

reach **bulletin**

march 2020 vol. 28 no. 1 | resources employment and community horizons

Helping Youth in a Precarious World



Cagwait high school students (p. 6,7).

*V*ision:

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

*M*ission:

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

Learning from Flawed Saints

After learning about fake news and post-modernism last year, the annual leaders' retreat trained its focus on God's grace based on John Piper's book, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*.

The Luzon members held the retreat on January 11-12 at the REACH ministry center in Proj. 2, Quezon City. Ed and Dr. Oyay Jimenez facilitated the retreat. Daisy Miguel joined them during a panel discussion. National Discipleship Team Leader, Jerry Francisco, capped the retreat with a final challenge.

Sovereign Grace in the Lives of Flawed Saints

The Legacy of Sovereign Joy highlights three flawed men transformed by God's grace and who made a significant impact on the Christian church. So if we think our past disqualifies us from serving God, look at St. Augustine, Martin Luther, and John Calvin.

Augustine — Sovereign Joy

Augustine (354-430 A.D.) was an important figure in early Christianity's development. *Sovereign Joy* is the term Augustine gave to God's grace after experiencing it and finding freedom from sin.

He lived a sensuous life until his conversion in his 30s under the teachings of Bishop Ambrose. Yet, Augustine struggled to enjoy God because he found it difficult to obey God's commands.

The breakthrough occurred when he recognized God's power was greater than his own to enable him to live an obedient life. God's grace



Oyay Jimenez, Daisy Miguel, and Ed Jimenez discuss lessons to learn about grace from three flawed saints during the retreat.

enabled him to delight in God more than temporal worldly pleasures.

During the panel discussion, Oyay said obeying God is not by sheer willpower but by the working of the Holy Spirit. Daisy said man's depravity prevents obedience. Like Augustine, we need to ask God to purify us. She also pointed out that Augustine's mother prayed for him faithfully, and we should pray for one another.

Ultimately, Augustine's theology of grace laid the foundation for the Reformation started by Martin Luther.

Martin Luther — Obedience to Scriptures

Luther (1483-1546) believed Christians could live in a state of grace, but remaining in grace required works. His frustration with sin started a search for answers. Luther's *aha* moment came while reading that salvation is by faith in Romans 1:17. He realized that grace gives us the discipline to study and obey God's Word.

“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” — Romans 1:17

Despite Luther's profound impact on Christianity through the Reformation, he struggled to the end of his life with a sharp tongue and heated temper toward his opposers. However, God used Luther to restore the reading of Scripture among the masses.



Luzon and Visayas members gather for a picture.

Calvin — A Passion for God's Glory

Calvin's (1509-1564) father worked for a bishop in France. But when his father fell out of favor with Church authorities, Calvin eventually fled to Switzerland, where the Reformation provided a haven.

As Calvin read and studied Scripture, the supremacy of God made an unshakeable impression on his heart and mind. He believed in glorifying God and centered his preaching and writing on promoting God's majesty.

However, Calvin lived in brutal times and approved the death of a heretic by burning at the stake.

But he still influenced the future of Christianity by writing a systematic theology, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, considered one of the most important works of Protestant theology. He also elevated expository verse-by-verse preaching of God's Word.

Each of these men knew their failings and depended on God's

mercy and Jesus' shed blood. Ed remarked that grace is a gift and a power as he challenged people to focus on grace in their ministry areas.

Looking back at these men, God's grace enabled them to *DELIGHT* in God's presence over fleeting earthly joys, gave them *DISCIPLINE* to study and obey God's Word, and focused their *DIRECTION* in all things to promote God's glory.

Lessons from the Lives of Flawed Saints

Here are a few take aways from the lives of these flawed men:

1. Don't be paralyzed by your weaknesses and flaws. As Augustine illustrates, God's grace is sufficient. Micah 7:8 says, "Though I fall I will rise..." *Gutsy guilt* enables us to acknowledge our sin, accept God's forgiveness, and move on to do the work God gives us to do.
2. In the battle against sin and surrender, learn the secret of

sovereign joy. By taking joy in God, God divinely drives out fruitless joys of the flesh that is no match for the superior pleasure we find in Him.

3. Supernatural change comes from seeing Christ in His sacred Word. No one can grow apart from God's Word. So Bible study is a sacred activity. It is a way of seeing combined with prayer.
4. Exult over the exposition of the truth of the Gospel and herald the glory of Christ for the joy of all peoples. Careful exposition of God's Word isn't dry but leads to a passion for the glory of Christ. As we experience Christ, we can't help but share it to others.

Looking at God's flawed children, we see God. If we think we are not good enough for God to use, think again. ■

Final Challenge: It's Time!

National Discipleship Team Leader, Jerry Francisco talked about the life of the Apostle Peter to encourage members to move on spiritually after failure. He concluded his message with challenges for those in different seasons of life.

Peter was an impulsive, strong tempered man. His tendencies got him into trouble several times. He denied knowing Jesus Christ three times and returned to his old life as a fisherman after Jesus' crucifixion.

After Jesus resurrected from the grave, the two had a heart to heart talk. Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me?" followed by "feed my sheep."

Jerry said Jesus wasn't doubting Peter's love, instead he wanted to help Peter feel confident as a true disciple of Christ.

Similarly, hurting questions may help clear our consciences and confirm our love for God.

The encounter with Jesus changed Peter from an arrogant, cocky man of thunder to a humble, willing, obedient servant of the Lord, even to death. Later, three thousand people accepted Christ when Peter spoke at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

Jerry asked, "Do we feed His sheep? Do we care? Do we love His Sheep?"

Jerry reminded the participants that life's greatest lessons are often learned at the worst times and from the worst mistakes.

Quoting Augustine, he said, "To fall in love with God is the greatest of all romances; To seek Him, the greatest adventure; To find Him, the greatest human achievement."



National Discipleship Team Leader, Jerry Francisco, challenged leaders to rebuild the broken walls in their ministry areas.

He encouraged the people to rebuild the broken walls in their ministry areas and gave the following

challenges to different sectors of the ministry (*see below*). ■

Young Men and Women

1. Know your priorities (Mt. 6:33).
2. Involve yourself in God's ministry.
3. Focus on God, not on people.
2. Allow God and depend on Him as we serve.
3. There's a blessing when we obey and accept the responsibility.

Women

1. We need your caring spirit, moral and prayer support.
2. Be patient and courageously encourage men to lead.
3. Pray more.

Men

1. We must step up and assume the leadership position.

Oldies

1. We need your guidance and wisdom.
2. Don't take away the enterprise of learning from the younger generation.
3. Allow them to fail and make mistakes in order for them to grow in the Lord.

REACH Office Operations in Light of COVID-19

With the growing cases of COVID-19 in the Philippines and the government's implementation of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon, the REACH office operated to the fullest extent possible to provide support to our various ministries. Here is an update:

1. The office staff is working from home. No activities will be held in the office and the REACH Fellowship Center at #23 Lanzones St. Proj. 2, Quezon City.
2. Salaries covering March 30 and April 15 and the 13th month pay for all staff (office, field and overseas) were released by the end of March to ensure the staff's ability to meet expenses, secure basic needs, and provide a buffer during these uncertain times.
3. Pending remittances of funds to ministry areas, e.g. petty cash fund replenishment, were released before the end of March.
4. Office operations such as receiving and reviewing reports, communications, coordination online are still being carried out. You can contact the office staff through their mobile phones, email, FB Messenger, or other means.
5. The April 11, 2020 AGMM is rescheduled to May 2, if the lockdown is lifted by April 14; or on June 13, if the lockdown continues until May. Please wait for the official notice from our corporate secretary, Naomi Ubiña, now in Taiwan for her Ph.D. degree.
6. Please keep yourself posted on REACH's various communication channels for further announcements. Let us PRAY, take PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES, exercise PATIENCE and by the POWER OF GOD, we shall PREVAIL over the COVID-19 pandemic! May we rest secure in God's sovereignty, and His unfailing and unconditional love for us! ■

MatDev Team Formed to Update Bible Study Materials

An outgrowth of last year's survey about REACH's Bible study materials resulted in creating a new Materials Development (MatDev) Team to implement survey suggestions.

The new team met for the first time on January 12 to consider the redesign of the Discipleship Family Series and how to market it. The meeting resulted in the establishment of three sub-teams and tasks assigned. The sub-teams are for design, content, and app creation.

The DFS 1, *Welcome to the Family of God*, is the first book the team will work on.

The design team will look at artwork, cover design, and the inside chapter title pages. Members are Hannah Tolentino and Anja Martinez, and Naomi Ubiña.

The content team will examine changes to the text of DFS 1. Members are Rodski Estigoy, Rogie Dadvivas, and T.J. Pasicolan.



Haggai Cacacho, Anja Martinez, Rogie Dadvivas, Hannah Tolentino, Rodski Estigoy, T.J. Pasicolan, Jofred Jimenez, and Naomi Ubiña.

The app team will design digital products from our discipleship materials and help make these available over the internet. They are working on a prototype app of the high school scripture memory verses and LAMP 1. They will add additional materials in future updates. Members are Jofred Jimenez, Haggai Cacacho, and Naomi Ubiña.

A team originally conceived the REACH materials in the 1980s. After 30 years, the new team will take the suggestions made during the survey to meet the needs of today's users. Besides REACH's materials, the team's scope will expand to consider new strategies to communicate REACH's vision and mission and develop new ministry tools.

In a time of changing technology and generational needs, the team of older and newer members will help REACH carry out the Great Commission to make disciples of all nations. ■

NDT Visit to Mindanao as Youth Ministries Grow



NDT Meeting in Cagwait at the Irizari house. (L. to r. Wilson Irizari, Lito Ouano, Jerry Francisco, Bong Tabada, Mercy Beltran, and Tina Brooks.



Lunch that included Letty's Lechon. In addition to the NDT members Alma Francisco (seated next to Jerry), Letty Irizari, and RoyAnn Andoy.

The National Discipleship Team (NDT) visited northern Mindanao from February 15-17 to discuss the team's roles and functions, national activities, ministry thrusts, and to visit local brethren.

The NDT members are: Jerry Francisco (NDT leader), Mercy Beltran, Tina Brooks, Weng Irizari, Lito Ouano, and Bong Tabada.

The team arrived in Butuan City on Feb. 14 and stayed at Bong and Jodel Tabada's home. The following day, they travelled to Cagwait for a meeting at Weng and Letty Irizari's house.

After assessing ministry needs, the NDT decided to go back to the basics, witnessing, developing disciples, and training the next generation of leaders so the ministry will grow in quality and quantity.

The team also agreed to rotate the team's leadership every three years. Jerry will continue serving until 2021, followed by Lito (2022-2024), Bong (2025-2027), and Weng (2028-2030). The ladies will serve as support. The team also wants to integrate younger leaders in the future.

Helping Youth in a Precarious World

While in Mindanao, the NDT visited ministries in Cagwait, Cabadbaran, Butuan City.

High schoolers in Cagwait arrived at the Irizari residence during the NDT visit on the 15th. The Jose Sanvictores Sr. National School sits across the highway on a hill overlooking the Irizari's house and store.

Weng and Letty are developing relationships with the students who stop by the store during their lunch break and have opened their house for activities. Discussions about family situations give Weng and Letty the opportunity to give godly advice.

During the NDT's visit, Weng told the students about God's unconditional love (John 3:16 and John 5:24) in a world where bad things happen. Afterward, the students played the brick game, *Jenga*, and ate a snack.

The NDT returned to Butuan City on Feb. 16 and joined the fellowship at Obet and Cerina Mabination's home, where there is a ministry apartment upstairs. Jerry spoke about remembering one's personal encounter with God and getting to know Him through the Bible.

On Feb. 17, the team visited Ronnie and Susan Omambac and Erniejun Zamora in Cabadbaran City. The leaders are ministering to first-year and second-year students.

Ronnie shared the gospel to the second-year students during their first year. He earned his students trust by telling them what he learned and experienced in industry while integrating spiritual values in their lessons.

The first-year students live in the ministry apartment established this school year. There is a monthly fellowship but few workers to do in-depth discipleship with the 11 guys. The ministry is seeking an intern.

Lito Ouano gave a short impromptu message in the local language to the guys in the apartment. He will visit the Cabadbaran ministry quarterly. Field staff worker, Den Den Gorme, also plans to visit the ministry area when she is in the Philippines.

Raquel Ong Montenegro, a former intern and now a pastor, caught up with the group during dinner where conversation about the new ministry continued.

Overall, the NDT was encouraged by the growing youth ministries. ■



(Above) High schoolers listen as Weng shares God's unconditional love. (Bottom left) The high school that sits across the highway from the Irizari's house. (Bottom right) The store where students congregate to eat their lunch in front of the Irizari's house.



Cabadbaran



Top: first-year students living at the new ministry apartment. Bottom: Erniejun Zamora and Ronnie and Susan Omambac.

Butuan



Students and young professionals during a fellowship in the ministry apartment above Obet and Cerina Mabination's house.

Sowing in Tears, Reaping with Songs of Joy



The ladies living in Cynthia Ubiña's apartment.

by Cynthia Ubiña

We are now reaping the fruit of our prayers. Two of the ladies in my apartment, Sokmon and Kimchheav, now believe and received Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord after a year of journeying with them. They never knew about God and Jesus when I met them.

They come from the same province and village and grew in a Buddhist background. They joined me in my apartment in Phnom Penh in November 2018 to pursue their col-

lege education. Every time we finished our Bible study, I asked them if they believed in Jesus and in the story we discussed. Their answers were, "It's unbelievable" or "We believe 40...60% only" and "We need to know Jesus more to believe in Him. He is only known in the Bible."

Aside from helping them know Jesus through Bible study, I prayed that by God's grace, they would see Jesus in my life and experience His love through me. This journey of introducing Christ to them was indeed a work of His grace, as I struggled

sometimes with tears.

Through this journey, I learned to stretch more and to love more. Exactly one year later, they finally said, "We now believe in Jesus." When I asked them what made them believe in Jesus, they said, "Because of the stories about Jesus in the Bible and we see in you your 100% confidence and belief in Him."

Nothing supernatural happened. The Holy Spirit just convicted them to believe in Jesus.

"Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy..." (Psalm 126:5-6). ■

How I Joined the Faith House Ministry

by Abel Saquing

Three Filipino missionaries founded Elpis Ministries International Foundation (EMIF). Maria Nelma Amihan, one of the founders, leads the organization. EMIF has three ministries: Faith House ministry, Elpis school, and a village ministry — each for migrants from Myanmar. Its vision is: *Every Child Given Hope, Transformed and Empowered.*

Faith House Ministry is a shelter organization on the Thai-Myanmar border for children at risk. Its vision is: *Future Homemakers, Restoring Family and Faith.* It started as early as 2009, but formally launched in 2010. Faith House has two satellite houses — Blessings House and Zion Apartment, which I started leading in August 2019.

How did I join Faith House Ministry?

It started in 2014 when I prayed for Myanmar as my next mission field even before meeting Ivy Peng. I had read many stories and watched news reports about the situation in Myanmar, causing my heart to want to help the poor. I waited for a verbal invitation from Ivy's family during my visit to Myanmar in 2017 but took it as God's *no* when there was not even a hint to join them.

On the other hand, I received many invitations to visit the Elpis ministry in Mae Sot, Thailand, even as early as 2013. I heard about the ministry from Grace, a volunteer. However, I had no desire to work in Thailand because of visa application intricacies.

But during an intimate prayer time, God reminded me of the min-



Abel (center) with girls from Faith House in Mae Sot, Thailand, whom she serves as a foster mom.

istry of Filipinos in Mae Sot. I took it as a confirmation when Kuya Paul Pasicolan affirmed my plan to go to Mae Sot, telling me he had planned to suggest a ministry at the border of Myanmar and Thailand. In February 2018, I visited to have a feel of the ministry and joined four months later in June.

I believe God appointed me to this people to set them free and find healing. Isaiah 61:1 (NIV) says:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for the captives.”

I am now assigned as the assistant of our team leader (who is in the Philippines to recover after an accident). This further confirmed that God sent me for such a time. I can

introduce one-on-one discipleship and stress holistic discipleship and servant leadership in context with the children's background.

I always have had this burden for children and youth. I will never forget what I learned at the Haggai Institute that 80% of children reached out at ages 4-14 become servant leaders and disciples of Christ.

My goal is to disciple three to five girls who live with me in the Zion apartment. Their background could be a great challenge, but God promises healing and freedom. Psalm 34:18 (NLT) says, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.” ■

Building Update



(Left) The demolished site at Bignay where the future REACH national office will rise. (right) Columns up to the second floor are completed.



The various steps necessary to submit a building permit application to the Quezon City government started in October 2019. During this period of waiting and upon getting the demolition permit, the old Garcia house was demolished, the area cleared of debris, and the project site cordoned off to facilitate construction activities later.

After many difficulties encountered along the way, we received the permit by February 2020. With the installation of a temporary electrical connection, construction ramped up with the use of electrical equipment

movement as enforced by checkpoints throughout the city, hampered delivery of materials.

Regarding, the building fund, the amount stands at P1,060,066 as of Feb. 28, 2020. The building contract price for the first floor and mezzanine is P2,299,542 payable in four tranches based on construction progress and agreed deliverables. Thus, we still lack P1,239,476 to complete the first phase of the REACH National Building.

The contract price is for a bare structure with simple finishings and no paint. Improvements will come later as we raise funds, including office furniture, fixtures, and air conditioners.

Let us continue to believe God to provide all needed finances and smoothen out all difficulties and hindrances that the enemy throws in our way! ■

by Dr. Oyay Jimenez
Building Committee Chair

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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.