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○ ISSUE: ○ Summer | ○ 2007

Leadership *in Ministry*

LOST RIVER, WV

BOSTON, MA

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

When in the midst of a crisis, it's often hard to remember the lessons we learned in the luxury of the study. In this article LIM faculty member Israel Galindo shares some playful "rules" to remember in times of acute anxiety.

The Rules

A short course to effective systems functioning in the congregational setting

By Israel Galindo

After a couple of consultations with two pastors related to approaching leadership from a systems perspective, each, on separate occasions, asked me, "Are these

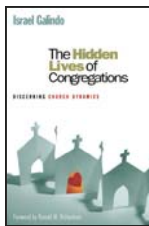
things written anywhere? Is there a book?" I gave them a list of good "systems books" off the top of my head, but I realized that some of the things I'd been sharing would not be easily tracked down. A lot of what of what I shared comprised of "oral tradition," things I'd learned, read, overheard, or acquired from oth-



The Rules, cont'd



LIM faculty member Israel Galindo is Professor of Christian Education at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. Visit his website at: www.galindoconsultants.com



Israel Galindo is the author of *The Hidden Lives of Congregations* (Alban), which was named “one of the ten best books of 2005” by the Academy of Parish Clergy.

ers about leadership in ministry.

In an effort to be helpful, and to test my own thinking related to what I’d shared I decided to compile a working list of “rules.” These are what I call “derivative rules,” meaning that while they are based on what Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) says about relationship systems, they pertain primarily to the congregational system. These “rules” are a mix of axioms, guidelines, and principles that capture in a phrase some of the important things to remember related to leadership in the congregational setting.

You’ll recognize some of these, and you probably have a personal story or two for several. I’m sure you have your own rules to add to the list—ones that address other aspects of leadership in ministry, or a well-turned phrase that makes these insights memorable to you. These are just some of the “rules” I’ve used when coaching clergy as a way to help them remember the dynamics of emotional process and of the leadership function related to it. They may appear like a laundry list as you read along, so let me provide the thread that runs through them: the leadership *function* of the pastor has to do with the systemic nature of congregations as emotional systems. Pastoral leaders are those persons who occupy the chief, or a primary, position of leadership in the congregational setting: a senior pastor, a rabbi, a pastor, an interim pastor, and to some extent, pastoral staff. The intersections between ministry and theology and BFST are that both deal with (1) the nature of relationships, and (2) striving to understanding the nature of persons. Ministry is about relationships—and systems theory is all about how people relate to one another.



Click on the paperclip to read the rest of this article
(opens a new window and a new .pdf document)

Non-Negotiables

SYSTEMS SERMONS SERIES

Dr. Daniel Bagby is the author of this issue's "systems sermon." Originally preached at the Seventh and James Baptist Church, Waco, TX

In this sermon to the congregation I suggested that Jesus, at the outset of his ministry, was tested on what he considered to be his priorities, his purposes, and how he would use his powers--and that each of us come to quiet, solitary moments when we must also define ourselves by what we believe in--and will spend time on—as most important—and therefore on what we consider "non-negotiable." I then shared what I considered non-negotiable for me—and asked the congregation to reflect on what each of them would consider "non-negotiable"--and which defines us—by virtue of our choices. So I said:

"My faith in God is non-negotiable:" I may have periods of questioning and struggles, doubts, and issues to consider. But I'm at a place in my life when believing in a loving, Supreme Being, Who wants to give focus and purpose to my

life--is non-negotiable. I will no longer surrender that belief. My hope is to follow the One who made me—Who gives me freedom, and who asks me to follow His will and way. Each of us must come to terms with what we believe about a God --and whatever that God has to do with us. Take your time if that's where you are. I believe my faith in God is non-negotiable--and I wanted you to know that.

"My commitment to my wife and our marriage is non-negotiable:" I've now been married over twenty five years, and know that it is by grace that all human relationships exist--by mutual forgiveness--by living out of faith and being faithful to a vow I made—even though sometimes I fail to give the relationship what it deserves--and even though I often

focus on myself above my wife--I want you to know that my marriage is non-negotiable—that my commitment—even though fallible--is not up for negotiation or dissolution. I want to work on my marriage like I want to work on my relationship to God—I am committed to it.

"My commitment to our children is non-negotiable:" Somewhere along the way we were given the privilege of having two children biologically--and some of you know that privilege almost escaped us... But I want you to know, and my children to know, that being a father is not just a privilege--it's a call and a responsibility—and it's also a sacred vow. I say to you what I have always said to our two children: "The door to our home will never be locked to you--though some day you

will live somewhere else, I hope, because you've grown--there is nothing that will cause me to reject you. I am committed to being your father—in the fallible way that you know--and others do too.... My commitment to you is on my short list of non-negotiables."

"My commitment to this church is non-negotiable:" I am not here to prepare for a better place.... (I actually cannot think of a better place!). The work and ministry we have here to do commits me to live with you, walk beside you, for another while! (That's probably bad news for some of you to hear—but life's not always fair....) I say this to you because I sense that we have ministry to do together—and some of the things we've started together



Daniel Bagby is the Theodore F. Adams Professor of Pastoral Care at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, VA



Congratulations!

To Sean Rowe, four year participant in the Boston workshop, upon his election as Bishop of Northwestern, PA

Non-negotiables, cont'd

require my commitment to do my part for them to flourish.... So I am here for a while.... There will come a time when you will sense that it's time for me to go—I hope you trust me enough to tell me as a friend—when you sense that. There will be a time when I sense that it is time for me to go—and I will talk with you--consult with you—on that. But for now—and I believe for a while—I'm called to complete some chapters with you that we've just started together. So my covenant with you—to stay by you—and to minister with you--to hear and follow God's will and voice together here—is non-negotiable....

This is my short list of non-negotiables—as we begin a new year. Christ was defining himself in this chapter—declaring what was most important to him—and I've just told you what's most important to me. I'd love to know what YOU think of what I've said.... But more importantly: What's non-negotiable for YOU? ♦

Dr. Daniel Bagby is the author of several books. His latest book is [*Beyond The Myths: The Journey to Adulthood*](#) (Smyth & Helwys, 2007).

What is a “systems sermon”?

An article by LIM faculty member Israel Galindo appears in the spring issue (Spring 2007) of *Congregations* magazine from Alban Institute. The article is titled [“What’s Systems Theory Got to Do with It?: Addressing Congregations’ Emotional Process in Our Preaching.”](#) In the article, Galindo writes, “The sermon is as much about the preacher, the congregation, and their relationship in the context of being church as it is about the text.”

The Alban Institute, located in Northern Virginia, offers numerous resources relating Bowen Family Systems Theory to congregational ministry and clergy leadership. You can read Galindo’s article, and others by him, on the Alban Institute website. ♦





Illustration: "Toil"
Graphite on paper
9"x11"
by Israel Galindo

I've been a lifelong doodler. In fact, my college course notes look more like sketchbooks than notebooks (and the doodles are the only reason I've kept some of my college notes). Even today pencil and sketchpad aren't far from reach in the event an idle moment provides opportunity to doodle.

At times doodles have turned into sketches, and sketches into drawings. The graphite drawing on the

left, done several years ago, started as a doodle that eventually became a favorite rendering, which today hangs framed in my study.

People sometimes say, "Wow, how do you do that?" On occasion my playful reply is "Well, if you do something every day for most of your life you can get pretty good at it."

Drawing helps artists develop a way of seeing things different than most non-drawing people seem able. Artist and teacher Brian Bomeisler was featured in a recent on-line issue of *American Artist* magazine.¹ Bomeisler (the son of Betty Edwards, author of the best seller *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*)² teaches the "Global Skills of Drawing" that help students produce more realistic drawings.

Leading from the Right Side of the Brain

Lessons on leadership from the world of art, by Israel Galindo

In effect, he teaches them the principles that help them see the world as it is as opposed to seeing the world as they assume it is.

The global skills of realistic drawing Bomeisler teaches include these five skills:

- 1 The perception of edges called lines or contour drawing.
- 2 The perception of spaces in drawing called negative spaces.
- 3 The perception of relationships known as perspective and proportion.
- 4 The perception of lights and shadows called shading.
- 5 The perception of the whole, which comes from the previous four perceptual skills.

It occurred to me that all five of Boemeiler's skills of "realistic drawing" are applicable to ministry leadership. Each of those concepts has a corollary when it comes to leadership in ministry. Particularly, they correlate to the way that Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) can help us "see" things differently. I like the corollary because, as an educator, one of my tasks in teaching is to move students from naïve understandings to more rigid, deep, or "realistic" understandings about the subject under consideration, whether it's congregations, leadership, ministry, education, or themselves.

1. Leaders need to develop a perception of edges called "boundaries."

A fundamental idea to the concept of self-differentiation in relationship systems is knowing where . . .



Click on the paperclip to read the rest of this article .



2008 Workshops:

MID-ATLANTIC
Lost River, WV

Workshop A Sessions

March 31—April 2
October 27—28

Workshop B Sessions

April 14—16
September 15—17

NORTHEAST, Newton, MA


May 19—21
October 13—15

WESTERN

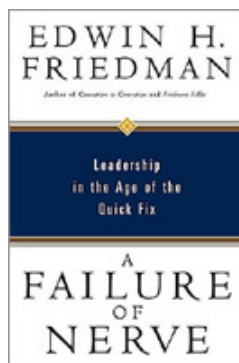
Colorado Springs, CO

May 5—7
September 29—October 1


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

 Click on the paperclip for a registration form

Book Review: *A Failure of Nerve*



Rabbi and therapist Edwin H. Friedman's book *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix* (Seabury, 2007) has been re-issued under the editorship of his colleagues Margaret M. Treadwell and Edward W. Beal.

LIM faculty member and professor Israel Galindo reviews this latest revision of Friedman's posthumous work. Click on the paperclip to access the review. 


LIM Faculty News:

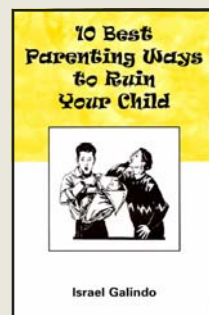
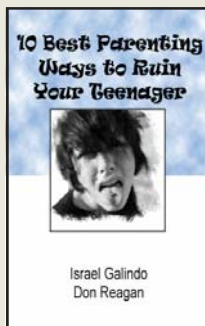
We welcome new faculty members **Meg Hess** to the Newton, MA workshops, and **Carol Jeunnette** to the Colorado Springs workshops. Meg is a pastoral counselor with the Emmaus Institute in Nashua, MA and serves as adjunct faculty in preaching at the Andover Newton Theological School. Carol is a Lutheran pastor, counselor, and facilitator of the Voyager group. She has trained with Healthy Congregations and Bridgebuilders (Peter Steinke).

James Lamkin has published "Sabbatical As Fitting Room: A Pastoral Paradigm." It is available for downloading from the [Resources for American Christianity](#) website.

Margaret Marcuson's new [blog](#) on leadership is now up and running on her website. Well worth the time reading! A recent article by Margaret, "[10 Tips for Handling Criticism in Ministry](#)" appears in Leading Ideas feature of Lewis Center for Church Leadership website.

The resource *A Family Genogram Workbook* by faculty members **Elaine Boomer** and **Israel Galindo**, and former LIM participant Don Reagan, has just seen a second run. The book is available from [Amazon.com](#). We're pleased that it has been well-received. Several of Galindo's articles for the Alban Institute are now available on the Alban website. Galindo is also a regular contributor to the [G.R.A.C.E. blog](#).

Marcuson and **Galindo** will be plenary speakers, along with author Peter Steinke, at the Healthy Congregations conference October 8-10, 2007 in Columbus, OH. The conference theme is "Healthy Leadership: Living With Nerve." You can download a brochure by clicking on the paperclip. 



10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Teenager, Israel Galindo and Don Reagan; and *10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Child*, by Israel Galindo.

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A Holiday Roll Family Nodal Event



Debbie Highsmith
is in her seventh year at
the Colorado Springs LIM

When I stopped in at the grocery store in Flagstaff, Arizona the day before Christmas and came out with a dozen holiday rolls, my family—father, step-mother, and husband—who were sitting in the car were a little baffled. Wendie, my stepmother, asked, “You know there are just four for Christmas dinner?”

“I know,” I replied.

What I didn’t say was that I had been thinking for months about how to share with them what I have been learning for the last six years at my Leadership in Ministry workshops. Any time I shared about family systems, my father’s eyes would glaze over. He always had this look that said, “Now what are you telling people about our family?”

The answer was that through my case studies, I was telling my group over and over again how well I functioned as a victim in my family of origin, in my hospice chaplaincy, in my ministry and in my life. My loving and caring Colorado Springs group continued to challenge me on my willingness to be the identified patient and I was starting to listen to them.

I was starting to see that I was reacting automatically to well established patterns of multigenerational behavior. I was starting to see that being a victim left me powerless and depressed, giving me less access to my principles and beliefs. I wanted to acknowledge what I believe my family was already beginning to glimpse, that I am finding clarity in my life and coming into my power.

So Christmas day, my family and I walked to the nearby lake. We gathered into a circle as I passed out one holy roll per person. In a silly and serious mood, I told my family to reach out and really smash their roll.

I then simultaneously burst into tears and laughter and told my family, “My depressed role (victim) in this family is for the birds. You may now feed the depressed rolls/roles to the awaiting ducks.”

My family smiled, then laughed, told me they were proud, and hugs went around the circle. The ducks were fed all twelve rolls—but only after they were smashed. We then continued to wander around the lake.

It was the best Christmas ever. ♦

Conceptual Similarities

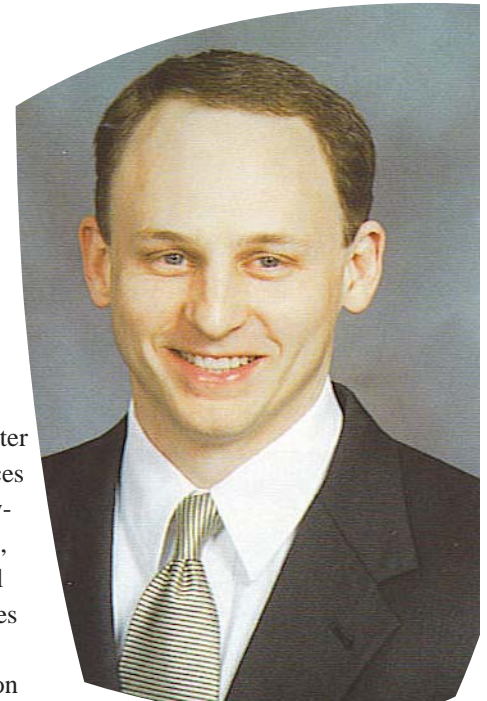
Michael W. Gillen recently received his Ph.D. in Practical Theology from Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, VA. This article is an excerpt from his dissertation, *Conceptual Similarities: Responsibility, Self, and Systemic Thinking in the Family Systems Theory of Murray Bowen and the Theology of H. Richard Niebuhr*.

Little has been done to connect Bowen Theory to specific Christian theologies or to evaluate critically its relationship to the Christian tradition. This is not the first time that a psychological model has been used by the Christian community without being examined for compatibility. H. Richard Niebuhr and Don S. Browning raise concerns about the coupling of various psychological theories with theology. In one of his earliest writings Niebuhr suggests there can be significant problems with the marriage of theology to psychology. Calling it “a sterile union,” Niebuhr sharply criticizes the psychology of religion movement of his day as having abandoned the true object of theological study in favor of the study of humanity. Niebuhr traces the origins of the union of theology and psychology back to the philosophical move toward the sub-

ject and the theological work of Schleiermacher to explain religious doctrine in terms of social consciousness and individual experience. As theology and psychology were brought into a more significant relationship, the move was made to talk about religious experience in terms of psychological analysis. Niebuhr suggests the result of this union is to subjugate religion in favor of psychological theories, making the object of theology the interior life of humanity as it relates to religious experience. Psychology becomes the dominant partner, exerting overt and covert influence on theology and diminishing the value and belief in both God and the practices of worship and prayer. Niebuhr voices concerns that theology would turn to a field of study that often criticizes the practice of religion by calling its teachings fictitious or assigning religious experi-

ences to the realm of psychology. Niebuhr suggests that theology can make better use of psychology if it places no special emphasis on psychological theories or facts, but gives psychology equal status with all other sciences and disciplines.¹

More recently, Don S. Browning asserts both the need to recognize the influence other disciplines can have on theology and the church as well as potential dangers inherent in uncritically accepting the conclusions made by sources that fail to share the same intellectual horizon.² While the incorporation of knowledge generated by the natural sciences and the human sciences can have beneficial effects on the church, there is the potential for ideologies—particularly in the underlying metaphysics and ethics of other traditions—to conflict with the Christian tradition.³ For example, in *Religious*



Michael W. Gillen is the pastor of Westhunt Baptist Church in Richmond, where he has served since 1997. He began studying Bowen Theory in 1995 when a colleague loaned him Ed Friedman's *Generation to Generation*, and has participated in *Leadership In Ministry Workshops* and an ongoing coaching group with Larry Matthews.

Similarities, cont'd

Thought and the Modern Psychologies: A Critical Conversation in the Theology of Culture, Browning's discussion of humanistic psychologies suggests there can be an undercutting of the intentions and teachings of the church when a psychology is not engaged theologically. The result is a loss of theological integrity. Browning demonstrates that careful, rigorous, critical conversations with other disciplines preserve theological integrity by identifying ideological differences. Such dialogue with theories of other disciplines also provides practical theology with new sources of insight and new perspectives from which to interpret the Christian faith.⁴

Browning identifies a second concern related to the specific field of pastoral care and counseling, which deals with the estrangement of pastoral care from religious ethics. He suggests that contemporary pastoral care and counseling fail to provide coherent perspectives on personal morality and values. The combination of a secular-

ized culture, pluralism, and psychology's perception of religious institutions, moral philosophy and theology as a root cause of mental illness influences the way pastoral care and counseling connect modern psychologies with the efforts of the church.⁵ Browning asserts that pastoral care is influenced by these cultural factors and psychology's negative regard for religion without critically examining the impact on the efforts of the church. Pastoral care either retreats into a sectarian world that fails to engage the culture or abdicates the responsibility of constructing and transmitting personal morality to others.⁶

Browning suggests that an effort should be made to bring a theological-ethical perspective into conversation with psychology, aiming to preserve the integrity of the theological perspective while gaining from such dialogue a greater understanding of the human condition. What Niebuhr perceives as detrimental to theology—the subjugation of theology to the theories of psychology—Browning

identifies as a continuing trend in practical theology. Both Browning and Niebuhr suggest that theology should remain true to its unique perspective, all the while continuing to engage other sources of knowledge with integrity and intelligibility.

If a Bowenian practical theology fails to do this, it can fall into the trap of simply looking at the church as an emotional system of humans, explaining the phenomena of being human in terms of interconnected emotional systems. While it might be a useful exercise for a pastor or professor of pastoral leadership to see a church through the Bowen Theory lens, if this is the only lens used to critically understand the church it then fails to be a theological endeavor. And if its philosophical or ethical premises go unexamined, the theologian or clergy person misses an opportunity to learn from or comment upon these biases, in which case Bowen's influence is muted or unnoticed.

NOTES:

¹H. Richard Niebuhr, "Theology and Psychology: A Sterile Union," *The Christian Century* 44 (13 January 1927): 47-48.

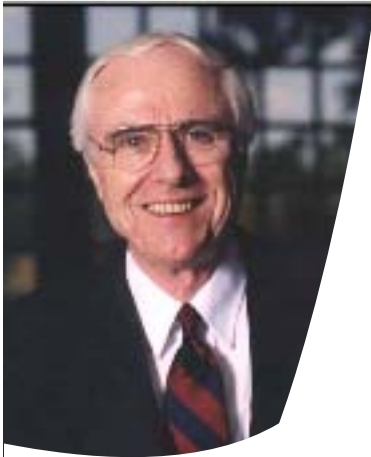
²Don S. Browning, *Religious Thought and the Modern Psychologies: A Critical Conversation in the Theology of Culture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 2-3.

³*Ibid.*, 73-82.

⁴For Browning's description of a critical conversation between practical theology and other disciplines, see Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 44-47, 68-71.

⁵Don S. Browning, "The Estrangement of Pastoral Care from Ethics." In *The Challenge of Psychology to Faith*, Steven Kepnes and David Tracy, eds., (New York: Seabury, 1982), 10-11.

⁶*Ibid.*, 11-12.



A Message from the LIM Coordinator

Larry Matthews reflects on seventeen years of Leadership in Ministry Workshops

How does one evaluate the effectiveness of the Leadership in Ministry Workshops? I think this is a question that leaders of every such endeavor should regularly ask and attempt to answer. I'm aware that there are many different ways to evaluate and that each has its own unique perspective and provides its unique insights and observations.

As I have reflected on this question during these seventeen workshop years, I keep remembering Ed Friedman's often-repeated words: "A test of one's self-differentiation is what's happening to the people around you. If anyone is moving toward a

higher level of self-differentiated functioning, that will affect the functioning of others in their relational systems." I did not hear him saying that we have the power to change other people. But I did hear him saying that our functioning can and does affect

(change) the emotional process of our relational systems and, therefore, presents others with the opportunity to respond in ways of their own choosing. Things will not be the same because the balance (homeostasis) has been disturbed. Whether the responses to the changes will be viewed as 'positive' or 'negative' will

As I have reflected on this question during these seventeen workshop years, I keep remembering Ed Friedman's often-repeated words . . .

LAWRENCE E. MATTHEWS

be determined by the responders themselves, and those doing the evaluations.

I think our newsletter articles communicate something of the effect the workshops are having upon participants and faculty-coaches. I value these 'self-definition' state-

ments as evidence that workshop participation encourages (1) increased levels of self-differentiated functioning in both one's personal life and vocation, and (2) reflection upon that process. These are not guaranteed results, but for seventeen years they have been frequently realized possibilities. ♦

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www.LeadershipinMinistry.com



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