

Associated Canadian Theological Schools

ChM 661: Family Ministry

Curtis Congo, EdD
Fall 2008
3 credit hours

ccongo@shaw.ca or curtisc@twu.ca
In Conjunction with the NOVA conference
Dates: October 23-25

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the way in which the needs of the family are met within the church or other 'family' work contexts. The student will study a biblical, philosophical, theoretical, developmental, strategic, administrative and research approach in understanding and addressing these needs.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course the student should be able to:

- A. Explain a biblical and theological rationale for family ministry.
- B. Describe a personal philosophical position of what family ministry is.
- C. Identify the stages of the Family Life Cycle and express strategies that bring healing, strengthening, resourcing and disciplining to meet specific needs of the family members and family as a whole.
- D. To demonstrate understanding of the social trends in society that affects families and identifies practical ways to accept and adapt so that ministry is inclusive and would effectively reach people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- E. Describe an administrative strategy to ensure that family ministry happens in the local church.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. ATTENDANCE is required at the NOVA conference put on by the Willow Creek Association of Canada. Further, the student must attend the following: 1) all Soul sessions; 2) compass session: Faith at Home and 3) Tool sessions: How Does Family Fit? and Fireworks and Fumbles.
- B. LITERATURE STUDY The student will read the textbooks (approximately 1000 pages). From each text you will choose three chapters and submit for each chapter:
 - 1. The author's thesis and your personal comments on the issue.
 - 2. An explanation of how the information you have read has helped you understand and/or deal with a real life situation.

You are invited to engage the material in positive or negative ways. Your critical thinking should enhance the way you practically use the material. The commentary on each chapter should be about 350 words.

C. PROJECTS (The student will choose one of the 1st three projects and also do the 4th project, so 2 of the 4 in total.).

NOTE: You **MUST** obtain written approval from the church where you choose people from to interview. This consent letter **MUST** be on the church's letterhead and **MUST** include the following: (1) date, (2) your name indicating the church's approval to conduct the interviews, (3) name or description of the study that is being approved & (4) name, signature and position of the person who is providing the approval. Further, this consent letter must be sent to: The Research Ethics Board of Trinity Western University, 7600 Glover Road, Langley, B.C., V2Y 1Y1. (The instructor will provide more information on Research Ethics Board expectations and approvals as part of the class.)

PLEASE USE THE QUESTIONS PROVIDED AT THE BACK OF THIS SYLLABUS FOR THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU COMPLETE.

Potential Project #1: *Study of the Single Parent Family*

Single parent families are prevalent in contemporary society and in the church. In this study, students are expected to write a four page (double-spaced) paper exploring how the church has adapted its ministries to care for this large demographic. To get closer to the issues that face people in this situation, students are to interview a single parent in their church. Describe his/her circumstances. Specifically report how the church has and has not served this family well. Then present your own evaluation of how the church has handled this family and the challenges that the church faces in dealing with single parent families. Include in this explanation how attitudes toward this non-traditional family affect our actions. Finally, give some ideas/suggestions for how the church could better serve the single parent family.

OR

Potential Project #2: *Study of the Blended Family*

With high divorce rates in contemporary culture both inside and outside of the church, blended families are another reality in the church. These families face a barrage of challenges much different than that of the single parent family. Do the same assignment (four pages; double-spaced) as for the single parent family, interviewing this time, a blended family. You can include the father and mother, children, and even grandparents for a thorough picture. Again, explore how churches have responded, your evaluation, and ideas.

OR

Potential Project #3: *Study of Social Issues Facing Families*

Rising social issues challenge the church to be compassionate and caring, often in situations that are awkward and where judgmental and standoffish attitudes can surface. The most common problem is our lack of information regarding the situations. These would include pornography addiction, homosexuality, depression, and drug addiction. Other challenges include physical or learning disabilities like autism or dyslexia. Though they are not controversial, they require the church to be adaptable and act in responsible ways. Your assignment is to research through periodicals, texts, and internet, ONE issue that affects families and ultimately the way we minister to them. Though you may not be able to present conclusive answers, demonstrate that you have grappled with the topic. Explore the church's response as "the body of Christ" to this particular challenge to the family. The assignment should be three-four pages, double-spaced.

AND (remember you only do 1 of the above 3 projects)

Project #4 (this is a required project for all taking this course): *Field Research of Realities of Family Ministries in a Local Church*

The student will spend time discussing with the leadership of a church they attend, about their thinking, attitudes and operative plans for ministering to the family. The student will then write out a four page paper that reflects their findings from these interviews. The intent of this project is to focus on what the leadership of your local church thinks and addresses related to the family as a unit and not what is being focused on in regard to developmental ministries (children, teens or adults).

Note: Please inform your interviewees that all will be kept confidential. However, the ideas they share may be presented in general to others as solutions to our questions and desire to make the church a more user-friendly entity.

D. PAPER *Philosophy of Family Ministries*

If you were candidating for a position in leading a Family Ministry focus in a church or other ministry setting and you were asked to explain your philosophy and approach, what would be your response? Please address the biblical basis; the why; the strategy; and the development of an effective ministry that is both preventive and responsive. This paper should not be less than 10 pages and include a minimum of 10 references within literature related to family ministries.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS:

Balswick, Jack and Balswick, Judith. *Family a Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1999.

Friedman, Edwin. *Generation to Generation Family Process in Church and Synagogue*. New York: The Guildford Press, 1985.

May, Scottie, Posterski, Beth, Stonehouse, Catherine, Cannell, Linda *Children Matter – Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family and Community*
Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans's Publishing, 2005

COURSE ASSIGNMENT % VALUES:

- A. Attendance 0%
- B. Literature Study: 30%
- C. Course Projects:
 - 1. 1 Project (from 1-3 possibilities) 15%
 - 2. Project #4 15%
- D. Paper - Philosophy of Ministry: 40%

PLEASE NOTE: The student will have three months after the completion of the training conference to complete the process and submit all assignments.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	Superior	4.30
A	Excellent	4.00
A-	Very Good	3.70
B+	Proficient	3.30
B	Good	3.00
B-	Average	2.70
C+	Adequate	2.30
C	Acceptable	2.00
C-	Needs Work	1.70
F	Below Standard	0.00

Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://students.twu.ca>

All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Paper Formatting

Students need to adhere to Turabian format except in counselling courses, for which APA format is used.

Students are encouraged strongly to use RefWorks (available through the library home page www.twu.ca/library) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. They will need to be aware of the need to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: <http://faculty.ucc.edu/egh-damerow/turabian.htm> or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. Note that in RefWorks the available formatting styles are those of Turabian (Notes), 6th edition, and APA – American Psychological Association, 5th edition.

Counselling students are expected to purchase the APA Publications Manual. More information found at the following website. <http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>. CANIL students can locate this on the CANIL intranet, under the “student” side. A hard copy is given to incoming students in the fall.

Please check with your professor to see which one he/she recommends you use!!

Research Ethics

Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) **MUST** be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/research/ethics/Main.asp>. Those needing additional clarification may contact Dr. Bruce Guenther. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Honesty

A fundamental expectation, grounded in biblical ethics, for anyone involved in academic work at ACTS is that he/she practice academic honesty. Students must become familiar with, and adhere to, the principles and requirements associated with academic honesty. Further details on this subject are contained in the ACTS Student Handbook in section 4.12. The handbook is available online on the ACTS webpage (www.acts.twu.ca) at the following link: www.acts.twu.ca/Handbook.html.

Equity of Access

It is the responsibility of a student with a learning disability to inform the ACTS Director of Student Life of that fact before the beginning of a course so that necessary arrangements may be made to facilitate the student's learning experience. We are unable to accommodate any student who informs the Director of Student Life of a disability after the beginning of class.

Questions to be Used in Processing Projects 1-2 & 4

Project #1: Study of the Single Parent Family

1. As a single parent you are faced with life challenges that no doubt place a lot of pressure on you. Could you share some of your greatest challenges as a single parent?
2. As you have become a more experienced single parent have you found the role to become easier or more difficult? Why?
3. What would you give as your 3-5 greatest needs in your role as a single parent?
4. In what way has the church that you attend been helpful to your role as a single parent?
5. Has the church you attend missed the mark in helping you with your role as a single parent? What specifically could they do better to help you in this unique role?
6. If you could give 3-5 suggestions for churches in general to be helpful to the single parent, what would those be? Which of these are the two most important for the church to respond to?

Project #2: Study of the Blended Family

1. As a parent of a blended family you are faced with life challenges that no doubt place a lot of pressure on you. Could you share some of your greatest challenges as a single parent?
2. As you have become a more experienced parenting blended families have you found the role to become easier or more difficult? Why?
3. What would you give as your 3-5 greatest needs in your role as parents of a blended family?
4. In what way has the church that you attend been helpful to your role as parents of a blended family?
5. Has the church you attend missed the mark in helping you with your role as a parent of a blended family? What specifically could they do better to help you in this unique role?
6. If you could give 3-5 suggestions for churches in general to be helpful to parents of blended families, what would those be? Which of these are the two most important for the church to respond to?

Project #4: Field Research of Realities of Family Ministries in a Local Church

1. Has the leadership of our church specifically discussed how we can strengthen the family? If so, what were ideas considered and initiated?
2. What structural plans have been considered that will help our church plan yearly for putting some emphasis on the family?
3. What thought has gone into limiting our nightly ministries so that the family can have time together?
4. What would you as leadership consider to be the greatest needs the family faces?
5. What initiatives would you like to see begin related to:
 - a. Strengthening marriage relationships?
 - b. Equipping parents in their God-given roles?

