

reachbulletin

april 2023 vol. 31 no. 1 | resources employment and community horizons

SEE?
I AM
DOING
A NEW
THING

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.

reach annual staff retreat 2

filipino wives ministry in NZ 4

butuan welcomes alumni again 5


holy week meditation 6

phase two: building update 7

hope for troubled youth 7

lb ministry shares gospel 8

Equipping People to Become Complete in Christ



BEHOLD,
I AM
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THING:
NOW IT
SPRINGS
FORTH, DO
YOU NOT
PERCEIVE IT?
I WILL MAKE A
WAY IN THE
WILDERNESS
AND RIVERS
IN THE
DESERT.”

I AM DOING A NEW THING

Psalm 90:12 tells us to number our days. With limited time here in this life, we can make our lives count by aligning ourselves with God’s plans. But God doesn’t stick to old ways. This year’s annual staff retreat gave REACH members a chance to look at 2023 with fresh eyes to see what God is doing so they can respond accordingly.

The retreat organized by the National Discipleship Team focused on Isaiah 43:19:

“Behold, I am doing a new thing: now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”

The retreat was held online on February 11. Speakers included Ed and Dr. Oyay Jimenez (God is Doing a New Thing in our Midst), Dr. Paul Pasicolan (Intergenerational Heritage of Blessings), and Jerry Francisco (Seize the Moment, Now Na!). Breakout groups gave attendees a chance to ponder the messages and how to apply them.

God is Doing a New Thing in Our Midst

Oyay said we face the danger of not perceiving what God is doing and adjusting accordingly.

The Israelites witnessed many miracles God performed on their behalf during their journey to the Promised Land and when they settled there. But the prophet Isaiah warned them not to linger on these things too long. God had greater things to do.

By focusing on the old things, we become too comfortable and miss out on the new. But new things

can also be uncomfortable. That can make us more dependent upon God.

Ed and Oyay enumerated the old things God has done in REACH: continued creative disciple making, meeting together during the pandemic through technology, sustained operations, sustained financial and non-financial help for constituents despite the pandemic, completion of the first phase of the national office, and continued missionary work locally and internationally.

Ed shared an acronym, VUCA, used to grasp conditions and needs of a particular time period which can be adopted in ministry. As defined on the internet, “VUCA thinking is a way of recognizing and understanding the complexities and dynamics of a rapidly changing world and how to prepare and manage the risks associated with them.”

VUCA stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity.

Ed reframed the acronym more positively to plot a course of action with confidence.

V — Vision. Our true north involves following the Lord in our calling.

U — Unchanging. God’s unchanging nature of being just, holy, and loving holds our future.

C — Clear Communications. We need one another to grow and mature.

Communication is the glue that holds the community together.

A — Adaptability. We need to be agile to adapt and adopt to change in line with Biblical principles.

A redeemed use of VUCA can help us stay the course in the Great Commission. It helps us develop a new mind-set, refrain from looking behind so we can look ahead to what God will bring into our midst.

Intergenerational Heritage of Blessings

Can God's blessings be passed on to the children's children? Can a spiritual heritage be lost? What is the key to God's intergenerational blessings and special favors?

Paul noted that over the years, there is often a redemptive lift when the gospel comes to a community or family. In the ministry, young disciples have had an impact on their families, spiritually and economically as Christ transformed their lives and values. However, continued blessing is not guaranteed.

As REACH continues its generational transition, Paul challenged the group to avoid resting in past glories. He highlighted REACH's spiritual heritage but also the dangers in the transition phase.

Using the Israelites as an example, he said they did not live up to their calling after entering the Promised Land. The elders failed to pass on their rich spiritual and historical heritage to the younger generation after Joshua's time (Judges 2:8-11).

God's people became legalistic (Matthew 23:1-39), bureaucratic, complex, and preoccupied with minor things rather than the essentials (Romans 11:1-32). The same can happen today. We can

be caught up in our professions and other concerns until we are absorbed by the world and return to worldliness (Romans 12:2).

What the Next Generation Needs:

Paul pointed out how we can help the next generation:

- Helping them to know the God of Abraham, Issac, Jacob, and Moses, and David; that God is creator of history and time; God's purpose of creation; and why Jesus came.
- Instill the value of the Lordship of Jesus in our life, in the child, the family, and of the entire kinship network.
- Sharing stories of great personal encounters and experience with God.

In the ministry, he emphasized these needs:

- REACH's emphasis and application of the BASICS
- Sharing the gospel as part of our lifestyle (spontaneously)
- Disciple making in the market place: (infiltrative purpose)
- Disciple making through changing seasons of life. Not quitting.
- REACH vision, mission, distinctives, and core values
- REACH as a corporate family unit; caring, building, and sharpening each other, (growing together as a community).

The Key

The key to intergenerational blessing is living an authentic life of faith and obedience that comes from a deep intimate personal walk with God. Over the years, disciple makers should model a good example and continue diligently mentoring and coaching. He said there are no graduation rites, just role modification through the seasons of life.

He also pointed out the need to allow one's disciples to make their own step of faith in order for them to meet God in a personal way. This applies in the home as well. He said children need to own their reality check.

Overall, we need to let the love of Christ radiate in our lives. Then, the next generation will be challenged to pass on what they learned and experienced to the generation after them.

Seize the Moment: Now Na!

Jerry told people to seize the moment based on Isaiah 43:19. Then, he drew three principles regarding the Lord's will for each of us from Ephesians 5:15-17:

1. Live not as unwise but wise,
2. Make the most of every opportunity, and
3. live with urgency.

Jerry said the declining morality of society puts us in a battle. He likened it to the last two minutes of a basketball game.

Instead of wasting our lives, he said, "Be a change maker. Time is short. Keep going!"

He said moving forward involves:

- Developing wisdom by living out the Bible in our lives.
- Seeking God's purpose
- Cultivating an intimate relationship with Christ.
- Depending on God
- Praying, and
- Becoming more desperate for Christ.

He said Christ will empower us to live one day at a time. It's not about our talent or skill.

When we seize the moment, we will experience the new thing God is doing. And God is very willing to give Himself for us. So pray for one another and release fear with faith. ■

Filipino Wives Ministry in New Zealand

In 2001, Mario and I were called to New Zealand to minister to international students. Mario went ahead of us because Sarah needed to finish her elementary education and Mario needed to find a job to support ourselves.

by Rebecca "Saling" Garcia

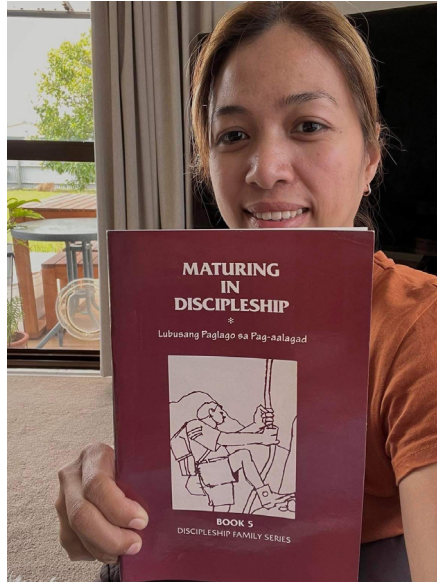
Over the course of time, we moved to different places and invited international students to our home for meals and Bible studies. We had Chinese, Africans, Singaporeans, Malaysians, Indonesians, Iranians, Bangladeshi, and Filipinos. The mixture included students, married people, and local people from different countries but who grew up in New Zealand.

We loved the ministry but found the physical distance from our daughter and grandchildren difficult. In 2019, the Lord led us to return to Palmerston North where we lived before, and Sarah and the kids continued to live.

This was a big move, but God fulfilled His promises to us. We were able to sell our house in Hamilton, buy a house, and build a second house for Mario and I to live behind the house we bought for Sarah and the kids. God has been answering our prayers for Sarah and also guiding the grand kids to knowing God in their lives.

Then we tried to start an international ministry in a polytechnic school, but somehow the Lord seemed to close it for us. Instead, He opened up a Bible study with Filipino families. Nena Alvarez' sister, Ting Salvador has her daughter and son's family around. Also, Alice Ballesfin (also Nena's younger sister) has her children staying here in New Zealand. We have Bible study and meals together with this group of people.

But the Lord impressed upon me that these young wives needed more



encouragement from the Word of God and time to pray together. Titus 2:3-5 encouraged me to do this.

So I started going to each of their homes (Navigator style of follow-up) and started praying with them. The Lord even provided a car that is both battery and gas operated so that my travel to each home was not that expensive by way of fuel.

At one point, I started using the REACH *Discipleship Family Series*. I started with Book 2 since all of them had accepted the Lord Jesus. They just needed to grow spiritually in the Word. I praise God because I can see changes in their walk with Jesus and in their roles as wives and mothers.

The material also helps us to see how our cultural mindset can align or go against the Word of God.

Wherever God places us, He is so good in showing us how our lives can be of use for His glory alone. ■



Clockwise: Top left: Liza with the maroon book, Ruth (daughter of Ric and Marie Soriano) with the green book, Ann (niece of Nena Alvarez) with the blue book, and Jen with the orange book.

Butuan Min. Welcomes Alumni After Pandemic Break



When the pandemic struck, REACH-Butuan ministry's annual alumni homecoming stopped due the lockdown restrictions. After three years, by God's grace and sufficiency, we've met again.

Last December 17–18, 2022, the ministry conducted its 5th Alumni Homecoming and Thanksgiving at the Montilla Beach Resort in Manapa, Butuan City.

The theme was "Jesus said, Take Courage" (Matthew 14:27). Twenty five REACH CSU alumni, ten students, and eight core members attended. Excitement filled their eyes as people arrived and could meet again.

During one session, Kuya Weng Irizari from the National Discipleship Team, said everybody needs to leave their comfort zones, knowing that Jesus is with them. There is no need to worry. He encouraged everyone to focus on Jesus, not on the storms in life.

Rev. Maxie Tiguman, REACH's Caraga Project Coordinator, also shared. He said Jesus spoke words of comfort, reassurance, and encouragement to his



Even COVID-19 can't break the ties that bind brothers and sisters in Christ to one another. After a three-year break, alumni and students gathered together for an alumni homecoming and thanksgiving.

disciples when they cried out in fear that they might sink in the Sea of Galilee. Maxie said, "Faith in God's promises fuels our courage, while courage is the result of trusting God's Word."

Besides prayer and worship, the group planned for ministry activities, exchanged gifts as part of the Thanksgiving program, and enjoyed games and the beach.

It was fulfilling to see the children of God convening and having fun together, and most especially reliving what God had done in their lives for the past years, especially during their college years. Indeed nothing is impossible with God. ■

Reported by Yolly Gonzaga and Rex Verano. Photos by Rex Verano.

A Ball Game, A Snake Head, and Holy Week



by David Harlen Brooks

“For it’s one,
Two,
Three strikes you’re out
At the old ball game”

— *Take Me Out to the Ball Game*

Once found a flattened snake’s head baking on the pavement under the summer sun. It reminded me of God’s promise to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. The serpent had just deceived the couple, and they rebelled against God’s command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of good and evil. Although sin had a price to pay, God told Eve her offspring (Jesus Christ) would crush the treacherous serpent’s head (Satan).

The serpent snagged the first inning in a World Series of sorts for humanity’s heart in the Garden of Eden that day. And he’s tried his best to win every inning since.

The Ball Game: Play by Play

Later, the serpent incited King Herod to kill the babies in Bethlehem, hoping to catch Jesus in death’s net. But when an angel warned Joseph of the

murderous plan, the surrogate father escaped to Egypt with Mary and Jesus.

Strike one.

Thirty years later, the serpent with ball and glove attempted to tag Jesus out at the beginning of the Savior’s ministry. A 40-day fast in the wilderness left Jesus hungry and weary. It was a vulnerable moment for Jesus and his mission. But Jesus got on base by the power of the memorized word of God.

Strike two.

Nearing the climax of Jesus’ ministry, the serpent struck with full venom. It was the bottom of the ninth inning, the last chance to dethrone the champion needed by a desperate world. He threw pitches of betrayal, false accusations and beatings, and death on a cross.

The serpent thought he won. But Jesus hit the ball out of the park by rising from the dead three days later.

Strike three.

Playing the Long Game

The serpent didn’t understand death’s part in the plan. Jesus did. In Luke’s gospel, Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), anticipating the

cross. Hebrews 12:2 says Jesus endured the cross, scorning its shame.

Why was Jesus so determined to see his mission through to its costly end? It’s because sin separated the human race from a loving God. Death entered the picture and dogged our every step. But Jesus volunteered to pay the penalty. He substituted his life for each of our lives. No, death didn’t end the game, it kicked it into an extra inning, culminating in Jesus’ resurrection!

To the serpent’s dismay, men and women, adults and children, of every tongue and skin color, from East to West, and North to South humbly accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. Daily they appropriate a power not of their own. It is a resurrection power that helps them resist their own wilderness temptations of self-destructive habits and sin. And they find guilt lifted from their shoulders.

Every Holy Week we commemorate Jesus as the most valuable player of all time. We celebrate the fulfillment of God’s words to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. The serpent’s head was crushed at the empty tomb and it will bake in eternal fire someday, not on a hot summer road.

If you would like to play on the winning team and experience forgiveness, you can enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ by praying this simple prayer:

“Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Take control of my life. Make me the kind of person you want me to be. Amen.”

Have a blessed Holy Week! ■

Phase 2: REACH National Office Update



Phase II of the REACH office construction plans will include a second and third floor above the mezzanine.

Preparations for phase II of the construction of the REACH office and ministry center continue.

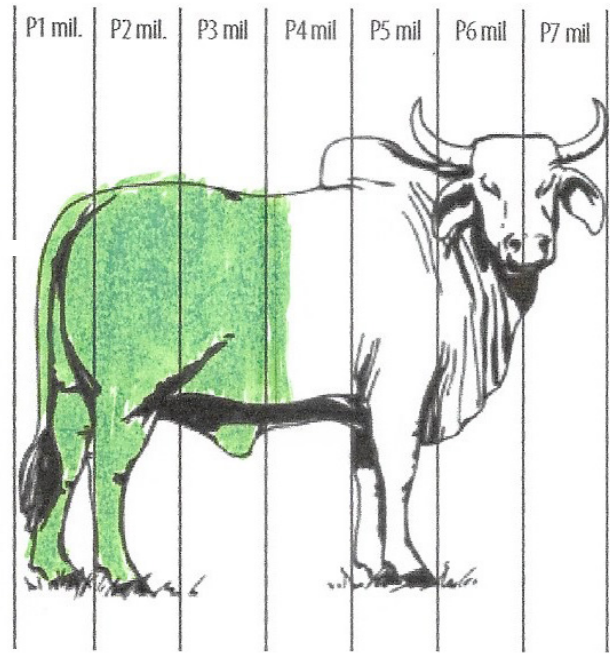
REACH is using the Quezon City government's new online application procedure to apply for the

additional building permit needed to add a second and third floor. That requires the professionals (architect, contractor, electrical and sanitary engineers) involved in the construction to encode all the details at the city website regarding the building plans.

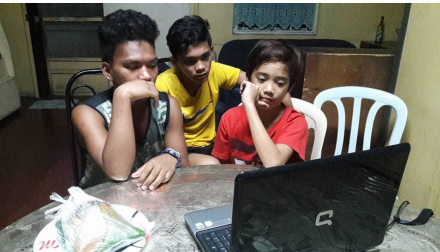
As of February 28 the building fund stands at P3,256,469.05 out of a projected budget of P7 million. Almost half way there.

Please join us with your prayers and gifts so work can begin as soon as the permit is released. Pray that the expanded facilities will enable REACH to touch more lives for God's glory. ■

We're Half Way There! Help Us Reach The Goal



Then and Now: Still Teaching Boys, now Men, Their Worth in God



Some of the boys watching a gospel presentation at REACH's old office.



The boys learn the value of gardening while planting vegetables and flowers outside the former REACH office.



Kim Cabatingan, standing on the left, continues to meet the boys, who are men now, for Bible study. Some have married and have children.

Wilson "Weng" and Letty Irizari gave a new name for the acronym, CICL — *Children in Christ's Love*. The initials originally stand for Children in Conflict with the Law. It derives from a government effort to protect children in the juvenile justice system.

In 2014, REACH conducted a values formation seminar at the Quirino 2A barangay hall for adults. However, the parents also brought their children. A separate group for

the kids eventually became a regular activity for the boys. Weng started a bible study for them that same year where they talked about their lives and God's love.

Later, Weng, a former executive officer for REACH, and Letty transferred to Mindanao. Instead of ending the outreach, Kim Cabatingan, REACH finance officer, continued meeting the boys. Now some of the boys have grown up and have wives and children.

The Irizaris were back in Metro Manila in March and a reunion was organized to give them a chance to renew ties with the young men and their families.

The men still have needs and they are still deeply loved by God. Pray for the continued outreach as they go through new stages in life and that they will find Jesus is always there to help them. ■

LB Ministry Shares the Gospel to Fellow Students

Photo by Hannah Tolentino



The UPLB gang at the ministry apartment during a fellowship.

The Los Baños undergrad fellowship meets face-to-face each week. On Feb. 24, they met students on campus and shared the gospel during the UPLB February Fair. Twelve students heard the gospel. It was a memorable experience for everyone, especially for a first-timer who joined the activity. Afterward, they held a debriefing session where they shared their experiences in presenting the gospel. ■



Photo by Jerry Francisco



Photo by Jerry Francisco

Top: TJ Pasicolan gives tips prior to an evangelistic activity conducted during the annual UPLB February Fair. Bottom: After the event, the members share memorable experiences sharing the gospel.

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an imaginative
use of resources
in the extension
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.