

reachbulletin

march 2019 vol. 27 no. 1 | resources employment and community horizons

Battle for Our Minds



Vision:

The gospel and God's Kingdom, actively and freely permeating all levels of society in a holistic and contextualized manner.

Mission:

To develop disciples of Jesus Christ as whole persons and promote a contextualized holistic Christian discipleship in the developing world.

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Equipping People to Become Complete in Christ



Luzon and Visayas members.

ANNUAL LEADERS' RETREAT 2019

What to Believe...

Post Modernism...relativity...post truth...right or wrong...
fake news...confirmation bias. What's a person to believe?

The truth has been stretched and pulled in so many ways that it can be hard to identify. Fortunately, Jesus Christ is the basis for truth. John 14:6, says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Navigating the era of social media and conflicting ideas of truth was the focus of the 2019 Annual Leaders Retreat held January 12-13 in Luzon and February 16-17 in Mindanao. An echo of the retreat was presented in Cabagan on March 2-3.

The theme was *Battle for Our Minds* based on 2 Corinthians 10:5 that states:

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

In Luzon, the retreat was facilitated by Ed and Dr. Oyay Jimenez while Dr. Paul Pasicolan gave the final challenge. In Mindanao and Cabagan, the retreat was facilitated by Oyay, and Paul likewise gave the final challenge.

The topics were interspersed with personal sharing and interactive games meant to reinforce the themes. A workshop in Luzon and panel discussions in Mindanao and Cabagan allowed participants to dig deeper into issues and offer biblically-based suggestions and appreciate diversity in the functioning of the Body of Christ.

The rationale for the selection of this year's theme was based on Hebrews 12:1-3, wherein the Christian life is likened to a race. It has a defined path, a

described pattern to follow (in Christ's footsteps), and a desired purpose (to love, obey, and serve God). Those who finish the race will receive a prize from God (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

The Christian life is also a spiritual battle. Ed said it's subtle, but ideas and thoughts contrary to God's nature are injected into our minds. These ideas (worldviews) impact our perception of life and influence how we live.

Thus we need to evaluate every teaching and idea so that everything we say and think conforms to His character and commands as 2 Corinthians 10:5 admonishes us.

CURRENT REALITIES OF THE POST-MODERN WORLD

The first topic covered current situations and issues that have rocked God's family, disrupted unity, and sidetracked many in the ongoing battle/race.

Characteristics of the post-truth era are:

1. Deliberately ignoring reason,



Mindanao members gathered at Cagwait, Surigao del Sur for the retreat.

rationale, facts, science, knowledge, and statistics to follow an emotionally driven agenda,

2. Shutting down the truth if it hurts someone's feelings, and
3. Silencing truth speakers if facts cause offense.

Ed said disciples should not compromise biblical standards of righteousness and moral absolutes such as the sanctity of human life, justice, integrity, etc. Instead, they should approach culture and specific issues with a framework based on the absolute, unchanging, and eternal TRUTH as revealed in the Bible.

Matthew 22:37-40 commands us to love God and one's neighbor. And obeying these two commands lead to involvement in society and culture — beyond the church walls.

Loving our neighbor means seeing them as created in God's image and encouraging others to treat them

with dignity. That means seeking the peace and welfare of others by promoting social justice, rules that affirm the value of life, and addressing social disorder.

We display God's values and pave the way for the Gospel when we love others and God.

STANDING FIRM IN THE BATTLE

In the second topic, participants learned how to resist the on-slaught of bad ideas based on the book, *The Secret Battle of Ideas about God* by Dr. Jeff Myers.

Myers states that bad ideas are like viruses. He said we can stop the spread and effect of bad ideas in the same way as the medical field treats infections — by identifying and isolating bad ideas, disseminating information, and investing time to help affected disciples so they can build spiritual immunity.

The message focused on how to

identify current worldviews (secularism, Marxism, new spirituality, post-modernism) competing with the truth of God's Word. Bad ideas often cloak themselves with something good or at least that seem harmless.

It was found that people prepared with information, exposure, and counter-arguments to refute bad ideas were less likely to be deceived.

Merely focusing on what we know to be true doesn't build up the immunity we need.

We can help struggling individuals develop discernment by investing our time, love, and patience to neutralize bad ideas.

According to Myers, we need to think critically or articulate sensibly about ideas. If we can't master ideas (hold our thoughts captive to something — [biblical] truth, ideas will master us!

Final Challenge

The final challenge called for partici



A small group discusses a contemporary issue (l. to r. Jerome Beltran, Grace Lazaro, Lolit Lagurin, and Rely Miguel).

pants to finish the race with endurance by God's enabling grace, undeserved and given by His prerogative through Jesus Christ (John 1:14,16).

The truth of our brokenness helps us accept our limits and imperfections. With Jesus as our moral compass, we can't be lost or deceived because He is the absolute truth.

By fixing our eyes on Jesus, we reflect His radiance of grace and truth, which overflows to others as channels of His goodness through acts of good works (2 Corinthians 9:10-15). Ultimately, He is glorified.

"When you run alone,
it's called race.

When God runs with you,
it's called grace."

In the end, grace enables us to finish the race well in these evil times. Our enemy is not of flesh and blood but unseen forces of the dark world. These forces operate in our minds, desires, values, and choices, striving to take God's place in the center of our life.

But we have the assurance of victory because Jesus defeated the world on the Cross, and we can overcome the world through faith (1 John 5:4,5). If we fall, His grace is sufficient for us to rise up and keep going (2 Corinthians 12:9). After all, God promises in Philippians 1:6 to complete what He started in us. In the meantime, grow in the knowledge of Him and live for what lasts for eternity. ■

Do You Think Before You Click?

Christianity Today magazine published an article by Bob Smietana dated July 17, 2015, titled *5 Tips for Spotting Fake News, How not to embarrass yourself or enable internet trolls*. Though the story is four years old, the tips are still useful to consider. Here's a summary plus some additional thoughts.

1. **Check the source.** Websites ending in .ru, and .co — and sometimes tacked on to the end of a reputable news site — should be read with suspicion. [Note: other clues can be the misspelling of the news sites name or poorly written or grammatically incorrect text.]
2. **Keep a mental list of fake news and satire websites.** Fake news sites give you enough truth to make it sound plausible to fool you. Satirical sites poke fun at a topic and shouldn't be read literally, but some people fail to see the humor and pass it on as truth. [Note: *National Report, World News Daily Report, Huzlers, Empire News, The Onion (satire)*, to name a few.]
3. **Be slow to anger.** Fake news sites like to play on people's fears to rouse their anger. They exploit our tendency to think people with a different viewpoint are the enemy.
4. **Snopes is your friend.** This website catalogs urban legends and other fake stories peddled on social media.
5. **Wait for the whole story.** Even established news organizations can get the initial facts wrong. [Note: For example, as a significant event unfolds, like a terror attack, news organizations may not have time to evaluate all the information pouring in. On the other hand, fake news sites will use the words *Breaking News* just to grab readers attention.]

A video by Alex Edmans from the TED Talks, shown during the REACH staff retreat, makes similar points. It served as the basis of the workshop in Luzon and the panel discussions in Mindanao and Cagayan. The video stressed the importance of fact-checking to counter *confirmation bias* — accepting or rejecting a story's truth whether it supports one's opinion or not. Key points for finding the truth are:

1. **A story is not a fact;** it may not be true.
2. **A fact is not a data;** it may not be representative.
3. **Data (a collection of facts) is not evidence;** it may not be supportive.
4. **Evidence (that which supports a theory and rules out the others) may not be proof;** it may not be universal.

Other practical tips included:

1. **Seek other viewpoints;** be open minded and willing to learn.
2. **Listen to experts;** experts rely on evidence and rely on it for their actions.
3. **Pause before sharing anything.** Ask is it true? Is it backed up by evidence? Who is the source, is he or she credible? Is it published and where? Would you believe the opposite view if the evidence and source were as strong?

As a GMA Television Network campaign advised several years ago:

THINK , BEFORE YOU CLICK!

Irizari to Leave REACH Office

After 13 years serving in the ministry in various capacities, Executive Officer, Wilson (Weng) Irizari, tendered his resignation effective June 30. He and his wife, Letty, plan to pursue a new avenue of ministry within REACH.

In his letter to the Board of Trustees (BOT), Weng said, “I am resigning in the mentioned capacities but not as a REACH disciple-maker. I consider this transition as a new assignment to Surigao del Sur to infiltrate different sectors in various communities and facilitate in gathering REACH alumni and help establish a core group.”

He said it was an amazing journey as an admin assistant, project man-



Weng has worked in the national office for 13 years.

ager, assistant office manager and executive officer during those years. Prior to that, he was an intern in Metro Manila.

In closing his letter, he said, “It has been a great honor serving God in His ministry, and I am deeply grateful to the wonderful people of REACH for the numerous opportunities for professional and personal develop-

ment that were extended to me.”

BOT Chairman, Nars Lozada, said, “You are opening another war front with all our blessings and prayers.”

Applications for executive officer may be submitted to the REACH office. A panel will choose between applicants. The group consists of BOT members, Jonathan NUESTRO and Daisy Miguel; and a former executive officer — Dr. Gloria Jimenez.

Applications will be considered on a point basis based on involvement in disciple-making, having experience in management and supervising, participating in ministry activities, and can promote the vision and mission of REACH. The person hired should be willing to live in Metro Manila. ■

Teaching Teachers in Cambodia

Tess Lozada conducted a four-day training for teachers of a school in Cambodia on November 12-15, 2018. Her travel was supported by the Indochina Mission Project (IMP), a cooperative effort between REACH, Inc. and Reach Ministries International.

Nine preschool and elementary-level teachers of a school operated by the Bileg Foundation learned about teaching methods and curriculum. Teachers were particularly interested in classroom discipline and holding students’ attention.

Bileg Foundation was started by Filipinos, Dr. Felipe Castro and his wife, Joy, who is a nurse. They also have served as resource persons and encouragers to IMP worker, Cynthia Ubiña.

Besides the school, the foundation operates a hospital and an orphanage in a province outside the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh.



Tess is the curriculum director of Abba's Child Science School in Davao City operated by her and her husband, Nars Lozada.

Dr. Castro is a friend of Dr. Alan Melicor from their student days in U.P. Diliman. Alan has been a good friend of REACH, dating back to his close friendship with Gene Tabor and older key leaders of REACH during their Navigator days.

Tess spoke through an interpreter and used simple Science experiments

to bridge the language barrier, cultural differences, and initial hesitation of the participants toward the teaching approach she was introducing. After a day, sessions lengthened as discussions flowed more freely.

Tess promoted learning by doing where children play as a strategy for learning. She showed pictures of the method in action and explained what skills the children developed through the content being taught.

She also shared teacher-made materials that can be used in the classroom and demonstrated two interactive Science experiments that students can perform, which enthralled her audience.

Most of the teachers appreciated the training and welcomed more in the future. Two teachers said they learned things they hadn’t learned at their university. ■

Connecting with the Father's Heart

Editor — Manny and Aging Beltran attended the Father's Heart Ministry conference on November 12-16 last year held at Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. They are from the REACH-Cabagan ministry. Here is what they learned.

by Manny & Aging Beltran

God is love!

Before the creation of the world, God existed already as the Trinity. The foundation for any relationship is the knowledge that God the Father loves the whole of the human race, starting with Adam and Eve. This revelation of the Father's love is the true essence of Christianity.

As James Jordan mentioned in his book *Sonship*, we have had a Christianity that is much too focused on what we have to do, and not on who God is and what He has done! We have been told that we must *do* from our initiative rather than what God has *done* from His initiative. We have been told that we have been blessed so that we will be a blessing to others.

He says the simple fact is that we have been blessed because God loves us and because He longs to bless us. We have been presented a gospel that tells us we must work for God — but this will eventually cause us to crash and burn.

What Christianity is about is this: God loves you and wants you to live in the continuous experiencing of Him loving you. Coming to this realization



Aging and Manny Beltran deepened in their understanding of the overflowing love of God after attending the Father's Heart conference and how that affects their lives.

brings us into rest and contentment with an inner peace that is so contagious that people will be impacted by who we are. Mr. Jordan said we are in renovation, a reformation, and the restoration of Christianity that is as significant as the Reformation itself.

Another learning is, why the HEART matters. God is in the business of changing our hearts. When God changes our heart, that part of our heart will automatically fulfill everything God asks of us. We will automatically be what a Christian should be without thinking about it because it will flow out of our heart, Proverbs 4:23.

The school was such a wonderful experience for both of us. In the short time we spent with the team

from the Fathers Heart Ministry, we experienced their loving heart. Their lives were their messages. They shared their past and how they were fathered by their earthly fathers. The love that they experienced with the Heavenly Father caused them to forgive their earthly father's shortcomings.

We learned the need to release forgiveness for all the people who hurt us especially if these were by our earthly fathers. We need to forgive the sins of others from the heart. We need to love to forgive.

We also learned to express our love for our children. We can tell our message by the tone of our voice. We can show the value of others by how we listen.

Jesus said in the Gospel of John that He came not on His own, He did nothing on His own, and everything that He said was from His Father (John 12:49-50). He was fathered by His Father who loves Him very much.

We need to go back to the Father who longs to father us. We need to listen to Him and learn what is in His heart as sons and daughters. He will not leave us as orphans, but He will come to us (John 14:18). Unlike our earthly fathers, God through the Holy Spirit is always present in our lives (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). Thank you, Father, for your unending, unconditional love. ■

Remembering James Alvarez

Editor — James Alvarez (age 27) died on December 8 after reaching the summit of Mt. Apo on December 7 with friends. He became ill on the descent, and heavy rains prevented a rescue team from reaching him in time. James was a researcher at the University of the Philippines Los Baños-Museum of Natural History. In the REACH ministry, he was active in the national youth programs as a group leader, speaker, and sports coordinator. He also attended the Youth Leadership Training Programs and served as the ministry coordinator in the REACH-Los Baños ministry.

by Cynthia Ubiña

I met James in 2008 when he entered as a freshman at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños. He was a friendly, smiling, accommodating guy.

I saw in him an interest to grow in his faith and a passion to serve God. He was one of those teachable, disciplined, and obedient boys in the ministry. He made ways to be present in Bible studies, quiet times, prayer times, and fellowships.

After his college graduation, he was my co-worker in the LB ministry. When his Bible study leader left, he became the *Kuya* for the younger students (especially those who never had a *Kuya* in their family).

Rox says, “For others, you were a great scientist, but for us, you were a great *Kuya* na laging maasahan.”

Anja, an only child, said, “*Kuya* James was very much concerned of the people around him, and he was always there to listen and give advice.



Above: James speaking during the National Youth Conference in Boracay in 2016. Left: James with other youth leaders, (l. to r.) Reymart Bagioso, Ephraim Beltran, James, Angelie Magcanam, and Jerome Beltran in back.

Siya ang takbuhan namin na maasahan pag may mga problema.”

James was loving, caring, and helpful. He not only helped them spiritually but also in their academics. He loved to cook and make coffee jelly for the LB team. He also cleaned their apartment and arranged their things. Now the guys miss this.

There was no generation gap between him and younger students because James was non-intimidating. They could easily joke and have fun together. He would say, “We’re not just friends, we’re family.” Hence, he led the ministry like a family, drawing the core group close together.

James was not perfect. He had his weaknesses, but he was close and dependent upon God. Despite the things he went through, he still made himself

available when he was needed.

As a student, he was diligent and smart and almost became cum laude. As a professional, his boss saw him having a future as a high caliber researcher in science.

At a young age, he already received awards in his field and presented research papers locally and abroad. He specialized in wildlife biology and loved to study bats. Hence we called him *Batman*. With all his achievements, he remained humble.

We are proud of you James! Thank you for inspiring us. You left marks on people’s hearts through your love, compassion, service, and passion. It was evident by the instant reunion of LB alumni and students at your wake. They traveled from Tuguegarao, Cabagan, Baguio, Manila, Cavite, and Laguna just to see you one last time. Goodbye for now *Batman*...see you in our reunion in Heaven when our time comes. We miss you so-o-o-o much. ■



YLTPians attended a REACH-Metro Manila Fellowship and were presented with power banks by the local ministry for their electronic devices.

EQUIPPING NEXT GEN LEADERS

BRenewed, Be Transformed was the motto of the 2018 Youth Leadership Training Program (YLTP). Twenty-one participants came from Mindanao and the Visayas.

The YLTP aims to deepen young disciples' relationship with God by developing intimacy with Him, settle issues that may hinder their relationship with God and effectiveness in disciple-making, develop their leadership qualities and skills for disciple-making and missions, and foster camaraderie, unity, encouragement, and love for the brethren.

"A good leader is a good follower, and a good follower is a good leader," Ritchel Otaza said at the end of the program about what she learned.

Kanaku Nishimura said, "As I grow in my relationship with God and the brethren, it doesn't end there, share the gospel also."

Staff and speakers included Mercy Beltran, Dave and Tina Brooks, Jerry and Alma Francisco, Dynna Golez, Dr. Oyay Jimenez, Dr. Paul Pasicolan, and T.J. Pasicolan.

Topics covered: *How to Make a Personal Testimony, Quiet Time Journaling, Bitter Roots Judgement, Forgiveness and Repentance, Honoring Parents, How We See God, Performance Orientation, Heart of Stone, Qualities of Biblical Leaders, Boundaries, Developing Intimacy with God, How to Lead a Small Group, The Wheel Illustration, Stewardship*

of Money, Guiding Principles of Next Generation Leaders, The Vella Method of Planning, REACH Organizational Set Up, and a final challenge.

Participants included: John Clifford Adlaon, Jebilyn Angeles, Adelfa Balloarona, Ram Borres, Erica Cata-luña, Ires Cepriano, Medelyn Cepriano, Christian Dela Cruz, Ruel De La Torre, Niel Dionaldo, Rose Encina, Nestogen Goc-ong, Yolly Gonzaga, Glayde Mejores, Kanaku Nishimura, Ritchel Otaza, Jershon Rosales, Je-ar Sales, Anamae Sutacio, L.J. Tabada, and Rea Mae Tupas.

After the training, Jershon and Nestogen have served as interns in Butuan City and Ram in Roxas City. Je-ar is already an intern in Davao City. ■



1. An icebreaker game helps participants get to know each other (Jershon and Clayton in the background, Ram, Kanaku, Rea, Ritchel). 2. T.J. Pasicolan speaking about quiet time journaling. 3. Discussion groups help participants imbibe the topic more deeply (L.J., Yolly, Ires, Rea, Anamae, Ruel, Jershon, and Adelfa). 4. Kanaku Nishimura working on an assignment. 5. Dynna Golez speaks about the stewardship of money.

REACH Buys Bignay Property from Garcia Family



Mario Garcia stands with REACH Executive Officer, Weng Irizari at 7 Bignay St. in Quezon City. The key to the property was given to REACH in October 2018. Since then the property title has been transferred to REACH, as well.

REACH has a permanent home! But some home improvements will be needed before moving in.

The deed of sale was signed in October 2018 between REACH and Mario Garcia, turning over to REACH the property at 7 Bignay St., Proj. 2 Quezon City. On January 15, 2019, the transfer certificate title was registered at the Land Registration Authority.

REACH eventually plans to construct a multi-story building on the

site. Construction will take place over several phases based on the availability of funds.

The first phase will include foundation work and the first floor. This phase is estimated to cost around three million pesos.

Dr. Oyay Jimenez, with the help of Daisy Miguel, was appointed to be the focal person for a fund-raising campaign for the new building. More details about the campaign will be

available later.

Mario is a former executive officer and office manager of REACH and chairman of the REACH Board of Trustees. He and his wife, Saling, were instrumental in starting the high school ministry in Metro Manila by showing evangelistic films to Mario's younger relatives and their classmates in the Garcia home at Bignay St. REACH would like to express its sincerest thanks to the Garcia family. ■

REACH National Family Conference in Cebu!



We live in a time when wickedness threatens to shake Christian family morals, values, and stability. How can our families and community of believers be spared from and equipped to battle the twisted moral virus spreading even in the realms of churches and school in these seemingly end-times scenarios?

Join the 2019 REACH National Family Conference to be encouraged and learn how to flourish as a nuclear family and family of believers in these difficult times as we confront grey areas and controversial issues of this end-times age. We will also revisit the importance of the BASICS of discipleship in our homes and communities.

Thriving Family in Changing Times

When: June 6-8, 2019

Where: Elsalvador Beach Resort, Danao City, Cebu

*** Conference Fee:** 3 in a room — P4,950.00 | 4 in a room — P4,550.00 |

For other details, contact: Weng Irizari — 0943-415-9209 | Ronald Golez — 0917-799-0966 | Daisy Miguel — Sun 0942-748-0191, Globe 0916-636-6720

** Please pay at least 50% of the conference fee on or before March 31, 2019*

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*reach*bulletin
march 2019 vol. 27 no. 1

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reach

Disciplemaking in the Developing World

REACH Ministries is developing disciples of Jesus Christ as whole persons in the context of the developing world. Specifically, it seeks to maximize the growth of disciples and disciple-makers in the face of complex social and economic environments in the developing world. Toward this end, REACH is committed to the following: the whole person; indigenous leadership styles; the poor; and disciplemaking through—staff development; ministry enhancement; socio-economic development; high school and collegiate outreach; developing contextualized materials; and practicing godly administration and management.