

# QuietWaters

C O M P A S S

May 2010, Volume 15, Number 1

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

A Quiet Place

Spiritual Formation

Intensives

**"The Lord is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down  
in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters.  
He restores my soul."**

**Psalms 23:1-3**

R E N E W I N G C H R I S T I A N L E A D E R S



The *QuietWaters Compass* is published twice annually as a free, educational service of QuietWaters Ministries and the Bethesda Foundation, Inc. a nonprofit organization. QuietWaters Ministries mission is to renew, restore, and strengthen Christian leaders and their families. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the QuietWaters Ministries, its personnel or trustees. Material contained in this publication is not intended as a substitute for the professional assistance you can receive from a pastor, counselor, or health care provider. Requests for permission to reprint articles should be directed to the editor at the address below.

## 4 | A Quiet Place

*by Jim Schlottman*

## 8 | Spiritual Formation

*by L. Lee McDowell*

## 11 | Intensives: Drawing a Deeper Well

*by David L. Ragsdale*

10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

**CEO/Executive Director:** Jim Schlottman  
**Director of Counseling:** Dave Ragsdale  
**Director of Donor Care:** Linden Kirby  
**Administrative Assistant:** Stacie Johnson  
**Editor:** Mary Ann Jeffreys  
**Cartoonist:** Tim Walburg  
**Graphic Designer:** Steve Riecks

**Board of Trustees:**  
 Ray Pittman, President  
 Keith McDonald, Vice President  
 Joe Gossack, Secretary/Treasurer  
 Bhaskar Das  
 Glenn Dykstra  
 Vince Fesmire  
 David O'Brien  
 Harold Seerveld  
 Meindert Bosch, Emeritus  
 Earl Lammers, Emeritus

### **Prayer Team (local):**

Vi Sjaardema, Leader  
 Nancy Bierling  
 Pat Gossack  
 Laurie Mall  
 Gene Meerdink  
 Jan Pittman  
 Marge Rozendaal  
 Kathy Shandro  
 Duane Sjaardema  
 Carol Tamminga  
 Larry Walton  
 Irma Zwart

### **Finance and Investment Committee:**

Joe Gossack, Secretary/Treasurer, Chair  
 Vince Fesmire  
 Gene De Kruif, Advisor  
 Ray Pittman  
 Tom Whitten

We welcome your contribution toward the cost of this publication, as well as your comments, questions, articles and suggestions.

### **Write to:**

The QuietWaters Compass  
 9185 East Kenyon Avenue, Suite 150  
 Denver, CO 80237

**Phone:** (303) 639-9066

**E-mail:** [info@QWaters.org](mailto:info@QWaters.org)

### **Internet Web Page:**

<http://www.QWaters.org>

© Copyright 2010  
 by the Bethesda Foundation, Inc.  
 All rights reserved.

# Distinctives and Awakenings

from the Director *Jim Schlottman*



With this issue we are introducing you to the new QuietWaters Retreat experience. Our former retreat site—the donated private home of a doctor and his wife—served hundreds. We continue our tradition of providing a safe place, a resting place where renewal can take place, with our new retreat site: a beautiful, spacious home that is already welcoming pastors and missionaries.

The scene on the cover of this issue represents what you will see around the new QuietWaters Retreat. Deer regularly visit the Retreat property. As you know, our name comes from the last words of the second verse of Psalm 23. With our new Retreat location, we can appropriately use the entire verse. “He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters.”

The Jack and Jill nursery-school rhyme will take on new meaning as you read David Ragsdale’s article in this issue of *Compass*. He introduces you to what he calls the Distinctives of Counseling Intensives, which can help you better understand what you will experience at a QuietWaters Retreat.

Dave describes these seven Distinctives of Counseling Intensives: Accelerated Change, Redemptive Focus, Seasoned Counselors, Integrated Treatment, Systems Oriented, After Care, and the Experiential Context.

In his article he points out that the first difference between traditional therapy and intensive counseling is not just the amount of time but the way this time is structured. He also reminds us that the QuietWaters counselors bring over twenty-five years of clinical experience to the Intensive process and have direct experience with the challenges of leadership.

Dave answers a question that I’m often asked by those inquiring about our program: It is both clinically competent and biblically grounded.

Lee McDowell’s article, “Spiritual Formation: Being Formed in the Image of Christ from the Inside Out,” introduces Lee as our new spiritual director. As she tells her personal story, you’ll begin to find yourself relating to her experience on some level. Lee introduces you to a new element of our Counseling Intensives—spiritual formation. As a participant in a Leadership Counseling Intensive, you will have the opportunity to meet with a spiritual director to help you in your personal formation.

Lee also shares about her major “spiritual awakening,” revealing to her the depth of God’s transformative love for her. That sharing introduces you to the opportunity you have for a “spiritual awakening,” which is a purpose of our spiritual-formation programs.

These outstanding programs are provided in our new QuietWaters Retreat. ■



For information about becoming a member of The Renewal Circle in support of this ministry, please call 1-866-5-WATERS.

For additional information, contact QuietWaters Ministries in one of the following ways:

Toll Free: 1-866-5-WATERS

Fax: 303-300-6773

E-mail: [info@QWaters.org](mailto:info@QWaters.org)

Website: [www.QWaters.org](http://www.QWaters.org)



“He leads me beside quiet waters.”  
Psalm 23:2

Internet Web Page: [www.QWaters.org](http://www.QWaters.org)

# A Quiet Place

by Jim Schlottman

Throughout Jesus' ministry He would often go to a "quiet place" to get away from the crowds, to rest.

*"Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a **quiet place** and get some rest.'"* (Mark 6:31, niv)

Today, QuietWaters Ministries says, "Come with Jesus by yourself or with your spouse to a **quiet place** and get some rest."

In our first years, QuietWaters Ministries' "quiet place" was the home of a doctor and his wife. It was there, in a homelike retreat setting, that we conducted our Leadership Counseling Intensives that renewed, restored, and strengthened literally hundreds of Christian leaders. The donated use of that beautiful home provided a "quiet place" for serving for nine years.

When we looked forward, we realized that a new dedicated "place" would be critical in order for us to meet future challenges and opportunities. So with God's guidance we set out to find just the right "place."

*"Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.'"*

(Mark 6:31, niv)

Today, QuietWaters Ministries says, "Come with Jesus by yourself or with your spouse to a quiet place and get some rest."

After a two-year search, God blessed QuietWaters Ministries with a new "quiet place" for pastors, missionaries, and other Christian leaders. The official opening was February 1, 2010. It is a quiet place, a retreat, where they can go for rest, to pray, and to be counseled.

Accept my invitation to experience this new QuietWaters Retreat as I describe the many amenities and comforts it provides.

## Virtual Tour

When you drive up the road to the Retreat, you will see a spacious brick home situated on a hill and surrounded by an iron fence with several large ponderosa pines framing the home. You drive up the circular drive and stop under the portico.

As you go through the front door of the Retreat, you enter the foyer, you see in front of you an etched door depicting pinecones from the ponderosa pines on the property that leads you into the Mount Evans room. You are greeted by your host couple, who will serve you delicious meals and provide warm hospitality throughout your stay.

As you turn to enter the Longs Peak room, you look up at the moss-rock fireplace that travels up two stories to the ceiling. As your eyes move down to the flickering fire, they come upon the large oil painting hanging against the moss rock. In muted earthen tones it depicts a boat sitting quietly on the water. As you take this all in, you know you have entered the QuietWaters Retreat.

*(Continued on page 6)*







Recently when I called the Retreat to talk to one of our guests, he said that he and his wife had been sitting in the massage chairs, relaxing. Yes, two massage chairs sit in a corner of the lower level. You pass them on your way to the large sectional or the four recliners, or as you make your way to the prayer chapel to meditate and pray. In the chapel, a quilted cross hangs on the wall, inspiring reflection. Going around the corner, you'll find the fitness center; after a workout, check out the hot tub, which is just through the double French doors on the outside patio.

Back on the main floor as you pass through the Longs Peak room, you enter the kitchen and hearth room. The kitchen is a welcoming place with a large island where some of your meals will be served buffet style. If there's a chill outside, after a meal you may want to sit in one of the leather wingback chairs that are positioned in front of the hearth-room fireplace. On a warm day you may want to wander out through the French doors in the hearth room to the private patio with its Adirondack chairs.

Your counseling or spiritual direction sessions will take place in the Pikes Peak Library, so named for its views of the beautiful mountain. After your sessions you may want to write in your journal sitting at the Craftsman desk that is positioned to look directly at the Peak.

Next to the Pikes Peak Library is the comfortable Mount Evans room with a fireplace and a soft leather couch

After a two-year search, God blessed QuietWaters Ministries with a new "quiet place" for pastors, missionaries, and other Christian leaders. The official opening was February 1, 2010. It is a quiet place, a retreat, where they can go for rest, to pray, and to be counseled.

and two overstuffed leather chairs. Since the Retreat is at six thousand feet above sea level, we recommend that you drink a lot of water, so bottles of water are in the small refrigerator located in this room.

Up the spiral staircase from the Longs Peak Room are the bedrooms. One is reserved for your host couple, and you

can select one of the others that appeals to your style of decorating. You can choose because you will be the only guest couple during your stay. We specialize in individual/couple therapy. So in keeping with that purpose we work with only one couple/individual at a time.

Throughout your stay you'll observe deer grazing on the property. You can sit on the large deck off the dining room to watch or you can wander around the almost three acres of property and sit on a bench by a large ponderosa pine. You may choose to take a hike on the three-mile trail that travels through the twelve acres of open space just beyond the Retreat property.

I don't want to forget that if you are spending Retreat time during the summer, you can always take a dip in the swimming pool. And in the near future we hope you can spend some quiet time in the authentic railroad caboose when donations enable its refurbishment.



## Open Door Campaign

God blessed us with this new Retreat, but He has also called upon us to secure the funds to pay for the home. We are securing the funds through what we are calling the Open Door Campaign. The economic conditions permitted us to purchase the home at almost half its value. Through much prayer, our board was led to proceed with the purchase and trust the Lord to provide the funds through all those who are prompted by God to give from the resources God has provided them.

God has already provided the furniture through Furniture Row furniture company and all the paint through Diamond Vogel Paints. Is God prompting you to participate in this great opportunity to provide for Christian leaders like yourself? If so, please give me a call, send me an email, or drop me a line. My contact information is elsewhere in this issue.

## Where the Retreat Fits

Now that you have gotten a feel for what it's like to stay at the QuietWaters Retreat, I want to take some time to talk about the ministry that has brought you to this relaxing place, since the Retreat is only the vessel in which we conduct our ministry. So although we have been provided with such a beautiful place, it is the ministry that takes place within the

The surroundings of the Retreat provide the ideal setting for processing all that takes place in a therapy session. The Leadership Counseling Intensive creates a dynamic that makes possible the beginning of real transformational growth in the couples'/individual's life.

walls that is what we are about and what is most important.

That ministry that is conducted at the Retreat is our Leadership Counseling Intensive program. The Leadership Counseling Intensive is, as the name implies, an intensive amount of time spent with an Intensive-trained therapist. With fifteen to twenty hours of focused therapy taking place over a one- to two-week span, core issues can be uncovered and explored.

The surroundings of the Retreat provide the ideal setting for processing all that takes place in a therapy session. The Leadership Counseling Intensive creates a dynamic that makes possible the beginning of real transformational growth in the couple's/individual's life.

Read Dave Ragsdale's article "Intensives: Drawing from a Deeper Well" for further understanding of intensive counseling.

A feature that has been added to our Leadership Intensive Counseling experience is time with a spiritual director. Over the years it has become evident that many who come to address an issue in their ministry have a weak spiritual walk. In addition to Christ-centered counseling with a licensed therapist, we are helping to strengthen the spiritual walk of those who come to the Retreat. Time for spiritual reflection can help to chart a path for future spiritual growth. Everyone participating in a Leadership Counseling Intensive will have the opportunity to spend this special time with one of our spiritual directors.

We are also making available Spiritual Direction Retreats for those who want to spend more time in developing their spiritual walk. Jesus taught us the importance of getting away to a "quiet place." Are you following His teaching?

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.* (Mark 1:35, niv) ■



# Spiritual Formation

## Being Formed in the Image of Christ from the Inside Out

by L. Lee McDowell

When my late husband, Clyde McDowell, was called to the presidency of Denver Seminary, he envisioned a much needed radical change in the way men and women are prepared for Christian ministry. Having experienced burnout himself and having witnessed his friends, mentors, and parents leaving ministry for reasons including burnout, irreconcilable conflicts, and infidelity, Clyde realized that something new or perhaps “old” was needed. The long-held emphases on “knowing” the truth and “doing” ministry had not satisfied the soul.

Toward that goal, Clyde introduced spiritual formation into the curriculum of the seminary to provide a focus on the development of men and women from the inside out (“until Christ is formed in you,” Galatians 4:19) instead of from the outside in as had been the focus throughout the modern period. Attention to such spiritual formation is a focus that QuietWaters has now introduced into its Counseling Intensives so that ongoing formation in Christ happens from the inside out for all attendees.

### Spiritual Formation vs. Rationalism

Many have offered definitions of spiritual formation in the past twenty years of its resurgence in the evangelical church. Pastoral couple Gordon and Gail MacDonald, when speaking about spiritual formation at Bethel Seminary, emphasized that genuine spiritual formation consists of spiritual

The task of spiritual formation is to reintegrate the human person so that the interior, deeply felt and spiritually centered core—the soul—is reflected more and more in the exterior self lived out every day.

awakenings that take us to a deeper level of our being. It offers a heightened awareness of the interior stirrings of one’s being. It also can bring the fragmented pieces of our existence into harmony with God’s will for us. The result is a renewed self, stripped of familiar defense mechanisms that keep us protected from, usually unconscious, threats to our sense of security. However, these same defensive strategies also insulate us from the love of God, which casts out all fear.

James Houston, professor of spiritual theology at Regent College in Vancouver, B.C., has attributed the dissatisfaction of the soul experienced by many Christians to the teachings of the Father of Modern Philosophy, René Descartes. Descartes’ simple formula, “*Cogito ergo sum*” (“I think, therefore I am”), defines the human person as primarily a rational being. The Enlightenment further reinforced the thinking self and promoted the development of individualism and its focus on one’s capacity to perform (do).<sup>1</sup> The consequence of this

philosophy is that we have not been encouraged to become authentic persons. Houston defines the individual as someone created by self, focused on self, who has the goal of self-sufficiency and does not sense a need for grace. On the other hand, a person who is created in the image of God, who relates to God and others authentically, is free of self and accepts grace, which touches the person’s deepest core. Rationalism led to a minimizing of feelings and dulled spiritual sensitivities, in essence a disintegrative process of separating our heads from our hearts from our hands. The task of spiritual formation is to reintegrate the human person so that the interior, deeply felt and spiritually centered core—the soul—is reflected more and more in the exterior self lived out every day.

### Ministry Can Undermine the Soul

In the past a Christian was often described simplistically as one who “doesn’t smoke, drink, or dance.” Today a Christian is more likely to be described as “someone who does ministry.” Certainly preparation to serve Christ and his kingdom is the focus of both Christian higher education and church programs. And yet how easy it is to fall prey to Oswald Chamber’s, author of *My Utmost for His Highest*, frequent admonition, “the greatest competitor of devotion to Christ is service for Him.”



Eugene Peterson tells the story that occurred just days before his ordination. He was traveling with a pastor friend, and when stopped at a gas station, his friend was asked, "What do you do?" His friend responded, "I run a church." Peterson goes on to say:

*Behind my back, while my pastoral identity was being formed by Gregory, Bernard, Luther, Calvin... Jonathan Edwards, John Henry Newman..., the work of the pastor had been almost completely secularized (except for Sundays). I didn't like it and decided, after an interval of confused orientation, that being a physician of souls took priority over running a church, and that I would be guided in my pastoral vocation by wise predecessors rather than by contemporaries.<sup>2</sup>*

Behind the façade erected by our defenses and the busyness of doing ministry, the authentic self easily vanishes. If you were to go on a three-day retreat of absolute silence, solitude, and a fast from all technology, what would it be like to face the inner emptiness without an audience or action? Would we be afraid to "be" if we don't know what our "being" is?

## Who Am I, Really?

Soon after Clyde was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, we found ourselves embarking on an eight-week forced retreat. We lived in another city, in a small borrowed apartment with no work or outside commitments except Clyde's daily, Monday through Friday, fifteen-minute radiation

**We may assert a doctrinal truth, e.g., God loves me, without it's having much impact on our lives. But once a truth is realized and embraced by both the head and the heart, it's transformative powers are released.**

therapy. Cell phones were not ubiquitous, and email was not yet the preferred means of communication. Being more than a thousand miles from family, friends, and ministry colleagues gave us an opportunity to discover if "being Christian" had greater meaning for us than "doing Christian." Long walks in a beautiful park and on the beach opened our hearts to the truth the ancient Christian spiritual masters knew: "Creation is the doorway to the soul." As we gradually let go of our former lives of important appointments to keep, sermons to preach, and meetings to lead, we encountered God, ourselves, and each other in new ways.

One day after we had returned home but continued the "retreat" due to Clyde's declining health, I opened my Day-Timer, only to realize I had no appointments the entire week. With one exception. And that one was fixed in my brain because it would reveal the success or failure of current medical treatment. As I

stood there staring at the empty pages, I experienced a small spiritual awakening. I realized that subconsciously I had lived as though God loved me, or at least loved me more than he otherwise would, because of all the things I did for him. But with the opening of my heart and the enlivening of my soul in the midst of our pain, I knew deeply within me that God just loved me. This is the distinction C. S. Lewis made between believing a doctrine and realizing it. We may assert a doctrinal truth, e.g., God loves me, without it's having much impact on our lives. But once a truth is realized and embraced by both the head and the heart, it's transformative powers are released. This was happening as we practiced, not intentionally but by virtue of the illness, the interior spiritual disciplines of silence, stillness, solitude, and *lectio divina*.

## Transformed by God's Love

You might ask, what is *lectio divina*, or divine reading? It is a form of Christian meditation on Scripture developed in the Middle Ages to help one hear God in his Word. As Clyde lost his ability to read, I read the Scriptures slowly to both of us, not even realizing we were practicing the art of listening deeply with the "ears of our hearts." That is, until the Lord's still small voice in his Word began touching my heart more deeply than ever before.

*(Continued on page 10)*

Jonathan Edwards, the great eighteenth-century New England preacher, said,

*I am bold in saying this, but I believe that no one is ever changed, either by doctrine, by hearing the Word, or by the preaching or the teaching of another, unless the affections are moved by these things.... In a word, there never is any great achievement by the things of religion without the heart being deeply affected by those things.*<sup>3</sup>

Near the end of Clyde's life as we were out on our last "date" together, a brief dinner at a nearby restaurant, I experienced a major spiritual awakening, revealing to me the depth of God's transformative love for me. That experience, of which I have previously written and condensed below, revealed to me the dramatic change from who I had been to who God was making me to be.

Looking back at my life, as a psychotherapist and trained spiritual director, I see that I routinely experienced fear disproportionate to my circumstances. My father, whom I love dearly, was my able teacher. His life is a paradox of risk-taking entrepreneurial endeavors and fear-motivated self-protective defenses. Thankfully, I am also endowed with his risk-taking spirit.

This was most clear when I lived as an exchange student in Brazil where my conversion to Christ occurred. As a lonely teenager far from family and friends, I became aware of the loving

protective presence of my heavenly Father. I was amazed that I felt so secure and peaceful, even when sick or confronting potential danger. In the childlikeness of my young faith lived the truth John wrote in his first epistle, "There is no fear in love.... Perfect love drives out fear" (4:18).

However, after my return to the United States, graduation from a Christian college, and responding to God's call to serve with Clyde in pastoral ministry, fear came to visit again, this time finding a home. Amid the uncertainties of life and the grown-up responsibilities of being a wife, mother, and ministry partner, I lost the intimacy of the Love that had found me in Brazil and freed me to live unafraid. I, like my father and our first parents, Adam and Eve, sought to secure my well-being through control. I perfected perfectionism, not in the moral sense, but in that neurotic sense, which drives the illusion that one will be loved and win approval when one performs to others' expectations or for their pleasure.

Some years ago after driving Clyde to the airport for his sixth missionary trip to India, I was half way home when I suddenly realized that in reaction to subconscious fear, I had planned his funeral. I knew there was real danger on these trips, but my reaction was out of proportion to any known threat. The Holy Spirit graciously showed me the freedom the Enemy had over my heart and mind to provoke such fear.

I have found help through Ignatius of Loyola's, author of the *Spiritual Exercises*, understanding of that which separates us from God. He framed sin as less an act of rebellion than the consequence of not knowing and deeply trusting God's love for us. Our sinful behaviors stem from not deeply trusting God's love and that his will for our lives is better than anything we can fathom.

Paradoxically, during the time Clyde's brain tumor was a grave threat to his life, we felt enveloped with God's presence. It was indeed a mystery and wonderful grace. I discovered the intimate connection between being still, waiting, and loving. When on our last date, three weeks before Clyde's death, I said to him, "I don't know if God is yet going to heal you or take you home to himself, but if he takes you home, tell him that I love him. I know that he knows, but please tell him anyway." For a moment as I listened to myself speak, I thought I might be crazy, but soon I realized I was now confronting that great fear of a few years earlier and finding in its place Love.

What occurred then and continues today is an ongoing formation of my soul from the inside out, with continuing spiritual awakenings as our Lord forms his image in me. ■



L. Lee McDowell, MA

*L. Lee McDowell, MA, is a Spiritual Director at QuietWaters Ministries and a mentor and life coach.*

<sup>1</sup> James M. Houston, "Becoming a Theological Person in a Postmodernist World," *Conversations Journal* 1, no. 1 (2005), .

<sup>2</sup> Eugene Peterson, "Curing Souls: the Forgotten Art," *Leadership*, July 1, 1983, .

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Edwards quoted in a Denver Seminary class by Dr. Bruce Demarest, 2005.



# Intensives:

## Drawing from a Deeper Well

by David L. Ragsdale

### Jack and Jill ran up the hill...

When we recited this nursery-school rhyme, we all knew what happened next. After climbing the hill, Jack “fell down and broke his crown,” and his companion, Jill, came “tumbling after” him. Did he trip, slip, or get pushed? Was he trying to fetch a pail of water from someone else’s well? Was Jill passive aggressive, sabotaging Jack because she did not buy into his vision? Oh the deeper meanings a counselor seeks to find in these little rhymes we learned as children!

Like a parable of leadership, such are the hazards of Christian ministry! Climbs and falls, progress and setbacks. As well-intentioned leaders, we take to the hills of ministry only to become wounded in the journey. In a domino effect, those we take with us on our vision quest become collateral damage. A fall of some kind takes place with the key leader: collapsing from compassion fatigue, a moral or ethical failure, a marriage at risk, pushback from an organization resistant to change, and so forth. All produce negative ripple effects, putting key relationships at risk. As a result, a marriage is in jeopardy, a leader’s heart is on the line, and a church is in chaos as its followers *come tumbling after* the critical incident.

Leadership Counseling Intensives are designed to touch the heart of the Christian leader and revitalize his or her walk with God, enrich and redeem a marriage, strengthen a family, and impact the organization. They address the complexity and urgency in each case by engaging the leader in a deep-change process that is healing, redemptive, and transforming.

### HELP FOR THE WOUNDED

That’s when the call is made to QuietWaters Ministries. Strategic therapy, recovery time, and a healing context are all needed for the wounded, weary, or wayward. In the place where grace happens, hope will be offered to Reverend Jack and Leader Jill as well as their organization as they find timely help at a Counseling Intensive. They have come to the right well for refreshing water. One

denominational leader called with desperation in his voice saying,

*Our senior pastor has just collapsed. We knew he was long overdue for a sabbatical, but we were trying to wrap up our building program. He does not even know if he wants to stay in ministry, much less continue to serve this church. The church is growing anxious, and we need to say something to quell the gossip. What do we do? Can you take this wounded leader...yesterday?*

Leadership Counseling Intensives are designed to touch the heart of the Christian leader and revitalize his or her walk with God, enrich and redeem a marriage, strengthen a family, and impact the organization. They address the complexity and urgency in each case by engaging the leader in a deep-change process that is healing, redemptive, and transforming. As Director of Counseling since 2002, I have witnessed over 92 percent of leaders successfully return to their ministries renewed and restored. Over 95 percent of conflicted clergy marriages have experienced healing and reconciliation. The benefits of Counseling Intensives also show up in the organizations that their leaders serve. The majority of churches and sending organizations also recover well, restore unity, improve their care of

*(Continued on page 12)*

key leaders, and become increasingly missional after an Intensive. One ministry couple said,

*We have decided to stay at our church and finish our career there. After much anguish, prayer, and fasting, we were able to see the Lord's leading clearly. We are calling to let you know how much your ministry helped us through this critical process. Your encouragement and timely counsel were just what we needed. Our church is thrilled that we are staying.*

## SEVEN DISTINCTIVES OF COUNSELING INTENSIVES

What makes the difference in this type of counseling ministry? I will seek to answer that question by describing seven distinctives of Counseling Intensives.

### Accelerated Change

People often ask, "What is the difference between traditional therapy and intensive counseling?" The first difference is not just the amount of time but the way this time is structured. In traditional counseling a therapist meets a client weekly for one hour or less in a private-practice office for several weeks, months, or even years. Often, just when a counselee gets into the depths of the problem in a session, he or she returns to the stress of the job or the demands of the family, and the problem continues or escalates until the next week when one might achieve another hour of insight.

**In contrast to the typical fifty-minute hour, the intensive counseling approach is structured to achieve both rapid and lasting results by providing two to three hours of daily counseling over a five- to ten-day period. The depth and complexity of issues are addressed without the disruption of work schedules, family obligations, or other personal responsibilities. Our clients are able to go deep and stay focused, sustaining the intensity to accomplish the changes they long to make.**

In contrast to the typical fifty-minute hour, the intensive counseling approach is structured to achieve both rapid and lasting results by providing two to three hours of daily counseling over a five- to ten-day period. The depth and complexity of issues are addressed without the disruption of work schedules, family obligations, or other personal responsibilities. Our clients are able to go deep and stay focused, sustaining the intensity to accomplish the changes they long to

make. Obstacles are removed that often hinder the change process as clients are prone to remobilize defensive structures and repeat dysfunctional patterns between weekly sessions. There is a higher level of concentration and personal contemplation on core issues. In the midst of these benefits, leaders finally get the time they need to hear from God as individuals and as couples. We believe the transformational effects of the intensive approach are often comparable to at least six months of weekly traditional counseling. One ministry couple said,

*We wish we had known about Counseling Intensives earlier. We had tried traditional therapy before but with mixed results. We had lost hope that our marriage and ministry would survive. But we had real breakthroughs during our Intensive. After our time at QuietWaters we were able to sustain the progress we had made.*

### Redemptive Focus

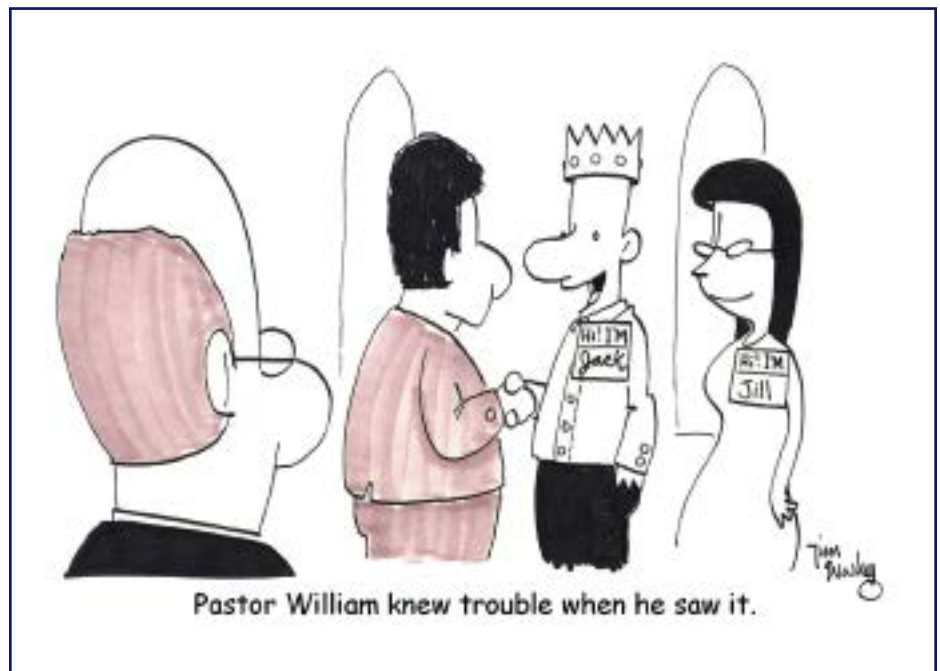
We recognize that a leader's heart has a direct impact on his or her ability to lead; therefore our counseling empowers leaders to confront core issues, navigate significant transitions, grow through crisis, and set a life-giving tone in their ministry context. Our counselors focus on recovery of heart and resiliency of spirit. Much more than competency development or organizational effectiveness, redemptive leadership is character and narrative driven. We believe the best leaders are wounded healers who will



leverage their lessons learned in the trenches of ministry. Hear what one leader wrote:

*Prior to our Intensive at QuietWaters. I had made a moral compromise. While it was not flagrantly immoral or unethical, it was enough to put a halt to my ministry and call my character into question. I had never pursued any help before even though I knew I needed it. The Intensive challenged me to face my vulnerability squarely and to learn a more interdependent style of relating with my spouse and other leaders. I am no longer afraid of my weaknesses and the dark side of my own story. I now trust that God will not waste my pain but uses it for his glory... especially in the messiness of my own issues and my ministry. This has fundamentally changed my approach to leading.*

The QuietWaters counseling team embraces the paradigm of “leading with a limp” as Dan Allender, PhD., has advocated in his book by the same title. This involves encouraging the leader to discover God’s redemptive purposes through suffering. The redemptive focus helps the leader fall forward. Leveraging their pain, they learn to live into the story God is telling through their lives and leadership. Embracing the divine crucible, they begin to reproduce new DNA in their relationships. The transformational effects are felt throughout their organizations. A refreshing authenticity becomes a catalyst for culture shifts, high trust, and a compelling witness to the gospel.



### Seasoned Counselors

*The very first session we had with our counselor gave me hope. We knew we were in the right place with the right therapist. Our situation was pretty complicated with a lot of turbulent history and trauma. Our counselor understood and diagnosed our condition with rare skill and empathy. We were able to relax, knowing we were in good hands. The counselor’s own story and leadership struggles enabled us to trust the process. This was no ivory-tower clinician; this was a real-life leader with sage wisdom.*

Our counselors bring over twenty-five years of clinical experience to the Intensive process. All members of our professional team have direct experience with the challenges of leadership. Along with their licensure and experience, most of our counselors are also ordained clergy as well. In contrast to the solo counselor,

QuietWaters Ministries uses a team-based approach to therapy, so each client is interviewed and paired with the counselor best suited to his or her particular needs. This sets the stage for an individualized treatment plan, the best context for therapeutic change and leadership renewal. Beyond the tools and techniques employed in Intensives, we believe the character of our counselors gives a spiritual depth to the process. Their own authentic relationship with God creates a high trust dynamic with our clients as they collaborate together in trusting God to make the Intensive a true success.

### Integrated Treatment

While some counseling that is called Christian gives token attention to the Bible and spiritual formation, our program is both clinically competent and biblically grounded.

*(Continued on page 14)*

Our counseling team is committed to therapeutic excellence with a rigorous integration of psychology and theology. Scripture is integrated throughout the Leadership Counseling Intensive process in order to blend psychological techniques into the client's spiritual growth and formation issues. The story of each leader's life is discerned within the meta-narrative God is scripting. Counselors share their own stories and utilize their own experiences, spiritual traditions, and knowledge of doctrine to encourage the client's faith development through the various stages of their leadership journey. After the Intensive, one reluctant leader said,

*I'm a bit old school and was skeptical about counseling. I found my fears were unfounded when our counselors asked if they could pray for us. Their use of Scripture was unlegalistically fresh but laserlike in its accuracy. I even walked away with some new ideas for a sermon series.*

### Systems Oriented

Engaging leaders within the context of their key ministry relationships, the Intensive process supports the organization the client serves with a systems-sensitive approach. Taking a wide-angle view, our counselors understand congregational problems are never rooted in one source only, but in patterns and dynamics that can be mapped across the entire organization. Tracking anxiety in the system, navigating triangles, understanding resistance, and confronting collusion, sabotage, and scapegoating are all in focus

Our counseling team is committed to therapeutic excellence with a rigorous integration of psychology and theology. Scripture is integrated throughout the Leadership Counseling Intensive process in order to blend psychological techniques into the client's spiritual growth and formation issues. The story of each leader's life is discerned within the meta-narrative God is scripting. Counselors share their own stories and utilize their own experiences, spiritual traditions, and knowledge of doctrine to encourage the client's faith development through the various stages of their leadership journey.

with a systems-oriented treatment plan. Our counselors see the entire spectrum of problems—from churches that specialize as “clergy killers” to narcissistic leaders who, like repeat offenders, have become “congregation killers.”

*After feeling beat up by our Board, we were worried the counselor would only see the issues as our responsibility. We came somewhat defensive. But the assessment our counselor conducted took all things into account. While we had to take a hard look at our contribution to the church's problems, we did not feel the spotlight was all on us. We left with some new tools for reengaging our leadership. Now we are seeing a system where everyone is starting to admit responsibility for the problems we must face together.*

In contrast to the blame-and-shame tactics that many lead pastors and church boards resort to, our Organizational Intakes give us a 360-degree view so that the Intensive process can address needed changes on every level. As the systems perspective is embraced, leaders learn to replace outdated analyses and narrow views with a balcony perspective of the entire dance floor of ministry.

Within the context of marriage and family counseling, our counselors also use the systems approach to address intergenerational patterns, family-of-origin themes, and the needs of the entire nuclear-family system. Sometimes this involves children, teenagers, and adult children in the Intensive when it is therapeutically appropriate.

### After Care

A needed discipline in any Intensive process is the continuity of care that leaders need after their time at QuietWaters. Seeking to reinforce our client's Growth Plan, we are intentional in our follow-up and want to see the



changes made in counseling continue. Our counselors conduct phone interviews within ninety days following an Intensive. Many clients elect to continue receiving support from our ministry with ongoing counseling, specialized training, or other forms of care and continuing education. We work diligently with other caregivers such as denominational leaders, supervisors, or Spiritual Care Teams to foster healthy reentry, high trust, real accountability, and sustained progress.

Intensives often result in requests for ongoing training in areas such as leadership development, team building, or conflict coaching. One staffer said,

*We should have done this five years ago while we were struggling with our new vision. This training could have spared us needless conflict. Thank God we are at least doing it now. We are all getting on the same page. I believe the best years are ahead of us.*

Another said,

*We have had nothing in place that would help us share a common approach to our conflicts. Understanding different approaches and the process of forming a covenant will help turn things around here at First Church.*

## Experiential Context

While we do talk a lot during Intensives, this is more than talk therapy. Intensives provide the perfect environment to use further education and creative processes that will foster new insights, improved behaviors, and emotionally corrective experiences. Our counselors draw from an array of tools and techniques to help clients

**An Intensive is God's crucible for transformational change. With the changes God is able to create, many will be blessed.**

**Jack and Jill will be back in ministry, climbing a new hill that he leads them to take. They will be wiser for the wear, stronger in the broken places, drawing from a deeper well, and ready to lead with a limp as redemptive leaders.**

assimilate what they are learning in a more experiential way. Recommended reading is targeted to each client's growth goals. Exercises and assignments may take the form of rituals, journaling prayer, communication skill building, media viewing, writing letters, or experiencing silence.

Away from sources of stress and demands of ministry in our lovely Colorado Retreat, our clients can begin the healing process, find renewal, and acquire tools for handling the stressors of life and ministry. There is ample opportunity to explore one's relationship with God and others while refocusing on mission and calling. Videos, DVDs, and books are available in our Retreat library to help foster new strategies for personal, marital, and organizational health in an individualized treatment plan. We are fortunate to provide Intensives in

one of the most beautiful places on the planet. The Denver area and the Colorado Rockies offer a great context for playtime and adventures that reinforce the client's recovery and overall health.

The focus on Jesus brings all things together in any Intensive setting. As each of the above seven dimensions is experienced in a Christ-centered manner, our hope for our clients is that they find not only rest, recovery, and renewal but a deeper sense of joy in their spiritual journeys. We trust that God will bring them out of the miry clay, place their feet on a rock of stability, and give them a new song with a great story to tell. The Psalm 40 Journey results in "many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord." What a testament to the ripple effect of God's grace through a leader's crisis. An Intensive is God's crucible for transformational change. With the changes God is able to create, many will be blessed. Jack and Jill will be back in ministry, climbing a new hill that he leads them to take. They will be wiser for the wear, stronger in the broken places, drawing from a deeper well, and ready to lead with a limp as redemptive leaders. ■



**David L. Ragsdale, LPC**

*David L. Ragsdale, LPC, is Director of Counseling and Leadership Renewal at QuietWaters Ministries.*

Quiet Waters Ministries  
9185 East Kenyon Avenue, Suite 150  
Denver, CO 80237

NON PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
DENVER CO  
PERMIT NO. 140



## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# QuietWaters



### QuietWaters Ministries

The leader in comprehensive ministries to pastors, missionaries and other Christian leaders and their families.



### QuietWaters Leadership Counseling Intensives

A one or two-week counseling program designed to create transformational change in a home-like retreat setting.



### QuietWaters Leadership Retreats

Family, marriage, and church leadership retreats with internationally recognized speakers to encourage and edify ministry couples and lay leaders.



### QuietWaters Ministry Assistance Program—CareLine

Professional and confidential, 24/7 phone consulting for pastors and other Christian leaders provided by contract to denominations and ministries.