

reachbulletin

august 2021 vol. 29 no. 2 | resources employment and community horizons

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



Commitment to the Poor

Food Packs: Loving our Neighbor Near the REACH Office

Earlier this year, food pantries popped up around the country to meet the needs of folks disadvantaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many pantries saw long lines and safety protocols became difficult to follow.

REACH and Resources Development Cooperative repurposed the idea by handing out food packs to 50 selected families in need. The distribution started at 9 a.m. on May 12, 2021.

The targeted families included nearby community members, which REACH has helped in previous years.

The food packs included 5 kilos of rice, milk, coffee, biscuits, vegetables, laundry detergent, and canned goods. Pamphlets telling of God's love were included in the packs.

Recipients received food stubs on May 10 to present when they arrived on the day of the distribution to pick up their packs on May 12.

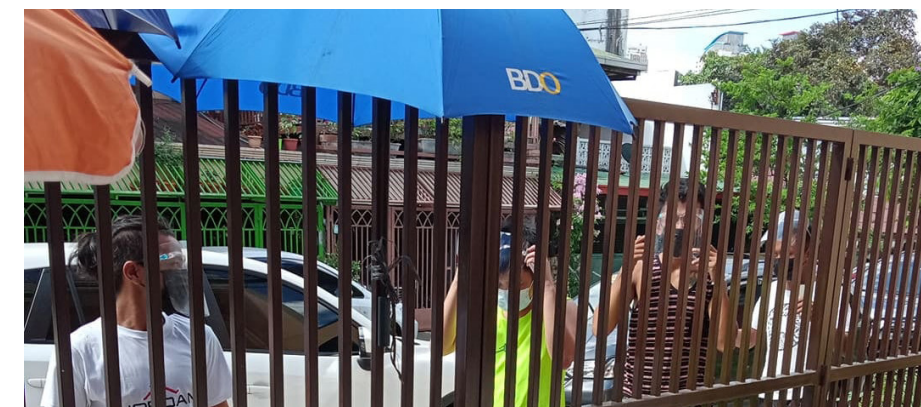
One recipient said the packs were timely since her husband's work hours were cut back due to the pandemic. The relief goods would help them survive for a couple of weeks. Some were surprised to be included on the list of recipients. Because of the detergent soap included, one youth said he would wash his clothes immediately.

Prior to the distribution, permission was sought from the barangay. A barangay patroller visited on the day

of distribution to see that rules issued by the COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the management of emerging infectious diseases were followed, which the office staff did.

Please pray for God's provision for families hurting from the economic impact of the COVID-19 virus and that they will draw closer to God during this time. ■

Opposite page and top left of this page: A woman and a youth with food packs for their families. Top right: Recipients sign in to receive their food pack and for REACH to maintain contact with them for future ministry activities. Middle: Lining up with social distancing. Bottom: Fe Ricohermoso packs food items.



REACH Women's Virtual Conference

The Joy of Womanhood in Times of Pandemic



Around 70 participants logged in on devices to attend the REACH Women's Virtual Conference on July 18.

Despite COVID-19 complicating life, REACH women reported the positive side of the pandemic. Some spent time in their gardens, bonded with family, and used the free time to deepen their relationship with God.

A REACH Women's Virtual National Conference (July 18) provided a venue to share their lives, update others about ministry concerns, pray, dance and laugh, worship, and hear God's Word. The conference was titled *The Joy of Womanhood in Times of Pandemic*.

Mercy Beltran and Tina Brooks organized the event as members of the National Discipleship Team.

Tina says, "Praise God and all

glory to Him" for the conference. "God answered all of our requests for good weather, internet connection, guidance in making the program, and implementing it." She said the cooperation of the women who took part in the program was a blessing.

After one of the ministry updates Abel Saquing commented in the chat box, "Praise God for all His work in the ministry and in our personal lives in the midst of the pandemic!"

The day's speaker was Dr. Jane Navalta. Jane is a professor in the Education Department at Nueva Vizcaya State University, and an active leader in her local REACH ministry.

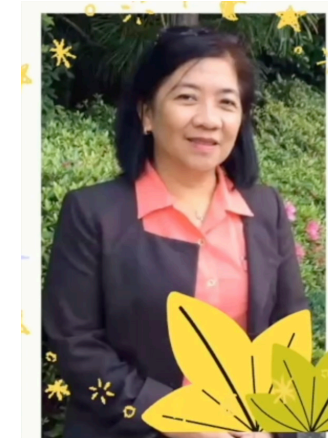
She encouraged the women to be joyful (Phil. 4:1-4) in the midst of the

pandemic. She said joy is not based on feelings, but on a fact — the fact that God walks with us through the difficult times. She said that is how Paul endured confinement in prison, false accusations, and the threat of death.

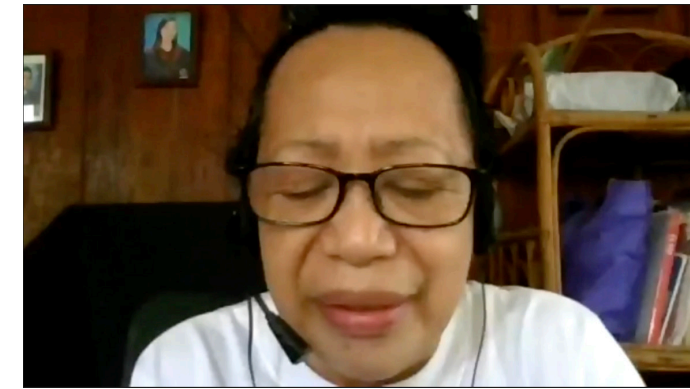
She said God is in control of our circumstances, and nothing can separate us from His love.

Finally, she challenged them to examine their inner life, walk with the Spirit and fellow believers, live a balanced life, and to choose to focus on God rather than circumstances.

Annie Ouano commented later, "This message is what I need now, it hit home to the core of my being. Thank you, Lord!"



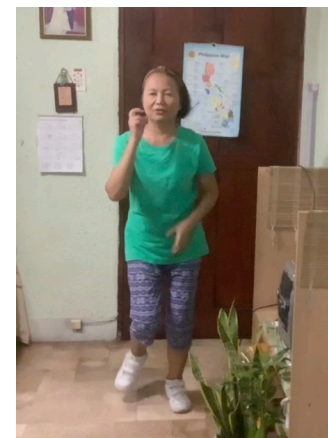
Dr. Jane Navalta, featured speaker from Bayombong, encouraged the women to rejoice (Phil. 4:1-4) despite the pandemic.



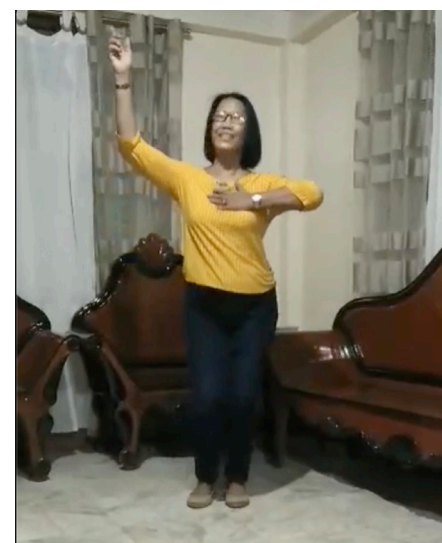
Marie Soriano prays for several ministry areas after their updates.



Ruth Lunag recalls the blessing of bonding together as a family during the pandemic.



Tina Brooks demonstrated keeping in shape during the pandemic with simple home exercises.



Virginia Manguba's interpretive dance, *Down on My Knees I Found My Jesus*, reminds us to keep praying whether on the mountain top or in the valley.



Butuan ladies, like many other ministry areas moved online for Bible study.



Tess Saquing gives thanks for God's sustaining grace as they raise their son, Mark, with his special needs and for his protection from emergencies during the COVID-19 outbreak.



Sharing Christ to the children in Roxas City through a video.

Suffer Not the Little Children

God is so good! We are overjoyed how God shows His love for little children! God spoke to a sister in Christ from abroad to pledge for a Jollibee party for our kids' ministry. Seeing how God brought so much joy to the kids' hearts when they tasted the burgers and fries was like God bringing heaven to them.

by Alma Francisco

When it rains, it pours. A sister from New Jersey also pledged support for the kids' Jollibee party this August. Aside from this, others sisters in Christ from abroad sent cash for our community pantry. The kids and their families were the priority beneficiaries. Most of them live as informal settlers near a creek. I see myself in them when I was their age.

I envision these kids being established in godly values, growing successfully, and reaching their God-given dreams. I believe God will transform

their lives and prosper them—just as He lifted my family out of poverty and made us who we are today.

Spending time with these kids helped me to know each one of them. It is heartbreaking to hear their individual stories. Many come from broken families.

One is a six-year-old boy who sells *walis tingting* or broomsticks made of coconut midribs. One day, we saw him carrying seven broomsticks alone. Out of pity, we bought all of them and gave him extra money. He said he is the youngest (all his siblings are married) and left



(Top) Kids enjoying food from Jollibee. (Bottom) Recipients of the food distribution.



The kids learn responsibility by cleaning up the surroundings.

alone to take care of his father who has tuberculosis.

Seeing the kids' smiles despite their experiences, I cannot imagine how God protects them from pain. I believe this is also why these kids like to have Bible study and do gardening everyday with us. They shared that they wished that I would be their mother. But I respond by teaching them to honor and help their parents as God commanded, with a promise.

We hold regular Bible study with the kids at a safe place, with permission from its owner who is abroad. After our Bible study, the kids enjoy vegetable gardening. They bring to their families some produce such as malunggay, lemon grass, camote tops, as well as some plants for them to grow. We also give banana leaves,

for the kids to use for *kakanin* or rice cakes that they sell. We also reward their efforts with small cash.

They also learn servanthood when they join us in sweeping our surroundings. After snacks, they play *bahay-bahayan* (make playhouse).

We recently had a film showing on Noah's Ark. From Noah's story, the kids realized how much God loves us by preserving two of all the animals for our food today. The story also taught the kids to obey God no matter what other people say.

We also prepare school supplies for the kids to write lessons they learn and memory verses. However, despite teaching them to memorize verses and reminding them to "love one another" as John 13:34-35 says, the kids still quarrel often.

We thank God for everyone helping us with this ministry and for the support of REACH to expand His Kingdom.

Even without biological children of our own, God has given us many children to care for who are in need (Isaiah 54:1). It's all by God's super abounding grace alone. To Him be the glory and honor and praise!

Prayer Requests

- Pray that the children will experience God's perfect love and learn to love one another.
- Pray for the children to grow faithfully in their walk with God.
- Pray for God's anointing, strength, and wisdom in ministering to these kids.
- Pray for our safety and protection during the pandemic. ■



Distribution of Food Subsidy at Christian Farmers MPC building



A screenshot of the joint fellowship (Batac, Bayombong, Cabagan, and Metro Manila, held on Zoom.

Joint Fellowship Calls Members to be Salt and Light

As the pandemic created challenges for ministry, it also opened opportunities to be salt and light and linking ministry areas through joint fellowships.

On April 25, four Luzon ministry areas held an online, joint fellowship, following the recommendation of the National Discipleship Team (NDT).

The NDT is promoting joint fellowships in response to the isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage members to get to know one another from different areas.

Ministry areas are clustered into three groups.

- Cluster 1: Batac, Cabagan, Bayombong, and Metro Manila.
- Cluster 2: Muñoz, Los Baños,

Roxas City, and Cebu.

- Cluster 3: Butuan, Cabadbaran, Davao City, and Kabacan (included here are General Santos City, Cagwait, and Pikit).

Clusters can meet once a quarter, through an app such as (Zoom, Messenger, Google Meet, etc.)

First Joint Fellowship

The first fellowship was led by Cabagan. After worship and updates, Jun Talosig, the Cabagan ministry coordinator, spoke about being salt and light in today's difficult times.

Jun said COVID-19 and the lockdowns made life difficult for many. "We are living in dark times, really."

But Christians can offer hope by manifesting Christ-like attitudes of humility and righteousness (Mt. 5:3-10) and not being swayed by the

circumstances around us.

He encouraged everyone to help the poor in their own ways and those in their sphere of influence.

As an example, Jun showed slides of initiatives conducted by the Cabagan ministry and the Christian Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative. He said we should not grow weary of doing good (Galatians 6:9).

Jun is a fruit of the Cabagan undergrad ministry, a Summer Training Program alumni, served as manager of the farmers' cooperative, and helps lead the local high school ministry.

BOT Election Results



Wilson Irizari.



Dr. Edwin Cruzado

The annual election for seats on the Board of Trustees (BOT) resulted in a younger but familiar face joining the BOT. Wilson Irizari was elected for his first term.

Wilson is the former executive officer and office manager of REACH before moving to Surigao Del Sur in Mindanao. Prior to that he served as

manager of the Resources Outsourcing Center and a ministry intern in Metro Manila. He hails from the former REACH ministry in Mindanao State University in Marawi City.

Dr. Edwin Cruzado returned to the BOT after being off for several terms.

Edwin is a native of Pikit, Cota-

bato. He is a surgeon and committed to serving his community in the midst of armed conflict where he has served as a municipal health officer and owns the Cruzado Medical Hospital. He also helps with medical missions.

A term on the BOT is for two years. BOT members can serve three consecutive terms.

Small Group in Local Church Uses DFS Series

After my island work, I resided in General Santos City in South Cotabato. Together with my family, we looked for a church for fellowship and where we could continue to mobilize others for missions and to help make disciples among its members.

I joined a small connect group, which met once a week for equipping, prayer, and mutual encouragement. At first, we studied the books of the New Testament, like Colossians. Upon studying First and Second Timothy, the group understood the *Timothy Principle*. After the discussions, the group decided to look for materials that focused on discipleship. So, I introduced the Reach Discipleship Family Series (DFS). I emphasized how these materials help us focus on the BASICS and grow spiritual-ly from a babe to adulthood. The group agreed and chose

me to facilitate the weekly discussions.

We ordered the books from the REACH office and started the *Dilemma of Choice*. One group member said, "The material is useful in creating another Bible study group." I encouraged them to study the materials thoroughly. Our goal is that after the book study we can handle one-to-one discipleship in the church or even in our respective workplaces.

Reported by Joshue Ouano

NOTICE: We are currently out of stock of Book 2 of the Discipleship Family Series, *Beginning Steps of a Disciple*. We hope to have it reprinted by the end of the year.

IMP Fellowship Links Partners Abroad

The Indochina Mission Project (IMP) held its first online fellowship on June 27. Participants joined from four countries.

IMP Director, Paul Pasicolan said the objective of the fellowship is to have a devotional time together to reflect and be challenged from the Word of God, share our personal life and ministry updates, share prayer needs, have mutual up-building, encouragement, and affirmation of love for each other in the Body of Christ.

Cal Milnes, CEO of Reach Ministries International, sent a recorded devotional due to the difference in time zones between the U.S.

and Asia. He said the fellowship is meant to encourage the field staff and local partners who may feel isolated and fear the deadly virus.

Despite the problems the world faces, Cal focused attention on the Great Commission in Mat. 28:16-20. He said Jesus' marching orders were the most astounding words spoken to an audience and to come from one miraculously raised from the dead. Since then, the marching orders for his followers haven't changed. Though the methods may change, Jesus leaves it to the followers to determine the method according to their time and needs.

Cal said we can figure it out through reading the Bible, prayer, dependence on the Holy Spirit, and by abiding in Christ (Jn. 15:5).

Despite job losses, food and medical supply shortages, and the shutdown of major economies, Cal said we are able to obey the command to make disciples and share the good news. In hardships, we become witnesses through our lives.

Paul also spoke to the group, reminding them of Hebrews 10:24,25, to spur one another on toward love and good deeds and to encourage one another, especially as we see the day of the Lord's return approaching.

In these uncertain times, Paul said there are three realities to give us hope. First, God is Sovereign and seated on His throne (Romans 8:28) He always works for the best of those who love Him. Second, God's grace is always sufficient for us (2 Cor. 12:9). Every need we face is always matched with God's overflowing abundance. Third, We are in transition from strength to strength (Is. 40:31).

He said, "If God is our dwelling place and source of strength, we can never be exhausted" (Ps. 84:4-7). ■

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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.