



CONNECTING **A REVIEW OF SPECIFIC ISSUES**

Introduction

In *Connecting*, Larry Crabb indicates he concluded that the church, as a connecting community, provides a better means of addressing the wounds and struggles of life. He then presents his vision of establishing a healing community.

Concerns with Crabb's Position

In his work, Crabb's explanations and assumptions create concerns. Consider the following:

Finding Religion

Being is a professional therapist who indicates he now has "found religion" when he says, on the book's back dust jacket, "We have made a terrible mistake! For most of this century we have wrongly defined soul wounds as psychological disorders and delegated their treatment to trained specialists." He goes on to say that disconnected souls, rather than damaged psyches, are the problem. Therefore, "What we need is *connection!* What we need is healing community!" Because Crabb was one of the leaders of the professional therapist revolution, even perpetrating that agenda through his students, it is a matter of concern that he *now* knows the "truth." He then is calling us to the "healing relationships" that are found in the ordinary relationships of life (pp. xviii–xix).

However, on the inside flap of the front dust jacket, "we" is inclusive of "all Christians," not just therapists, when he says, "For decades now, we Christians have been abdicating our role as healers of soul-disease." He further states, in his Introduction (pp. xii–xiii), that he would be satisfied to continue doing what he has been doing for the past twenty-five years (being a professional therapist and training others to be professional therapists) but he *now* is helping the church become a connecting/healing community. Again, it is a matter of concern that he not only *now* knows the "truth" but *now* points the finger at "all" Christians for this mistake.

Creating a Healing Community

Crabb's current understanding of the healing potential of the church is admirable, but the church should never have been forfeited to professional therapists this "connecting" potential. However, the thesis of the book is based more upon theories and illustrations, with proof-texting from the Bible for support, than from sound biblical study. Conclusions based upon wrong assumptions *typically* do not provide the desired results, no matter how sincere the desire for these results might be!

Other than mentioning Ephesians 4:15–16 one time in his Introduction (p. xiii) to lift the word, "connecting," Crabb never again describes the outworking of his "connecting" idea directly from the Scriptures. He also addresses the New Covenant as the energizing force for the "connecting" community. However, again, Crabb never explains the passages addressing the New Covenant, using only proof-texts for his views.

Because a theological position, regarding the New Covenant in a connecting community, is a conclusion based upon study of relevant passages and because Crabb evidently did not do that study himself (at least not as revealed in this book), one should question the validity of his position. This is particularly true because other theological positions exist concerning the New Covenant and its outworking. Therefore, when Crabb uses a questionable scriptural base to come to conclusions for the church, one must obviously question those conclusions.

Crabb says he knows the “connecting” purpose of the church. But, knowing about a concept does not mean one understands the inner workings of that concept with sound biblical support. And, if Crabb’s theological positions are incorrect, then his conclusions are incorrect, just as he was incorrect twenty-five years ago concerning professional therapists. If the church is to be a “connecting/healing” community, *how* is it to accomplish that end? The fact that a problem is recognized does not in itself provide a correct solution, particularly if the underlying assumptions for addressing the problem are incorrect.

Conclusion

There is a better way. To understand the “connecting/healing” church requires extended study of Eph. 4:11–16, Heb. 10:24–25, Acts 2:42–47, etc., which would provide biblical insights into the proper functioning of the church, when it gathers, and the biblical applications would be apparent.

Connecting
Larry Crabb
Word Publishing
Nashville, Tennessee
Copyright © 1997

