

The Face of LCI

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.”

2 Cor. 1:3-4

In these verses, the apostle Paul describes a way of being with people who are suffering. The Father comforts us in all our troubles, and thus teaches us how we are to be with those who are suffering. The Greek word “comfort” here literally means “a calling alongside.” LCI helps the local church identify and train caring and gifted believers to walk alongside those who are suffering and struggling. This is an aspect of biblical counseling. In a recent interview, Dr. Larry Crabb and his wife, Rachael, gave us some of their thoughts on biblical counseling.

There seem to be two ends of the spectrum with regard to what most people consider biblical counseling. “One end sees biblical counseling as confronting behavior, laying out God’s expectations of you and holding you accountable to meet those expectations,” Dr. Crabb explains. “The Pharisees were externalists, not looking on the inside, just focusing on the outside.” As important as Scripture is, on this end of the spectrum, some counselors will simply quote bible verses and expect that alone will change behavior. Rachael Crabb says, “Many people are hit over the head so much with the Bible that they grow to hate God’s words.”

On the other end of the spectrum is the professional model. “[Secular] psychological counseling looks to the inside: to motivations, interior realities, the heart, but without biblical truth. Psychology prompts questions,” says Dr. Crabb. “So a Christian psychologist trained in secular counseling may open a session in prayer, giving it a Christian veneer. Psychology is interesting and provocative, but not authoritative.”

What does God have to say about this? In Hebrews 4:12, the writer states: “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” Thus, Dr. Crabb says, “God encourages us to look inside,” with His truth.

In his personal journey, Dr. Crabb has had “seismic shifts” in his thinking. In graduate school, he thought of himself as many typically do: “I am a Christian and I am entering graduate school to be a psychologist.” He assumed that being a Christian wouldn’t affect the content or profession. But as he studied, he noticed contradictions in the Word of God and the subject matter. He continues, “What I do now doesn’t have much to do with what I studied all those years. What I did was spend years thinking about these things, in light of the Word of God. A professional just thinks a lot about this stuff. This is why Bill Clark’s training is so important. Training lay people to join on the journey, this is what we are called to as part of the body of Christ.”

“Biblical counseling... includes receiving comfort from God, and giving that same comfort to others: joining people on their journey in a relationship of trust, armed with God’s perspective.”

Whether lay or professional, biblical counseling is more than being sympathetic and understanding; it goes beyond an external, accountability model. It is joining people on the journey with these categories and truth in mind. Dr. Crabb sums up his thoughts: “Biblical counseling is going to core issues, in light of biblical categories.”

Dr. Crabb tells the following story: “Hans Strupp, a psychologist at Vanderbilt, was asked ten years ago, what can you count on a professional counselor knowing? A surgeon or electrician has training and credentials. You therefore expect certain things from them. What can you expect of a professional counselor? Strupp studied this and what he came up with is that with all the training, all the years of study, the one thing a trained professional provides, that people expect, is that when you are hurting, sometimes it helps to talk to someone you trust.”

“A difference between a professional and some lay persons is confidentiality,” Rachael says. “When you are paying money you expect confidentiality. With some lay counseling, your confidences are sometimes made public as prayer requests.” Dr. Crabb adds, “Confidentiality should be something

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Larry and Rachael Crabb



Focus on Fairfax Community Church

Fairfax Community Church (FCC), like many churches today, is experiencing an increasing demand for counseling among its congregation. Accordingly, almost three years ago, the FCC lay counseling ministry was born out of their Recovery Ministry. Initially, this ministry was called

Celebrate Recovery, a Christ-centered 12-Step program based on the Beatitudes and now it is called *Restoration*. During these early years, the pastors and paid ministry staff were meeting with individuals, yet the volume of people was increasing. “The need to walk alongside individuals in a deeper

way is required more and more in the church community,” shares Pam McKenzie, who serves as a lay counselor and co-leader of *Restoration*.

“The FCC leadership team made a conscious decision not to have a professional counseling center at the church, but rather, embraced the lay counseling perspective,” Pam said. Many of the pastors rose up through the congregation—it has been organic—and they wanted to look at the counseling piece this way.” Pam introduced Kathleen Otchy, Associate Pastor of Small Group Communication, to LCI, followed by a meeting with Bill Clark and the pastors and ministry staff. Eric Nickle, FCC Staff member and co-leader of *Restoration* states, “LCI is a good fit for the church. It is what church is supposed to look like.”

The *Restoration* Leadership Team participated in LCI’s Level 1 Training not to become lay counselors but to support the work they do leading Recovery Groups and meeting one-on-one with individuals. “LCI equips them to be better able



to walk alongside others and to continue to heal themselves. They came out of Level 1 having a snapshot of Christ in a way that they have never had before,” Pam shares.

Presently, there are six lay counselors at FCC including some professional counselors and those currently enrolled in graduate school. Although some of these professionals have advanced schooling, they participated in the Level 1 Training so that everyone would be on the same page regarding LCI’s framework. There is a mutual understanding between the lay counselors and the professionals. “LCI is a perfect vehicle for the professionals in our church. They were amazed at the depth to which this approach takes you. It has been wonderful to sit at the table with lay counselors and those who have been professionally trained during our weekly supervision group and discuss how we can bring people to the Cross, along with some really good tools. I reached an oasis in the desert. I can’t get enough of the feedback and processing with people in this way,” Pam shares.

Eric shares, “If there is a specific need among our Recovery Groups, we send them to lay counseling. On the flip side, a lay counselor may encourage someone to participate in a particular support group. These two ministries can feed into each other and the goal is to have these ministries function in this way.”

One thing that is unique to *Restoration* is that we are encouraging individuals to “live their story out loud. It is not just in a support group but through worship, teaching, and testimonials that it can take the darkness away from the story and call people to a greater freedom in Christ—living life abundantly, not trouble free,” Pam said.

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Lay Counselor Supervision Group at Fairfax Community Church

LCI is a perfect vehicle for the professionals in our church.

They were amazed at the depth to which this approach takes you.

We Need Your Feedback

Where are you now?!

If you **participated in Level 1 or Level 2 Training** and utilize this material in ministry, or your work, or have continued with further schooling, we would like to hear from you. Please email info@lciministry.org, *Attn: LCI Newsletter* and include your information.

If you are a **seasoned event planner** or would love to help LCI in the planning of a future fundraising event, please email LCI at info@lciministry.org or call the office to indicate your interest.

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“I think training individuals to realize how God uses their story and how to share one’s ongoing story can invite other people to share their own story and be open to God’s changing power. I would love to see this more common knowledge among people. Whether a person walks into the door for the first time for lay counseling or *Restoration*, my dream is that they would be so impacted that they experience freedom and already have something to share with someone else. ‘I went [to the church], I spoke to somebody about my problem and they showed me Christ. I don’t have to carry shame anymore.’”

FCC would like to encourage their other church pastors and eventually the entire staff to go through the Level 1 Training. “It would be beneficial for our entire staff to attend Level 1 and to instill confidence in a way to care for people from the start, at a deeper level, while inviting them to access God’s transformation,” shares Pam.

Eric and Pam express that one challenge of the ministry is the ongoing management of the lay counseling infrastructure. They are trying to catch up with demand, as well as have enough time and “person power” to identify and monitor the lay counselors. “It comes down to trusting. Trusting

that God will send the right people, He will filter, He will make things obvious if someone is not well placed as a counselor. You never know where God is going to take it,” Pam said.

FCC’s senior pastor, Rod Stafford, has set the pace by his own vulnerability and by sharing his own story. Pastor Stafford challenges people to do the same and not to settle for just “a little bit of Jesus.” During Jesus’ ministry, anyone that encountered Him was exposed to Truth, and thus had a decision to make about his own life. Although these encounters varied from person to person, Christ recognized that these people were hurt and broken and that He was the answer. We celebrate the example of FCC in loving others well and pray that we could “go and do likewise” in our own church communities.

Level 1 Training Dates

Mark your calendar for the following dates. If you would like to register for one of these locations, please visit the LCI web site at www.lciministry.org.

September 13-15, 2007: McLean Presbyterian Church, McLean, VA

October 25-27, 2007: Mid-Atlantic Community Church, Crofton, MD

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that Christians do, not as part of a code of ethics of professionals. Confidentiality should be a way of relating.”

Rachael describes a group that she was in: “I have been in many groups and one group was a story telling group. We would take turns telling our stories. In that sense, we were joining each other on our journeys and we were all on a journey. Another person had a similar group, and several women joined it. Some of the women later said, ‘She was never on the journey with us.’ They wanted to come back to the original group because there was a sense that we were all on the journey together. Lay counselors join the journey.”

Thus, biblical counseling, whether lay or professional, includes receiving comfort from God, and giving that same comfort to others: joining people on their journey in a relationship of trust, armed with God’s perspective.

Through the many years that Dr. Crabb has been a professional counselor, and Rachael has been a lay counselor, wrestling with these issues has landed them here: “If God’s intent for us is to know Him well, then He is inviting us to join a small group, a Trinity, of three Persons. That is

His model for us here. The deepest healing comes in community. Real healing takes place when Christians identify the deepest part of themselves in community. In community we are wounded and in community we are healed. That is where we learn how to relate, how to love and serve. That is why training like Bill provides is crucial. We learn what biblical relationships look like. We enter the community of God, down here.”

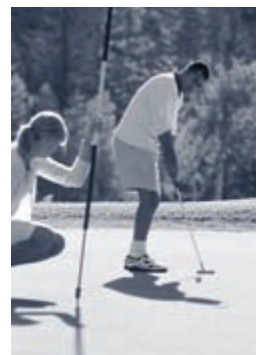
Rachael Crabb has been involved in lay counseling for many years. She is an author and has been a ministry consultant and motivational, inspirational speaker for over 20 years. She enjoys speaking to women about the impact of hospitality, authentic relationships, the blessings of womanhood and the power of relational prayer.

Dr. Larry Crabb has a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Illinois and is a well known author, speaker, teacher and founder/director of NewWay ministries.

Larry’s website: www.newwayministries.org lists many resources on the subject of biblical counseling. In addition, Larry offers a week long School of Spiritual Direction, as well as weekend conferences, which help equip believers to join others on the journey.



Barbara Giuliano and Bill Clark lead the LCI Training sessions.



LCI Golf Tournament Update

The LCI Golf Tournament has been postponed this summer and plans are to resume next year.



The Director's Couch



Bill and Debbie Clark were first introduced to Larry and Rachael Crabb in 1983 at Grace Seminary in Indiana. Bill responds to Larry and Rachael's thoughts on biblical counseling in the front-page article.

In 1981, I was on Young Life staff in South Carolina. An older staff friend told me, "You *have* to take this Christian counseling class taught by this guy, Larry Crabb!" That summer, three of us on staff did. I was stunned. I had never heard anyone teach the Bible and apply it to the human dilemma like Dr. Crabb did. I had been in classes with marvelous professors: R.C. Sproul, John Gerstner, Vernon Grounds, and heard many great preachers and teachers in Young Life and at conferences, but nothing compared to what I heard that summer. Nothing else ever made me say, "I want to go spend a year with that person and learn more." Dr. Crabb had that impact and in the summer of 1983, Debbie and I packed our belongings and moved to Indiana to spend what would become two years with

Larry and Rachael. Dan and Becky Allender were also there; Dan already had a Master of Divinity degree, but at this time was a doctoral student in counseling psychology at Michigan State. He had yet to make his mark on the national horizon.

Larry's commitment to study and think about the Scriptures is profound. We still use his book, *Understanding People* in our Level Two training, in part because it explains in great detail why and how counselors of any ilk can learn from the scriptures what is necessary in helping others. Not just what passages are important, or what concepts and principles are foundational; he helps us see that there are categories of biblical truth that truly help us understand what is happening behind or within non-organic dysfunctional behavior (the kind of behavior the mental health world works with). This study of the scripture and its application to human behavior is not simple. When I studied in Indiana, we spent half of one semester in a Psychopathology class, applying biblical categories to eating disorders. The goal: learn to think biblically as you are confronted with information.

But this task is not the only critical piece for which we need training. The second "half" of the training is about how to relate to someone. In simple terms, there are two parts to this relationship. First, we must know how to build a relationship, which

is safe and hopeful. As Rachael said, "we must join another in their journey. We must 'come alongside' and offer whatever comfort we have experienced."

Next, we must be willing to reveal,

release, or expose the human heart: ours and another's. The Crabbs modeled and taught this element as well. Debbie and I still remember being nervous when we went out to dinner with the Crabbs. "What will they ask us tonight?" We would still say that we have never experienced community like we did those two years we were in Indiana. These were life-giving and life-changing relationships – friends and mentors who penetrated our lives, sometimes in uncomfortable fashion – for both our sake and the sake of the kingdom.

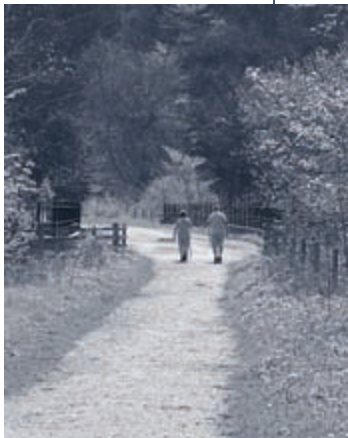
"Thinking biblically, relating powerfully; this is the essence of ... community."

Two statements, one from Larry, one from Rachael, in their interview, capture these ideas. "Biblical counseling is going to core issues, in light of biblical categories." "Biblical counseling... joining people on their journey in a relationship of trust, armed with God's perspective."

Thinking biblically, relating powerfully: this is the essence of discipleship, mentoring, counseling: community. The Bible reveals these two truths. Read *Connecting*, *Soul Talk*, *The Safest Place on Earth*, and *Finding God*, and this is the message you will see. God created us and then saved us to be in intimate relationship with Him, and then with one another. Our relationship with God, and the relationships that flow out of that, are meant to change who we are, how we think, feel and act.



Bill and Debbie Clark



Lay counselors join the journey.

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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.