

LMPC Newsletter

Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

Summer, 2003

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New Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process

"I would never have made it through this past year – with everything that was happening in my church – without attending this program."

"When I started this program in September, I was experiencing the worst time in my life due to the conflict in my church. Now, as we end this program, I'm entering a new chapter where I can see a lot of hope on the horizon."

These are the sentiments of two pastors who attended LMPC's *Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process* during the past year. Meeting monthly between September and May, the *Clergy Clinic* gives ministers, leaders in religious communities, as well as consultants working in church systems an opportunity to step back periodically from the fray to assess their own capacity for managing themselves in a calm, more differentiated way.

Differentiation is a central concept of family systems theory, one that has profound implications for those in leadership. Self-differentiated leadership includes the ability to define self – based on one's own principles, values, and beliefs – while simultaneously maintaining emotional contact with others in the system.

Another key element includes the capacity to manage the natural reactive tendencies that stem from one's own family of origin dynamics – even in the midst of an anxious congregational system.

LMPC has been offering the monthly *Clergy Clinic* each year since 1999 in various places. Locations in Illinois have included Lombard, Rockford, Normal, and Moline; groups have also met in South Bend, IN and Brookfield, WI. Over the last four years, a total of 150 people have participated in the various groups.

For the 2003-2004 program year, the *Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process* will be offered in two formats:

a monthly *Clergy Clinic* available to people within driving distance of the LMPC office; a second format that meets for three days, three times per year – either for those traveling from afar or those who prefer the intensive format.

Didactic components for each format will include input from LMPC

faculty and video input from Dr. Murray Bowen, Dr. Edwin Friedman, and others. The clinical component in each includes the opportunity to explore one's own family of origin dynamics as a key first step toward enhancing one's ability to function as a well differentiated leader.

Clinical sessions also include the presentation of congregational case studies. Thus, participants will be able to process challenging situations in their ministry setting, while receiving coaching and consultation.

LMPC will again offer in 2003-2004 an *Advanced Clergy Clinic in Family Emotional Process* for those who have previously participated in our *Clergy Clinic* or a similar program elsewhere. It

will also meet three times per year for three days each, following a similar format as the *Clergy Clinic*.

The *Advanced Clergy Clinic* is conceived as a program in which people can participate year after year, since the didactic presentations are different each year. It also includes one day of input during each of the three yearly visits from a guest presenter who is a significant leader in the field of Bowen family systems theory.

Interested persons can contact LMPC at 630-627-0507 to request a registration brochure for either of the three programs, each of which will meet in the western suburbs of Chicago. Or consult our website at www.LMPeaceCenter.org for further information.



2003 Training Events

Mediation Skills Training Institute:

- Aug. 4-8, 2003 - Glen Ellyn, IL
- Sept. 22-26, 2003 - Seattle, WA
- Nov. 17-21, 2003 - Chicago, IL

Here I Stand:

- Oct. 21-23, 2003 - Brookfield, WI

Clergy Clinic:

- Nov. 10-12, 2003 - Chicago, IL area

Advanced Clergy Clinic:

- Oct. 27-29, 2003 - Wheaton, IL

Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations:

- Oct. 10-11, 2003 - Nashville, TN

God's Own Peace: Systems Theory and Spirituality:

- Nov. 5, 2003 - Kansas City, MO

Healthy Congregations:

- Nov. 7-8, 2003 - South Bend, IN

For registration brochures contact LMPC at 630-627-0507.

LMPC's Twentieth Anniversary Dinner — Come Celebrate With Us!

January, 2003, marked the twentieth anniversary for Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. To celebrate this milestone, we will be having a celebration dinner on August 11, 2003. We extend an invitation to all LMPC friends, hoping you can join us for a 6:15 dinner and program at Carmelite Spiritual Center in Darien (\$15 per person). Please call LMPC at 630-627-0507 or email us at Admin@LMPeaceCenter.org to reserve your spot.

Commentary

Rethinking Exit Strategies

by Bob Williamson

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. — Matthew 28:20

Recently the church observed Ascension Day. Forty days after Easter, Jesus returns to the Father – disappearing from his disciples' view.

Did Jesus have an exit strategy? That's a phrase that's been used in varying ways in the last few years.

In finance, an "exit strategy" is the plan an investor has for closing out a particular investment.

In business, an "exit strategy" is the plan an owner has for going out of business.

In employment, an "exit strategy" is the plan for managing one's own termination or layoff.

Then, of course, there's war. Since at least the first Gulf War, the phrase "exit strategy" has been shorthand for the plan to get out of an armed conflict or military intervention once it's been initiated. Some in government have attempted to slow down hasty military action by asking the question before it's even begun: "What's the exit strategy?"

One of the more frequently voiced concerns about current U.S. international policy is the haziness of any apparent "exit strategy" for U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Once dramatically in, how do the troops get out?

An article in BBC News Online explained: "'Exit strategy' is one of those simple-sounding, actually menacing catch phrases we've started

using about war whenever it's uncomfortable to think a little deeper and acknowledge something unpleasant."

However, the use of the term "exit strategy" in the context of war and its management raises larger issues – issues for which recurring military interventions are one symptom.

Thinking of our dealings with other peoples and nations in terms of "exit strategies" implies a certain view of how the U.S. as a nation gets on with others.

Thinking in terms of interventions and subsequent exit strategies implies a way of getting on with others that focuses on episodes rather than relationships, getting in and out rather than living with one another.

Did Jesus have an "exit strategy?" Was his time with us just a quick "in and out," or did he enter into a real relationship with us?

At the very end of Matthew's gospel, Jesus says to his disciples: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Of course he was with them in a different way. Maybe the imparting of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost marks the continuing, but more mature, relationship of Jesus with his disciples and the church. They're on their own, responsible in new ways for their lives as apostles and as church. Yet Jesus is still present, is still their Lord.

Jesus never really exited his relationship with his church. From the beginning, he was in it for the long haul. That's the mark of a relationship that is both important and mature.

One way of talking about maturity in a family is to say that people are better able to have their own thoughts and goals – and to act on them – while allowing others to do the same and to hang in there with each other. Differences don't "do in" the

relationships.

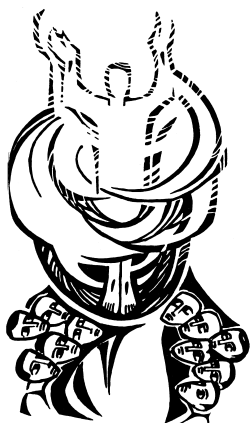
In international affairs, talking about "exit strategies" may betray an immature notion of relationships among peoples and nations.

The U.S. has dealt too often with others in episodic bursts. Long periods of exploitive inattention are characterized by little effort to understand other nations, cultures, or peoples – their needs, their views of the world and its problems.

These periods are punctuated by times of intense over involvement, often with military force, in which our own views and values are clumsily imposed on unwilling recipients.

When things don't go smoothly, we bemoan the absence of an "exit strategy."

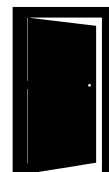
What Jesus models in his life with us isn't an entry and an exit strategy. It's a way of living in relationship for the long haul – the kind of mature relationship that includes boundaries and challenges for all.



The Prayer Closet

Despite the recent launching of the "Road Map to Peace," the effort to bring justice and peace to the Middle East will be a long-term challenge.

Jeremiah reminds us, "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord... They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit."



Gracious God, we pray for strength to be like that tree: able to survive times of drought, able to remain calm, and able at last to be an instrument in bringing to fruition peace, justice and mercy where there is violence, injustice, and revenge.

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The Bookshelf

Why Smart Companies Do Dumb Things

by Erin Dalian

The Anxious Organization by Jeffery A. Miller. Tempe, AZ: Facts on Demand Press, 2002. 219 Pp. \$17.95.

Bowen family systems theory has been applied successfully by therapists, consultants, and pastors. *The Anxious Organization* demonstrates how Bowen theory applies to the business world.

The author, Jeffery Miller, has experience as an organizational consultant, family therapist, and coach to top executives. His purpose in writing the book is to alert others to how the ideas of Bowen theory can contribute to personal and organizational success.

The book begins with the assertion that all organizations are anxious. As living systems, organizations inevitably experience the instinctive response to threat characteristic of all organisms.

Organizations deal with a multitude of threats on a regular basis – external,

internal, and those experienced by individuals in the system. Due to the contagious nature of anxiety, it's easy for the real threat to go unaddressed, as people engage in a variety of reactive behaviors.

The book details how anxiety driven behaviors – like distancing, herding, triangling, blaming, scapegoating, cut-off, and overfunctioning-underfunctioning reciprocity – are played out via the complex interactions characteristic of organizational life.

Throughout the book, Miller helps such concepts come alive by serializing the story of two companies – Pronto, an advertising agency, and *My Way*, a newly emerging online magazine. As Pronto helps launch *My Way*, anxiety rises. The reader readily identifies with the behaviors of the various characters as they engage in an ever escalating cycle of reactivity.

The illustration becomes particularly instructive as the author steps into a coaching role in working with certain key individuals. The resulting dialogues provide insight into how effective coaching challenges leaders to do their own best systems thinking, rather than providing administrative, managerial solutions.

Via the coaching process, the employees come to understand that conflict

is not to be taken personally. Conflict simply points to the place in the system where organizational anxiety is focusing.

Key individuals in the illustrated companies are ultimately able to calm themselves, identify the underlying sources of anxiety, and take I-positions while addressing the real issues. The story ends with the successful launch of *My Way* – as principle, not reactivity, becomes the basis for decision-making.

The final chapter tells the story of one of Miller's clients and the impact of the coaching process. One is able to see systems thinking put in action – and how one leader, changing his behavior, was able to change his company.

The story drives home Miller's central thesis: "To remain calm, collected, and clear in the midst of collective anxiety is to be a leader."

Although written for the business world, the book also contains valuable insights for church leaders. Indeed, its usefulness extends to anyone committed to being a transforming presence in the midst of the inevitable anxieties that characterize organizational life.



Until August 31, 2003, *The Anxious Organization* may be purchased from LMPC for \$16.15 (10% off the regular price), plus \$3.00 shipping. Illinois residents please add 6.75% sales tax (\$1.09).

Previews

A Selection of LMPC Summer Events

Mediation Skills Training Institute:

- For the Baptist Convention of Maryland-Delaware, at The Baptist Center, Columbia, MD, June 16-20.
- At First Congregational Church, UCC, Glen Ellyn, IL, August 4-8.
- For the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida, at Day Spring Episcopal Conference Center, Parrish, FL, August 18-22.
- For Unity of Louisville, Louisville, KY, September 8-12.
- At Seattle Mennonite Church, Seattle, WA, September 22-26.

Here I Stand: Leading Change Through Self-Differentiation:

- At New Hope Community Church, Glendora, CA, June 10-12.

Healthy Congregations:

- At Hope Lutheran Church, Toledo, OH, June 6-7.
- At Unity Church of Peace, South Bend, IN, June 7.

- At First United Methodist Church, Westmont, IL, June 22.
- For Okaw River District, Illinois Great Rivers Conference, United Methodist Church, at First United Methodist Church, Decatur, IL, September 5-6.
- For Presbytery of Santa Fe, Albuquerque NM, September 19-20.
- For East Iowa Presbytery at Collins Plaza Hotel, Cedar Rapids, IA, September 26-27.

Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations:

- For Shalom Zone Ministries, Texas Annual Conference, United Methodist Church, at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, Houston, TX August 1-2.

Clergy Clinic:

- At LMPC, Lombard, IL, September 4.

Here I Stand Clinic:

- At LMPC, Lombard, IL, September 30.

LMPC Responds to War in Iraq

Although the U.S. has declared "an end to armed conflict" in Iraq, the fallout of the war will continue for years. Sadly it appears that U.S. leaders may launch further preemptive wars in the future.

LMPC remains committed to challenging others to heed the call of God to "seek peace and pursue it" in the midst of these troubling times. On June 7, 2003, LMPC cosponsored *People of Faith – People of Peace* organized by the West Suburban Faith Based Peace Coalition. Held in Lisle, IL, at St. Procopius Abbey, almost 400 people attended the event.

We also continue to offer an array of educational programs and A-V resources on Christ's way of peace and the Middle East conflict. Contact us for a list of programs and other resources available to your church.

The A-V Shelf

A Plea for Justice for Palestinians

by Erin Dalian

The Longing. Host Productions, 30 minutes, 2002. VHS.

The Longing draws attention to the plight of the Palestinian people by excerpting two scenes from a full-length play by Robert Hostetter. The video also includes interviews and documentary footage to accompany the dramatic scenes.

It opens with introductory vignettes that place the current situation in its historical context. Since the 1948 establishment of Israel as a state, the West has only been exposed to one perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The story of the Palestinian people has not been heard. Few are aware of the fact that, in the process of Israel becoming a state, 418 Palestinian villages were destroyed and over 750,000 Palestinians became refugees.

The video highlights two scenes from the play, which is based on an oral history Hostetter recorded from 1998-2000. The scenes – *Settling a Question* and *Building a Real Peace* – recount two typical stories that grow out of the Palestinian experience.

In *Settling a Question*, an Anglican priest, his wife, and their youngest son struggle with the restraints placed on those living under occupation. Despite the fact that they are forced to leave

their door unlocked so Israeli soldiers can enter their home at will – to climb on the roof to conduct surveillance during an Israeli imposed curfew – they demonstrate hospitality to the soldiers who parade through their home.

Their son, hoping to graduate from high school during the volatile time, breaks curfew in order to go to school to take his final exams. Not having reached the school, he returns bloodied from being beaten by Israeli soldiers. The family's Christian faith undergirds their commitment to respond nonviolently to the injustice they are suffering.

Building a Real Peace tells the story of a Palestinian man who wants to build a home on his land. Each time he applies to the Israeli government for a building permit, he faces a new obstacle. He decides to build without a permit.

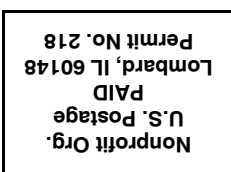
Soon afterward, their home becomes one of the more than 9,000 Palestinian homes destroyed by the Israelis since 1967. A community of Israelis and Palestinians come together to rebuild the family's house after each time the Israeli government demolishes it.

The video demonstrates that there are Israelis and Palestinians who are working together in the quest to build a just peace. The video would be useful for a study group interested in hearing another side to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – that of the voiceless victims of injustice.

To borrow this video, call LMPC at 630-627-0507.



Return Service Requested



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