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ISSUE: SUMMER 2010

Leadership *in Ministry*

LOST RIVER, WV

BOSTON, MA

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

in Ministry

2011: A Year of Transition

LIM founder and Coordinator Larry Matthews reflects on transitions for Leadership in Ministry Workshops

In this photo I'm seated in a rocking chair on the front porch of a farmhouse in the mountains of West Virginia. No, Jean and I haven't moved and, no, we still haven't decided when and where we will move from Vienna, VA. What I have decided is that 2010 is my last year to serve as Coordinator of the LIM workshops. Those of you who have been in the 2009 and 2010 workshops know that I have been in the process of choosing a date. When Bob Dibble said 'yes' to my request that he step up to the Coordinator position, that settled the date for me.

I am pleased that Bob will be our next LIM Coordinator. His first workshop was at Lost River, West Virginia in 1994, the 3rd year of LIM. He has participated every year since then. In 2001 he accepted the invitation to become a faculty coach and has served at each of the workshop sites. He is a committed student of BFST who continues to relate it to his



Lawrence E. Matthews

Continued next page

A year of transition, cont'd

For twenty years this has been a venture of faith. There is no organizational chart or official board or any other institutional structure . . . Our bond has been a shared commitment to a common goal: learning, practicing and teaching a different way of understanding 'leadership'

life and ministry. He is also an outstanding Christian educator who has served for 21 years as Minister to Adults at River Road Church, Baptist in Richmond, VA.

Bob is already in the process of contracting with retreat centers and beginning to line up faculty for 2011. When he asked me if I would be willing to continue to serve as a faculty coach, my answer was: "Let me know when you need me. I promise to think about it and respond appropriately." Which means after considering what's on my personal and family calendars for those dates!

Since 1991 when I founded LIM, twenty seven faculty coaches and the participants in each of our 60 workshops have joined me in making it possible. The relationships I have shared along the way have enriched my life and challenged my growth and I will always cherish them.

What about the future? No one of us knows what the future holds for LIM. I've learned from BFST and Ed Friedman that process determines outcome.

For twenty years this has been a venture of faith. There is no organizational chart or official board or any other institutional structure for Leadership in Ministry Workshops. A web site and an excellent newsletter have been our stack poles. Our bond has been a shared commitment to a common goal: **learning, practicing and teaching a different way of understanding 'leadership' through the process of differentiating a self - in our own lives first, then in our families, personal relationships and the larger communities and institutions in which we work and live.** I appreciate being a part of this venture.

Larry

Larry Matthews is founder and coordinator of the LIM workshops. He was a congregational minister for 42 years before his retirement, and served as faculty on Edwin Friedman's post graduate program for clergy. After twenty years with LIM this will be his "second retirement."

Once More Unto the Breach

LIM faculty member and new Coordinator Bob Dibble ponders about the transition and future of the Leadership in Ministry Workshops



Robert L. Dibble

is Minister to Senior Adults at River Road Church, Richmond VA. He has served on the faculty of LIM since 2001. Bob will become the Coordinator of Leadership in Ministry Workshops in 2011.

Bob Dibble

*“Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more; . . .
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility:
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger; . . .”*

These memorable lines from Shakespeare’s *King Henry* have flitted across my mind for more than a year now. Though I do not think of the leadership transition in which LIM finds itself now as “war,” it is a challenging time nonetheless. We know enough about the formidable forces of homeostasis in our own personal and professional lives to appreciate an innate resistance to such change.

But across my sixteen years of participation in LIM, I have come to the strong conviction that both individuals and organizations have the greatest potential for maturity and growth in the directions of health and wellness (you could also insert here: *toward greater differentiation of self*) through challenge. Such is the time in which we find

ourselves.

Who among us does not value highly the dream brought to reality in LIM? Larry’s vision of this affordable ministry for clergy and others is the direct result of his passion and wisdom and hard work across nineteen years. I, for one, didn’t want it to change. But when he approached me awhile back about stepping into the Coordinator’s role, there was, quite frankly, within me a powerful “life-wish” for LIM and its continuing. Was I intimidated at the prospects? ABSOLUTELY! But that was my stuff, and eventually more of my positive first-born traits overcame any fears and reservations (insert *anxiety* here) I had about succeeding Larry. Another realization also emerged that calmed my anxieties about this leadership transition; namely, that there were



Mindfulness

A resource for Self-differentiation

Carla Toenniessen

“Mindfulness provides a simple but powerful route for getting ourselves unstuck, back into touch with our own wisdom and vitality. It is a way to take charge of the direction and quality of our lives, including our relationships within the family, our relationship to work and to the larger world and planet, and most fundamentally, our relationship with our self as a person.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are*

Differentiation is the life-long process of striving to keep one's being in balance through the reciprocal external and internal processes of self-definition and self-regulation. . . .

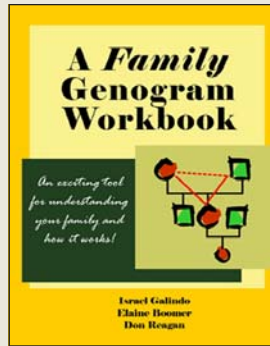
Edwin Friedman,
A Failure of Nerve

How does the saying go, “crisis as opportunity”? As a result of three recent medical emergencies in my family, one with my husband and two with my father, I have discovered mindfulness meditation as a resource for self-regulation, self-definition and connection. I had already been trying on mindfulness without even knowing it, as part of the “research project” of working on self and “staying in my own skin,” as Larry Matthews calls it. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn mindfulness is about paying attention to process—to what is happening inside a person and without—to practice awareness and to observe one’s experience, to be present and intentional with the stance of a learner. Mindfulness may seem simple, but it is not easy and it is a life-long project. Sound familiar?

The opposite of being mindful is being mindless, which occurs when anxiety increases and one gets carried away, even driven, by automatic thoughts and reactions. Along similar lines, in *A Failure of Nerve*, Ed Friedman distinguished between “cerebration” which he considers to be reactive and “thinking” which comes from “the differentiation of the thinker’s self.” (p.129)

According to the current brain research, thoughtful reflection and meditation help lower anxiety, promote right and left brain connectivity and assist access to the cortex, the higher ground, opening the way for creativity, imagination and insight to emerge. Slowing down, noticing one’s breathing, listening to the body, paying attention to senses and experiences are but a few ways to practice mindfulness and to self-regulate in order to get clearer about a well-defined response. The opportunity awaits. ♦

Carla Toenniessen is a family systems coach and practitioner. She has participated in the LIM Workshops at Lost River since 1998 and joined the faculty in 2008. Visit her website at <http://www.systemsjourney.com>



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by Israel Galindo,
Elaine Boomer, and
Don Reagan

\$16.00

ISBN 0-9715765-3-X

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Leadership In Ministry Scholarship Fund

It is no surprise that the present recession has increased requests for scholarship help. For the second year in a row, almost one-third of our 2009 registrants have been unable to register for the 2010 workshops—most of them due to budget cuts that either decreased or omitted continuing education funds. We may very well face a similar situation in 2011.

As we have noted in past newsletters, we will gladly receive contributions for this purpose. Individual and congregational gifts have enabled us to provide partial scholarships again this year.

We welcome gifts from individuals as well as congregations. Make checks out to “Leadership in Ministry Workshops” and note on the check or in an accompanying letter: “LIM Scholarship Fund”. ♦

LIM Faculty News

Leadership in Ministry Coordinator Larry Matthews was the guest presenter at the annual Healthy Congregations Leadership Series at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio. Two other faculty members have been presenters at the Healthy Congregation’s national conferences, Margaret Marcuson and Israel Galindo.

Former faculty coach Israel Galindo’s latest book, *Perspectives on Congregational Leadership: Applying Systems Theory for Effective Leadership* (Educational Consultants, 2010) has been named the Book of the Year by Healthy Congregations. Faculty member Marcuson’s book, *Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry* (Seabury, 2009) was similarly recognized in 2010. Congratulations to our LIM faculty authors! ♦



Sibling Position

LIM faculty member and author **Margaret Marcuson** writes about sibling position and staff relationships.

My younger brother told me recently that one of his most enduring childhood memories is chasing after me on his tricycle while I and my friends shot away from him on our bikes. What memories do you have of your siblings?

“Sibling position” is one of the eight foundational concepts of Bowen Family Systems Theory. Michael Kerr suggests that, for example, “a first born, all things being equal (as Dr. Bowen liked to say) is born into a different set of needs and expectations of the system than a second born.”

Over time, as we work on our own differentiation we can better manage the automatic responses we learn

from our functioning position in the family. Kerr himself says, “I’m less of a youngest than I used to be.” For me, this has to do with managing my over-functioning and being less bossy. I recognize that when my anxiety goes up, my irritability with the perceived underfunctioning (“irresponsibility!”) of others increases. I can now see it more clearly, and regulate it better, on a good day.

Many in ministry are oldest or only children. This can work well, to a degree. They know instinctively how to take charge and articulate a vision. Still, when the pattern becomes compulsive, it can be a problem. People at higher levels of differentiation will have a wider repertoire than those who are less mature.

Beth Norton, director of music at First Parish Church, Concord, MA and long-time workshop participant, notes that in a high-functioning staff like theirs, the sibling dynamics are a bit less important on an ongoing

basis. But, she says, at times of higher anxiety the patterns emerge more strongly: “It’s predictable who is going to be the caretaker, who are going to be the ones who underfunction when it gets really stressful, who are going to be the ones who try to take care of them and restore harmony, and who are going to go into a room and close the door.”

Here are some questions to consider:

*What is your sibling position in your family, and that of your parents?
How have your own siblings fared in life? Your aunts and uncles? What do you notice about how you function in your ministry role based on your sibling position? Can you try it another way, lightening up if you’re an oldest, or getting more serious if you’re a youngest, just for a day?* ♦

Rev. Margaret Marcuson is the author of *Leaders Who Last* (Seabury, 2009). Read her newsletter, *The Leadership Adventure* on her website margaretmarcuson.com



2011 Workshops:

MID-ATLANTIC
Lost River, WV

Workshop A Sessions

March 21—23
October 24—26

Workshop B Sessions

April 11—13
September 12—14

NORTHEAST, Newton, MA

May 16—18
October 10—12

WESTERN
Colorado Springs, CO

May 2—4
September 26—28

See our web site for registration information and updates. Call us for current space availability at these workshops.

Click here for a
registration form



Review of *Perspectives on Congregational Leadership*, by Israel Galindo

Margaret Marcuson

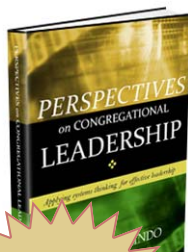
Galindo's latest book, *Perspectives on Congregational Leadership: Applying Systems Thinking for Effective Leadership*, offers in bite-sized segments his usual provocative perspective on pastoral ministry and congregational life.

The book can be read one short essay at a time, as I did when Galindo originally put them out as blog posts. Or it can be read in one sitting, as I also did on a recent plane trip. I found both to be valuable ways to take in his wisdom. He includes three major sections: "The Fundamentals" (of systems thinking), "Leaders and Leadership," and finally, "Congregations and Organizations."

Galindo always has stimulating titles: "Five Just Plain Wrong Notions about Leadership," "Maybe the Problem Is with You," "The Ten Best Ways to Ruin Your Staff." His content often challenges conventional wisdom: "Essential and developmental changes come about slowly in organizations, and they don't happen without a determined leader willing to be the positive deviant." "Few things get done without motivation, but I think it is a risky notion to believe that it is the responsibility of the leader in any organization to motivate others to action." Almost every page includes a thought-provoking sentence such as these.

Founded in his years of work with Bowen Family Systems Theory, in congregations and as an educator, Galindo brings a broad base of experience. He's a good writer, too. Don't miss this book.

Perspectives on Congregational Leadership: Applying Systems Thinking for Effective Leadership



Educational Consultants, 2009

ISBN 9780971576575

\$25.94 210 page. Available from Amazon.com

"Book of the Year"

"In this book Galindo combines in-depth insight into the basics of BFST and the theory's application to leadership, while always maintaining the vital connection between theory and practice." *Lawrence Matthews, Coordinator, Leadership in Ministry Workshops*

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Twenty Years in One Place: *An ending or a beginning?*



LIM faculty member Betty Pugh Mills reflects on her 20th anniversary as pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, VA

Betty Pugh Mills

Betty Pugh Mills

has served as pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, VA since 1997, and as Associate Pastor before then. She has been a participant at LIM since 1996 and joined the faculty in 2005. Betty is adjunctive faculty at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond

A colleague called me a week or so after my congregation and I had celebrated 20 years of ministry together on July 11, 2010. He said, “Well, what’s next for you?” I was intrigued that he thought that this particular marker along the journey of ministry might be a sign for me and maybe for my congregation, that it was time to think about transitioning. He joked with me about leaving on a high note, with everybody wanting more, and not outstaying my welcome. We talked at length and I appreciated his question and candor, for unlike the transitions of my first marriage ending in 2001 or my re-marriage in 2005, which invited great anxiety in the congregation, this celebration of 20 years of ministry together didn’t seem to me to be an anxious time for anyone.

His question surprised me, but it has also confirmed for me that I’ve got a few more years in this particular saddle with some things that I still want to do and a good sense that the ministry continues to be of interest to me and I can see indications of vitality in the congregation. Most days I wake up very pleased with how I spend my time, and very few days go by when I feel a total sense of despondency or disillusionment about church life, conflict issues, and the repeating of some of the patterns present in my congregational setting. I find ministry in this place and at this time, interesting, enjoyable, fascinating and even when it is hard and filled with waves of deep loss and grief, I am clear that it is meaningful work, challenging me and filling me with things that I value in this life.

I preached my “I Have a Dream” speech on the morning of July 11. It was nothing new, just a reminder of what I think I am supposed to be doing and what I think they are supposed to be doing. Sometimes I feel like a broken record, and my guess is that the congregation thinks the same on occasion, but I don’t know any other way to help guide and empower a congregation as it moves forward,

“There are no guarantees in this life and especially in this sort of journey, but I feel a little looser in the saddle when the end is not quite in view and knowing I am riding side by side with friends.”

Continued from previous page.

celebrating their resiliency, their history and DNA and challenging them to work harder when growth is causing them pain some way. As the day concluded, I hoped that they went home feeling that they knew who their church was and what it was doing, how it would do it, and what the flavor of our ministry and mission would be. I hoped as well, that as I managed the flood of 20 years of memories, that, I too, would know who I was, what I was supposed to do as the leader, how I was to go about this work, and what it would mean to imagine together our future with 20 years behind us.

As I filtered through a slew of cards and letters that afternoon following the celebration, a number of persons ended their kind words with the phrase, “Here’s to 20 more years!” I guess that’s a good thing, to imagine that we could work together for 20 more years and that it would be a blessing to God’s world and evidence of God’s presence. There are no guarantees in this life and especially in this sort of journey, but I feel a little looser in the saddle when the end is not quite in view and knowing I am riding side by side with friends. Keeping to the work of defining, communicating, addressing conflict, setting goals, living with clear principles and values, and doing it everyday makes the work hard, but it also makes it worth the effort. So, here’s to whatever the future holds. I don’t feel at all anxious about it. ♦



New Contact Information for LIM

Please note our new contact information for Leadership in Ministry Workshops. Our new e-mail is leadershipinministry@gmail.com

You may send correspondence and workshop registrations and payment to the following mailing address:

Dr. Robert L. Dibble
9506 Heather Spring Dr
Richmond, VA 23238

Our new phone numbers are:

804.965.0647
804.288.1131

Registration payments should be made to:
“Leadership in Ministry Workshops”



James Lamkin

is senior pastor of the Northside Drive Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA. This article is his reflection from a 2009 panel presentation at the west Virginia LIM Workshop.

Of the panel he writes, *“Though the subject was artificial, it offered a good exercise for looking at life through Family System lenses. Plus, the line about “70% of the time” had some of Ed Friedman’s playfulness in it. Thus, with theory and humor in hand, our bunch was off and running.”*

Multi-Generational Transmission

*The Most Important Concept of Bowen Theory
(at least 70% of the Time)*

James Lamkin

My grandfather was an alcoholic. One of the most important things about that fact is that I was 40 years old before I said it. It was not that I didn’t know; but it was that *I didn’t know that I knew*. My maternal grandfather’s alcoholism colored my mother’s childhood; and because it affected my mother, it affected me. The family’s adaptation to this symptom and the contributions of previous generations before, lives on still.

Thus, when I pondered what might be “the most important aspect of Bowen theory,” I gravitated toward multi-generational transmission. In addition, I believe that the first cousin to multi-generational transmission is the notion of the emotional field. These two concepts hugely *shape the shape* of any system.

I am defining *multi-generational transmission* as the process of passing along relational patterns, resources, symptoms, strengths, anxiety, and behaviors from individuals and groups to their successors. The *emotional field* is an environment of influence. It consists of emotional/relational pieces; however, once the field comes into being, it has more power to influence the individual aspects/relationships/selves within it than any of the pieces can influence the field they have collectively created.

Here is a personal example. A few months after coming as pastor to Northside Drive Baptist Church in 1997, I attended a committee meeting in the church conference room. A large table occupies most of the space with chairs all about. The meeting went well. We walked out. One of the participants said casually, “It is so good to have a meeting in that room and leave feeling good.” “What do you mean,” I asked? “Oh,” she said, “seems like whenever we have met around that table, we always have needed to deal with bad news.”

The room itself was a part of the emotional field! How the church functioned in that space was part of the common memory and probably current functioning.

Continued on p. 13.

Emotional Triangles and the Emotional Field

Bowen Systems Theory is “systemic,” and the components that make up the theory are interrelated and integrated.

Israel Galindo

Students of Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) learn early about the importance of triangles in relationship systems. The concept of the emotional triangle is one of the original eight basic concepts in BFST. So foundational to the theory of emotional process is the concept of emotional triangles that it is often said, “If you understand triangles, you understand the theory.”

The eight concepts of the theory, and their derivatives, are interrelated, together they comprise part of what is “systemic” in BFST. To truly “think systems” one cannot focus on one concept without considering all others. While not all concepts within the theory are equally applicable to the same extent for any particular case or issue, some are consistently linked in terms of

emotional process in systems. For example:

- Anxiety and reactivity
- Overfunctioning and underfunctioning
- Change and homeostasis
- Differentiation and neutrality
- Triangles and the emotional field.

One insight we often fail to apply to the concept of emotional triangles is that they exist and function within the dynamic of the emotional field to which they belong. One cannot truly understand the emotional process at play merely by identifying the triangle formed between three persons (or two persons and an issue) while ignoring the emotional field in which that triangle is being

played out. In other words, context matters. Triangles are not just a result of anxiety, they are, in a real sense, the product of the emotional field.

Friedman on the Emotional Field

Edwin Friedman explained the concept of the emotional field:

“... Bowen has at times used the phrase “emotional

field” rather than emotional system. So used, a field may be defined as an environment of influence that is not material in itself (a magnetic or gravitational field, for example) but comes into existence because of the proximity of matter to matter. However, once this field does come into being, it has more power to

influence the discrete particle within it than any of those pieces of matter can continue to influence the field they have, by their presence, “caused” to exist.” (Friedman, *Myth of the Shiksa*, p. 167).

Further, he wrote,

“The term ‘emotional system’ refers to any group of people or other colonized forms of protoplasm (herds, flocks, troops, packs, schools, swarms, and aggregates) that have developed emotional interdependencies to the point where the resulting system through which the parts are connected (administratively, physically, or emotionally) has evolved its own principles of organization.” (Friedman, *Myth of the Shiksa*, p.163).

In light of that statement we can consider that triangles are part of the principles of organization of the emotional field.

Components of the Emotional Field

The emotional processes in the emotional field that affects everything in it, including the formation and maintenance of emotional triangles, can include the influence of the following components to one extent or another:

Continued on page 14



Liz Shoop

Liz Shoop has been a LIM participant since 2007. Following six years of experience as a high school counselor, Liz founded LampLight Counseling Ministry at Harrisonburg, VA. Currently she is a school counselor in an elementary school setting.

Lessons from a Ball of Yarn

Liz Shoop



When I selected an activity for my elementary school students using a ball of yarn, I was not expecting how much I myself would learn in the process. The idea was to roll the ball from person to person across a circle of seated children. The result was a web, symbolizing the relationships students have formed in their class throughout the year. Each student said something friendly about the person they rolled the yarn to.

Once the little ones left the room, I ended up with a huge tangle of yarn it took hours to unravel. The complex knot was an illustration of relationships among a network of people, whether it is in a work setting, a family, a church or community. The strings, loops and obstacles stand for different individuals, dyads, triads and clumps within a group.

Here are some things I learned in my attempt to find the straight and narrow. The first instinct is to pull and tug. The stress on individuals tightens the intricate mess. I found it helped to loosen and separate on the whole system, making some space amidst the fray, which was counter-intuitive. It's best to open things up so I can see my way through. Even tension and stress on *one string* can tighten the whole knot back up into a wad where it's hard to tell who's who.

The second insight is, I sometimes feel like the end of the string. I realize I have to travel back through the mess I've been through in order to come out. If I try to run away from the knots, the aforementioned tightening occurs. The way out is through contact with others, not avoidance. Some wringing and twisting can be involved. It may benefit me to pause and observe where others have been before I attempt to untangle myself from them.

Finally, if I take shortcuts, it may look like things are getting better, but it's still a "knot." At times things have to get worse before they get better, and sometimes I'm just tangled up with myself. In order to get things unraveled, inevitably, I must navigate through the chaotic center of the tangled mess. There is fear of getting lost. But the hard-won freedom and growth is worth it in the end. ♦

Multigenerational Transmission, cont'd from p. 10

I offer three reasons why I believe the multi-generational transmission process (coupled with the notion of the emotional field) is the most important piece of Bowen Theory.

First, I believe multi-generational transmission always is an unspoken leg of every triangle.

Andrew Archie, my distinguished colleague from the great state of Missouri, will enlighten us as to the tenacity of triangles. However, I will lobby that when it comes to overlapping triangles, the genogram *always* is one leg.

The first time I “saw” a triangle was when Larry Matthews drew one on a dinner napkin in a Greek restaurant in Vienna, VA. He spoke of hearing Friedman speak of the inherent triangle of nearly every new pastor. It consists of 1) the congregation, 2) the congregation’s vision, and 3) the new minister. Friedman unpacked it: “With joy, the new pastor takes up the mantle to achieve the congregation’s vision. Yet, as she or he does, the resistance kicks-up.”

As Larry drew it, I “got” it. I still remember the “ah ha”. To this day, I still relish the rush of identifying the triangle in a stuck scenario. There is something about the delight of “Now I see it!” that unleashes all sorts of energy and creativity and perception and a reduction in anxiety.

Michael Kerr says, “If you aren’t thinking triangles, you aren’t thinking systems.” Exactly.

Friedman said, “We are always in a triangle with our predecessors.” This points to the multi-generational nature of systems---whether with family members or employees.

I am the eighth pastor of Northside Drive Baptist Church. The sixth pastor of the church lives 300 yards from my desk. A former Associate Pastor and two former Youth Ministers are members of the church. Part of my job is to live in these relationship triangles. What a wonderful opportunity to keep working on myself!

Bowen’s own confession of his vulnerability to the emotional weight of triangles gifts me from afar. (Have you heard the rabbinical saying, “By your confession, I am healed?”) When Bowen spoke of his early work on his family of origin, he said, “As for my own emotional part...if a person working on a triangle can stay less involved than others, I think that is to be desired. In other words, I was able pretty much to laugh at my brother while he was shaking his finger at me. But I still get emotional. I get emotional talking about it here. I didn’t find a way to get around this last one.”¹

“If you aren’t thinking triangles, you aren’t thinking systems.”

Michael Kerr

“We are always in a triangle with our predecessors.”

Edwin Friedman



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Into the Breach, cont'd from p. 3

many others who shared the same “life-wish.” All of you, I know, remember Larry’s closing words at almost every workshop: “We literally couldn’t do this without you!” So true! As formidable as assuming the mantle of LIM Coordinator felt to me, there was this deep awareness that what keeps this ministry “alive-and-well” is not entirely wrapped up in whoever occupies the “L” position, but rather in us, the faithful participants, who have made—and will continue to make—this enterprise sustainable and successful.

We are in this together; we go “once more into the breach, dear friends.” 2011 will be a year of transition and challenge. And there will be wonderful opportunities to celebrate everything good about Larry’s leadership across these years. There will also be all the systemic forces within us as individuals and as LIM that will resist the change. But Larry has astutely noted that “our bond has been a shared commitment to a common goal: learning, practicing and teaching a different way of understanding ‘leadership’ through the process of differentiating a self—in our own lives first, then in our families, personal relationships and the larger communities and institutions in which we work and live.” As long as that shared commitment to a common goal exists, LIM will not only continue but prosper. ♦

Emotional Field, Cont'd from p. 11

- *The positions of the individuals in the field and the functions they serve (leader, IP, etc.)*
- *The field is moderated by the level of differentiation of self of those within and among the field*
- *The field may be mediated by culture (ethnicity, religion, etc.)*
- *The field is influenced by biology*
- *The systemic structures of the field (type of system—biological family, corporation, congregation; developmental stage of the system)*
- *The field is influenced by external and internal forces—positive and negative*
- *The field can provide resources or be a deficit to emotional processes*
- *The field is influenced by multigenerational transmission dynamics.*

The next time you identify emotional triangles in a system, work at gaining a deeper understanding of the emotional process at play by remembering that triangles are situated in the context of a specific emotional field: a biological family, a congregation, a family business, an organization, etc. ♦

Israel Galindo is Dean and Professor of Christian Education Formation at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.