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## Charting Self: The Beliefs Chart as a Tool for Change

Over the past twenty years, many church leaders have become aware of Bowen family systems theory as a way of understanding themselves and the functioning of their congregations. Those who grasp the theory appreciate the need to look beyond “quick fix” answers to the challenges facing the church, its leaders, and society as a whole.

*Charting Self: The Beliefs Chart as a Tool for Change* is for individuals who want to begin a long-term effort at clarifying the “solid self” which provides a basis for responsible thought and choice in an anxious world. The workshop assumes that many of our beliefs have more to do with being comfortable in relationships than with independent thought.

*Charting Self* offers participants a way to come to grips with the interplay of beliefs and relationships in their own lives through the use of a *Beliefs Chart*. The *Beliefs Chart* is designed to help one to clarify those beliefs and principles which are one’s own – independent of relationship pressures. It offers participants a way to be more objective about their changing beliefs and relationships and to grow in the capacity to choose a steady course in life. Individual progress in this area has profound implications for the functioning of one’s family, one’s congregation, and all of one’s relationships.

- 9:00-10:30 – **Differentiation and Charting Self**
  - Introduction to Systems Thinking
  - Solid Self and Pseudo-Self
  - Beliefs Chart: Case Study #1
- 10:30-10:45 – Break
- 10:45-12:00 – **Anxiety and Charting Self**
  - Automatic Reactions to Anxiety
  - Beliefs Chart: Case Study #2
- 12:00-1:00 – Lunch
- 1:00-2:15 – **“Proving” Solid Self or Pseudo-Self**
  - Multigenerational Patterns
  - Beliefs Chart: Case Study #3
- 2:15-2:30 – Break
- 2:30-4:00 – **Charting Your Own History**
  - Thinking About Your Own Beliefs and Relationships
  - Beginning Your Own Beliefs Chart

The facilitator for *Charting Self* is Bob Williamson, who serves with LMPC in an Adjunct Faculty role. Bob is a graduate of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (M.Div., 1976). In addition to the *Charting Self* workshop, Bob has developed the *Here I Stand* approach to congregational change which also employs the *Beliefs Chart*. He has attended training at the Bowen Center for the Study of the Family in Washington, D.C. LMPC staff have extensive training in family systems theory and consult with pastors and congregations from that theoretical framework. In order to continue the educational process after the workshop, LMPC books on family systems theory and its applications to the functioning of churches and church leaders can be made available to participants.

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