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ISSUE: WINTER 2010

Leadership *in Ministry*

LOST RIVER, WV

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LIM newsletter editor and former LIM faculty member Israel Galindo describes levels of emotional maturity and their implication for Differentiation of self.

Differentiation of Self and Emotional Maturity

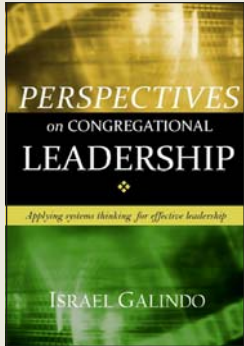
Israel Galindo

While differentia-
tion of self is a key
concept in Bowen
Family Systems
Theory (BFST) it defines a narrow
concept related to functioning. Spe-
cifically, the concept is not a descrip-
tion of a state of being or a “stage” a
person arrives at or resides. It de-
scribes a way of functioning relative
to ones capacity to separate thinking
from feeling, thereby being non-

reactive and less driven by emotion-
ality when in relationship with oth-
ers. This facilitates functioning out of
one’s values and principles rather
than anxiety and its derivatives
(reactivity, triangling, herding,
groupthink, enmeshment, etc.).

Rightly interpreted, Bowen’s
Scale of Differentiation is a helpful
schema for understanding the con-
cept of differentiation . The problem
lies in how often it is misinterpreted.





*Perspectives on
Congregational
Leadership: Applying
systems thinking for
effective leadership*

by Israel Galindo

\$25.94

ISBN 9780971576575

This article is adapted from Galindo's book *Perspectives on Congregational Leadership*. Mention this LIM newsletter when ordering from Educational Consultants for a 50% discount.

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Emotional Maturity, cont'd

The scale is a metaphor that depicts a range of functioning. It was not intended to suggest a stage of arrival (“Last year I received my black belt in Karate and attained Nirvana. Within two years I’ll be a fully self-differentiated person.”), or, even a goal toward which one aspires (“Last month I was 55% differentiated with my teenager. This month, My goal is to achieve 70% on the scale in my relationship with my mother-in-law.”).

Emotional Maturity

I find myself favoring the concept of emotional maturity as a helpful frame of reference for many of the elements of differentiation of self. I think there is a direct correlation between a person’s emotional maturity and one’s capacity for differentiation. Given the fact that emotional maturity is a nuanced and dynamic concept, I also find it helpful to plot it in the wider categories of high, middle, and low levels, rather than on a scale.

Here is how the characteristics of emotional maturity may be described:

Low Emotional Maturity

- Prone to intense attachments or enmeshments
- Lack of self-awareness of emotions or interior life (may not be aware of cutoff, reactivity, stress, or anxiety)
- Lack of awareness of, and inability to reflect and interpret, family of origin emotional process
- Identity derived from roles or constructed-adopted persona (large pseudo-self)
- Tend toward polarization in relationships, with family and others
- Lack of capacity to be emotionally neutral. Their emotional stance is irrationally negative (antagonistic) or blindly positive (loyal).
- Often functions out of projection (takes everything personally).
- Lack capacity for empathy or perspective.
- Will tend to act out the anxiety in the family.
- Disruptions in significant relationships typically results in reactivity.
- Find it difficult to self-regulate in the midst of and in the wake of a crisis.
- Will invest self in a belief system or people who reassure their beliefs or who promise salvation, status, or privilege.

Emotional Maturity, cont'd

Achieving emotional maturity is “lifework.” It contributes to our capacity to function characteristically (defined by our character) in a self-differentiated manner in all contexts and in all relationships.

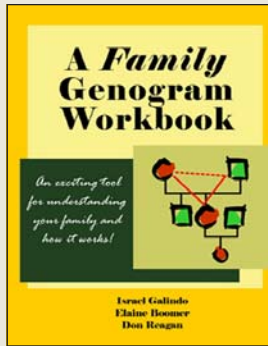
- Lack ability to question or reflect upon the consequences of their behavior.
- Lack awareness of how they communicate, or how they do not “connect” with others in their speech or behavior.
- Prone to absorb the anxiety of family or relationship system resulting in blame, guilt, and psychosomatic symptomology.
- Lack appropriate sense of boundaries (can be prone to over- or underfunctioning)
- Rarely find their self or their “voice.”
- Have a great need for a larger relationship system for managing anxiety.

Middle Emotional Maturity

- May often be too attached and prone to symptoms associated with dependency or fusion.
- When not highly anxious can separate appropriately from the family of origin and establish individual life principles and goals.
- In times of high anxiety will develop symptoms or function out of reactivity. But, they are able to self-regulate once anxiety diminishes.
- Can be aware of interior emotional process if they pay attention.
- Have an accurate level of awareness of how they are perceived by others and how their communication is being received by others.
- During times of anxiety will attack, coerce, herd, or use other methods to try and encourage conformity.
- They may gossip about people and not deal directly, but they make efforts to be principled with those who are important to them.
- Will unwittingly allow unhealthy and unethical behaviors as they are uncomfortable holding people responsible for what they do.
- Will do their (assigned) part (enabler, accomplice, triangle, IP, maintain secrets) to maintain homeostasis in a family or other system.

High Emotionally Maturity

- Highly emotionally mature people are rare. They seem to be the exception rather than the rule.
- They tend to rise to positions of leaders, teachers and healers.



A Family Genogram Workbook

by Israel Galindo,
Elaine Boomer, and
Don Reagan

\$16.00

ISBN 0-9715765-3-X

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Emotional Maturity, cont'd

- They can remain unattached to what and how others are feeling or to reactivity or emotionality.
- They have the capacity of seeing others as they are and validating them for who they are.
- They have no need to make others into something for their self-gratification, self-validation, or self-worth.
- They are clear about their principles and so stir reactions from others (both positive and negative).
- They function, and make decisions, based on their principles, ideals, and values rather than on personal need, or, on others' personal needs, predilections, opinions, or demands.
- Their emotional field often is experienced as unique, powerful, and different. This can be attractive or experienced as a threat.
- They often form engender followings that admire or hate them. Either response may be a result of the fact that they don't need others for affirmation or validation.
- They tend to be characterized by courage and so are able to challenge rather than pamper, can hold others accountable, and can be prophetic as well as visionary.
- They take responsibility for their own goals, their own position, and their own well-being rather than those of others.
- In work and relationships their influence is a result of empowering, permission-giving, and collaboration rather than insisting on conformity or setting ultimatums.

Achieving emotional maturity is "lifework." It contributes to our capacity to function characteristically (defined by our character) in a self-differentiated manner in all contexts and in all relationships. ♦

Israel Galindo is Dean and Professor of Christian Education at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond. He is the author of sixteen books, including *The Hidden Lives of Congregations* (Alban). His latest book (co-authored with Marty Canaday), *Planning for Christian Education Formation: A Community of Faith Approach* (Chalice Press) will be released spring of 2010.



What Are You Going to do With Your Life?

LIM faculty member **Robert L. Dibble** reviews Edwin Friedman's latest book, *What Are You Going to do With Your Life?*

Surprises of real joy are often too infrequent experiences for most of us. Here's a genuine one: while continuing their cleaning and organizing of Ed Friedman's personal effects after his death in 1996, his son and daughter accidentally discovered a file drawer full of previously unpublished papers: diaries, sermons, articles. That serendipitous discovery is to our collective benefit, for reading *What Are You Going to Do with Your Life?* is an absolute pleasure. It captures vintage Friedman: his hopes and dreams as a young "rabbi in training," his signature wit and playfulness (especially in his "An Interview with God"), his insights—both seminal and more fully developed—of family systems thinking, his sage counsel to young couples as he preaches on marriage as music, his straight to the heart of human

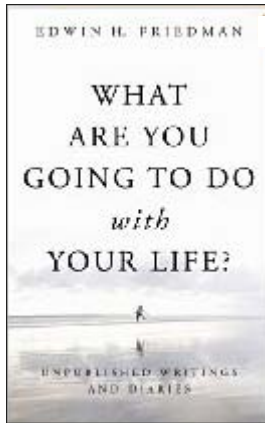
growth and relationships found in his baccalaureate addresses to students or his reflections on a visit to his parents grave. All of this, and more, reveal a delightful side of this rabbi, teacher, therapist, and leadership coach.

Friedman's 1985 groundbreaking work, *Generation to Generation*, has become a modern classic. In it, Friedman applied the thinking of Bowen Family Systems Theory to congregational leadership, and. He caused a revolution in viewing human relationships as exposed the emotional processes involved in relating in families and working in religious, educational, therapeutic, and business systems. His acclaimed work and posthumous publication of *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*, furthers his understandings on leadership. After his untimely death, Friedman's

daughter Shira Bogart edited a collection of her father's favorite essays under the fanciful title, *The Myth of the Shiksa and Other Essays*. This present publication, also edited by her, as well as Margaret Treadwell and Cynthia Shattuck, provides something for everyone who has admired this great man's life and respected his profound thinking and teaching.

What Are You Going to Do with Your Life? is organized around the stages of life, the "rites of passage," one experiences on the journey from young adulthood to maturity and death. *Part One: Starting Out*, is directly targeted at youth. In fact, the title of the book is drawn from one of Friedman's baccalaureate addresses to young people facing the transitions to adulthood. But this section's real treasure is "A Reason for Living," a portion of Friedman's

Friedman review, cont'd



Edwin H. Friedman
*What Are You Going to do
 With Your Life? Unpublished
 Writings and Diaries.*
 New York: Seabury Books,
 2009.
 185 pages
 \$28.00
 ISBN 978-1-59627-114-2

diary which chronicles his first year in rabbinical school. Revealed here is a man longing for love and commitment and struggling with his chosen vocation. His Jewish faith becomes for him an avenue to give full expression to his passions. Three lovely wedding homilies conclude this section. *Part Two: The Challenges of Maturity*, contains an essay, “The Joy of Discovery,” in which Friedman’s early thoughts on adventure, risk-taking and leadership are discussed. These prescient ideas find more mature expression in the beginning chapters of *A Failure of Nerve*. Other essays in the section explore family dynamics at key rites of passage. I found fascinating his thoughts about the life-affecting, transitional processes of divorce, geographical mobility, and retirement. *Part Three: Accepting Mortality*, is the final section and worth the price of the book. Here, through his reflections on his own mortality and his dealing with his own family of origin, you learn more about the man, Ed Friedman. He puts his “money where his mouth is,” or his theories into practice in two wonderfully written chapters, “How to Get Your Parents into a Nursing Home” and “Old Age: Condition or Diagnosis.” These essays, too, expose the “whither and whence” of Ed’s frequent criticisms/challenges of the helping professions. The most poignant essay of the section is “Between Two Cemeteries.” Visits to family members’ graves conjures deep, fond memories, the assessments of which have a powerful effect in shaping his self-understanding. You, the reader, may discover a similar effect.

So, what’s the bottom line? *What Are You Going to Do with Your Life?* is an essential reader for those seeking life-changing insights. Some of these insights will be subtle; some will “hit you between the eyes!” Regardless, you come away with a better understanding of a great man full of humor, wisdom, and possessing an especially delightful deviousness. You will not be disappointed in adding this book to the growing corpus of Friedman’s writings that should occupy a prominent place in your library. We are indebted to his family for proving once again that there is “life after death.” Douglas Ort says it even better: “Taken as a body, Ed Friedman’s work is perhaps the most creative contribution of any 20th century writer on how leadership works (or doesn’t). If one wishes to truly understand self in terms of families, organizations, religious groups, or politics, one must invariably reckon with Ed Friedman. Period.” ♦

Leadership in Ministry is My Gift to Myself

Ellen Culpepper



Ellen Culpepper

is senior pastor of Centennial Christian Church (Disciples) in Bloomington, IL. Her husband Joe also is a pastor there. This year will be her 4th year in Lost River Workshop A.

I stood at a whiteboard in the circle of faces in my small group at the most recent workshop. “I’m really anxious about this, guys,” I said, as I drew a triangle between me, my 85-year old widowed father, and the woman in assisted-living that he’s quite interested in. The bonds of deep familiarity and trust within my group enabled me to relax in the face of their brewing playfulness and honesty—I knew they would not go easy on me as we looked together at my functioning. What began to emerge in our shared reflections surprised us all. “Would you please add your husband up there in that diagram?” one requested. I did, and we looked at the interlocking triangles. Then with dawning insight another said, “Now put your church up there.” Startled, we all saw together that my dad’s lady-friend was merely my handiest target of anxiety. As I recognized some options to strengthen my functioning in other key relationships, she was no longer a significant issue to me at all.

Insights like that are the reason Leadership in Ministry is my most valuable gift to myself both as a pastor and in my personal life. I wouldn’t take anything for it. And it is not at all difficult to “treat” myself to it even though the entire costs come out of my own pocket, my church doesn’t give me a nickel toward expenses of attending LIM. I don’t need them to. I know that *I* want to grow into the highest maturity I possibly can as a pastor during very anxious times, and I know that *I* am the one who decides how and where I will stretch toward my best, not my church. So I come freely on my own, as twice a year I observe this process working for me. I watch myself doing ministry in ways much wiser, and better self-regulated than I ever could do without it.

Journaling is an extremely valuable daily tool of insight for me, yet it cannot provide me with the insights from others’ perspectives that my small group has given me for three years. Similarly, I have a best girlfriend with whom I share hours of phone conversations weekly, but those chats, undisciplined by family systems concepts, do not tug me into the deeper insights that small group work and the content sessions at LIM provide. Local clergy coffee groups offer warm companionship with fellow pastors but they do not attempt to invite me to deeper self-awareness and calmer self-regulation that helps me do my work

“When I attended my first session of LIM three years ago, long-time folks told me that the best benefits come to those who keep at it for years. This third year is the year I am starting to see that is true for me.”

better. They are no substitute for LIM.

The spiritual aspect of my twice a year drives to Workshop A at Lost River is another vital aspect of the value I receive in these retreats. After leading Sunday worship I head out on my 12 hour drive, and I frankly relish the quiet miles in the car as spiritual preparation for the event that will begin the next day. I think carefully about the cases I’ve decided to present. I take prayer time. I find the unfolding miles giving me new perspectives on my life, my work, my values, my priorities. I enjoy the solitary motel room along the way, the unhurried arrival at the cozy cabin in woods which are lavish with spring or autumn beauty.

In the mountains of West Virginia, I treasure the lack of cell phone and internet connection. It helps me take needed “time out” from my own anxious fusing with my parishioners—they can’t reach me and I can’t reach them, apart from the emergency phone number I’ve given them. My fellow LIM retreat-ants are similarly stripped of electronic distraction, and we rest in the Present Moment with God and with these friends who have deep values like our own. We leave cell phones in our rooms and simply (gasp!) relax and relate to each other. We share lots of smiling eye contact, and we sustain lines of conversation til the voiced thoughts feel fully completed. We listen to the texture of quiet pauses as well as to the layers of meanings in our shared stories. How rare is that these days?! We actually practice with each other at being less-anxiously present and connected.

I make a point of arranging for my drive home afterwards to be leisurely, I do not schedule meetings I’d have to rush back to. I line up someone else to preach for me the next Sunday, so that as I drive home I am free to mull about and absorb the gifts I’ve just received. After three years my parishioners have begun to notice how good this is for my ministry with them, they value it for me. A couple of wise ones actually perceive that not only do they get back a pastor who is refreshed and calmer but that I have invested in becoming a more astute, more self-aware and a better self-regulated leader for their benefit.

When I attended my first session of LIM three years ago, long-time folks told me that the best benefits come to those who keep at it for years. This third year is the year I am starting to see that is true for me. I’m investing about the same amount of money, time, preparation and spiritual engagement each time, but the “bang for my buck” is growing deeper and more resonant. By now it is more like a “*Boom* for my buck.” It’s a richer sound. I really like it. ♦

Review of *Leaders Who Last*

Stephen J. Price-Gibson reviews LIM Faculty Coach Margaret Marcuson's new book, Leaders Who Last

In *Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry*, Margaret J. Marcuson has written a deceptively simple book that should be insinuated into the Christmas stockings of your clergy friends who are anxious about coping with the stresses of ministry. It will be, admittedly, a willful act, inconsistent with one of the book's principle messages, to "let go of outcomes". Do it anyway.

Marcuson's book is the product of years of parish experience and a solid grounding in the concepts of Bowen Family Systems Theory and the thinking of Ed Friedman. The perspective is ecumenical and unapologetically spiritual. It is an easy read, so full of specific examples, adages, and suggestions that it almost comes across as a manual of techniques. The book could be easily

categorized as a variant of the business management self-help genre, produced by the clergy equivalent of a management consultant in the business world. The reality is far more interesting. The reader who has little or no acquaintance with systems thinking will actually be exposed to a great deal of theory along the way. By the end of the book the reader will have learned a lot about the Bowen Theory concepts of defining self, triangles, sibling position, and multi-generational transmission process, along with such phenomena as homeostasis, reactivity, over and under functioning, distancing, self regulation, letting go of out-

comes, and staying connected: e.g. "Connection with our congregation is an act of spiritual

leadership." (p.128)

Not every aspect of systems theory is introduced, but it would be unrealistic to complain about elements of theory that could not be addressed in 145 pages of

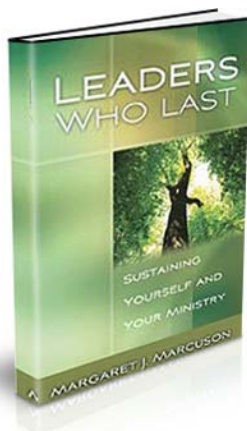
text. Marcuson provides a useful bibliography and list of websites and blogs to equip the reader with further opportunities to explore systems thinking and its application to ministry.

Perhaps the book is not best served by the title. *Leaders Who Last* sounds like a study of decades-long pastoral ministries. Although the principles in the book are precisely those that can make

a long-term ministry possible and productive, in fact this book would be especially helpful to a minister as she or he enters the parish.

While the novice will find Marcuson's work an insightful introduction to applying systems theory to the practice of ministry, clergy and other church leaders who have spent many years in the parish and exploring systems theory will also find themselves making new connections, shedding new light upon their own functioning in ministry and in their families. An alternative subtitle for the book could well be: 'Considering Ministry in the Light of Systems Theory Again for the First Time'. Especially valuable is Marcuson's long-term perspective: "Most of us have personal challenges that we will work on for a lifetime. When we keep the faith, we keep working on ourselves." (p. 3) Marcuson's book is a notable contribution in the effort to both initiate and sustain that lifetime's work. ♦

Stephen J. Price-Gibson is Pastor, Church of the Plains (PCUSA), Edgar, Nebraska



Loss: The Engine of Growth



Susannah Smith

Is an Episcopal priest with over fifteen years experience in congregational ministry. A veteran participant of the Leadership in Ministry Workshops she currently leads workshops and consultations for religious leaders. See her website at:

Inspired Leadership
www.inspiredleaders.com/

I find that I am often talking to my friends and family about some kind of loss—loss of physical capacity; loss of a loved one or a dear pet; loss of a job; loss of a sense of direction; loss of a pastor or counselor; loss of identity that was tied to a vocation; loss of an anchoring place and support system due to a geographic move; loss that comes when old skills won't do the job. The list goes on and on, but I'll stop there.

This subject of loss is not new in my conversations. From the moment we leave the coziness of our mother's womb, we encounter loss that disturbs our way of life in large and small ways. When that threat arises, our anxiety and the anxiety of others compels us to try to restore the relational system to what most closely approximates it's familiar pattern of functioning before the loss occurred. When the matriarch of the clan dies, it's amazing how quickly the family adapts to fill that vacuum with another family member (who has probably been primed for some time to step into the matriarch's shoes). The same holds true when a congregation loses its pastor or another key leader. This adaptation is a natural process that arises from a system's reaction to any change that could undermine its core identity and structure.

In *Leadership on the Line*, the authors state: "People do not resist change, per se. People resist loss ... Leadership becomes dangerous when it must confront people with loss." Imagine as a church leader that your challenge is helping a congregation accept and adapt to a tough reality (seems like Jesus was doing this kind of work all the time!). Perhaps it's the reality of changing demographics in the church's neighborhood, or a financial situation that will affect staffing, or the acknowledgement that the pastor and the congregation are on a collision course.

Whatever the situation, a church leader is wise to tread carefully, recognizing that the disturbance caused by loss could open a door into a healthier way of being. It's a good time for leaders to be curious about how the congregation has reacted to past losses. Did it find creative, imaginative ways to deal with loss that helped it move into the future with new direction and energy? Or, in its rush to restore its equilibrium and get past its sense of helplessness, did it apply a bandaid solution that avoided painful adjustments? If the latter has become the pattern in dealing with loss, then leaders need to plot a course that puts on the brakes, avoids answers from on high, and encourages new learning and experimentation. As *Leadership on the Line* puts it, "You have to counteract [your congregation's] exaggerated dependency and promote its resourcefulness."

I think loss can be the engine of growth in our personal lives and in our relationship systems. The question that presents itself when we experience loss is, "Am I functioning through this loss in a way that leads to growth in myself and healthier relationships with others?" If your answer is "yes", keep on keeping on! ♦



2010 Workshops:

MID-ATLANTIC
Lost River, WV

Workshop A Sessions

March 23-25
October 26-28

Workshop B Sessions

April 20-22
September 14-16

NORTHEAST, Newton, MA

May 18-20
October 12-14

WESTERN
Colorado Springs, CO

May 4—6
September 28-30

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

Click here for a
registration form



2009 Workshop Presentations

Presentations by LIM Faculty:

“Birth Order In Bowen Family Systems Theory”, Elaine Boomer

“Is Character A Missing Dimension In Friedman’s Understanding Of Leadership Through Self-Differentiation?”, Larry Matthews

“The Road To Incompetence: The Yoke Is Easy And The Burden Is Light”, Carla Toenniessen

Differentiation As Finding A Voice” And “King David: A Case Study In The Basics Of Bowen Theory”, Margaret Marcuson

“Playing Your Own Tune, Preaching In Your Own Voice: Self-Differentiated Preaching”, Meg Hess

“Bishop Tutu And Murray Bowen: Truth And Reconciliation In South Africa And Emotional Process In Society”, Katharine Baker

“The Most Important Concept In Bowen Theory (But No More Than 70% Of The Time)”, Panel Presentation: Carla Toenniessen, James Lamkin & Andrew Archie. LIM faculty member Bob Dibble served as Moderator

A Series Considering BFST’s Concept of Self From 3 Different Perspectives:

“The Labyrinth Of The Self: A Short History Of An Endless Journey”, Bruce Matthews, Associate Professor Of Philosophy, Bard High School Early College, NYC

“The Illusion Of The Ego...The No Self”, Hank Dunn, Author and former Hospice Chaplain


“Bowen Family Systems Theory’s Concept Of Self: A Theological Perspective”, Larry Matthews

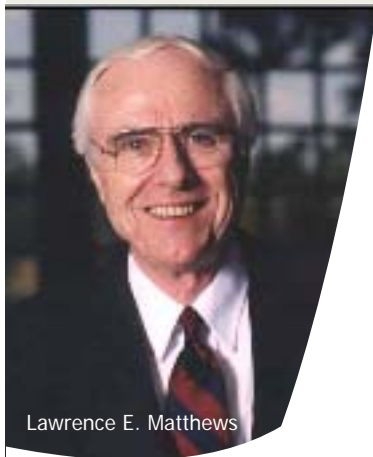
DVD Presentations:

“An Interview With The First Marriage Counselor”, Edwin Friedman

“On The Development Of A Systems Concept Of Supernatural Phenomena: A Status Report”, Michael Kerr, MD ♦

A Systems Sermon by Vanessa Ellison

In this issue we continue the “systems sermons” feature. This issue’s sermon is by LIM participant Vanessa Ellison, Associate Pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Richmond, VA. The sermon is titled “Laying It All Out On The Line,” based on the book of Ruth. Click on the paperclip symbol to access the sermon. 



Lawrence E. Matthews

A Word of Appreciation from the LIM Coordinator

LIM Coordinator Larry Matthews reflects on twenty years of LIM Workshops.

2010 will mark the 20th year of Leadership In Ministry Workshops. This fact never ceases to amaze me. In 1991 LIM workshops began as one workshop that met twice a year at Vienna Baptist Church's Lost River retreat center in West Virginia. There were 11 of us. Last year 111 of us gathered in three sites across the USA.

Our residential workshop format has al-

ways depended upon a host of faculty coaches. We spend one third of each workshop session in the large group where presentations are made, but two thirds of our time is spent in small groups in which BFST is related to individual family of origin work and case studies from participants' work settings. These peer groups are the heart of our workshops.

LIM would not be possible were it not for the twenty three capable people who have served as

faculty coaches since our beginning—twelve of whom were still active in the 2009 workshops! They continue to make creative and challenging workshop presentations and write good books. Examples of both are highlighted in these pages.

I always say to the participants at the close of a workshop session: "Thanks for being here. We couldn't have done this without you." How true that is of our faculty coaches! ♦

It is no surprise that the present recession has increased requests for scholarship help. Almost one-third of our 2008 registrants were unable to register for the 2009 workshops, most of them due to budget cuts of continuing education funds and, in two cases, to job loss. We are grateful that the registration of 19 new persons enabled us to offer viable workshops in all three locations. However, we may very well face a similar situation in 2010.

Although we do not have an official LIM Scholarship Fund, we will gladly receive contributions for this purpose. A few such gifts through the years have enabled us to provide some partial scholarships. This year the congregation of one of our registrants contributed funds that made it possible for another registrant to attend.

We welcome gifts from individuals as well as congregations. Make checks payable to "Lawrence Matthews, LIM Workshops" and note on the check or in an accompanying letter: "LIM Scholarship Fund." Thank you for helping us to continue to offer LIM workshops for a 20th year. ♦

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www.LeadershipinMinistry.com



Feel free to share this newsletter with friends. Back issues are available on our website

Editor: Israel Galindo

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