

reach **bulletin**

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What is the Meaning of Life?

Vision:

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

Mission:

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

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Equipping People to Become Complete in Christ

What is the Meaning of Life?



From Luzon...

What is the purpose of life? Try looking at the end of life and work backward to find the answer.

That was the suggestion given at the leader's retreat, *Wise Living in Light of the End*. The retreat focused on living a meaningful life by drawing on the Book of Ecclesiastes and insights from David Gibson's book, *Living Life Backward*.

The retreat was conducted in Luzon (Jan. 13-14) by Ed and Dr. Gloria (Oyay) Jimenez, and Dr. Elbert Sana. In Mindanao, it was led by Rely and Daisy Miguel, Wilson and Lety Irizari, and Gene and Virgie Tolentino.

Perspective on the Nature of Life

Ed and Oyay described Ecclesiastes as a book written by a tired man looking back over his life searching for meaning and purpose. From his mistakes, he guides the young who stand at the same crossroad.

They said death is inevitable and no one, but God, knows when that

Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.

—Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

day will arrive. Since death levels everything, keeping the end in view helps one make the best choices for living life today.

Solomon stated that *all is vanity* (Ec. 1:2). What he meant was that life is like a breath — it's fast, short, and elusive. It's also repetitive. So, we are either frustrated by unexpected change or bored when it doesn't

change fast enough.

The more we try to grasp life and control it, the more it slips through our hands like the wind.

Since death is inevitable and everyone will face the Creator, Ecclesiastes advises one to let the end sculpt priorities and goals, ambitions, and desires to find *the good life*.

Why You Were Born

American writer, Mark Twain, once said, "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 explains the *why*. Life boils down to two things: fear God and keep His commands. But it was pointed out that fear means to be in awe of God for His character.

When we bump into life's unfairness, we need to remember that God is in control, God will judge and set things right, and God will reward those who fear Him. Then we are free



... to Mindanao, leaders learn about living with the right priorities.

to enjoy life as we experience it, not as we expect it.

We Are All Doomed — The Challenge of Ecclesiastes

Elbert said Ecclesiastes is a retrospect about life becoming meaningful only with God. Although we can't relive our lives up to this point, we can take time to look back, before it's too late, and give thought to our ways (Prov. 14:8).

Elbert said to remember the landmarks of God's faithfulness.

God's faithfulness helps us put life and its difficulties in perspective and find satisfaction.

Ultimately, we will see that God is working in all of our circumstances, provides for our needs, and sends blessings in the form of relationships.

He said looking within and valuing what truly matters will help us know what to do with our precious time and energy.

Elbert asked the group to ponder the following questions:

- How do we remember our Creator?
- How shall we improve in our time with God's Word? In our follow-up?
- How shall we enjoy our loved ones?
- How do we make up for meaningful times we missed?
- How do we open our home to those in need?

Answering these questions will help us live life backward. ■



Left: A game of rock-paper-scissors lightens the mood.



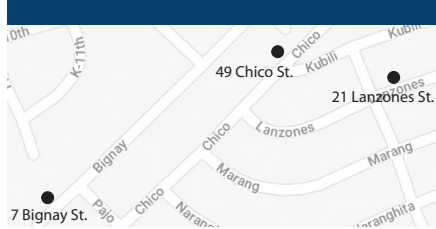
Right: Small-group discussions helps personalize lessons.

A Permanent Home for REACH

The dream for REACH to have a property of its own is closer to becoming a reality. And a transfer of the REACH office may be sooner than later.

REACH accepted the offer made by Mario Garcia to purchase the Garcia family property at 7 Bignay St., Proj. 2, Quezon City. Bignay is the street directly behind Chico St. The property is near the deadend on Bignay St. Transferring the property title into REACH's name is underway.

In another development, Eloi Same and her brother, who own the house and lot at 49 Chico St., recently requested a realtor to sell the prop-



erty. REACH already declined to buy the property, after determining it was beyond its budget.

Once the Chico property is sold, the REACH office will need to transfer.

Funds are still needed to complete the payment of the lot and construct a new building on the Bignay property. Gifts may be designated for the Building Fund.

Other Properties

REACH is also seeking to sell the Masili lot in Calamba, Laguna. Proceeds will go toward expenses for buying the Bignay property and construction.

The ministry center at 21 Lanzones St. will continue to be used. REACH is about half way through its 25-year lease that is renewable for another 25 years.

REACH extends its appreciation to the Garcia family for their generous offer, to the Same family for graciously allowing REACH to affordably use Chico over the years, and to the Gozon Foundation for use of the Lanzones property. ■

The New Dilemma of Choice is Available Now

The Discipleship Family Series

Dilemma of Choice

Nakalilitong Pagpili

A Beginning Study

1 HAVE YOU MET YOURSELF?

Nakilala Mo Na Ba Ang Iyong Sarili?

Who is the most important person in the world? Each of us would like to think that one's self is the most important, yet many times we secretly dislike ourselves. Sometimes it seems we have not met our real selves. This lesson will help us in four ways; we will . . .

Sino ang pinakamahalagang tao sa buong mundo? Bawat isa sa atin ay may pagnanais na maituring ang ating sarili bilang pinakamahalaga. Ngunit sa maraming pagkakataon, ilhim nating inaayawan ang ating mga sarili. Kung minsan pang ay waring hindi natin talagang kilala ang ating tunay na pagkakataon. Tutulungan tayo ng araling ito na . . .

- ✓ Appreciate ourselves physically
Kalugaran ang ating pisikal na kaanyuan
- ✓ Understand ourselves spiritually
Unawain ang ating espirituwal na katangian
- ✓ Evaluate ourselves morally
Bigyang-halaga ang ating moral na katayuan
- ✓ See ourselves as God sees us
Makita natin ang ating sarili gaya na pagtingin ng Diyos sa atin

Have You Met Yourself? / 5

UNIQUE PHYSICALLY

Bukod-Tangi sa Pisikal na Kaanyuan

1. We are a unique creation of God physically.
Tayo ay nilalang ng Diyos na may bukod-tanging pisikal na kaanyuan.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful. I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139:13-16)

Ang anumang akling sangkap, ikaw, O Diyos, ang lumikha, sa tiyan ng akling inyong hinugis mo akong bata. Pinupuri kita, O Diyos, marapat kang katakutan, ang lahat ng gawain mo ay kahanga-hangang tunay; sa loob ng akling puso, lahat ito'y nakikitang. Ang bata ko sa katawan noong ipon ay huagis, sa loob ng balay-bata dosy iyong nagpapansin lumalaki ako roong sa ipon di'ng nalilitim. Akly'nyong nakita na, hindi pa man sinilang, batid mo kung ilang taon ang haba ng akling buhay; pagkat ito'y nakatik sa aklat mo na taanan, matagal nang balangkas mong ikaw lamang ang may alatan. (Mga Awit 139:13-16)

a. In this passage David meditated on the wonder of his physical body. What part did God have in the creation of David's body?
Sa mga talata ito, binulay-bulay ni David ang bigay ng kanyang pisikal na katawan. Ano ang naging bahagi ng Diyos sa paglalang sa katawan ni David?

b. What wonders of the human body cause you to praise God?
Anu-anong mga hiwaga sa katawan ng tao ang nakapag-udjok sa iyo upang purihin ang Diyos?

c. But sometimes we question God's wisdom and love when certain aspects of our physical body are defective, deficient, or not desired. If you had the choice, what aspect of your physical body would you change? Why?
Ngunit kung minsan, nagkakaon tayo ng pag-aalalang sa karunungan at pagmamahal ng Diyos dahil may mga bahagi sa ating katawan na may kapintasan, may kakulangan o hindi ganito ang ibig nating taglayin, kung ikaw ay

6 / Dilemma of Choice

The redesign of REACH's *Discipleship Family Series* (DFS) has begun. The first book to be updated is the *Dilemma of Choice* (DOC). Other books in the series will be updated as old stock run out.

REACH members are encouraged to use the DFS series in their ministry area and promote the mate-

rials at their local churches.

The price of the DOC remains P55.00 with a 10% discount for orders of more than ten copies.

One hundred copies of the DOC were used recently at Balara High School in Quezon City for a values program. Prior to that Ethel Estigoy order over 60 copies for her church.

The DOC is suited to use for evangelism and establishing young Christians. The six lessons deal with emotional struggles young Filipinos face.

In addition, Kabalikat Para Sa Maunlad Na Buhay (KMBI) placed orders for LAMP 1 and *The Living Genes*. May these materials be a blessing to all! ■

2018 Brings Personnel Changes to the REACH Office

Transition to younger leadership continues in 2018. Dr. Gloria (Oyay) Jimenez stepped down as REACH's executive officer and office manager after four and a half years.

Taking her place is Wilson (Weng) Irizari. Weng graduated from Mindanao State University (MSU) in 2001 with a Civil Engineer degree. He attended the first REACH Summer Training Program in 2000 and later served as a ministry intern in Metro Manila. Weng joined the office staff in 2006. He has been an administrative assistant, project manager of the former REACH Outsourcing Center, and assistant office manager.

In other changes, Narita (Nerrie) Castillo, REACH's financial officer, is leaving in April and is training Kim Cabatingan as an assistant financial officer. Kim was replaced as accounts officer of Resources Development Cooperative (RDC) by Regeline Supas, who began started work in January. Marife Tandog remains as administrative officer.

Meet Regeline Supas

Regeline grew up in Placer, Surigao Del Norte, 30 minutes from Surigao City. She enrolled at Caraga State University (CSU) in Butuan City to study Biology.

She learned about REACH while looking for a boardinghouse and joined the REACH ministry apartment.

Residents were required to attend Bible study. Her first Bible study leader was Inday Quizon who shared The Bridge Illustration with her. Regeline accepted Christ and eventually led Bible study with several ladies. She graduated in 2009.

Following graduation, Regeline worked at CSU as an administrative aide, was a caregiver for a family, and



Nars Lozada, Chairman of the REACH Board of Trustees, presents a certificate of appreciation to Oyay Jimenez during the annual leaders retreat as Oyay leaves the REACH office. During the recognition, several shared testimonies of her influence in their lives.



Regeline Supas



Wilson Irizari



Marife Tandog



Nerrie Castillo



Kim Cabatingan

later a massage therapist after arriving in Manila in 2013.

She married Al Supas in 2016. They have a five-month-old girl, Sofia.

With Sincere Appreciation

Nerrie joined the REACH office in 1998. REACH wishes her God's blessings as she helps her husband, Nemar, in his business and spends more time with their daughter, Karla.

REACH also thanks Oyay for her commitment to the Lord to carry out the Great Commission and use of her organizational skills and wisdom to further REACH's mission and vision as a disciple-making ministry. ■

I Am Satisfied!

It was my fourth year at the University, and I was exhausted. That semester was supposed to be the last, but it wasn't. My family kept asking when the graduation will be, what dress will I wear, and whether I have a graduation photo already. They were always so excited about it. So even if I knew the truth, I could not tell them, *I'm sorry, I'm not graduating this time.*

by Johanna Marie Drece

The semester before the supposed-last was even tougher. I had to fight for what I wanted to study, but my adviser insisted that it was not research-worthy. He suggested going home to my province and asking around for whatever topic I could make into a proper proposal. I heeded his advice and took the 10-hour travel from Los Baños to Naga City almost every

tell me outright that I was wrong regarding my convictions. It was an important matter to me, so that's when I really started to feel suffocated. I felt I lost my voice to the person that I needed to listen to me the most regarding my research.

I became scared to express my thoughts and opinions. Worse, I panicked whenever I saw him within a 100-meter radius. I was on edge when going to a class in our building because that would mean risking the chance of meeting him in the hallway. That would mean small talk about

That's when I really started to feel suffocated. I felt I lost my voice to the person that I needed to listen to me the most regarding my research.

week for a month. I interviewed various groups of people ranging from government officials to leaders of people's organizations to elementary school teachers.

But I was also stubborn. While researching for topics my adviser would approve, I continued reading and writing about what I liked. In fact, I wanted to study the relationships of the people with whom I share this faith in Christ. I wanted to know how they create, exchange, and share the information about our faith, and what kind of structure can be drawn using the links formed from these activities. Because we had different views on Christianity and faith (he believed more on the perils of Protestantism than its potentials), he tended to shut me out and

how my thesis was going (terribly) and how little time I had left before the deadline.

I had posted several notes of my deadlines above my bed, on my desk, on my phone, and even on the laptop, I borrowed. I thought those would suffice.

I knew I tried hard to get better, read better, and write better, but the hardest part was how to make him listen. Because of the repeated rejection, I realized that I unconsciously built a wall around me, not just against my adviser but also against others. I started to lose interest in social gatherings, I suffered from an upset stomach more frequently than usual, and I looked terrible. Unconsciously, the stress and pressure took its toll on my body. Becoming

aware of it only made me feel worse. That same semester, I was admitted to the hospital, not for stress, but for a fever caused by Chikungunya, a mosquito-borne virus with similar symptoms with dengue. Season it with my family's repeated questions regarding my graduation, I met the most worn out version of myself for the past 19 years. It felt like I was in a downward spiral, and I did not know how to get out.

My time in the hospital allowed me to go back to God's Word. I had always been scared to be left alone in a room due to my wild imagination, but at that time while I immersed myself in seeking God, I felt okay. The pain did not go away — I still felt like my joints were hammered down and my eyes and ears still burned. But I felt okay. I felt *satisfied*.

John 16:33 says, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

Jesus knew how much I was suffering because He felt it, too, when He was hammered down with nails to that cross. He was rejected, also, not only by strangers but even by his friends and family. His words were not empty. My LORD understood me, and that was enough reason for me to hope in Him again. But He did not end it with just that. He gave me hope. Yes, there will be rejection, hardships, and seemingly fruitless efforts, but my future is in the hands of a God who makes stars worship Him. It is bright, and no amount of discouragement or lies will make it dim. *I am satisfied*.

More than ten months later, I've finally managed to pass the 151 units of coursework required to finish my undergraduate program. Finally, I have happily answered my family's questions:

"What will you wear?"

"Don't worry about it. A friend will let



JM Drece sings with the LB worship team during the Annual Leaders Retreat in January.

me borrow her graduation dress, shoes, and Sablay."

"Have you taken your graduation photo yet?"

"I had last February."

"When is the ceremony?"

"On June 23. Make sure you're there!"

God continually uses His Word, my mom, and the REACH-LB family to provide, encourage, and strengthen me every single day, even now that I'm already a professional working in a government agency. The struggles may be different than what I experienced during my college days, but I'm thankful with my whole heart that my God *never* changes. I am satisfied! ■

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Johanna Marie Drece is a Planning and Project Development Officer for the Philippine Center for Post-harvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) in Muñoz, Nueva Ecija.

Creative Approaches to Evangelism: *Seizing Opportunities*

Students Hear of a Better Life in Christ

Declining test scores, rising teen pregnancy, and demonic oppression of students at a high school led one of its teachers from REACH to organize a values program for Freshmen and Sophomore students. REACH and several churches were invited to meet the students during an open period in the school schedule.

The REACH high school team handled over 100 students. The gospel was reinforced in each meeting by making a nativity scene, viewing a film, listening to a song, sharing the Wordless Book, and discussing chapters from the *Dilemma of Choice*.

Although the values program ended, a Bible study continues with several Christian teachers led by Dr. Gloria Jimenez. The weekly session



Students write the meaning of the colors of the Wordless Book to help them remember the gospel.

with the teachers includes a personal sharing time for them to bond as a group, Bible study, and skills training — such as The Focus Chart and The Bridge Illustration).

Please pray that the teachers will continue meeting and that REACH can re-enter the school to help the students in the next school year. ■



Top: Jane speaks to DAR employees. Left: Pen illustrates a point.

Integrating the Gospel at the DAR

Gene Tabor used to talk about developing dynamite delivery systems to blow out the gates of Hell with the gospel. Pen Sana and Dr. Jane Navalta, did just that, delivering biblical principles while conducting personal development and team-building exercises in Diffun, Quirino last year for Department of Agrarian Reform employees. ■

IMP Partners with Local Ministry in Myanmar

Calamity creates needs exponentially. In 2008, Cyclone Nargis slammed into Myanmar, killing people and livestock and destroying homes and farms. It also birthed a new ministry by a local pastor and his family. The outreach is called Living Stream Myanmar Ministry.

At the time, the pastor worked for the Bible Society of Myanmar. He visited villages outside the capital of Yangon to distribute relief goods from the Bible Society and other Christian organizations and churches.

In 2009, over 300 people were fed and heard the gospel for the first time in Magyigon village. The first to receive Jesus Christ was in 2010. Another man accepted Jesus in 2011 in the town of Kungyangon. In 2012, a couple from Myittar village (founded in 2009 for the cyclone victims) also received Jesus Christ. Today there are 98 members of the house-church movement in three communities.

Most of the believers are poor and illiterate. Children are often sent to work in the city after Grade Three or Four. Some men find contract work as fishermen for ten months to one year. The lack of employment in the communities and the resulting mobility of people seeking work makes it difficult to establish a stable ministry.

Other problems include poor hygiene, a lack of potable water and electricity, and environmental concerns.

The pastor and his family visit the communities, often by boat, on Saturdays or Sundays. One of their main activities is conducting Sunday School for the children. They use verbal repetition to plant scripture verses in the children's hearts. The family hopes to reach the parents through the children eventually.



(Top) A water pump, funded by the IMP, provides potable water for several families in a Myanmar village. (Left) The pastor and his wife attended the IMP meeting in February in Quezon City.

The pastor also conducts discipleship classes several times a year for laymen. Those who attend miss a day's wages, so the pastor pays them so they can support their families' daily needs. He also invites doctors and dentists from the capital to provide medical and dental assistance.

IMP Partnership in Myanmar REACH came in contact with the indigenous ministry through a REACH field-staff worker, who is a friend of a daughter of the family.

In June 2017, two people from REACH visited the family ministry. They explored a possible discipleship and equipping seminar for adults and a teachers' training for Sunday school.

They also went to strengthen friendship and partnership in discipleship and mission activities in Myanmar.

They helped distribute food, shared the gospel with children and adults, and inspected the water pump the Indochina Mission Project (IMP) funded. Twenty families still lack potable water.

A memorandum of understanding was signed last year between the pastor and the IMP. The IMP looks forward to assisting the house church in disciple-making and other projects that improve the quality of life in the communities. ■

5 Tips for Surviving a Crisis of Faith

by Dr. Paul Pasicolan

By nature, I tend to panic whenever there is a crisis. I'm always reminded by my wife, Sim, to think of the bigness of our God more than any problem that comes our way. I've found five tips to remember when we experience a crisis of faith during difficult times:

1. God does not change the rules of the game when we face testing. Faith remains the key to avail of His wonders and miracles (Hebrews 11:1,6).
2. Go beyond the present. Don't dwell on the momentary pressure but focus on the big picture ahead. For our momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all (2 Corinthians 4:17).
3. Everything is in transition (Psalm 84:4). No trouble or pressure is permanent. God determines the extent of its application according to our capacity to endure (Job 1:12; 1 Corinthians 10:13).
4. God ends all situations for our best no matter how unpleasant or bitter the beginning. He



Think biblically when your faith is rocked during difficult times.

recycles the garbage in our life to bring forth the best from our mess (Job 23:10).

5. As we pass through the valley of tears, we are assured to journey from strength to strength because of His presence with us (Psalm 84:7). ■

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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.