



BOB TEBOW Evangelistic Association

"The Harvest is Plentiful... The World is the Field"

May 2016



In **January 2012**, a team of six Americans, including BTEA Evangelist Charles Stone, and six of our Filipino staff, boarded a small boat in Surigao City and sailed to Dinagat. The team had been told that Dinagat was known as "The Witchcraft Capital of the Philippines" and were strongly cautioned about accepting food from strangers because of its potential to be poisoned. Missionaries had been run off in the past. There were a few churches on the western part of the island, but the entire island was dominated by a satanic cult known as the PBMA.

Upon arrival, the team saw no smiling faces, which is highly unusual in the Philippines. The local police asked for copies of their passports for identification purposes in case of an emergency. They also offered the protection of armed guards, but our team declined the offer and said they trusted their God to protect them. They left the hotel at 3:00 every morning so no one would know where they stayed. When they shared about Jesus with the locals, there was no recognition of His name in the eyes of the people. Everyday the team faced various challenges, such as injuries and muddy and mountainous terrain that was

difficult on their vehicles. They had trouble finding boats to transport them to the small surrounding islands. God overcame every single obstacle and even added a bonus: He concluded everyday with a literal rainbow!

The things our team experienced on the first trip to Dinagat were obviously orchestrated by God, and He had very clearly prepared the hearts of the people there. Surprisingly, our team was well received, which immediately led to an opportunity to present the gospel in the market. A reporter from the local news station was present and recorded the entire message with his cellphone! Many responded to the invitation to trust Jesus Christ as Savior! When our team returned to preach in the market the next morning, the same reporter was there with a video camera. He had already set up a sound system for their use and once again, recorded the gospel message they shared. They went back to the station afterward, where Charles Stone was interviewed and shared the gospel with the other employees. Footage of our team was shared on the TV and radio stations during their week there, which made them celebrities everywhere they went on the island and facilitated their entrance into the schools to share the gospel! Every principal welcomed them, and the response to the gospel was tremendous. They received requests for Bibles at each school. As their week on the island ended, they became burdened for the people who did



January 2012 Dinagat Team

Charles Stone, Jennifer Myers, Meghan Flammer Purvis, Britt White, Beverly Myers, Pastor Mars, and Ben Pickett



Charles Stone talking to a local news station

not get to hear the gospel. They prayed for the money to send another team there soon to saturate the island with the gospel. God quickly provided the funds and a team, equipped with 5,000 copies of the Bible to distribute!



Singing at the market



In **April 2012**, we sent six BTEA Filipino evangelists, along with Americans Charles Stone and Jeff Ropp, to distribute the Bibles, plant churches, and preach in every village of Dinagat. The people were ready to hear the gospel and many professed faith in Jesus. In the first place our team preached, almost 100 adults responded to the invitation and were invited to return to learn more. Sixty-four former cult members and their teacher arrived for Biblical teaching! The cult teacher invited our team to meet in the PBMA chapel, and that became the location of a new church!

The Lord transformed the capital city of San Jose, even though it is the headquarters for the PBMA and the mayor is the cult leader! The growth there began when one of the barangay captains trusted Christ and started holding Bible study meetings in her home. Over the next year, weekly church services were held in each of the 12 barangays of San Jose!

When our team visited Dinagat in **January 2013** to provide additional discipleship training, we were excited to hear about the vision that God had given the new Christians. They were praying for a plan to reach all the people on their island for Christ and for leaders and pastors to help them fulfill their vision. Various ministries were implemented, including women's ministry, children's ministry, TV/radio ministry, and a food ministry where they share the gospel door-to-door and again at gatherings when food is distributed. They also began an annual Christmas outreach called "Bundle of Joy." The church sends carolers to sing and give gifts to the people in the barangays. The people were originally leery, refusing to open their doors because they expected to be asked for money, because the cult never gave anything and always asked for money. When the people realized this was not the case, the outreach became a great success.

Dinagat Today: Every municipality in Dinagat now has at least two evangelical churches, and most of the churches are growing. When our team visited **last month**, the Jesus Is the Way Christian Church in San Jose was about to celebrate their fourth anniversary and expected 1,000 people to attend. As a part of the celebration service, they were planning to have a marriage ceremony for six couples, a baby dedication, and a baptism! Another one of the churches, however, has been under severe persecution. Attacks from cult members caused the church to dwindle from a regular attendance of 200 people to just 25 people each Sunday. These members have proved faithful under great distress and continue to minister in their community through feeding programs. The people in their village are thankful but shocked by their generosity. Being the recipients of generosity is something entirely new to them. They are accustomed to giving over 50 percent of their income to the PBMA and some even give their entire income! This church also purchased the rights to broadcast 24 hours a day on a local television channel. They play their weekly Bible study on a loop, along with additional material, including the contact information of the pastor. Many people are sending him questions, which he addresses with them individually and during future Bible studies. God is blessing the efforts of this church, and it is slowly starting to grow again in the midst of persecution. Currently, there is a monthly meeting with the pastors from all denominations on the island. The pastor at the persecuted church is working hard to get all churches on the island to unify instead of working individually.

Most of the pastors on Dinagat are young in their faith and have not had much training; yet, they are eager to serve the Lord with the talents and resources they have been given. The whole atmosphere on Dinagat is completely different from that first day our team arrived four years ago. The port security guard welcomed us with a smile, a hug, and thanked us for returning. The people are joyful, Bibles are allowed, and churches have been planted. This is all a testament to the transforming power of God's amazing grace. We look forward to continuing our ministry on Dinagat as long as the Lord opens the door.

In the harvest,
Bob Tebow



P.S. Please pray for our upcoming July project with over 40 Americans preaching this same gospel that transformed Dinagat.