



Lombard Mennonite Peace Center 101 West 22nd Street, Suite 206, Lombard, IL 60148

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## God's Own Peace: Systems Theory and Spirituality

Since the publication in 1985 of Dr. Edwin Friedman's *Generation to Generation*, many pastors and other church leaders have become aware of Bowen family systems theory as a way of understanding human functioning. This workshop suggests some implications of faith perspectives for family systems theory. It takes seriously recent research into how the brain changes as people engage in meditative prayer. And it introduces participants to simple, classically grounded approaches to meditation. While offering no "quick fix," this workshop will point participants toward a life-long approach to change with profound implications for personal faith and functioning. Pastors and others will discover resources and strategies for enhanced effectiveness and health when providing leadership in anxious church systems.

One possible outline for this workshop would be:

- 9:00-10:30 – **An Introduction to Family Systems Theory**
  - Togetherness and Individuality Forces
  - Fusion and Differentiation of Self
- **Theological Perspectives on Being a Self**
  - Grounding Self in God
  - Meditation and Prayer as a Way Toward Self
- 10:30-10:45 – Break
- 10:45-12:00 – **One Approach to Meditative Prayer**
  - Video Input: Principles and Procedures
  - Time for Meditation: Putting Theory Into Practice
- 12:00-12:45 – Lunch
- 12:45-2:00 – **Other Models of Meditative Prayer**
  - The Cloud of Unknowing
  - Other Traditions
- **Choosing One's Own Practice**
- 2:00-2:15 – Break
- 2:15-3:30 – **Effects of Meditation and Prayer**
  - Anxiety and Spiritual Practice
  - Short-term Effects
  - Long-term Effects
- **Leadership and Meditation: Effecting Change Within Anxious Congregations**

The facilitator for this workshop would be Bob Williamson, who serves with LMPC in an Adjunct Faculty role. He is a graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (M.Div., 1976). Bob has experience as a parish pastor and as a trainer in conflict transformation and a consultant to conflicted churches. He has studied with Edwin Friedman and Peter Steinke, and has been a participant in the Georgetown Family Center's "Special Postgraduate Program in Bowen Family Systems Theory and its Applications" in Washington, D.C.

**Groups interested in exploring the possibility of hosting this event can contact the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center at the above address or phone number.**