

# NEWSBITS

## UPDATES FROM THE MISSION FIELD

What happens when couples moved by the Holy Spirit to accept the Lord through baptism are faced with unique hurdles that come with cohabitation? This was the curious situation that health coaches in the North Central Mindanao Conference faced as they put together a beautiful program that wouldn't only unite husbands and wives, but new Christians with Christ.



### A NEED FOR MARRIAGE

Throughout the territory of the North Central Mindanao Conference are beautiful, lively churches filled with families that happily and eagerly serve the Lord. But as the health coaches in the area would come to realize, many of the parents shepherding these small flocks remained unbaptized despite their willingness because they weren't married.

Unfortunately, these couples began cohabiting before they realized it was truly wrong. Now, with small families established under their partnerships, marriage was a necessary prerequisite before they could be united with Christ through baptism. The only problem? These families didn't have the means to get married. So our health coaches took it upon themselves to organize a program that would reduce the burden on the couples and pave the way for their acceptance of Jesus.

### OVERCOMING THE HURDLES

Although our health coaches had organized similar programs in the past, this new undertaking proved to be much more complicated. With relentless paperwork required and the necessary involvement of the local government, our health coaches exerted themselves in prayer as they built the foundation of what would be a grand mass wedding.

After having brought their proposed program to the district level, all of the church leaders within their area were instructed to find couples with similar needs. Any couple therefore hoping to get married at no expense was offered the opportunity. The only requirement? That they attend Bible study sessions with the members and pastors of the district.

### MET WITH ADVERSITY

Numerous couples accepted the invitation for Bible study and eagerly examined the Word of God with our health coaches and other faithful ministers of our church. All the while, our volunteers worked tirelessly to process paperwork and ensure that every couple had their requirements polished and ready for the big day.

Sadly, many of them were denied the license to marry because of discrepancies in documents and issues with past marriages. Unable to solve the problem for the time being, our health coaches promised continued support for these couples and guaranteed that they would get their chance at marriage soon after, in God's perfect time.

### RENEWED HOPE

After months of preparation, endless paperwork, fervent prayers, and routine fasting, the health coaches of the Northern Central Mindanao Conference, with the help of the local government, organized a successful mass wedding ceremony for all of the couples who had completed their Bible study and lesson on the 28 Fundamental Beliefs. But even more humbling is that through the ministration of the Holy Spirit, the Conference witnessed the soon baptism of 36 precious souls. Of this number were entire families moved to accept Jesus after their parents had studied the Word of God.

Although many of these members had lost hope in their chance of baptism, the Lord proved through this effort that nothing is hopeless when we put our trust in Him. Today, these families joyfully sing praises to the Lord and attend Sabbath worship services as families made whole, thanks to the tireless effort of our health coaches through the guidance of our Lord.

