

BIBL 6262 – Fall 2012

Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture

Theme: Family

September 27-29, 2012

North Park Theological Seminary

3 Credit hours

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Each fall, North Park Theological Seminary hosts the international *Symposium on the Theological Reading of Scripture* featuring prominent scholars from different countries. The Symposium provides a forum for presentation of perspectives on a theme for the benefit of the church. Please make travel arrangements so that you arrive on campus in time for our group's meeting on Thursday afternoon, and can remain through the Symposium on Saturday until after our group's session. Attendance at all sessions is required, and reading of the entire symposium materials is assumed.

See Attachment #2 for an outline of Symposium schedule. Attend all sessions and participate in our group's sessions outside the regular Symposium schedule. *The days and times of our group's meetings are indicated in bold.* (Note: We won't plan meals together to give you opportunity to sit with a presenter or other Symposium attendee of interest.)

Course Description

This course is held in conjunction with the annual *North Park Symposium on the Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. The course will foster concentrated reflection on the papers presented at the Symposium and allow students to participate more meaningfully in the Symposium event.

Accommodations

Students with documented disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Deidre Robinson, Seminary office of Academic Services (773-244-5240, drobinson1@northpark.edu). Please do so as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely manner. If needed, appointments can be relocated.

Learning Assignments

Before the Symposium:

1. Read all the Symposium papers. The papers will be distributed electronically and should be read completely/critically prior to the start of the Symposium.
2. As you read the papers, make rough notes in margins or on separate pages as you reflect on one or more of the following questions: How do the papers compare in approach? What conclusions do they offer? How are they similar? How do they differ? What central insight do you draw from each paper? What areas of further research or questions does the comparison of papers indicate? You will share some of your observations at the first Thursday meeting.
3. Write about a 150-200 word (about half page, regular formatting) analytical review of one of the symposium papers—your choice. You will share your review in small clusters at the first Thursday meeting of our group.

4. From your review or from another paper, prepare at least one question for the presenter, and seek opportunity to ask it during the Symposium. We will discuss your questions during our first session—Thursday September 27, 3:30-5:30 p.m.
5. Read the New Testament chapter from Julie Hanlon Rubio. *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family*. (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 2003). This chapter (Chapter 3, *New Testament Vision*) is included in the PDF document sent to you in June. If you did not receive it, contact me.
6. Read the excerpts from *Exploring Family Theories*. This document is found in the Dropbox uploaded August 8, 2012. If you did not receive it contact me.

Following the Symposium:

Because of the amount of [careful] reading you have to do *before* the Symposium, time that counts toward the total hours for the 3 credit hours, you will select **ONE** of the following categories of *post*-Symposium response--*Theological/Theoretical Post Symposium Response, OR Practical Post Symposium Response*.

However, if your interests are a combination of the practical and theoretical, you may design a project that fits your career interests and/or the context in which you are working where the theoretical and practical are merged.

Category I: Theological/Theoretical Post-Symposium Response. Select ONE of the following (or adapt to more precisely fit your professional interests and/or context):

- Select a Symposium paper (or papers) that you believe would be helpful to and received well by leaders/parents in your church. (You may choose the paper for which you wrote the 150-200 word “analytical review” above.) Summarize the paper(s) in half a page—an “executive summary” if you will to assist the readers. Then prepare a 2-3 study guide for a small group session of about one hour *that you will facilitate (counted as part of your course time)*. Participants will read and reflect on your guide prior to the session. The following questions are suggested as you prepare the guide: What biblical/theological/theoretical perspective is/are given by the presenter(s)? How do these perspectives compare with what you believe to be the common understanding of “family” in your congregation? What implications might there be for the church’s pastoral practice? Send me an email following this session with a brief report of how it went.
- Select a theme from one or more of the Symposium papers—a theme that intrigues you. Also reflect on the themes from the book excerpts for possible relevance. Imagine that you have been invited to present a paper to a Symposium. Following the theme, actually prepare a paper suitable for such a context (use the length of the Family Symposium papers as a guide for length). In addition to the paper, design a 3-5 page response guide that could be used to stimulate discussion at your Symposium. Follow the basic intent that your paper and the response guide will be of service to the church directly or obliquely. Send me the paper and response guide. Meet with a group of colleagues (Symposium attendees and/or others), ask them to read your paper. Then meet with them in a context of

your choosing for about one hour (*counted as part of your course time*) to get their responses. Send me an email following this session with a brief report of how it went.

Category II: Practical Post-Symposium Response. Select ONE of the following (or adapt to more precisely fit your professional interests and/or context):

- Read the brief introductory summary of Rubio’s book in Attachment #1. Reflect on her statement that it is impossible for the church to provide a blueprint for families, and that it is up to families to figure out how to live out their calling. Prepare a 3-5 page discussion leading to action paper for the relevant leadership group in a church. (Presumably one or more of the papers will assist with this reflection.) If you believe that a church can provide a “blueprint” of what might it consist? If you believe Rubio is correct, how does the church help families to “figure out” their calling? Distribute the discussion paper to a small group, *then facilitate a one-hour discussion designed to lead to concrete ideas or an actual plan that can be implemented. The one-hour counts as course time. After the meeting send me an email with the document and a short statement of how it went.*
- Organize a one-hour meeting with 4-6 stakeholders to determine their interests and suggestions concerning family ministry. This hour will count as course time. The intent is to lead the stakeholders to identify one or two ideas that your church could implement in the coming year. For example, you might use one or two of the following ideas to stimulate the group’s thinking. *After the meeting, send me an email with a brief report on how it went.*
 - (1) Design intergenerational learning experiences for family clusters or multi-age clusters that may or may not include family members. (See also Attachment #3) These learning experiences can be designed around content such as a biblical theme, worship, service, a particular skill.
 - (2) It has been suggested that the church is a “tribe” of families. Where once the emphasis was that the church would develop programs for spiritual formation and bible learning; the emphasis more recently is that the church develops educational/formative opportunities where parents and caregivers learn how to lead spiritual formation etc for their own children. Design one or more learning experiences for parents/caregivers. (See also Reggie Joiner. *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide*. Colorado Springs: CO, David C. Cook Publishing, 2009)
 - (3) Reading to children is a vitally important activity for their development. Design a read-aloud workshop for parents, caregivers, or other relatives.
 - (4) Use the “Family Menu” (see Attachment #3) to design a workshop for parents and caregivers where they will select activities and create their own “book” of family ideas.
 - (5) Encourage children and youth and families to develop the sustainable habit of service and mission. Help each family unit design a “One Day to End Poverty” experience. (See Shannon Daley-Harris and Jeffery Keenan. *Our Day to End Poverty: 24 Ways You can Make a Difference*. (San

Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2007). See also a resource like Della Halverson, *Helping Children Care for God's People: 200 Ideas for Teaching Stewardship and Mission* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994).

- (6) Generally, the only Sunday program where parents/caregivers must bring their children to the area is the preschool program. Suggest the creation of a “parent/caregiver reception area” where you can make contact, suggest parenting resources, get feedback for ministry, and so on.
- (7) Building on Rubio’s notion that the language is a “diversity of families” and drawing on a resource like Kathleen McGinnis’, *Celebrating Racial Diversity* (St. Louis, MO: Institute for Peace and Justice, 1994), design experiences to assist families become more aware of the opportunity for multicultural relationships.

ATTACHMENT #1
Rubio: Introductory Comments

Julie Hanlon Rubio. 2003. *A Christian Theology of Marriage and Family*. New York, NY: Paulist Press

Today the language of a monolithic family has changed to that of a “diversity of families”. The definition of many being that of a “group of people who love and care for each other” (3-4).

In today’s culture, the notion of a mom at home with dad being the sole breadwinner, is viewed as unrealistic. Families require at least two incomes to survive—at least in America. However, the reality also exists of many families making it comfortably on the national median income of \$30,000-50,000 (9).

Research in the mid-1980s among families in Silicon Valley, CA suggested that it is working class families that are rewriting the notion of what it means to be family in the late 20th century (11).

Michael Lawler, a Catholic marriage scholar, observed that the media image of the 1950s family was never a common reality and, “Healthy processes or ways of functioning are far more important to him than particular forms or structures” (13). Family forms have varied historically, and vary in the present. If one can free oneself from defining family by a particular form or ideal, then the question of values and processes can be discussed without equating values with a particular form.

Conservative evangelicals, such as James Dobson, Max Stackhouse and others, have described the family in terms of a form given by God to human beings (see pp. 14-17). The form includes particular role definitions for men and women and children in the family unit (15). Other evangelicals, such as Stephen Post (*Spheres of Love: Toward a New Ethics of the Family*, 1994) attempt to hold to traditional forms while at the same time upholding gender equality (in Rubio, 15).

Rubio asserts that if families look to church teachings for guidance, “they will find a general set of ideas to guide them and a call to involve themselves in the process of the church’s theological reflection on marriage and family. The church does not give them a blueprint of how to conduct their family life. The church’s teachers have enough wisdom to know that producing such a blueprint is impossible. Instead, they present their reflections on what families are called to be and ask families themselves to do the important work of discerning how they are to live out this calling. They present a moral vision; it is up to families to fill in the details” (23).

ATTACHMENT #2
SYMPOSIUM Schedule
FAMILY
September 27-September 29, 2012

Thursday, September 27

3:30-5:30 **Group Meeting**
7:00-7:30 Presentation
7:30-7:40 Response
7:40-8:30 Discussion
8:30-8:45 *Evening Prayers- Isaacson Chapel*

Friday, September 28

9:00-9:30 Presentation
9:30-9:40 Response
9:40-10:30 Discussion

10:30-11:00 *Coffee*

11:00-11:30 Presentation
11:30-11:40 Response
11:40-12:30 Discussion

12:30-1:45 *Lunch-N-I*

1:45-2:15 Presentation
2:15-2:25 Response
2:25-3:15 Discussion

3:30-5:30 **Group Meeting**

7:00-7:30 Presentation
7:30-7:40 Response
7:40-8:30 Discussion
8:30-8:45 *Evening Prayers-Isaacson Chapel*

Saturday, September 29

9:00-9:30 Presentation
9:30-9:40 Response
9:40-10:30 Discussion
10:40-11:30 Worship

11:30-12:30 *Lunch- N-1*

12:30-1:00 Presentation
1:00-1:10 Response
1:10-2:00 Discussion

2:00 -2:15 *Coffee*

2:15-2:45 Presentation
2:45-2:55 Response
2:55-3:45 Discussion

4:00-6:00 **Group Meeting**

ATTACHMENT #3

A Menu of Activities for Use in Family Ministry

There is very little curriculum for family/intergenerational learning. However, it isn't difficult to create experiences. Most Christian bookstores carry idea/activity books for families. You can purchase 3-5 of these books and have a large selection of ideas to choose from. Then it is simply a matter of getting a team together to organize how the activities you have selected can be done with your church. The following categories are meant as a guide. Choosing activities in some or all of these categories will give you the variety and balance needed. *Linda Cannell*

Guidelines for Preparing Family and Intergenerational Learning Experiences

As you work with families and congregations over a period of time, you will want to develop a balanced "menu" of learning experiences. The following template is offered as guide for the development of these experiences. Purchase or borrow a number of books or manuals that have been written to give parents ideas for activities at home. As you read through these sources, you will find activities that can be used in the following categories. Subheadings in each category are suggestive of the sorts of experiences you can create.

1. Biblical Orientation

- Present issues and draw on principles from Scripture to deal with the issues.
- Use stories/characters from Scripture to illustrate Christian character, values, and so on.
- Enhance Sunday School instruction through activities that lead to application of
- Biblical truth.
- Provide overviews of Scripture, for example, ordering of events and people in a time line. Activities may integrate with the Sunday School curriculum.

2. Building Relational Skills

- Understanding and dealing with emotions.
- Communication skills—listening, confrontation.
- Enhancing cooperation.
- Appreciating others' unique gifts.
- Learning to work together.
- Learning to respect one another.
- Encouraging behaviors that show respect, consideration, caring, sense of responsibility.

3. Practicing Skills That Become Part of Individual Family Life

- Family devotions.
- Family problem solving/decision making.
- Family ministry projects.
- Learning to have fun together (using leisure time effectively).

4. Family/Intergenerational Ministry

- Build a network of families or intergenerational grouping to reach out to others.
- Develop helping/service projects

5. Experiences for Special Days

- Plan special Christmas/Easter celebrations.
- Create special family celebrations.