



APRIL 2013 EDITION

PHILIPPINE PEACE PANEL FOR THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT SEARCHES FOR NEW APPROACHES TO TALKS

BY TWINKLE BAUTISTA

On 03 April, the Peace Panel of the Government of the Philippines (GPH) who is negotiating with the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) held a forum in Davao City to *"search for new approaches"* as the talks reached again a dead end. In the previous months, both the GPH and NDFP were optimistic in reaching an agreement on a special track (ST) which is different from the formal peace negotiations. However, this ST did not work out. Both the GPH and the NDFP are blaming each other for the "stymied" special track. Now, the GPH is holding consultations with other stakeholders nationwide supposedly to generate input for new approaches which seeks to address "concerns both on the peace table and on the ground, especially among the communities most affected by the conflict," as expressed from a statement of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace Process. The NDFP is not in favor of this move and its armed wing promised more offensives in the countryside.

Please join us in praying for the Shalom of Christ in our country.

PEACE ADVOCACY TEAM MEETS SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

BY DANN PANTOJA



Malacanang Palace, Manila. 02 April 2013 – Our team of peace advocates had a very productive meeting with Secretary Florencio "Butch" Abad (Department of Budget and Management) and a brief exchange of notes with Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman (Department of Social Welfare and Development) about their respective roles in achieving just-peace in our beautiful land.

We were led by Bishop Efraim Tendo (Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches) and Gus Miclat (Initiatives for International Dialogue-Mindanao PeaceWeavers). The other team members were Karen Tanada (GZO Peace Institute), Regina Lyn Getuiza Mondez (Sulong CARHRIHL-Generation Peace), Jun Aparece (Mindanao Peoples Caucus), and Malou Tabios Nuera (IID-MPW).

The next day, I had a one-on-one meeting with a key official at the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

My general perspective about the peace process in Mindanao can be summarized in two words: Critical optimism!

In Shaa Allah, a comprehensive agreement may be completed within the mutually agreed time-frame.

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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BUKIDNON CHRISTIAN LEADERS WELCOME PEACEBUILDERS SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP



21 people finished the first quarter of the Peacebuilders School of Leadership (PBSL) in Valencia City, Bukidnon. It was held last 24-26 April 2013. They are a group composed of peacebuilders, pastors, church leaders, missionaries and educators.

It was designed as highly academic with the book *Mediation in Pastoral Care* as the main topic and the books *Yahweh is a Warrior, Why did Jesus, Moses, Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road* and *Just Peacemaking* as book reports of some PBCI staff.

Once again, the whole team witnessed an outpouring of the Spirit as the participants shared not only their minds but also personal stories proving again that peacebuilding begins in the “being” and his or her relationship with the Creator. It served also as a healing place for some of the participants as they explored peacebuilding. PBSL is a two-year program with four quarters in a year. It is the training program for PBCI’s prospective PAR Consultants and new staff candidates; it is also the continuing education program for current PBCI staff, consultants, and selected volunteers. The next session will be held in July.

PBCI INTENSIFIES ARABICA COFFEE TRAININGS

Philippines is one of the 70 countries that can grow the four varieties of coffee but we are not in the coffee map. We have a largely volcanic soil that is best for the Arabica coffee but the small supply of coffee that we have are largely Robusta.

In the context of the peace theology, specifically in the economic-ecological transformation, Peacebuilders Community (PBCI) is intensifying its Arabica coffee training through fair trade principles. This month, three trainings and one orientation were held with 290 farmer participants.

In the interior of the mountains of Bukidnon where banditry is supposed to be rampant, around 180 farmers gathered for coffee training on 10 April 2013. A Higaonon tribal member went to the PBCI office in Davao City, six hours away, to invite us to their place. When we went there, we proved once again that behind the stereotypes are people who are dreaming of a life of dignity for themselves and their families. This photo shows one of the possible sites for the plantation. The mountain in the background is a sacred place for them that cannot be touched. Dominorog is 1050 meters above sea level.



PRAYER LETTER: APRIL 2013

YouTube [PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.](#)



Upon the invitation of an evangelical pastor who graduated in the Peace and Reconciliation training, the team held a coffee training for 60 Higaonon farmers in Manalog, Bukidnon on 11 April 2013. The team crossed twelve creeks to reach the place which is also the last village that is reachable by the road. Manalog has vast mountains full of natural resources waiting to be tapped. May the Higaonon people continue in strengthening their being so that the resources given them by the Creator will be used with stewardship. The mountains in the background of this photo are part of Manalog.

If we crossed a dozen rivers in our last coffee training, in this trip, we passed through a road that seems to be once was a river! Despite that, it was a trip that's worth all the bumps. On 16-18 April, the team visited a possible coffee plantation in Upi, Maguindanao through the invitation of Bai [Jehan Baraquir](#), owner of Datu's Brew in Cotabato City. The farmers were family of one of the baristas in the coffee shop. The site had a lot of money lying on the ground. Coffee seedlings were robustly growing. The hills had gentle slopes. Truly, Mindanao is blessed! After the field visit, an orientation was given to the farmers at the Datu's Brew coffee shop.



It is not the season for coffee but the farmers of Mt. Apo have lots of berries waiting to be picked. On 19-20 April, the team went to Purok Pluto, Sitio Balutakay, Barangay Managa in Bansalan Davao del Sur to train 50 coffee farmers. It is in the Mt. Apo range, a "potentially active" volcano and the Philippines' highest peak. At noontime, the place is enshrouded in fog. The soil is very rich with vegetables and flowers and coffee growing in profusion. The sad thing is that the mountain is laid bare with the forest cover gone. The farmers are practicing non-organic farming. Because they have existing coffee trees, the team emphasized proper plantation management, improvement in quality and increase in biodiversity. Peace and Reconciliation trainings and financial management will be held in the next few months. All the trainings are in partnership with Catholic Relief Services and Kapwa Upliftment. The farmers are mixture of migrants and of the Bagobo-Tagabawa tribe.



Joji teaches the farmers hands-on on plantation



**The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it
on the sea and established it on the waters.**

Psalm 24:1-2

PBCI STAFF PRAYER REQUESTS



DANN PANTOJA
Please pray for the new PBCI Management Team led by Joji Pantoja. They are young, energetic, visionary, and demonstrates spiritual calling as peacebuilding missionaries. They are skillful in their respective assignments and job descriptions. Pray that PBCI would be like a 'pottery shop' where God can mold the lives and vocations of these young leaders.



SELFRED ABELITADO
I pray for good health for my family especially my daughters. I pray also for reconciliation among the relatives of my wife.



JOJI PANTOJA
Pray for all the proposals we have submitted. Pray for the new Peace and Reconciliation communities that are being started.



DARRIENE JOY BETIOS
I pray for continuous provision for my family and the house that I am building. Pray also for my romantic relationship.



TWINKLE BAUTISTA
Please pray for a heart sensitive to the Spirit as our team actively pursues the Vision 2020 which means one Peace and Reconciliation Community in each of our country's 80 provinces. Pray also for my family that we continuously experience the shalom of Christ.



CLAY ROJO
Please pray for the healing of our children who all got sick this summer. May they continue to recover their strength.



DAVID RAE QUICO
Please pray for all the activities in May especially the peace and reconciliation seminar in Mindoro. May everything be put into place according to the will of God.



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.



JOHN MEL SUMATRA
Pray for the shalom of the communities I am working with. Pray also for strength as I travel to these communities.



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.



NENIA RHEA GALANZA
Pray for love, joy, peace and patience for my family as we make important decisions. Pray also for financial provisions and for self-control.



FRANI CATUA
Please pray for good health for my family and for my husband's work. I pray that he will not be laid-off this month.



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.



ECRECENCIA ECLEVIA
I pray for a man who will be my life partner, someone who I'd love and will love me unconditionally too.



TYRON ORTIZ
I pray for continuous spiritual growth in all aspects of my life.