

reachbulletin

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Thriving Family in Changing Times



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



Thriving Family in Changing Times

The solidity of values and morals of a Christian family and community of believers was never excused to let lapse in the menace of this perilous society.

This was the backdrop to the 2019 REACH National Family Conference. Different ministry areas from Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao, and even individuals from overseas, converged from June 6-8 in El Salvador Beach Resort, Danao City in Cebu. The theme was *Thriving Family in Changing Times*.

The conference highlighted the importance of equipping both family and the community of believers to meet the challenges of living amongst twisted moral values. The conference director was Lito Ouano of the Cebu ministry. Emcees were Timothy Pasicolan and Naomi Ubiña.

Members from the Roxas team welcomed participants with a rousing dance to the music *I Love Cebu* for the opening salvo. Joy Lyn Dung-ao of Bayombong said, "It was really funny, entertaining, and gave you the last song syndrome LSS" (a song that continues to play in your mind). The praise and worship team followed, led by the REACH LB ministry.

Dr. Oyay Jimenez provided a brief, informative history and the uniqueness of the REACH vision, mission, and distinctives that tie us together as the REACH family. ■

Reported by Maribeth Calinao

REACH: One Family North to South and Overseas



Top: Los Baños gang. Middle left: Ivan Matu from Myanmar. Middle right: The office staff help participants register. Bottom left: Robert Deligero and Gamaliel Salar from Davao City help with praise and worship. Bottom right: An ice-breaker game helps members bond together with a little fun.

Where in the World Are We Today?



Ed Jimenez talked about a Christian's response to troubling trends in light of Jesus' second coming.

Ed Jimenez opened the plenary messages with snapshots of our troubled world: the post-truth era, relativism in morality, increasing suicides among the youth, political correctness, and another generational change.

Alarming, a significant number

of Christians now say that they won't share the gospel because of these developments. It might offend! Ed reminded the audience that the Bible, itself, says it will offend. So there is no excuse for not proclaiming the Good News.

In Matthew 24, Jesus warns against being misled, the rise of false prophets, and wars before his second coming. But Ed reminded the group

that God is seated on His throne and will not forget His children amid these problems.

What Should Be Our Response?

Live a Godly Life (1 John 3:3,2 Peter 3:11-14). The rule and reign of Jesus Christ in our lives should be evident in the home, the barangay, and the office. He quoted Warren Wiersbe who once said that we need to be different but not odd. Wiersbe said different people attract people, while odd people repel others.

Continue to Work (Luke 12:43). Ed said secular work shouldn't be viewed as less spiritual. We should work to the best of our ability to glorify Christ. However, he challenged the audience to invest in one's relationship with God, the Word of God, and the lives of men and women, which will last forever and have eternal significance.

Anticipate His Coming, Anytime (Revelations 22:12-13; 20). Since Christ could come at any time, we should remain alert and work for the Kingdom while waiting. Ed said, "Do it now, not tomorrow!" ■

Workshop: Discipleship in the Home



Dr. Paul Pasicolan said a home of unconditional acceptance helps build an environment for discipling one's children. So does focusing on goals and objectives rather than rules and norms.

Paul said home discipleship can't be carried out through distance learning. It is modeled, not taught. Here are 10 practices that helped him and Sim disciple their children:

1. Start with Christ as the center,
2. Preserve the integrity of the pillars of the home,
3. Sow God's Word at an early age,
4. Cultivate family traditions with God at the center,
5. Invest in building good values and lasting memories,
6. Integrate kids with one's inner

circle of Christian friends and give exposure to other Christian groups,

7. Be part of their world during their transitions in life,
8. Be there when they need you most,
9. Challenge them to define their life mission to integrate family life with career and ministry,
10. Live for God and eternity as the overall theme of all teaching in the home. ■

Managing God's Financial Resources in REACH



Daisy Miguel shared how REACH practices stewardship of the resources entrusted to it and challenged members to use money to live and love others like Jesus.

Our attitude toward the money in our pocket reveals what we value. Daisy Miguel said money “is a tool God uses to help us live and love like Jesus.” Whether we admit it or not, money is an essential part of carrying out ministry. As such, accountability is important.

Luke 16:11 says, “So if you have

not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?”

For transparency, she explained REACH’s financial practices: How the office receives and handles God’s money, and how the office is accountable to ministry leaders and the government.

She also challenged members to handle their money faithfully, so it doesn’t become an idol and lead to ruin.

Quoting Matthew 6:24, she said,

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Then she showed a video called *The Water Parable*. A bucket with water represented one’s time, talents, the gospel, opportunities, and finances. The water level can change as one adds or takes from it, such as getting paid, paying bills, or taking someone to lunch.

Daisy said we no longer own the bucket when we give our lives to Jesus. Instead, we become stewards, managing the resources according to Jesus’ values and blessing people and Christian ministries.

When we revert to an ownership mentality: *I earned this, this is mine*, we put a lid on the bucket. Water can no longer enter because we shut God out of the picture.

But when we give our tithes to the Lord, He will use them in surprising ways to transform people for the Kingdom. It’s our privilege to be part of that.

Ultimately, Daisy said, “Stewardship is a choice. Let us choose God, not money.” ■

Workshop: Keeping the Fire in Marriage



Dr. Sim Pasicolan said marriage was institutionalized by God. A couple’s wedding vow was made before God to love and to hold, for better or for worse...till death do you part.

Sim shared about creating a home where love can grow stronger through the years. She said we live in the real world and that no couple is problem-free. But no matter how lukewarm the relationship may be, rekindling the original flame is still possible. She gave six points to keep the emotional tank full:

1. Verbal affirmation is needed by both partners,
2. Focused attention shows interest in one’s mate’s stories and notices simple things like a new haircut.
3. Eye contact: the eyes are the mirror of the soul and can enhance a conversation and deliver our words more effectively,
4. Improve Communication—both partners contribute to the discussion, give undivided attention, and speak to build up each other,
5. Touch and physical intimacy promotes attachment in a couple,
6. When wounded or offended: Forgive. ■

The Role of the Family Amid Declining Values



Former Philippine Navigator country leader and trained counselor, Eseng Victolero, talked about the spiritual foundation needed in a physical and spiritual family.

The importance of having a strong family spiritual foundation and Christian support-system was the focus of Mr. Jose “Eseng” Victolero’s message. He presented the realities of the changing times, the difficulties in doing ministry in the late ‘80s and ‘90s, and the deterioration of character among the youth in the post-modern world.

He presented two truths for influencing our thinking and living: *bloom where you are planted* and *the nature of the Kingdom of God*.

Through the Gospel of Christ and in the Kingdom of God, we can thrive in any soil we are planted; whether in the context of our status as married or single, as free or slave, or whatever culture we were brought up with.

In the Kingdom of God, we can live above every situation for the Gospel of Christ brings us into a relationship with Him far beyond gender, status, or the

challenges from post-modern culture and changing times. Amid moral decline, he said we can thrive and grow because God is with us.

Eseng presented the nature of God’s kingdom through the parables. As with the yeast and the mustard seed, he said the Kingdom of God starts small but grows, permeates, and impacts the rest of society. As salt and light, we influence non-believers with kingdom values.

Similarly, God’s kingdom has the capacity to mingle with non-believers and thrive as in the parable of the wheat and tares. However, it is also God’s intention for believers to detach from those who don’t believe in Him without being exclusive. Jesus modeled this kind of life.

Three Bricks of the Spiritual Foundation

1. *The way of living in the Kingdom of God—The Beatitudes (Matthew 5)*

While we aim to be happy, Jesus defined happiness differently. In the Beatitudes, happy people are those who are spiritually bankrupt, those

who mourn their sinfulness before God, and those who are persecuted.

Even so, we can be happy because our circumstances are temporary. Our struggles don’t come from waywardness but by being identified with Jesus. Happiness is a by-product of obedience.

2. Righteousness in the Kingdom of God

The kind of righteousness expected of followers in God’s kingdom is not perfection to obey the Law superficially, like the Scribes and Pharisees, but obeying the essence of the Law — loving others. He said love is more profound than these laws, and the essence of the Law is loving God.

3. The spiritual disciplines in the Kingdom of God

Spiritual disciplines, such as giving to the needy, prayer, and fasting, should be practiced in private between the believer and God. Righteousness and spiritual disciplines in the Kingdom of God address the issues of the heart where sin and idolatry reside. In this environment, our family will not only survive but thrive amid moral decline.

The Christian Support-System

A Christian support-system is based on Hebrews 10:24, 25. The characteristics include a safe community, meeting together in person, praying for one another, and practicing love and grace. Listening and asking tough and timely questions of each other is also crucial for a ministry of accountability.

Eseng concluded the message by saying, “Build your houses upon the rock through obedience” (Matthew 7:24-27). ■

Reported by Angelie Magcanam

Thriving and Growing Together as a Family



Pastor Philip Flores, first Filipino Navigator country-leader, gave the final challenge.

“Leadership is a position of trust, once you lose that trust, you lose your authority.”

He said some religious leaders are “gifted but not godly.”

So, how do we thrive and grow as a family unit or as a body of Christ in times like these? From 2 Timothy 3, Philip shared three instructions the Apostle Paul gave to Timothy that can help us thrive today in spite of our environment.

“It is possible to thrive and grow in a moral and socially declining society, just like Noah.”

Keep Away from Such People (v.1-5)

He said, “People who love themselves, people who love money, people who love pleasure—don’t go with them.”

Since a companion of fools will find harm (Prov. 13:20), and bad company corrupts good morals (1 Cor. 15:33), he advised regular fellowship among believers.

“We need one another to protect one another.”

He pointed to studies showing that children raised in churches are healthier and happier. “Let’s make sure they are exposed to Christian fellowship.”

Keep on Believing the Scriptures (v.14-15)

Paul instructed Timothy to continue in what he was taught from Scriptures by his grandmother, mother, and Paul, himself.

Philip said he finds it shocking to encounter pastors from Bible-believing churches, who haven’t read the whole Bible and some only in the preparation of their sermon.

Turning to parents, he said, “As parents, we are the first disciples of our children.”

He recalled *The Hand Illustration* (see next page) and how each finger deepens one’s intake of God’s Word and improves retention. “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another...” (Colossians 3:16).

Keep on Preaching the Word (4:2)

Timothy was instructed to preach God’s Word in season and out of season. Philip said today, people have traded sound doctrine for what makes them feel good.

“There’s a difference between a good message and God’s message.” He said a good message makes you feel good, but God’s message makes you feel bad because God aims to change us not merely challenge us.

“The Bible was given to us not to increase our knowledge but to change our lives.”

He said we need a good grasp of Scriptures in order to be grounded in God’s Word so false teachers in the last days can’t deceive us.

“This is not an easy time.” Dr. Philip Flores said in the concluding message. He said we are in the midst of moral and social breakdown as a people and noted that 2 Timothy 3:1-5 is “a passage that pictures our times.”

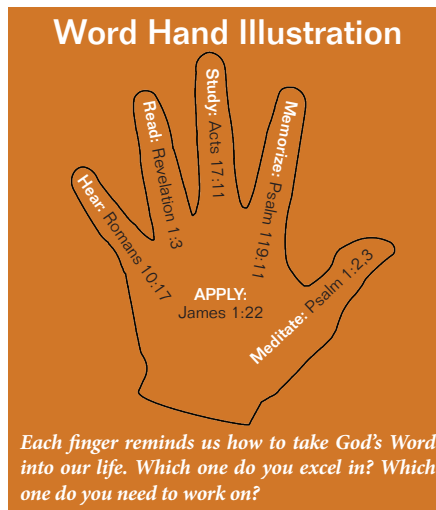
He pointed to wrong teaching, fake news, and the troubles warned about in the Bible as the culprits of the stressful times we live in.

Sometimes problems arise from within the Church, such as the gospel of prosperity that says every Christian should be rich. Another is extreme grace that negates personal holiness. Putting pastors or religious leaders on a pedestal is another problem afflicting the Christian community today.

“If we are to protect our families, our children from false teachings, if we are to protect the body of Christ, the family of God from false teachings, we have to counter it by preaching the Word of God.”

Quoting John Stott, he said, “The reason why we are not effective in our evangelistic efforts is that we do not look like the one (Jesus Christ) we proclaim.”

Someone once said, “Our message is good news, but our messenger is bad news.”



Philip said preaching the gospel effectively means becoming more and more like Christ. “Discipleship is a call to a Christ-like life.”

Savior's Triumph

In closing, Philip quoted John 16:33 from *The Message*, “In this godless world, you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.” ■

Workshop: Strengthening Relationship in the Context of Unity Amid Diversity of Views

A basic human need is a connection with others. The problem is how to get close without getting hurt. Withdrawal and attack are common sinful responses. One response goes against another’s good while the other acts with indifference.

God’s aim in human history is an inclusive community of loving people with Himself included as the sustainer and most glorious member.

To achieve God’s purposes we need a community of relationships. We need a sense of value or importance



Dr. Oyay Jimenez explained how to nurture relationships and why Christians can derive different understandings on issues.

from others, inclusiveness to break down barriers of acceptance and respect, forgiveness, and truth to break down lies. Most of all, we need God’s grace.

Finally, Oyay talked about aspects of God’s will to help us understand how God works amid issues that can divide us when we use human understanding:

God’s sovereign will — There is nothing that happens that is outside God’s sovereign will. Sometimes He allows evil human acts when they accomplish His greater good, which we need to accept with trust in Him.

God’s revealed will — These are God’s will or precepts revealed in the Bible, which we are obligated to obey, but can choose to disobey (Deuteronomy 29:29).

God’s dispositional will — This is what pleases or displeases Him, which people may or may not follow. ■

Workshop: Basic Counseling Skills



Jose “Eseng” Victolero said counseling is not a quick fix. It nurtures holistic development and facilitates spiritual transformation.

Counseling is the process of assisting a person explore and resolve personal, social, or psychological difficulties and problems to facilitate positive change. While secular counseling is concerned with helping people become functional, Eseng Victolero said Christian counseling nurtures Christ-likeness. He advised referring a person to a professional when the problem is beyond one’s capacity to help. Some techniques for counselors include:

- **Paraphrasing** — restating in your own words what was shared,
- **Clarifying** — bringing vague material into sharper focus,
- **Perception Checking** — request verification of your perceptions,
- **Summarizing** — pulling together, organizing, and integrating the major aspects of your dialogue,
- **Empathy** — a reflection of content and feelings.

He said counseling is not a quick fix and that decisions should come from the counselee rather than being prescribed by the counselor. ■

Youth Night: Learning from Each Other



Young professionals (l. to r.) Estephen Fortela, Jemimah Ballesteros, and Naomi Ubiña fielded questions from the youth about common problems young people face.

The youth night was a venue for younger participants to pose any question to a panel of peers. Questions were submitted on paper to provide anonymity.

The panel discussion was preceded by a presentation from the Roxas ministry, showcasing different scenarios of people who were lost but found when they placed their trust in God. Christian Dela Cruz concluded the presentation with the statement, “Ang tao pag nangako laging napa-pako pero si Jesus nagpapako para matupad lang ang pangako.”

The discussion was moderated by Timothy Pasicolan. Panel members included Estephen Fortela, Naomi Ubiña, and Jemimah Ballesteros. The audience’s questions fell under three main categories: boy-girl relationships, career paths, and depression.

Boy-Girl Relationships

For the topic of boy-girl relationships, questions included, “Bakit po

ayaw ako ni mama mag-girlfriend?” and “How to handle peer pressure na almost lahat na ay may relationship?”

The first advice came from a mother in the audience. She said having patience is important since it may not be our *season* yet.

The panel pointed out that we must select a partner who is a growing Christian because the moment we choose the wrong person, it will affect generations. They also stressed the importance of receiving counsel from loved ones and fellow Christians.

Moreover, they advised not letting the relationship define ones’ self because feelings are fleeting. They said make the most out of the season you are in and grow in your relationship with God first.

Career

The next topic was about career paths. The main questions were, “Paano mo malalaman kailan ang right time to leave a job” and “Is it okay to keep changing jobs because you are finding your passion?”

Jemimah shared her experiences in a sales company, and Zenylou Frias shared her experience teaching special children. Both said the work environment is important since they deal with people who are difficult to work with. But since we serve the Lord, not our workmates, God will fill our weaknesses and bless our obedience and hard-work. It was said that if God puts you into it, He will put you through it (Isaiah 58:11).

Depression & Anxiety

The last topic dealt with depression and anxiety. The main question was, “How to cope with depression, especially when people seem to be doing okay?”

Naomi started the discussion emphasizing the effect of social media on our mental state. People only showcase their best sides in social media which gives the viewers a false sense of reality. She said it’s better to lessen the use of social media, especially when dealing with depression.

The panel appreciated that the writer of the question acknowledged that he or she was dealing with depression and recommended finding the right people to be with.

The panel discussion ended with National Discipleship Team leader, Jerry Francisco, answering a few questions related to rejection and marriage. He also said it is important to talk to fellow Christians about what we are dealing with so we can share our experiences and learn from one another.

As a whole, the youth panel discussion was an excellent opportunity for the youth to communicate their problems to people who can better guide them. It was also a good way to hear each other’s stories and deal with issues together. ■

Reported by Anja Martinez

Workshops

Stewardship of God's Creation



Dr. Rex Cruz said caring for God's creation is an act of worship.

A steward is one who is given authority and responsibility to rule over the affairs of a household wisely and well.

Rex said stewardship is rooted in Genesis when God created mankind in His image and gave him dominion over creation. But authority from God is not a license to abuse, misuse, and exploit His creation but to manage it, mirroring God's values.

The Biblical attitude that should govern our actions is 1 Corinthians 10:31, "so whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Therefore, fulfilling our mandate to rule over all creation, by reflecting the image of God in how we care, maintain, protect, and beautify creation becomes an act of worship and service to God.

Then Rex asked attendees to examine how the following verses relate to the stewardship of the environment as a form of worship, and bringing glory to God: Romans 12:1; Luke 4:8; John 4:24; 2 Peter 3:5-8, 13; and Mark 12:30-31. ■

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Editorial Board

Rodski Estigoy, Ed & Oyay Jimenez, David & Tina Brooks

Editor

David Brooks

Contact us

REACH, Inc.

23 Lanzones St., Proj. 2

Quezon City, Philippines

Tele/Fax (02) 795-4046

reachorg@yahoo.com

<http://www.reach.org.ph>

Negative Effects of Computer Gadgets on the Brain



Tess Lozada shared how to counteract the effects of daily screen-time.

While we can't escape screens entirely, these tips — and regular breaks from screens — can go a long way toward protecting the brain and bolstering its resilience, especially among children.

1. Increase exposure to nature, and sunlight.
2. Include more movement, exercise, and free play.
3. Practice good sleep hygiene and create an environment conducive for sleep.
4. Engage in creative play and activities.
5. Practice bonding: touch, empathy, and love.
6. Incorporate daily chores for the entire family.
7. Mimic nature's day/night light cycles as closely as possible.
8. Tone down the brightness level on screens. ■

an imaginative
use of resources
in the extention
of the gospel

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.