

MULTIPLY

DISCIPLE MAKING IN SAMAR

After team church planting in the teeming metropolis of Quezon City, Metro Manila, the call to 'make disciples' amongst the relatively remote and unreached Waray people group on the island of Samar presented many new challenges. Not least of these was gaining acceptance and credibility in a closely knit, Folk-Catholic community that was very suspicious of newcomers.

GETTING STARTED IN GUIUAN, EASTERN SAMAR

Three short term GLO teams to Guiuan, prior to the resident team's arrival in 1995, played a significant role in surveying the scene and connecting with some key community members. Visiting teams continued to assist with school programmes, film showings and street evangelism, while the resident team focused on door to door follow-up, home Bible studies and youth, children's and other church based ministries.

A kindergarten programme proved most effective in breaking down community suspicion, neutralising opposition from the Catholic church and cementing relationships with many families.

Discipleship training took place within the context of the fledgling church and new believers grew through participation in team outreach activities and youth ministries. These included Daily Vacation Bible School programs and a Student Drop-in Centre. Paul Kulikovskiy developed a full-time internship training programme that equipped a core group of committed young people, who are today filling leadership roles in the church and associated elementary school, and spearheading ongoing expansion. A weekly worship meeting has just commenced, 20 Km. south of Guiuan.

NEW LOCATION - NEW CHALLENGES

Catbalogan City, capital of Western Samar and the commercial and educational hub for hundreds of smaller mainland and island communities, presented different challenges that called for a different approach. Some considerations in developing a strategy for making disciples here included –

1. The need for a broad spectrum approach, implanting a vision for ongoing evangelism, discipling and church multiplication.



Students taking Street Kids outreach

2. The opportunity to reach students from multiple communities in a central location.
3. The need for an early focus on discipleship and equipping in leadership skills in anticipation of multiple church plants.
4. The need of a deliberate strategy to reach the less accessible and less evangelised island communities.

The two pronged strategy that emerged has proven successful. Part of the team lived and worked with a poor, waterfront community, seeing many saved and baptized and initiating the first island community church plant. Other team members commenced working with students in a boarding facility down-town. A number of students were saved and this ministry has grown as saved students and team members' children have effectively reached out to classmates, bringing many to Christ.

The down-town church now supports two new church plants, both arising from student connections into their respective villages. Each of these now has its own outreach, one through family connections, on Daram Island. Daram is the largest and remotest island being targeted, with 57 coastal villages, almost all with no local witness.

Island evangelism is encouraged through the provision by GLO, where necessary, of a suitable outrigger boat. With the Lord's help, our vision is being realised.

DISCIPLING AND TRAINING

Jesus said, "Go and make disciples". As we read the Gospels, it is apparent that 'in-service training by example' was Jesus' discipleship model. The openness and receptivity to the Gospel in Catbalogan has been such that there has been neither time nor resources to establish a GLO discipleship training centre but the following strategy is producing promising results:

1. New converts attend immediate follow-up classes that prepare them for baptism and are then channelled into ongoing bible study groups.
2. New believers are encouraged to take Emmaus Bible Correspondence courses, often studied together in small groups with a leader. At least one course has been done to date.
3. Many participate in outreach teams, developing their spiritual gifts and practical skills.
4. The keen ones are sponsored to attend the intensive, two week Christian Training Camp at Mololos (north of Manila) and some with leadership potential are assisted to attend Emmaus Bible School, involving four annual, two month segments. Attendances to date- CTC (20); Bible School (7); Special Studies, which involves 2 weeks of leadership training at Mololos (6).
5. Elders and elders-in-training also meet regularly in Catbalogan for ongoing training.

by Bruce Jenyns



Training Student Leaders, Catbalogan



Home Bible Study Group, Catbalogan



Student Centre, Guiuan