

## In this issue

- Sharing Life Together
- Our Mission
- LCI Developments
- The Director's Couch
- Reflections on the Beginnings of a Church Partnership

*"If people in the church deal with their own issues, then we will be more able to reach out to others in the body of Christ as well as those hurting in the community."*

## Sharing Life Together

### Our Local Church Partnership with Reston Bible Church

"I hear nothing but great response from members of our body who have been personally touched through the LCI ministry. I believe that LCI provides the tools to people who have the essential gifts, wisdom, experience, and similar life struggles to come alongside others in the Body who are hurting," shares Senior Pastor Mike Minter, founding pastor who has served at Reston Bible Church (RBC) for the last 30 years.

In 1997, the initial LCI Level 1 Training was taught at RBC and over the past eight years, the team has grown to 12 lay counselors as well as numerous others in the church who have attended the Level 1 training. Currently, the lay counselors attend a bi-monthly supervision group led by Dr. Bill Clark. Although these men and women are available to meet one-on-one with individuals, one of the exciting aspects at Reston Bible Church is the variety of ways that the lay counselors serve throughout the body as small group leaders through the Men's and Women's ministries, accountability groups, and meeting with couples.

Frank Best, who completed the Level 1 and 2 Training, is currently leading a weekly small group of men that began as an outgrowth of the Men's ministry. Frank shares that "sometimes our discussion focuses on a matter of the heart and sometimes a matter of the season of life. The privilege is hearing someone share and seeing another layer of his heart come off." Frank describes the changes he has seen in a person's heart as "small happenings."

"Being involved with LCI has made me a better listener," said Susan Wood, director of RBC Women's Ministries and the point of contact for those who seek counseling through the LCI ministry. "It [LCI] has also given me an understanding of the depth of pain that people are in." She has also been able to identify women in the Body who have been through a particular trial and connect them with other women who are experiencing a similar trial.

Another active member in the RBC Women's ministry, Lynne Bergman, also serves as a lay counselor, and attended the Level 1 Training



*Several lay counselors at the bi-weekly supervision meeting led by Dr. Bill Clark at Reston Bible Church.*

session with her husband. "The Level 1 Training weekend alone has been used by the Lord to increase our compassion and understanding of each other. The training also allowed us to see God's vision for His body to be healed and to do the work of the ministry."

Mary Wolfe, a lay counselor for 7 years, has also been touched by the Lay Counseling Ministry and describes it as one of the most important ministries in the church. "If people in the church deal with their own issues, then we will be more able to reach out to others in the body of Christ as well as those hurting in the community. It is the willingness to get into the pit with others and deal with the messy side of life."

Pastor Minter shares, "I would love to see more people in the Body equipped to deal with the difficult issues that people encounter through the seasons of life. That is the beauty of the Body. I don't think that pastors and staff are called to have all the answers." Indeed there is a special ministry of pastors and teachers to help "equip the saints for the work of the ministry" (*Eph. 4:12*) but every believer is meant to serve and minister to others. Pastor Minter considers the following passages to reflect the importance of the Body of Christ.

First, the apostle Paul reminds us of the specific help and encouragement that he received from others. The apostle didn't provide for every need that existed among the early church. For example, he mentions Epaphras, "a dear fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ" and in 2 Timothy 1:16, we read how Onesiphorus refreshed Paul and that he was "not ashamed of his chains." He risked going to prison to visit Paul and exposed himself to danger. So, it can also feel "risky" at times to

*continued on p.3*



## Our Mission

*The Lay Counselor Institute (LCI) is a non-profit organization that consults with the local church to design, organize, and maintain a ministry of care and counsel led by gifted and trained individuals. LCI helps train and guide believers into roles which serve members of the congregation and those outside the church. Through three separate levels of training, LCI provides the equipping and ongoing supervision for lay counselors, helping them continue to grow in skill and capacity to help others.*



## LCI Developments

### 3rd Annual LCI Charity Golf Tournament

The annual LCI Charity Golf Tournament will be held at Raspberry Falls Golf and Hunt Club in Leesburg, VA on Wednesday, August 24th with a scheduled 1:00 pm tee time featuring a Captain's Choice format.

Since its inception in 2003, this Tournament has grown in stature and reputation and remains the premier fundraising event in support for the LCI ministry. In addition to enjoying camaraderie and competitive golf, there will be numerous prizes awarded from the golf competition, raffle drawings, and a silent auction. All participants are invited to an all-you-can-eat barbecue after the day of golf (included in registration).

**August 24, 2005**  
*at Raspberry Falls Golf & Hunt Club*  
- PLUS -  
**Silent Auction & Raffle Drawing**

#### How can you help?

**Register to play:** Sign up now as we expect the tee times to sell out quickly and share this information with other avid golf players.

**Business sponsors:** You can help in this effort through your company or others you might be able to approach to consider sponsoring the tournament and receiving advertisement, please contact Ed Satterfield, 703-861-3897 or Jack Wolfe, 703-620-4263.

## 2005 LCI Training Update

**LEVEL 1 TRAINING:** two training sessions held for 56 participants.

**LEVEL 2 TRAINING:** two training sessions have prepared 18 people to begin serving as lay counselors. In addition, two more Level 2 groups have started this spring with 20 participants.

**LEVEL 3 SUPERVISION GROUPS:** three supervision groups are currently operating for ongoing training and support for over 25 lay counselors.

Earlier this year, LCI began a new supervision group led by Anna Stratton and Ed Satterfield. This bi-weekly group is the first step in beginning a lay counseling ministry at five new churches and has been a stimulus for finalizing the church relationships and procedures where the lay counselors attend.

### Upcoming LCI Level 1 and Level 2 Training Dates:

#### Level 1 Training Dates:

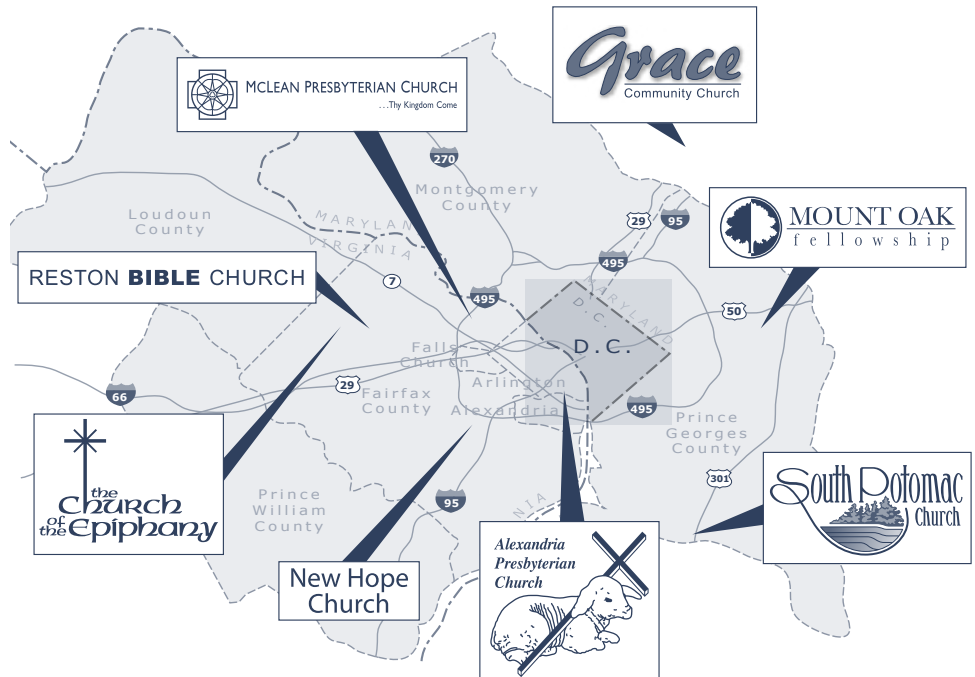
October 21-22 and November 18-19, 2005  
Alexandria Presbyterian Church  
Winter/Spring 2006 dates, TBD

#### Level 2 Training Dates:

Beginning June 6, 2005 in Tysons Corner, VA  
Beginning September 2005 in Bowie, MD  
Beginning October 2005 in Tysons Corner, VA

## Church Partnership Update

- McLean Presbyterian, McLean, VA
- Church of the Epiphany, Herndon, VA
- Alexandria Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, VA (Training workshop held for Care Team leaders)
- Reston Bible Church, Reston, VA (supervision group led by Bill Clark)
- Mount Oak United Methodist Church, Bowie, MD (supervision group led by Cindy Hunter)
- South Potomac Church, Waldorf, MD – This was the site of the spring Level 1 Training.
- LCI is also helping establish ministries at Alexandria Presbyterian, New Hope in Springfield, VA, and Grace Community in Columbia, MD.



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minister to a heavy soul and to those who are in despair.

Second, in 2 Corinthians 1:4, the apostle Paul states, “that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” God gives His people comfort so that we are able to pass on this comfort to others. Only those who have gone through deep testing (and have embraced the trial from the trusted hand of God) know how to speak a fitting word to others who are called to endure the same. “The Lord desires the Body to reach out and use their very trial to touch another person. When we practice this passage in our local church, we now have the Body functioning as the Lord intended,” said Pastor Minter.

The LCI Ministry desires to help equip others in the church to understand, respond to, and use the suffering in their lives to help them grow in their love for God and for others. The ministry focuses on not just relieving a person’s problems but to help them display the character of Christ in the midst of whatever problems or pain they may be experiencing.

Although suffering is a part of life on this side of heaven, it is not the source of people’s problems. Instead of asking, “Why is this happening to me?” or “How can I get out of this situation?” It is helping someone eventually ask, “God, what do you want me to do in this situation?” and “What is my responsibility in loving You and others in the midst of the pain?” God has a plan for the suffering we experience in our lives—to draw us closer to Him, to use our lives to offer hope to others, and to keep us mindful of our eternal home.

What encouragement would Pastor Minter offer to other churches that would consider developing a lay counseling or care ministry? It is important to have a staff contact that can serve as a liaison between the church leadership and the lay counseling ministry in providing an ongoing dialogue with leadership, staff, and ministry leaders. Pastor

Minter also believes that “a lay counseling ministry sets the church body free to become a healing community. People within the body who are equipped and, more importantly, have a sincere heart, are the real healers in a community of believers.”

About two years ago, Pastor Minter shared a series of messages on the topic of “Addictions” and how each of us struggles with things that compete with our love for Christ. He invited Dr. Bill Clark to share his perspective on how the church can offer healing to others and he shared the following descriptions of a church:

1. A church can be similar to a country club where only certain people are accepted and because of a particular struggle, some people would not feel comfortable in a church setting.
2. A church can be described as a restaurant where people come to be fed and to select what they prefer.
3. Or, a church can be compared to a hospital. Are we inviting people to share honestly with what is going on in their lives? Are we prepared to deal with the mess (and blood and disorder) that often comes before healing can take place? Are we mindful of Christ’s words to the Pharisees, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick” (*Matt. 9:12*).

We trust that our local churches can more and more reflect the image of a hospital – a place of healing and hope. It is an opportunity to practice I Thessalonians 5:14, “encourage the timid” [the fainthearted, people who struggle often emotionally and physically with worry and fear], “help the weak” [the exhausted and burned out, weak in faith] and “be patient [calm, longsuffering] with everyone.”



*Dr. Bill Clark teaching a Level 2 Training Class.*

*“I would love to see more people in the body equipped to deal with the difficult issues that people encounter through the seasons of life.”*



## Reflections on RBC’s Beginnings

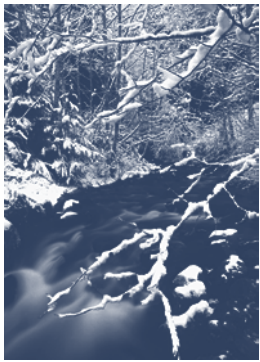
There are many stories that I could tell about the beginnings of ministry at Reston Bible Church (RBC) but among the more memorable was the first group who attended our LCI training. I’m not sure that Bill and I were prepared for what God had in store.

When I entered the room in which we were teaching, I was greeted by a smiling but somewhat apprehensive group (this is normal for the initial evening of the LCI training weekends). The first gentleman that I met was an elder. The next person that I met served

on the RBC staff and as I later found out, was very much responsible for many of the attendees participating in this weekend training. She introduced me to several pastors and key ministry leaders that evening. In my confident secure self, I immediately panicked and thought, “The church has sent in all the major players and what do we have to offer? They have the inside track with God and the church.” We took our seats and Bill began the introduction.

All about those first few hours became a blur, but by the end of the evening my thinking changed. I drove

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How do we get from the chains of human imperfection to the freedom of the perfection of the love of Jesus?

## The Director's Couch



Cheryl South has been invited to share her perspective this month as a fellow sojourner who gives words to what the Spirit has taught her. Cheryl has been involved in LCI's Level 1 and 2 Training and now serves as part of a Level 3 Supervision Group.

*"I know a place, a wonderful place  
Where Accused and Condemned find mercy and grace.  
Where the wrongs we have done,  
And the wrongs done to us  
Were nailed there with Him, there on the Cross."\**

Sooner or later, those that seek healing, freedom and truth, come face to face with the hard wall of unforgiveness. Many may enter counseling due to the struggles of this life – unfaithfulness of a spouse, the abuse or neglect of a parent, the betrayal by a trusted friend, our own self-abuse, and more. Behind each victim is an agent and behind every agent is a victim. We all have been hurt by others and sinned against (victim) but we also choose to respond to life according to what we think is best and not trust God (agent). There is a generational cycle of retribution at work in many of our lives as victims and abusers.

Against the background of pain and darkness come the words of Jesus: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). How can we forgive such great offenses? How can we not judge the evil done to us, or to others? Still, the words of Jesus are inexorable. "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36) and "Be perfect, therefore, as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

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home praying and thanking God for the marvelous opportunity! What I had thought of as "the chosen from RBC" were real people that were broken and hurting and would find something of value in what God had allowed Bill and I to introduce to the church.

Some people come to the LCI Training to find answers for others they know, some come who are hurting and want help, some expect a list of tools to use, while still others secretly hope to fix their own lives, marriages, or families. Many have been involved in counseling before and many on the receiving end, which is how I became involved.

This initial group came mostly because of the support of the pastor and the influence of one staff member. This staff member knew that RBC, like all churches, had many hurting members and believed there were ways to reach out. This person was not sure of what those ways should look like but encouraged the leaders and brought them to LCI. I would say half of these leaders didn't have a clue why they

How do we get from the chains of human imperfection to the freedom of the perfection of the love of Jesus? Not the perfection of never making a mistake, or the perfection of human striving, but the life-giving power of the Perfect Love of God? Jesus answers, "...whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matt. 10:39). By the power of the Holy Spirit, I must lose my life, lay down my right to retaliate, my right to require justice, my right to demand payment. If I lay that down, what will I find?

I find life – the life of Jesus in me. I find that I share in His sufferings. Not as a self-righteous martyr who always keeps an eye on the debit column. I begin to understand what He understands – that love is inseparable from suffering and that suffering brings intimacy with Jesus. In sharing in His sufferings, I understand, I feel, I know what He did for me and continues to do for me. I understand grace for the first time. I know "how wide and long and deep is the love of Christ, and to know the love that surpasses knowledge" (Eph. 3:18,19). I discover that just as God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself that Jesus is in me, reconciling my part of the world to Himself through me (2 Cor. 5:18-19).

Jesus gives me the privilege of playing *His part* in the story of *my life*. Grace and mercy begin to drive out the darkness of generational bitterness and retribution. The freedom of Love, in invisible ways, begins to heal things – things past, present, and future. But the cost is high – the place of mercy for me is the same place it is for my enemy – the rough-hewn cross of Jesus.

*\*Words taken from the song At the Cross by Randy and Terry Butler.*

were there and my impression is that they were introduced to a new level of intimacy.

God had a purpose above and beyond what Bill and I could ever imagine. Few from this group became counselors. However, it gave the leadership a taste of what and how we were training. At the very most, many individual lives were impacted. I would say these leaders began to look at themselves and the way they relate in a new and different way. The results? When leaders change so do the followers. RBC began a ministry of lay people touching the walking wounded.

Many more training sessions have taken place at RBC and many more lay counselors have come forward. Each group is memorable and has a story but I thought it was significant that our first group was filled with leaders. It is a blessing and an opportunity to be used by God in training lay counselors and particularly sweet within your own church community.

*Barbara Giuliano, co-founder of LCI and a lay counselor for over 15 years.*



Barbara Giuliano at a recent LCI Level 1 Training weekend