

# **Barner Learning Center's New Paradigm for Peace in Mindanao through a Scholastic/Reconstructionist Biblical Christian Philosophy of Education**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

“Don’t go to Mindanao!” State Departments from a multitude of countries send out regular warning messages to prospective travelers. “Visit the beautiful Philippines Islands. But stay away from Mindanao!”

Why this aversion to this southernmost section of this beautiful archipelago? Are not the tropical fish a draw to scuba divers? Is not the rich tribal culture fascinating to anthropologists? Would not ethnomusicologists tap their feet to the rolling thrum, thrum thrumming and konk-konk-konking of the Muslim brass gongs? Are not the sweet, fresh, exotic fruits of lanzoni, rhambutan and durian tantalizing to the palate? If so, then why the aversion to visit?

The plague that has beset this paradise on earth is quite simple, yet therefore complex in its simplicity. The complexity is derived from feeble monetary attempts to provide a solution, yet which have actually fed the flames of the dilemma. There is a civil war going on in Mindanao. If you are not careful, if you go out at night or to a seldom-traveled area, or too far south, or too far up in the mountains, well, you might not come back alive. Especially if you are a foreigner. The NPA, MILF or MNLF might get you.

The problem is greed. The solution is Christian evangelization. Christian evangelization does not mean mass and meaningless forced conversions to Christianity, but rather, informing the populace about Christianity and Christian morals, and supplying

for them the uplifted standard of living that comes with Christian love and morals. After all, only the Holy Spirit can save a soul. If not one of God's elect, chosen from before the foundation of time, then no matter how much cajoling, the end product will not be a born again believer.

However, Christianity carries other worthwhile baggage as well. It is a religion of peace. It seeks to make the world a better place. When Christian missionaries arrive in villages throughout the world, they build hospitals, schools, houses for the poor and places of worship. Illiteracy is tackled. Poverty is absolved. A sense of community is developed. In non-aggressive, nonpolitical ways, normalcy and joy is introduced into former areas of blood, sweat, heartache and strife.

Barner Learning Center is in Mindanao, and in Mindanao it will remain. Although we may use this prototype among the poor in other countries, our mother school is right here in Davao City, Mindanao, Philippines. If the civil war of Western Mindanao comes east, then we will be here to bandage the wounded. If our school is burned down, we will build another. My personal clear calling by God in 1971 demands that I stay here and make a difference, planting churches, educating the masses, and eliminating poverty.

The goal of this paper is to reveal the philosophical explanation for the approach that Barner Learning Center of Davao City is taking to blend scholasticism and social transformation with Biblical aims. Included also will be an explanation of the miracle of where the funding for this work comes from. There is no supporting foundation, no "mother organization" that is supplying finances from wealthy businessmen. Rather, an old widow in her 90's skipping a meal to send money overseas for this work. A young couple with a new job, committing their first paycheck to missionary work. A dying

friend who commits any memorials in her honor to be used in building a classroom. A church taking a special offering so that we can buy paperback hymnals for our congregation. One person giving a twenty-dollar bill every month so that one child, whom they may never meet face to face, can go to school. This is the miracle of Barner Learning Center.

## I. Civil War in Mindanao

### Civil War in Mindanao

The people of Basilan will never forget Jose Maria Torres, the “doctor-priest.” He was a Claretian brother, a Spanish missionary for 47 years who spent 17 years of his life in China and 30 years in Basilan. When he died, he was buried in Basilan, in front of a hospital he built for the poor.

“My name has run through the whole island and both [Muslims] and Christians came to me seeking a remedy for their illness[es]. The Christians protest against my accepting [Muslims], but I tell them that a good Christian ought to imitate Jesus Christ who made the sun shine on all.” [8]

President Ramon Magsaysay, learning of the missionary’s work, ordered the health department to grant the good doctor a medical license so he could legally practice on the island. In 1955 Torres built the Saint Peter’s Clinic. When the Moro rebellion broke out in the 1970’s, he found himself treating Muslims and Christians and innocent civilians caught in the crossfire.

Torres estimated that he must have attended to some 17,000 patients. Only 3 died. In 1976, the people of Basilan adopted him officially as a son of the island. In 1977 rebels invaded the clinic and burned it to the ground. He built a new one and continued to help the poor, never charging them even one centavo. The next year he died.

The question is rightfully asked why these greedy people, these Moro rebels who burned down Jose's clinic and murdered or maimed so many, are allowed to go around killing others? The answer is war. War wreaks havoc on life and property and disrupts and disorganizes the existing social order. It also foments hatred between combatants. Yet wars have been incited by the desire for excitement, adventure, and combat, as well as by hatred and conflicting interests of different societies and groups.

Military leaders who shine during war may encourage combat. Yet the horrors of war outweigh the advantages. Therefore social norms have been instituted to have some form of control over the actual combat. It is necessary to inform the opponent before engaging him in battle. Also holidays need to be implemented, and restrictions on what form of weapons are allowed. [9]

Sometimes, as in the case with Mindanao, the attacking party wants land that the others have, and they either fight the landowners, or will behead public figures with the highest visibility, to instill terror in the hearts of the residents so that these "outsiders" will move away. Since the perpetrators often run out of funds for weaponry, they resort to kidnapping to glean funds.

In the case of Martin and Gracia Burnham (American missionaries with New Tribes Mission), the Abu Sayyaf had kidnapped the missionaries because they thought they were wealthy businessmen. A big mistake on their part. As a result, they were "stuck" with these Americans from whom they would not get funds, since it is against mission policy to pay terrorists any ransom for missionary personnel taken as hostages.

The reasoning behind this is that ransom money is used to buy weapons and weapons are used to kill people. If the mission gave funds to the terrorists, then they would consider missionaries as a "bank" from which they could always withdraw any amount they pleased, which is bad stewardship of the Lord's money. Plus, it would make it very difficult for other missionaries, if they always had to be leery of greedy folks wanting to

“steal” them for a few million dollars. Also, the money just is not there. Missionaries live on a shoestring budget, and are fortunate if they have enough money for rice to eat and a roof over their heads. Plus, if they give money that will be used to buy guns for killing innocent people, then essentially it is the missionaries who are doing the killing. The killing could not be done if there were no funds to purchase the guns. Do you give liquor to a struggling, recovering alcoholic? Not if you have a conscience.

When the Burnhams were kidnapped, Solaiman, one of their captors, informed them,

“We’re the Abu Sayyaf. Some people call us terrorists. We want you to know, we’re not terrorists. We are simply people whom the Philippine government has robbed of our homeland, and we just want it back. No one in the government will listen to us, and so we have to do things like this to gain notice.” [10]

Solaiman was referring to the attitude of some rebel Muslim factions who claim that Mindanao was first populated by the Muslims and therefore should always be a Muslim state. This idea is not entirely true. Over a thousand years ago eastern Asians traveled across either a land bridge or by boat from the Asian mainland to the archipelagoes of Indonesia, Micronesia and the Philippines.

The islands were first visited by Europeans on Magellan’s expedition of 1521, and were later named in honor of the future Philip II of Spain. By the 1570’s Spanish rule was secure and lasted until the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, after which the Philippines were ceded to the United States. A revolutionary nationalist movement under the leadership of Emilio Aguinaldo helped the United States defeat Spain. The issue of independence loomed large in U.S. relations with the Philippines until the establishment, in 1935, of the internally self-governing Commonwealth of the Philippines, with Manuel Quezon as president. [11]

When the Spaniards had landed in the Philippines, it was just a collection of tribal factions, not truly united as one country. There were Muslim populations and heroes and histories on Mindanao, but there were animists and other religious persuasions as well.

To say that they were all Muslim is a misnomer. My wife’s family has been native to Mindanao for so many generations that no one can remember them being from anywhere else. Her stock is Malay. But no one in her family is Muslim. Her father owns a small

piece of land where he grows fruit crops of banana, rambutan and cacao in the foothills of Mount Apo.

They fought together against the Spaniards. They fought together against the Americans, and they fought together against the Japanese. In fact, America's intervention with the Spanish during the Spanish-American War is the main factor that freed the Philippine Archipelago from Spanish domination:

Every shell shot from our great thirteen-inch guns costs as much as two Alliance missionaries for a whole year. The entire cost of the present war for a single day would keep five thousand Alliance missionaries for a whole generation... We have in two months given two hundred thousand men to set Cuba and the Philippines free. One quarter of that number would suffice to set the whole human race free from the thrall of sin and Satan. [12]

#### **A. The problem is poverty.**

When a person is hungry, he is going to look for food. If that person has not eaten for a few days, he is desperate to find food. If it has been weeks and his family is dying of disease from starvation, then his desperation has turned to survival mode. He will stop at nothing to be able to fill this need. If his neighbor has an abundance and is not willing to share, then “by hook or by crook”, he will get some of his neighbor’s abundance.

Now the Philippines is full of fruit trees and coconut trees, and surrounded by great bodies of water where fish abound. So a person does not have to starve. But poverty is a relative term. The more someone else has, the less we think that we ourselves have. Did not Jesus say, “The poor you will always have among you?”- Matthew 26:11 [13].

Quite often, the poverty of the Muslims in Mindanao is not due to their not having their own land, but a basic internal problem with the setup of their religious system as well as unwillingness to produce the products that will bring in a regular income. Also the distribution of wealth is extremely uneven, with very rich shop owners on one extreme and extremely poor pickpockets and sea gypsies on the other extreme.

## B. The problem is unequal distribution of wealth.

Why is it that some are so very rich in the Philippines, and others are very poor? Why does a shiny black, air conditioned Mercedes-Benz drive aimlessly down the street past a ragged, sweating man pulling a wooden cart full of vegetables behind him? How is the income for the country's gross national product distributed?

Scripture says, "*The man who has two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same.*" - Luke 3:11 [14] The poor Filipino, if he is eating, will offer you some of his little, inviting you with the words, "Manga-un-ta!" (Come, let's eat) and making gestures with his hand as if to scoop invisible rice into his mouth. But if you pass a rich man's house, he can't even see you through the thick cement walls, so he does not feel obliged to share with you.

A friend of ours was recently visiting from New York. She is a single mom, and has a job in America, but does not really earn very much. Just enough to get by, and a little extra to put away for a little trip like this one. As we were driving down the road, she was amazed at a new and impressive housing development for upper-class people.

The development had a great big wall surrounding it. Outside of the wall were shanty shacks. The population in the cluster of cardboard and sheet metal squatter huts was likely ten times that of the population in the new development. And the land area occupied by those living inside the wall covered about ten times the space of the squatter shacks outside. Why this incredible disparity in the distribution of wealth?

The urban poor uprising of May 1, 2001- now popularly known as "Edsa III"- left not just a swath of destruction and broken lives in its wake. It also shook the convictions of those involved in cause-oriented groups and social development organizations. Many of them had to face the painful reality that despite years of dedicated organizing efforts and conscientization programs among the grassroots, these efforts have not been enough to prevent the masses from storming the gates of Malacañang [Palace] that fateful day in May. Swayed by demagogues with deceitful political ends, the involvement of many of the poor in "Edsa III" was a grim reminder that efforts to understand and alleviate their

plight and communicate with them are still very much wanting. The church has been very much part of this collective soul-searching in the aftermath of “Edsa III.” [16]

### **C. The problem is Nepotism.**

The big picture is that jobs just are not available. Big businesses crowd out little ones, and the need for employees diminishes. Perks are given to the big businesses so that they will grant favors to the politicians. Once a politician is elected, often he gives jobs to all of his unemployed family members, be they experienced or not. Once he leaves office, his relatives are fired as well.

During the period of his employment, since many of those working under him are inexperienced, unskilled and illiterate, the governmental bureaucracy slows down to a snail’s pace. License plates take a year to be released. Those of the population who own vehicles drive around town with temporary plates for months and months. Driver’s license cards take a year and a half to be released. Little tattered blue sheets of paper clutter the wallets of all the drivers, as a poor excuse for a temporary license. The grocery list is scribbled on its edge, and somebody’s phone number is scratched on the back.

The bureaucracy is packed with political proteges, many of who do nothing except to collect their salaries in the middle and at the end of each month. Thus the well intentioned among career officials and employees in government become demoralized early or withdraw into silence or resign altogether. And those who opt to continue despite disillusionment are only too often harassed or eventually co-opted into the system. [15]

### **D. The problem is not religious, but Biblical.**

As the Scholastics postulated, The problems in civilization can find their solutions in the revelation of God in scriptures. Jesus said, “*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*” –2 Chronicles 7:14 [17]

How is it possible for people who have abandoned the Bible to seek the face of God and pray? How can Muslims know God? The only way to God is through Jesus Christ.

*“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” –John 14:6 [18]* Therefore Muslims have to be converted before their prayers will be heard by God.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If any does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” – John 15:5-8 [18]

Please note that Jesus did not say, “If you are a Baptist, you will bear much fruit.” Nor did he mention any other denomination or religion. Not Alliance, not Methodist, not Quibuloy, not Catholic, not Mormon, not Muslim. He only said, *“If a man remains in me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit.”* Now, how is it possible that Jesus will be inside of someone, and that that someone will also be inside of Jesus? The answer is found in Revelation 3:20- *“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”* [19]

It is true. The core problem in Mindanao is not poverty, nor nepotism, nor war, nor disease nor sickness nor unequal distribution of wealth. These are only symptoms. The core problem is a people group that has turned its back upon Jesus. By the grace of God, we will bring peace to Mindanao as we turn Mindanaoans back to their Master, even as the Scholastics determined to do from the Middle Ages up until today.

## II. Scholasticism in History

# Scholasticism in History

The best factor of Scholasticism is its Christian emphasis. Not just in name, but in theology. The belief is in a Biblical basis for reasoning. The center of activity in the learning process is grappling with what the Bible says, and then all other learning is to coincide with those truths.

### **A. Beliefs of Scholasticism**

Scholastic thinkers held a wide variety of doctrines in both philosophy and theology. They considered Augustine the chief philosopher, and Aristotle their chief (and infallible) empirical scientific authority. What united the whole Scholastic movement were the common aims, attitudes, and methods generally accepted at first by all its members. The chief concern of the Scholastics was not to discover new facts but to integrate the knowledge already acquired separately by Greek reasoning and Christian revelation. [1]

From the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Scholastics sought to use human reason, especially that of Aristotle, to understand the supernatural content of Christian revelation. The ultimate ideal of the movement was to integrate into an ordered system both the natural wisdom of Greece and Rome and the religious wisdom of Christianity.

Two core beliefs were carried by Scholastics down through the centuries: First, Human Reason (philosophy) and Divine Revelation (the Bible) go hand in hand. Secondly, The servant of theology is philosophy, not vice-versa. The justification for this approach is that since God is the author of reason, his creation carries on that attribute. His book (the Bible) describes all that we have to know about the universe and its interpretation.

## B. Beginnings of Scholasticism

Scholasticism gets its name from the medieval monastery and cathedral schools. It actually can be traced as far back as the ninth century. Begun as a response to the secularization of the intellectual thinkers, this new spiritual approach desired to bring into perspective the true approach of philosophy. It was a tool to understand God, faith, the Bible, etc. Reason was baseless without the ground of faith and theology.

Later in time reason was to take a stronger and stronger hold in the Scholastic doctrine, and as a result, although science was progressing rapidly, it still could not explain all the questions that had arisen. A scientific discovery is never an end in itself, but a door opening into a hallway full of more doors of potential discovery. Thus, with many unanswered questions, some of the Scholastics decided that human reason was not capable of explanation, therefore Divine reason would have to be grasped by faith alone. Reason, therefore, took back burner to blind faith.

## C. Proponents of Scholasticism

As the following list portrays, Scholasticism was neither restricted to a specific geographical locale, nor to one essential religious order. It also has lasted, since its inception in the century of the First Crusade (when Christians took back Jerusalem from the Turks, who'd had it for 28 years), to the present day, with a century-long interlude in the 1400's, and a revision in the late 1800's. The French, Spanish, Belgian, English, Italian and German; as well as Protestant, Catholic and even some Jews have followed it. Its strength has been in its holding the Bible itself up as the ultimate authority.

It is intriguing to notice that the nations who sponsored different religious crusades against the Muslims also supported some element of Scholasticism during the

period of that crusade. An explanation could be that they were trying to both reclaim land that had been taken by the enemies (Muslims) and also to reclaim the fundamental authority of scriptures which had been taken away by philosophers who demanded an overemphasis on reason. [2]

**11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES:**

ANSELM- ARCHBISHOP, REFORMER

ABELARD- LOGIC, FRENCH

ROSCELIN- PASTOR WHO FOUNDED NOMINALISM

MAIMONIDES- JEWISH RABBI

HENRY OF GHENT- BELGIAN

**15<sup>th</sup> CENTURY NOMINALISM INTERLUDE:**

WILLIAM OF OCKHAM: ENGLISH LOGICIAN

**13<sup>th</sup> CENTURY “GOLDEN AGE”:**

DOMINICAN MONKS:

MAGNUS- GERMAN

AQUINAS- FRIAR

FRANCISCAN MONKS:

ROGER BACON- ENGLISH MONK

DUNS SCOTUS-

BONAVVENTURE- ITALIAN PRELATE

SECULAR PRIEST:

**16<sup>th</sup> CENTURY RESURGENCE:**

FRANCISCO DE VITORIA- SPANISH THEOLOGIAN

SUAREZ- SPANISH

**19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY NEO-SCHOLASTICISM (TO PRESENT-DAY):**

POPE LEO XIII-

MARITIAN- FRENCH DIPLOMAT

HENRI GILSON- FRENCH HISTORIAN

Anselm first put forward the “ontological argument” for the existence of God. His statement, *“I believe, in order that I may understand.”* Remains a pillar in the reasoning technique of Scholasticism.

#### **D. Benefits and Effects of Scholasticism**

The major weakness of Scholasticism was its proponents’ unwillingness to clarify, update or correct the findings of Aristotle, but rather to try and justify his findings (even if they were partially ungrounded) through reason of theology. How can one prove falsehood by truth? It is not possible. Thus, Scholasticism had to be revised.

The logic, demonstration and discussion that Scholasticism practiced was far deeper than the other philosophical proponents of their time were. The practice also was introduced of delving deeply into the depths of Scriptural interpretation by the usage of

literary commentaries, especially Lombard's, and including emendations into these commentaries.

Public debates during this time period were also extremely popular. Periodically throughout the year, every professor in a medieval university was required to defend his views before the faculty and student body. Each of these debates would be evaluated in light of recent discoveries in matter or thought. The popular *scholastic method* involved a technique of setting up contradictory statements concerning a problem, and then resolving them by reason.

Scholasticism's key factor was faith, blended with reason. Abelard, one of the pioneers of Scholasticism, stated, "*Faith has no merit with God when it is not the testimony of divine authority that leads us to it, but the evidence of human reason.*" Abelard's book *Sic et Non (Yes and No)* set the stage for discussing the relationship between faith and reason in Christian theology, as well as for the work of Aquinas in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Although stamped as a heretic in his time, Abelard's student Lombard was to write the theological textbook *Book of Sentences*, which was to become a major sourcebook for theologians for centuries to come.

The English reformer Wyclif claimed that "*the whole error in the knowledge of Scripture, and the source of its debasement and falsification by incompetent persons, was the ignorance of grammar and logic*".[3] For such reasons the Bible lay buried and obscured for centuries. With the Renaissance, revival of the study of the languages and literature of Greece and Rome, Scholasticism finally toppled.

Or did Scholasticism topple at all? Did it not just come back in a different form? True, Wyclif was accurate in the realization that interpretation of Scripture must include

form criticism and analysis. But once these qualities were *added* to the revelation/reason approach of Scholasticism, its errors were resolved. Aquinas understood the importance of the content of the Bible. Revelation, he felt, supplements, but never contradicts reason. Aquinas was even able to confront and justify Aristotle's proposed contradiction that God, the Unmoved Mover, neither knows nor cares about the world; yet the Bible clearly states frequently that God is intimately concerned with his creation (as exemplified in John 3:16).

Not all medieval Scholastics followed Aquinas' method of semantic explanation of apparent contradictions. Bonaventura taught that rational knowledge of God is impossible, because God is different from man in quality and well as quantity. In the thirteenth century another monk, Roger Bacon, also resisted the methods of Aquinas with a very revealing approach for modern Mindanaoans:

These scholars emphasized observation, experiment and the use of measurement for understanding the world. Bacon came to recognize the practical possibilities of his studies. He dreamed of a world in which the pope would have an army equipped with new types of weapon that would be able to destroy with one blow the Islamic armies and bring peace to the world. [4]

To revise Bacon's dream, I propose that yes, we can defeat the Muslim insurgents. But not with a war of military weapons, funded from abroad. Rather the weapon of love, funded from abroad can defeat these insurgents. We can provide schools for them, information for them, food for them, understanding for them. Placed side by side, with Christianity on the right and Islam on the left, Islam fades into the shadows, for it is a foolish religion of fairytales. Yet Christianity is living and active and full of miracles and run by the one true, benevolent God who came to die for His creation. Yes, Bacon, we can bring peace. The kind of peace that comes from providing hope for all, including the insurgent Islamic armies. Now that we have analyzed Scholasticism, a

philosophy that focuses on stressing the importance of divine revelation over reason, let us now look at Reconstructionism, a philosophy that desires to bring about social change through streamlining education and globalizing its effect upon society. Let us also then blend the two into a new philosophy, the Barner Leanring Center Paradigm for Peace.

### **III. Reconstructionism in History**

## **Reconstructionism in History**

### **A. Beliefs of Reconstructionism**

The philosophy of reconstructionism contains two major premises: 1) *Society is in need of constant reconstruction or change*, and 2) *such social change involves a reconstruction of education and the use of education in reconstructing society*. [5] This change is to be with an attitude toward change that encourages individuals to try to make life better than it was or is.

At the present time this could strike a responsive chord because people are faced with a bewildering number of problems regarding race, poverty, war, ecological destruction, and technological expansion- problems that seem to call for an immediate reconstruction of all existing religious and philosophical value systems. Although there have always been intelligent people of vision who have thought about and promoted social change, only in recent times has a systematic outlook developed called *reconstructionist philosophy*.

### **B. Beginnings of Reconstructionism**

The Utopian idea has been expounded upon, planned and dreamed about by many, such as Plato and Augustine, down through the ages. Modern reconstructionism is basically pragmatic and owes a great debt to the pragmatist, John Dewey.

Reconstructionists promote such things as scientific method, problem solving, naturalism and humanism. But reconstructionists diverge from pragmatism in how they believe the pragmatic method should be used. Pragmatism's approach has become a tool for helping people adjust to society rather than change it. Yet for the reconstructionist, education serves as the tool for immediate and continual change. It is often necessary to get outside the general bounds of the contemporary value system to look at problems from a fresh perspective, without traditional baggage and restraints. Marx's form of reconstructionism was communism, a socialistic conquering of the system by the proletariat. Almost all approaches of reconstructionism involve an entrance into society through the school system of education.

### **C. Proponents of Reconstructionism**

#### UTOPIANS:

PLATO-	PHILOSOPHER, PREPARED A DESIGN FOR A FUTURE STATE IN <i>THE REPUBLIC</i>
MARCUS AURELIUS-	ROMAN EMPEROR
AUGUSTINE-	THEOLOGIAN
THOMAS MORE-	SUGGESTED WAYS TO BASE A STATE ON CHRISTIAN THINKING.
BELLAMY-	INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION TO IMPROVE HUMANITY
MARX-	PROPOSED A RECONSTRUCTION TOWARD COMMUNISM CHANGING THE WORLD

The two main modern proponents of Reconstructionism were Americans who had studied abroad, especially in Russia.

COUNTS (1889-1974)	AUTHOR OF <i>DARE THE SCHOOLS BUILD A NEW SOCIAL ORDER?</i>
BRAMELD (1904-1987)	AUTHOR OF <i>EDUCATION AS POWER AND TOWARD A RECONSTRUCTED PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION</i>

### **D. Benefits and Effects of Reconstructionism**

Reconstructionism does not seek to, nor have the patience to make epistemological or logical sociological studies like most philosophies do. It is more concerned with the broad social and cultural fabric in which humans exist. In a way, it is a social philosophy. It is an activistic approach.

Educators own a strategic position in social and cultural reconstruction. Although education has been used historically as a means of introducing people to their cultural traditions, social and cultural conditions were so altered by modern science, technology, and industrialization that education must now be used as a positive force for establishing new cultural patterns and for eliminating social evils. Educators should be willing to go against the status quo and become social reformers.

At the disposal of mankind is presently, according to Brameld, the immense capacity for good on the one hand, and a terrifying capacity for destruction on the other. All races, religions and creeds need to band together in order to bring about a peaceful world. Of course this involves short-and long-term goals: Utopian ends and piecemeal, engineering means.

Scientific technology is involved in making societies more efficient but also more complex. For example, cars save lives as people can get to the hospital quicker. But thousands are killed in traffic accidents every year. So the question arises, will we give up the fantastic pleasures of advancing technology, or will we “ride the dragon” into fascinating new realms of experience and opportunity?

While the reconstructionist claims we should get “back to basics”, I say *Sic et Non* (Yes and No). Get back to the basics, not of technology, but of faith and reason. Back to the Bible. Work together in studying the Bible, studying history (for it does repeat itself) and studying ways of helping each other. Network.

Simply stated, networks are people talking to each other, sharing ideas, information, and resources. The important part is the communication that creates the linkages between people and clusters of people. Networks exist to foster assistance,

exchange information, change society, communicate and share resources. They can improve the quality of life. Of course the Internet is the most obvious pivot point for networking. Where else can you type a collection of words into a search engine and in an instant, receive access to 10 million or more linkages to information on that topic?

In the network environment, rewards come by empowering others, not by climbing over them. Eventually we will restructure our businesses into smaller and smaller units, more entrepreneurial units, more participatory units. The vertical to horizontal power shift that networks bring about will be enormously liberating for individuals. Hierarchies promote moving up and getting ahead, producing stress, tension, and anxiety. Networking empowers the individual, and people in networks tend to nurture one another. Today we live in a world of overlapping networks, not just a constellation of networks but a galaxy of networking constellations. [6]

#### **E. The “Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter” Approach to Social Change**

Futurists like Teilhard and McLuhan have termed the design that we are now experiencing, “noosphere” and “global village”. To find the common basis that we long for all mankind to embrace, we could lean millions of anthropologists to examine cultures to see what is worth discarding and what is worth keeping. However, time constraints restrict this approach.

Truly Anthropologists are needed. But even more, normal people are needed (not implying that anthropologists are anything but normal!). Dozens of people. Hundreds of committed people. Thousands of supporting people. Millions of praying people. Toward the one common goal of evangelizing this globe before Jesus returns, we need a concerted effort to reach the lost through loving them and providing them with their basic needs which their own false religions have failed to give them.

The Society for Educational Reconstruction (SER) was established in 1969. Its policy statement sets forth two basic objectives of reconstructionism: 1) democratic control over the decisions that regulate human lives, and 2) a peaceful world community. [7] Such a movement must begin with the view that the school does not exist apart from

society but within it and that reconstruction of society will occur not through the school but with it.

As the school seeks to restructure society, it will have a challenge in reaching all "seasons of life". Let us suppose that, for matters of simplicity, the typical American will live 100 years. Granted, the average life span is only about 74, but there are many who die as children, and there are many others who exceed the first few years of entering the triple digits. With this supposition in mind, let us then divide the lifespan into quarters, giving 25 years to every one of the four "seasons" of life. 0-25 years would be the Springtime of life. 26-50 years would be the Summer of life. 51-75 would be the Autumn of life, and 76-100 would be the Winter of life.

History has shown that it repeats itself, and also fashion trends reveal that the styles that your parents enjoyed are often the ones that your own children will desire. One generation likes long hair and bell bottom jeans. The next one likes short hair and normal jeans, and the third goes back to long hair and bell bottom jeans. Since the odd and even generations have this fraternal spirit, what is taught in the schools to your children will likely be accepted by their grandparents, even if you don't. This is because the parents are in the Summer of their lives, while the students are in the Spring. Reconstructionists, in order to appeal to the alternate seasons, need to influence the generational gap through community action.

"I don't agree with what you are saying, but I like how you say it." is the idea. As children are taught in schools to help in their community through babysitting, cleaning up their neighborhood parks, helping out at the nursing homes, and cleaning the dishes at home, they will be looked upon favorably by their parents. But children do not just go out

and help others unless they are prompted to do so. The church is excellent at inspiring young people to reach out and help others. Therefore, a correspondence between schools and churches would speed up this process of social transformation.

Quite often those in the winter of their lives are a good target group to help. They are still active and have a wealth of knowledge and history to share. However, they are often discarded or forgotten. They are found in the churches though. The generational completion of the circle of seasons must, therefore, include this factor as well. 75 years old is not really all that old. And the person who is 80 should not consider himself finished with this mortal coil any more than the five year old starting kindergarten should consider himself a young man freshly out of college.

The Christian's approach to reaching other nations through educating the children of today will only work when the foundation of learning is in its proper perspective. The reconstructionists made the point that social responsibility is our task, with social responsibility as our ultimate goal. As the Scholastics proposed, the Bible is to be our sourcebook to carry this out.

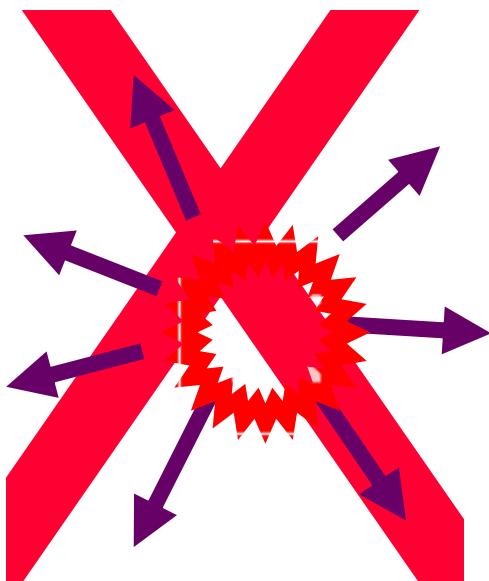
#### **IV. The Bible is our Sourcebook**

## **The Bible is our Sourcebook**

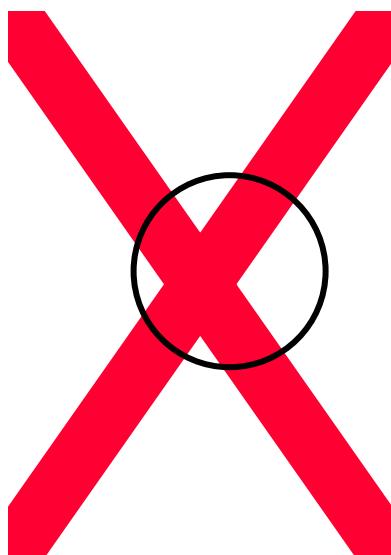
### **A. Biblical Curriculum**

As the scholastics have portrayed, the schools need to get “back to the Bible.” Yet they also revealed that a naïve look at the rudiments of knowledge, labeling what is not understood just as to be taken by blind faith, is not acceptable. Instead, a curriculum must be mapped out that will present the process of education in a Biblical framework. The Bible is to central focus of our approach. The following is a drawing of how to keep the

Bible as the center of our curriculum, and all other learning as outrprung from it. Like a wheel, the Bible is our hub and all learning is the spokes.

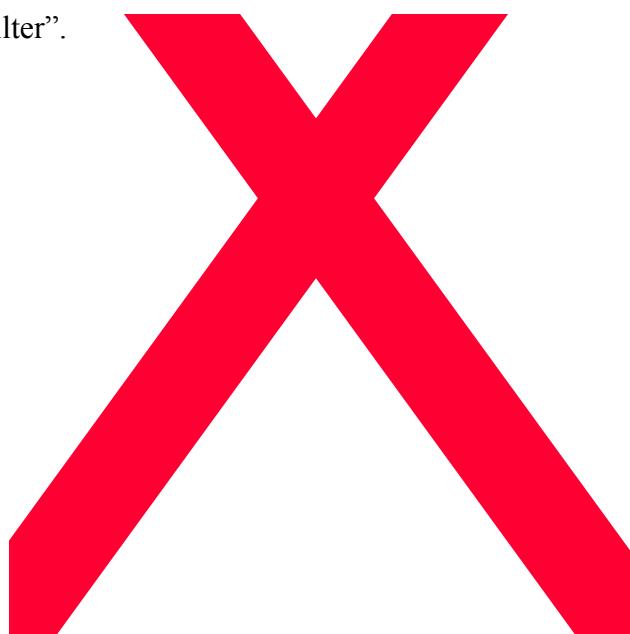


[22]



[21]

Further, the student himself is in the center of this process. As the Bible is studied, it has an amazing, miraculous affect upon that child's mental process. He begins to make correct decisions for himself, as he processes all imput from all sources through his "Biblical filter".



[26]

As educators, it is our great burden of responsibility to be sure that this Biblical filter is properly installed. It is not a “once for all” installation process. Rather, piece by piece, with painstaking care, this Biblical filter is assembled. The process resembles a modellist gluing together with tweezers the toothpicks, through the neck of a bottle, to build a ship inside.

Some of the questions to ask when evaluating curriculum for its Biblical strengths are:

1. How does the series treat Biblical integration?
2. Does the series provide for a varied approach to teaching and learning?
3. Is the material of high interest?
4. Does the material address students’ individual needs?
5. Is the series consistent with our philosophy?
6. Does the series teach all skills well? [33]

As we evaluate the prospective Biblical curriculums available on the market, an aspect of evaluation that helps greatly is to have specific Goals in mind. These are based on the Christian outcome that we seek to achieve, and is tied in directly with the institution’s philosophical approach.

For example, one of our purposes (aligned with our philosophy) should be to see the student learn the knowledge of God and His truth. With that purpose in mind, Possible goals arise which direct all factors to its end. The goal of teaching the Bible as God’s inspired word, and not just as fables created by man to portray lessons of morality. Another goal which seeks to achieve the purpose of seeing the student learn the

knowledge of God and His truth would be to teach the basic doctrines of the Bible: salvation, Christ, etc.

### **Christian Purposes and Goals of Education**

#### **PURPOSE:**

To learn the knowledge of God and His truth

#### **GOALS:**

Teach the Bible as God's inspired Word  
 Teach the truth about the behavior of human beings  
 Teach the basic doctrines of the Bible, including the doctrines of God, Christ, salvation, and man  
 Teach the truth about the natural universe

#### **PURPOSE:**

Respond to God and His truth

#### **GOALS:**

Lead students to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ  
 Lead students to commit themselves fully to God in wholehearted surrender to love and serve Him  
 Guide students to appreciate the total truth of God as contained in the Scriptures and in the natural creation

#### **PURPOSE:**

Living in harmony with God and His truth

#### **GOALS:**

Teach students to *obey* God's instructions for righteous living  
 Teach students to *appreciate* the natural universe and to live in accord with its laws and truth principles for human relationships  
 Teach students to *live* according to God's families, communities, and nations

#### **PURPOSE:**

To impact others with the knowledge of God and His truth

#### **GOALS:**

Train students to *communicate* verbal meaning effectively to other persons  
 Train students to *participate* in the church's worldwide task of evangelism and discipling  
 Teach students a realistic and Biblical *view* of work [24]

While the school supervisor, principal and president (in short, administration) have this massive responsibility of curriculum selection their hands, the teacher has an even greater role: to carry out that responsibility further by instilling the curriculum into the minds of the students. This involves all the factors of reasoning: who, why, where, when, how, what, which...the teacher needs to *know* the curriculum before teaching it. The teacher needs to *live* the curriculum as he teaches it. The teacher needs to be prepared to answer questions that the students have regarding that curriculum.

Such would be an impossible task with any curricular basis but the Bible. You cannot *live* a science book. But the Bible is a living book. It is history, telling about real

people who existed in the past, and how God touched their lives and challenged them to do great things. The Bible continues to live on through the lives of born again believers down through the ages and into today. When the student sees a trait in his teacher of strength, he sees Samson in his teacher and in himself, potentially. When the student sees the trait in his teacher of steadfastness, he sees Jeremiah and Elijah and Jesus at Gesthemane. Examples are set as the teacher *lives* the Bible for his students.

### **Role of the Teacher**

<i>Personal example of godliness</i>	Prays <i>daily</i> for students
Applies <i>Christian</i> philosophy in instructional content	<i>Active</i> in local church
<i>Stimulates</i> students to worship God	Able to <i>lead</i> students to Christ
<i>Enthusiastic</i> Bible Student	<i>Displays</i> Christianity in class décor
Sees faculty as <i>Spiritual</i> body	<i>Eager</i> to receive/act on reproof
Approaches <i>every</i> lesson with Christian mindset	Feels <i>called</i> to be a Christian Teacher [31]

### **B. Biblical Guide for Peace**

The Christian school is designed to influence its society in a positive way. It follows the mandate in which God commanded us to show His love to the world: “*You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*” -Acts 1:8 [30]

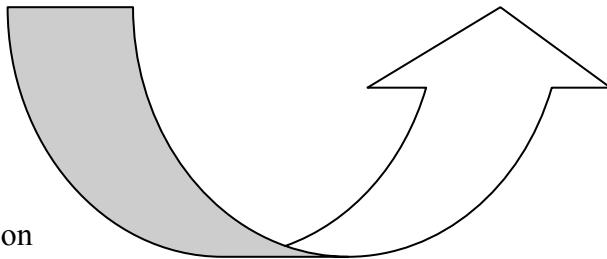
As the Christian school influences society, it is truly confronting people who are on one side so like them in many ways, and on yet on the other side are so vastly different, even down to their basic assumptions:

<b><u>SECULAR ASSUMPTIONS:</u></b>	◆	<b><u>THE CHRISTIAN MIND:</u></b>
Universe is a closed system.	◆	God intervenes and controls the universe.
Moral standards are relative.	◆	Biblical standards of good and evil.
Man is supreme.	◆	God ordains authority.
Truth is discovered by science.	◆	Truth is revealed by God.
Survival of the fittest.	◆	Concern for persons.
God is irrelevant	◆	All exists to God’s glory. [25]

Furthermore, since the basic assumptions of the secular mind are adverse to those of the Christian mind, the overall worldview therefore of the believer is distinct and unique as well.

- **Christian Worldview:**

- A belief system
- based on scripture
- affects world perception
- promotes world interaction
- view: all subjects are in God's pattern



[32]

With the goal of systematic and global revision in mind, the Christian looks upon all of existence in a unique light. The student in a Christian curriculum says, "*Wow, look at all that is going on in the world. Now, let's get busy and see how we can fix it!*" Analyzing the greatest needs, creative opportunities are developed, based on an understanding of each actual problem's complete scenario:

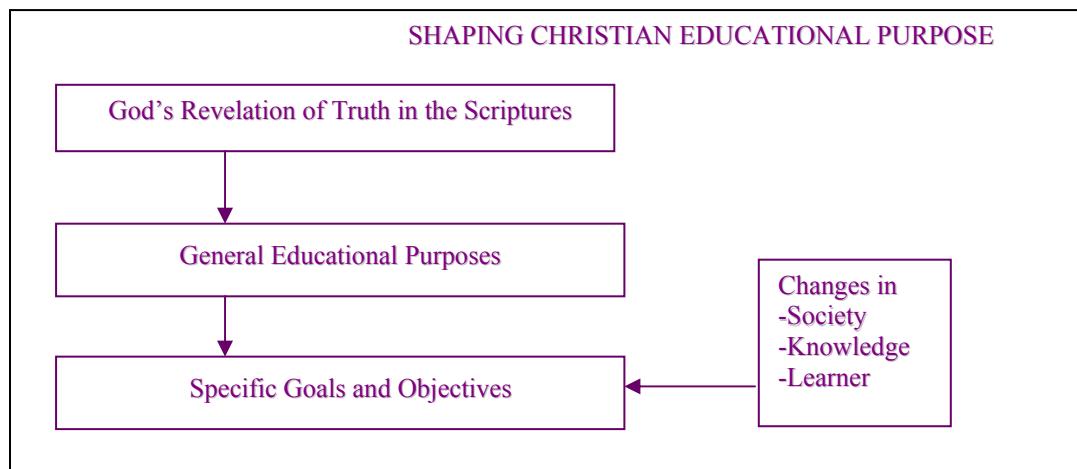
Need: Food. Hunger does not stand in isolation. It is not the one-time result of lack of rain (drought) or crop failure (famine). Rather, it is linked to a web of factors that include war, illiteracy, disease, contaminated water, oppressive governments, drug abuse, environmental destruction, poor housing, lack of education, and crime- just to name a few. [20] In a Christian school we train the students to be globally minded, to see that in many ways, the world is a global village.

The needs of the person on the other side of the planet are our needs as well. The list of needs is endless, therefore there will always be some area in which we are gifted to be qualified to help out. Legal matters, sponsoring children, sending food or clothes or

small gifts, raising money through car washes and bake sales for a well to be dug, learning a foreign language and going on a short-term missions trip. The Christian teacher can open the eyes of his students to see more realistically who he is, what he is, and how he can help others.

### C. Biblical Guide for Life

As the Bible is taught and followed by the student, and as he continues to seek greater ways of changing the society he lives in, he himself is transformed as well. His personal besetting sins of temptation, greed, jealousy, etc. are replaced by Godly fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness and self control, as seen in Galatians 5:22



[23]

His interactions with others are seasoned with the salt of Christian good will. The Christian school's student body as well has less problems such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, and vandalism. The atmosphere is one of security and safety. Even the students with mental or physical defects are treated as equals, and like a family the others seek to nurture and love them as equals. The Bible is honored and respected and therefore chapel times and gospel singing presentations are a joy for all. Sports become physical

outreaches to extend personal God-given abilities to their limits, instead of blind frenzies of unfettered competition.

**School Atmosphere and Relationships:**

- Atmosphere is based on the Mission Statement.
- Atmosphere is good when the Bible is honored.
- Atmosphere is good when school and home are partners.
- Atmosphere is God-conscious.
- Atmosphere encourages evangelism of the world.
- Atmosphere promotes excellent character development.
- Atmosphere is forgiving.
- Atmosphere is full of team spirit and good sportsmanship.
- Atmosphere is accountable and focuses on Jesus.

[28]

The overall conceptual desire, not just in a Christian school, but in any educational institution, is one of intellectual transference: We are passing information from one generation to the next, thereby providing the groundwork for further intriguing possibilities. Imagine if Ben Franklin discovered electricity and then he kept it to himself without sharing the news with anyone? Or what if Alexander Graham Bell never shared his news of the discovery of the telephone with anyone besides his assistant Watson? Mankind would still be living in the dark ages. Technology builds on technology, and thus the educational institution holds the key for future progress and invention.

*And the things that you have heard from many witnesses commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who goes not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” –2 Timothy 2:2,15 [29]*

Yet the end result speaks for itself. What have we produced, after these past generations of Christian schooling?

**Characteristics of most Christian School Graduates:**

1. Has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
2. Applies Biblical values to the issues of everyday living
3. Committed to Bible study and Spiritual growth
4. Prepared to share the truth of the Gospel with others.
5. Able to stand on Biblical convictions.
6. Understands the centrality of the Bible, and its worldview.
7. Has a work ethic that is honest, ambitious and has integrity.
8. Has a strong relationship with a local church.
9. Knows how to seek and find God's will for his life.
10. Practices Christian morality in interpersonal relationships.
11. Understands and applies individual God-given abilities for God's glory.
12. Makes life decisions based on Gospel principles, godly counsel and Holy Spirit insights.
13. Makes wise ethical and vocational choices based upon the Word of God.
14. Has a Christian view of history, economics, social relations, politics and science.
15. Demonstrates the ability to think like a Christian.
16. Has and can explain a Biblical view of marriage.
17. Has good study habits and a commitment to lifelong learning and intellectual growth.
18. Accepts himself as a unique creation of God.
19. Able to come up with Biblical answers to life's problems.

**20.** Is committed to live in obedience to God's laws.

[27]

#### D. Biblical Guide for Salvation

The final, and most crucial of all gifts that Christian Schooling can provide to the world is that of an invitation for eternal life. After all, what good is it to feed a person and extend his life for as many as eighty years, and then have him die an eternity of suffering in hell? All is temporal compared to the infinite. Since the time of Methuselah, who was the oldest man who ever lived, lasting 969 years, life spans have gotten much shorter. And even at that, Methuselah's almost-millennial age was a mere breath compared to the quadrillions of years which we will spend in eternity with (or without) God.

To provide help for the hurting without an offer of eternal life would be like bringing a person to a hospital for cure of an illness, but only feeding him there until he died instead of performing surgery. We cannot help the poor without telling them of how to be saved from damnation. We would be like Adolf Hitler, who tempted the Jews into hot showers that in actuality were furnaces heated to scorch their bones dry in agony. You cannot clean dirt, and you cannot clean a soul that has not received Jesus into his heart.

The Biblical plan of salvation, of which all BLC students are informed, is found in the following four verses of Romans:

**3:23-** *All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*

**6:23-** *The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**5:8-** *God commended his love toward us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

**10:9-** *That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

**12:1,2-** *I beseech you therefore brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable act of worship. Do not conform any more to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good, pleasing and perfect will."*

[34]

It is so very simple. All they have to do is pray and repent of their sins, believing that Jesus died on the cross for them. They give over their devotion to God and accept His eternal gift of salvation, and from then on until eternity they are freed from the threat of hell. It is the best gift that we can give them...and it is absolutely, unconditionally free! Jesus was the substitutionary sacrifice for their sins, which he paid for completely upon the cross.

#### V. Barner Learning Center's New Paradigm for Peace

## **Barner Learning Center's New Paradigm for Peace**

### **A. A Quality, Christian, Values-Based Education**

Barner Learning Center, Inc. Seeks to provide *a Quality, Christian, Values-Based Education* to children of all ages. This purpose is on our stationery, on our school vehicles, even on our school sign. When your child receives his report card, there is the goal right before your eyes. When you arrive for one of the monthly events of our student body, the printed program will have our purpose emblazoned across its back cover. There is no doubt about why we are here. We are designed with one aim in mind: to provide a Quality, Christian, Values-Based Education to children of all ages. The following is an explanation of how this is done.

#### **1. Quality Education**

In order to provide quality, we require a staff that is well chosen, and facilities and a curriculum that are approved by the Philippine Department of Education (DepEd). All teachers on the BLC staff are licensed by the DepEd. The entire curriculum required by the government is present, and also supplemented with Christian curriculum. Facilities

are constantly being extended and improved upon so that the greatest learning environment is afforded. Enrollment and tuition costs are kept low- in fact, they are some of the lowest in all of Davao City. Yet all the classrooms are air-conditioned. No elementary classroom will have more than 30 students, nor will any preschool classroom have more than 15. An aide is in every single classroom to assist the teacher.

## **2. Christian Education**

Every year there are many applicants for teaching positions at BLC. Teachers like to teach here because we take good care of them. Although the salary cannot match that of public schools, nonetheless, “perks” add to the base salaries of the teachers substantially. For instance, each licensed teacher will receive an extra 5% bonus in every paycheck for each of the following in which he or she qualifies:

- has taken and passed 9 or more units of masters courses approved by the DepEd
- for seniority of each year in the employ of BLC
- is actively taking between three and five units of graduate or post graduate courses approved by the DepEd

Thus, by the time a person retires from BLC, he can double (or more!) his salary! Also BLC enrolls all employees in the Social Security System and Philippine Health Organization.

The main requirement that is looked for before an employee is hired, however, is that he or she is a strong Christian. What year did he pray to receive Jesus into his heart? To what church is he now an active member? What is he doing in his church? Is he on the

worship team, or does he teach Sunday School? Does he have a good reference from his pastor?

These questions may seem unimportant, but in BLC they are essential. For each staff person, from the principal and president on down to the bus driver and maintenance man, are to view the BLC students as their spiritual charge. They are to be an example for them on a daily basis. Even when they are not punched in on the BLC time clock, the employees are responsible for their actions. Have they been seen drinking, smoking, or gambling? Are they philandering with mistresses or boyfriends? Then they will be disciplined and may even lose their jobs. To be on the staff of a Christian school is a serious business. We are strict with them because God will demand from us accountability in the integrity of our staff before the pupils and parents.

The teachers also teach, not only Bible stories and Christian songs, but they teach the government-required curriculum of Mathematics, Science, Home Economics, etc. from a Christian perspective. For example, how better to describe “infinity” than to look at God? Or how better to describe God’s infinity than to look at the ongoing remainders of pi-r-squared (3.14...). The universe declares the glory of God. Therefore as we study the universe, we understand God all the more.

### **3. Values-Based Education**

The logo of BLC has a cross in the middle and four pictures in the four sections of the cross. These include the four main emphases of BLC: Spiritual, Mental, Physical and Social. We are not an “ACE” (Accelerated Christian Education) school, for we strongly emphasize social interaction, which is not as dogmatic in ACE schools. The BLC

children have received awards for their performances and competitions with other schools and even in shopping malls. Dance numbers, elocution competitions, and musical presentations are a few of their accomplishments. Organized sports competitions have not yet been a strong emphasis, due to the young nature of the kids. However as we open fifth and sixth grade this year, that will be a major thrust.

## B. AIM

BLC is quite popular with the middle-class and wealthy, since it is in close proximity to their homes and also has a local staff. Plus the air-conditioned rooms make for a comfortable and safe environment for their children. Because the staff is relatively small, the fees are quite reasonable as well. We tell the parents every year that this is not a business, but a ministry. In fact we are tax exempt, non-profit and non-stock.

Even though the cost is quite reasonable, there are nonetheless many families who are poverty-stricken and therefore cannot afford even the pittance that BLC charges for enrollment. I love to keep in contact with friends from college, high school, childhood, and former churches that I have pastored or attended. In fact, the list is quite impressive, with thousands of names, addresses and email addresses. When I mentioned to some of these buddies about the case of the poor who couldn't afford schooling, the sponsorship program got off the ground. Today hundreds of sponsors from six different countries sponsor BLC kids. More than half the student body is made up of sponsored children.

Although they do not have to pay anything to come to school, they do however have the responsibility of filling certain requirements, beyond being morally fit and regularly attending classes. Every year a few drop out of the sponsorship program, due to

unwillingness to comply with the rules. These rules involve the acrostic “AIM”: Attendance, Involvement, and Meetings.

### **1. Attendance**

All sponsored families must attend church each Sunday. If they are not pastoring a church somewhere, then they must attend the church that I am pastoring, Faith Fellowship. It is easy to find, since it meets in the BLC gym every Sunday. An attendance book is signed each week and the children must attend as well. Why do we do this? Because we feel spiritually accountable for these families. How are we supposed to know what is being taught in other churches? Plus, we could not possibly keep track of every church, and contact every pastor to find out if the family was present that Sunday.

We are making and revising an ongoing church directory with a listing of all 200+ in the church so that I can regularly pray for each and every one of the parishioners.

### **2. Involvement**

The second requirement of all sponsored families is that they put in “sweat equity,” similar to that of Habitat for Humanity (yet we do not require that they build a house!). An hour a day must be given to the school in cleaning, assisting in classes, filling secretarial responsibilities, etc. Most of the parents of the younger children would just be waiting around in the school for their children to get out of classes anyway. Plus this extra substantial work force helps us to keep the school very presentable and immaculate.

### **3. Meetings**

Although the parents are attending church every Sunday in community worship, we want to be sure that the parents are also personally growing in their Christian walk. Every

week they should be getting to know Jesus in a deeper way. The best way to do this is to learn about Him and to study his Word, the Bible. Also to pray. And to learn how to lead others to receive the gift of eternal life. Thus we have hired a lady chaplain to make up a chart and personally interview a representative from each family at least 20 minutes per week. Dozens have become born again, baptized and members of the church as a result of these discipleship meetings. Quite often they will be in tears as they pray together for their needs and see miracles done and answers to prayer.

### **C. BLC as a Prototype**

We are seeking the overall plan of having BLC be a prototype which will be cloned in other areas which need schools. This will be possible as the sponsor base grows exponentially. The idea can be both duplicated and also extended through the “Mother-School” approach.

#### **1. The Mother-School Concept**

A mother does not abandon her child after giving birth. Rather, she feeds and nurtures the child to a diminishing degree for the rest of that child’s life. Likewise, we seek as an institution to reach out to the areas which are further from our school, by providing teachers for them, and by building the institution from the ground up. This will be possible in future years when we build, by the Lord’s will, a teacher training college.

#### **2. The President’s Appeal: “Give us more Schools!”**

A few years ago it was the president of the Philippines who made the appeal that there were not enough schools to go around. Many Filipino children were learning out under mango trees or in libraries, community buildings or barangay halls. “Can you help us?”

was the appeal from Malacañang Palace. The offer was even made to sponsor children in a school (similar to the voucher system that has succeeded so well in the USA) where no government school exists presently. We can reach the poor and the abandoned and the remote families through this BLC school system, and also present the gospel to bring about social transformation in their areas. Unevangelized, war-torn areas will now be open to the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the new BLC Paradigm for peace in Mindanao.

### **3. Mindanao as a Global Prototype**

Mindanao is not the only area of the world where people live in poverty. As this system of evangelization and education succeeds in Mindanao among the squatter families, it can extend to the aborigines of Australia, the Indians of North America, the Aids children of Africa and the orphans of Russia. One day our successors will look back and exclaim, “What hath God wrought!”

### **D. The International Sponsorship Factor**

It is such a blessing when poor families realize that they are not alone in their struggles. Someone, somewhere on this planet is praying specifically for them, and paying for their child to be able to attend BLC. It really is very much like an extended family. This “adoption” covers many aspects:

#### **1. “Adopting” Students Through Finances**

The most obvious way that sponsors are helping the poor families is through paying \$20 a month for their schooling. This is done in many ways. Some people send a check directly to us through the mail. Then we deposit it in our BLC dollar account and cover

that student's school expenses. Others give through Christian Aid Mission, which sends us these funds in bimonthly checks throughout the year, sending receipts to the givers. Others deposit directly into our New York account. However they do it, they aggressively commit themselves to thinking about their sponsored child by sending the required funds every single month. When they get their paychecks and pay their bills, they remember to send that check as well. We have in this small way created a factor of "global community".

## **2. "Adopting" Students Through Prayer**

When someone approaches us and lets us know they would like to sponsor a child, we assign them a boy or girl, depending upon their preference. Since we have already interviewed the student who is on the waiting list, we take the child's picture and list pertinent information on their family situation. They really have to be poor. My wife Elvie is the principle and also the one who interviews all the sponsored kids's parents. She has turned away many who wanted to be sponsored but were not really financially needy. She'll ask them, "Are you sure that you want to steal the sponsorship from a truly needy child?" They understand, and sometimes even go ahead and enroll in the school by paying the enrollment themselves.

The sponsorship card and letter that we send to the sponsors is of sturdy paper, so it stands up by itself on their desk or mantle at home. Many sponsors regularly pray for their sponsored kids. There are Sunday school classes that take special offerings to sponsor children. These have many who together pray for the sponsored child. When there is an emergency in the family, I let the sponsor know right away (if they have email) so that they can pray for the need, be it spiritual, physical, financial or social.

### **3. “Adopting” Students Through Hosting Representatives**

Another aspect of sponsorship that some have chosen is to provide us lodging as we travel and find sponsors. Some speak to their pastors about us and set up a time for us to speak at their churches. This is invaluable, for even if the family cannot afford sponsorship, they may be providing the opportunity for many who can afford it to hear of the opportunity. Instead of one sponsor, we could get two or three sponsors from that one speaking engagement.

### **4. “Adopting” Students Through Gift-Giving**

Since the information card that the sponsor received from us has the birthday of their sponsored child on it, we often receive gifts in the mail for the children. Their eyes brighten up when I knock on the door of their classroom and the teacher points out the “birthday child”. Sometimes there will be a gift, but usually just a card with lots of stickers inside that the child can share with his classmates.

Occasionally a sponsor will send \$10 for a birthday gift for their “adopted” child. We then will use that money to buy a second uniform for that child. Only one school uniform (plus one scouting uniform) is included in the sponsorship, and it has to be washed every day. So this extra “birthday outfit” is really appreciated by both the kids and the parents...especially the mom!

Since Christmastime is Jesus’ birthday, everybody gets a gift. We have a Children’s Christmas fund, and whenever anyone gives funds for a Christmas gift for their child, the money goes into that account. To avoid jealousy, all the children receive the same thing. Last year they received play outfits (colorfully decorated shorts and T-shirts), as well as

their very own Bibles, a stuffed animal toy and Christian coloring book. The year previous they received watches.

Since people give all year long, we give gifts to the kids every few months as well. Toothbrushes, toothpaste, vitamins, toys and clothes are the usual fare. We make sure that, whenever they receive a gift, they write a thank-you note to their sponsors. Then I process the letters, arranging them in envelopes addressed and stamped to go across the seas to welcoming hands. They are so thrilled when they go to their mailboxes and pull out a letter with a Philippine stamp on the outside! Sometimes the kids draw pictures, and almost always they include the words, "Thank you! I love you!"

## **CONCLUSION**

Truly, the world is full of heartache. Death, disease and defamation degrade civilizations. Mindanao especially is plagued by Muslim and Communist radicals who kidnap and maim and kill and steal. There seems to be no escape.

Yet even as in the Old Testament when God heard the cries of the Israelites when they were being persecuted, and God sent a deliverer, so today a deliverer has arrived. That deliverer is the Barner Learning Center, carrying the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Learning from the Scholastics the importance of keeping the Bible as the central focus, and also from the Reconstructionists the Importance of gleaning international assistance for transformation of children through education on both sides of the fiscal spectrum, BLC has designed a plan that will alleviate, and perhaps eliminate the war that has already claimed thousands of lives. More so, BLC provides the eternal benefit of an opportunity of receiving the greatest gift of peace ever offered: salvation from Hell and sin, and eternal life in heaven with Christ.

## ENDNOTES:

1. Phillips, 202,203.
2. Dowley, pp. 249-289.
3. Ibid, p.286.
4. Ibid, p. 289.
5. Ozmon, p.167.
6. Naisbitt, p. 229.
7. Op Cit, p. 180.
8. Torres, p. 172, 173.
9. Panopio, p. 150.
10. Burnham, p. 10.
11. Drubbel, p. 866.
12. Simpson, p. 698. Cited in Rambo, p. 39
13. God, p. 878.
14. Ibid, p. 906.
15. Alejo, p. 50.
16. Ibid, p. iii.
17. God, p. 387.
18. Ibid, p. 952.
19. Ibid, p. 1082.
20. Campolo, p. 9.
21. Kienel, p. 108.
22. Ibid, p. 96.
23. Ibid. p. 135.
24. Ibid. p. 139.
25. Ibid. p. 160.
26. Ibid. p. 282.
27. Ibid. p. 463.
28. Ibid. p. 414-425.
29. God. p. 1050.
30. Ibid. p. 961.
31. Kienel, p. 228.
32. Ibid. p. 24.
33. Ibid. p. 323.
34. God. Pp. 1001,1002,1000,996,995,994.

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14. Torres, Jose Jr. (2001). *Into the Mountain: Hostaged by the Abu Sayyaf*. Quezon City: Claretin Publications, Inc.