



*Special Issue for
the 8th Anniversary of Oasis FLEC (2010-2017)*



**A Reflection
on the Sequential Development of the Ministry
by God's Grace
by
Rev Dr Francis Ngoi**

In the early 1970s, when I started my theological education, I began my search for a practical family life education which can equip Christians to function effectively in the various seasons of family life. I was disappointed not to be able to find any record of Family Life Ministry in the History of Christian Nurture. Therefore, when I was serving in the pastoral ministry, I made frequent attempts to call upon our community to give some attention to the family life ministry.

I thank God for the opportunity given to me by the Chinese Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Singapore in 2002 to spearhead a study and develop a family life education ministry. After eight years of labouring, some fruits materialised but according to the Book of Methodist Discipline, I had reached the retirement age by then and had to leave the position at the end of 2009.

Fortunately, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, I did not stop nurturing the seed that had been sown and made a personal commitment to God to further develop this ministry. As Jesus said, "This is what the Kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head." (Mk.4:26-29).

Perhaps after the first eight years, I had only got the stalk, but in the last



eight years the head had seemingly grown. I believe that over the rest of the years, the full kernel will naturally be in the head. Let me share how the head has been growing.





With the principal of
Shandong Theological Seminary

2010: By *faith*, the Oasis Family Life Enrichment Centre was registered in Singapore in the beginning of the year with our wholehearted belief that God would provide the resources and the direction for the development of the ministry that is urgently needed in this century. The ministry's aim is to bring restoration to marriages and

families that have been destroyed by Satan, in the light of God's blueprint for marriage and family. I also advocated a maturing process of spiritual life through sequential development of Christians through the family life cycle in accordance to 1 Peter 1:5-7 where we are urged to "Make every effort to add to your faith, virtue, to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly affection; and to brotherly affection, love for all men." Family life might then be a practical means of grace to enable believers "to go on to maturity" (Heb.6:1)

We experienced God's miraculous guidance in our visits to places such as Jinan, Shenyang, Qingdao, Weihai, Dalian, Fuzhou, Shenzhen, Beijing, and Hainan during the year. During those visits, several seminars on marriage and family life were conducted at Three-Self churches, house churches and even a theological seminary. We also had dialogues with the members of Lianghui in Qingdao which provided us with the opportunity to explore and identify the needs of the churches in China. We distributed more than one thousand sets of our books on "Guide to Christian Family Life" and "Family Altar II" as our gifts to the agencies we met, hoping to stir their interest in family life ministry. The books were published in China through the help of Lianghui in Jiangsu Province.

Visiting the building site of the North Eastern Theological Seminary while it was under construction was a most unforgettable experience for me. I was impressed by a prayer tent set up at the site where a 24-hour prayer chain was conducted daily for the salvation of all nations. When I knelt down and



Praying for the salvation of all nations



prayed in the tent, I sensed that China would be a blessing to all nations of the world. Therefore, promoting family wellness ministry in China is definitely a timely God-led mission. We need a great *faith* to produce such work.

2011: God provided me with a house in Horizon Hills, Johor Bahru, Malaysia, as an office to extend our family therapy ministry and a quiet environment for me to write the textbooks for the Family Wellness course series and the Devotion Guide for Family Altar series.



Where our JB home is

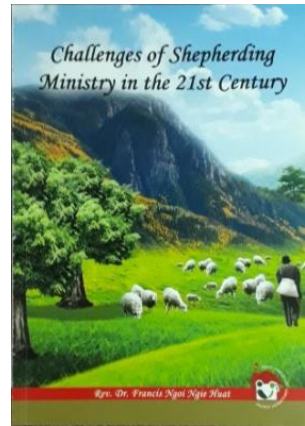
Besides the writing of the self-awareness textbook, we were busy conducting various programmes for courting couples, married couples, parents, senior adults and students of family life educator courses in China and Malaysia, and even solemnizing marriages for the non-Christian community in Singapore as



Solemnizing marriages

a means of propagating God's blueprint for marriage. All the available services of the centre were done with our conviction of living out the *virtue* of Christ. For He said, "I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. "(Jn.13:15) "For even the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve." (Mk.10:45)

2012: During the year, a booklet on “The Challenge of Shepherding Ministry in 21st Century” was published and mailed to some pastors in Malaysia and Singapore with the hope of stirring up their interest in working together to counter the crisis of marriage breakdown and family dysfunction as well as the growing influence of LGBT. The booklet was also used in the workshops we conducted for interns of our Family Life Educators to deepen their conviction of promoting the family wellness ministry.



I was then inspired to speed up the writing on self-awareness and the other books for the family wellness course series. These books would be useful resources to our interns as they could use them for facilitating group study of the course or in other ways that suited the course participants. This would also ensure that the interns and the course participants would acquire the *knowledge* and *wisdom* originating from the Scripture to work on their own marriages and family lives. Ultimately, they would be equipped for helping others around them.



Workshops with pastors
from Pingtan & Malaysia
with the book

2013: Through working with self-control and complete trust in the help of the Lord, the textbooks for Self-Awareness and Marriage Enrichment courses were published within a year. The programmes that we had in Indonesia, Myanmar, China, Singapore and Malaysia kept us very busy and without self-control and trusting fully in the Lord, this urgently needed project would not have been accomplished.



With the Bandung Church

Thus, we believed that if we could continue working with self-control and reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit, the family wellness course series would certainly benefit the course participants in the following ways:

1. Accepting the salvation of Jesus Christ;
2. Enriching their marriages and family lives;
3. Being involved with the Covenant Family Group;
4. Being equipped for the ministry of building up the body of Christ;
5. Having family altar in their respective home;
6. Affirming the function and identity of man and woman; and
7. Going on to maturity.

Thus it was imperative for us to form teams among the educators (interns) as well as course participants which would be followed up by covenant family groups in order to enhance their capacity of **self-control**. Members of the teams or groups could encourage one another to overcome the weaknesses of their flesh and work on what they had been inspired to do. We therefore encouraged our interns to recruit members who had the potential of working as team members and bring them for the family life educator training in our centre. Similarly when they conducted any family wellness course, they should work towards forming family covenant groups.



At Myanmar Theological School

2014: A judge we met in Lijiang when we were teaching a course at the end of 2013 advised us to register our work as a company in China publishing materials for internal use, so as to allow us to promote our work legally. We therefore spent about a week working with our staff in Hangzhou to apply for the registration of Hangzhou Eden Garden Wellness Consultancy

Company. As it would be registered as a foreign company, the procedures were rather complicated. We had to visit the foreign trade Bureau of Commence as well as the Bureau of Industry and Commence in Hangzhou daily during the week to submit and amend the documents. After we returned from China, we had to continue settling several other documents. Finally, we were given a 20-year permit for our ministry in China.

God also wonderfully led a property developer to develop our inheritance into a housing estate. After my brother was apportioned his share, three houses were left for me and they were God's provision for us to establish the Oasis Family Life Enrichment Training centre.



Working with the Hangzhou staff team in a village church



Sitiawan Training Centre

I could perceive all these events as a divine indication for me to have a long-term commitment to the training of the Family Life Educators for China. Thus I need brothers and sisters in the Lord to pray with me for **perseverance and health** in order to keep the ministry going.

2015: It had been 40 years since I graduated from Trinity Theological College. It was time for me to affirm my **godliness** by surrendering all my selfish desires and devote the rest of my life to fulfil what God had called me to do. The call was to build a training centre for equipping as many family life educators as possible to help believers integrate their faith into their family lives so that men and women may play their roles effectively in raising godly off springs for the advancement of God's Kingdom. In this way the body of Christ may build itself up in love, as each family does its work.



1st batch trainees at Sitiawan

At the beginning of the year, God graciously moved the Missions Committee of Barker Road Methodist Church and several individuals to sponsor 3 batches of Family Life Educator Training Course for pastors who were recommended by their church leaders to attend the course. This sponsorship made it possible for the pastors to receive the two-week intensive training free of charge. It was with regret to note that though the pastors might have knowledge of the Family Wellness courses, they were too busy with many pastoral duties that they hardly had time to implement them.

Fortunately, when I was conducting the Family Wellness course at a training centre for full-time Sunday school workers, I realized that God might make use of ordinary preachers and full-time Sunday school workers to develop the Family Life ministry. Hence we stopped sponsoring pastors for the training and began to recruit those students who were godly church workers and willing to submit themselves to the call for such a mission and pay for their food and lodging while they received their training at our centre.



Inspiring students of
Wenzhou Bible School

2016: God had enabled me to complete the writing of the whole set of text books for the series of the family wellness course. He also led me to Arksu in the northwestern part of China to conduct a successful Marriage Enrichment Camp with the help of one of our interns there.

Reflecting on our ventures in the past years, we realized with amazement that we had taught the Intensive Family Life Educator Course to two hundred students in 17 different locations in China, from Hainan Island in the south to Arksu in the northwestern part of the country

It was time to consolidate our work by calling all those who still had the



Educators Conference at Pingtan

passion to be involved in our ministry to come for the training conference which was held from 10 - 12 May at Pingtan Island in Fujian Province. Besides listening to the lectures based on a newly published textbook for the Courting Couple course, they also witnessed the launch of the

full set of textbooks for the Family Wellness course series.

A Family Life Educators' Association, or rather the Fellowship of the Volunteers and Workers of Oasis Family Life Enrichment Centre, was formed at the end of the conference. This was to enable us to present ourselves as a special task force for the advancement of God's Kingdom by being like-minded, having the same love and being one in spirit and purpose. And most of all, to work together with *brotherly affection* among the certified educators and the interns for the fulfilment of the mission God has called us to do.



Books for the Family Wellness course series

2017: Even though quite a number of family life educators (interns) were trained for the Three-Self churches and house churches in China, we were yet to be certain of the future direction of our ministry. However, the leaders of the Disciple Training Centre of Watchman Nee's church in Hangzhou recognised the significance of our ministry and this was an affirmation to us. The younger generation of the church, in particular realized that this ministry was a pragmatic means of grace that would enhance the spiritual growth of believers. The head of the seed had seemingly grown.



1st group of Students and Marriage Enrichment camp
of Watchman Nee's church

A group of twenty young adults came to our centre for the intensive educator training course during the Chinese New Year holidays. After that, two more batches of students were trained and a Marriage Enrichment Camp was organized successfully by one of the interns during the China National Day holidays. They also organized a seminar to introduce our ministry in other regions of the church. The feedback of the participants was very positive as well. 48 family life educators (interns) were trained for the church within the year and most of them have been actively organizing classes and facilitating the group study of the course. One of the interns even led a group of students to our centre and demonstrated her skills in training and lecturing at the 13th batch of the Family Life Educator training course. She was then awarded with a golden badge to identify herself as a certified Family Life Educator.



The golden badge
awarded to certified
Family Life Educators

Two other interns who had been trained some years ago also received their golden badges after they were found fit to be certified as Family Life Educators at our centre. The latest was Rev Yao Jicheng. He had been an inspiration to us. He brought 7 godly and dedicated lay workers from his own church, Keqiao Christian Church in Shaoxing, and 5 full-time church workers from other churches to attend the 14th batch of the Family Life Educator Training at our centre. He not only gave lectures and led in the training of workshop facilitators successfully, but also committed himself to following up with the class by going through the remaining workshop sessions of the course personally. This would certainly enhance the team spirit among them and encourage them to work corporately in implementing the ministry in their respective churches.

With Rev Yao as an example, we hope that every intern would be able to recruit a group of godly and devoted candidates who would like to work as a team and bring them to our centre for equipping, as well as following up on them as Rev Yao had done with his church's lay workers. This might not only nurture their team spirit but also cause them to encourage one another to grow, "to supplement faith with virtue; virtue with knowledge; knowledge with self-control; self-control with perseverance; perseverance, with godliness; godliness with brotherly affection, brotherly affection with love for



Meeting in Oasis Pingtan Office

all men." (I Pet. 1:5-7). They would then have no difficulty in attaining *the Love for all men* and fulfil the new command of our Lord Jesus Christ: "Love one another. As I have loved you." (Jn.13:34)

For our convenience, Hangzhou Eden Garden Wellness Consultancy Co has

been moved to Pingtan in the province of Fujian, with its name being changed to Pingtan Oasis Wellness Consultancy Co in Oct 2017. It seems to mark a more pragmatic development of our future ministry in China.

Conclusion:

We thank God for shaping the Oasis Family Enrichment Centre over the past eight years. The centre has been empowered to be more pragmatic and effective in all that it would be doing. We hope many more golden badges will be awarded yearly to our interns. If it is the Lord's will, each of the certified educators shall flourish wherever he or she may be. Ultimately, China will be able to bless other nations through the equipping of the saints for the ministry of building up the body of Christ through restoring marriages and families in the light of God's blueprint for marriage and family. We therefore, invite you to join us and pray earnestly, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen."



Certified Family Life Educators awarded the golden badges at Sitiawan Centre

Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank God for His faithful leading in the journey of this ministry ever since He began this good work in us. We are also grateful to those who have been faithfully partnering with us in this ministry through their prayers and generosity of gifts and services. We pray that God will always remember their kindness, reward them richly and bless them with abundant grace, so that in all things and at all times, having all that they need, they will abound in every good work.

We wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year!

December 2017

Training of Family Life Educators

In order to enhance the faith of Family Life Educators and students through their involvement with the ministry of Oasis Family Enrichment Centre, and help them to persevere in promoting the family wellness course series, we are modifying our training programme. This is to ensure that those who have responded to the call for Family Life ministry will be sufficiently equipped and able to function effectively. We will train our future Family Life Educators in 3 stages with a 7-8-day intensive course for each stage. This is to enable trainees to have sufficient time to develop their skills and knowledge during the intervals between the stages. They will begin from the self-awareness stage to the stage of attaining skills to conduct marriage and family therapy. Through each stage, students will grow in strength to carry out the ministry. They will then be motivated to dedicate the rest of their lives to working full time for this most urgently needed ministry. While the ministry is challenging, it is one with an enduring value.

Having the Family Life Educator Course in 3 stages will not only achieve the objectives mentioned above but it will also be easier for the students to attend the course using their annual leave from work. Moreover, after they have completed the 1st stage of training, they can start teaching others by facilitating the study of the course they had learnt. This will enable the interns to thoughtfully go through the course in detail so that they have a good grasp of the course content and practise the skills of facilitating the study of a course. They will also gather practical life examples from the class discussions for their future seminar talks on the subject.

A student may take 3 years or less to complete the 3 stages of the course work. After the first stage of his training, he will be able to facilitate the study of “Self-awareness” course as an intern. After his 2nd stage of training he will be more skilful in facilitating the study of “Marriage Enrichment” course for couples who may need such a

programme. He can also help the newly-weds and courting couples by facilitating the study of the “Courting Couple” course. The final stage will focus on parenting with some training in marital and family therapy. The intern will then have a full knowledge of God’s blueprint of marriage and family systems. He will feel more competent in facilitating the study of the Parenting Course as he may have to deal with some problems of marriages and dysfunctional families.

Each of the interns will be encouraged to recruit suitable candidates and bring 12-14 students to our centre for training. The interns will go through the course a 2nd time but with a new approach to the training. As a part of the requirement for him to be certified as an educator, he has to give a lecture at each stage of the course, facilitate a course study and monitor the training progress of the students. He has to follow up on the students he brought to the centre by completing all the workshop sessions of the course. This will sharpen the intern’s skills for facilitating a course study, enhance the team spirit among them and prepare them to work as a team for the extension of the family life ministry.

Moreover, the intern will receive free food and lodging throughout the three stages in his training to be an educator. He will also receive a subsidy of RMB 2,000 for his air ticket. All students will have to pay for their own food and lodging in the centre. When the intern has met all the requirements of the three stages of the Family Life Educator course, he will be awarded a golden badge and a Certified Family Life Educator certificate. The students he had been working with through the 3 stages will become interns under his supervision and work as a team to promote the family life ministry under his charge.





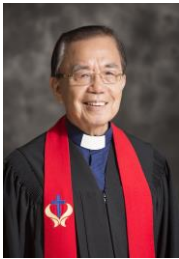
Mission Statement:

Enriching Family systems to nurture capacities of Love

Objectives:

1. **Shepherding:** Enable churches to launch a practical and sustainable family life enrichment ministry.
2. **Building Harmony:** Enlighten families towards reconciliation and the demonstration of love as it was in Eden Garden.
3. **Establishing the Family Altar:** Sustaining them with suitable sharing materials.

Introduction to the founder



Rev Dr Francis Ngoi has been a pastor of Methodist Church in Singapore for more than 25 years. He received his master of ministry in pastoral care from Trinity Theological College, Singapore in 1978; Doctor of Ministry in Personality, Culture and Religion from Boston University in 1990 and professional Diploma in Marriage and Family Therapy from Institute of Family Therapy, London in 1996.

Besides his pastoral ministry he also served as a part time lecturer of pastoral care and supervisor of clinical pastoral care training. He was then appointed to spear head of the family life ministry in 2002. Through eight years of research and experiment, he has integrated basic biblical principles and years of experience in shepherding, lecturing, counselling, personality development, behavioural traits and systemic theories as his building blocks for family life ministry. A series of family life enrichment programmes, designed and written, have proven to be effective.

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