Chapter 8

Peace Leadership Education Within Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding Approach in International Peace Leadership College – Philippines

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ABSTRACT

It becomes clear that integration of appropriate and effective inputs of principles of peace into education is vital to raise future leaders who would lead humanity into prosperity and peace. This qualitative study aims to have deeper understanding of the International Peace Leadership founder’s teaching on five principles of peace and effect of the teaching on molding peaceful graduates. The result of the interview with students indicated that five principles of peace broaden the understanding of the students and turn them into more global peace leaders who would like to actively take responsibility for their spiritual growth, strengthening families, live for the sake of others, and involve cooperation with others beyond the barriers of ethnicity, religion, and nationality to realize peace.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable individual, family, community, national and global development would not be realized unless humanity achieve long lasting peace and harmony among them, others and with environment. “We experience the violence, fear and anxiety of a world in travail, as global linkages of communication and commerce are undermined by tensions that arise from persistent cultural and religious misunderstanding, prejudice and conflict”(Universal Peace Federation, 2007). How far can we continue our usual business without correcting the situation and finding solutions to fundamental problems of individuals, families and community?

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Integration of appropriate and effective inputs of principles of peace into education is vital to raise future leaders who would lead humanity into the prosperity and peace. Ban Ki Moon (2011), former UN Secretary General in his message on international day of peace stated that “peace is our mission, our day to day quest.” Adversity or prosperity of the families, communities, nations and the world depends on which one will be promoted by parents, teachers, religious and community leaders. In other words, the seed of war or peace is planted in the minds of people which would be harvested by the next generations. As UNESCO Constitution (1945) proclaims, “That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed”.

There are still obvious signs of insecurity all over the world which make the search for effective peace education more relevant and significant. If we search among the World News articles and other literatures we may find similar concerns as this: “With the advent of 21st century, humanity was yearning for the dawning of a new era of peace and prosperity. Yet these ideals seem ever more elusive, as international terrorism and ethnic clashes create global fear and chaos. Societies worldwide continue to suffer from grave problems such as hunger and poverty, corrupt leadership, racial and religious intolerance, violence, AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse and rampant environmental destruction” (International Educational Foundation, n.d.).

Even as developed countries enjoy unprecedented technological and economic prosperity, it is plagued by a pervasive moral crisis which undermines the peace and security of the society. This crisis is nowhere more evident than among youth and families. “The 20th century demonstrated how dramatic improvements in science, technology and material prosperity can resolve some issues, but these alone cannot ensure personal, familial and collective well-being. Unless the character and family crisis can be resolved, there will never be a basis for lasting peace and prosperity” (International Educational Foundation, n.d.).

The early increasing eruption of moral crisis among youth and families was reported during the second half of 20th century. In a poll conducted by Who’s Who by American teachers, teachers observed a toxic trend in their schools over the past 10 years: “81 percent reported less respect for authority, 73 percent noted a decline in ethics and morals, 65 percent observed less responsible attitudes, and 60 percent saw children as more self-centered. In a June 1st, 1995 radio interview, New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani reported that though crime that year had decreased 18 percent, crime within the school system had increased 25 percent. In late April 1999, two students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado went on a murderous shoot-out, killing twelve of their fellow students and a teacher, and wounding many others” (As cited in International Educational Foundation, 2001).

As the result of rapid rate of changes in contemporary world and disruption of ancient traditions, humanity is experiencing a deep worldwide spiritual and moral vacuum. “To fill the spiritual and moral vacuum of this age, a new perspective of life based on universal values is necessary, one that integrates the best of spiritual and material values, traditional and contemporary values, left-wing and right-wing values, and Eastern and Western values. Such a worldview can help provide the basis for healthy individuals, strong families and stable communities that can connect with one another to create nations and an international network of peace” (International Educational Foundation, n.d.).

This imminent need for such peace education materials motivated the researcher to study and scrutinize the teachings of Dr. Sun Myung Moon on peace leadership education which are summarized as 5 major principles of peace: God as the parent of humanity, spiritual nature of human being, family as the corner stone of peace, living for the sake of others, and necessity of interreligious and international cooperation for world peace.