

reach **bulletin**

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Jesus, Everlasting Father

*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.

christmas meditation 2

flooding in luzon 4

imp looks to the future 6

family evangelism 8

gender & development 9

building update 10

Equipping People to Become Complete in Christ

Jesus, Everlasting Father..Was Isaiah Mistaken?



Photo by Josh Willink from Pexels

by David Harlen Brooks

One can become fatherless by illness, crime, divorce, or plain old simple abandonment. It happens every day, at any age. Each is painful. Earthly fathers are not everlasting.

Jesus — An Everlasting Father?

Isaiah 9:6 says, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Each Christmas, my eyes skimmed the familiar titles for Jesus until one time *Everlasting Father* leaped off the page like the odd man out. Why did Isaiah call the future Messiah, Everlasting Father? Jesus

isn't God the Father of the Trinity. He's the Son. Was Isaiah mistaken?

Jesus Knows Our Pain

Sorrow visited Jesus just as unexpectedly as it does for us. Isaiah 53:3 says: “He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.”

Despised and Rejected by Mankind — Jesus started life on the run. A politically threatened Sovereign sought to kill the infant king when wise men

arrived asking about a royal birth. As an adult, this backwater Galilean taught Scriptures with such authority it upset the religious order and the privileged position of its leaders.

Jesus made enemies.

The people who once fawned over him for healing their sick and filling their stomachs, shouted, “Crucify him” when he failed their political expectations. Even his own brothers and sisters thought he was crazy.

A Man of Suffering — Jesus gave up the comforts of Heaven for a human body bounded by the need for food, water, air, and sleep. Hunger gnawed at his stomach when he fasted 40 days. Temptation played games with his human nature. Then the crush of desperate people seeking his attention

wearied him until he crashed at the bottom of a boat during a storm.

It didn't get any better toward the climax of his mission. The Judean sky darkened, and our sin hugged his naked, bleeding body hanging on a cross. Finally, the Heavenly Father turned his back on him. Jesus cried out, “Why hast thou forsaken me?” Think of a jilted partner's feelings when a spouse walks away for good and multiply it 1,000 fold.

Familiar with Pain — Pain isn't always physical. Emotions can hurt even more. Jesus lost not one, but two fathers.

He lost face-to-face fellowship with Father God when he took on the physical and mental limitations of a baby to save a human race that didn't think it needed saving.

Remember the first time you left home? Maybe you sat in an empty college dorm room or landed in the big city for your first job. You didn't know anyone around. How did you feel?

He also lost Joseph. Joseph wasn't his biological father, but he protected and guided Jesus throughout his early life. Joseph taught Jesus a trade and probably instilled life lessons while working side by side in the carpenter's shop. Time together can yield deeper ties than shared DNA guarantees.

When Jesus took on flesh and blood, he had cells layered upon cells, with embedded sensory receptors that connected not only with the brain but mysteriously with the soul. If he wept for his dead friend, Lazarus, surely he wept at Joseph's grave.

Jesus felt what we feel.

Jesus, a Father Figure at Home

What the Bible doesn't tell us about Jesus' younger days, culture gives clues. Jesus took on family responsibilities

as the eldest when the head spot at the supper table remained vacant. It was Jesus whom Mary looked to solve the wine-less wedding scandal in Cana. And from the cross, he assumed his responsibility, by entrusting his widowed mother, Mary, to a disciple's care.

Jesus — The Good Shepherd

In John's Gospel, Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd. Good shepherds guide their flock to grass and water to sustain them. They rescue strays and lead the flock to the safety of the pen at night.

Isn't that what a good father does? He provides for his family's food and shelter; he advises and warns his offspring of danger if they follow a certain path. Ultimately, good shepherds lay down their lives for their sheep. Jesus did all of that and still provides,

guides, and chides us today.

Yes, The Everlasting Father

If this Christmas rakes the embers of loss, remember that you have an Everlasting Father in Jesus. He still seeks, listens, empathizes, and understands us. He will never leave nor forsake us.

Death couldn't steal him. Jealous officials couldn't silence him. Divorce isn't in his vocabulary. And abandonment is totally out of the question after hanging on a cross for our sins.

By nature, earthly fathers may fail us. But failure to father isn't in Jesus' nature.

That's why Isaiah calls him Everlasting Father. That's the good news the angels sang about in the hill country surrounding Bethlehem once upon a midnight clear. ■

God's Faithfulness in the Pandemic

The country's economy took a hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. It also affected churches and Christian organizations. Yet, God faithfully provided for the REACH ministry's needs. The board of trustees marveled over God's graciousness during its meeting on Dec. 12.

Despite retrenchments, layoffs, or reduced work hours that REACH members faced, actual giving to REACH increased compared to 2019.

Board member, Paul Pasicolan, says, “In other organizations there is scaling down of operations and even retrenchment of workers. But not in REACH. Praise The Lord!”

He noted that this is remarkable with REACH's building

program underway when the pandemic struck.

REACH treasurer, Daisy Miguel agreed. She said in some organizations, staff did not receive their salary, or had their hours reduced to three days a week with pay based on the number of days worked. Some employees received their separation pay but continued to work without pay.

In REACH, the staff received their salaries, including allowances and 13-month pay. No positions were terminated or hours reduced.

“It's been an encouraging year for us as an organization,” REACH board chair, Oyay Jimenez said.

Let us all give thanks to God for his faithfulness individually and corporately. To God be the glory! ■

Flooding in Luzon

“Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”

— Jesus (Matthew 25:40)

When the worst flood in 40 years hit Cagayan and Isabela provinces in November, many were unprepared for the depth and severity of the destruction. Entire towns filled up with coffee-colored water from eroded soil due to back-to-back storms, illegal mining, and release of water from Magat Dam. Inches of mud filled homes.

Water in the Ubiña family house in Tuguegarao, Cagayan almost reached the second floor. Jonathan Ubiña was in Batangas but said the newly bought refrigerator and a washing machine were flooded and furniture damaged.

Despite their own trial, the entire family (Jonathan’s grandmother down to her great grandchildren), pitched in to help their neighbors.

“I’m proud to say that they were very much willing to help our neighbors and gave relief packs to our barangay and to nearby towns,” said Jonathan.

The day after the flood arrived, Jonathan and Naomi Ubiña (studying in Taiwan) talked over the phone and began a donation drive on their Facebook accounts.

They hit P279,000 in total donations plus clothes from Canada and 200 relief packs from donors. Items included canned goods, water, rice, biscuits, and coffee.

They also plan to purchase a printer for a school after flood water destroyed the printer and bond paper. In addition, four needy students received cellphones for their required online studies.

Long-term projects are in the planning, too. “We hope to bless more people,” he said.

Although Jonathan was far away from the devastation, he served as their keyboard warrior, getting out the word. He and Naomi took charge of the budget. For the sake of transparency, they posted in public so donors could see how their money was spent.

Many in REACH saw the devastating pictures that appeared in Facebook and responded with gifts. The national office also released money from the *People-in-Need* fund.

In addition, the REACH national office provided funds for members with families in Catanduanes, Marinduque, Rizal, and Metro Manila, affected by Typhoon Ulysses.

God bless those who extended helped. ■

Photo by Louie Antonio Films

Above: Tuguegarao City by Louie Antonio Films, a local events photographer.

Other photos by the Ubiña family: l. to r. Lemuel Ubiña gives a relief package to a flood victim. Flooding at the Ubiña house, and a boy with two jugs of donated water.



IMP Looks to the Future



Photo by Marcus Löfvenberg

Buddhist monks, walk the streets and offer prayers when asked.

Editor's Note — In the last issue, IMP director, Dr. Paul Pasicolan presented milestones and experiences gained in the IMP's ten years of existence. In this issue, he shares challenges the mission project faces in the coming years.

by Dr. Paulo Pasicolan

The Indochina Mission Partnership (IMP), like any mission sending organization is not spared from difficulties and uncertainties. Among the concerns presently confronting the mission program are:

1. Sustainability: Two IMP Board Members are in their

70s, and two of our original lady missionaries are nearing their retirement, while another one retired in 2018. This is coupled with decreasing financial support, especially from local givers. There is an urgent need to pray and recruit fresh blood for the team and supporters.

2. Transition: The next three to five years in the IMP is crucial as the program transitions in leadership and team composition. More missions- and progressive-minded younger leaders need to take charge of the team.

3. Interconnectivity: There seems to be a weak link between discipleship and missions in REACH Inc. In the past, we had the "Adopt a Missionary and Mission Field" project that IMP launched during its formative years. The aim was to bring missions to the core of REACH disciple-making teachings and emphasis. Only a few ministry areas responded to this initiative. There remains the need to mainstream missions in REACH's disciple-making emphasis.

4. Contextual Relevance: Early on, the IMP adopted somewhat the traditional approach and strategies in cross-cultural missions handed down by the early Navigators in the Philippines. REACH's founder, Gene Tabor, improved upon it. With the changing times, alongside the new normal brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we may need to review and adjust IMP's program strategies and even mission statements.

5. Sending Modality: IMP is gradually shifting from the full-time missionary mode to a tent-making emphasis. However, there are some cases in which deployment of a full-time missionary is still the most ideal and strategic mode of deployment.

Challenges Ahead

1. Mainstream missions in all ministry areas. Over the past years, since the late 90s, the Cabagan ministry was the only missionary sending ministry, locally and overseas. We need to challenge other ministry areas to groom missionaries in the same way. We should organize alumni associations for each ministry area to support the missions program.

2. Missing link between discipleship and missions. Discipleship without commissioning is incomplete or may lead to a dead-end commitment to the cause of the Gospel.

If missions is not at the core of REACH's disciple-making ministry, there is the danger of extinction or stagnation in the movement. Missions may mean opening new local or overseas ministries as a spiritual multiplication goal. REACH as a disciple-making ministry has lost its ardent fire for the Great Commission. Disciple making should culminate in The Great Commission as a goal for spiritual multiplication.

3. Tapping the inexhaustible resources of God in missions. When the church or any disciple-making movement commits to missions, it opens more windows and channels for God's resources to flow both extensively and intensively. Missions creates more needs and demands that are being equally met by God's overflowing sufficiency and goodness. As the saying goes, "If there is vision, God's sufficient provision will follow."

4. New normal. IMP has to review its missions statement and strategies to adjust to the needs of the time, in particular the mode of sending people to the field, type of interventions to adopt, and most importantly, the dynamics of relating and working with established Christian groups and local churches in the host countries.

5. Strengthen existing part-

nerships in host countries.

With the pandemic outbreak, travelling overseas and occasional visits to the mission areas seems unlikely. Hence, this calls for a more creative and mutually enhancing, working dynamics with established partners and contacts, as with the two pastors in Cambodia and the one in Myanmar.

6. Explore collaborating with other mission groups and development programs. We need to partner with other mission sending organizations (e.g. The Christian and Missionary Alliance) and welfare development programs (e.g. World Vision, Tear Fund, PLAN International, etc.)

There is a special blessing for obedience when we obey God in the call of missions. However, the price of obedience may often entail sacrifice and risk. But the blessed side of it is experiencing God on a higher plain. When we obey, we have the joy of participating and displaying His mighty power at work in us in accomplishing His purpose.

There are three assurances that have kept us moving forward in missions. They are Jesus' promise that we will do greater things (John 14:12-15), we will feast on the treasures and wealth of nations (Isaiah 45:2,3), and God's companionship and sovereignty (Matthew 28:18-20). Let's claim them again and follow the Lord in obedience to make disciples of all nations. ■

Family Evangelism

by Cristy Mendrez — Metro Manila

On Sunday, Aug. 30, 2020, early in the morning, I found out that a cousin really dear to me passed away. It seemed too sudden. She was only hospitalized on Friday that week. I thought that everything was okay, but it was too late.

I cried hard because I could not visit or chat with her while she was in the hospital. So many questions filled my mind. But what I really regretted was not being able to share the Gospel to her.

I asked one of my cousins, who was making the preparations for her wake and internment, if there would be a mass or program. Then I boldly asked for a minute to share something. God laid His Word on my heart and the desire to share salvation to everyone attending, especially to our entire family who would attend the last night.

It's unusual for me to stand in front, preaching God's Word. But I knew that God would be the one to speak through me and give the right words to say. I shared Ecclesiastes 3:1-17 during my cousin's eulogy:

A Time for Everything

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:
a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent
and a time to speak,
a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.*

What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them



Cristy Mendrez shares during a cousin's wake that there is a time for everything, including a time to judge every deed committed in life.

may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

*Whatever is has already been,
and what will be has been before;
and God will call the past to account. And I saw
something else under the sun:
In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.
I said to myself,
“God will bring into judgment
both the righteous and the wicked,
for there will be a time for every activity,
a time to judge every deed.”*

I praise and thank God for what He has done in my life and for giving me the courage to share His Word. After sharing to them about salvation, I asked them to follow a prayer of acceptance. I know God will be the one to work in their lives so that the seed planted in their hearts will grow. ■

God's Design in Gender and Development

Society is facing greater confusion about sex and gender and about male and female roles. Dr. Oyay Jimenez addressed the issues from a Biblical perspective during the Resources Development Cooperative (RDC) General Assembly held September 19.

Society's Current Usage of Terms

Sex and Gender — Sex refers to the biological characteristics that categorize someone as either female or male; whereas gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male.

WID (Women in Development) emphasizes the need to integrate women into the development process.

GAD (Gender and Development)— Focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations.

Gender Mainstreaming — An organizational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policies and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability.

Gender Discrimination — The systematic, unfavorable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender, which denies them rights, opportunities, or resources.

Gender equality — women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere.

Gender equity — equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognizing their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources.

Two extreme views include—male chauvinism and radical feminism. Male chauvinism devalues women (sexual harassment, abuse, debasing comments, and jokes).

Radical feminism is a glorification of women who should take control of their own destinies, regardless of what anyone says or does (denying the differences, devaluing motherhood, and renaming God).

A Biblical Perspective

In Genesis, Oyay noted the differences God created between men and women. She said respecting the differences does not detract from equal stature between male and female. Genesis 1 states that God created Man (male and female) in His image and gave them authority to *rule* over the rest of creation. This gives equal value, dignity, and worth to both sexes.

Elsewhere in the Old Testament, the Ten Commandments require children to honor both their father and mother. Women also played decisive roles in Israel's political and social history.

In the New Testament, Jesus valued women. They traveled with him and his disciples. Paul affirmed the equality of all Christians without regard to birth, status, or gender (Galatians 3:28)

“Men and women, as they are added to the body of Christ, are equally redeemed and heirs of God's grace,” Oyay said.

Unique Roles and Responsibilities

Genesis 2 reveals different roles and responsibilities while maintaining equality. Adam is created first, given the mandate to care for the garden, warned concerning the forbidden tree, and tasked to name all the animals. He named God's creation, designed for him, *woman*.

On the other hand, God took Eve from Adam's side as a helper suitable for him. Oyay noted that it is the man who leaves his father and mother in Genesis 2:24.

Implications

Adam had the leadership role in the garden before the Fall. He was created first because God intended for him to be the leader in the relationship. Adam is given the mandate to care for the garden because the primary responsibility of subduing the world is his. He names the animals because he is the *King of Creation*. Adam calls *woman*, Eve, because he is responsible for the wife and family. The man is the initiator in the marriage relationship.

Eve is in the helper and complementary role beside Adam (the same Hebrew word, *'ezer*, translated as *helper*, is even used to describe God, himself).

Accountability Pattern

In Genesis 3, the Serpent approached Eve, not Adam, reversing God's order. Eve was deceived and sinned first, unknowingly. But Adam sinned knowingly. God spoke first to Adam as the head.

Eve did not exercise being accountable to Adam for her actions. God held Adam personally accountable as the leader in the relationship, even though Eve sinned first. God punished Adam and Eve differently, befitting to a man (his work) and a woman (in relationships).

Oyay said, “Sin distorts the relationship between men and women so competition replaces [the intended] cooperation and complementation!”

Summary

Men and women stand equal before God, in dignity, value, and worth. There are significant God-created differences between the two beyond mere biology. Currently, there is great pressure to disregard these differences.

Oyay said, “Men and women find their full potential in life and truly [act] as agents of genuine transformation to those they serve when the God-created differences are accepted and celebrated!” ■

REACH National HQ: Phase 1 Nears Completion



Left: Exterior of the new REACH national headquarters showing lower and upper ground floor and steel matting around the roof deck. Right: Partially completed kitchen.

Our hearts overflow with thanksgiving to our Lord who touched many people to give towards this project!

We are pleased to report that we are

nearing the finish line and hope to complete construction by the end of this year. After the basic shell of the REACH national headquarters was done, additional funds came in to proceed with needed additional work to fulfill the multifunction purpose of the facility.

To date, the following have been accomplished: 1.) painting of most of the exterior and interior walls; 2.) laying tiles on all floors (lower and upper ground floors) including water proofing and tiling the roof deck; 3.) installation of security steel matting around the perimeter of the roof deck; 4.) placing a partition between the RDC and RI office areas; 5.) partial completion of the tiles and fixtures in the toilets on all floors; 6.) erecting the front gate; 7.) finishing the electrical system; and 8.) partial construction of the kitchen (cabinets, sink, fans, etc. have been installed).

A few hurdles remain as we wait for the government permit to excavate so that the office sewage system can connect to the city sewage system. Likewise, application for the Occupancy Permit began in October. This is required so that the new building can be manned and start operations.

Please pray that the construction and securing of all needed government permits, documents, etc. will proceed without further delay. This journey continues to stretch our faith as God faithfully leads and provides so that the planned four-story structure will be built later on. ■

*Reported by Dr. Gloria 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 infiltrative disciplemaking through—staff development; ministry enhancement; socio-economic development; high school and collegiate outreach; developing contextualized materials; and practicing godly administration and management.