

Christian Counseling Ministries of WNY, Inc.

910 Union Road, West Seneca, NY 14224

NEWSLETTER

674-6747

SUMMER 1999

Dr. Timothy P. Chambers, Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

Christian Counseling Ministries is committed to providing professional counseling services within a Biblical framework to the individual, the family, the church Body and the community. We will extend God's love in the emotional and spiritual healing of individuals in order to equip them to become more Christ-like in their personal, professional and public lives.

CONFESSIONS OF A CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR

I heard news of a former client of mine whom I had counseled ten years ago. Her problem had been real, and so had been her healing to the point where her marriage grew and a ministry was born as a result. But when I heard that she was divorced, I wept. I couldn't help but wonder, **"Is a Biblical model for counseling any different from a secular model?"** I couldn't help but ask, "Should I stay in this profession?"

But then I remember the other lives.....the man with severe learning disabilities who didn't have the capacity to discuss his feelings or understand his wife's heart. He called me one day crying in despair, "I don't know what to do but I want to love my wife." I had little hope. Two years passed and his wife told me of a night, in the quietness of their own home, when he apologized for his failure and wept over his stubbornness. That was the door God needed. **God requires more than insight. His way has always been clear, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart." (Psalm 51:17)**

Is Christianity big enough to deal with the totality of this picture? I would say, "yes." Not just "yes" with reluctance, but "yes" with the resounding sense that Christianity bears the full weight of reality in ways that are beyond the reach of secular thinking.

All you have to do is listen to Oprah discuss the Columbine killings. Her "expert" assumed the murderers were basically good kids gone array and "were never allowed to cry as children." Is there not something in your heart that screams out, **"NO, THE PROBLEM IS BIGGER THAN YOU THINK!"** The Columbine killers

were misdiagnosed and because they were misdiagnosed, the cure was not big enough. It's easier to hope that they are "basically good" because then the cure is manageable. **But it takes courage to look in the eye of evil and know that what is required is radical redemption.** The Bible does not turn a blind eye to sin. Page after page it spells out the reality and comprehensiveness of rebellion and evil and it screams for the need of a Savior who is powerful enough to uproot it, turn it over, and spit it out. **No other model has the courage to deal with man's utter depravity while recognizing the beauty of man's dignity.**

This same Bible says, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." (Genesis 1:31); and "God looked on the earth and behold it was corrupt...and behold, I am about to destroy them." (Genesis 6:12,13)

Is there not a sense of relief that there is a God who will deal strongly with evil? Does it not increase your respect for God to think He is powerful enough to look through our shallow excuses for sin and call us to account? And are you not humbled to the core to think that He can hold the truth of our depravity, while offering us redemption? The secular models of counseling that offer hope through man's own potential alone seem insipid in comparison.

No other model is rooted in the person of Jesus. All secular models can offer is principles and formulas: Count to ten before you speak; Do some reflective listening; "I hear what you're saying." These techniques may be helpful and certainly have value, but they are not enough. They may even help us rearrange our foolishness, while doing nothing to uproot our self-centeredness.

What is more quenching: to count to ten before getting angry; or to discover you have springs of living water that come from a heart radically transformed by Christ?

Which is the greater motivation: To love and learn reflective listening in order to get your spouse to love you better, or, to love no matter what because you have been impacted by the endurance, faithfulness and sacrifice of Christ?

God will not be mocked. He will dismantle every false structure, technique and formula until there is authentic change through His Son. (Con't on back)

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ALL GIFTS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.**

No other model offers hope when all other signs point to despair. And what of the apparent failures? I look at those who have fallen in ways that are grandiose and harmful to the kingdom of God. I look at those who continue to sin, fall, and sin again. Is God not implicated? Has his success rate been diminished? Has His reputation been damaged? We need only look at Peter the betrayer, Paul the accuser, David the adulterer, Moses the hothead. **It is one act of repentance at a time that sanctifies a man. Who am I to say real redemption can only happen on the first try?** Who am I to brand someone a failure when they have failed 7X7 times? If God offers hope, who am I to offer less? I find encouragement from Jesus' words to Peter in anticipation of His betrayal: "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail, and when you have returned AGAIN, strengthen your brother."

Jesus' own prayer did not prevent Peter from betraying Christ. Peter failed big time...not once, not twice, but three times! **But Christ offered Peter a vision that was bigger than the sum of his parts. Christ offered hope rooted in His own sacrifice, not Peter's potential.** He encouraged Peter not by attributing positive characteristics that Peter did not possess, but by looking through Peter's sin to the cross. **This kind of hope surpasses the shallowness of a hope that looks at life through rose colored glasses. It is a hope drenched in reality and rooted in Jesus Christ. It is a hope that is enduring.** And that's why I stay in this profession.

(Submitted by Mrs. Laurie (Fitzgerald) Muscato, who has been a counselor with CCM for 10 years.)

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WE WELCOME MR. NORM KAHLER

We are excited about the addition of Mr. Norm Kahler to our CCM staff. Mr. Kahler will be working primarily at our Lockport location and is interested in developing another site in Niagara County. He received his Masters degree in counseling from the University of Buffalo and brings a rich background of experience, including the Peace Corps, Wycliffe Bible Translators and Barker Central Schools.

NEW Sign

CcM has a new sign at our main location in west seneca. Thank you to peter perrello, A FAITHFUL SUPPORTER OF CCM who donated HIS TIME AND materials to make this much needed contribution.

UNITED WAY

Don't forget to designate Christian Counseling Ministries as recipient of your United Way gift through the Donor Choice Option. Make your choice count!