

## The Face of LCI

*“God has shown me how people just blossom under grace.”*

*In this issue we highlight one of LCI’s Level 3 Supervision Groups that has met together since January 2005 and is led by Anna Stratton. Initially, the group was co-led by Anna Stratton and Ed Satterfield and began because there were no Supervision Groups meeting at their particular churches. Although there are a few individuals who have come and gone, the unique bond that existed at the very beginning of the group has deepened over time. Recently, the group participated in the following interview:*

***How have your initial impressions changed throughout the course of participating in the group?***

“I was really skeptical at the beginning,” shares Maggie. “Is this really going to work? It took me awhile to...feel comfortable...a good 6 months.”

“It started out fairly personal right away as we heard each other’s stories and then over the course of the year, we have had the opportunity to revisit one another’s stories,” says Debbie.

Randee says, “I was very uncomfortable being the only guy in this group at the beginning. I got challenged big time in here but I have grown a lot and I appreciate their friendships. It has been a great experience.”

Corinne, Randee’s spouse, noted the impact on her husband, “Randee is committed to coming and I have watched how it has impacted him and how he has grown.” It has invited him to go deeper with himself as he struggles with being effective with the people he is counseling.

“I came about 7 months ago and I was pretty scared of coming into a group of people that I didn’t know. I wondered, ‘How would I fit in or was I going to fit in?’ In the last month or so, I felt more and more comfortable. I feel safe,” Sharon shares.

One reason that the LCI ministry includes the Level 3 Supervision Group is to provide a place for the lay counselors to care for their own hearts as they are working with other people’s painful stories. As Debbie says, “As we share about our clients, our own issues could get in the way. We are helping each other deal with our own issues so that we are becoming much better counselors, much better friends and much better ‘walkers with God.’”

***How does being in this group impact your relationship with the clients you see?***

Nancy and Grace both drive an hour one way



*Participants in the Level 3 Supervision Group highlighted in this issue, shown l-r, Sharon Holliday, Anna Stratton, Maggie Cho, Beth Porta, Grace Fuqua, and Debbie Yorgey. Group members not pictured: Nancy Barlow and Corinne and Randee Vance.*

from the greater Baltimore area for the biweekly meetings. “We are all in process. We are all aware that we have developed all kinds of ways to get through life and not be exposed,” shares Grace. “The group is a place to be exposed and no one [in the group] is shocked at your exposure. I have had some clients with some serious hurts in their lives—OCD, sexual abuse—and this has been a wonderful place to come get help and input. I have become a greater ‘grace-giver.’ God has shown me how people just blossom under grace.”

Nancy says, “I love our group and am learning so much...it is so wonderful to have others to share with and have them give their insights.”

“We need each other in the sense that as we see clients,” says Maggie, “we need a support base, a safety net. Granted it is totally up to God, but it is nice to know that if I get stuck, it is not all on my shoulders. You come here and get the help you need to get unstuck.”

“It has made me a much better listener. I learned that I had to be right, I had to be competent and so being in this group has helped me become aware of this issue. As I share about my clients it has been so helpful for this group to say, ‘just listen’ or ‘watch the process,’” adds Debbie.

***How does being in this group impact you personally?***

“One of the big things that I have learned is to trust God with people instead of my own competence,” continues Debbie. “That has been very significant

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Dr. Bill Clark teaching at Level 1 Training with sign language interpreter.

“It was moving to see the LCI material translated into sign language. The highlight for me was seeing a deaf person counsel a hearing person in sign language in our small group. Because the client could sign, the entire 10 minute session was done in American Sign Language and interpreted for the hearing by one of the translators who sat in on the group.”

Dr. Bill Clark

**INSET ▶**

Participants at the Level 1 Training at Bethany Community Church.

“LCI fosters caring within the context of community rather than in isolation.”

Senior Pastor, Kevin McGhee



LCI Level 1 Participants: l-r, Tracie Calloway, Jean Dean, and Myrna Gold.

# Bethany Community Church Hosts Level 1 Training

Bethany Community Church (BCC) in Laurel, MD hosted the Level 1 Training earlier this year. This particular training included a few “firsts” for LCI and Bethany. Unlike other LCI Training weekends that draw people from a variety of churches, this was the first LCI Training that included a majority of the participants from the same church body. Bert Pasquale, who serves as the LCI Champion at Bethany said, “about half of those who attended the Level 1 Training plan to continue onto the Level 2 Training.”

At Bethany Community Church, discipleship is one of their core values and the main method by which people grow spiritually. Senior pastor, Kevin McGhee shares, “LCI provides invaluable training in ‘specialized discipleship’ that helps people find healing and hope despite the inevitable heartache of living in a broken world. Many cannot afford professional Christian counselors—and, even for those who can, real sustained life change requires involvement in community life. LCI fosters caring within the context of community rather than in isolation.” Bert also affirms, “Bethany is a disciple making church. The tools and information that LCI offers, enables those in our community to deepen their connection with God and with others.”

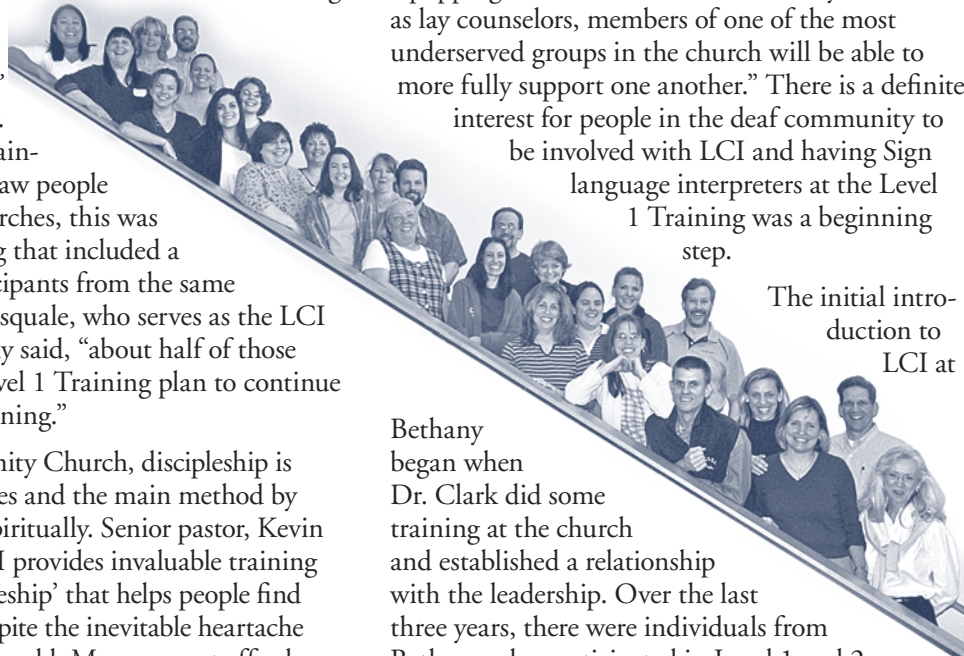
Another significant first was that a few Level 1 participants included individuals from the deaf community. Bethany has an active deaf ministry including a Deaf Ministry Team that parallels the leadership structure used throughout BCC. In addition, there are also church-wide activities in which deaf and hearing people interact together. Pastor McGhee shares, “this area is the capital of the deaf world; yet, to my knowledge there is not a single Christian counselor who uses ASL (Ameri-

can Sign Language) as their primary language. By equipping members of our deaf ministry to serve as lay counselors, members of one of the most underserved groups in the church will be able to more fully support one another.” There is a definite interest for people in the deaf community to be involved with LCI and having Sign language interpreters at the Level 1 Training was a beginning step.

The initial introduction to LCI at

Bethany began when Dr. Clark did some training at the church and established a relationship with the leadership. Over the last three years, there were individuals from Bethany who participated in Level 1 and 2 Training sessions. “One of the main reasons that I support LCI Training is that I have known Dr. Bill Clark for many years. His personal effectiveness and compelling witness for Christ gives me confidence that our people will be well trained,” said Pastor McGhee.

The community at Bethany recognizes that any time people get involved in other people’s lives that it will take a considerable amount of time and commitment. “When you open yourself up to others, there will also be challenges. We prefer to see these challenges as additional opportunities,” expresses Bert. These thoughts seem to go hand-in-hand with Pastor McGhee’s description of Bethany as a “community of risk takers for God but also a family.” We look forward to how God uses this “community of risk takers” as His plan unfolds for BCC and LCI in the months ahead.



## Church Partners:

**LOCAL PARTNER**

- Alexandria Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, VA
- Bethany Community Church, Laurel, MD
- Church of the Epiphany, Herndon, VA
- Grace Community Church, Columbia, MD
- Mount Oak United Methodist Church, Bowie, MD
- New Hope Church, Springfield, VA
- Reston Bible Church, Reston, VA

**CHURCH CHAMPION**

- Maggie Cho
- Bert Pasquale
- Martha Petersen
- Tim Siemens
- Cindy Hunter
- Debbie Thorp
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with my relationship with God, with my relationship with my family and with my friends.”

“I think it is the commitment to this group,” Maggie adds. “Something Grace shared a while ago when her son asked, ‘How long are you going to go to that group?’ Grace’s response was, ‘forever.’” The reality of that response is what this group represents.

Sharon shares, “It is a process of digging deeper—I don’t mind being challenged. It takes me awhile to get comfortable.”

“There is a willingness to come and share with one another even when we may be guarded,” adds Maggie. “It is nice to have so many people from different places to help you think outside your little box. It is nice to come into this group and have a connection and where we can call each other on the carpet.” This supervision group represents six different area churches.

The unique quality is that the group pursued each other from the beginning and [are] not hesitant to get involved in one another’s lives. Grace mentions that many times, they end the meeting, still in a lot of pain, and God picks them up and reveals more about the process and more about themselves.

### *What role does Anna play in the group?*

They all agree that her experience as a professional counselor is beneficial and she gives them a place to go when they are ‘stuck.’ Anna also chimes in, “There are times that I don’t have to add anything. I just sit back and enjoy how the group is thinking the case through.”

“Anna has an incredible mixture of professionalism and relational skills,” adds Grace.

“She is real, says Randee, “and [she] invites others to be real.”

Grace mentions, “As she has become more vulnerable with us, it allows us to be more vulnerable with one another.”

### *How has the group helped you in your own relationship with God?*

Randee feels that being in the group “makes you realize how much you need God.”

Grace adds, “Each person shares, and others know about you and they still love you. It is a wonderful picture about who God is and what He is like.”

“The uniqueness of God in each of us,” muses Maggie. “Our group is so unique. Every time [we meet] it is completely different and I think that is what makes it unique. We have a little bit of everything.”

### *Are there any concluding thoughts that you would like to share?*

“The group is growing in its depth and wisdom and skills,” adds Randee.

Corinne says, “There is an invitation to share your story and have it be affirmed. When you are counseling, you are at war for people’s souls and you get bloody and bruised and you need someone else to come alongside you and pick you up and be there with you in the battle.”

Debbie shares, “In the last few months we have become a community. I don’t want to miss... because when a community is growing, you don’t know what God is going to do. As a community, it has grown and it is a place that you want to go because you know you are going to benefit. The experience of our group,” Debbie concludes, “is that God is continuing the work much deeper in each of us in order to use us in other people’s lives—it is a journey in our own personal walk with Him.”

There are tears, laughter, joking, serious moments, and tons of grace. There is an understanding within the group that each person around the circle is working on their own issues. A willingness to be exposed, to be vulnerable, to be committed, to sacrifice are all descriptions of this group. One group member commented that it seemed like together they reflect Christ. What a privilege for the clients that these group members serve, that they are indeed reflecting the very life of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*“When you are counseling, you are at war for people’s souls and...you need someone else to come alongside you.”*

## **LCI Golf Tournament** **Save the Date – August 23, 2006**

...Plus an opportunity to win **2 tickets** to the **Redskins Opening Game** this fall (*including parking pass*) at the Silent Auction held during the LCI Golf Tournament.

We invite you to the 4th Annual LCI Golf Tournament fundraiser event on Wednesday, August 23, 2006 at Raspberry Falls Golf and Hunt Club. This is LCI’s only fundraiser throughout the year and our goal is to recruit 100 players to raise money to support the worthy effort of training lay counselors for local churches. These counselors will touch many lives, as well as assisting the church pastors and their staffs.

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Anna Stratton

*“Out of this safe place, we are learning how to love others better”*

## The Director’s Couch



*Anna Stratton received her Masters in Counseling from Colorado Christian University and her Masters in Social Work from the University of Kansas and has practiced in Alaska and Falls Church. Ten years ago, God literally called Anna to Virginia to be with her sister and her sister’s new family. Through a mutual friend, Anna met Bill Clark and ultimately moved her counseling practice to office space she shares with Bill.*

I have long had a heart for the church to take back a caring ministry for its people. Interacting with Bill Clark, in sharing office space with him, I was intrigued by the growing Lay Counselor Institute he and Barbara Giuliano started. I popped in on a couple of Level One’s, eventually leading a small group. I attended one Level Two group, then co-led one Level Two group with Bill, then was approached to facilitate a Level Three Supervision Group. I love group relationships and dynamics, and LCI seemed to fit my passion for the church and its caring ministry, so I agreed to lead a Level Three group.

I have been encouraged and inspired by our group. Our little band of warriors is small, allowing a sense of community that isn’t possible with a larger group. We have a community where we are acutely aware that who we are, what we struggle with, and how we struggle, is as important to our caring for people as understanding the uniqueness of their struggles. In our group, we are all continually aware of the reality that we are fallen; our ability to love is tainted with our own sin. But we have found the beauty of a community with each other, that sees one another’s faults, laughs together, and challenges one another—somehow God has made it a safe place for us to be seen and to journey toward being more the men and women He designed us to be.

Out of this safe place, we are learning how to love

others better and call out the same in those we have been called to care for. We have experienced failure with each other, learning what it is like to not love one another well, and yet stay in community; that failing or hurting people is not grounds for giving up on relationship. In fact, it can be part of our client’s growth as we model how we handle our failures.

The format of our group is such that we spend the beginning of our time together catching up on each other’s lives. We then take turns asking questions regarding issues that might pertain to a particular client’s story, or our own story, such as relational struggles, making difficult life decisions, depression, medication, eating disorders, or abuse. I might bring in information that speaks to a particular issue, as a resource to be used. Next, someone in the group might present a case that they would like to discuss, and each person might comment, or ask questions as we walk through part of a client’s journey. Although that is our basic format, there is flexibility to respond to the Spirit’s leading from meeting to meeting. Our group is not “leader-led,” in the sense that each person is a full participant, each one willing to get in there and “go for it,” with each other and on behalf of their clients.

Recently, I had the privilege to go to Alabama and Mississippi for two weeks, to offer my help to Hurricane Katrina victims through the Red Cross. Most of my time was spent caring for the Red Cross workers and volunteers themselves. What struck me was that even the Red Cross knows that you have to take care of your own in order to take care of the crisis-stricken community. Not a bad model for the church. The church offers herself to the crisis-stricken world; our Level Three group seeks to care for one another that we might offer ourselves to those in crisis through the love we have experienced.



*We need Hole Sponsors! Each sponsor will be highlighted throughout the tournament with signage at a tee box and rotating ad on the GPS system within each golf cart.*

*LCI Golf Tournament continued from page 3*

Please join us for this fun day of golf competition and an opportunity to win valuable prizes in the Raffle and Silent Auction. Even if you don’t play in the Tournament, all are welcome to join us at Raspberry Falls. You can also purchase Raffle tickets and offer bids on the Silent Auction items *before* and *during* the day of Tournament.

The total cost of this event is only \$125. The registration form may be downloaded at [lccounselor.org](http://lccounselor.org) and sent to the LCI office with

a check or credit card. Online registration is also available. If you would like to contribute a Raffle prize or Silent Auction item, please contact [marygwolfe@yahoo.com](mailto:marygwolfe@yahoo.com).

**Check the LCI web site, [www.lccounselor.org](http://www.lccounselor.org), for future Level 1 Training Dates in Fall 2006.**

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### Our Mission

*The Lay Counselor Institute (LCI) is a non-profit organization that assists the local church in establishing and growing an effective ministry of biblical counseling by identifying and training caring and gifted believers who are grounded in their knowledge of the Bible and committed to biblical counseling.*