



MARCH 2013 EDITION

## AMID THE SABAH CRISIS, PBCI SUPPORTS THE CONTINUATION OF THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON THE BANGSAMORO

BY TWINKLE BAUTISTA



The Government of the Philippines (GPH) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) are currently finishing the annexes of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB). However, the Philippines is facing another crisis when the Sultanate of Sulu reiterated its claim on Sabah by sending 200 armed men. It has resulted to violence which claimed 66 deaths and affected 800,000 Filipinos living there. It seemed to start as a resource-based conflict but is unraveling within the backdrop of colonial history, local politics in both countries, maneuverings within the international relations and personal feuds.

Some prominent people in our country have called for the postponement of the FAB citing the case of Sabah. Sabah is part of Malaysia which had facilitated the GPH-MILF peace talks. Some nationalist sentiments have also called for the government to go to war against Malaysia. Please pray for the peace in the Philippines, wisdom and discernment for our leaders, calm and sobriety among our people and repentance for those who are taking advantage of the situation for their own personal interests.

PBCI leadership, along with our network, is quietly working behind the scenes to help open channels of communications between the conflicting parties.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. - 1 Cor. 3:11

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## PBCI JOINS THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE MORO-INDIGENOUS PEOPLES REAFFIRMATION OF KINSHIP



Peacebuilders Community is celebrating the Lenten season declaring that the Prince of Peace is alive!

The three major people groups in Mindanao – the Moro, indigenous peoples (IP) and the migrants – came together to celebrate the first year anniversary of the Moro-IP Reaffirmation of Kinship last 08 March. The Reaffirmation is a move that aims to “sustain the spirit of kinship, unity and cooperation” between the Moro and the IPs within the current context of the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro. (*Datu Migketay Saway, Talaandig tribal elder*)

In a conflicted land like Mindanao, hope bursts out as we see more and more

people coming together for peace.

*This photo shows a Talaandig tribal elder sharing her story to an Ilonggo pastor trained in and working for peace and reconciliation. She is sharing how the Creator is revealing himself to her through her dreams. Some evangelical leaders have also viewed IP culture and cosmology with distrust. In the celebration, the Bukidnon pastors who have embraced the peace and reconciliation values listened and reveled with the indigenous peoples. "God has been working in this place even before we came here," they said. The IP leaders welcomed them warmly too and we hope that this signifies a long-term relationship based on trust and respect.*



Ten pastors and church leaders in Lantapan, Bukidnon finished the first book of the Peace and Reconciliation training on March 9, 2013. The training was led by Daniel Pantoja and mostly facilitated by the local PAR team – Clay and June Rojo, Eddie and Liberty Isada, Twinkle Bautista and Nenia Galanza. We are thankful to witness how the Christ is multiplying the workers living out the Shalom of Christ in practical ways.



On March 6, the women field staff led by Joji Pantoja ministered to young women working as entertainers. Joji gave a talk on the topic “Being, Doing and Having” of a person while the other staff served as counselors during the break-out groups. The young ladies shared heartbreak stories of cyclical abuse and violence. They are kids themselves yet some of them have kids of their own already. Despite that, they cling on to the hope that there is Someone bigger than them whom they can turn to.

### Coffee Orientation in Dominorog, Bukidnon

On 21 March, the Peacebuilders team held an orientation for Arabica coffee farming and Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) training at Dominorog, Bukidnon upon the invitation of the barangay (village) council. Most of the residents there are from the Higaonon tribe. It is one of the places that has a reputation for banditry. But once again, when we went there, we saw that the people are simply fellow human beings who want to live with dignity. Next month, the coffee and PAR training will commence. After the orientation, we visited the possible areas for the coffee farms and also a possible place for the coffee processing. Help us pray for the coffee processing facility which would serve the Bukidnon farmers whom we have trained.



### PRAYER LETTER: MARCH 2013

YouTube PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.

## Latin American and Sri Lankan leaders visit PBCI



Latin American and Sri Lankan leaders visited Peacebuilders Community and Coffee for Peace on 14 and 27 March respectively. The Latin American leaders wanted to explore possibilities how we can work together in our peacebuilding ministry. As we talked, we learned that one of them is as passionate of coffee as CFP is! Hopefully we can learn more from each other. They are:

- **Fernando Amezcua** from Mexico is pastor of Guadalajara's Iglesia Bíblica Gracia and president of FAMEX
- **Carlos Nahum Erazo** is a Salvadorian entrepreneur and member of DEMMCA (FAM El Salvador) and COMISAL
- **Omar Ulloa** is a Honduran entrepreneur and president of FAM Honduras
- **Oscar Guevara** is president of the Central American Churches Association in Costa Rica
- **Gustavo Soto** is president of FAM International and is originally from Costa Rica
- **Voltaire Cacal** is a Filipino American (born in Bacarra, Ilocos Norte) and serves as Director of Strategic Initiatives for Camino Global and as Missions Pastor for Biblical Community Church in Dallas, Texas.

Five priests and a nun from Sri Lanka also visited us. We shared stories and experiences regarding peacebuilding in Mindanao. They also visited our partners in Valencia, Bukidnon. These leaders wanted to meet PBCI after reading an article about our community published by the Catholic Relief Services. These new friends are:

- **Fr. Ashok Stephen, OMI** – Fr. Ashok is presently the Director of the Oblate Center for Society and Religion (CSR) in Colombo. He is involved in human rights training and advocacy, legal counseling and citizens' empowerment programs in the district level.
- **Fr. Shivantha Waas, OMI** – He is a newly-ordained priest who worked previously with the youth and overseas contract workers in Italy. He is working with CSR in its reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts.
- **Fr. Joseph Cooray, OMI** – He works with a children's movement that seeks to build a peaceful society based on equality among different ethnic communities. This movement has spread to all corners of the islands and the members belong to all ethnic and faith communities.
- **Sr. Helen Fernando, HF** – Sr. Helen is a Sister of the Holy Family of Bordeaux. Part of her ministry includes working with the victims of the Southern Youth insurrection. Her "Ministry of Presence" has been instrumental in bridging gaps in the communal divide specifically among war zones and re-settled communities.
- **Mr. Tarcisius Fernando** – He is a former Oblate priest whose previous work include Buddhist-Christian dialogue, education for justice and peace and migrant labor issues. He served as Executive Secretary for Ecumenical Relations at the National Christian Council and is now involved in the North-South Reconciliation.

Our community is grateful for new friendships formed.

## 50 TYPHOON PABLO VOLUNTEERS GET APPRECIATED



On 12 March 2013, 50 volunteers were appreciated for their service during the Typhoon Pablo relief operations. They were the ones who really showed commitment, coming in day by day helping us pack relief goods. Some of them even worked at night when we had to do 24/7 shifts to address the need. Most of them also experienced what it means to lose loved ones and material possessions due to calamity. In fact, their experience in the flash 2011 flood motivated them to help the survivors of the typhoon. As one of them said during the program, "We cannot give money because we do not have that. But we can volunteer." During our appreciation night, the volunteers enjoyed food, games and just being together. They are our Davao Urban PAR Community.

### PRAYER LETTER: MARCH 2013

 **PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.**

**PRAY FOR THE PBCI STAFF**
**DANN PANTOJA**

Please pray as we continue to build a sustainable structure to advance peace and reconciliation (PAR) in our land in the years to come. Pray for the seamless coordination of PBCI's Field Operations Team, Support Operation Teams, Mobilization Team, Education Team, Provision Team, and for the Information-Communication Team.


**JOJI PANTOJA**

Please pray for the budget shortfall that we will be experiencing due to MC Canada's financial adjustment. We will be needing \$2000 for this year's budget.


**TWINKLE BAUTISTA**

Please pray that my family be always embraced by the Shalom of Christ. May they always experience it. Pray also for the Vision 2020 of PBCI. May we be always strengthened as we actively pursue it.


**DAVID RAE QUICO**

Please pray for the dreams and goals of the PBCI team. Pray also for our families that we left to share the peace of Christ to all.


**JOHN MEL SUMATRA**

May God help me to become a better man everyday. May His blessing and grace be upon everything that is going on in our field operations right now.


**NENIA RHEA GALANZA**

Please pray for my health physically and spiritually as I serve in the people of Bukidnon. May I be strengthened spiritually and may I grow more in my relationship with God.


**SHEREL QUIDER**

May the Spirit sustain my spiritual journey. Please pray that my skills in information and communication be more effective and efficient in advancing peacebuilding. Pray also for the wisdom, safety, peace and joy for my family, relatives and friends.


**TYRON ORTIZ**

Please pray for patience and wisdom as we parent our growing child.


**SELFRED ABELITADO**

Please pray for my teenage niece to come back home to us. She has ran away from home and may our love bring her back.


**DARRIENE JOY BETIOS**

Please pray for the construction of my house. May our God provide everything that we need.


**CLAY ROJO**

Please pray for a 4X4 vehicle that we can use in our ministry. We are often invited in the mountains of Bukidnon.


**JUNE ROJO**

Please pray for our family's health, especially my children. May God continue to protect us from any illness as we serve the Prince of Peace.


**EDUARDO ISADA**

Pray for the ministry of peace and reconciliation in San Fernando, Bukidnon. Pray for discernment as we engage with all the sectors. Please pray also for safety as we hike to the mountains.


**FRANI CATUA**

Please pray for good health for our family. It is the season for cough and my two children got the cough virus.


**ECRECENCIA ECLEVIA**

Please pray for the healing of my sister. May my whole family be in good health always.

