

Badjao Tribal Mission

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“a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” Rev 7:9

“Pastor you must come here tomorrow. The city government wants to destroy our church.” This is the text message that I received on my cell phone on October 22. Because the church is on the Leyte Island, I had to take the overnight that night boat to get there the next morning.

Things happened rather fast from this point. I was able to meet the mayor briefly in the morning and we scheduled another meeting in the afternoon. During our discussion we were told that we had to make way for a project of the town of Bato. They are changing the flow of the river and they are making a channel so that the river will flow right through the property where our church is built.



The first meeting with the Mayor in green, councilor in purple and the church leaders

Not only our church but also 15 Badjao houses will be destroyed to make room for this development. Because the mayor had another schedule made arrangements to meet with in the next two days to discuss the relocation of the church and the 15 houses. But on Thursday when we went to the municipal hall to meet with the mayor we learned that he was not there and that he went to another town. We were told to come back on Monday the 26 to meet with the mayor and the town counsel. So I went back that night by boat and returned back to Leyte on Sunday night. When we arrived at the Municipal hall we learned that that the mayor was not there again. After talking to the vice mayor we were invited to attend the town counsel meeting to present our case. After meeting with the town counsel we were assured that the town counsel would set up a meeting with the Mayor and give him the appropriate authority to make the necessary decisions that he need to make. I returned that night by boat back to Cebu City. On Tuesday morning I received a phone call from our Pastor that they have started to demolish the fence around the church and started to dig the channel through the church property, damaging the church. This was clearly in violation of our agreement the previous day and shows the disregard the general Filipinos have for the Badjao people. There was nothing that I could do since the next boat only leave at night which I took. Upon my arrival I was totally dismayed and discouraged when I saw what they have done. I learned that there was a meeting with the mayor and the town council members in our community at 9 am.

Again the mayor did not attend the meeting. But during the meeting the town council member and town administrator agreed to provide a relocation area for the Badjao families that are affected by the demolition



of their houses. But the church will not be compensated for since it was built on public land. The one good thing that came out of these discussions is that the city agreed to relocate and compensate the Badjao for the

Preparation for the river to go directly through our church in the background

rebuilding of their houses. The problem with the church is that we need to buy land now where the church can be located. A qualification for the land is that it needs to be near the Badjao area. There is 500 m² (about 5200 ft²) lot available at around \$6000. We would appreciate your prayers for this situation as well as the church that we need to rebuild now and the land that we need to buy for the church.



The forkcrane getting ready to demolish the fence and the church

Prayer Requests

1. Pray for the land that we need to purchase and the church in Leyte that we need to rebuild
2. Pray also for the church in Cebu that we need to rebuild. We need to finish the foundations before end of February 2009 before the hightides are mostly during the day, since the church will be built on the sea.
3. We are planning a church family camp for our 3 churches just before Christmas. we believe that this is necessary to encourage our members this at this time.
4. Please continue to pray for Chunghee. She is slowly recovering and doing a bit better than the last few months.

God Bless

Petrus and Chunghee Vercueil