

""Twitter handle (and profile name): JacobZHess (Jacob Z. Hess)

Twitter description:

Description of the organization from a third party source: "During his doctoral program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Jacob helped develop and co-facilitate a liberal-conservative dialogue course for undergraduates, the first of its kind in the nation. With Dr. Phil Neisser (State University of New York, Potsdam), Jacob co-authored a book on liberal-conservative dialogue entitled, "You're Not as Crazy as I Thought (But You're Still Wrong) Conversations between a Devoted Conservative and a Die-Hard Liberal" (Potomac Press). More recently, Jacob collaborated with Arthur Pena to write a book on religious conservative / LGBT dialogue (see AThirdSpace.org). Jacob's current focus is broadening the public mental health conversation in the country (see Mindweather.org)."

Scraped text from their home page of their website: Titles: A Third Space

Headings: A Third Space; Introduction; 1. Dreaming; 2. Doubting; 3. Creating; 4. Diving In; 5. Pressuring; 6. Clarifying; 7. Studying; 8. Learning (More); 9. Allowing

Paragraphs: (C) 2024 A Third Space; Forte Theme by ThemeBeans

Scraped text from their about page of their website: Titles: Introduction - A Third Space

Headings: A Third Space; Introduction; 0 Comments; Cancel

Paragraphs: "[Society is living in] a new tribalism...that is driving us ever more angrily apart...Any attempt to impose...an artificial uniformity in the name of a single culture or faith, represents a tragic misunderstanding of what it takes for a system to flourish." -Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, The Dignity of Difference; Few public conversations in recent memory have stirred more passionate disagreement than the one surrounding gay rights. Over the last fifteen years, in particular, challenges to the status quo by the LGBT community have gradually (and suddenly) taken center stage in societal consciousness. While a large group of people has embraced these developments as a modern day civil rights movement - another substantial group continues to harbor concern - seeing the questions involved as not simply sexual or civil, but also profoundly moral and spiritual.; The contrasting emotions could hardly be more striking. When California's Proposition 8 passed in 2008, religious conservatives said things like: "What a wonderful day where our country's highest ideals were preserved" and "Thank you God, for smiling down on America." In the same moment, liberal citizens said things like: "Where is the country I thought I loved?...God's message is one of inclusive love" and "I cannot express enough how disappointed I am in the people of California. Shame on you!"; Several years later, when the Supreme Court struck down a part of the Defense of Marriage Act, the celebration was flipped on its head.

In that moment, conservatives were now saying things like, "I feel scared for what is coming in this country" and "as Americans reject God's ways, consequences are coming." In the same moment, liberal-leaning Americans were saying: "Tears of joy are streaming down my face...I am so proud of this country!" and "It's history in the making...I feel Harvey Milk smiling down on the scene from heaven."; So is Harvey Milk smiling down from heaven - or God...or both? (Or neither?); What a divide! One lawyer called it "a cultural clash of unprecedented proportions."; You might think this kind of a profound and deeply personal clash between religious conservative and LGBT communities[1] would call for an especially careful and fair-minded attempt to explore the many questions involved. Rather than thoughtful exploration, however, the disagreements at play have more often been approached by hyper-emotional sound-bites, stereotypes and slurs than nuanced attempts to understand the competing worldviews coming into conflict.; As a result, this conversation hurts...for many people on all different sides. For sure, if the pain of this conflict is inevitable in our collective march to progress (or destruction), well then - let's swallow hard and soldier on.; But is it? Does it have to be this hard? Or are we perhaps doing different things that inadvertently MAKE the conversation this painful? For one, instead of sitting face-to-face with those who see things different than us, it's much easier to do something else. Many of us now spend hours listening to others-on-various-screens tell stories about Those People - providing just the perfect evidence we need to continually reinforce the believe in our own rightness.; In that gap between Our Story about Those People...and, well, Those People, the authors of this book believe a vast complexity of rich experience and tremendous opportunities are being overlooked.; What if, at the center of the religious conservative/LGBT conflict, there were super-interesting questions just begging for thoughtful exploration - issues about which good-hearted people can and do reach very different conclusions? How might the nature of the conversation change if both sides were to simply acknowledge this - and view each other in this way? And finally, if much that we think is true about Those People is actually not, what if anything might be preventing us from seeing that?; The problem of cultural isolation. In Bill Bishop's instant-classic sociological text, "The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-minded America is Tearing Us Apart," he documents how, in nearly all aspects of life, we've become less connected to those who don't share our views. This is true in the churches we go to, the clubs we join and even the neighborhoods we live in. Bill draws on statistical analyses to document a literal "sorting" of people into like-minded groups - a subtle gathering that keeps happening over recent decades.; As the national director of the Village Square, Liz Joyner, puts it: "We're increasingly choosing to associate only with our 'tribe' rather than bravely disagree face to face. Bunkered up at home with information sources that serve as a virtual amen chorus for everything we want to believe, we can't seem to tolerate the people we used to share town meetings with."; Surrounded by our customized news outlets and online communities, each of our tribes are regularly served up with announcements about the latest offenses by Those People that assure (and reassure) us that We, of course, are on the unquestionably Right Side of history.; We have to wonder, within these kinds of air-tight echo-chambers, how will any of us gain new insight - especially the kind that challenges our own tightly held worldviews?; This book's second author, Arthur Pena, is a gay Christian man who writes,

"The fault lines of the culture war run straight through my heart. And I find I have no choice but to seek dialogic bridges over those fault lines in order to heal my own fractured soul...and maybe, just maybe, even get a glimpse of the whole truth."; Not only are these glimpses less likely to happen in the echo-chamber, research suggests that like-minded conversations frequently increase the level of polarization.[2]; How committed are we to seeing and understanding new things that we haven't seen before? How willing are we to hear questions about - and even challenges to - what we each hold to be precious?; If there is a common motivation for talking across difference it goes something like this, 'yeah sure - I'll spend time with Those People...as long as there's a chance to get them to join our side?! Otherwise, why waste my time?' [3]; Flirting with another possibility. That's not what the authors of this book believe.[4] In fact, our life experiences - and that of our review team - offer abundant proof to the contrary. As a collection of people on the right and left, secular and religious, with various experiences of sexual orientation (and even more varied ways of describing them), our lives are fuller, richer and more joyful because of conversations, relationships and friendships we've had with, yes...Those People (who see the world very differently than we do).; For that reason, we're naturally interested in helping others experience what we have seen and felt, especially since all around us, we see people having a completely different experience. At best, Those People have become a source of major annoyance to us - and at worst, they're the cause of ongoing pain, even a seeming threat to our freedom and very existence. As dark emotion takes a hold of us, we can become even more suspicious of others' motives and convinced that they ("those gay activists" or "those religious people") must be consciously trying to hurt other people (and society as a whole).; In every direction, civic and family relationships continue to be strained and soured in this conversation in a way that has metastasized into an alarming level of hostility, even violence, across the country.; Although the authors of this book disagree (even vociferously) on virtually every meaningful question in the LGBT/religious conservative discussion, what we agree upon has brought us together in this project.; Starting with this: we're convinced the quality of public conversation has real, tangible and long-term consequences for all of us. As Phil Neisser, at State University of New York, argued in his first book, *United We Fall*, Americans seem to be losing their capacity to disagree in healthy ways. If nothing changes (to preserve and defend and nourish that capacity), we're part of a growing number of Americans who believe that the increasing heat of our current socio-political "climate" may prove disastrous down the road.; An invitation. For anyone with similar concerns (and especially for anyone carrying around their own frustration or suspicion over LGBT questions), thank you for taking a minute to hear us out. In lieu of meeting face-to-face in a cozy Living Room Conversation, we hope this book can function as a kind of proxy exploration that opens the space in a similar way.; For instance, here are some questions we've posed to people ourselves: Are you open to the possibility that the 'other side' in this conversation has acted in recent years with integrity according to their own sincerely-held convictions and beliefs (in other words, in line with what they feel the world really needs)? More specifically, to liberal-leaning readers, are you open to the possibility that religious conservatives have spoken and acted out of any motivation other than hate or fear? And to conservative-leaning readers, are you open to the possibility that progressive folks have

acted out of any motivation besides anger or evil itself?; If you've been listening in to the larger American conversation, you may already know what many people would say in response to these questions: absolutely not!; Baffled. This brings us to one of the stand-out themes from our analysis of thousands of online comments gathered since Proposition 8 - labeled simply, "bafflement."; It shows up on both sides - like these comments from the right;; Or comments like this from the left;; As reflected here, those with concerns are frequently depicted as lacking in basic intelligence or humanity. Following Windsor v. United States, other people said this;; With surprising frequency, those resisting LGBT affirmative changes are portrayed as embarrassingly regressive - somehow wanting a "return to the Dark Ages" - or as "fanatics" who are as "bad as the Taliban." [5]; As noted above, there's plenty of Bafflement on the right as well, everything from 'don't they care that they are destroying America' to a wonder at how quickly the country has turned against a more orthodox understanding of sacred text and teaching;; What each side has in common, then, is utter astonishment at how Those People could possibly disagree. After the same U.S. Supreme Court decision, one person described it as "a temporary victory for sanity." [6]; In a conversation where insanity, evil, malevolence, fanaticism, ignorance, lack of intelligence and being un-civilized have become go-to explanations for why others disagree with us...how in heaven's name are we supposed to have any sort of a productive conversation together?; Moving in another direction. Despite what some people hope, religious conservatives aren't going away. Neither is the gay community. So what to do?; For starters, how about meeting each other? In person. And long enough to let the other's experience, insights and humanity sink in.; If, after this kind of an encounter, we are only more convinced of the malevolence and evil of the Other - well then, at least we can sleep better knowing we've given Them a chance. (; But in fact, many of us have found that meeting Them in person almost always generates interesting new insights...including this one: thoughtful, good-hearted people can disagree on lots of important things.; If that's true, then other things might follow. For instance, maybe we could simply insist on a space where everyone at least gets heard?; What we're trying to do. Since 2003, Jacob has been exploring different kinds of evidence to better understand basic themes and patterns across the national conversation on gay rights. First in original interviews, then in discourse analyses of online comments, he has been consistently struck at how

Scraped text from their mission page of their website: Titles: NA

Headings: NA

Paragraphs: NA

Scraped text from their history page of their website: Titles: NA

Headings: NA

Paragraphs: NA

Summaries of Links: Based solely on the provided URLs, it can be inferred that this organization is focused on promoting dialogue and understanding between different

communities, particularly between LGBTQ and religious communities. The organization has a website, athirdplace.org, which features information about their mission, authors, review team, FAQs, consulting services, and a book titled "A Third Space." The website also includes blog posts and discussions on various topics related to LGBTQ and religious dialogue. Additionally, the organization has a presence on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, where they engage with their audience and share updates about their work. Overall, the information provided suggests that this organization is dedicated to fostering positive relationships and bridging gaps between different communities through dialogue and collaboration."""