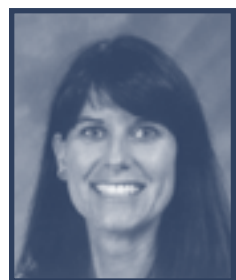


The Face of LCI



Libby Conrad

Over the 15 years that LCI has been training and supervising lay counselors, there are countless lives that have been touched by LCI. Through this new section of the newsletter, we would like to introduce you to these individuals by sharing a snapshot of their journey with you beginning with Libby Conrad. Libby is a 10-year participant of LCI and has a ministry with high school students through Young Life.

“If you want anything else in life more than entering into the beauty of the relationship of the Trinity, then you haven’t seen or understood that beauty.” Those were the words I heard Dr. Larry Crabb speak the first morning of his School of Spiritual Direction which I attended in September. His words stung as I reflected on my journey in recent months: struggling to trust God with my life as a single woman in my early forties. I thought of the things I want so deeply – companionship, intimacy, and connection with another – and how the pain of not experiencing these things can at times consume me with overwhelming grief and fear. As Dr. Crabb spoke those words, I knew immediately that I must not really be experiencing and enjoying *that* (the beauty of the relationship of the Trinity), otherwise *this* (the journey of being single) wouldn’t be so paralyzing and consuming. I had a sense that I was in for a transforming week as I had a glimpse of moving toward a deeper understanding of God that would move me *through* the pain.

Throughout my journey, I have found myself with questions to which I didn’t have easy answers. How do I view God’s involvement in my life when I look around and see that “everyone else” has a husband? At what level do I really trust Him when at times He seems silent or disinterested? What happens when I’m trying to teach someone else to trust God with their life, when I’m not even sure I experience that kind of trust myself? In my darkest moments, those questions seemed overwhelming enough to take me out of the ministry I am involved in. The pain of these questions has ebbed and flowed throughout my journey, with times of trust and times of discouragement.

So when I found myself at Dr. Crabb’s conference in September, the recent months of pain and grief caused me to desire a deeper encounter with God – however uncomfortable, painful, or even terrifying it might be. After some initial discussion, Dr. Crabb asked me if I would be willing to serve in a role that would in effect make me the class “guinea pig,” participating in a series of conversations with him throughout the week, which were to take place in front of the class. He would use these conversations to model a spiritually directed relationship in the context of my own personal story. I am sure that I would not have had the courage to do it had it not been for my involvement in LCI. I knew the value would far outweigh the vulnerability and pain! In sharing my journey and revealing the demanding sinfulness of my heart, the Spirit was able to move me from this place of feeling stuck regarding my singleness, to one of surrender in the midst of the pain of wherever I am.



Libby and Dr. Larry Crabb sharing a conversation together.

I have come to discover that this very journey of brokenness is what the Spirit uses to pour His life and energy into me, and I in turn pour that life and energy into those the Lord places in my path. As I connect deeper with the Lord, my ability to connect deeper with struggling friends increases as we encourage each other to move through the pain and confusion. I felt myself truly make a shift that week into a “dance with the Trinity” – living my story in His delight as I am received by the Father, redeemed by the Son, and journey forward in the rhythm of the Spirit.

“I have come to discover that this very journey of brokenness is what the Spirit uses to pour His life and energy into me...”



Dr. Bill Clark and Barbara Giuliano teaching at the Level 1 weekend.



Shown here is a small group meeting during the weekend.

“There are some pastors that don’t see the need for this kind of ministry. I think LCI can be a useful tool...”

Alexandria Presbyterian hosts Fall Level 1 Training

“The development of lay counseling at APC has been simply walking through the doors that God has opened,” said Maggie Cho, who serves as the “champion” for LCI at Alexandria Presbyterian Church (APC). The champion is an individual that serves as the liaison for the LCI ministry at a local church and also interfaces with the leadership and staff.

“LCI is consistent with the vision of APC. It [LCI] has been a natural progression of our heart and vision as we cultivate a culture of shepherding at our church,” shares Senior Pastor, Tom Holliday. “APC looks at shepherding and training to occur from the bottom up not the top down – through pastoral counseling, covenant fellowship groups, and lay counselors.” The leadership recognizes the important role that LCI can offer in equipping lay counselors at APC. It is their hope that some of their members who have gifts and a passion to invest in shepherding others will participate in the LCI training, in order to become better equipped to come alongside people.

APC places a high priority on relationships. Approximately 60-70% of APC’s congregation is involved in small groups called Covenant Fellowships. In addition, the church offers a 16-week discipleship course called Sonship that combines teaching and small group discussion that bridges what Christians know about the Gospel in their minds with what they experience in their hearts. It’s the church’s desire that the lay counselors will be another layer in relationship building.

What encouragement does Pastor Holliday have for other pastors beginning or involved with LCI? “There are some pastors that don’t see the need for this kind of ministry. I think LCI can be a

Alexandria
Presbyterian
Church



useful tool for the church to sharpen its member’s counseling skills in order to truly help others. The LCI training program is one more way for equipping the body of Christ for effective service.”



APC members who attended the Level 1 Training this fall.

When asked what words from the Scriptures help reinforce the importance of shepherding and caring for the flock, Pastor Holliday points to I Thessalonians 2:8, *We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.* Pastor Holliday believes that foundational to caring for others is a growing understanding of how the Good Shepherd shepherds us.

Save The Date

APC will host *Learning to Love Your Story* with Dan Allender on April 28-29, 2006.

For more information, please contact the church office at 703-683-3348 or the Mars Hill Graduate School web site at mhgs.edu, under Conference Section.

Church Partners:

- Alexandria Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, VA
- Bethany Community Church, Laurel, MD
- Church of 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
- South Potomac Church, White Plains, MD

- Maggie Cho 703-683-3348
- John Lowe 301-332-4560
- Martha Petersen 703-481-8601
- Tim Siemens 410-992-5384
- Cindy Hunter 301-262-4095
- Debbie Thorp 703-971-4673
- Susan Wood 703-478-9730
- Mary Belote 301-753-4075

3rd Annual LCI Golf Tournament

“The 3rd Annual LCI Golf Tournament was truly a blessing in more ways than one,” said Jack Wolfe, who has helped coordinate the tournament over the last three years. This event remains the premier fundraising event in support of the LCI Ministry and this year over \$14,250 was raised, a 25% growth over last year.

Most importantly, this event has given LCI the opportunity to connect with many folks, both players and sponsors, that otherwise would not have access to LCI to discuss the mission and goals of the ministry. In soliciting for contributions, the typical question is, “What does LCI do?” “This allows us the opportunity to educate others in the community about LCI, raise awareness, as well as financial support,” said Mary Wolfe, LCI board member and coordinator of the Silent Auction and Prize Raffle for the Golf Tournament.



Shown here are Adam Clark, Bill Clark, Alex Clark and John Hazlett who joined over 70 golfers that participated in this year's tournament.

Our thanks to all who helped on this year's tournament and we will look to see you next August 2006!



As LCI ends a very encouraging and exciting year of growth and change, we ask you to remember us in your year-end charitable giving plans. We also wish to remind you that significant income tax savings can be achieved through the donation to LCI of appreciated investment property (such as shares of common or preferred stock, or other securities), as the income tax on the capital gain is avoided. We are prepared to receive such gifts into our securities account through December 27, 2005 in order that you might receive your income tax charitable contribution deduction for the full fair market value of your gift in 2005. Please consult with your tax advisor and contact us at info@lcciministry.org for more information and to complete the transfer.

Thank you, Mary Ellen!

Over the past four years, Mary Ellen Chamberlin has participated in the Level 1 Training weekends through teaching and serving as a small group facilitator. She has also been in private practice with Dr. Bill Clark during these past several years.

Mary Ellen will now be moving to Colorado Springs, CO and will be working in private practice. She shares, “I have so enjoyed my time with LCI and learn something new each time that I have been involved in the Level 1 and 2 training sessions. There is such a need for people to learn how to come alongside others.” We are grateful for Mary Ellen's life and ministry and pray for a smooth transition to her new home and ministry.



Mary Ellen Chamberlin

Your Feedback:

We welcome your comments, questions, or suggestions regarding LCI and this newsletter! Please email LCI at our new email, info@lcciministry.org. We have a need for a photographer for the newsletter so if you enjoy taking photos and would be interested in helping tell the story of LCI through pictures, please contact us.

Upcoming LCI Level 1 and Level 2 Training Dates:

Level 1 Training Dates:

January 27-28 and March 10-11, 2006
Bethany Community Church in Laurel, MD

Level 2 Training Dates:

Beginning January 9, 2006



Barbara Giuliano

Lay counseling, like parenting, is an enormous responsibility; but it is an even greater privilege.

The Director's Couch



"Your Face Mirrors Your Heart"

(Proverbs 27:19 *The Message* by Eugene Peterson)

If I were to respond to this verse I would have to say I am in trouble! Not just one person, but many, have suggested that I should counsel with a paper bag over my face. My children, years ago, used to tell me I yelled at them with my eyes. Evidently, my body and mind work very well together. The reflections of my thoughts, reactions, and feelings are right out there for all to see. However, what about my heart? Is my face truly a mirror of my heart? What a piercing question for every believer. It is particularly penetrating for a lay counselor. Sometimes, in the midst of the enigma of suffering and trying to find out why a good God allows so much pain, the lay counselor is the only heart a suffering soul is relying on.

Recognizing this profound responsibility, as well as privilege, took me awhile and when I did I was overwhelmed! It paralleled parenting. I can remember the joys of wanting a baby, and the thrill of the arrival of each of my daughters. I also remember the incredible fear that went through my mind and body when I realized I was the primary caregiver to each of these teeny-tiny little souls. Immediately, I became "nurturingly challenged!"

Unfortunately, as a lay counselor, there was not the same immediate fear and known responsibility for a soul. I did have fear, but it was much more selfish. I thought about doing this counseling stuff right! There was probably a multitude of ways God called me to see this tremendous responsibility but there were three specifics that got my attention.

The first was the privilege of counseling a woman who suffered with lupus. When she came to see me, her disease was in remission, she was pregnant and was medically advised to abort the baby and if she did not there was a good possibility she would die. I felt like this was one of the times I needed a paper bag over my face. I looked at her with that "deer in the headlights" look and screamed internally, "God, please don't let her ask me what to do"? Guess what? She did. I cried and said, "I don't know what to tell you." The responsibility was overwhelming! With my supervisor's and pastor's help, I began to realize the privilege my tears were and a reflection of what my heart felt. This was more significant than *all* the counseling stuff.

The second specific that drew my attention to the responsibility may appear less traumatic in our human eyes. In God's eyes I pray it is equally significant. I had been meeting with a young woman for a long time, so



long, that rather than meeting at the church, we met for coffee. She had struggled with a marriage filled with harm and a boat load of questions for God. I was extremely surprised when one morning, while sitting across from her, she looked directly at me and said, "I want to know the God you know!" I'm not sure anyone has ever said that to me before or since, in such a direct manner. What a privilege! What a responsibility! Immediately the questions flooded my mind? Does she see, really see the God I know? Do I really see the God she thinks I know? What is God doing? Many more questions flooded my mind. As I relayed this event to my supervisor, who happened to be Dr. Bill Clark, he replied with three brief words, "That surprises you?"

Bill kept the focus on me and on God. Bill emphasized the person I was in Christ, free and growing. He focused on how I could know my own heart and how my face (with or without the paper bag) was a mirror. Therefore, I would have to emphasize that Supervision was the third way, repetitiously, that God called my attention to the responsibility of having impact for Him.

Lay counseling, like parenting, is an enormous responsibility; but it is an even greater privilege. We can have impact on a suffering soul! The impact has less to do with knowing something about getting through a troubled marriage, or even what it has been like to be abused, or how to deal with teenage maladies, or even what it means to lose a loved one. Rather, significant impact comes as we struggle with the enigma of suffering with another for the sake of *their* soul!

Barbara Giuliano is a co-founder of LCI and has been a lay counselor for over 15 years.

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.