

June 25, 2015

This July, BTEA will host its 22nd summer mission trip to the Philippines. In 1994, our oldest daughter Christy and her good friend Amy graduated from high school and begged me to take them to the Philippines before they started college. I agreed, and by July, our second daughter Katie and other young people had joined our first trip of 20. Christy and Amy and their families are now missionaries in unreached countries.

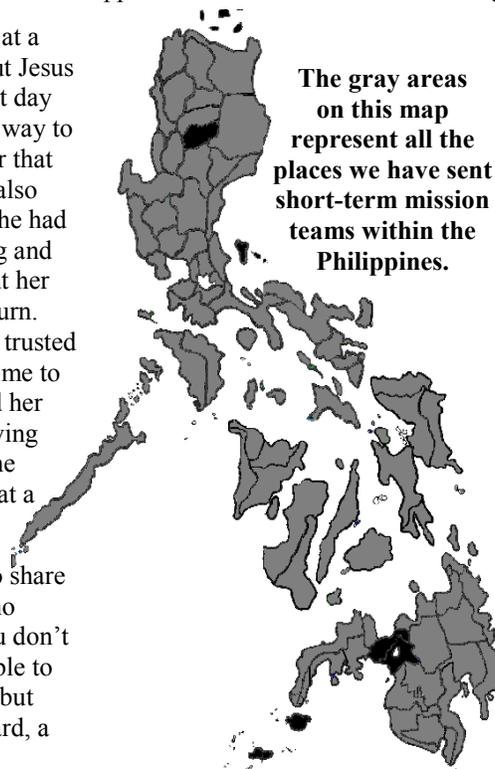
Since that first summer trip, the Lord has allowed us the privilege of leading approximately 775 young people and adults on short-term mission trips to the Philippines, with the purpose of sharing the Gospel with those who have never heard about the free gift of eternal life in Christ. Our records show that over the course of 21 summers, 9,396,932 people indicated they made a decision to trust Jesus as Savior, to forgive their sins, and give them eternal life. Since 2010, we have been distributing anywhere from 500,000 to 1,000,000 Gospel tracts each summer to reinforce the message we share. We know that God has perfect accounting, and we will rejoice in heaven someday over the results of these willing summer missionaries, our faithful BTEA national staff, my incredible side-kick Charles Stone, and all of you who have made an eternal investment.

In addition to the impact of the Gospel on those who heard it, the Lord has also impacted those who were trained to preach it. Countless short-term missionaries gained a passion for the Gospel and the people who need to hear it. They returned to their jobs and schools with a vision of impacting those in their spheres with the life-transforming Gospel. In addition, many were called to full-time ministry while serving in the Philippines. Some, like Christy and Amy and their husbands Joey and Josh, were called to serve on the mission field.

Twenty-two years ago, we could not have imagined the results of the summer trip; but God knew, and He deserves all the glory for allowing us to work with Him (1 Cor. 3:9) in a place where His Spirit is moving mightily in the hearts of the people to draw them into a personal relationship with Him. We are humbled and very grateful to Him and to you! The following are a few of the hundreds of stories that we have compiled from our summer missionaries. We hope you are encouraged by reading them. Please pray for the summer missionaries who will be serving in the Philippines with BTEA from June 27-August 2.

Peter Tebow: In 2001, I shared the Gospel at a high school in Iloilo. Anthia had heard about Jesus before, but she didn't understand grace. That day she learned that she didn't have to work her way to heaven, and she put her trust in Christ. Later that week at another school in the same town, I also preached at Anthia's best friend's school. She had been living a rebellious life style of drinking and drugs. After hearing the Gospel, she also put her trust in Christ. Her life made a 180 degree turn. Later, the two friends realized that they had trusted in Christ the same week, and God had used me to bring His message to them both. Anthia and her friend decided to live lives dedicated to serving Christ. Today, Anthia serves as a nurse at the Tebow Cure Hospital and her friend works at a seminary in the Philippines.

Casey Seland: I walked into a classroom to share the Gospel but was stopped by a teacher who said, "These are special needs students. You don't need to talk to them." I appealed and was able to share. Each child had a different condition, but every one of them accepted Christ! Afterward, a girl approached me crying as she said, "No one has ever taken the time to make me feel loved." The love of Christ was so appealing to these children. I am thankful I was able to love them, as well, and tell them about Jesus.



The gray areas on this map represent all the places we have sent short-term mission teams within the Philippines.

Because the primary focus of our short-term mission trips is evangelism in the schools, we revisit provinces about every ten years to share the Gospel with the new generation of students.

Michael Cowley: The route to one of our assigned schools went right through a mountain village. There were many homes that had been damaged by a typhoon the week before. The people in the village had been told that a team from America was coming to survey the damages. When they saw us driving through the village, they assumed we were the survey team and followed us to the school. With everyone in the village present, I preached to them about having a home in heaven that a typhoon cannot destroy. Many adults were crying. I gave the invitation, and 320 people got saved!

Rebecca Bronzini: We rode in a jeep for almost an hour before continuing on a motorcycle. We reached a small village with a few huts and a one-room school. Everyone in the village gathered to hear what I had to say; however, they could not understand any of the dialects my translator knew. We found one man who understood, and the three of us stood in front of the crowd. I spoke, my translator translated for me, and the local man translated for him so the people could understand! At the end of the presentation, the entire village came to know Christ!

Bob Tebow: At one school, the principal reluctantly agreed to let us share with his students. I could tell he was angry, but nonetheless, he allowed us to proceed with an assembly. As the message was preached to almost 2,000 students and teachers, not only did the principal trust Christ, but he was so excited about us being there that he insisted we go and visit another high school nearby where he was friends with the principal. He offered to drive us over and set everything up. When we arrived at the next school, he took care of all the arrangements and told the principal, "You must let these Americans share this message!" We were able to hold another assembly and share with over 1,700 students. Over 1,500 of those students put their trust in Christ!

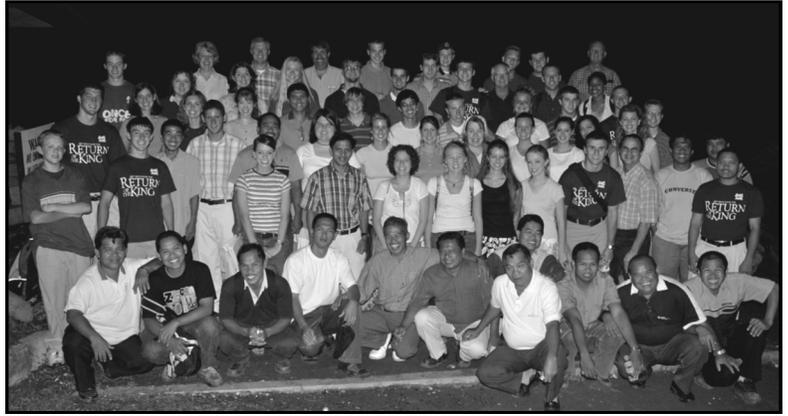
Ross Cleveland: A young boy approached me after I finished sharing the Gospel at his school. He was crying, but through his tears he said, "My father left me and my heart has been broken for so long. I know now that I have a heavenly Father who loves me so much and is able to heal broken hearts."

Hannah Fain: I found myself in a primarily Muslim classroom, surrounded by young women wearing traditional Islamic head coverings. After I presented the Gospel, I took a few moments to fellowship with the precious teenagers. As I was leaving, a hand grabbed my wrist. I turned to see the tear-streaked face of a girl. I watched in awe as she began unwrapping her headdress. "Thank you for coming to my school. I now have hope," she whispered as her veil fell to her shoulders.



Breanna Wright Cota sharing the Gospel with school children in Isabela, Philippines

Heather Spaulding: While my translator and teammate spoke to the older children at an elementary school, I was given the opportunity to share with the younger children and had one of the teachers translate for me. As she translated, I could sense that she really wanted the students to grasp the message. She repeated key parts and added examples to help them understand. At times, she would listen to my message and say, "Wow! Really?" Then she would translate it to the students! Once, she even commented, "Did you hear that, class?" This teacher and all 52 students indicated that they put their trust in Christ that day!



Most of our 2005 missions team in Davao, Philippines

Jamie Spencer: When we arrived at a small school in the mountains, the teachers were amazed we had come so far to visit them and wondered if we would also visit the other school in the area. We had not previously known there was another school but found out it was about a 10 minute hike from their school. We shared the gospel there and immediately set out for the other school. The hike was exhausting, but we finally arrived at the tiny school. They, too, were amazed that we had come so far and informed us that they had never had a single visitor in over 20 years! We assembled the students and teachers, and I shared about God's great love for them. All the students and both teachers indicated that they put their trust in Christ! After my message, the children started jumping and chanting, "Jesus loves me!" Some were even crying because they were so happy to hear that Jesus loves them, and they now know they have a home in heaven!

Melissa Whalen: As I spoke in a classroom, I noticed a young man who was listening very intently and making sure that his classmates were also listening. Almost every student prayed to accept Jesus as Savior. When I finished speaking, I handed out tracts to each student. The young man came up to me and showed me that he had a copy of the same tract that our team hands out every mission trip. Someone gave it to him two years earlier and told him about Jesus. As a result, he became a Christian! He was so excited that we had come to share Jesus with his friends, whom he had been witnessing to for awhile.

Joni Webster: I got the chance to share the love of Christ with some deaf children. I told them that everyone would be able to communicate with them in heaven. Right then, God got the attention of a boy in the middle of the class. When I first began sharing, he seemed upset; but when he understood this, a few tears trickled down his cheeks. As I was leaving, he said through sign language that one day we would talk in heaven, and because of God's love, we could be friends forever. The other students all signed things that they are excited about now that Jesus is in their hearts!



Tiffany Gray Vickery with elementary students in Davao, Philippines

In the harvest,
Bob Tebow