety do you have about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view?” The focus (CPE) group scored a mean score of 2.88 while the control group (local clergy) scored a mean score of 2.11. While acknowledging the small sample limits the analysis of this question, it may be significant that the focus group claims more anxiety than the control group.

CPE encourages self-assessment of anxiety and asks the students to look at the meaning and value of the anxiety. This may offer one explanation why the focus group claimed more anxiety concerning discussing their own view of homosexuality with someone who holds a different view. It is also noteworthy that the focus group was about to begin a seven-week process of doing what is described in this question.

Question 5 dealt with the possibility of civil dialogue with someone holding a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith. On this question the focus group scored higher (4.75) than the control group (4.33). The lower score was affected by one clergy-person who identified herself as progressive and scored a 2 on this question. This individual stated to the researcher that she had given up hope of civil dialogue between two clergypersons with differing opinions on this issue. She stated that her previous attempts to have conversations with clergy holding different opinions had been hurtful. Her response reminds us of those on both sides of this issue who have scars from previous conversations/arguments concerning homosexuality. One must not lose sight of the fact that in both the focus and control group, the scores suggest that there is optimism and confidence that exists on the part of clergypersons for civil dialogue with those who believe differently (question 5) and with those who are LGBT (Question 6).

Table 4.2 Post Curriculum Survey 1 for Focus Group

Question	Focus Group
1. Which of the following best describes your biblical/theological position regarding homosexuality and Christian Faith? Answer Choices: Traditional or Progressive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant Scores: Traditional (5), Progressive (3).
2. How much biblical knowledge did you have before our group began to support your theological view of homosexuality? Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much	Group Score: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.0 Standard Deviation: 0.71 Participant Scores: 3: 2 (25.0%)

	<p>4: 4 (50.0%) 5: 2 (25.0%)</p>
<p>3. How much biblical/theological knowledge do you have now to support your theological view of homosexuality?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.88 Standard Deviation: 0.33 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>4: 1 (12.5%) 5: 7 (87.5%)</p>
<p>4. How much anxiety did you have before our group sessions began about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 3.25 Standard Deviation: 0.83 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>2: 2 (25.0%) 3: 2 (25.0%) 4: 4 (50.0%)</p>
<p>5. How much anxiety do you have now about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 2.25 Standard Deviation: 0.83 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>1: 1 (12.5%) 2: 5 (62.5%) 3: 1 (12.5%) 4: 1 (12.5%)</p>
<p>6. How much biblical theological understanding did you have before the group session began concerning homosexuality and Christian faith views that were different from your own?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 3.38 Standard Deviation: 0.48 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>3: 5 (62.5%) 4: 3 (37.5%)</p>
<p>7. How much biblical theological understanding do you have now concerning homosexuality and Christian faith views that are different from your own?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.50 Standard Deviation: 0.50 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>4: 4 (50.0%) 5: 4 (50.0%)</p>
<p>8. How much confidence did you have before our group sessions began that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality that is different that your own?</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.25 Standard Deviation: 0.66 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>3: 1 (12.5%) 4: 4 (50.0%) 5: 3 (37.5%)</p>
<p>9. How much confidence do you have now that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mean: 4.88 Standard Deviation: 0.33

homosexuality that is different from your own? Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much	Participant Scores: 4: 1 (12.5%) 5: 7 (87.5%)
10. How much confidence did you have before our group began that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion about homosexuality and the Christian faith with someone who is Gay, Lesbian, or Transgendered? Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much	Group Score: • Mean: 3.75 • Standard Deviation: 0.43 Participant Scores: 3: 2 (25.0%) 4: 6 (75.0%)
11. How much confidence do you have now that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion about homosexuality and the Christian faith with someone who is Gay, Lesbian, or Transgendered? Answer Choices: 1: None; 2: Very Little; 3 A Little; 4: Some; 5: Much	Group Score: • Mean: 4.75 • Standard Deviation: 0.43 Participant Scores: 4: 2 (25.0%) 5: 6 (75.0%)

The post-curriculum survey above (table 4.2) was given to the focus group following completion of the seven-week curriculum. A five point, self-assessment Likert scale was used to measure the answers to each of the eleven questions. An explanation of each answer choice is shown above with each question. The purpose of this survey was to measure any changes that may have taken place as a result of the seven-week group process. In this survey, questions were asked of each participant calling for a self-assessment of changes that had taken place after completing the curriculum.

A notable change occurred with two individuals who changed their self-assessment of progressive/traditional (question 1). One individual who earlier self-assessed herself as Traditional, changed her self-assessment to Progressive at the end of the process. Another individual changed his self-assessment from Progressive to Traditional. This significant change will be discussed later in this chapter.

Questions 2 and 3 asked individuals to compare their biblical/theological knowledge of homosexuality before and after the group process. The change in scores

from before (4.0) and after (4.88) suggests a notable increase in biblical/theological knowledge. Two individuals rated their pre-biblical/theological knowledge at “2- Very Little” (25%), four at “4-Some” (50%) and only two at “5-Much” (25%). In question 3 the individuals ranked their post-biblical/theological knowledge at a score that shows an increase in knowledge. Only one individual scored a “4-Some” (12.5%) while seven individuals ranked their biblical/theological knowledge at “5-Much” (87.5%). This was an outcome that affirms the curriculum as having been effective in increasing the individuals’ biblical/theological knowledge of homosexuality.

Questions 4 and 5 were designed to measure any before and after changes in the participant’s level of anxiety concerning discussing one’s view of homosexuality with someone holding a different view. The self-assessment scores show a decrease in anxiety after completion of the group process. The participant’s score for their anxiety level before the group began was 3.25. The participant’s score for their anxiety level at the end of the group process was 2.25. Before the group process began, 4 individuals (50%) rated their anxiety at “4-Some.” Two (25%) rated their anxiety at “3- A Little.” The scores for the post group time period were one individual (12.5%) rating a “1-None;” five (62.5%) rating themselves as “2-Very Little;” one (12.5%) rating him/herself as “3- A Little;” and one (12.5%) rating her/himself as a “4- Some.” The scores show a lowering of anxiety and more self-confidence regarding the person’s ability to discuss their views of homosexuality with those who believe differently.

Questions 6 and 7 were designed to measure the participants’ theological and biblical knowledge of differing views of homosexuality before and after completion of the process. The survey shows a notable increase in understanding. The group scored

their understanding prior to the group process at 3.38 and after the group process at 4.50 – an increase of the mean score by 1.12 points. The before scores had the following range: five (62.5%) rated their understanding level at “3- A Little;” and three (37.5%) rated a “4-Some.” The after scores had the following range: four (50%) rated their understanding level at “4- Some” and four rated their understanding level at “5-Much.” The scores for these questions help confirm the hypothesis of this project: That there would be an increased understanding of those holding differing biblical/theological views of homosexuality. The scores on these two questions suggest that this change took place.

Questions 8 – 11 were designed to measure the student’s experience of civil dialogue and how that experience may inspire confidence for future conversations with those who believe differently (questions 8 and 9) and with those who are LGBT (questions 10 and 11). The participants were asked in question 8 to rate their confidence before the group began in participating in civil dialogue with those who hold to different biblical and theological beliefs. The group score for question 8 was 4.25 with one individual (12.5%) rating a “3- A Little,” four (50%) rating a “4- Some” and three (37.5%) rating a “5 - Much.” The participants were asked in question 9 to rate their confidence following the group process to participate in civil dialogue with those holding a differing biblical/theological view. The group score was 4.88 with one person (12.5%) scoring a “4 – Some,” and seven (87.5%) scoring a “5 – Much.” In question 10, the group was asked before the group began to rate their confidence in having a civil dialogue with someone who is LGBT. On this question the group scored a 3.75 with two individuals (25%) scoring a “3 – A Little,” and six (75%) scoring a “4 – Some.” This was a .63 increase in the mean score from 4.25 to 4.88. Question 11 asked the individuals

to rate their confidence before the group began to participate in civil dialogue with someone who is LGBT. The group scored a 3.75 with two individuals (25%) scoring a “3 – A Little,” and six (75%) scoring a “4 – Some.” Question 12 asked the group to score their confidence at the conclusion of the process in engaging in civil dialogue with someone who is LGBT. The group scored a 4.75 with two individuals (25%) scoring a “4 – Some,” and six (75%) scoring a “5 – Much.” This was a 1.0 increase in the mean score from 3.75 to 4.75. We conclude from the outcome of these survey questions that the process resulted in a significant increase in the confidence of the participants in engaging in civil dialogue with those who believe differently and with those who are LGBT.

Table 4.3 Post Curriculum Survey 2 for Focus Group

Question	Focus Group
<p>1. As a result of this course/group process I have changed the way I look at myself.</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: Entirely Disagree; 2: Mostly Disagree; 3 Somewhat Disagree; 4: Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5: Somewhat Agree; 6 Mostly Agree; 7 Entirely Agree.</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean: 5.25 • Standard Deviation: 1.09 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>3: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>5: 4 (50%)</p> <p>6: 2 (25%)</p> <p>7: 1 (12.5%)</p>
<p>2. This course/group process has challenged some of my formerly held ideas.</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: Entirely Disagree; 2: Mostly Disagree; 3 Somewhat Disagree; 4: Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5: Somewhat Agree; 6 Mostly Agree; 7 Entirely Agree.</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean: 5.0 • Standard Deviation: 1.32 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>2: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>5: 5 (62.5%)</p> <p>7: 1 (12.5%)</p>
<p>3. During this course/group process I discovered faults in what I previously believed to be right.</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: Entirely Disagree; 2: Mostly Disagree; 3 Somewhat Disagree; 4: Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5: Somewhat Agree; 6 Mostly Agree; 7 Entirely Agree.</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean: 4.63 • Standard Deviation: 1.73 <p>Participant Scores:</p> <p>1: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>3: 1 (12.5%)</p> <p>5: 4 (50.0%)</p>
<p>4. As a result of this course/group process I have changed my normal way of thinking about homosexuality and Christian faith.</p> <p>Answer Choices: 1: Entirely Disagree; 2:</p>	<p>Group Score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mean: 4.63 • Standard Deviation: 1.73 <p>Participant Scores:</p>

Mostly Disagree; 3 Somewhat Disagree; 4: Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5: Somewhat Agree; 6 Mostly Agree; 7 Entirely Agree.	2: 2 (25.0%) 4: 1 (12.5%) 5: 2 (25.0%) 6: 2 (25.0%) 7: 1 (12.5%)
5. As a result of this course/group process I have changed my theological position concerning homosexuality and Christian faith. Answer Choices: 1: Entirely Disagree; 2: Mostly Disagree; 3 Somewhat Disagree; 4: Neither Agree nor Disagree; 5: Somewhat Agree; 6 Mostly Agree; 7 Entirely Agree.	Group Score: • Mean: 3.75 • Standard Deviation: 2.17 Participant Scores: 1: 1 (12.5%) 2: 2 (25.0%) 3: 2 (25.0%) 5: 1 (12.5%) 7: 2 (25.0%)

Qualitative Analysis

The post-curriculum survey above (table 4.3) was given to the focus group following completion of the curriculum. A seven point, self-assessment Likert scale was used to measure the answers to each of the five questions. An explanation of each answer choice is shown above. The purpose of this survey was to measure changes that may have taken place as a result of the process. In the survey, questions were asked of participants calling for a self-assessment of changes that had taken place after completing the curriculum.

Question 2 asked the group to respond to the following statement: “This course/group process has challenged some of my formerly held ideas.” 74% of the participants responded that they either “somewhat agree” (62.5%) or entirely agree (12.5%). The mean group score was 5.0. The answers suggest that seven of eight group members had their formerly held ideas challenged.

Question 4 asked the group to respond to the following statement: “As a result of this process I have changed my normal way of thinking about homosexuality and Christian faith.” The mean score for this question was 4.63. Two persons (25%) chose 5 “Somewhat Agree,” two (25%) chose 6 “Mostly Agree” and one (12.5%) chose 7

“Entirely Agree.” The scores suggest significant change on the part of most of the group (62.5%) in how the group members thought about homosexuality and Christian faith.

Question 5 asked the group to respond to the statement, “As a result of this course/group process I have changed my theological position concerning homosexuality and Christian faith.” Of the eight, one chose “5 – Somewhat agree” and two chose “7 – entirely agree.” Three (37.5%) selected answers suggesting a shift in theological position on the subject of homosexuality and Christian faith. This is significant and an outcome that the researcher did not expect. This shift will be explored more later in this chapter.

c. SEVEN WEEKLY SEMINAR EVALUATIONS

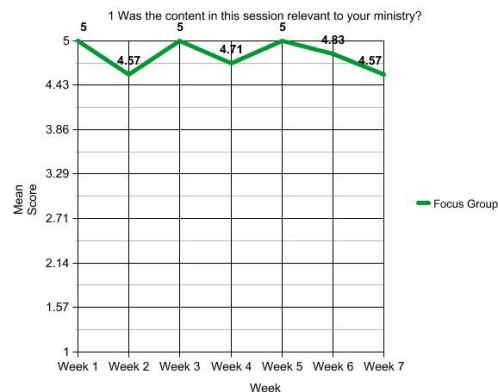
Weekly Table survey data and other analysis are found in Appendix 7.

At the end of each daylong seminar (one per week), the eight group participants completed an anonymous survey evaluating the seminars that had taken place that day. Ten questions were asked each week using a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, the participants were invited each week to answer 5 questions (question 11-15) with narrative answers. Compilations of these weekly seminar evaluation answers are found in the tables below. Following the tables below (table 4.4 – 4.10) a section will be devoted to a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data.

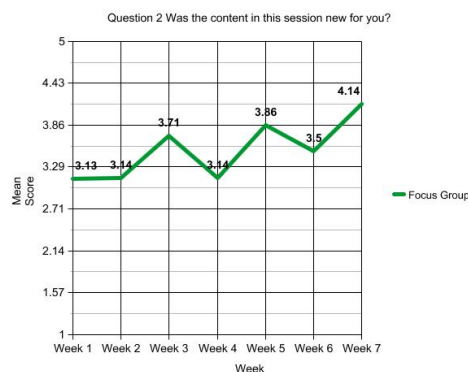
Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

Question one asked, “Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?” The graph below tracks the mean scores during the seven-week period. The average mean score for the group process was 4.81. Three of the seven weeks received a 5.0 score (highest score possible) and the lowest score received was a 4.57. The high scores and the comments made concerning this question show that the group found the seminar presentations relevant to ministry. The specific comments on this question suggested that

the seminars helped the group members to deepen their understanding of homosexuality and to relate to others who disagree and provide care for others.

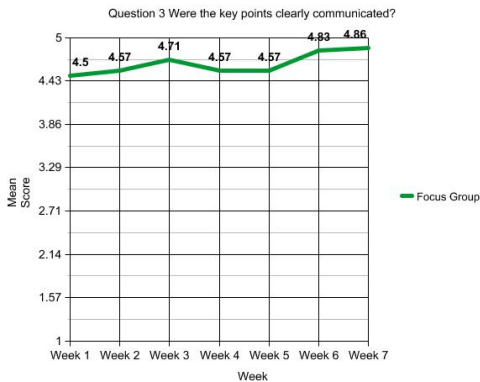


Question 2 asked, “Was the content in this session new for you? The graph below tracks the answers to this question throughout the process. The average mean score for the seven weeks was 3.52. Weeks one, two and four received lower scores. There were few specific comments explaining the lower scores with the exception of week 2 when there was a strong reaction from the majority of the group concerning the views of the guest speaker. The overall feedback and written comments suggests that all group members learned new information during the group process.

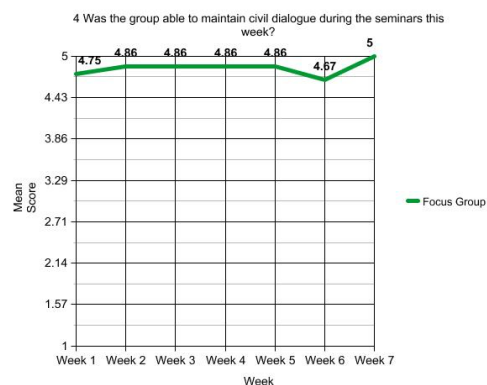


Question three asked, “Were the key points clearly communicated?” This question received consistently high scores. The graph below traces the scores for this question throughout the seven-weeks. The average group mean score was 4.66. The high

scores, as well as the specific comments associated with this question, affirm that the group's believed the key points were communicated clearly.



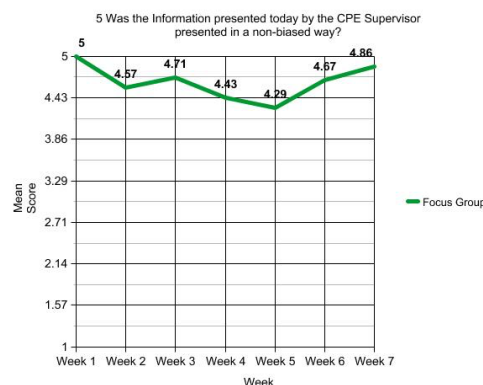
Question four asked, “Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars this week?” The graph below traces the scores for this question throughout the seven-week process. The average group mean score was 4.84. One of the main goals of this project was to create a safe and open space for civil dialogue. These high scores and specific comments made by group members showed that the group’s unanimous witness was that the group was able to participate in civil dialogue throughout the process. This subject will also be dealt with later in the chapter in the interview analysis.



Question five asked, “Was the information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?” The graph below traces the groups answer to this question throughout the seven-weeks. The average group mean score was 4.65. The

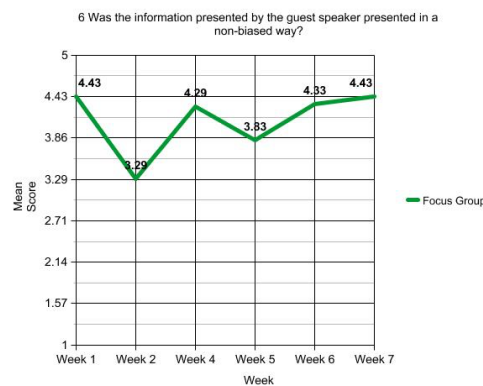
scores suggest that the group believed the CPE Supervisor/Researcher was able for the most part to maintain a non-bias perspective. It is worth noting that the CPE Supervisor – Researcher is not unbiased. While the Researcher believes a good effort was made to maintain a non-bias perspective there were times that were difficult for him.

This Researcher admits that he personally interprets the six highly debated passages of Scripture from a progressive viewpoint, which presented a challenge to the Researcher’s desire for a balanced project. A frequent criticism of qualitative research is that the bias of the Researcher may affect the results. There were safeguards which were incorporated in this project to insure that this project was as balanced as possible. These are discussed in more detail in the Means of Evaluation section of this paper. This Researcher has received extensive training in self-supervising techniques that aided in recognizing and transcending biases in the moment – what in Clinical Pastoral Education is frequently referred to as self-supervision. The goal of the Researcher was to maintain as neutral a position as possible during the project and for the most part this was accomplished.

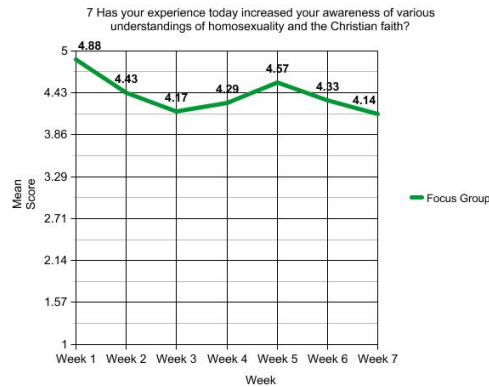


Question six asked, “Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?” This is a question that is not completely fair in that all six guest speakers were invited to share either a progressive Christian or traditional

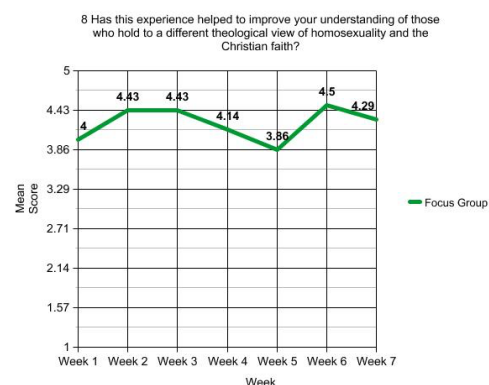
Christian perspective regarding homosexuality. It could be argued that the guest speakers were invited to present a one sided biased argument. Acknowledging the limits of this question, the scoring of the question by the participants is interesting. The average group mean score for this question is 4.1. The participants scored the guest speakers high most weeks. The two lowest scores were for the guest speakers on weeks two (3.29) and five (3.83). The controversial comments of the guest speaker on week two have been previously discussed and the score is not surprising. The low scoring of week five is more surprising. Three of the eight group members wrote specific comments about the guest speaker's effort to present a low-pressure argument of the progressive side.



Question seven asked, “Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?” The graph below traces the group's answer to that question. The group's average mean score was 4.40. The scores each week were over 4.14 (the lowest score). The high scores as well as specific comments concerning this question show clearly the participants belief that their awareness of various understandings of homosexuality has been expanded.

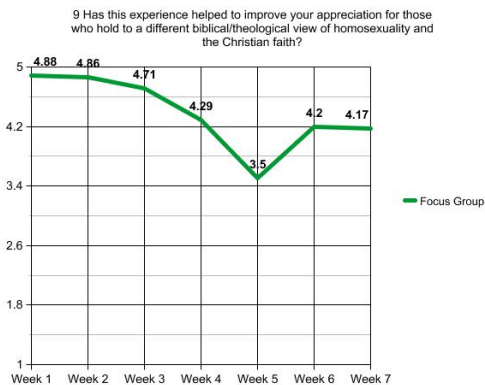


Question eight asked, “Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?” The average mean score for the seven-week process was 4.24. The scores and comments suggest that the group participants gained much understanding of different theological views toward homosexuality and Christian faith. In addition to the guest speakers, the biblical didactics presented both a traditional and a progressive viewpoint. The three books read by the students represented different theological views from both the traditional and the progressive viewpoint. The graph below traces the group scores on this question throughout the group process.

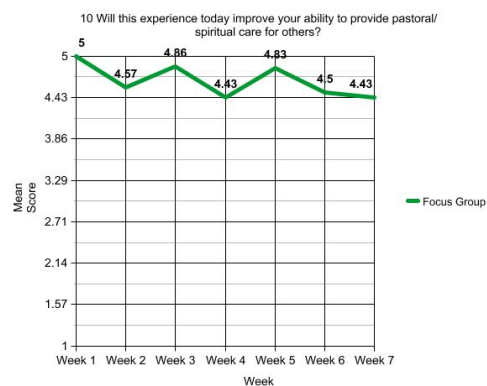


Question nine asked, “Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?” The average group mean score for this question was 4.37. The scores for

this question each week were high (over 4.17) with one exception (week 5). As a whole the group rated this question with a high score. Comments made elsewhere, including the interviews, support the conclusion that there was an increase in appreciation for those with differing theological/biblical beliefs regarding homosexuality.



Question 10 asked, “Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?” As the graph below shows, the participants scored this question high. The average mean score was 4.66. The lowest score was 4.43 and the highest score was a 5.0. Specifics comments concerning how the seminars helped improve the participant’s pastoral care will be explored further in question 12.



Question 11 asked participants to list three things that they learned or discovered as a result of the group process. For some traditional participants, it was the first time that they heard a presentation by a LGBT person sharing his/her personal theological and

biblical perspective. An important discovery for some of the participants was learning about sexual orientation and dialoging about nature verses nurture. The entire group saw one of the guest speakers representing the traditional view as extreme. His extreme views led to a healthy dialogue among the group concerning love, sin and judgment. Both traditional and progressive participants were challenged by the study of scriptural texts, readings and guest speakers. One important discovery made by all participants was that the group shared many core beliefs regarding all human beings created in the image of God. Question 11 was answered thoroughly each week by the participants suggesting the magnitude of growth and knowledge on the part of each participant.

Question 12 asked participants to list three ways the group experiences helped the participant in their pastoral/spiritual care. Comments included increased compassion, improved active listening for those who are LGBT as well those who hold different biblical/theological viewpoints, transporting learned skills for civil dialogue to the local church, being less judgmental, being more pastoral toward those who are rejected by others, getting to know a person opens the door for deeper understanding, valuing the opinions of others without writing them off, creating room for God to show the new things God is doing and to be more sensitive in ministry. One individual stated a desire to “listen actively, be less judgmental and accept others where they are on the journey.” All of these comments show clergyperson participants who are struggling to improve their skills and growing in their pastoral identity as compassionate caregivers.

Question 13 asked the participants to write about what they found most helpful during the seminars and group experiences. At the top of the list was the setting that existed for civil dialogue in which open and honest exchanges could take place. The

participants were exceedingly grateful for this experience. Other notable mentions were the guest speakers that included gay and lesbian clergy. There was an appreciation for the study of the biblical texts and other aspects of the curriculum.

The last question (14) asked the students to offer any suggestions for future seminars. Most stated that they would recommend more of the same. One participant suggested more time for reflection. Another recommended student led lectures on selected topics. One person suggested expanding the experiment of civil dialogue into other areas such as Christian-Muslim relations. Good ideas to consider for the future.

d. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

The interview questions focused particularly on the issue of the person's view of homosexuality and Christian faith. The interviews gave some understanding of how area Protestant clergy view the changing cultural values concerning sexuality.

i. Methodology

Eight CPE students making up the focus group were interviewed individually before the seven-week group process began. The focus group members were also interviewed after the completion of the group process. Nine clergypersons from the Gastonia area were interviewed individually. The control group provided a baseline sample of area clergy theological perspectives on the subject of sexuality.

The process for the interviews involved the researcher asking those being interviewed questions and writing the answers as completely as possible on paper. Occasionally those being interviewed were asked to elaborate more in order for the researcher to comprehend what was being stated. Interview questions concerning how the clergyperson interprets scripture were helpful in understanding how the person

approached LGBT persons from a Christian faith perspective. The answers to these questions helped the researcher determine whether the participants were working from a traditional or progressive approach. For further analysis we now look at the interview responses dealing with marriage, family and homosexuality.

ii. Understanding of Marriage, Family and Homosexuality

One of the early interview questions was, “What do you think of when you hear the words, family?” This question was asked before the subject of homosexuality had been raised in the interview. In almost every case, this question resulted in those being interviewed introducing the subject of homosexuality. The traditional clergy mentioned that their definition of family did not include homosexuals. The progressive clergy mentioned that their definition of family included gay couples and gay couples with children. This was an important reminder; at least as far as the 17 clergypersons interviewed that the subject of homosexuality is a powerful subject and one that continues to divide the faith community.

1. Focus Group Pre-Curriculum Interview

a. Traditional Clergy

The three members identifying themselves as traditional all described the family in terms of a male husband, female wife and children. This was also true of one clergy who identified himself as “progressive.” One person also included church family into her definition of family. Another included close friends as a part of family.

One individual who identified herself as traditional was a twenty-five-year-old United Methodist (UMC) female clergy in the early period of her clergy formation. She

stated that she thought the Bible should be taken literally. The reason she gave for considering herself a Traditionalist was her strong belief in sin, something she felt Progressives gloss over. She spoke of the need for holiness in the church. She said there was a need for church discipline for those in the fellowship who commit sinful acts. In regards to homosexuality and gay marriage, she stated, "I am against anything that goes against God's design of man and woman." She did believe that other genuine interpretations of the Bible were possible. She stated, "I try to be close to God and look at scripture through God's eyes, but I am human and some may have a clearer interpretation than I do." She did feel that she would be able to participate in civil dialogue discussing the subject of homosexuality and the Christian faith but expressed some concern as to how open others may be of her opinion.

An individual who identified himself as Traditional was a fifty-one year-old male who serves as a senior pastor of a Southern Baptist Church in the Gastonia area. He said, "Compared to the people in my congregation, I would be considered progressive." He stated, "I believe I am open to other people's views of faith and scripture and I don't have to hold on to tradition if my conscious tells me there is more truth to know." When asked about his thoughts on homosexuality and gay marriage he stated, "I don't believe God designed male and females to have homosexual relationships." He went on to say, "The thing I have most difficulty with comes down to Romans 1 where Paul uses the word depraved to describe homosexuals." When asked if someone else could look at the passage and arrive at another valid interpretation, he said, "I don't think so." He continued, "If they take the meaning of the words of Romans 1 seriously, it would be difficult for them to justify another interpretation." When this person was asked if he

could participate in a setting of civil dialogue where different opinions/interpretations concerning homosexuality were discussed he stated, “Yes, I want to understand and be understood and at the same time be true to my conscience.” When asked if he thought that in such a setting he could expand his understanding of homosexuality, he said, “Yes, I can appreciate the other person’s opinion while not embracing it as my own.”

The third individual who identified herself as traditional was a fifty-year-old Southern Baptist female who has been in ministry for nine years in various unpaid ministry positions. She is also a seminary student working on her M.Div. degree. When asked about her beliefs about the Bible, she stated, “The Bible is God’s inspired word.” She added, “Some stories can’t be taken literally as actually happened but it is our written spiritual guide to connect us to God.” When asked about her thoughts on family, she stated that she described the family in traditional terms of mother, father and children. When asked about homosexuality and gay marriage she said, “I believe a person has the right to be with or marry whomever they want but it is a sin and humans were not designed that way biblically.” When this person was asked if she could participate in a setting of civil dialogue where different opinions/interpretations concerning homosexuality were discussed she stated, “Yes, because I am not educated about this subject and I have read about it from a bias perspective.” When asked if she thought that in such a setting she could expand her understanding of homosexuality, she said, “Yes.”

b. Progressive Clergy

Among the five persons who identified themselves as progressive, a common theme of relationship was the central element of family. Four of the five progressives did not mention the traditional husband, wife and children as defining the family. Instead

comments such as the following were made by the progressives: “the broader human family – anyone with whom we are in close relationship;” “where people are loved and held and have a commitment to one another;” “those with whom you are in relationship;” “where one experiences relating, trust and dependence.”

One clergy person who identified himself as a progressive was an Episcopal male Deacon over seventy years old. He stated that he chose progressive as his self-identification largely because of his denomination identity. He mentioned the importance of the three-legged stool: scripture, tradition and reason. He said, “we are not literalists but we do see the scriptures as being inspired.” When asked why he did not choose “traditional” as his self-identification he stated, “I don’t believe we have a hell, fire and brimstone God – my God is a caring God.” When asked about the Bible he stated, “The Bible is very important although I am not a Bible thumper but the concepts are helpful.” When asked about interpretation he said, “At the beginning of the Bible you find two creation stories, which tells me that it is not to be taken literally – divinely inspired but human produced.” When asked about his thoughts concerning homosexuality he stated his belief that a person was born this way. “I don’t believe God puts people in untenable situations – that is something that we do.” He continued, “In scripture there is no condemnation on homosexuality per se, and gay persons are just as much God’s people as you and I are.” When asked about his thoughts on gay marriage he stated, “Marriage is sacred between two people in love and in a committed relationship.” He further stated, “It doesn’t necessarily mean two people of the opposite sex.” He affirmed that he would be open to listening to understandings of homosexuality and thought it would be beneficial but did not think there was any chance of his changing his mind.

Another clergyperson who self identified as a Progressive was a 57-year-old Southern Baptist Pastor of a church in the Gastonia area. While choosing progressive as the category that best describes how he approaches the subject of homosexuality, he stated that he was traditional in some areas as well. In terms of how he interprets the Bible he affirmed his holding to a view of inerrancy but said, “We can come to our own conclusions.” When he was asked about his view of family he described his understanding in the traditional terms of husband-wife, mother-father-children. When asked about homosexuality he described it as a sin but went on to say, “Homosexuality is not going away, it is a reality, I don’t think their lifestyle is any worse than anyone else and Christ’s crucifixion covers all sins –homosexual and heterosexual.” He affirmed his own confusion on the issue stating, “There is a lot about this that I don’t understand.” He went on to say, “I think there is a lot more going on in a person being gay than the family or life experiences – I don’t rule out the fact that the person is born this way.” When asked about same sex marriage he stated, “I don’t get into it, I don’t support it and I don’t condemn it.” He stated that he did have LGBT persons in the congregation and that it was not an issue. He said, “In the black church, if they don’t flaunt it, you don’t mess with them.” When asked what he meant by that statement he explained that in his church and in many African-American churches in his tradition, gay persons in the church are not uncommon and it is not an issue for the church as long as the person doesn’t want to take up the issue in the church in a peace and justice sort of way. When asked about the possibility of listening to other interpretations of homosexuality and the Christian faith he stated his openness to this idea and said, “I do think it is possible to have different interpretations – think of all the beliefs that we have different schools of thought.”

Another clergyperson who self-identified as a Progressive is a forty-six-year-old, United Methodist Church (UMC) Associate Pastor female in the ordination process with the UMC. She is a seminary student earning a Masters degree at a Methodist Seminary. When asked why she identified herself as a Progressive she said, “Because traditional, and I do have traditional affections, can box you in and result in a mindset that does not allow them to think outside the box.” She went on to say, “I embrace the term progressive because it allows me to listen to the Holy Spirit.” When asked about her view of the Bible she stated that, “the Bible is divine revelation, God’s gift offered through human mortals, holding authority for how to live our lives, but not the only authority.” She went on to say, “We have to read the Bible with our own experience and reason.” When asked about her own approach of biblical interpretation she stated, “The bible is written language with many layers and multiple messages – I don’t believe there is only one way to interpret it.” When asked about her understanding of family she defined family broadly saying, “Family is about connection, struggle, love – family is a unit where people are loved and held and taught.” When asked about her personal beliefs about homosexuality she stated, “My beliefs are evolving – I am still learning, listening, a little confused but open to the idea that I can find God in homosexuality.” She continued, “I am non-judgmental but still uncomfortable and grappling with scripture. When asked about same-sex marriage she used the same words “uncomfortable, but undecided.” She continued, “If two gay people are together, I would rather they be in a covenant relationship with one another.” When asked if interpretations that were different from her own was a possibility she replied, “Absolutely, we have not unpacked all of the sociological and psychological context of these passages.” She continued, “I can certainly see how

someone could look at these passages and interpret them traditionally – it could be a both-and.” She affirmed that she would be open in a safe setting of civil dialogue to explore different interpretations, share stories and be open to God’s grace.

Another clergyperson who self-identified as a Progressive is a sixty-one-year-old, SBC female chaplain. While not in a clergy role at her local church she attends services weekly and has served in various laity roles. For over 10 years, she has been employed as a hospital chaplain. She is also completing Masters level work at a Baptist seminary. When she was asked why she considered herself a progressive, she stated, “God chooses whom God wills for ministry – and I believe that there is someone for everyone and even possibly the same gender.” When she was asked about her approach to interpretation she stated, “I see myself believing that there are more interpretations than there are people.” She continued, “For me it is more relational – what God is inspiring me to learn and it is ever changing.” When asked about her thoughts about family she stated, “Traditional families come to mind although there is really no such thing – families have secrets about family members.” She continued, “Family are those who love and support you during times of sorrow and joy – those with whom you are in relationship.” When asked about her personal beliefs about homosexuality she stated, “I am still struggling with this but I don’t see God as one who would put these kind of urges in someone and then deny them the opportunity to follow through – everyone else can satisfy their sexual urges except homosexuals – I don’t see this.” When asked why she holds to these beliefs about homosexuality she said, “Because of the people I know and experienced their pain and stories.” When asked about her beliefs on same-sex marriage she stated, “Again, I don’t see anything wrong with committed partners who want to share their lives together.”

When asked about the possibility of Christians genuinely interpreting the passages regarding homosexuality differently than her own interpretation she replied, “Absolutely, my understanding is not the end all be all – my interpretation today may not be my interpretation in the future.” She stated that she would welcome the possibility of a setting of civil dialogue where homosexuality and faith could be discussed. She stated, “I like the concept of civil dialogue it is a give and take that will give me insight to questions I have had all along.”

The last member of the focus group who self-identified as a Progressive was a sixty-seven-year-old Lutheran (ELCA) male who was completing his last semester of M.Div. studies at a nearby seminary. When asked about his view of the Bible, he replied, “The Bible is the experience of the people – an inspired book, a book of authority, the basis for what I believe about God.” He went on to say, “The Bible is inspired but not inerrant, written by humans and therefore it allows for interpretation.” When asked about his beliefs about the family he stated, “The family is a collection of individuals, where there is trust, relating, cooperation and interdependence.” When asked about his personal beliefs about homosexuality he replied, “I have not always seen it as I see it today – being okay, I have had to make a lot of adjustments.” He continued, “A lot of my changing thoughts have come about as a result of meeting and getting to know people who are gay.” When I asked about his beliefs concerning same-sex marriage, he stated, “I wish they would not do it – I have not thought this through - I need to free myself from these feelings or to let my mind free them.” When asked about the possibility of participating in a group process of civil dialogue and discussing different understandings of

homosexuality, he stated, “Yes, but it would be difficult – as long as it is respectful toward one another and not confrontation.”

2. Focus Group Post-Curriculum Interviews

The focus group post interviews were conducted specifically to see if there was any change as a result of participating in the seven-week curriculum process. We will examine more closely each of the post curriculum interviews below.

a. Traditional Clergy

One male focus group member (the fifty-seven-year-old Southern Baptist male) changed his earlier designation in the pre-curriculum interview from “progressive” to “traditional” in the post curriculum interview. In comparing his answers from the first interview with the post interview there was not a lot of noticeable differences in his answers to the interview questions. In the first interview he stated his belief that homosexuality was a sin. In the post interview when asked about his beliefs about homosexuality he answered, “I still believe in original sin and because I believe it is because of the fall, I do not believe homosexuality is God’s will.” When asked about his reflections concerning the attempt toward civil dialogue and sharing of different viewpoints he said, “Christians have genuinely different viewpoints on the scripture and I was reminded of that during the group sessions, sometimes we simply agreed to disagree.” He continued, “I learned some things from the other group members – I believe that in the middle of our civil conversations, God spoke.” One area of significant change that was noteworthy from the interview was his response to the question, “Do you ever teach or preach on any of the themes that we have discussed in this interview?” In

the first interview he stated that he had not preached or taught on the subject. In the post interview, he stated the following:

“I preached a sermon during the time of our group process so that the church could have a better understanding. The church has to stay out of the judgment zone. We do not want to stand where the Pharisees stood in the story of the woman caught in adultery. The Church has to stand on the side of grace.”

The twenty-five-year-old UMC female self-identified at the beginning and at the end of the group process as “Traditional.” She experienced some noteworthy changes in perception during the seven-week period. In defining the term sexuality in the first interview, she answered the question in a physically related way. In answering the question during the post interview she stated, “Sexuality is how we interact with other human beings – it is more than just our gender – I acknowledge that now.” She continued, “It is all our interactions.” She stated in the interview that she completed the group process with a much broader understanding of family. In commenting on her beliefs on homosexuality she stated, “My earlier opinion of homosexuality being a conscious and rebellious decision is changing although I still view it as a sin.” She continued, “If our denomination (UMC) changes its by-laws on this on this, I would honor it just as much as I do our current discipline.” In the first interview, she was asked if there were any LGBT individuals in her congregation. She stated that there were none. When she was asked if this information was still current she stated that during the seven-week process, she had been surprised to learn that her church did have a lesbian member who was in a committed relationship with her partner. This woman was an active member of the church who served on at least one of the church boards. She stated, “I was shocked because she did not meet the typical stereotypes I would have expected of a Lesbian.” She went on to say that she had attended bible studies with this woman and had

taken communion with her. This situation was fully known by the senior pastor and most of the congregation. She also mentioned how the message of one of the guest speakers, an openly gay Lutheran (ELCA) deacon in a same sex marriage had impacted her. While she disagreed with the guest speaker's theological position, she stated that she found the presentation, "eye opening." Cognitive dissonance may be a good term to describe her experience meeting a lesbian minister who considers herself a committed spiritual Christian. When asked about the experience of civil dialogue the person interviewed stated the following:

"I am still of the mindset of desiring civil dialogue in learning about other Christian viewpoints. I still believe it is worth the active effort for the civil discussion. We need more of this across the board in Christianity. I have grown to appreciate the differing opinions more although I have not changed my position entirely. I have come to realize that homosexuality is not as clear-cut as I thought it was. The six passages we looked at all have a lot of gray area. I had never heard the progressive viewpoint concerning these passages."

The last individual interviewed who held a traditional view was the fifty-one year old Senior Pastor of an SBC church near Gastonia. In comparing his post interview to his first interview there seemed not to be much of a theological shift. He stated that there was a shift in his understanding of Progressives who support LGBT persons as full participants in the church. In the interview, as well as in the group discussions, he was especially moved by the presentation of one of the guest speaker to the group, The Reverend Cody Sanders, a gay Baptist minister who represented the progressive view. While he did not agree with Cody's theology, he was moved by his story and his spirituality. He stated that Cody's presentation and dialogue helped to expand his understanding of LGBT persons and especially those who claim to be Christian. When I asked him about his teaching and preaching on the subject of homosexuality, his answer

denoted a shift in his thinking. In the pre-interview he stated that he never preached or taught on the subject. In the post interview he said, “I am telling my people that we need to talk about these things and what it means to be a person of faith.”

b. Progressive Clergy

One group member, the fifty-year-old SBC female, changed her self-identification from “traditional to progressive.” She said,

“I no longer hold the traditional view as this unit has allowed me to see my own biases. I believe I am more progressive now with the knowledge I have received during this study. This study gave me comfort in hearing the stories of others, as well as the balanced approach to the scriptures and the didactics helped me to be more open. I am more convinced I am not to judge and that God is in this.”

When asked about her definition of family she said, “No longer my traditional view, my definition of family is two or more people who love and respect each other.” This represents a shift from the pre-interview in which her definition of family included the traditional mother, father and child. When asked about her beliefs concerning homosexuality she stated, “I believe two people can love whomever they want to love, the sexual act is what is creating the confusion.” She continued, “I still believe the homosexual act is unnatural just as I believe sex before marriage is unnatural but love is love.” When asked to reflect on her experience in the class and our focus on civil dialogue she stated, “I gained a new perspective - the six presenters helped me to see my own biases, unpack my own stuff and expand my theological understanding.”

The next person interviewed was the forty-six-year old UMC female. When asked about any possible changes in her thoughts about family she stated, “I do believe my understanding of family is broadening to include more of a variety of possibilities since

we began this study.” When asked to talk about her personal beliefs about homosexuality she made the following statement:

“I came in to this pretty progressive minded. If anything has changed, I have had to re-think being too liberal. The last two conservative speakers have had me rethinking whether or not God is okay with this. There is a design – a beautiful design but there is such mystery. I have more respect now for people who are more conservative on this issue.”

When asked to reflect on her experience of participating in this effort of civil dialogue on the subject of homosexuality she stated, “It was a good experience for me, I do wonder what it would be like to try to engage in such a setting if there was a person in the group who was unwilling to reflect.” She went on to say, “When there is a place where there is open and honest dialogue, the presence of the Spirit grows us and that is good.” In the first interview, she stated that she did not teach or preach on the subject of sexuality. In this post interview she stated, “I will be talking more about this – I want us to do something in our church similar to what we have done here and I would love to be a part of addressing this with young people.”

The next person interviewed was the seventy-one-year-old Episcopal Deacon. When asked about any changes in his beliefs about family, homosexuality, same-sex marriage he stated, “No change, same as before.” When I asked him to elaborate on any new discoveries, learning, shifts that had taken place as a result of participating in the study he stated, “The biggest surprise for me was how open the more traditional peers were.” He continued, “In hearing the stories of my peers and how their theological positions on homosexuality were developed, I was moved.” In commenting on the guest speakers he said, “I was also moved by the last traditional presenter - I was surprised that his views were not that different from my own.”

The next person interviewed was the sixty-seven-year-old Lutheran clergy person. When asked about any changes, shifts, learning about family, homosexuality, and same-sex marriage he said that there had been no changes. When reflecting on his experience in the group process of civil dialogue he replied, “I have a deeper appreciation for other person’s viewpoints.” When asked for an example he said, “I come from such a different culture than (he named two of his peers). Their cultural experience has been so restrictive and mine has been so open. This insight has helped me develop a deeper appreciation and care for those who disagree with my position.” To this researcher, this is significant. In his first interview, he talked about not trusting those who hold a traditional view of homosexuality and his fear of entering into this process. He expressed his concern about getting into a confrontation with another peer. His hesitation played out in the group through his quietness. As the group progressed he became more open and participatory. He, like many of his peers, stated his desire to teach this subject in his local congregation.

The last progressive interview was with the sixty-two-year-old, Southern Baptist female. When asked why she considered herself a progressive she stated:

“I thought before hand that I was more traditional but in the group, I found myself leaning toward the progressive much to my surprise. Hearing the interpretations of scripture, the guest speakers, the didactics, the civil conversations with my peers all helped me to see that I am a Progressive. Before this, I would have probably waved the traditional flag.”

When asked to say more about why she no longer saw herself as Traditional she said, “Before, I would have tolerated the Traditional, I have been speaking out more in a way that previously I would not.” During the study, she made a discovery concerning her congregation, a large SBC congregation in the Gastonia area. She discovered that indeed there were LGBT members in her church and that they can become participating

members of the congregation. In talking about any changes in her personal beliefs about homosexuality she stated, “I think it can be genetic and that means that God made them that way. She continued, “Some perhaps may have become homosexual due to their environmental and social circumstances.” When asked about her beliefs on same-sex marriage she stated that since participating in the class she is more comfortable with the idea. In discussing her growth concerning different interpretations of the six passages dealing with homosexuality she stated, “Yes, there can be different interpretations.” She continued, “For example when we looked at the Sodom and Gomorrah passage and the ways Traditional and Progressives interpret it, I came to see that it was not an issue of homosexuality being discussed and this opened the door for me to look at the other passages in a fresh way.” When reflecting on her experience of civil dialogue, she stated:

“Because of the experience of sitting with peers and scholars, and having a civil conversation in an environment of mutual respect I have been open to hearing and considering opinions that are different from my own. It helped clarify my view. It may have been the view I have held all along but I didn’t see it. I would love to have that same opportunity on lots of topics. The use of didactics, speakers, books, chapel, everything – who wouldn’t want to do that? All of this made it well rounded and exceptional – a great model for me to teach the subject.”

3. Control Group Interviews

Nine Gastonia area clergypersons who made up the control group were interviewed using the same interview questions used in the focus group interviews. All three of the progressive clergy espoused an open understanding of what constitutes a family. One progressive made the following interesting statement:

“My understanding of family has expanded. A family can be the traditional husband, wife and children. It can also be two men, two women, two people sharing life together, horizontally and linearly. I hold this view because of my personal experience of meeting people who have alternative interpretations.”

The six self-identified traditional clergy all espoused an understanding of family that held up the mother, father, children family as God's plan for the human family. One clergyperson stated, "Family is defined by the traditional marriage of one man and one woman." When asked why he held this belief he stated, "My beliefs on family are based on God's word that states that God ordained marriage as one man and one woman." One of the traditional clergypersons interviewed was a Lutheran (ELCA) pastor who holds to a traditional view even though the ELCA has embraced a more progressive view of family and homosexuality. Another traditional person who is an ordained Foursquare pastor stated that the Foursquare denomination fully accepts all people into their congregation including LGBT persons.

a. Progressive Clergy

Three clergy persons in the control group self-identified as progressive. These clergy had an open understanding of what constitutes a family. Families for the three progressive clergy included LGBT persons. All acknowledged that cohabitating, blended, LGBT persons were authentic families who should be loved and embraced by the church. The makeup of an authentic family had less to do with marriage between a male and female and more to do with love and commitment within the family unit.

The embracement of diverse family types also coincided with a more open progressive approach toward biblical interpretation. While all three control group members acknowledged holding to some degree of biblical authority, they also allowed much room for biblical interpretation. One control group clergy, a pastor of a Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), a denomination not normally thought of as a progressive denomination, stated the following:

“I feel there are many interpretations of the biblical passages/stories, not just one. Different cultures have always interpreted the passages different ways. There is room in my thinking for different interpretations. Whether the stories in Genesis happened literally, we will not know during this life.”

Another control group clergy person was an Associate Pastor of a non-denominational Pentecostal church. While stating that he was heterosexual, he said that the great majority of the congregation was made up of LGBT persons. When asked about his interpretation of the Bible, he stated, “I definitively lean toward an open interpretation of the Bible. The stories don’t have to be based on fact to be spiritually important.”

The third progressive clergy, an Alliance of Baptist Clergy person who self identified as a Progressive said the following when asked why she considered herself a progressive thinking Christian: “Because I see scripture as metaphorical narrative, God is less literal and more open to diversity.

b. Traditional Clergy

Six of the nine clergypersons (66%) in the control group self-identified themselves as “Traditional.” This correlates roughly with research results from 2004, which concluded that 57% of clergy in the American South hold to a biblical worldview affirming among other things, the accuracy of biblical teachings, the literal existence of Satan, and the sinless nature of Jesus.¹⁴³

Of the six traditional clergy, all held to the belief that marriage between a man and woman is ordained by God in creation. Four of the six stated that there could be no varying interpretations of Scripture concerning God’s design for marriage. Only two of

¹⁴³ George Barna, “Only Half of Protestant Pastors Have a Biblical Worldview,” accessed January 24, 2015, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/5-barna-update/133-only-half-of-protestant-pastors-have-a-biblical-worldview>.

the six clergy made room for a possible alternative biblical interpretation that was different from their own. An SBC clergy stated the following:

I believe in traditional marriage – one man and one woman. I base this on God's word, which says God ordained marriage for one man and one woman. I believe in teaching abstinence outside of marriage. I take the Bible literally. My wife and I agree on this. I believe in a six-day creation.

Another SBC clergy took a more progressive view of the Bible but stated that he did not think there could be an alternative interpretation regarding homosexuality and the family. He made the following comment:

“The bible stories are written about people living at the time, which may or may not be true. I wasn't there. These stories are still important and true at least in regards to the principles taught. All of this has changed for me since I began divinity school. The stories are not meant to be taken literally. I do get enough from the Bible to live by.”

A Lutheran pastor (ELCA) who identified herself as traditional stated, “I don't subscribe to inerrancy or infallibility - there are layers of meaning/interpretation of the Bible including metaphorical meaning.”

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

a. Findings

1. Finding One: Civil Dialogue is a Catalyst for Theological Growth

All focus group members felt that civil dialogue occurred throughout the study process. This achievement is shown in the analysis of the weekly surveys and post interview analysis. The survey results (see chapter 4) shows that the group successfully achieved civil dialogue. All affirmed the experience of civil dialogue was experienced throughout the study. All attributed the safe setting as having been important for their participation in the group experiment as well as the resulting personal and theological growth that each experienced. One group member, a fifty-seven-year-old SBC pastor said, “I believe that in the middle of the civil conversation, God speaks.” The twenty-five-year-old UMC clergy stated, “I am still of the mindset of desiring civil dialogue in learning about other Christians, I still believe it is worth the effort for the civil discussion.” She continued, “We need more of this across the board in Christianity – more civil discussions.” The sixty-two-year-old Southern Baptist female stated the following when asked what she may have learned:

The experience, the ability to sit with scholars and peers and have a civil conversation where there is mutual respect – I would like to have that same conversation on lots of topics. The use of didactics, speakers, books, chapel services, everything is a great model for oneself in teaching. I listened and learned and lean now toward the other position. It helped to clarify my view perhaps – I think it may have been the view I had but did not see it.

2. Finding Two: The Bible is Not Always Used as a Primary Argument Opposing Homosexuality.

Of those who self-identified as Traditional (9 of 17) only one gave specific biblical reasons to express his opposition to homosexuality. This individual discussed

his understanding of homosexuality as sin based on Paul's description of homosexuals as depraved persons (Rom. 1). Other traditional clergy surveyed made such comments as, "It is not God's will or design." Most comments, by traditional clergy, were more culturally centered. An example of how traditional clergy use cultural rather than biblical arguments was seen in a discussion about gay marriage. One traditional pastor argued against homosexuality by stating that children need a mother and father. He also stated, "gay marriage is destroying marriage - one of the world's most important foundations." Biblical support was not offered. While this small sample is not large enough to make definitive conclusions, it does raise questions. Are most traditional clergy opposed on biblical theological grounds or more cultural biases? As far as this researcher can tell, there has been no survey asking clergy for reasons for opposing homosexuality.

3. Finding Three: Many Traditional Clergy Support Gay Marriage.

Many traditional clergy support the legality of gay marriage while opposing homosexuality on religious grounds. Two of three (1/3) traditional focus group clergy, remained opposed to gay marriage. One, while saying he did not support gay marriage said, "I don't condemn it." Only three (50%) clergy self-identifying as Traditional said they opposed gay marriage. This response is consistent with changing attitudes on gay marriage. An Elon University poll from 2012¹⁴⁴ found that a majority of North Carolinians favors same-sex marriage. The same poll found that 62% of voting North Carolinians would vote to ban any attempt to make gay marriage unconstitutional. A

¹⁴⁴ "Support Growing for Same-Sex Marriage Rights," Elon University, accessed February 15, 2015, <http://www.elon.edu/e-web/elonpoll/040212.xhtml>.

Recent Pew Research Poll¹⁴⁵ found that roughly 60% of mainline Protestants and Catholics support gay marriage. The same poll found Evangelicals still largely opposed gay marriage with only 21% favoring it. This is changing among younger Evangelicals. The poll found that 67% of Millennials (those born after 1981) support same sex marriage. Baylor University Researchers have a term for this: the “Messy Middle – Evangelicals who oppose homosexuality on moral grounds but support equal rights such as civil unions for Gays...”¹⁴⁶ The Baylor study found that 24% of Evangelicals fit into the “Messy Middle” category. The study mentioned two well-known Evangelicals who fit this category – Rick Warren, who in November 2012 expressed regret for supporting Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriages in California and Richard Cizik, former spokesperson for the National Association of Evangelicals who was forced to resign when he expressed support for same-sex civil unions in 2008.¹⁴⁷ While this sampling is too small to make firm conclusions about changing attitudes of clergy and gay marriage, further research in this area would be beneficial.

4. Finding Four: Changing Attitudes on Homosexuality.

All members of the focus group stated that their understanding of homosexuality is evolving. This is consistent with changing attitudes in the US toward homosexuality. One focus group assignment during the study was to write up a verbatim of a conversation with a LGBT individual. Some focus group members expressed that they did not know an

¹⁴⁵ “Changing Attitudes On Gay Marriage,” Pew Research Center: Religion and Public Life, September 24, 2014, accessed February 15, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2014/09/24/graphics-slideshow-changing-attitudes-on-gay-marriage/>.

¹⁴⁶ “The Messy Middle: Many Evangelicals Are Ambivalent About Homosexuality and Civil Unions for Gays, Baylor Study Shows,” Baylor University, August 12, 2013, accessed February 17, 2015, <http://www.baylor.edu/mediacommunications/news.php?action=story&story=131931>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

LGBT individual. Two of the progressive guest presenters, Cody Sanders and Martha Baker, are openly gay. These two presenters gave the group an opportunity to hear their presentations, share a meal and allow questions to be asked and answered. At least one of the traditional clergy group participants was open about the cognitive dissonance that this experience created for her. Meeting a clergyperson who was gay and spiritual did not fit with her preconceived notions. In the post interview, both traditional and progressive participants said that their understanding of homosexuality was in transition.

5. Finding Five: Increased Appreciation For Those Who Hold a Different View concerning Homosexuality and Christian Faith.

The focus group's weekly analysis and post interviews showed that all participants had an increase appreciation for those who held a different theological perspective toward homosexuality and Christian faith. The words, "We are closer together in our beliefs than I thought," became something of a refrain throughout the sessions. This researcher believes that there is a close connection with this finding and finding six below.

6. Finding Six: Most Clergy Do Not Understand Both sides of the Theological Argument Concerning Homosexuality and Christian Faith.

From the survey results and interviews the focus group participants came to realize that they did not understand as much about the theological argument of those who hold a differing viewpoint as they originally thought. The group experiences penetrated the assumptions of Traditionalists and Progressives. The civil dialogue and the sharing of faith stories helped to bring about a deeper understanding and love for one another.

7. Finding Seven: Personal Discoveries.

During the past year of working on this project dissertation I have made several important discoveries that have enriched my personal growth as a pastor and person. The

following statements will outline these discoveries.

I have learned how important it is to create a space for civil dialogue to talk about important issues. This project has helped me to understand how important it is for Christians to discuss the subject of homosexuality and Christian faith. The results of this project gives me hope that the church can lower its divisive rhetoric and find common ground. I personally experienced growth through conversations with traditional clergy. The conversations helped me to appreciate those who believe differently. I finished the group process believing that traditional and progressive Christians are closer together on this issue than I originally thought.

With hard work I can minimize my biases in the classroom and in my interactions with others. A lot of hard work went into my remaining quiet when my normal response would have been to enter the conversations. There was great value in watching my students struggle with their biases when I removed myself from the equation. Using balanced reading assignments on homosexuality and Christian faith was another important step toward a non-biased approach.

b. Contributions to Ministry Setting and Beyond.

The curriculum design will be duplicated in future CPE groups at CRMC. This researcher envisions using the curriculum in at least one group per year. The model will be portable making it possible for other CPE Supervisors to use the process at other locations. The model, with minor adaptations, could be used by clergy or layperson in a church in order to educate and address issues of sexuality. This researcher believes that the Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling may have interest in publishing a synopsis of this process, therefore reaching an even greater audience of Pastoral Caregivers.

APPENDIX A-1

a. Interview Questionnaire¹⁴⁸

Before beginning the interview, I would like to remind you, as was stated in my letter, that I will be recording this interview and the interview will last approximately one hour. In addition, your answer(s) may be written in my doctoral project/dissertation, which will eventually be published. Your name will not be recorded. If you agree to these terms, please sign here. _____

Identifying Individual's Beliefs

1. Tell me a little about yourself. How did you become a clergyperson?

Traditional or Progressive Christian? (Questions 2-4)

2. As I am sure you know, defining Christianity is complicated because of the diversity of denominations and groups that define themselves as Christians. How would you define what it means to be a Christian?
3. What do you think makes you different from other people who also call themselves Christian but hold to different beliefs than your own?
4. If you had to choose only one, would you call yourself a traditional or a progressive thinking Christian?
 - a. Why? What makes you consider yourself a traditional or a progressive thinking Christian?
 - b. What makes you say that you are not a traditional or progressive thinking Christian?

View of the Bible?

5. How do you view the Bible and the importance of the Bible in helping people live their lives?

Among those who call themselves Christians, there are a lot of different opinions concerning the Bible. Some say that the Bible should be taken literally. Some say the Bible is perfect without error of any kind. Some say there is only one right interpretation of scripture – Still others say no – there can be a variety of interpretations of the biblical passages among those who call themselves Christian. Some say that several of the stories in the Bible are not based on fact. Where do you see yourself in this discussion concerning the Bible and interpretation of the Bible?

¹⁴⁸ Richard Smith, "Validating Beliefs: (PhD diss., Temple University, 2009). This interview instrument is used by permission (written permission has been granted for this researcher to use the interview questions as long as proper citation is made).

Movement?

6. Please give a brief history of your church?
7. How does your church fit in among other Protestant (Catholic – if Catholic) churches?
What are the main beliefs of your church?
8. What makes your church unique from the other churches in your area?

Sexuality and Christian Faith

As I mentioned in my letter to you, I am doing a doctoral study about sexuality and the Christian faith focusing on understanding different beliefs on the subject. I am focusing specifically on the topic of homosexuality and the Christian faith. I want to ask you a few questions concerning sexuality, your own beliefs and what you preach/teach in your congregation.

I want to ask you a few questions dealing with sexuality and the Christian faith. Please answer honestly and clearly what you personally believe and what you teach/preach in your church.

General Thoughts on Sexuality

9. What does the word “sexuality” mean to you?
Who is able to experience sexuality?
10. What thoughts come to mind when I mention the term family?
 - a. What defines a family?
 - b. Why do you hold to these beliefs about family?
11. Do you have a variety of types of families in your church? For example, do you have single parent, blended, cohabitating (not married) families? Do you have Gay/Lesbian, Transgendered, Bi-sexual families?
If you do, how are these families viewed in your church?

Sex Outside of Marriage

12. What are your thoughts about people having sex outside of the marital relationship?
Why do you hold to this belief?
13. Have you had people in your church engaging in sex who were not married?
 - a. How did you or the congregation deal with this situation?

- b. Why did you deal with it this way?
- c. Why did the congregation deal with it this way?
- d. If you have not faced this situation before, how do you think you will deal with it?

Extramarital Sexual Relationships/Affairs

- 14. What are your views/beliefs on married people having extramarital relationships/affairs?
Why do believe this?
- 15. Have you ever had this happen within your church membership?
 - a. How did you and the church deal with it? Why did you and the church decide to approach the situation this way? If you had it to do over again, would you deal with it the same way?
 - b. If you have not had to deal with it at this point in your ministry, how do you think you will deal with it?

Homosexuality

- 16. What are your beliefs about homosexuality.
Why do you have this view/belief?
- 17. What are your beliefs on same-sex marriage?
- 18. Do you have any gay or lesbian individuals in your congregation?
 - a. How do you and the church deal with them?
 - b. Are they accepted as members of your church? Why? Or Why not?
 - c. Are they able to serve in leadership positions in your church such as pastor, elder/deacon, and teacher?
- 19. I am sure you know that there are six passages in the Bible that are commonly used by traditional Christians to argue the point that the Bible condemns homosexuality. These passages include Genesis 19 (The Sodom and Gomorrah story), Judges 19 (The Levite from Ephraim Story), Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 (The moral code), Romans 1:26-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).
 - a. Do you believe that it is possible for Christians to genuinely interpret these passages in a way that differs from your theological understanding of these passages? Why or why not?
 - b. If a setting existed where there could be civil conversation concerning a biblical understanding of homosexuality, would you personally be open to the possibility of hearing a theological opinion of these passages that differs from your own? Why or why not?
 - c. In such a setting, do you think it is possible to expand your theological understanding of homosexuality to the point of better understanding and appreciation of the position that differs from your own?

20. Do you ever teach/preach on any of the themes that we have discussed in this interview today?
- a. Why or why not?
 - b. (If yes) - Can you give me an example of how you dealt with the subject?

APPENDIX A-2

Pre Curriculum Survey for Focus and Control Group

Demographics:

Denomination/Faith Group: _____

Years in Ministry: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Which of the following would best describe your biblical/theological position regarding Christian faith and homosexuality:

(Please check one of the following)

____ Traditional or

____ Progressive?

Instructions: Read the following five (5) statements and circle the number that most accurately describes your level of disagreement/ agreement with the statement.

1. How much biblical knowledge do you have to support your theological view of homosexuality?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

2. How much anxiety do you have about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

3. How much theological understanding do you have of those who hold a differing biblical/theological view of homosexuality and Christian faith?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

4. How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality that is different than yours?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

5. How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion about homosexuality and faith with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

APPENDIX A-3

Post Curriculum Survey 1 for Focus Group

Demographics:

Denomination/Faith Group: _____

Years in Ministry: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Which of the following would best describe your biblical/theological position regarding homosexuality and Christian faith:

(Please check one of the following)

_____ Traditional or

_____ Progressive

Instructions: Read the following ten (10) statements and circle the number that most accurately describes your level of disagreement/ agreement with the statement.

1. How much biblical/theological knowledge did you have before our group sessions began to support your theological view of homosexuality?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

2. How much biblical/theological knowledge do you have now to support your theological view of homosexuality?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

3. How much anxiety did you have before our group sessions began about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

4. How much anxiety do you have now about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

5. How much biblical/theological understanding did you have before the group sessions began concerning biblical/theological views of homosexuality and Christian faith that were different from your own?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

6. How much biblical/theological understanding do you have now concerning biblical/theological views of homosexuality and Christian faith that were different from your own?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

7. How much confidence did you have before our group sessions began that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a different theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

8. How much confidence do you have now that you can participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a different theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

9. How much confidence did you have before the group sessions began that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion about homosexuality and the Christian faith with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

10. How much confidence do you have now that you can participate in an open, honest and civil discussion about homosexuality and the Christian faith with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered?

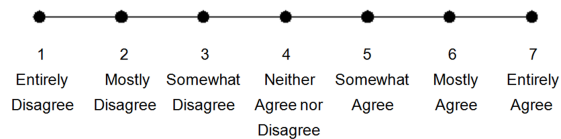
1	2	3	4	5
None	Very Little	A Little	Some	Much

APPENDIX A-4

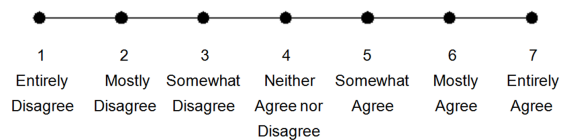
Post Curriculum Survey 2 for Focus Group

Instructions: Read the following statements and circle the number that most accurately describes your level of disagreement/agreement with the statement.

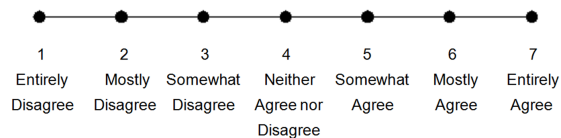
1. As a result of this course/group process I have changed the way I look at myself.



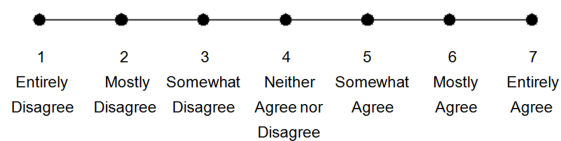
2. This course/group process has challenged some of my formerly held ideas.



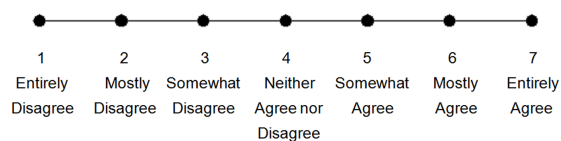
3. During this course/group process I discovered faults in what I previously believed to be right.



4. As a result of this course I have changed my normal way of thinking about homosexuality and Christian faith.



5. As a result of this course/group process I have changed my theological position concerning homosexuality and Christian faith.



APPENDIX A-5

Weekly Survey of Seminars, CPE Supervisor Presentations and Guest Lecturer

**An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at
CaroMont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina**

Seminar Evaluation: Biblical Study Presented by CPE Supervisor and
Guest Speaker Presentation

Please feel free to add additional comments on the back of this form.

–Thank You!

1. Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?
Comments:

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

2. Was the content in this session new for you?
Comments:

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

3. Were the key points clearly communicated?
Comments:

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

4. Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars today?
Comments:

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

5. Was the recruiting process for your participation in this research study conducted in a non-bias way?
Comments:

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

6. Was the information presented today by The CPE Supervisor presented in a non- biased way?
Comments:

Low					High
1	2	3	4	5	

13. List three new ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral care?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
14. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?
15. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?
16. Any additional comments:

APPENDIX B-1

CURRICULUM

Curriculum Basics for Participants during Group Process:

- Reflection Paper
 - Due by Sunday Evening
 - This will be a weekly assignment for each group participant.
 - Reflection paper will consist of a 1-2 page (single spaced) paper of the participant's experience in the CPE group, with the curriculum, readings, guest speakers, theological thoughts, struggles and personal growth.
- Reading Seminar
 - During this CPE unit we will be reading the following books:
 - Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Thought by James B. Nelson (1978). Published by Augsburg Press. This book will serve as a representation of a progressive theological approach toward sexuality.
 - Welcoming But Not Affirming: An Evangelical Response to Homosexuality by Stanley J. Grenz (1998). Published by Westminster John Knox Press. This book will represent the traditional theological approach to homosexuality.
 - Reading assignments will be made for each week of the group process.
 - Two group participants will be assigned each week to serve as facilitators for the seminar.
- Chapel Services:
 - Participants will rotate responsibility for leading chapel services each week.
 - This is a 15-20 minute service scheduled from 8:30 – 8:50 AM at the beginning of each class day.
 - The chapel service will include a meditation/homily and prayers (music is optional). Prayer for the needs of the hospital patients/families/staff and the Spiritual Care community is observed during each of the chapel services.
 - The theme of the chapel services for the next eight weeks for the homily/meditation is to address some aspect of sexuality and spirituality.
- Verbatim/Theological Integration Seminar (See Appendix K & L)
 - Each week, one student will present a verbatim/theological integration presentation within the group setting. Each student will prepare copies for each group participant and have them ready for distribution by the beginning of the seminar. Copies will be returned to the student at the end of the seminar.

- See appendix K (Verbatim) and Appendix L (Theological Integration) guide sheets for information on what is expected in these written presentations.
 - During these eight weeks, each student must prepare a total of three verbatims or theological integration papers. Ones that are not used in group presentations will be submitted to the supervisor.
- Interpersonal Relationship Seminar
 - This will be a weekly seminar.
 - See Appendix M for full explanation.
- Individual Supervision Seminar (IDS) (See Appendix N)
 - The Supervisor will meet with each student every other week during the unit for 50 minutes of individual supervision.
 - It is the Student/Participant's responsibility to schedule this session (not the Supervisor's).
 - See Appendix N for a full explanation of IDS.

APPENDIX B-2

Week One Day 1: Group meets on Thursday, October 2, 2014

Day-Long Retreat

The first daylong session will involve an off-campus retreat. The place will be announced but the setting will need to be more informal than the hospital setting. The purpose of the retreat is for the group to form in a more relaxed setting with the hope that this will facilitate group cohesiveness.

Assignments given to each group participant for the retreat (given the week before)

- Each participant is to bring a symbol that he/she will use to illustrate an aspect of who she/he is as a person created in the image of God. See below.
- Each participant will be asked to help plan the retreat meals and contribute with food items for the meal.
- Each participant will be asked to write a prayer that will be read during the retreat. This prayer is to be a prayer celebrating one's own sexuality.

Retreat Schedule

8:45 AM Group forms – breakfast together. Each participant will bring a food item to the retreat for this meal.

9:30 AM Meditation, Guided Prayer Experience, and conversations of response.

The meditation will focus on a passage of scripture dealing with the theme of sexuality. A reading from The Song of Solomon 2:8-13. This passage communicates the deep longing that exists within each of us for communion with another – to both know and be known by that person. We are reminded in these words that we have been created as sexual beings.

10:00 – 10:10 Break

10:15 – 12:00 Telling Our Stories.

Each participant will be asked ahead of time to bring three symbols with them to the retreat as a way of introduction. Each symbol will be selected to represent who we are as a human being created in the image of God. One symbol represents the person's personal identity, one symbol represents the person's identity as a pastor and the third symbol represents the person's identity as a sexual being. Each person will be allowed fifteen to twenty minutes each to tell their stories and five minutes feedback from the group for each person.

12:15- 1:15 Sharing a Meal Together.

This meal will be planned before the retreat, the participants will plan the meal together and decide what items each will prepare/purchase to allow this meal to come together. The preference is for the group to sit at table together at the retreat setting as opposed to

going out for a meal. The quietness of the group retreat setting as well as the sacredness of sharing this meal together, and sacred conversations at table will help in the formation of the group.

1:30-3:00 PM Sharing Our Prayers.

Each participant will read her/his prayer in the group setting. After a time of silence recognizing the sacredness of this experience, the group members will be offered an opportunity to respond to the prayer that has just been read.

3:20 PM Overview of the curriculum for the next seven weeks.

4:30 PM Debriefing

APPENDIX B-3

Week One Day 2: Group Met on Thursday, October 9, 2014

8:30 – 8:50 AM	Chapel Services led by group member.
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Verbatim/Theological Reflection Presentation
10:10 -11:10 AM <i>of</i>	Didactic Seminar (Lemons): <i>“Human Beings Created in the Image of God”</i>
11:20 – 12:20 PM	Reading Seminar facilitated by two group participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nelson: pages 8-37 ▪ Grenz: Introduction and Chapter 1
12:30 PM	Lunch with Guest Speaker: The Reverend Martha Baker
1:20- 2:45 PM	Community Guest Clergy representing a Progressive Biblical View of Homosexuality: The Reverend Baker
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

APPENDIX B-4

Week Two: Group Met on Thursday, October 23, 2014

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 8:30 – 8:50 AM | Chapel Services led by group member. |
| 9:00 – 10:00 AM | Verbatim/Theological Reflection Presentation |
| 10:10 -11:10 AM | Didactic Seminar (Lemons):
<i>“The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality:
 Genesis 19:1-38 The Sodom and Gomorrah Story and Judges 19
 The Levite From Ephraim Story.</i> |
| 11:20 – 12:20 PM | Reading Seminar facilitated by two group participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nelson: Chapter 3 ▪ Grenz: Chapter 2 ▪ Wink: Preface and Introduction |
| 12:30 PM | Lunch with The Reverend Rit Varriale |
| 1:20- 2:45 PM | Community Guest Clergy representing a Traditional Biblical
View of Homosexuality: The Reverend Rit Varriale |
| 3:00 – 4:30 PM | Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR). |

APPENDIX B-5

Week Three: Group Met on Thursday, October 30, 2014

Mid- Unit CPE Evaluation

On October 23, the CPE (Focus) group met off campus for a mid-unit evaluation. The mid-unit evaluation was designed to evaluate where group members were at the unit halfway point. Each student prepared a detailed reflection paper evaluating the first half of the group process. Each student brought copies of her/his evaluation for each group participant and the supervisor. Fifty minutes was allotted to each participant, with the group interacting with the participant concerning the participant's presentation to the group. The following were the instructions for the reflection/evaluation paper.

Prepare a written reflection addressing the following items. The paper should be no longer than 5 typed single space pages. Bring copies for your peers and your supervisor.

- 1) Describe your investment in the learning process. Discuss each of your learning goals. Why did you choose them? Evaluate your progress. What are the unfinished pieces? What adjustments do you need to make?
- 2) What are you learning about yourself as a:
 - Pastor
 - Person
 - Participant in group
 - Person of faith/Theologian
- 3) Evaluate your learning process focusing specifically on the previous 4 weeks of our focus on Homosexuality and the Christian Faith.
 - a. Evaluate the guest speaker presentations, biblical studies didactic seminars, and readings seminars. How helpful have these elements of the curriculum been for you? What new insights have you discovered? What has been your biggest struggle?
 - b. Evaluate your participating in the group. How faithful have you been as a group participant? How have you shared openly or been withholding to the group?
- 4) Evaluate each of your peers (use initials). Choose a symbol for each of your peers that you will use to describe something about each of them. Bring them with you to show to the group. If possible, you are invited to give the symbol to the group member as a reminder and to help him/her in future reflection on the symbol. Use the symbol to evaluate each of your peers' strengths and limits. What are you learning from each of them? How could each be more helpful to you?
- 5) Evaluate your use of supervision. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor? Include experiences that have been helpful and experiences where he could have been more helpful. Choose and bring a symbol to describe your supervisor.

APPENDIX B-6

Week Four: Group Met on Thursday, November 6, 2014

8:30 – 8:50 AM	Chapel Services led by group member.
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Verbatim/Theological Reflection Presentation (Appendix J)
10:10 -11:10	AM Didactic Seminar (Lemons): <i>“The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: Leviticus 18:22/20:13.</i>
11:20 – 12:20 PM	Reading Seminar facilitated by two group participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nelson: Chapter 4 ▪ Grenz: Chapter 3 ▪ Wink: Chapter 1 and 4
12:30 PM	Lunch with The Reverend Dr. Kent Blevins
1:20- 2:45 PM Biblical	Community Guest Lay/Clergy person representing a Progressive View of Homosexuality: The Reverend Dr. Kent Blevins.
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

APPENDIX B-7

Week Five: Group Met on Thursday, November 13, 2014

8:30 – 8:50 AM	Chapel Services led by group member.
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Verbatim/Theological Reflection Presentation (Appendix J)
10:10 -11:10 AM	Didactic Seminar (Lemons): <i>“The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: Romans 1:26-27</i>
11:20 – 12:20 PM	Reading Seminar facilitated by two group participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nelson: Chapter 5 ▪ Grenz: Chapter 4 ▪ Wink: Chapter 3 and 5
12:30 PM	Lunch with The Reverend Cody Sanders
1:20- 2:45 PM Biblical	Community Guest Lay/Clergy person representing a Progressive View of Homosexuality: The Reverend Cody Sanders
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

APPENDIX B-8

Week Six: Group Meets on Thursday, November 20, 2014

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 8:30 – 8:50 AM | Chapel Services led by group member. |
| 9:00 – 10:00 AM | Verbatim/Theological Reflection Presentation (Appendix J) |
| 10:10 -11:10 AM | Didactic Seminar (Lemons):
<i>“The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10</i> |
| 11:20 – 12:20 PM | Reading Seminar facilitated by two group participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nelson: Chapter 8 and 9 ▪ Grenz: Chapter 5 ▪ Wink: Chapter 7 and 11 |
| 12:30 PM | Lunch with The Reverend Joe Bell |
| 1:20- 2:45 PM
Biblical | Community Guest Lay/Clergy person representing a Traditional

View of Homosexuality: The Reverend Joe Bell |
| 3:00 – 4:30 PM | Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR). |

APPENDIX B-9

Week Seven: Group Met on Thursday, December 4, 2014

8:30 – 8:50 AM	Chapel Services led by group member.
9:00 – 10:00 AM	Verbatim/Theological Reflection Presentation (Appendix J)
10:10 -11:10 AM	Didactic Seminar (Lemons): <i>“The Debated Biblical Passages Referencing Homosexuality: Jesus’ Silence and its Significance.”</i>
11:20 – 12:20 PM	Reading Seminar facilitated by two group participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nelson: Chapter 10 and Epilogue ▪ Grenz: Chapter 6 and Epilogue ▪ Wink: Chapter 13 and 16
12:30 PM	Lunch with The Reverend Jonathan Schnibben
1:20- 2:45 PM Biblical	Community Guest Lay/Clergy person representing a Traditional View of Homosexuality: The Reverend Jonathan Schnibben
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Interpersonal Relationship Seminar (IPR).

APPENDIX B-10

The Verbatim Guide Sheet¹⁴⁹

Chaplain:

Date Verbatim Presented:

Chaplain's Learning Goals for this Unit:

I. Record of Visit

Date of Visit:

Verbatim #:

Location of Visit:

Number of Visits to Patient/Counselee:

Time and Length of Visit:

A. Patient/Parishioner Information:

Sex:

Age:

Race:

Denomination/Faith Group:

Marital Status:

Diagnosis:

Other:

B. Context of Visit

Prior knowledge of Patient/Counselee (From previous visits/chart/referral source):

Purpose of Visit:

Chaplain's State before the Visit:

Observations upon entering the Room/Meeting Space:

C. Interpersonal Relationships

Record of the conversation(s) as you remember it, between Chaplain, patient/counselee and any family members who may be present. Indicate verbal and non-verbal communication expressed. Use "C" for Chaplain, "P" for patient etc. (do not use patient/counselee's real name). Example:

C1: Good Morning Mrs. Smith (pseudonym), I am Chaplain Jones...

P1: Good Morning Chaplain...

C2: Your nurse asked me to drop by...

P2: Yes, she asked me if I was comfortable with the chaplain visiting.

II. Evaluation of Visit

A. Pastoral/Spiritual Assessment of Patient/Counselee:

¹⁴⁹ This verbatim guideline was developed by Stephen A. Lemons, 2002 and revised 2005, 2014.

B. Your Pastoral Interventions:

Include an assessment of the strength and limits of the interventions you used.

What are your overall impressions of the visit/session? Where do you think you may have missed an opportunity to “go deeper” with the patient/counselee? What makes this visit a “Chaplain” visit?

III. Sexuality Reflection

- How did your experience of being a woman/man impact your ministry to this person? How did you handle this?
- How did the fact that the patient/counselee was Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgendered (LGBT) impact you personally as a spiritual caregiver who is straight (or LGBT)?

IV. Theological Reflection

- Where was God in the experience?
- What theological issues were raised for you?
- How does being a part of your particular faith tradition impact this visit?
- What Biblical Themes/Images comes to mind as a result of this visit?
- How were your preconceived notions of God challenged by this visit?
- How is your theology changing (or not changing) as a result of this visit? Why?

V. Consultation Needs:

(What do you need from your peers and supervisor?)

APPENDIX B-11

Theological Integration Presentation Guide sheet
Experience of Faith: Sexuality and Gender

Write a two or more page (single spaced) theological reflection addressing the following:

- What is your experience of being a straight or LGBT male/female? A straight/LGBT male/female in ministry?
- In what experiences do you become aware of your sexuality/gender/sexual orientation in the practice of pastoral care? How do you deal with this?
- In what particular pastoral care experiences have you been aware of another's sexuality/gender/sexual orientation in the context of your care? How did you respond to this experience?
- Choose a passage from scripture and reflect on it as an image of your experience of sexuality.
- How does your sexual/gender identity affect your ministry/spiritual caregiving?

APPENDIX B-12

Interpersonal Relationships Group Seminar (IPR)

The IPR group process will be used in weeks 2-8 of the group process. This group is different from all the other groups used in Clinical Pastoral Education as this group does not have a pre-established subject for discussion: topics are introduced by the group participants. The general goal for this group is for the group members to express honestly and openly their feelings, experiences and challenges of self and others. It is also an appropriate place for asking clarification, affirmation and appropriate confrontation of group members.

Group rules for IPR will be established at the beginning of the IPR process during week two. The group is established as a safe place for expressing one's feelings, struggles concerning their relationships with the group members or CPE supervisor. It is the role and the responsibility of the CPE Supervisor to ensure that the environment is a safe place for the participants. Abuse of a participant by another participant is not tolerated. The group participant presenting is the "gate keeper." This means, the participant can end the discussion at any time if the participant feels it is too intense and needs to take a break from the discussion. Confidentiality of group process is also an important part of IPR as well as all other aspects of the CPE group.

IPR has great potential as a transformative process. This has certainly been this researcher's experience in working with IPR groups since 1998. In fact, group exit interviews year after year give testimony to the value of the IPR group. Group members share one another's pain and create a safe place to hear the anger of another. The group will be encouraged to covenant with one another to be honest with and caring for one another, agreeing to not run away from the group process.

APPENDIX B-13

Individual Supervision Seminar (IDS)

IDS serves an important need and is multi-faceted. The student and the supervisor meet for 50 minutes once every two weeks. Under some circumstances, this may need to be re-negotiated to a weekly meeting. This session will be treated confidentially by the supervisor, therefore this session offers a forum in which students may choose to discuss issues that they may not be ready to present to their peer group. It provides an opportunity to continue processing unresolved issues that arise in the peer group or in clinical material observing professional boundaries. It is a place to share feelings and thoughts on a variety of issues and an opportunity to use the student-supervisor relationship as a learning experience in itself.

Individual supervision is also a method of insuring accountability in the hospital. The CPE Supervisor is accountable to the hospital for the activities of the CPE students, and they are in turn accountable to their supervisor. Therefore, individual supervision will also be a time for reviewing how students are fulfilling both the expectations of the CPE program and the expectations of the hospitals.

Each student is to come to IDS prepared. One of the outcomes of ACPE is for each participant to learn how to ask for the consultation that he/she needs. While the supervisor generally will follow the student's agenda, the supervisor reserves the right to address significant issues that the student has not presented.

Supervision sessions will be held between the CPE student and a supervisor certified by the ACPE to conduct individual supervision. Confidentiality in the individual supervision session is restricted to the CPE program. That means your supervisor will not discuss your learning issues, or personal information, with anyone outside of the program. He or she may however consult with other supervisors about your learning process but will not reveal the student's identity.

APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY FOR CONTROL GROUP

1 Denominational Faith Group Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

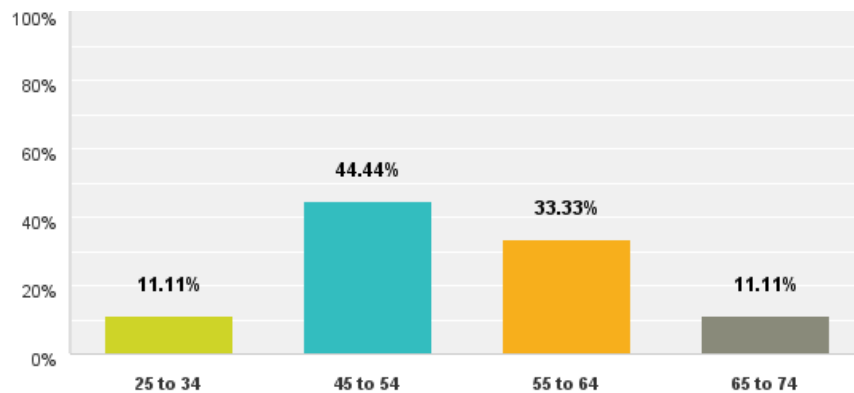
The following were listed as denominational faith groups of the nine control group participants:

Four Square Non-Denominational
 Lutheran (ELCA)
 Pentecostal Holiness
 Presbyterian (PCA)
 Baptist
 Baptist - Alliance of Baptists
 Southern Baptist
 Non-Denominational (Formerly UMC)
 Nazarene

2 Years in Ministry Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

The following answers were given:

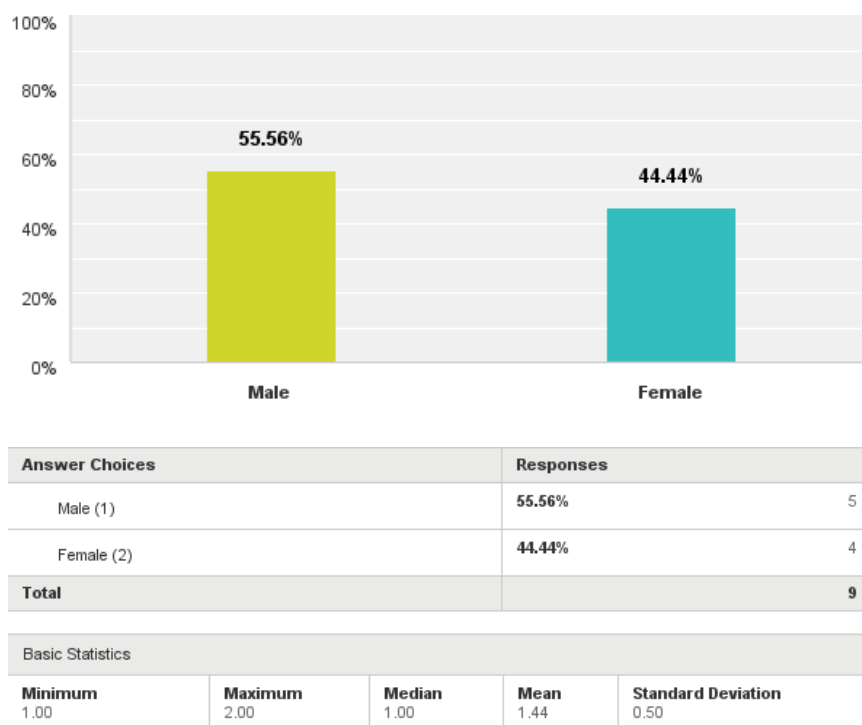
30, 5, 3, 52, 25, 32, 15, 13, 23

3 What is your age? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0

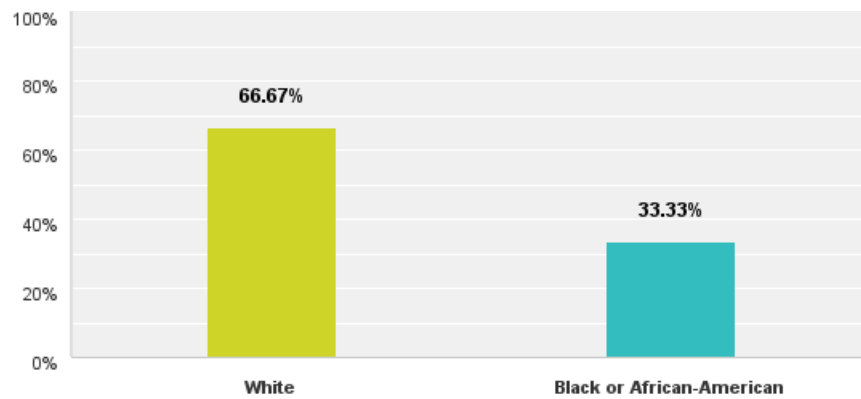
Answer Choices		Responses	
25 to 34 (2)		11.11%	1
45 to 54 (4)		44.44%	4
55 to 64 (5)		33.33%	3
65 to 74 (6)		11.11%	1
Total			9

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	6.00	4.00	4.33	1.05

4 Are you male or female? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



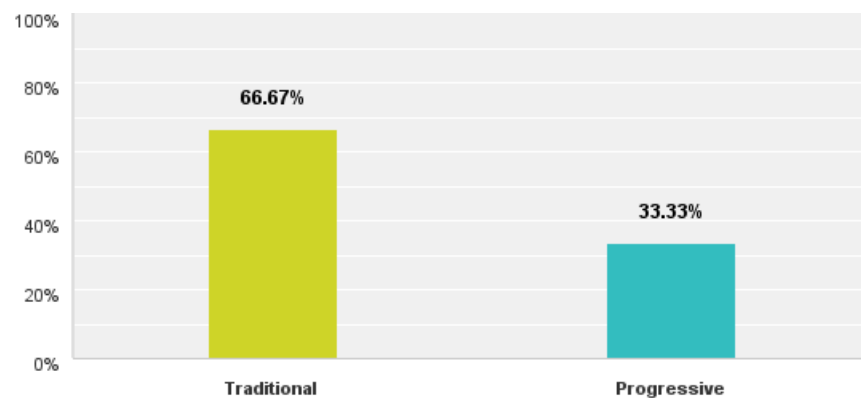
5 Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
White (1)	66.67%	6
Black or African-American (2)	33.33%	3
Total		9

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
0.00	1.00	0.00	0.33	0.47

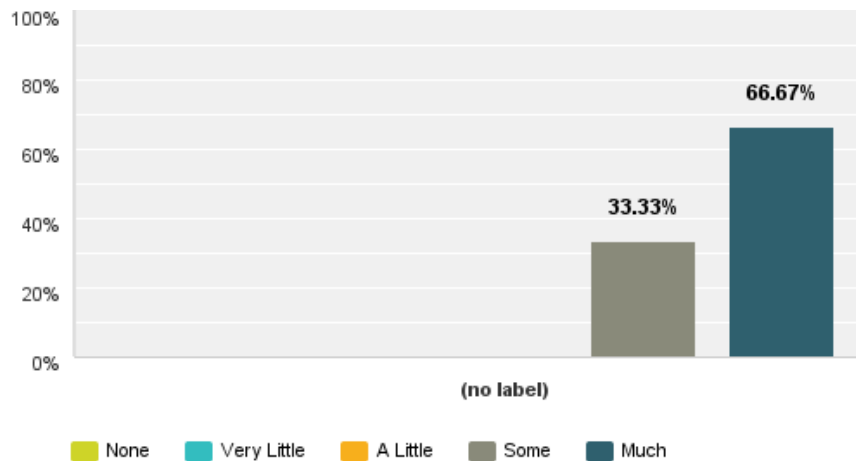
6 Which of the following best describes your biblical/theological position regarding Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices		Responses
Traditional (1)		66.67% 6
Progressive (2)		33.33% 3
Total		9

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	2.00	1.00	1.33	0.47

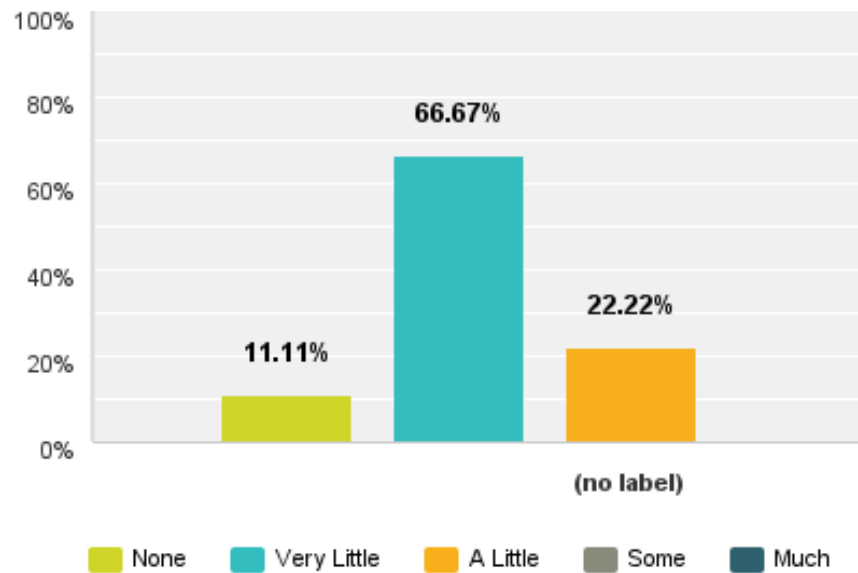
7 How much biblical knowledge do you have to support your theological view of homosexuality? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	66.67% 6	9	4.67

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
4.00	5.00	5.00	4.67	0.47

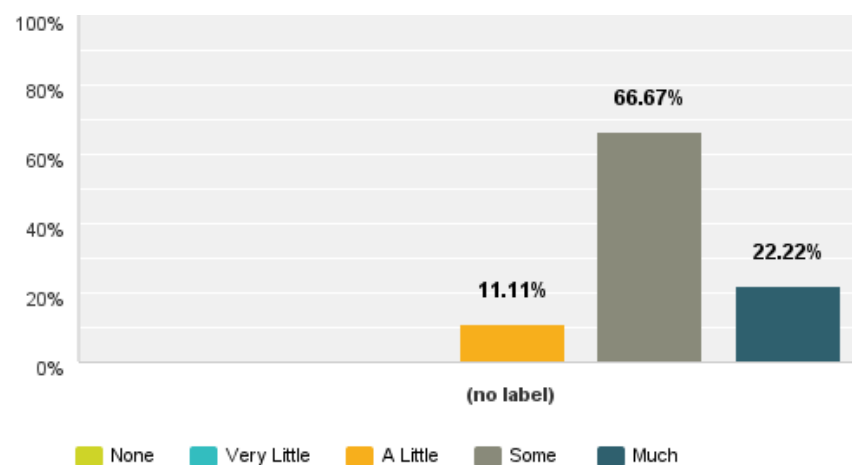
8 How much anxiety do you have about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	11.11% 1	66.67% 6	22.22% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9	2.11

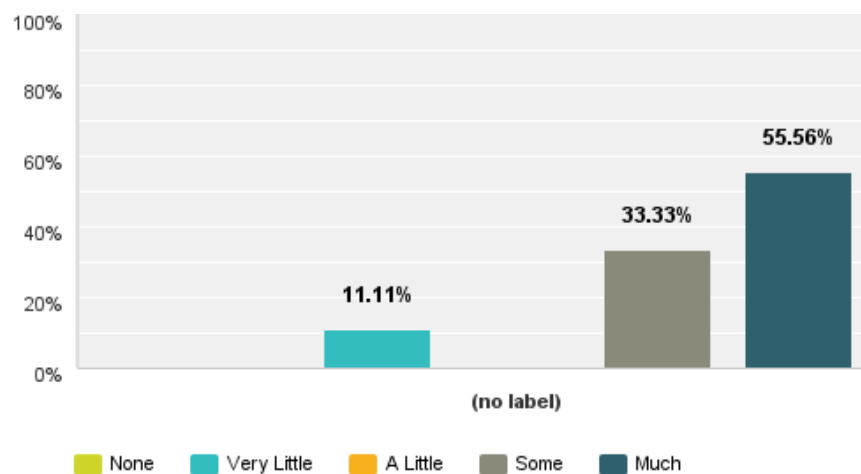
Basic Statistics					
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	
1.00	3.00	2.00	2.11	0.57	

**9 How much theological understanding do you have of those who hold a differing biblical/theological view of homosexuality and Christian faith? Answered: 9
Skipped: 0**



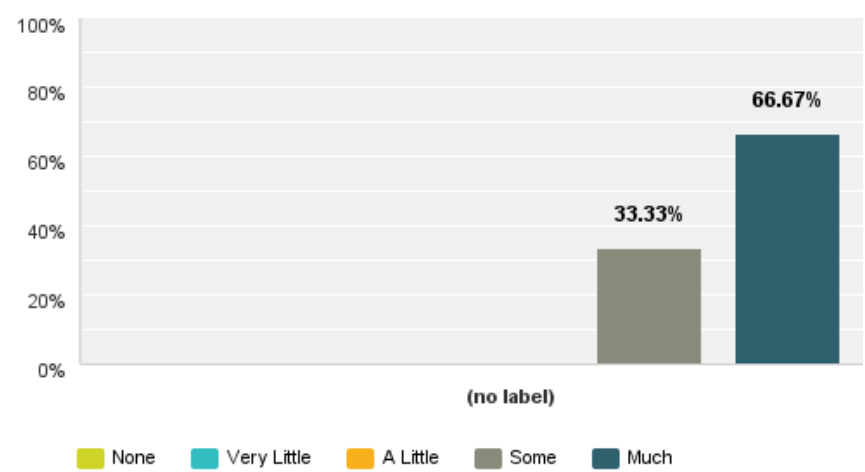
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	66.67% 6	22.22% 2	9	4.11
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
3.00	5.00		4.00	4.11	0.57		

10 How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality that is different than your own? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	55.56% 5	9	4.33
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
2.00	5.00		5.00	4.33	0.94		

11 How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered? Answered: 9 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	66.67% 6	9	4.67

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.67	Standard Deviation 0.47

APPENDIX D

ANALYSIS OF PRE-CURRICULUM SURVEY FOR FOCUS GROUP

Q1 Denominational Faith Group Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

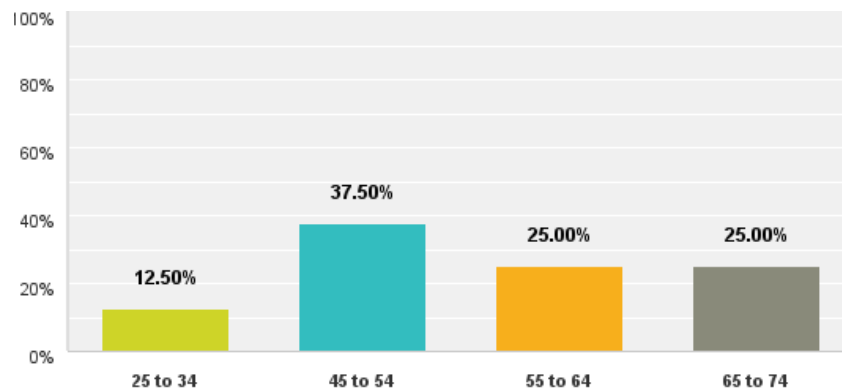
The following were listed as denominational faith groups of the eight focus group participants:

- 2 United Methodist Church
- 4 Southern Baptist
- 1 Episcopal Church USA
- 1 Lutheran (ELCA)

Q2 Years in Ministry Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

The following answers were given:

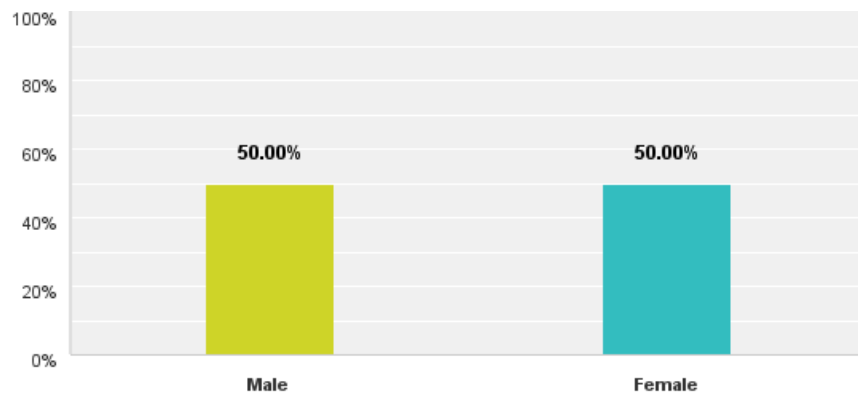
14, 9, 5, 25, 11, 27, 11, 7

3 What is your age? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses
25 to 34 (2)		12.50% 1
45 to 54 (4)		37.50% 3
55 to 64 (5)		25.00% 2
65 to 74 (6)		25.00% 2
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	6.00	4.50	4.50	1.22

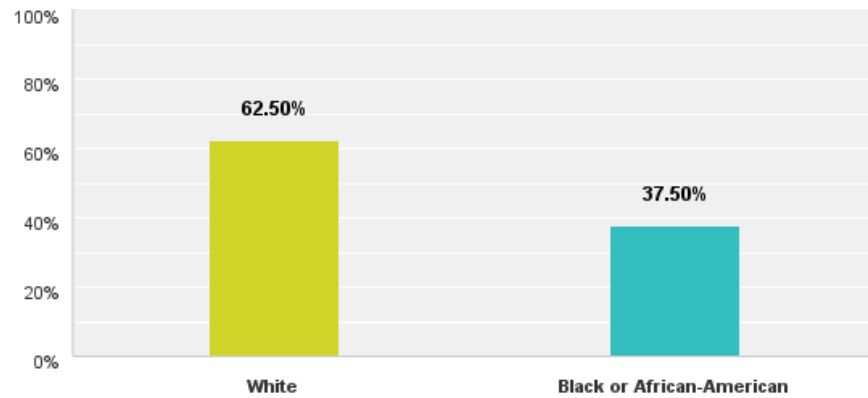
4 Are you male or female? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices		Responses
Male (1)		50.00% 4
Female (2)		50.00% 4
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	2.00	1.50	1.50	0.50

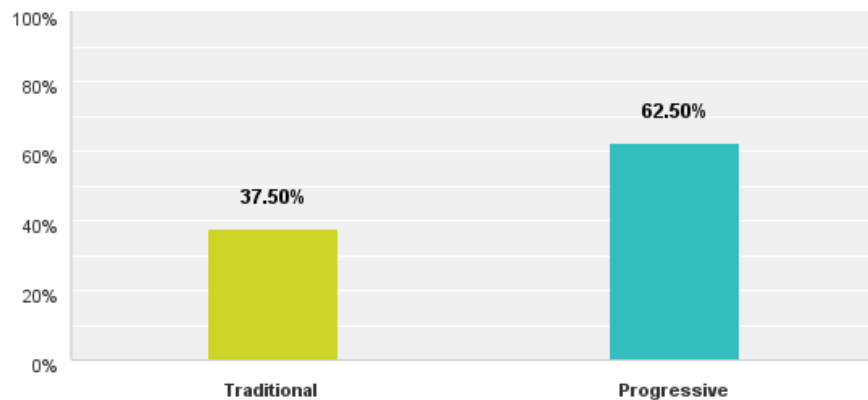
5 Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
White (1)	62.50%	5
Black or African-American (2)	37.50%	3
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
0.00	1.00	0.00	0.38	0.48

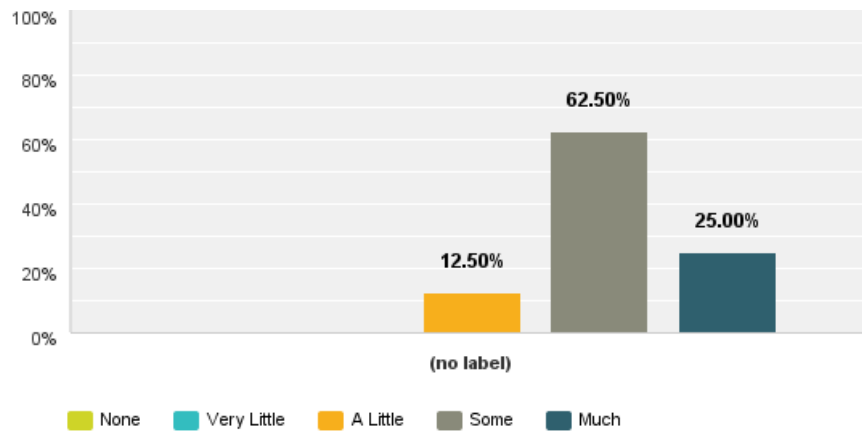
6 Which of the following best describes your biblical/theological position regarding Homosexuality and Christian Faith: Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Traditional (1)	37.50%	3
Progressive (2)	62.50%	5
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	2.00	2.00	1.63	0.48

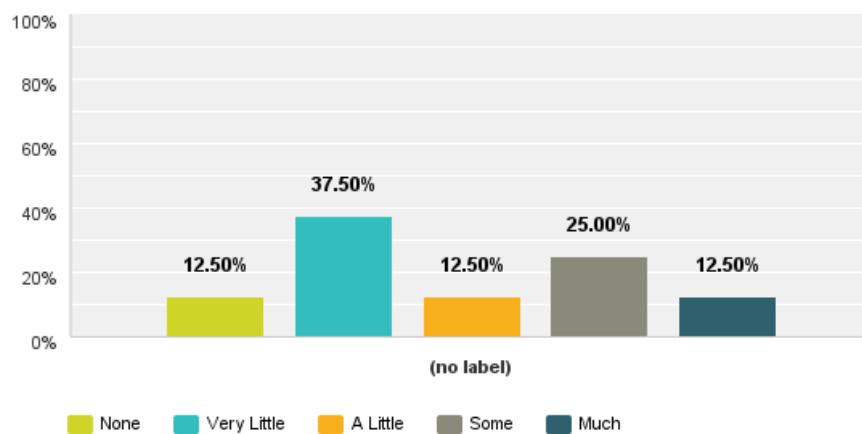
7 How much biblical knowledge do you have to support your theological view of homosexuality? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	62.50% 5	25.00% 2	8	4.13

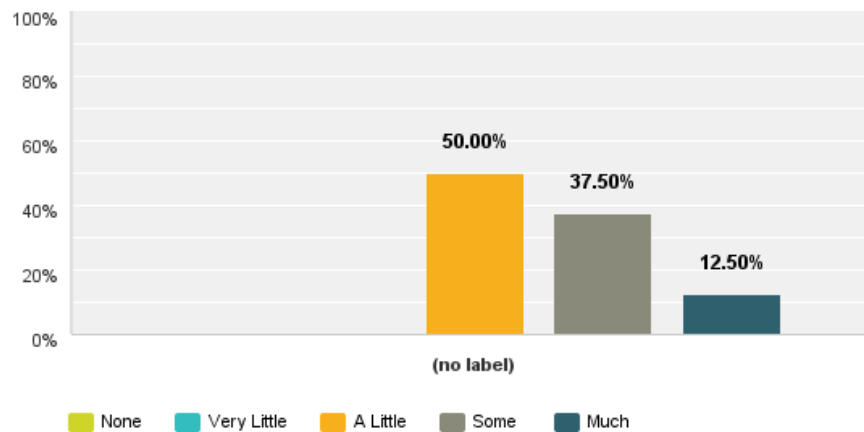
Basic Statistics					
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation	
3.00	5.00	4.00	4.13	0.60	

8 How much anxiety do you have about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



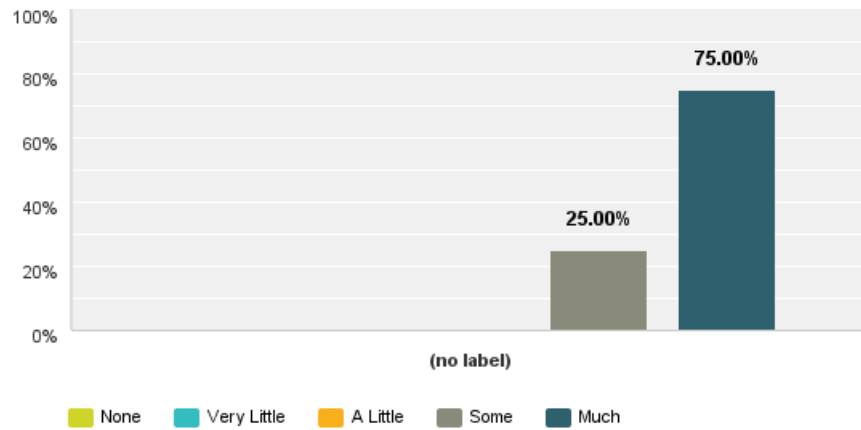
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	12.50% 1	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	25.00% 2	12.50% 1	8	2.88
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
1.00	5.00		2.50	2.88	1.27		

**9 How much theological understanding do you have of those who hold a differing biblical/theological view of homosexuality and Christian faith? Answered: 8
Skipped: 0**



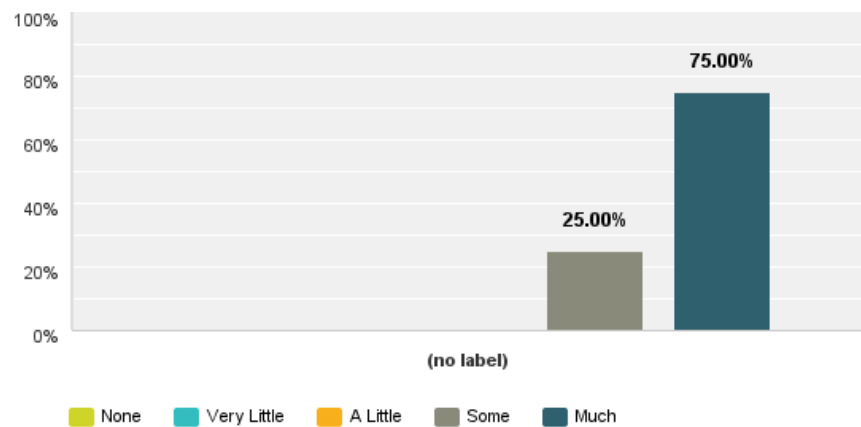
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 4	37.50% 3	12.50% 1	8	3.63
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
3.00	5.00		3.50	3.63	0.70		

**10 How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality that is different than your own? Answered: 8
Skipped: 0**



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	75.00% 6	8	4.75
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00		Median 5.00	Mean 4.75	Standard Deviation 0.43		

11 How much confidence do you have that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered?
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	75.00% 6	8	4.75
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00		Median 5.00	Mean 4.75	Standard Deviation 0.43		

APPENDIX E

ANALYSIS OF POST CURRICULUM SURVEY 1 FOR FOCUS GROUP

1 Denominational Faith Group Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

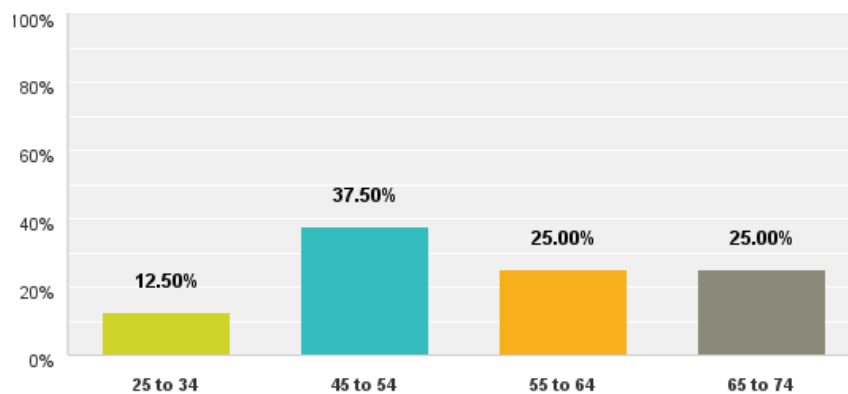
The following were listed as denominational faith groups of the eight focus group participants:

- 2 United Methodist Church
- 1 Baptist
- 1 Missionary – Southern Baptist
- 1 Baptist - Christian
- 1 Southern Baptist
- 1 Episcopal Church USA
- 1 Lutheran (ELCA)

2 Years in Ministry Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

The following answers were given:

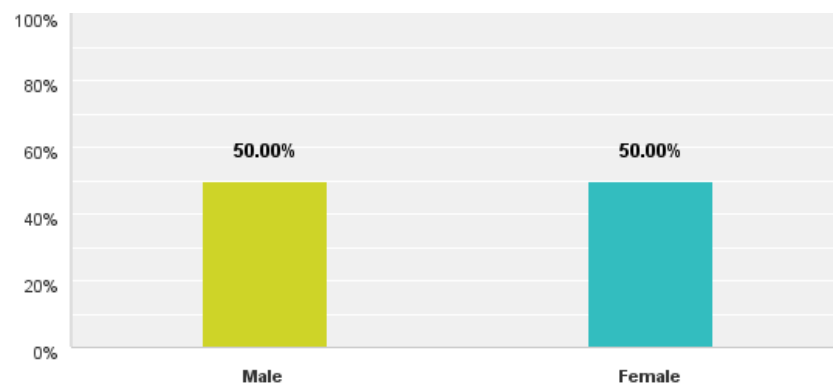
22.5, 40, 10, 25, 25, 11, 7

3 What is your age? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices		Responses
25 to 34 (2)		12.50% 1
45 to 54 (4)		37.50% 3
55 to 64 (5)		25.00% 2
65 to 74 (6)		25.00% 2
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	6.00	4.50	4.50	1.22

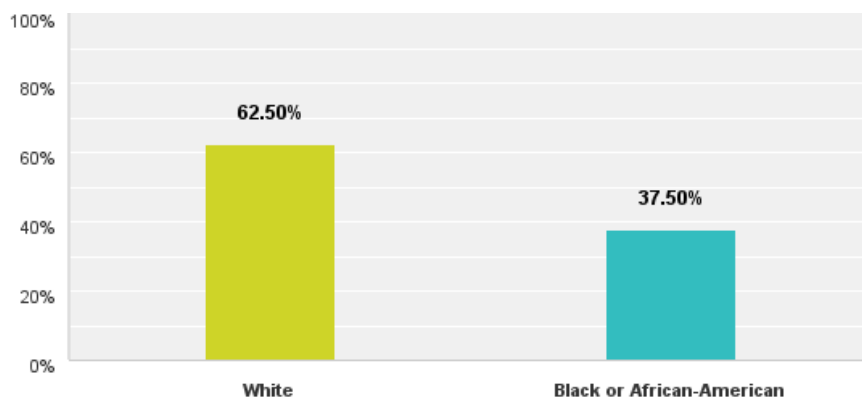
4 Are you male or female? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices		Responses
Male (1)		50.00% 4
Female (2)		50.00% 4
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	2.00	1.50	1.50	0.50

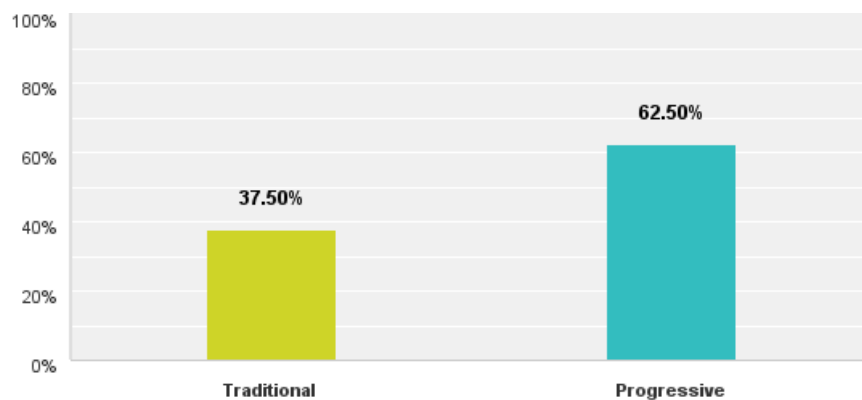
5 Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
White (1)	62.50%	5
Black or African-American (2)	37.50%	3
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
0.00	1.00	0.00	0.38	0.48

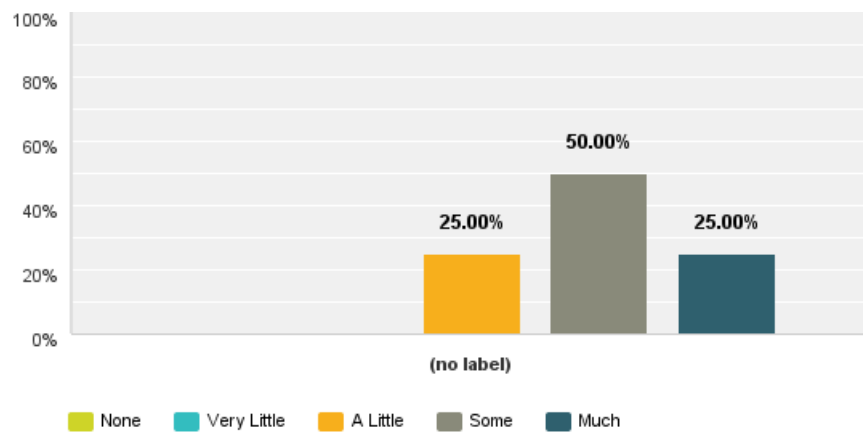
6 Which of the following best describes your biblical/theological position regarding Homosexuality and Christian Faith:



Answer Choices		Responses
Traditional (1)		37.50% 3
Progressive (2)		62.50% 5
Total		8

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	2.00	2.00	1.63	0.48

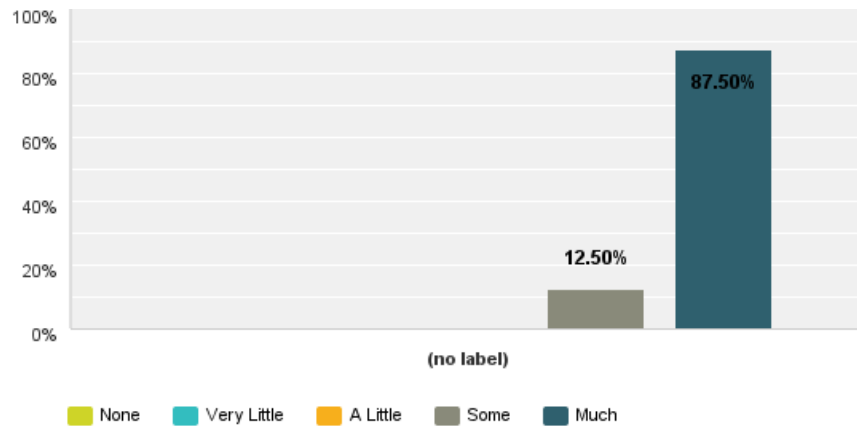
7 How much biblical knowledge did you have before our group began to support your theological view of homosexuality?



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	50.00% 4	25.00% 2	8	4.00

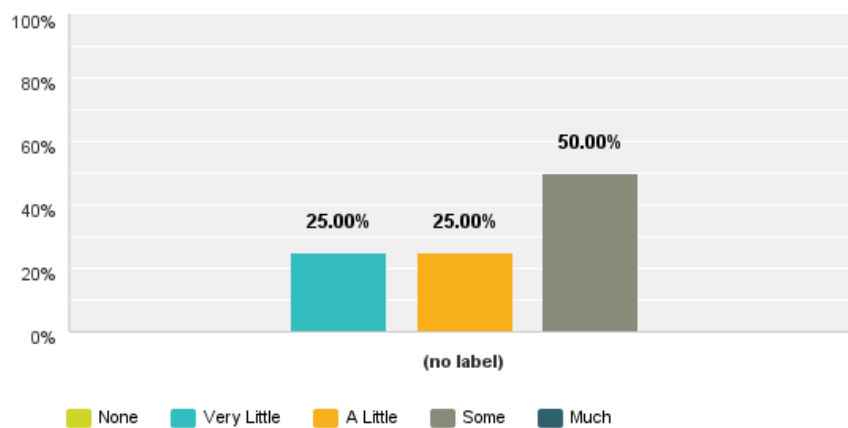
Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
3.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	0.71

8 How much biblical/theological knowledge do you have now to support your theological view of homosexuality? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	87.50% 7	8	4.88
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00		Median 5.00		Mean 4.88	Standard Deviation 0.33	

9 How much anxiety did you before our group sessions began about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

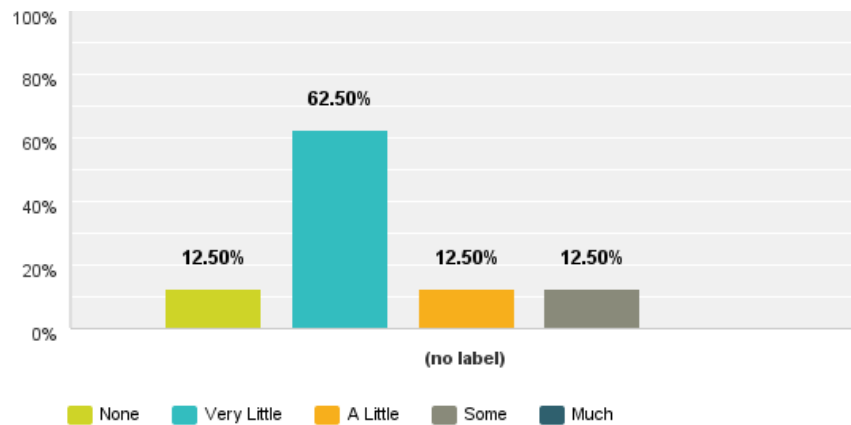


	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	25.00% 2	50.00% 4	0.00% 0	8	3.25

Basic Statistics

Minimum 2.00	Maximum 4.00	Median 3.50	Mean 3.25	Standard Deviation 0.83
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10 How much anxiety do you have now about discussing your view of homosexuality with someone who has a differing view? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

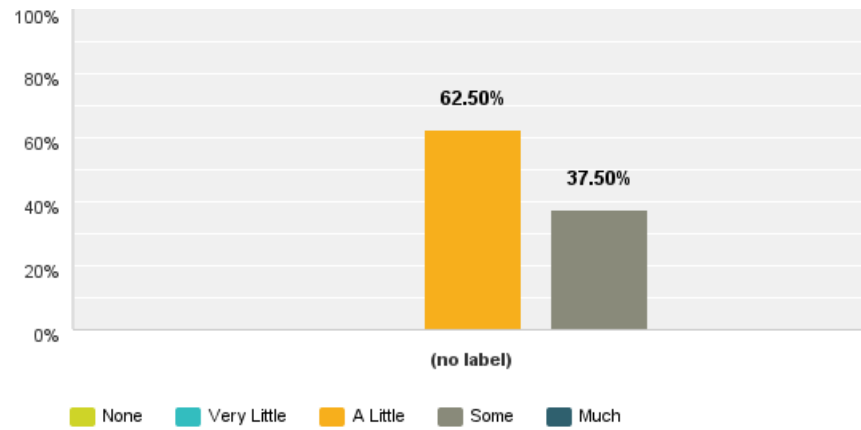


	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	12.50% 1	62.50% 5	12.50% 1	12.50% 1	0.00% 0	8	2.25

Basic Statistics

Minimum 1.00	Maximum 4.00	Median 2.00	Mean 2.25	Standard Deviation 0.83
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11 How much understanding did you have before the group sessions began concerning biblical/theological views of homosexuality and Christian faith that were different from your own? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

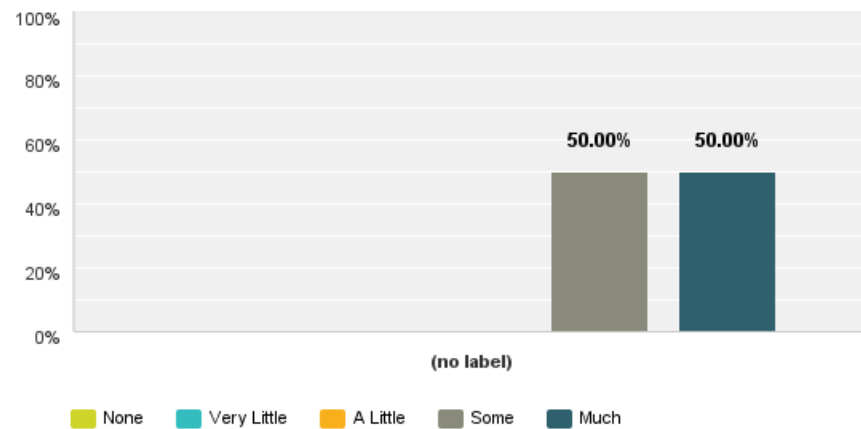


	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	62.50% 5	37.50% 3	0.00% 0	8	3.38

Basic Statistics

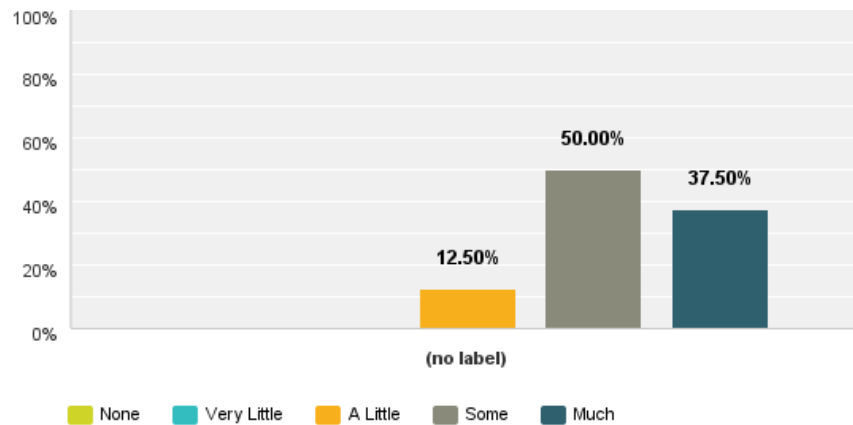
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
3.00	4.00	3.00	3.38	0.48

12 How much biblical/theological understanding do you have now of views that are different from your own? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



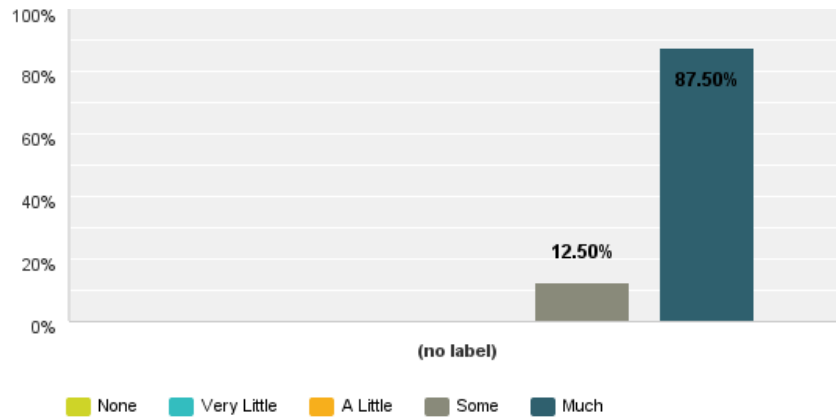
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 4	50.00% 4	8	4.50
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
4.00	5.00		4.50	4.50	0.50		

13 How much confidence did you have before our group sessions began that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality that is different than your own? Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



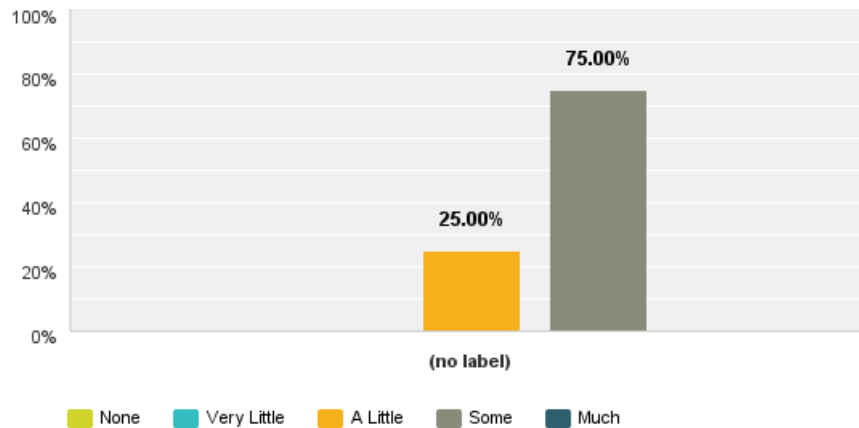
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	50.00% 4	37.50% 3	8	4.25
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
3.00	5.00		4.00	4.25	0.66		

14 How much confidence do you have now that you can participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who holds a different theological and biblical understanding of homosexuality. Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



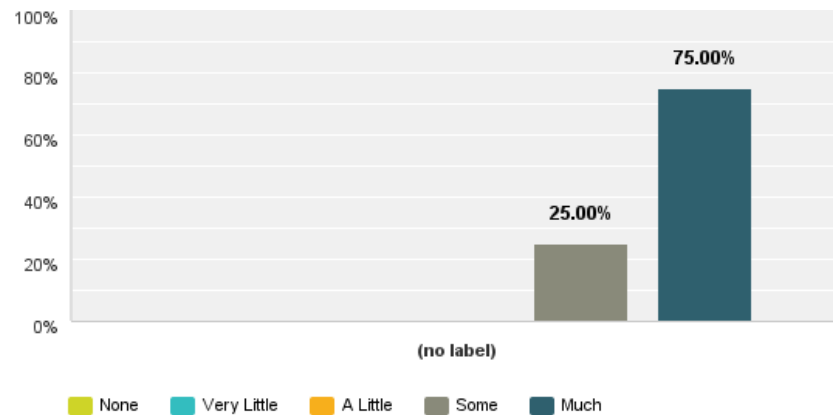
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	12.50% 1	87.50% 7	8	4.88
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00		Median 5.00	Mean 4.88	Standard Deviation 0.33		

15 How much confidence did you have before the group session began that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion about homosexuality and the Christian faith with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered?



	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	75.00% 6	0.00% 0	8	3.75
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
3.00	4.00		4.00	3.75	0.43		

16 How much confidence do you have now that you could participate in an open, honest and civil discussion with someone who is Gay, Lesbian or Transgendered?
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



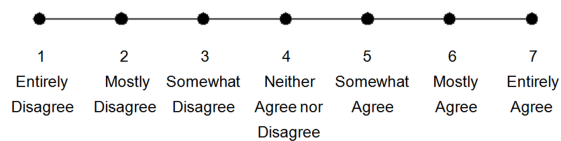
	None (1)	Very Little (2)	A Little (3)	Some (4)	Much (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 2	75.00% 6	8	4.75
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
4.00	5.00		5.00	4.75	0.43		

APPENDIX F

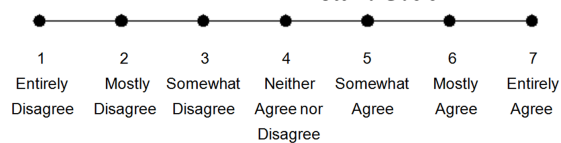
POST CURRICULUM SURVEY 2 ANALYSIS FOR FOCUS GROUP

Instructions: Read the following statements and circle the number that most accurately describes your level of disagreement/agreement with the statement.

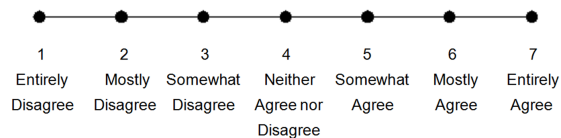
1. As a result of this course/group process I have changed the way I look at myself. **Mean: 5.25**



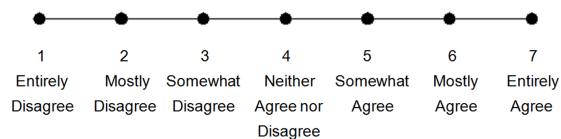
2. This course/group process has challenged some of my formerly held ideas. **Mean: 5.00**



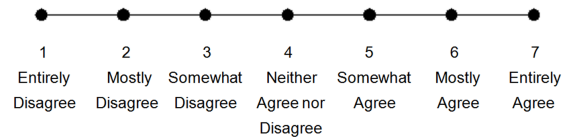
3. During this course/group process I discovered faults in what I previously believed to be right. **Mean: 4.63**



4. As a result of this course I have changed my normal way of thinking about homosexuality and Christian faith. **Mean: 4.63**

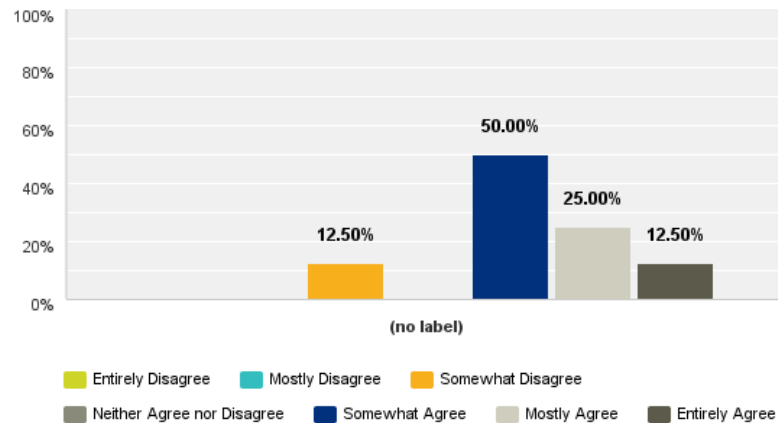


5. As a result of this course/group process I have changed my theological position concerning homosexuality and Christian faith. **Mean: 3.75**



1 As a result of this course/group process I have changed the way I look at myself.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

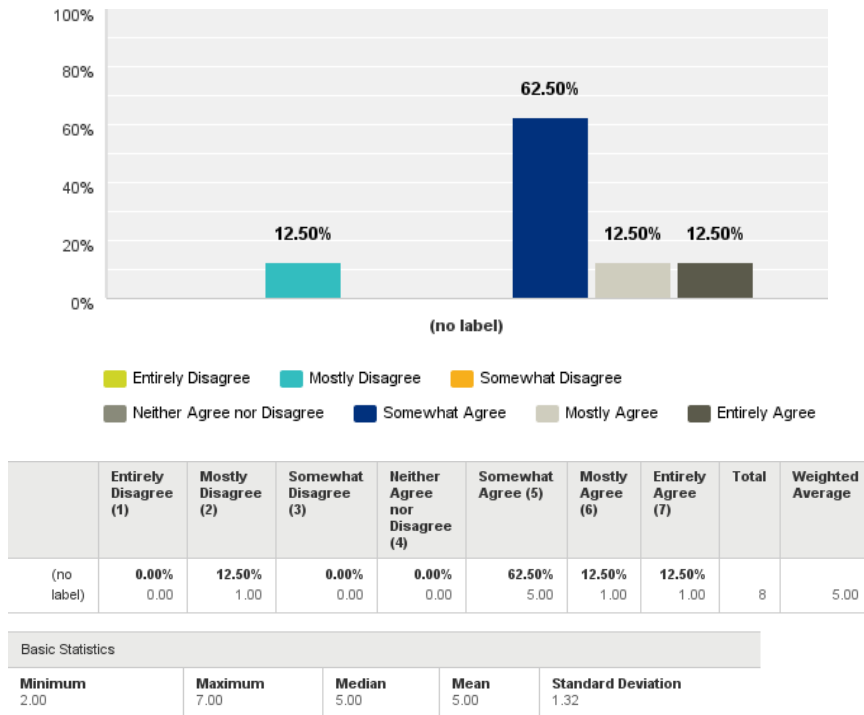


	Entirely Disagree (1)	Mostly Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Mostly Agree (6)	Entirely Agree (7)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	12.50% 1.00	0.00% 0.00	50.00% 4.00	25.00% 2.00	12.50% 1.00	8	5.25

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 7.00	Median 5.00	Mean 5.25	Standard Deviation 1.09

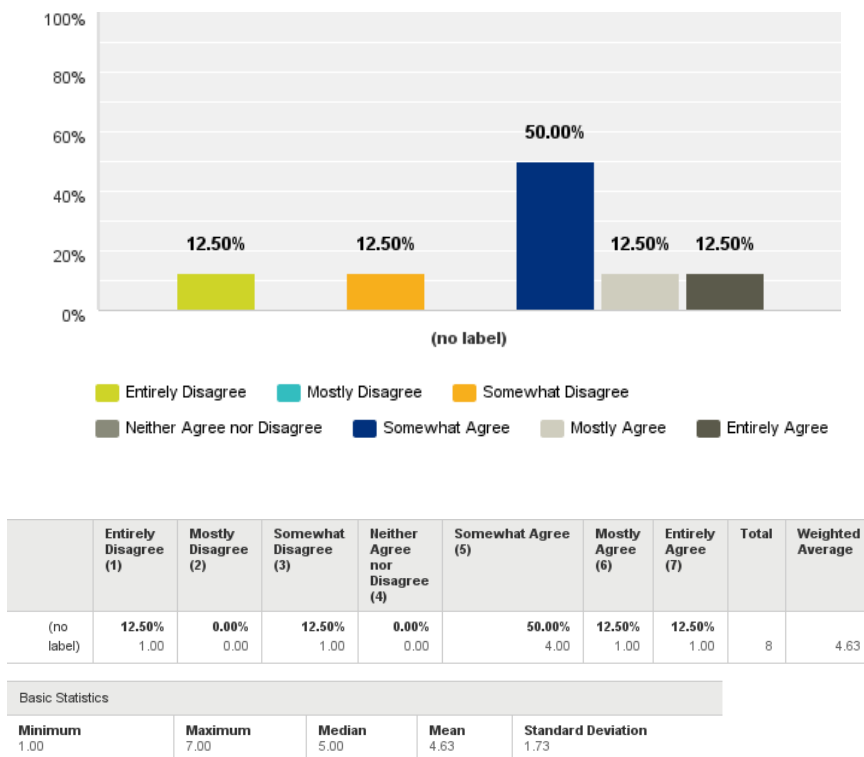
2 This course/group process has challenged some of my formerly held ideas.

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0

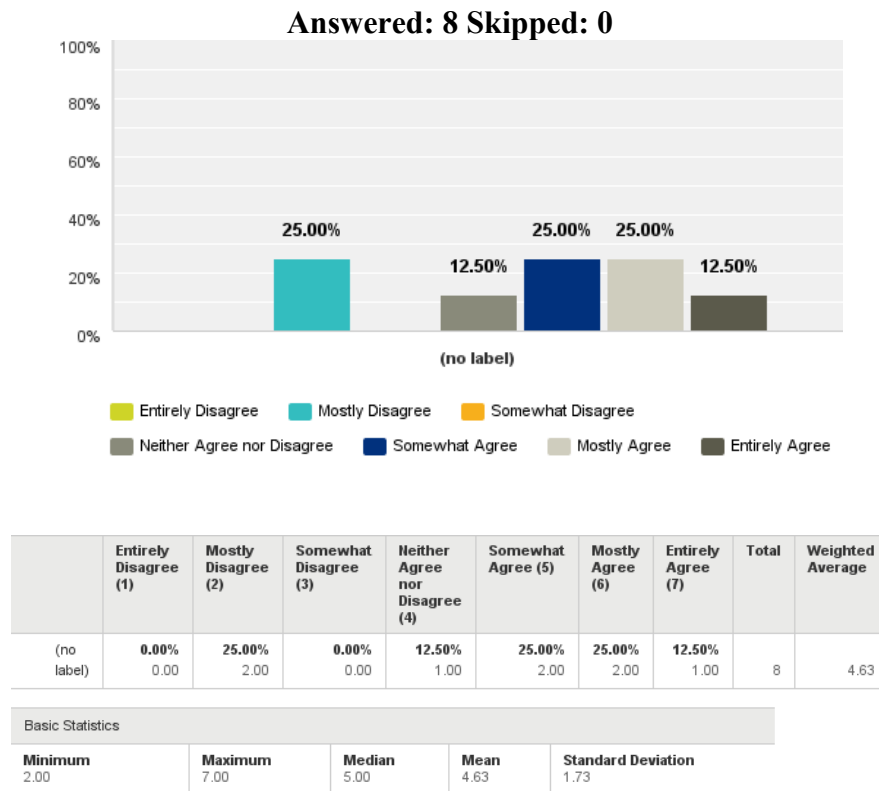


3 During this course/group process I discovered faults in what I previously believed to be right.

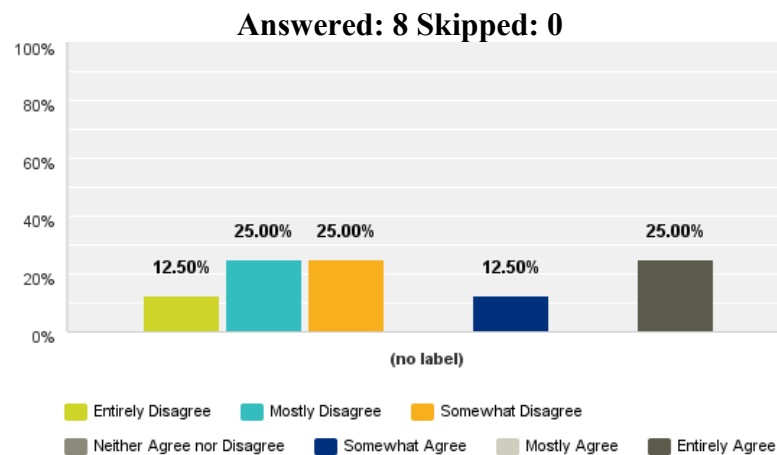
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



4 As a result of this course/group process I have changed my normal way of thinking about homosexuality and Christian faith.



5 As a result of this course/group process I have changed my theological position concerning homosexuality and Christian faith.



	Entirely Disagree (1)	Mostly Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Mostly Agree (6)	Entirely Agree (7)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	12.50% 1.00	25.00% 2.00	25.00% 2.00	0.00% 0.00	12.50% 1.00	0.00% 0.00	25.00% 2.00	8	3.75

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 1.00	Maximum 7.00	Median 3.00	Mean 3.75	Standard Deviation 2.17

APPENDIX G

ANALYSIS OF WEEKLY SURVEY OF SEMINARS, CPE SUPERVISOR AND
GUEST LECTURER

Weekly Evaluation of Seminars Instrument Data and Analysis

1. Week One
2. Week Two
3. Week Three
4. Week Four
5. Week Five
6. Week Six
7. Week Seven

(See the following pages)

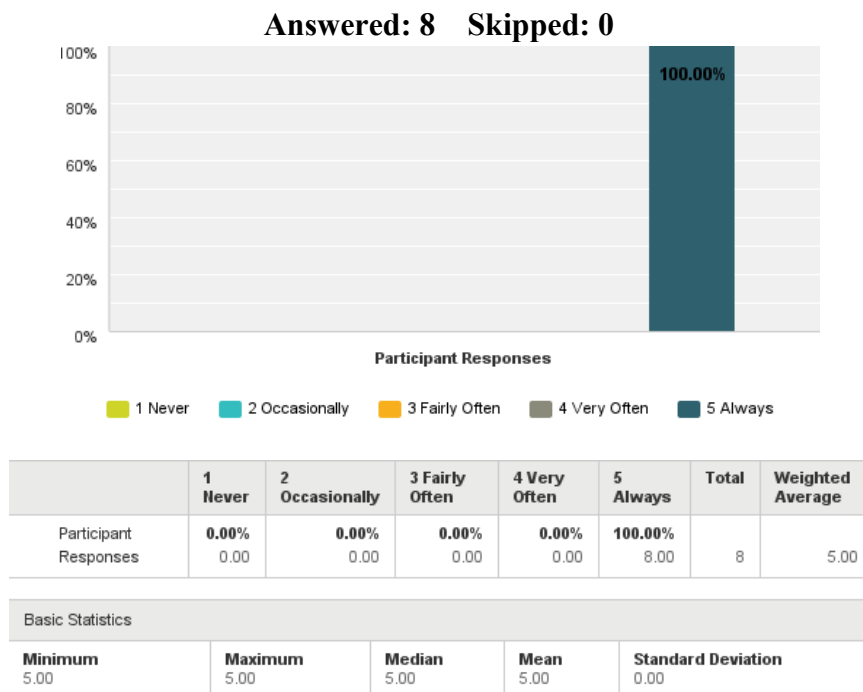
understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Mean: 4.00	
9. Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.88	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Comments
10. Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 5.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Comments
11. List three things that you learned or discovered today:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First time hearing the perspective of a LGBTQ person in a formal way. 2. People are gay when you may not ever expect them to be gay. 3. We can face this mystery and difficulty together in the church. 1. The speaker could speak on a lifestyle of heterosexual and homosexual. 2. A different perspective on the scriptures typically used by speakers. 1. When I feel it is one-sided or that I am in the minority, I shut down. 2. That the world around us is changing and that one is expected to choose or be left behind. 3. When I struggle to speak up and the dialogue becomes overpowering because everyone having something to share and not everyone can be heard due to time constraints or having a quiet nature. 1. Helped to improve my theological view. 2. A better understanding of homosexuality and the Christian faith. I learned that the Genesis 19 text was about a lack of hospitality. 2. I discovered that homosexual involves more than a sexual act. 3. I discovered that the church must rethink how it relates to the LGBTQ community 1. Homosexuals interpret the scripture differently. 2. Some homosexuals were at one time heterosexual. 3. Some people play different sexual roles 1. Homosexual orientation is different from behavior. 2. Homosexuality can be genetic. 3. Homosexual orientation may not be cured or changed from gay to straight 1. That the group can talk about it with respect for each other. I was pleasantly surprised. 2. What a nice person the presenter seems to be. 3. That on some issues the members of the group are not really that far apart in our views. 	
12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeing an LGBTQ person as an individual 2. Lowered the gate a little more so it is even less uncomfortable to communicate. 3. To lead the church in a pastoral way facing the difficulty of receiving all people. 4. Understanding the 	

	<p>heart of multiple perspectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Compassion for those who choose a different lifestyle. 2. The Scripture is open to interpretation of the individual. 3. to carefully listen to those who are different from me. • 1. My prayer is that I will learn how to continue listening and even listen at a deeper level asking questions and clarification as needed rather than shutting down. 2. To be aware of my conviction and God's Spirit and choose only if led by God and not by pressure of those around me. 3. I believe if I reflect on the presentation as well as what triggered me to shut down that it will still positively impact my ability to provide pastoral care to others. • 1. To be more open. 2. A greater appreciation for people who hold to a different view. • 1. I will be more open to discussions on the subject of homosexuality. 2. I will be less biased when serving a person of a different sexual orientation. 3. I will become a better chaplain as a result of these new discoveries. • 1. I can understand how people can relate differently to others. 2. Through understanding different theological perspectives. 3. By learning to be compassionate. • 1. Be open to persons with sexual orientation that is different from my own. 2. Scholars are not in agreement about what the Bible says about homosexuality. 3. The Gospel gives room for love ethics rather than legal ethics. • 1. Reaffirms that I am doing the right thing by supporting LGBTQ. 2. Helps me to remain non-judgmental of other opinions. 3. Helps to know other LGBTQ persons who are happy and committed in their relationships.
13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing from a person who is LGBTQ • I loved the way the speaker shared the history of homosexuality and her interpretation of scripture. She held us in rapt attention and in the end shared her sexual interpretation. • The dialogue and learning a different even more rigid perspective than my own. • I enjoyed the guest speakers open views. • The possibility of civil dialogue surrounding a subject that brings such passionate convictions from persons of the traditional or progressive views. • The time we were allowed to ask questions. • Openness and civility from everyone, presenters as well as participants. • Her straightforward presentation of her story. She did not present in a biased way. She simply told her story.
14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I really like the format of having opposing views presented • Everything was well planned. • Allow students to present their views in a seminar form. • The format we are following is adequate. • Have her present again.

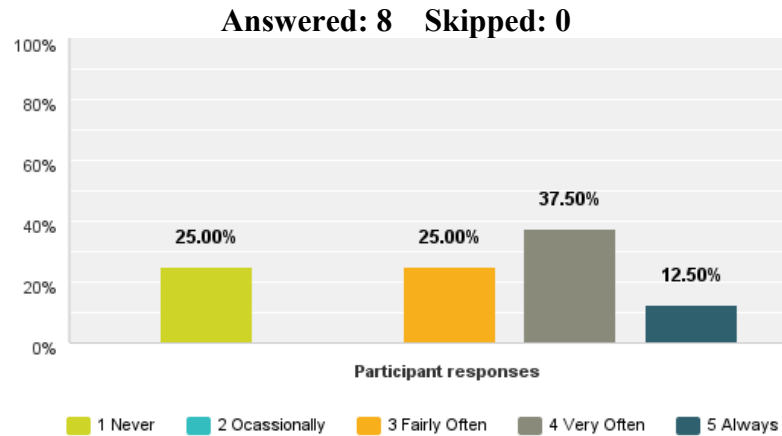
Any additional comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These were good seminars. The guest speaker was great. • Some of the content today was new for me. Although there was no yelling or disrespect, I did feel conversation was restricted by how much folks shared and desired to discuss. It seemed as if we had to fight to get heard. For those of us who are introverted this made it difficult to engage. I had not previously experienced/encountered a gay person who was married to someone from the opposite sex but then discovered his or her sexual tendencies. • I have not had much conversation on homosexuality and sexual orientation. • 1. It was nice to see respectful receiving of the guest speaker's presentation and some surprise in our group that Lesbians did not really have two heads or three arms. 2. I look forward to working with Martha (guest speaker).
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Seminar One Data Analysis

1: Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?



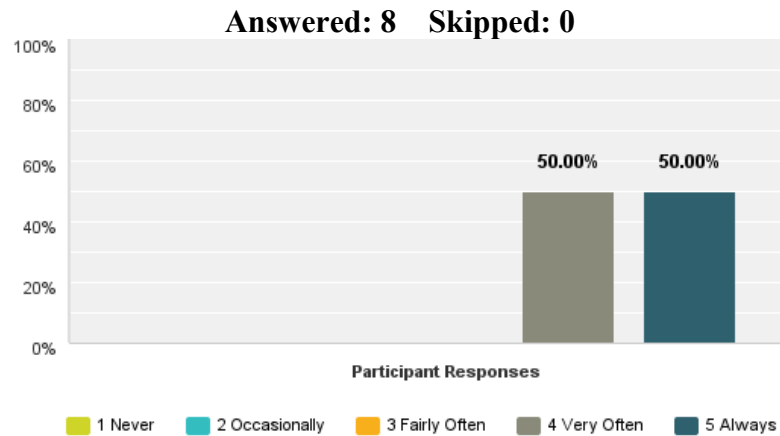
2: Was the content in the session new for you?



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant responses	25.00% 2.00	0.00% 0.00	25.00% 2.00	37.50% 3.00	12.50% 1.00	8	3.13

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
1.00	5.00	3.50	3.13	1.36

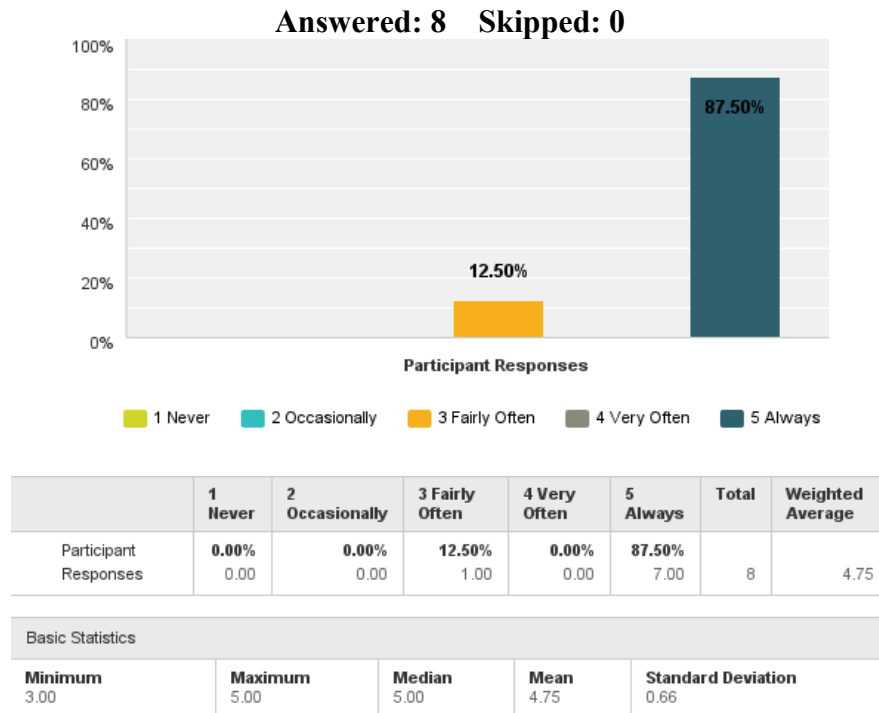
3: Were the key points clearly communicated?



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Responses	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	50.00% 4.00	50.00% 4.00	8	4.50

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
4.00	5.00	4.50	4.50	0.50

4: Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?



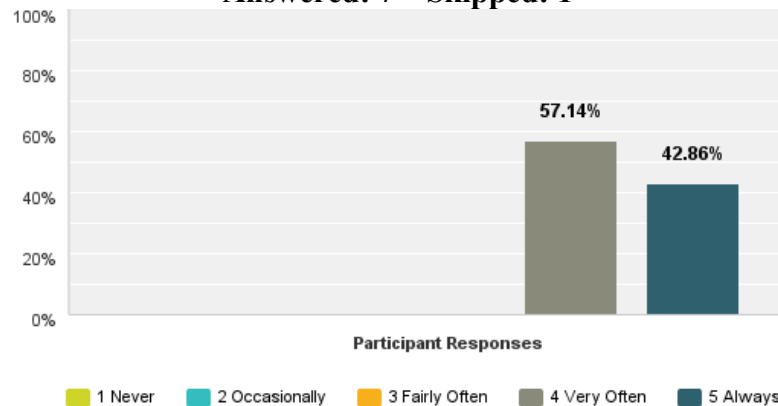
5: Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Responses	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	100.00% 8.00	8	5.00
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation			
5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00			

6: Was the information presented today by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?

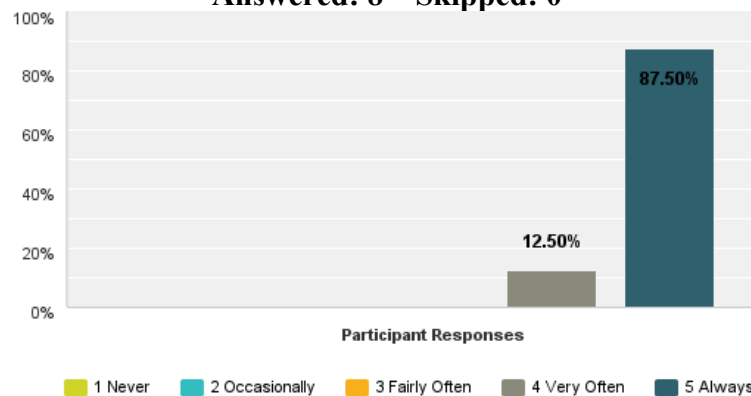
Answered: 7 Skipped: 1



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Responses	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	57.14% 4.00	42.86% 3.00	7	4.43
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation			
4.00	5.00	4.00	4.43	0.49			

7: Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

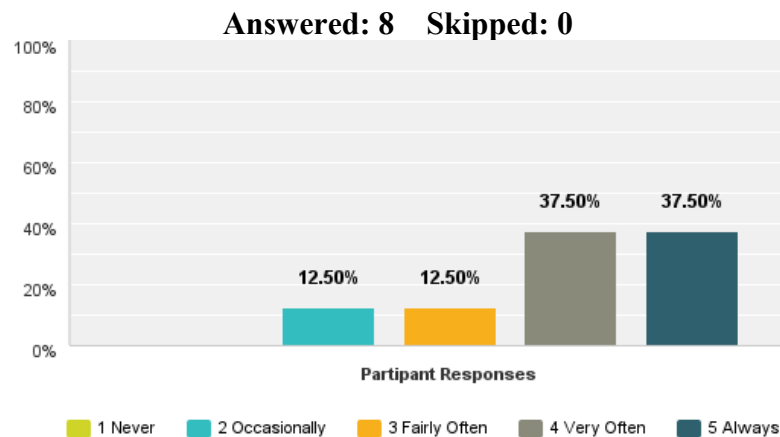
Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Responses	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	12.50% 1.00	87.50% 7.00	8	4.88

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.88	Standard Deviation 0.33

8: Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Responses	0.00% 0.00	12.50% 1.00	12.50% 1.00	37.50% 3.00	37.50% 3.00	8	4.00

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 2.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.00	Mean 4.00	Standard Deviation 1.00

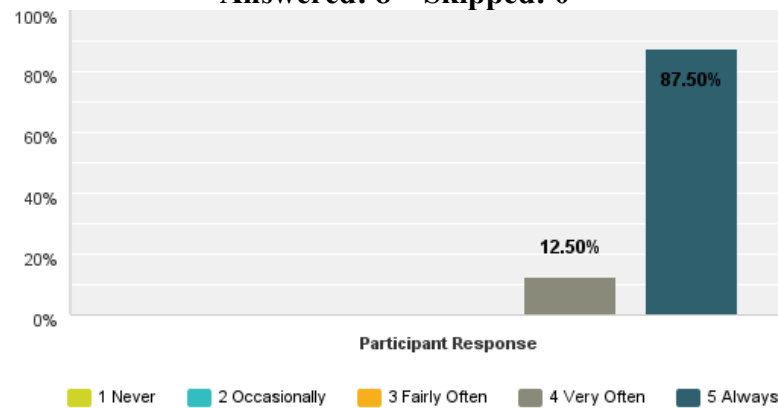
9: Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Responses	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	12.50% 1.00	62.50% 5.00	25.00% 2.00	8	4.13
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.00	Mean 4.13	Standard Deviation 0.60			

10: Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 0



	1 Never	2 Occasionally	3 Fairly Often	4 Very Often	5 Always	Total	Weighted Average
Participant Response	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	12.50% 1.00	87.50% 7.00	8	4.88
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.88	Standard Deviation 0.33			

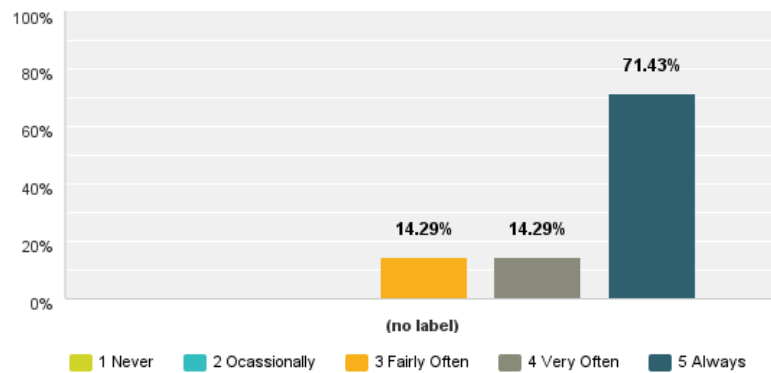
		<p>issues surrounding homosexuality like homosexuality and civil rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am already familiar with this way of thinking. • I was surprised at how much of a literalist the guest speaker was. It surprised me especially for the day and time in which we live.
8. Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.43</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is always good and helpful to hear from other people's perspectives. • The guest speaker today helped me to realize how even further apart we are at the left and the right - further than I previously thought.
9. Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.86</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The guest speaker presented a view that I was familiar with. • I see the passion. • No - I respect their right to believe but I don't share them in any way.
10. Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.57</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, the more I must face this point of view the better prepared I will be and I will learn to communicate better. • Hopefully, I will be present for those who have been rejected by traditional thinkers like the guest speaker today - so that I can affirm them.
11. List three things that you learned or discovered today:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I perceived Rit to be communicating an even more conservative view on homosexuality than I and one that comes across as too extreme for me. 2. I find I am finding it uncomfortable to place conditions on especially ones which ask others to deny their true selves and to be in and engage with the church forcing them to be active or kept at arms length. 3. I witness discomfort and possibly even anger shared and voiced regarding those who attempt to parallel today's homosexuality issue with civil rights movement especially in racial discrimination, 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. I have discovered that I no longer hold these views. 2 I am okay with a God of mercy rather than a God of judgment. 3 Sin is a perception. • 1. The guest speaker gave us a lot of information to set up his viewpoint. 2 There are many people who hold his view. • 1. Accepting homosexuals into the guest speaker's community he believes will contaminate others. 2. Homosexuals may impose their lifestyle on others. 3 It is very public policy to advocate for the civil rights of homosexuals. • 1. I learned how individuality influences our decisions. 2. I learned about how politics is a part of the issue. 3. I discovered that people see things differently even though they believe the same thing. • 1. I am surprised that such an educated person could be so blind to his own bias. 2. You cannot hate the sin without hating the sinner. How can you turn away from someone you love? 3. The church is more in trouble than I know. • 1. There are still pastors in important positions with these extreme views. 2. That group members from both sides disagreed with part of the guest speaker's beliefs. 3. That I realize how thankful I am that I am a liberal thinker.
12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 I will try to keep a better balance of my own personal view in light of this perception and being more conscious of how my personal welfare communicated and reflected to those I minister for and with. 2) I hope and pray that I can and will strive to not place conditions on others again especially ones in which cause my message to ask others to deny their true selves and engage with the church forcing them to be actively changing or kept at arms length. • 1 Agree to disagree in a civil manner. 2 To reflect on my own bias and prejudices. • To be more open to all people. • 1 Being open to people with different sexual orientation from mine. 2 Advocating for the human rights of homosexuals. 3 Accept homosexuals as a people created by God. • 1. To be more compassionate towards those who are different. 2. To realize different theological perspectives. 3. To listen carefully to others. • 1. I need to be better equipped to TEACH as a pastor on the issue of homosexuality. 2. I must never turn from homosexuals regardless of my discomfort or questions about sin 3. Pastors need to be blind about some things and lead with love. • 1. I will try to be more pastoral to those rejected by others. 2. That I must always be on the lookout for bias of any kind. 3. To know that people are still being discriminated against by church today
13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dialogue and conversation that have spun out of this guest speaker's presentation with the CPE Supervisor and my peers. • The information was presented in an intelligent manner. I was

	<p>given thought provoking information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the background study that the guest speaker presented. • Civility and respect for points of view that are different from mine. • Hearing the historical position on individuality. • What not to do! Do not turn away from the sinner. The church is to love! Hearing from a different perspective than I agree with is different but doable. • Listening to an important speaker representing a traditional point of view.
14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have traditional and progressive speakers representing varying perspectives. • More of the same. Current issues with opposing views. • Everything was well planned. • Format is adequate • Have students study a particular issue concerning the topic. • None • Bring him back so others can see how ridiculous his bias really is.
Any additional comments:	Thanks for the opportunity to participate in this study

1: Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?

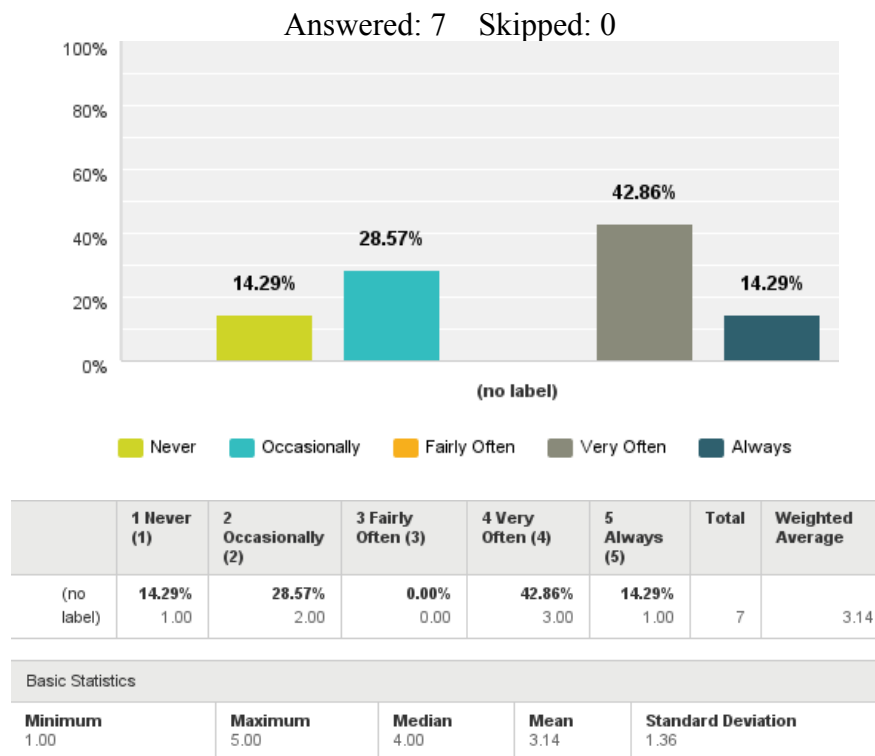
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



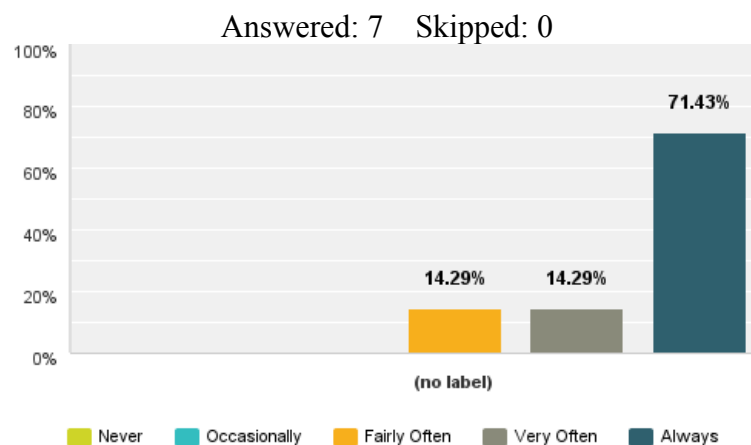
	Never (1)	Occasionally (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Very Often (4)	Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.57

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.57	Standard Deviation 0.73

2: Was the content of this session new to you?

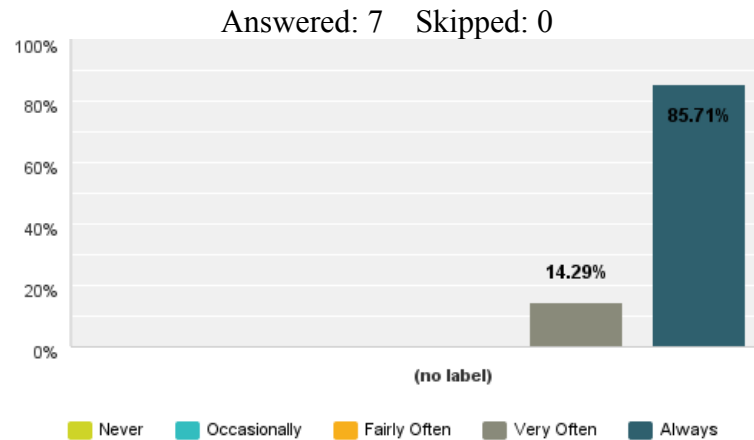


3: Were the key points clearly communicated?



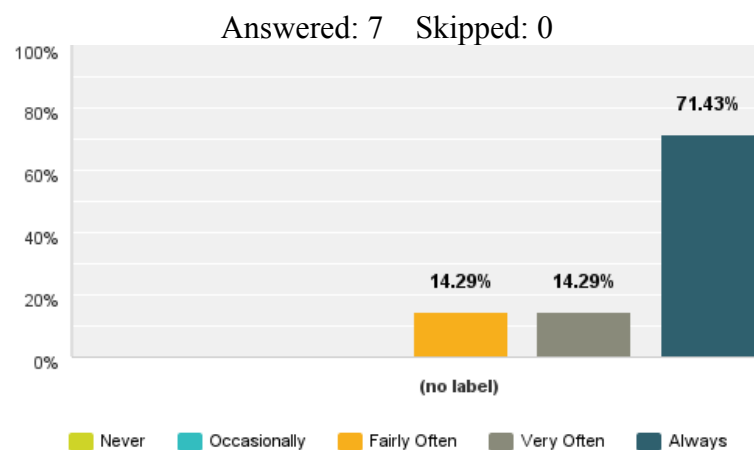
	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.57
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
3.00	5.00		5.00	4.57	0.73		

4: Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	85.71% 6.00	7	4.86
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
4.00	5.00		5.00	4.86	0.35		

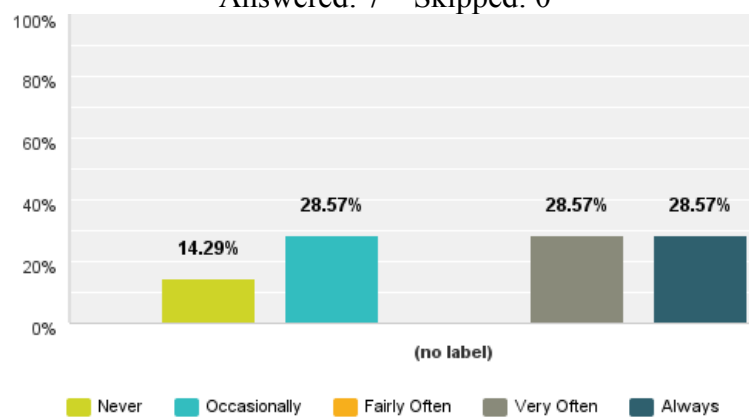
5: Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.57
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
3.00	5.00		5.00	4.57	0.73		

6: Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?

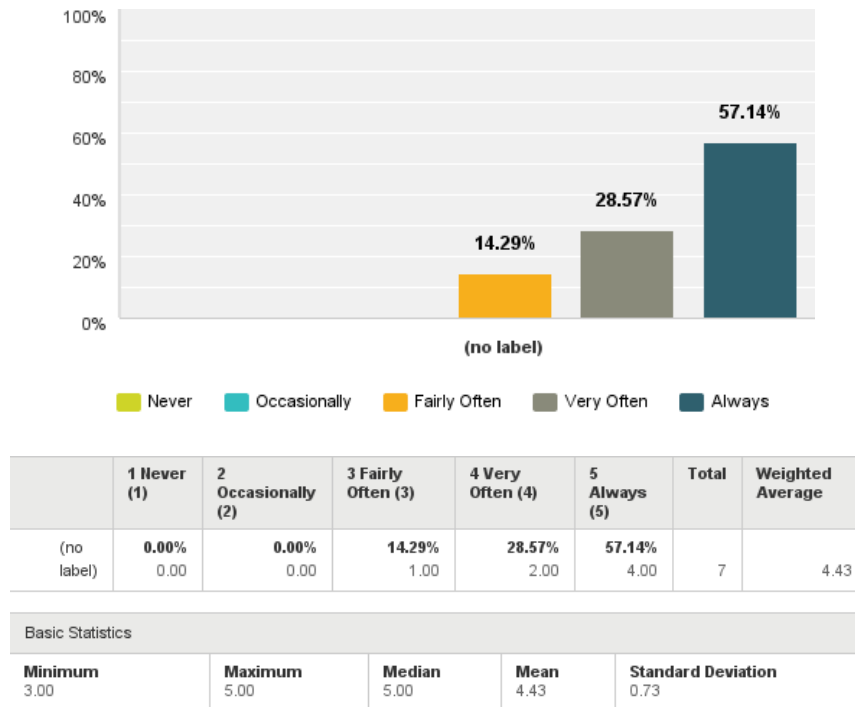
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	14.29% 1.00	28.57% 2.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	28.57% 2.00	7	3.29
Basic Statistics							
Minimum	Maximum		Median	Mean	Standard Deviation		
1.00	5.00		4.00	3.29	1.48		

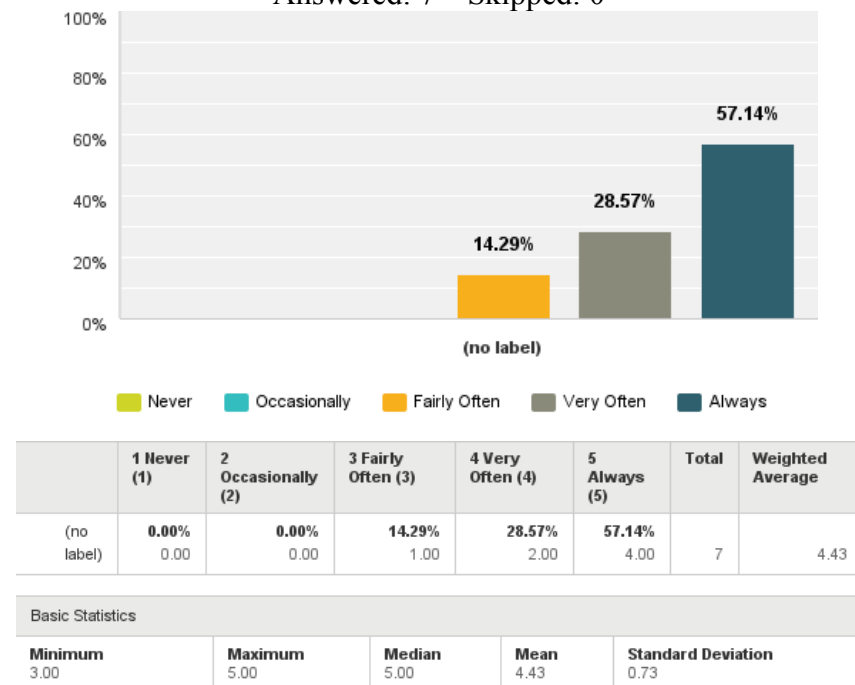
7: Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



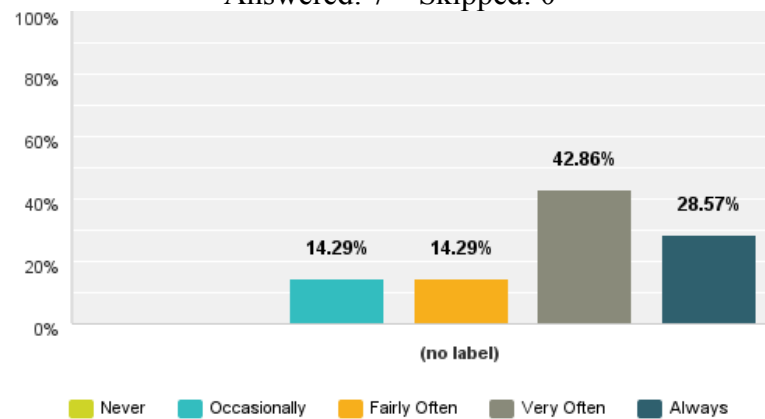
8: Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



9: Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

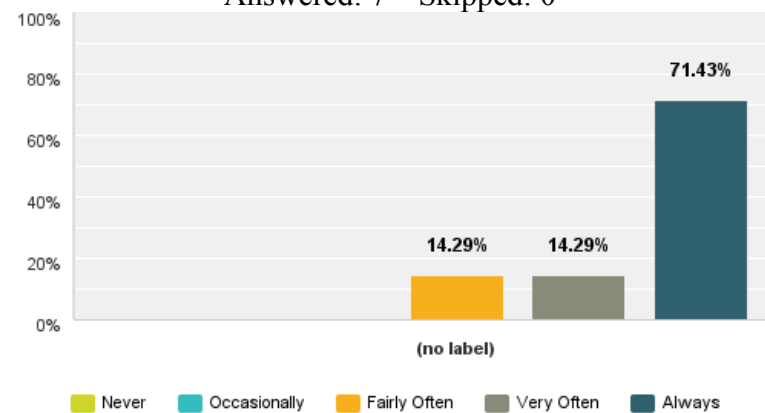


	Never (1)	Occasionally (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Very Often (4)	Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	42.86% 3.00	28.57% 2.00	7	3.86

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 2.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.00	Mean 3.86	Standard Deviation 0.99

10: Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.57

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.57	Standard Deviation 0.73

An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at CaroMont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina.

Seminar Evaluation – Week 3
Mid Unit Evaluations Off Campus
October 30, 2014

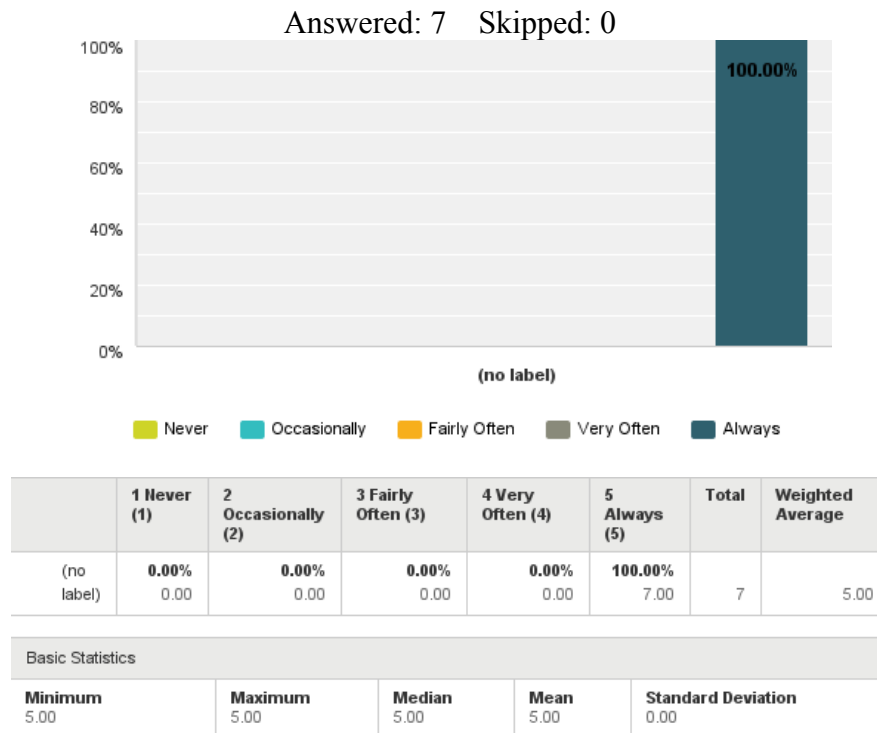
Table 7.3 Week Three: October 30, 2014 Mid-Unit Evaluation

Question	Score	Comments
1. Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 5.0</div>	No comments
2. Was the content in this session new for you?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 3.71</div>	No comments
3. Were the key points clearly communicated?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.71</div>	No comments
4. Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars this week?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.86</div>	Yes. I am aware that we had to confront some issues and struggles regarding two of us in the group. I felt like other than the "head point" that the feedback and dialogue was beneficial, encouraging and pivotal.
5. Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.71</div>	• No comments
6. Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 0</div>	• No guest speaker today.
7. Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.17</div>	• Yes. Hearing more about where different participants are on their journey and sharing more about my own personal journey.
8. Has this experience helped to improve your	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div>	• One of my peers sharing helped me to think in

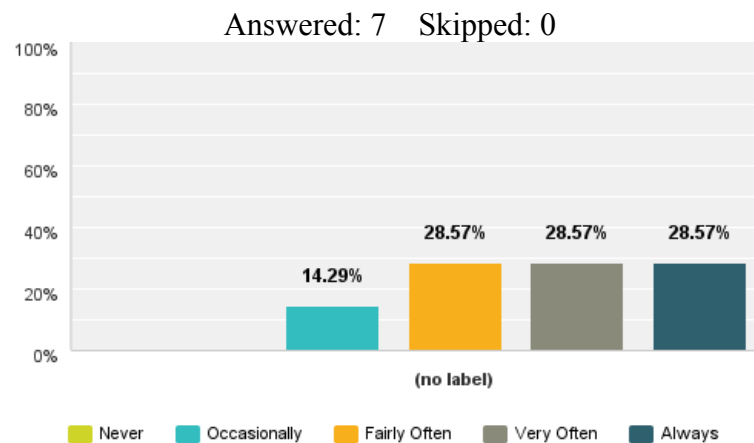
understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Mean: 4.43	some different ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some of the Scripture texts that deal with the topic tend to lend themselves to various interpretations.
9. Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.71	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments
10. Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments
11. List three things that you learned or discovered today:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discovered that others views present very valid arguments. 2. Learned how others see me. 3. That I am more open to learning now that I am older. 1. We all need and want to be loved by God and others. 2. Our stories are different but the same. 1. More personal insight into my peers thinking. 2. Importance of being prepared to do the job. 3. Importance of having compassion for those who are hurt. 1. How different members of the group see different characteristics in each other. 2. How we can love a person regardless of sexual orientation. 3. Being able to challenge others is a sign of trust. 1. That my perceptions of the group overall were incorrect. We don't often voice our stance but the group seems to be more balanced theologically than I had originally thought. 2. I have many fears, insecurities unknowns that impact my interactions with the group individually and as a whole. 3. I need to get stronger in my confidence and belief in myself and that many in the group see courage and strength in me but now I have to start showing it in my pastoral care and response to others. 1. The value of each of us as an individual. 2. Open honest discussion allows for a free flow of information. 3. Asking for others perception of my ministry is helpful, encouraging and eye opening. 1. The Scripture texts are not definitive. In regards to Romans 1 - Textual scholars agree that St. Paul did not have the benefit of modern scientific findings on genetics. 3. Respect other people's methodology even if it differs from mine. 	
12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To consider the concerns of those who have different views. 2. Will be more eager to relate to those whose views are different. 3. That ministry sometimes takes more we are prepared to offer, therefore we must be willing to make this 	

	<p>necessary adjustment to do ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. To be open and true to myself. 2. Most people do care about each other and want to do what they can to help. • 1. To always be open to offering beliefs and opinions. 2. Know what is going to be expected of you. 3. Be a calming influence to those in need. • 1. It will help me relate better in the group. 2. It will help me appreciate diversity. 3. It will allow me to talk about homosexuality from a more informed point of view. • 1. To be more questioning, exploring and assessing before making a general observation or proclamation regarding other members of the group's position or stance on this controversial topic especially. 2. I also learned that the group appreciated my honesty, openness and vulnerability but to not speak for the group as a whole. • 1. Listening to others, hearing their heart. 2. Getting to know a person on a deeper level opens the door for more understandings. 3. Support from others you trust is important in ministry. • 1. I learned not to take a static view of theology. Theology can be revised to make it represent present reality. 2. Be able to present objectively on the topic of homosexuality. 3. Learn to be civil in opposing viewpoints and not to be far ahead of my audience.
13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discussions, I have learned a lot. Very enlightening. • The things we all give each other help me. Being more open with my feelings. • Personal evaluations. Hearing what members saw in each other. • Listening to how people justify their beliefs about homosexuality. • The group's dialogue and feedback and affirmations of what they saw in me. • Sharing our impressions of CPE. Each of us finding common ground. • Learn to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.
14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have found great joy and growth in these seminars. • Allow participants in the group to present their views on homosexuality in a formal way. • More of the kind of thing we did today. • I welcome the opportunity to learn more in areas of struggle for me, for example civil conversations with those of Muslim faith. • Maintain the current format.
Any additional comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good day overall. • I think the mid-term evaluations allowed the group to connect personally and to learn a lot about each other. • Thanks for this opportunity of growth.

1: Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?



2: Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?

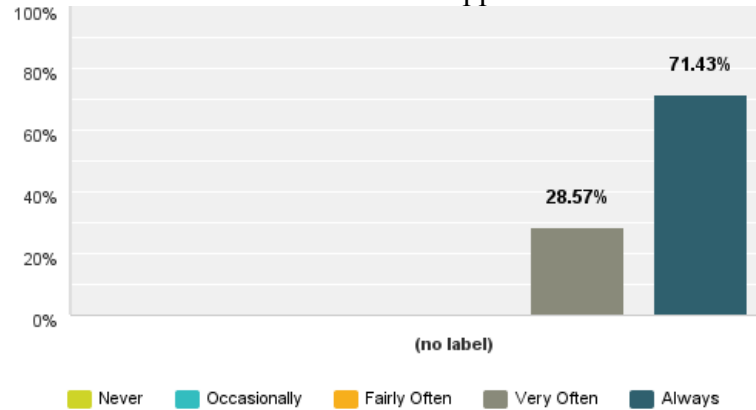


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	28.57% 2.00	28.57% 2.00	28.57% 2.00	7	3.71

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 2.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.00	Mean 3.71	Standard Deviation 1.03

3: Were the key points clearly communicated?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

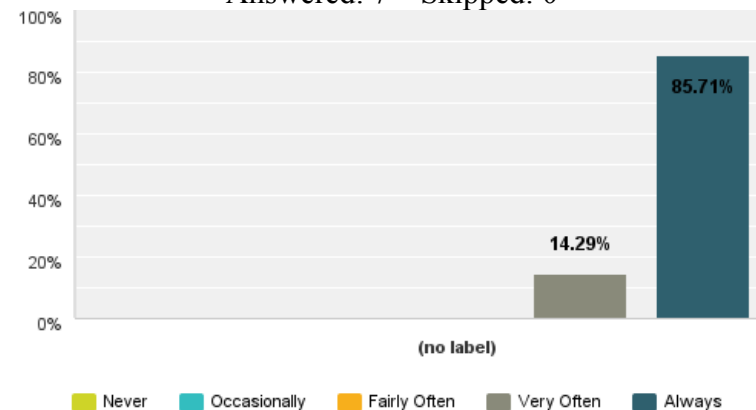


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.71

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.71	Standard Deviation 0.45

4: Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?

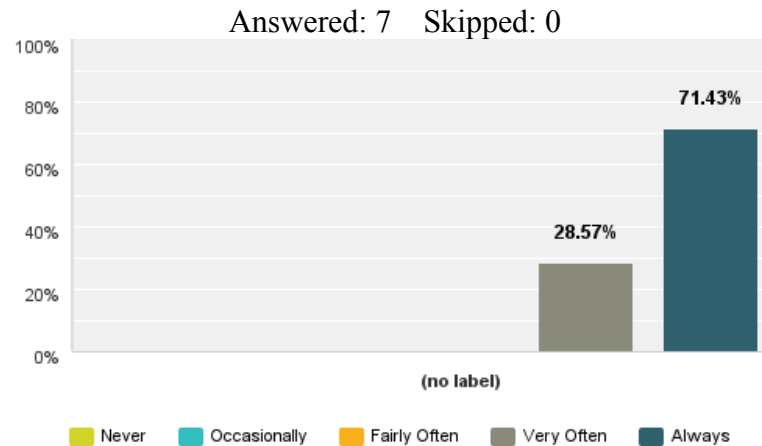
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	85.71% 6.00	7	4.86

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.86	Standard Deviation 0.35

5: Was the information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.71

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.71	Standard Deviation 0.45

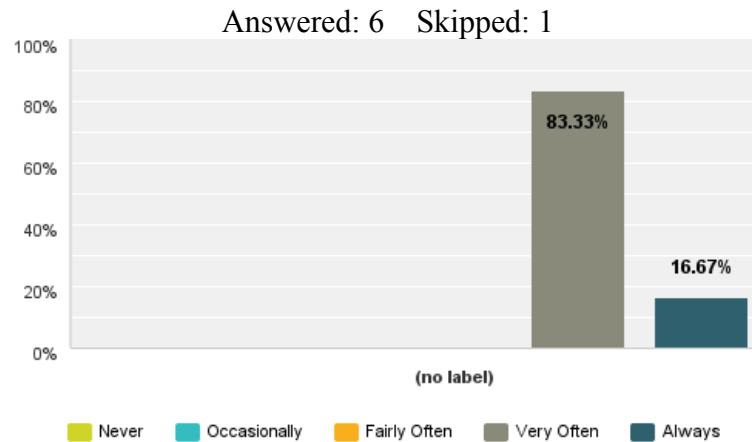
6: Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	100.00% 7.00	7	0.00

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 0.00	Maximum 0.00	Median 0.00	Mean 0.00	Standard Deviation 0.00

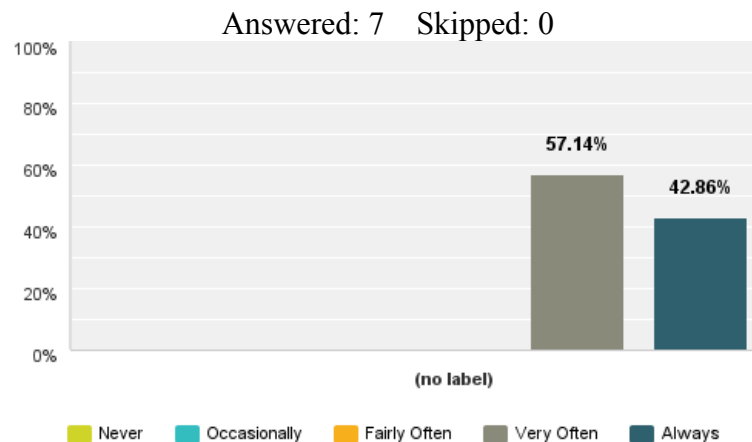
7: Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	83.33% 5.00	16.67% 1.00	6	4.17

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.00	Mean 4.17	Standard Deviation 0.37

8: Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

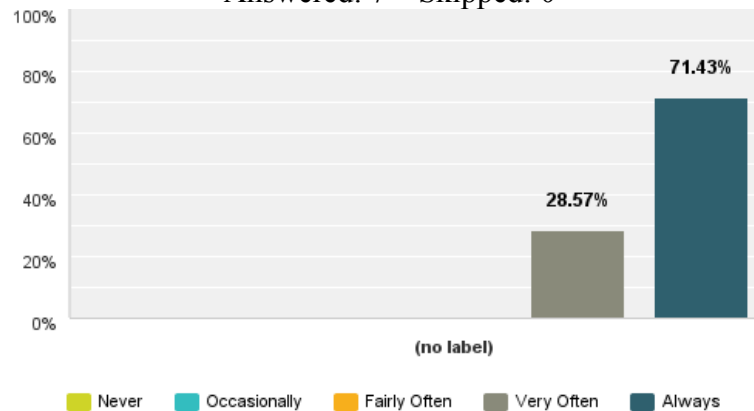


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	57.14% 4.00	42.86% 3.00	7	4.43

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
4.00	5.00	4.00	4.43	0.49

9: Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

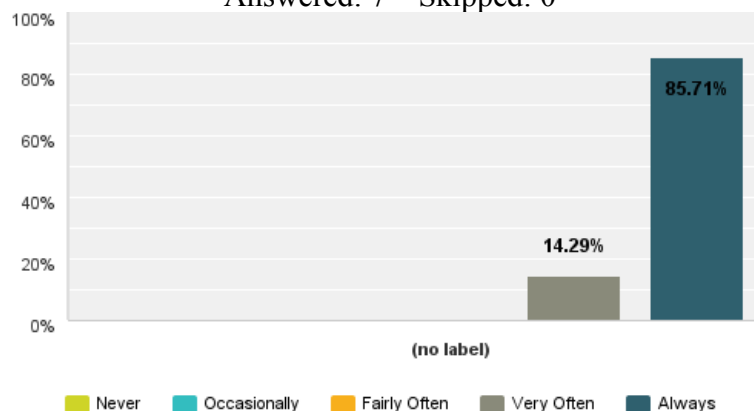


	Never (1)	Occasionally (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Very Often (4)	Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.71

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
4.00	5.00	5.00	4.71	0.45

10: Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	85.71% 6.00	7	4.86
Basic Statistics							
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00		Median 5.00	Mean 4.86	Standard Deviation 0.35		

**An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at
CaroMont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina.**

**Seminar Evaluation – Week 4
Seminars: Leviticus 18:22/20:13 & Dr. Kent Blevins, Guest Speaker
November 6, 2014**

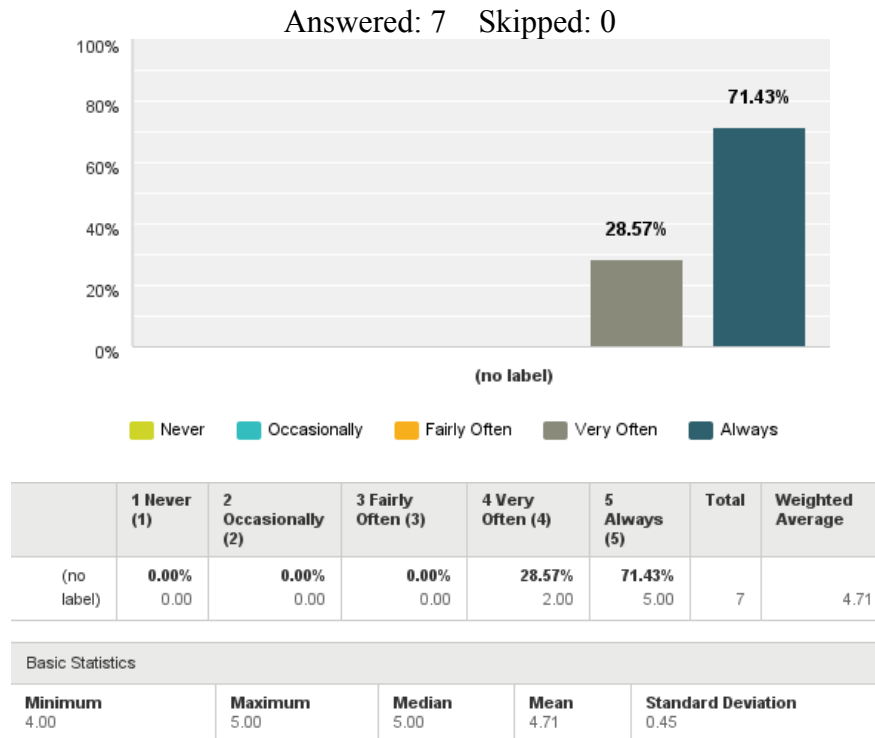
Table 7.4 Week Four: November 6, 2014 Seminar: Leviticus 18:22; 20:13 – Stephen
Lemons. Guest Speaker: Kent Blevins.

Question	Score	Comments
1. Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.71	Absolutely - Kent's less aggressive and less in your face presentation approach aided me in being less on the defensive side and more just listening and learning to agree to disagree.
2. Was the content in this session new for you?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 3.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good presentations. • Some of Kent Blevins thoughts about scripture were new to me.
3. Were the key points clearly communicated?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.57	Mostly to me the sort of commercial pitch for his book was both helpful but also distracting.
4. Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars this week?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.86	No comments.
5. Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.43	Mostly.
6. Was the information presented by the guest	Low High 1 2 3 4 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though Kent Blevins was clearly progressive

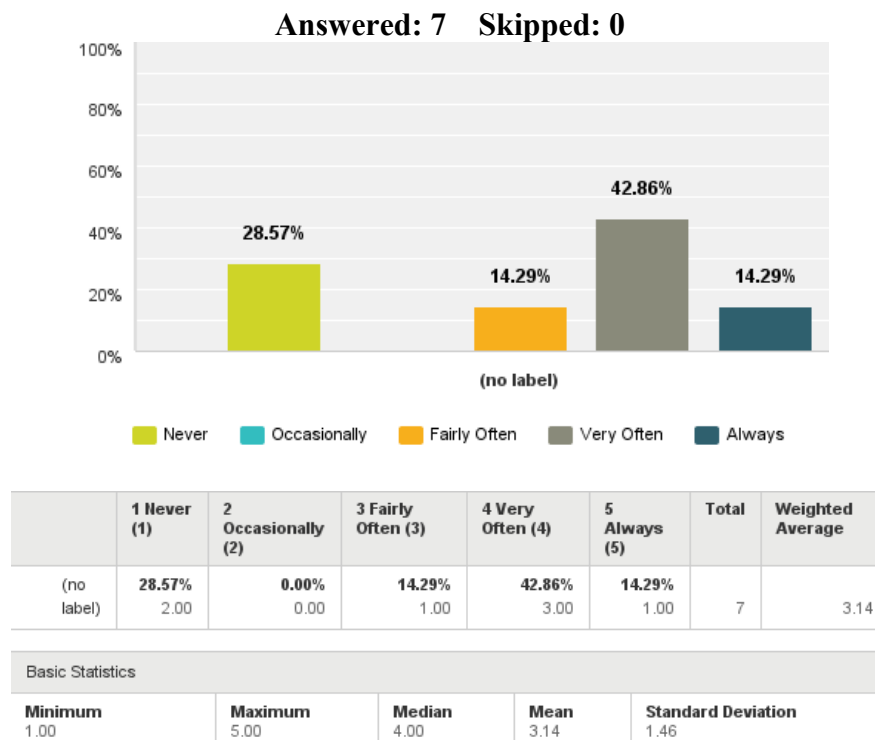
speaker presented in a non-biased way?	Mean: 4.29	and unapologetic for that he also was very relaxed and open to conversation. • Very clear and straightforward.
7. Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.29	• No comments
8. Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.14	No comments.
9. Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.29	• No comments
10. Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 Mean: 4.43	• No comments
11. List three things that you learned or discovered today:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our group is able to listen with respect even when not agreeing. 2. That some traditionalists agree with me on scripture. 3. There are different ways to view scripture I read. • 1. Can't use reason alone to interpret scripture no matter how conservative you are. 2. Inequality is a theme throughout the Bible. 3. The word homosexual doesn't exist in the Bible. • 1. Biblical interpretation surrounding texts on homosexuality vary. • 1. Attitudes and beliefs that people hold at deep emotional level are considered self-evident truths that are hard to change. 2. Christians from both sides of the homosexuality debate claim that the authority of the Bible is on their side, 3. Natural order of whatever is claimed to be revealed in truth in nature is relative in each culture. • 1. That much like the saying that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar when we are open, willing and encouraging conversation with these differing viewpoints. 2. That people especially with differing viewpoints will hear what you say better and look at it at a deeper level when they understand that you won't just write off their opinions. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How experiences are involved when interpreting scripture. 2. That Christians can interpret the same scripture differently. 3. That people have different understandings of what is nature.
12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Confirms my perspective on scripture. 2. Always be clear and candid in stating my beliefs. 3. Be aware that others may not agree with you. 1. Sexual orientation is set early in life. so I need to respect that. 2. Learning to listen better. 1. Do not get too far ahead of your congregation on issues that are controversial. Be patient in guiding their understanding. 2. Learned that my emotions and thought processes is largely constructed from my experiences. I must learn to transition from what I think to the authority of scripture. 3. Because I do not have complete knowledge of truth, I must be humble to accept the reality and do my best to find meaning based on how God chooses to reveal himself in each human experience through spiritual reflection. 1. It will help me to remember to openly express and reflect my willingness to civilly discuss tough topics with others, especially those with differing viewpoints. 2. It will also help me to continuously make an active effort to value others thoughts and opinions and not write them off. 1. Understanding different perspectives. 2. Learning to disagree but still respect others. 3. Caring for people with different sexual orientations. Even if I am experiencing feelings that are negative, I can/should listen & learn from the speaker.
13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The didactic was very helpful and I very much enjoyed Kent Blevin's presentation. Great conversations today. I like the instructional approach of Dr. Blevins that made me aware of the fact that culture can be mistaken as the authority in matters of justice. The open and willing spirit for discussion especially differing viewpoints that Kent came up with. Learning that there are many different issues dealing with sexuality. The material the guest speaker shared was well thought out.
14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good format, but would like to have other LGBT people present The format is instructive and does not need to be changed at this time. Continued presenters/presentation modeled similarly. Give students opportunities to share a presentation on their perspective of homosexuality. Much of the same style of teaching as the CPE Supervisor.
Any additional comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thanks for providing the seminar.

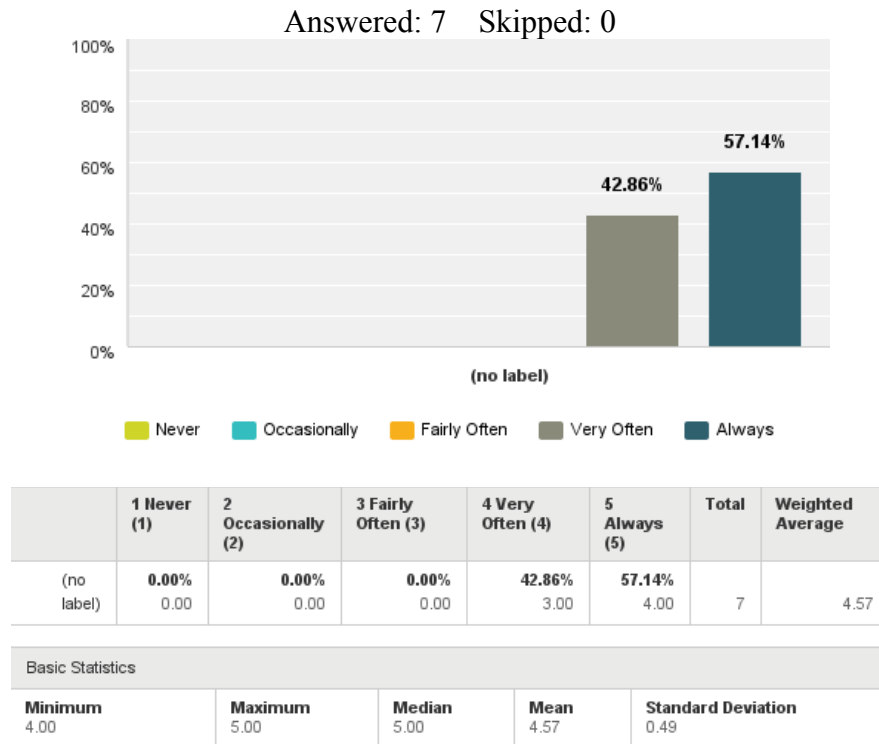
1: Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?



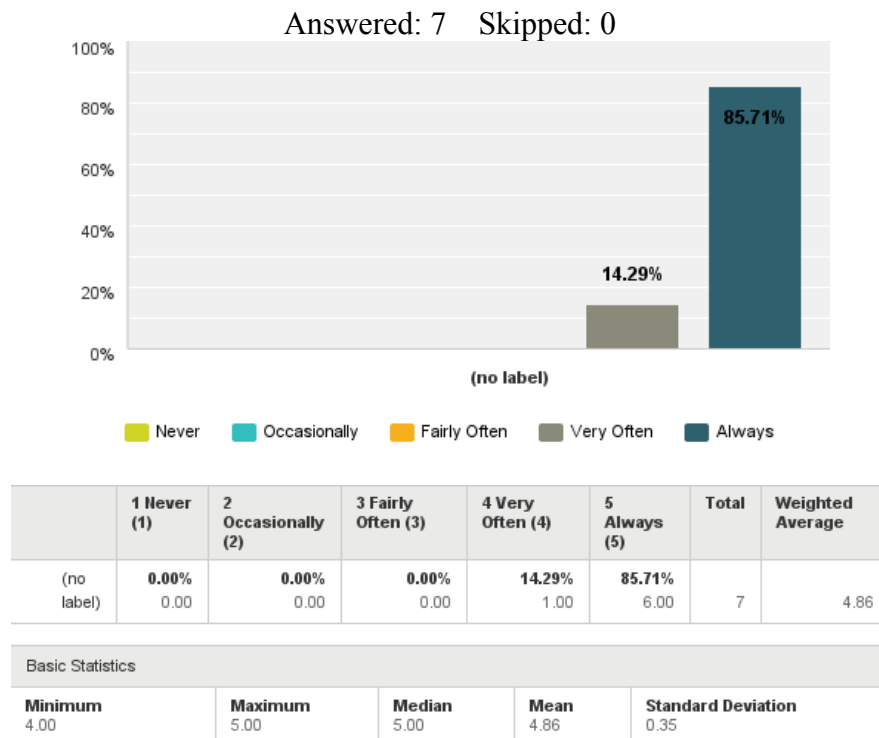
2: Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?



3: Were the key points clearly communicated?

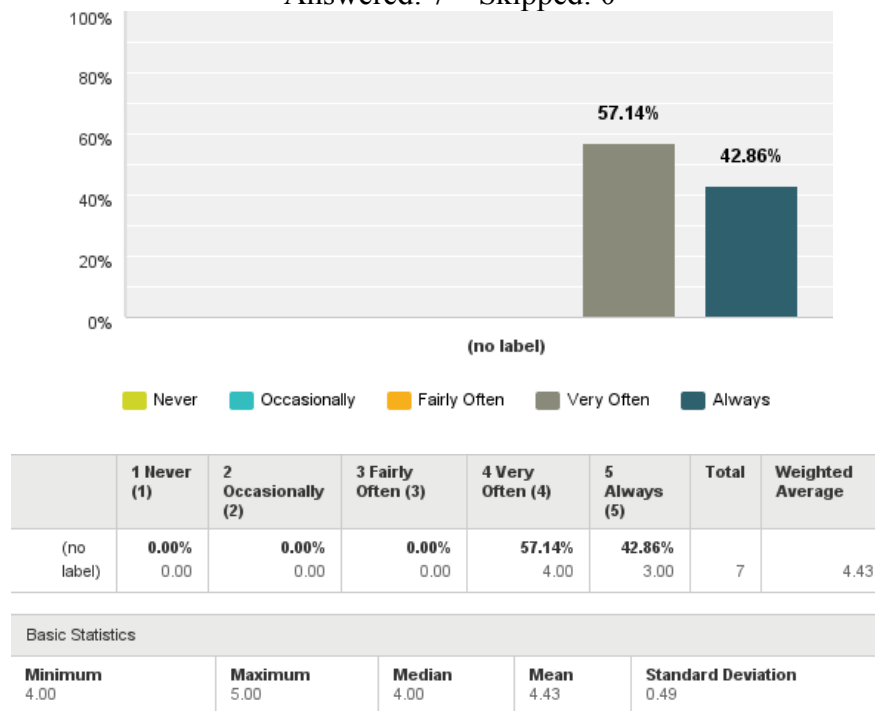


4: Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?



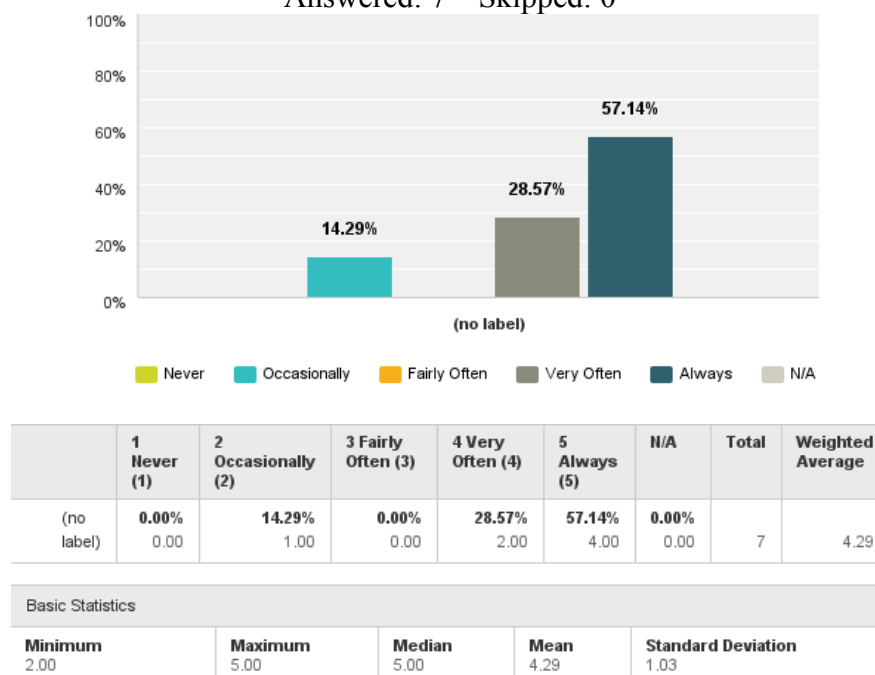
5: Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

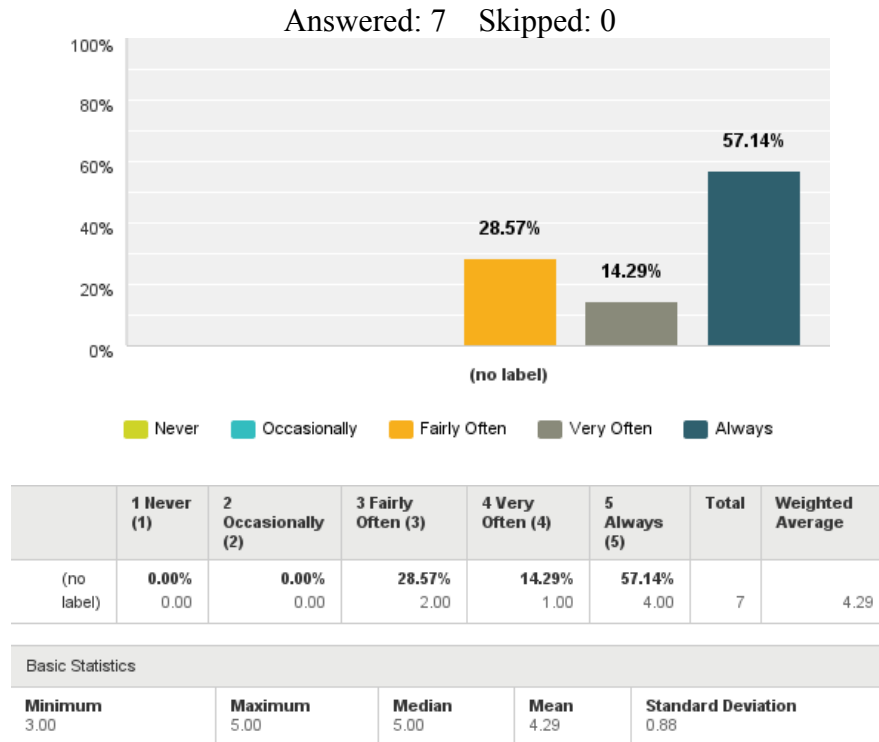


6: Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?

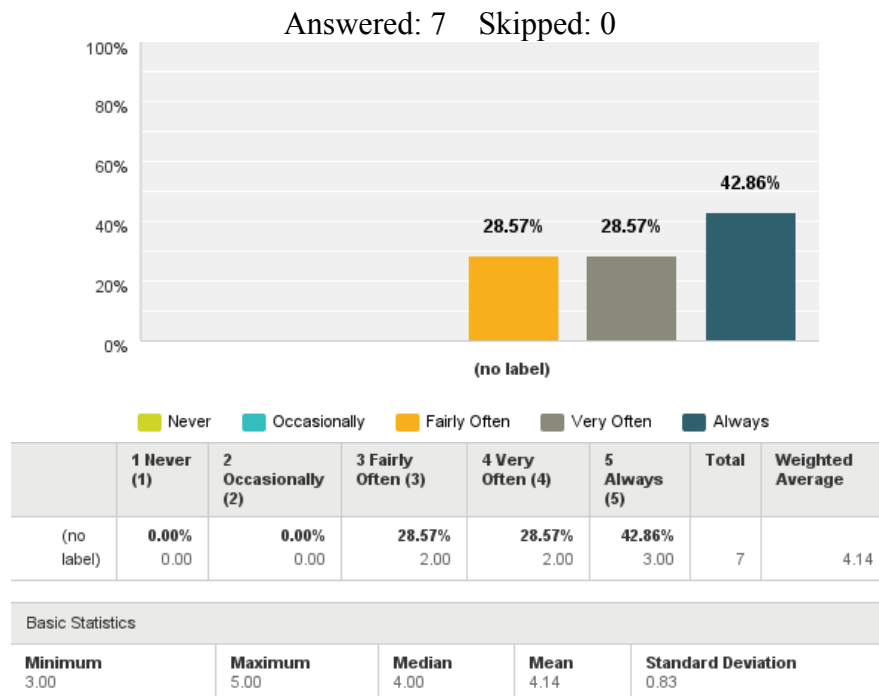
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



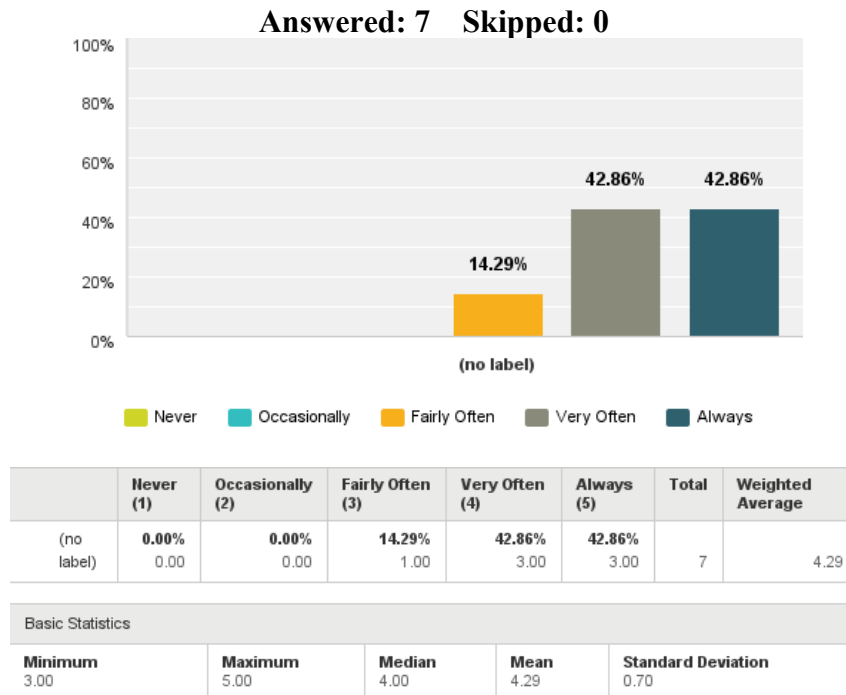
7: Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?



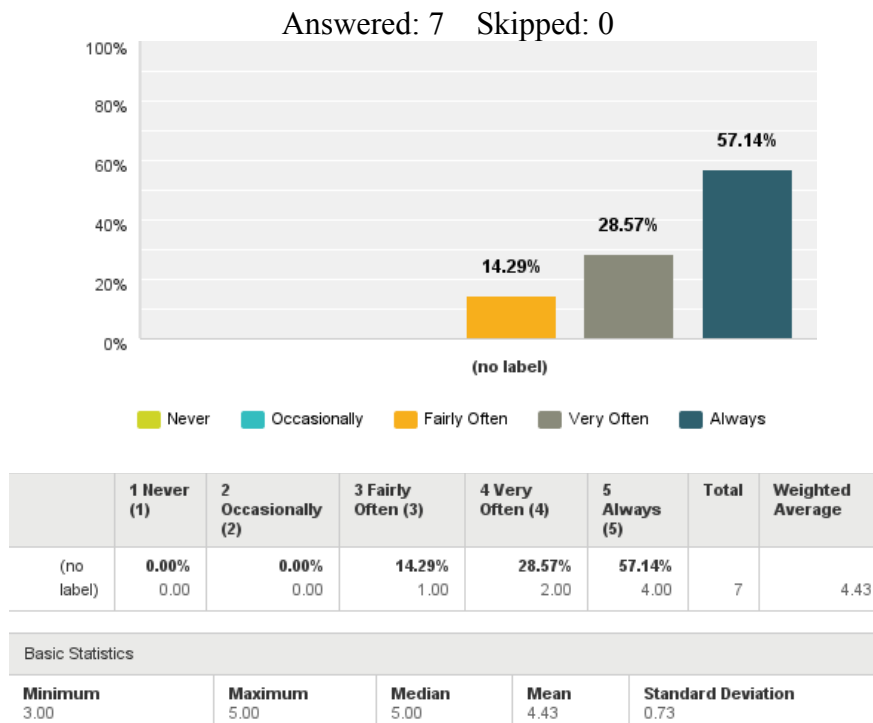
8: Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?



9: Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?



10: Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?



An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at CaroMont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina.

Seminar Evaluation – Week 5
Seminars: Romans 1:26-27 & Cody Sanders, Guest Speaker
November 13, 2014

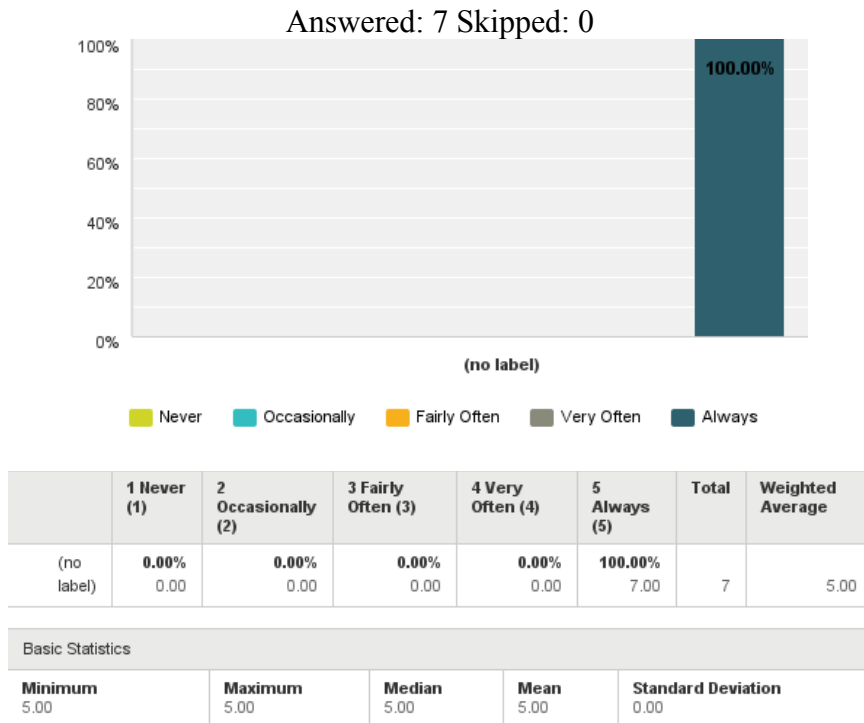
Table 7.5 Week Five: November 13, 2014 Seminar: Romans 1:26-27 – Stephen Lemons.
Guest Speaker: Cody Sanders

Question	Score	Comments
1. Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 5.0</p>	Absolutely. The guest speaker's presentation was helpful to clarify some of the perspective of the LGBTQ community and those who advocate for equality and beyond for these people.
2. Was the content in this session new for you?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 3.86</p>	Some of it -particularly the multitude of ways that we can perceive and interpret the Bible.
3. Were the key points clearly communicated?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.57</p>	No comments.
4. Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars this week?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.86</p>	No comments.
5. Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.29</p>	As was noted by the supervisor - today's didactic seemed to weigh heavier on the progressive point of view and support of it.
6. Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 3.83</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cody Sanders did not present the traditional side but did not present in a way perceived as trying to convert anyone to his thinking. He just calmly presented his point of

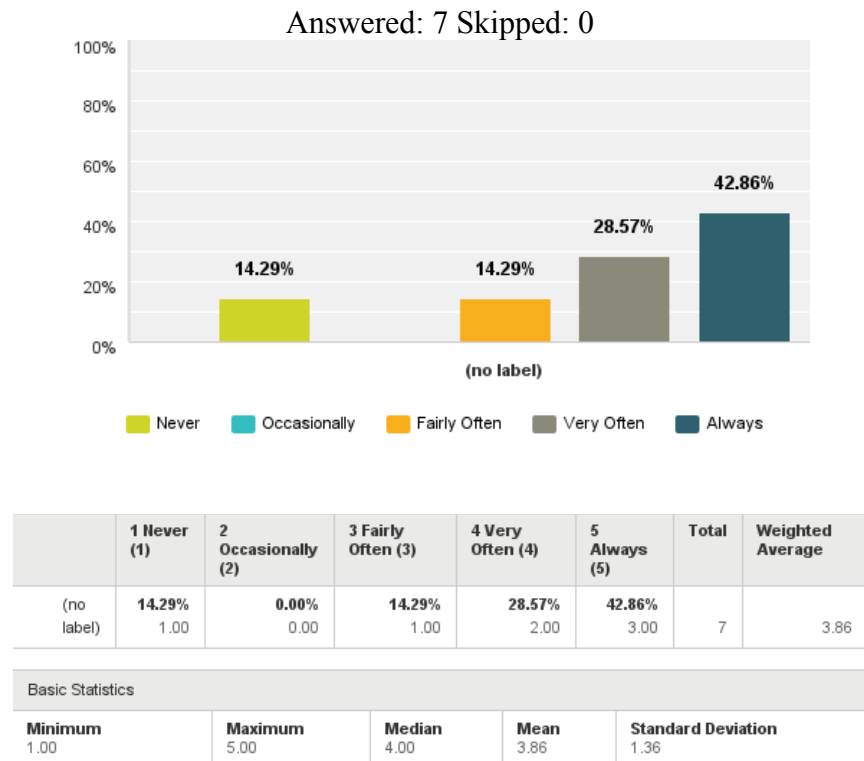
		<p>view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today's speaker because of first hand experience seems to not only be impacted but also an advocate for the rights of those who are affected by this struggle. • Cody was very respectful of differing views though clearly maintaining a particular view himself.
7. Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.57</p>	Yes, taking a close look at the scriptures dealing with homosexuality through the multiple ways these passages are interpreted has helped me understand how other people see them.
8. Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 3.86</p>	I found we had more common ground.
9. Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 3.50</p>	Presenter only spoke of his personal understanding of himself as a gay person. Did express different viewpoint.
10. Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?	<p>Low High</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Mean: 4.83</p>	Helped me develop an understanding and being more at ease with people of different sexual orientation.
11. List three things that you learned or discovered today:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. A person can be born with homosexual tendencies. 2. "Homosexual" may not be an appropriate term in describing gays or lesbians. The latter terms are in vogue. 3. The term "Queer" is used to push back on what some heterosexuals use as a derogatory term. • 1. New names for different sexual orientations. 2. That I need to read more of Cody's Book. • 1. That we are more alike than different. • 1. Language is sometimes used to control people. 2. Sexual orientation is physical, biological and emotional. 3. Sexual identity is similar. • 1.. What interpretive theology is. 2. How progressives interpret 	

	<p>these scriptures. Learned more about how people from other cultures and experiences interpret these passages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sixty churches in the Alliance Baptist Group. 2. Churches have lots to learn from LGBTQ community. 3. We should ask questions of compassionate curiosity.
12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a civil conversation with those who disagree with my progressive views about homosexuality. 2. Develop competences in counseling persons who may experience conflict in their sexuality. 3. Allow room for or create an environment where people can allow God to show the new things he is doing in the world. 1. Enhanced my understanding. I see an individual as more like me than different from me. 1. To understand how Gay men see themselves. 2. Know how Christians view Gay ministers. 3. To become more understanding of homosexuals. 1. It helps me to see how theology is used and misused. 2. I believe my experiences today will help me respect others more - especially those of differing views and backgrounds. 3. In addition, I believe hearing differing opinions like this will help me to learn better listening skills stretch and growing and stretching from looking at the differing views.
13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cody's relating from his personal experience. This speaker was easy to connect to for me. I found myself open to his viewpoint. Listening to how homosexuals view the church and its response to homosexuality. Probably clarifying of several of the terms and language we use. Choose compassionate curiosity verses suspicious scrutiny - this will take us a long way.
14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. These seminars have been exceptional with reading, didactics, speakers and peer learning. Allow the participants to lead a lecture. Continue open dialogue and reflecting like this.
Any additional comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments

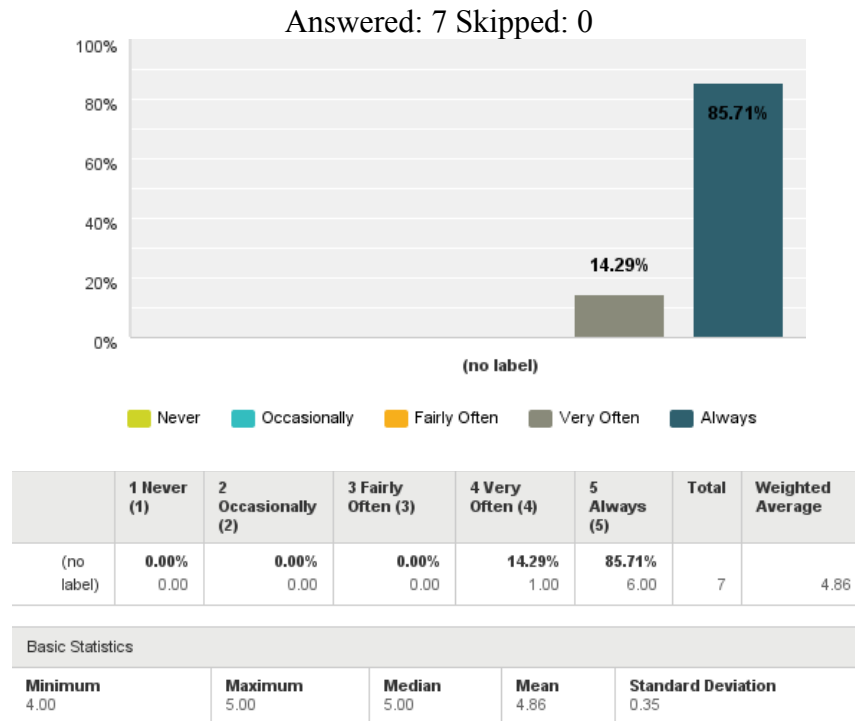
1 Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?



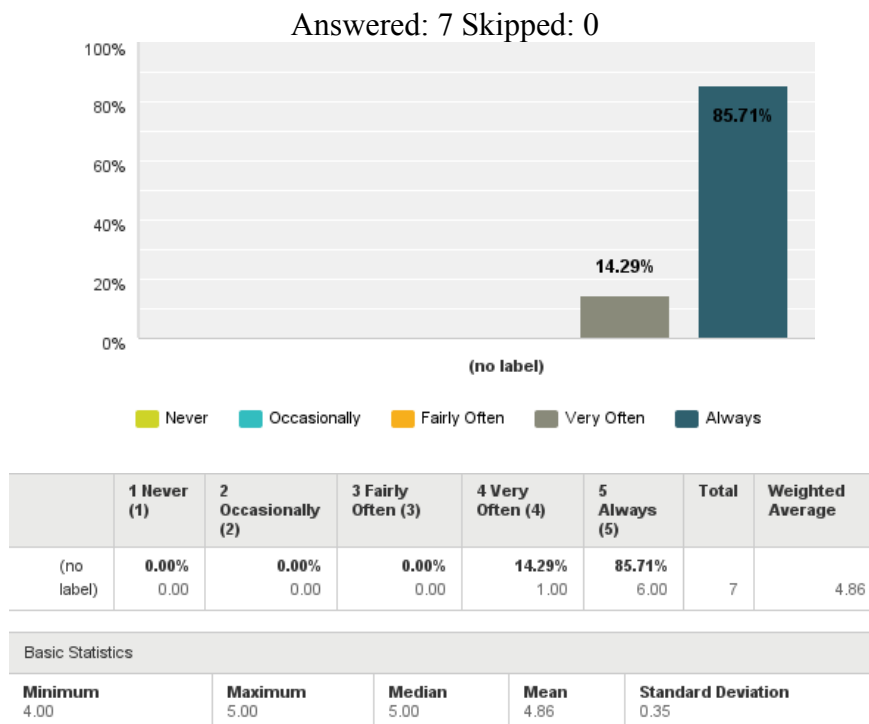
2 Was the content of this session new for you?



3 Were the key points clearly communicated?

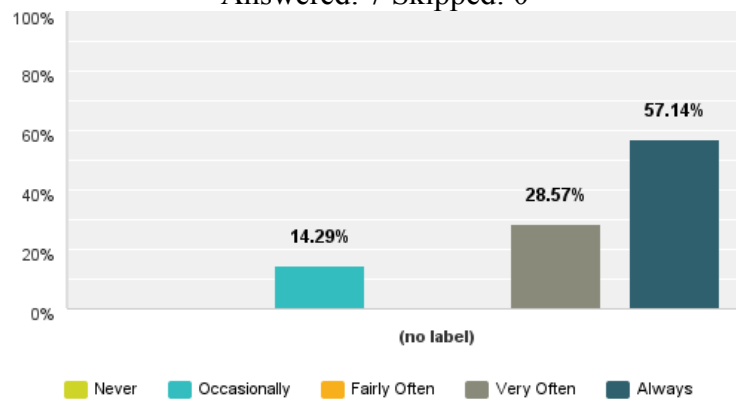


4 Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?



5 Was the information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

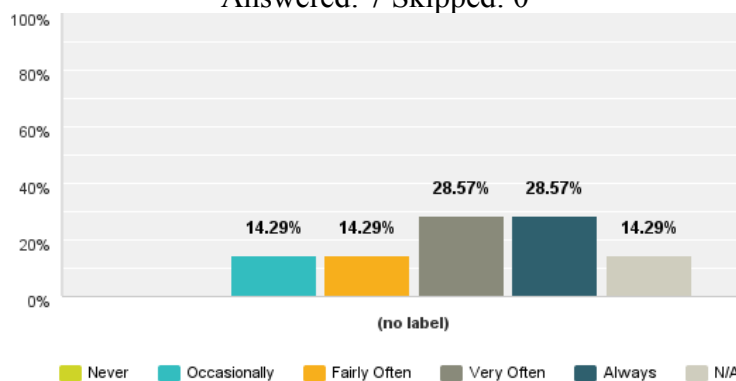


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	57.14% 4.00	7	4.29

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	5.00	5.00	4.29	1.03

6 Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?

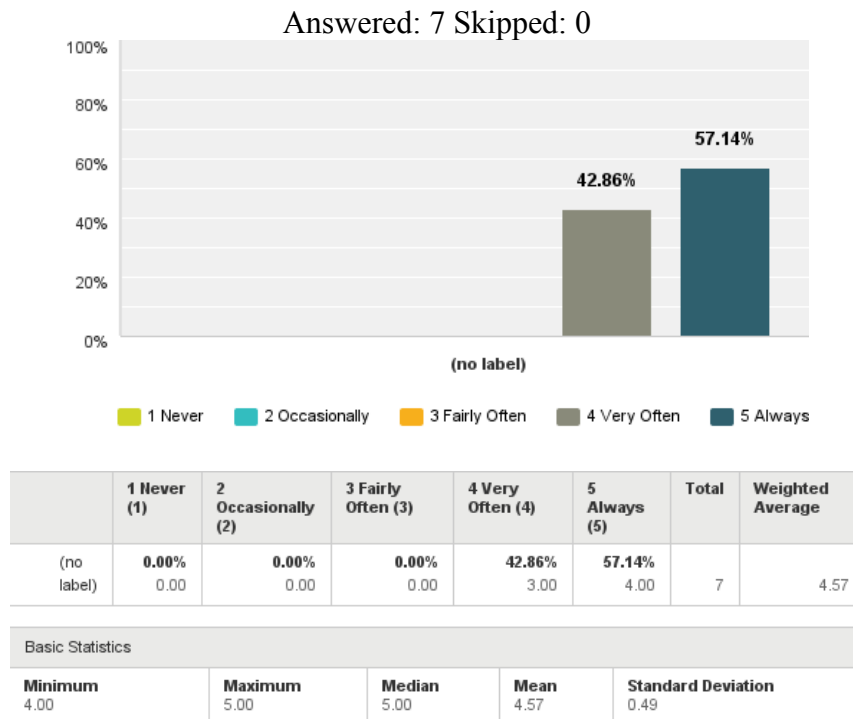
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



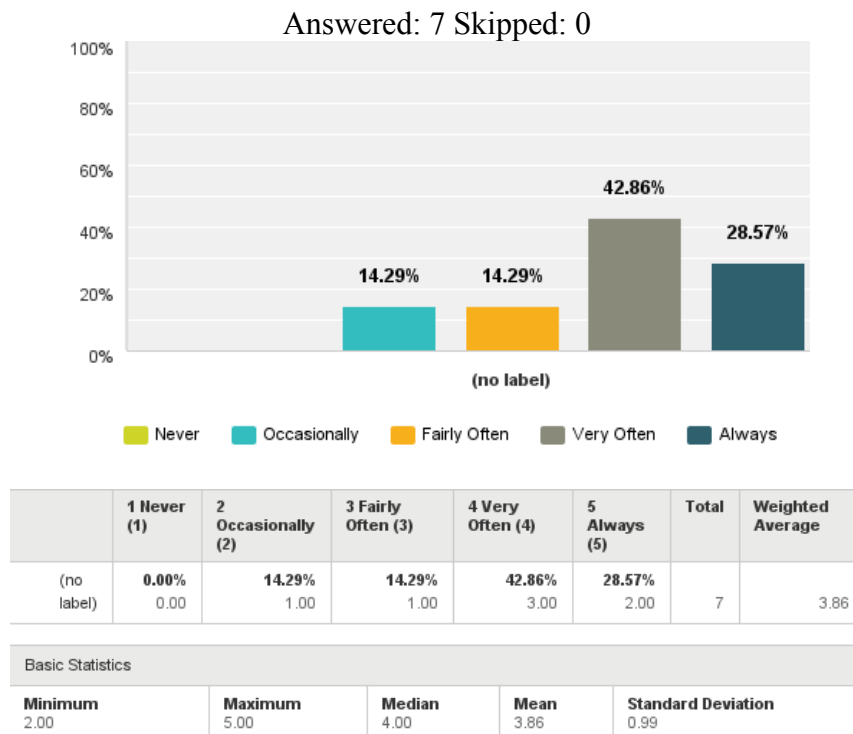
	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	28.57% 2.00	28.57% 2.00	14.29% 1.00	7	3.83

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	5.00	4.00	3.83	1.07

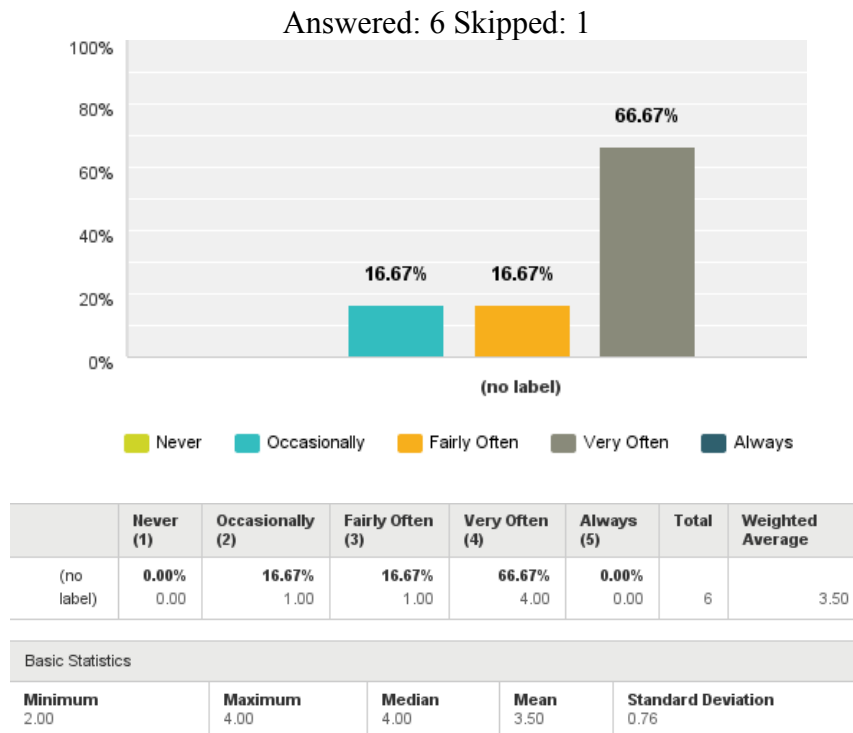
7 Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?



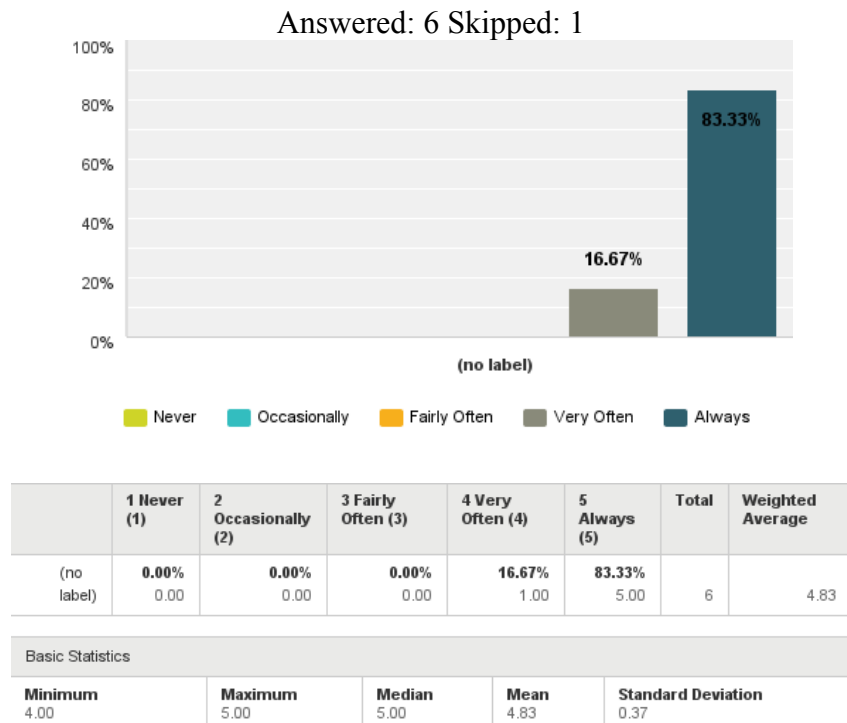
8 Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?



9 Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?



10 Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?



**An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at
CaroMont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina.**

Seminar Evaluation – Week 6 Seminars: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 & Joe Bell, Guest Speaker November 13, 2014

Table 7.6 Week Six: November 20, 2014 Seminar: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – Stephen Lemons. Guest Speaker: Joe Bell.

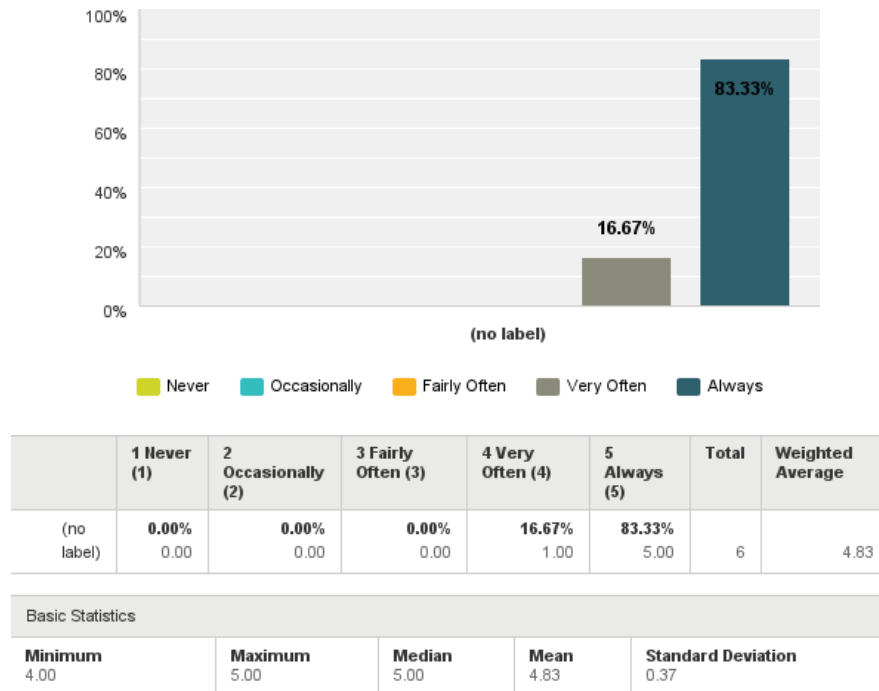
Question	Score	Comments
1. Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.83</div>	The experiences shared through personal testimony were certainly eye opening to some of the different ways of growing in our understanding of sexuality.
2. Was the content in this session new for you?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 3.50</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am familiar personally with this speaker and some of his views. He did share some new information. Yes, somewhat new for me, especially what is shared from the book the guest speaker recommended.
3. Were the key points clearly communicated?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.83</div>	Mostly although Joe Bell did not seem to struggle to clarify some of the points our group asked him about.
4. Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars this week?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.67</div>	Yes, we seem to be able to. This presentation did seem to raise a good bit of discussion.
5. Was the Information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.67</div>	No comments
6. Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.33</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, I feel it was non-biased as possible while being true to himself and his convictions.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I struggled a bit more with today's guest presentation. • Beautifully so. Every effort to consider a fuller perspective across the spectrum of views from traditional through progressive
7. Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low 1 2 3 4 5 High</p> <p>Mean: 4.33</p>	Yes, although ultimately more towards the traditionalists view. Joe Bell seemed to shape some different insights and thought processes than my own. Joe seems at the traditional as well because he acknowledges wedges that need to be held in tension - love and the inspired scripture.
8. Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low 1 2 3 4 5 High</p> <p>Mean: 4.50</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not really because Joe's theological view on the struggle seems to be quite similar to my own. • I appreciate the desire to love all people and recognize the main function involved in being homosexual.
9. Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?	<p>Low 1 2 3 4 5 High</p> <p>Mean: 4.20</p>	No comments
10. Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?	<p>Low 1 2 3 4 5 High</p> <p>Mean: 4.50</p>	Yes, I feel that it will be because it helps me understand some of the process and journey of how another from like background, theological and denominational beliefs and experiences came to the conclusion they did.
11. List three things that you learned or discovered today:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with homosexual orientation have productive lives. 2. Until gay and lesbian groups ask or demand their voice to be heard homosexuality was considered to be a sin. 3. There is no agreement among researchers as to the factors that contribute to homosexuality. • 1. How church membership is different in churches. 2) How religious people have certain rules they go by. 3. That people 	

	<p>can disagree and still hold to their faith.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. We still have to be true to ourselves. It will not always be easy in a group mixed beliefs to express in clear ways that others will understand and view as plausible what our personal belief is. • 1. Very traditional views can still be very loving depending on the heart of the true person. 2. Not all traditionalists are judgmental of LGBTQ.
12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen to what is being said. • 1. Don't go too far ahead of the people in discussing homosexuality. 2. Guide the congregation to an understanding of the texts in scripture that addresses homosexuality. 3. Allow people to reach their conclusions after a careful study of the texts that deal with homosexuality. • 1. Helping communicate to homosexuals in a caring way. 2. To be more accepting of gays and lesbians. 3. To be more sensitive in ministry. • 1. That as believers we ought to continuously be willing to evaluate and grapple with where we are personally on these tough civil rights and social justice issues. 2. I can also use this as motivation for myself and others to become more confident with sharing our personal understanding and viewpoint in clear and plausible ways. • 1. People who are gay and are also believe it is wrong need to be set free from self-condemnation. This is possible when they understand that it is indeed natural even if it is not God's original plan.
13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of different views. • Uninhibited discussion of the topic listening to different interpretations of the same text. • Learning how there are many factors related to the gay and lesbian issues. Biological, social, theological. • Our classes dialogue and reflection on Joe's presentation and the personal investment and research Joe did. • Honestly, seeing the flaws in the argument about theories and statistics, and the dates of information.
14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These sessions are good learning tools. • Allow students to present a topic related to homosexuality. • Continued open and variety in our sharing and dialogue with one another
Any additional comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thanks for the opportunity for today's seminars.

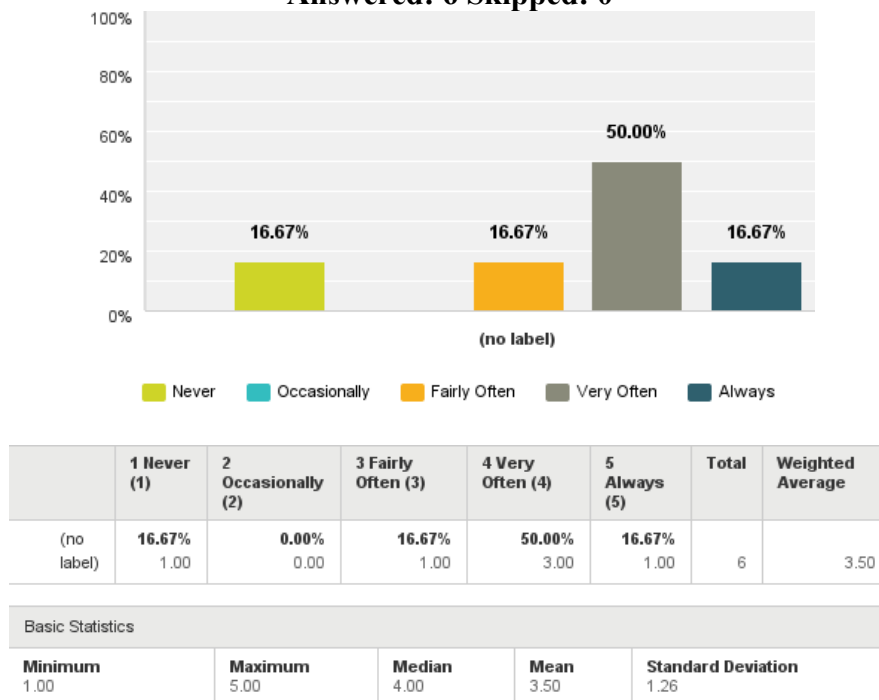
1 Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

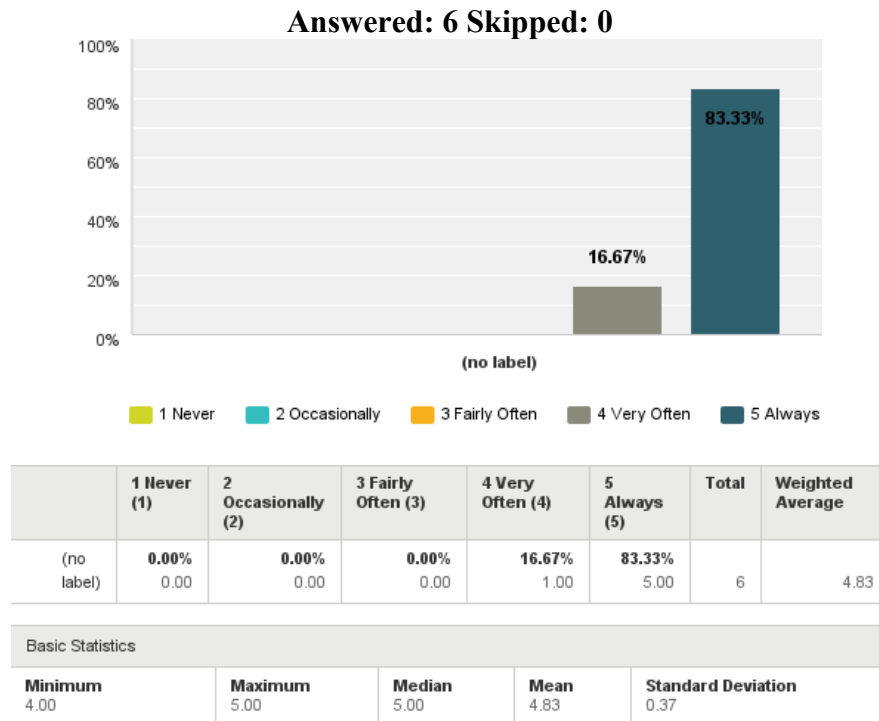


2 Was the content of this session new for you?

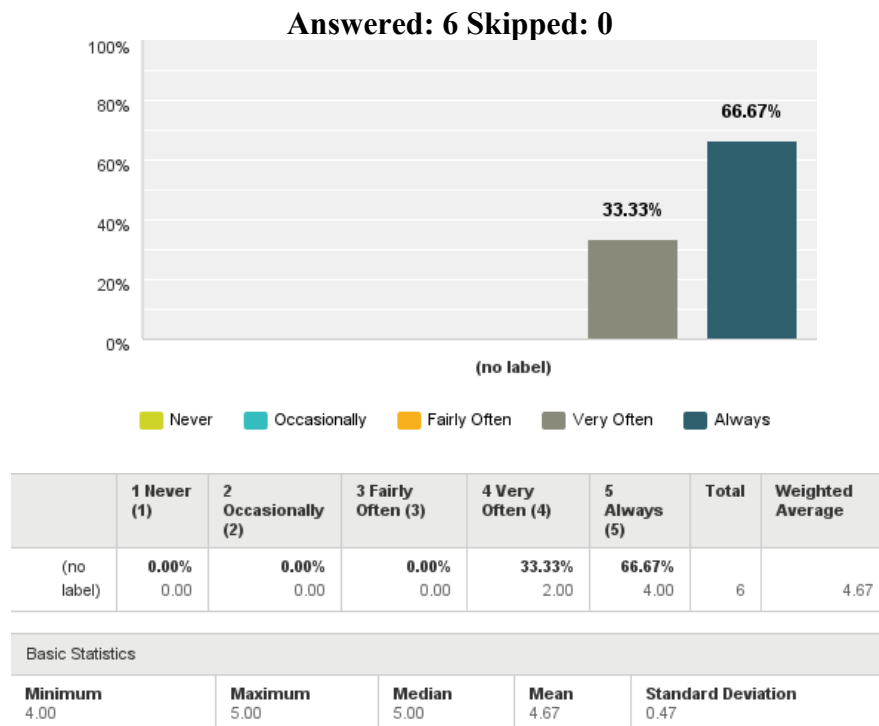
Answered: 6 Skipped: 0



3 Were the key points clearly communicated?

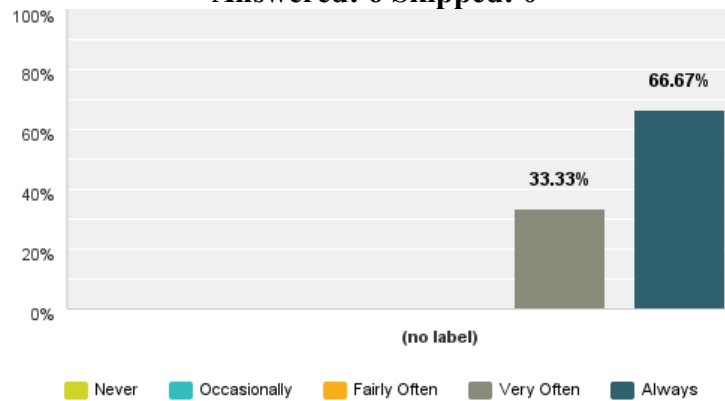


4 Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?



5 Was the information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

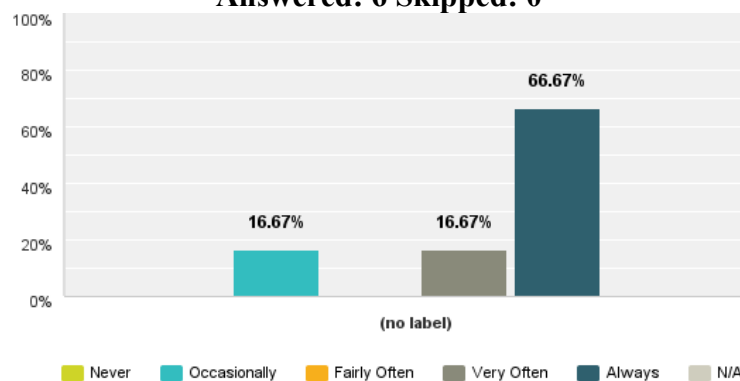


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	33.33% 2.00	66.67% 4.00	6	4.67

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
4.00	5.00	5.00	4.67	0.47

6 Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 0

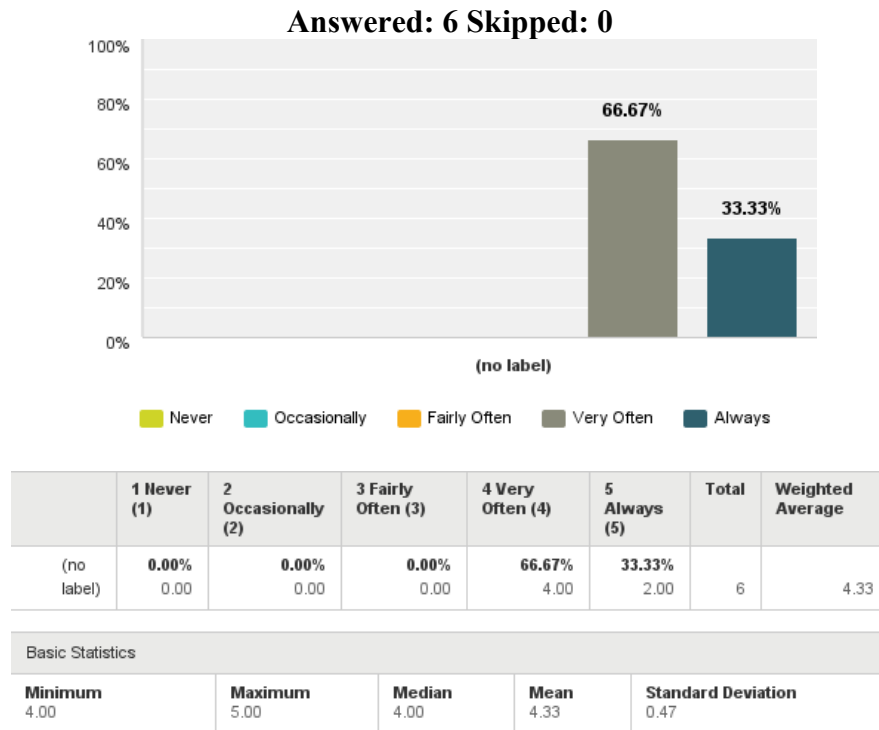


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	16.67% 1.00	0.00% 0.00	16.67% 1.00	66.67% 4.00	0.00% 0.00	6	4.33

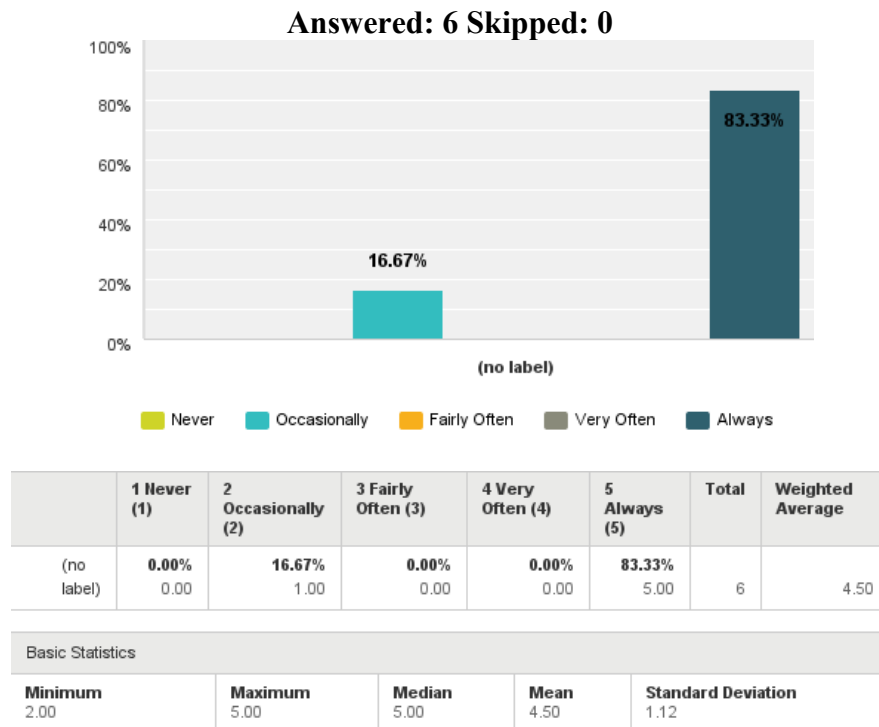
Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	5.00	5.00	4.33	1.11

7 Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of

homosexuality and the Christian faith?

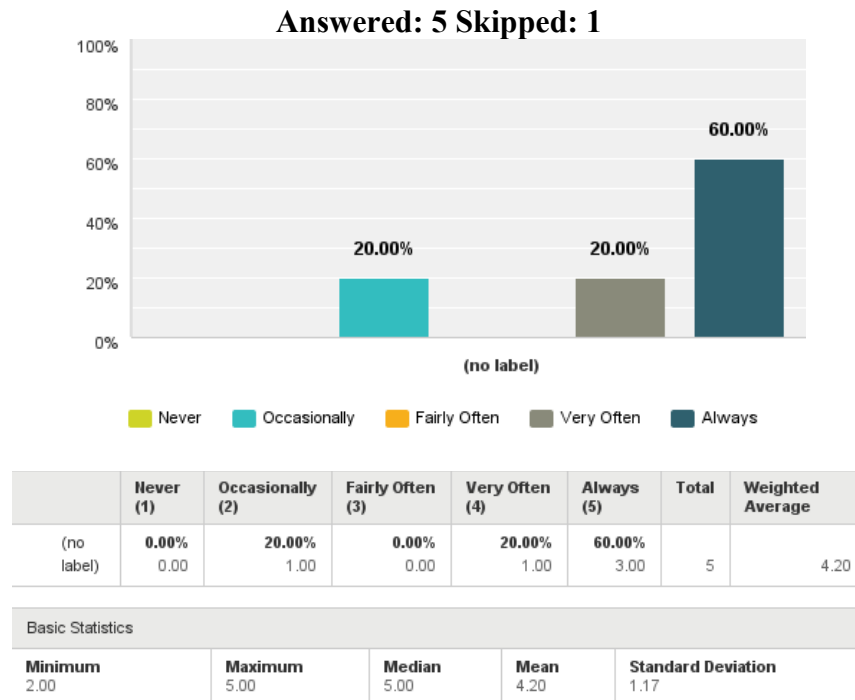


8 Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

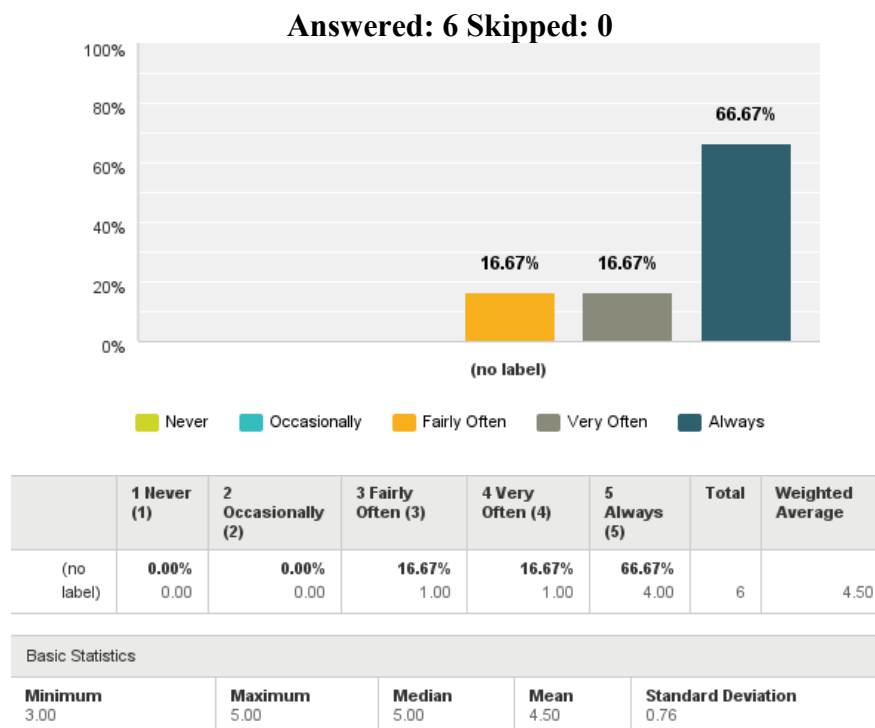


9 Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a

different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?



10 Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?



An Experiment in Civil Dialogue in a Clinical Pastoral Education Group at CaroMont Regional Medical Center, Gastonia, North Carolina.

Seminar Evaluation – Week 7
Seminars: The Silence of Jesus & Jonathan Schnibben, Guest Speaker
December 4, 2014

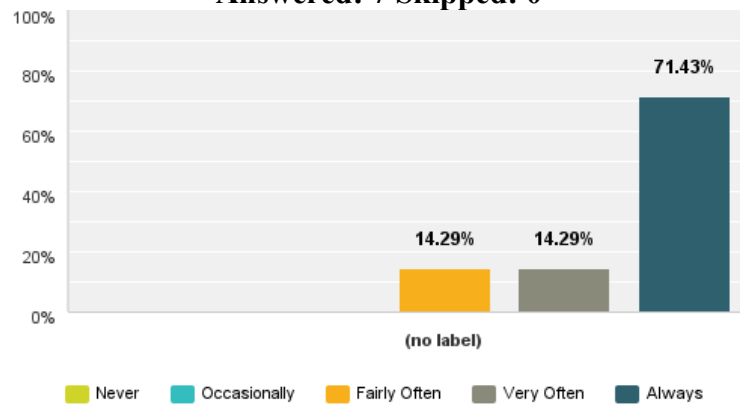
Table 7.7 Week Seven: December 4, 2014 Seminar: The Silence of Jesus – Stephen Lemons. Guest Speaker: Jonathan Schnibben.

Question	Score	Comments
1. Was the content in this session relevant to your ministry?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.57</div>	Yes, as my church has a number of gay and lesbian members.
2. Was the content in this session new for you?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.14</div>	Some of the traditionalist positions were
3. Were the key points clearly communicated?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.86</div>	Yes, especially the didactics.
4. Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue during the seminars this week?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 5.0</div>	Yes, without question.
5. Was the information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a non-biased way?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.86</div>	Good didactic presentation.
6. Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div> <div>Mean: 4.43</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I could not decide whether the guest speaker was a Progressive or Traditional. 2 This guest speaker shared a traditional view yet seemed to be moderate or progressive.
7. Has your experience today increased your awareness of various	<div>Low High</div> <div>1 2 3 4 5</div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, I enjoyed hearing how his theological beliefs had been developed.

<p>12. List three ways your experience today will help you in your future pastoral/spiritual care:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Helped me to continue to be open in my view and thought process. 2. I am not going to be closed minded in my care of heterosexuals or homosexuals. • 1. To understand more clearly those who come from a different point of view on the subject of homosexuality. • 1. A church body can take a stand but allow local practice that does not destroy faith. 2. Develop a caring leadership that is not too far ahead of members, but coach membership to embrace the truth of the Gospel. • 1. I know I will need to care for both the congregation and the parishioners as individuals. 2. Sometimes care for the individual will challenge the congregation and group concerns about the body as a whole. • 1. To be more open with others and myself. • 1. To listen actively. 2. To be less judgmental. 3. To accept others where they are on their journey.
<p>13. What did you find most helpful during the seminar?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was the last day of seminars. All of them helped me work through my thought about homosexuality and faith. • The discussion about the controversy in the ELCA church. • The speaker's openness and honesty and discipline to base practice on the love ethic of Jesus rather than on cultural expectations. • The honesty of Pastor Schnibben about his personal conflicts in theology and carrying out the role of pastor in his congregation. • Learning to trust God's plan for my life. • The combination of didactics, speakers and open conversation is a great way to learn, to gain compassion, and encouraging others.
<p>14. What suggestions do you have for enhancing future seminars?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No suggestions. Good civil discourse and interaction through all of this. • More reflection time provided. • Do not change. • I enjoy the seminars and the people. I pray that I will get to do a second unit next Fall. • I would do more of the same, a great teaching tool.
<p>Any additional comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent presentations and discussions today. • The guest speaker was refreshing and easy to talk with although his viewpoints were different from mine. Good choice for future dialogue. I am thankful. • Thanks for the opportunity.

1 Was the content of this session relevant to your ministry?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

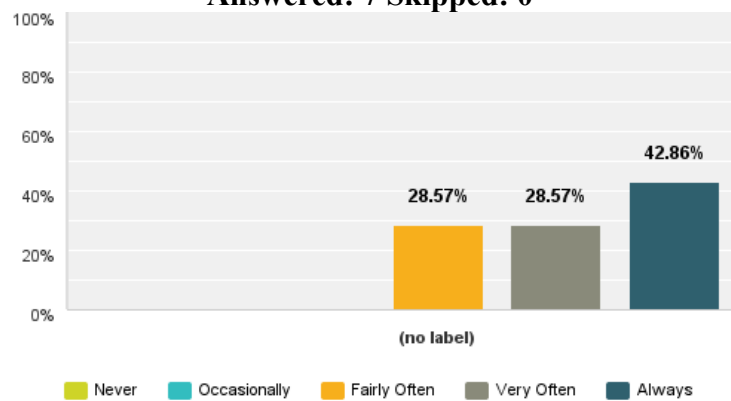


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	14.29% 1.00	71.43% 5.00	7	4.57

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.57	Standard Deviation 0.73

2 Was the content of this session new for you?

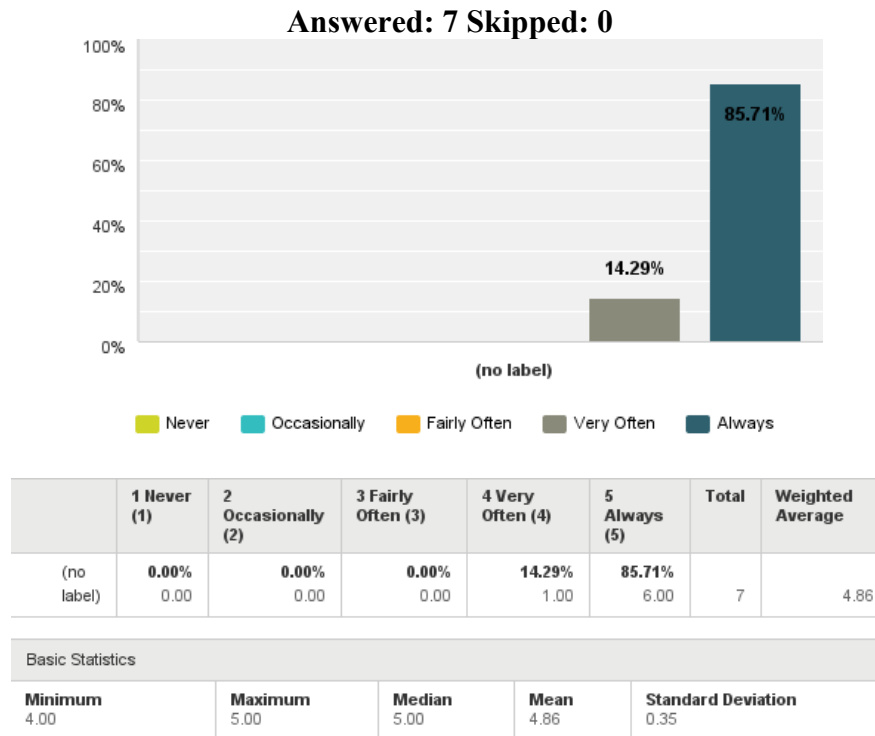
Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



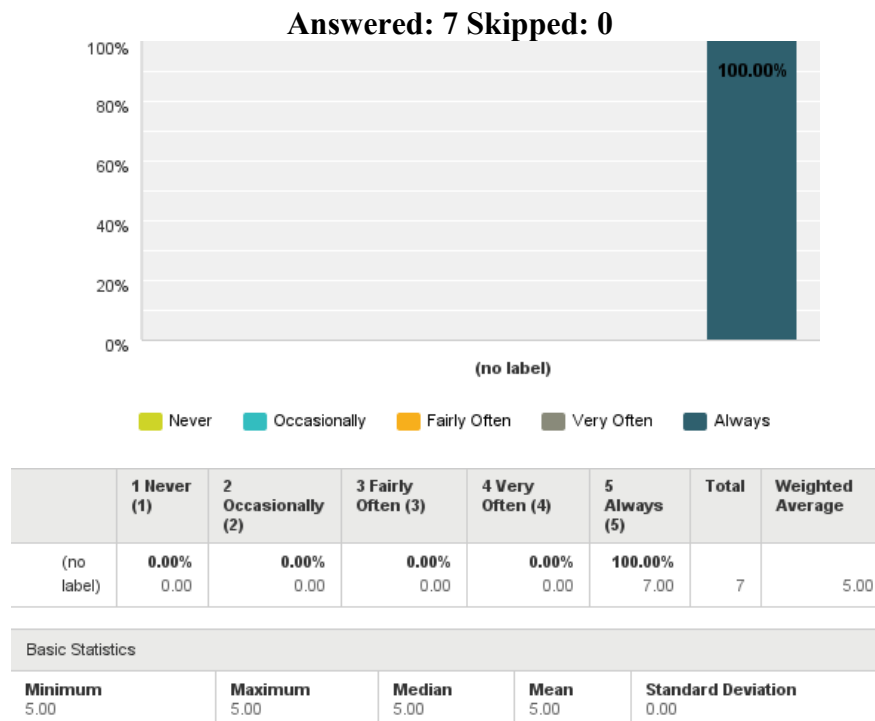
	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	28.57% 2.00	42.86% 3.00	7	4.14

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.00	Mean 4.14	Standard Deviation 0.83

3 Were the key points clearly communicated?

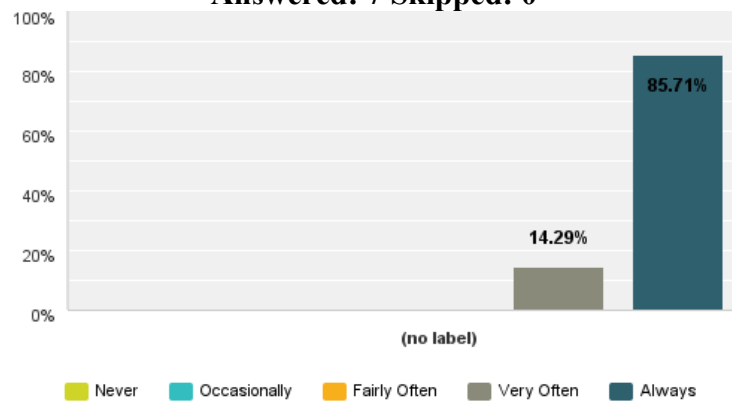


4 Was the group able to maintain civil dialogue?



5 Was the information presented today by the CPE Supervisor presented in a nonbiased way?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

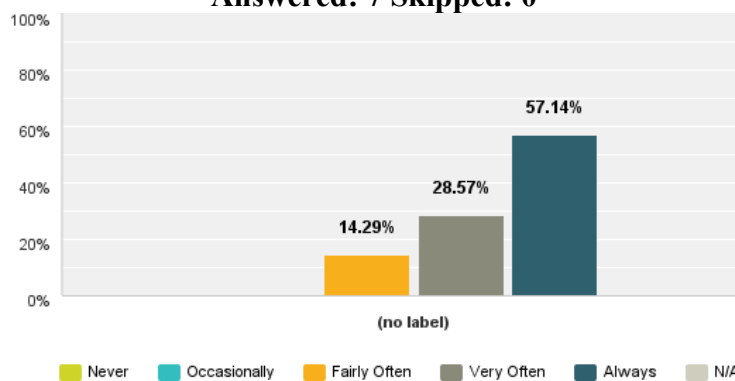


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	85.71% 6.00	7	4.86

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 4.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.86	Standard Deviation 0.35

6 Was the information presented by the guest speaker presented in a non-biased way?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

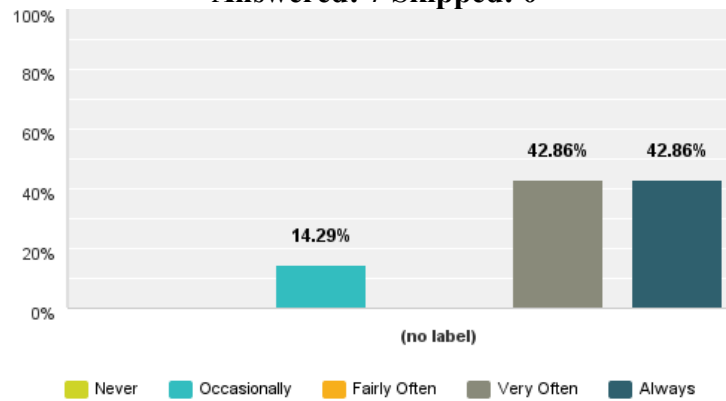


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	N/A	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	28.57% 2.00	57.14% 4.00	0.00% 0.00	7	4.43

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.43	Standard Deviation 0.73

7 Has your experience today increased your awareness of various understandings of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

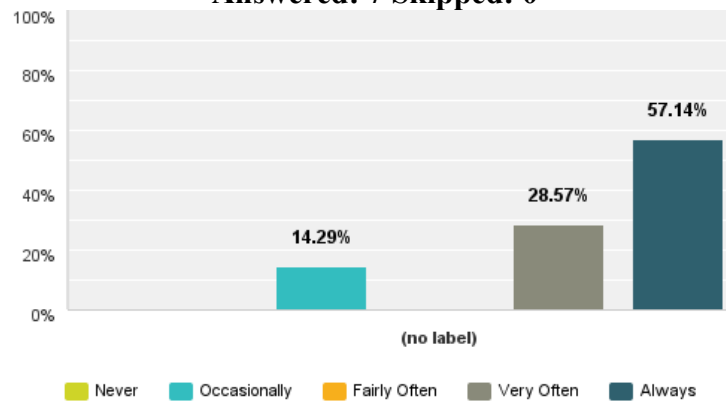


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	0.00% 0.00	42.86% 3.00	42.86% 3.00	7	4.14

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	5.00	4.00	4.14	0.99

8 Has this experience helped to improve your understanding of those who hold to a different theological view of homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0

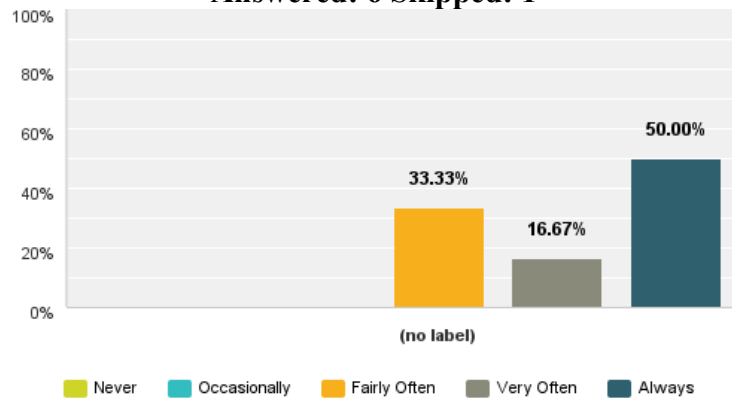


	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	0.00% 0.00	28.57% 2.00	57.14% 4.00	7	4.29

Basic Statistics				
Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
2.00	5.00	5.00	4.29	1.03

9 Has this experience helped to improve your appreciation for those who hold to a different biblical/theological view on homosexuality and the Christian faith?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 1

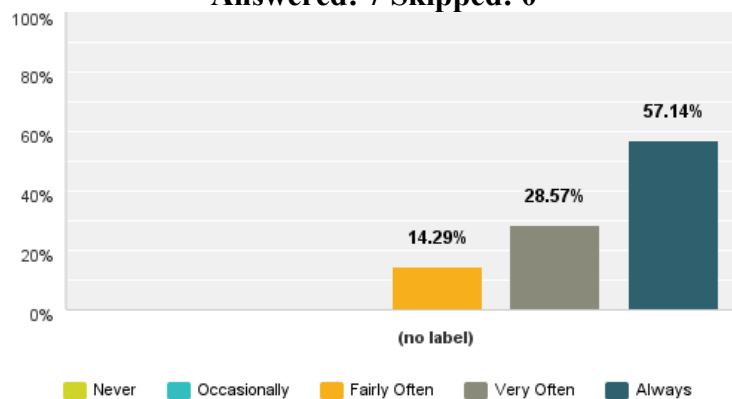


	Never (1)	Occasionally (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Very Often (4)	Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	33.33% 2.00	16.67% 1.00	50.00% 3.00	6	4.17

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 4.50	Mean 4.17	Standard Deviation 0.90

10 Will this experience today improve your ability to provide pastoral/spiritual care for others?

Answered: 7 Skipped: 0



	1 Never (1)	2 Occasionally (2)	3 Fairly Often (3)	4 Very Often (4)	5 Always (5)	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	0.00% 0.00	0.00% 0.00	14.29% 1.00	28.57% 2.00	57.14% 4.00	7	4.43

Basic Statistics				
Minimum 3.00	Maximum 5.00	Median 5.00	Mean 4.43	Standard Deviation 0.73

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