Mennonite Church Canada
Forming a people of God • Becoming a global Church • Growing leaders

Philippines

Daniel & Joji Pantoja
Witness Workers

MAY 2014 EDITION

CMU AND THE TALAANDIG TRIBE CHOOSE THE PATH OF CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

By Dann Pantoja

The conflict is about 3,000 hectares of rich, arable land around Mount Kalayo in the Province of Bukidnon. The parties are the Central Mindanao University (CMU) and the Talaandig Tribe. CMU firmly takes the position that they legally own the land based on Torrens Title. The Talaandig Council of Elders insists they own the land as part of their ancestral domain based on Native Title. It's a clash between colonial and native views of land ownership.

Top: Dann & Joji (adopted members of the Talaandig Tribe), Dr. Maria Luisa Soliven (CMU President), Bae Liza and Datu Saway (Talaandig Chief and Lady) pose for a reconciliation photo. Left Bottom: Dr. Soliven signs the MOU Towards Peace and Reconciliation. Right Bottom: Pastor Emmanuel Alkuino (PAR Leader in Bukidnon), Dann, Bae Liza, and Datu Saway sign the MOU.

For the past 50 years, these two parties have been fighting over this land—through both legal and violent means. 35 people were killed during those years of conflict. 25 of them were from the Talaandig Tribe. 10 were from the migrants who fought for the University. Both parties deny responsibility for the killings. Both parties blame the other side for deaths of people from among their respective ranks.

Three months ago, a group of scientists and researchers from CMU entered Mount Kitanglad to study certain plants for medicinal purposes. The Cultural Guards of the Talaandig Tribe patrolling the forests arrested the researchers who entered the tribal territory without permission from the tribal council. Past issues and deep wounds immediately re-surfaced.

Meanwhile, the Bukidnon Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) Team have been working with the Talaandig Tribe for the past five years in the areas of peacebuilding, cross-cultural understanding, coffee growing, and fair trade. The same PAR Team is one among various organizations working with CMU in developing an academic program to train social entrepreneurs in the context of building just-peace in Mindanao.

Both the Talaandig Tribe and CMU invited our Bukidnon PAR Team to facilitate a conflict transformation process between them. Both parties have a clear vision of where this long-term process is going. *Reconciliation*.

WILLARD METZGER VISITS PEACEBUILDERS COMMUNITY

By Joji Pantoja

28-30 May 2014. Dr. Willard Metzger, Executive Director of Mennonite Church Canada, visited Mindanao and encouraged us during the joint spiritual retreat of the PeaceBuilders Community and Coffee For Peace. Willard was accompanied by Gordon Janzen, MCCanada Witness Facilitator for Asia.

Before coming to Davao City, they spent time with our sisters and brothers at Peace Church Philippines in Manila and then visited our PAR Team in Valencia, Bukidnon. Willard and Gordon met with Emmanuel Alkuino, our PAR Leader in the Province of Bukidnon, who is also a pastor, an inventor, and a community development leader. Emmanuel Alkuino showed them his brick factory, his bamboo processing technology, and various farm technologies geared for the Philippine economic context.

Both Dann and I were encouraged by the visit of Willard and Gordon, especially as we spent a few days travelling together, dreaming, and strategizing on various projects that would advance the Gospel of Peace in this part of the globe. Our interaction with them helped us crystalize practical approaches on how the Anabaptist convictions, as applied in the context of the Philippines, would bring spiritual transformation, psychosocial transformation, socio-political transformation, and economic-ecological transformation in this land.

PASTORS & CHRISTIAN LEADERS GET HANDS-ON TRAINING ON FLOOD RESCUE OPERATIONS

By Krizanti Cruzado, Haiyan Project Manager

Pastors and Christian leaders who survived the super-typhoon Haiyan simulate a flood rescue operations facilitated by PeaceBuilders Community, Inc. in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Church Canada.

"Flood rescue operations is now a crucial ministry of our church to our neighborhood and even to our municipality," said Pastor Paul Villamor, a survivor of super-typhoon Haiyan and one of the organizers of a local disaster response network being facilitated by PeaceBuilders Community Inc. (PBCI). "Because of the disasters we've been experiencing, we are now becoming more sensitive to what the Creator says about the Divine Creation… In fact, caring for God's creation is now becoming a part of our discipleship ministry and biblical teaching," adds Pastor Paul.

Pastor Paul Villamor (left) practice knot-tying for rescue operation purposes with his PAR-DRN buddy.

Pastor Paul is a graduate of the *Peace and Reconciliation—Disaster Response Network* (PAR-DRN) Leadership Training which PBCI is facilitating in partnership with Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Church Canada. Our goal is to train 50 pastors and Christian leaders like Paul Villamor who would train 4 more volunteers each. Each PAR-DRN graduate would form a PAR-DRN Team in their respective communities to work hand-in-hand with other community-based organization leaders and local government leaders.

The past three years have been tragic among communities in the Philippines that were hit by deadly typhoons and flooding. In December 2011, tropical storm Washi unleashed floods that killed 1,080 people in Northern Mindanao. Twelve months later, in December 2012, there were 1,900 people who were left dead or missing by typhoon Bopha in Southeastern Mindanao.

Then in November 2013, super-typhoon Haiyan hit the Visayas Islands leaving at least 6,340 confirmed dead and 1,061 missing according to a running government tally. Most of these deaths were caused by drowning. Human remains are still being recovered from under the rubble even after six months.

An average of 20 typhoons and storms kill hundreds of people across the Philippines every year.

WE'RE MOVING TO A NEW OFFICE

Starting 15 June 2014, our new office location will be on

721-A Loreto Street, Juna Subdivision

Matina, Davao City, Philippines 8000

PBCI STAFF PRAYER

ECRECENCIA ECLEVIA

Please pray for good health for my family especially my daughter. May we always surpass the challenges we face.

FRANI CATUA

Please continue to pray for wisdom for my life partner, Joebel, as he pursues what he truly wants in life. Pray also for good health for my family.

SILFRED ABELITADO

Please pray for the health of my family. We're growing. I'm now a grand-father! Pray also for our family's needs.

NENIA RHEA GALANZA

Please pray for provision for the establishment of our coffee farm. May God grant us wisdom in determining the time for the transplanting of the seedlings. Please pray that I may always glorify God with a pure heart and peace of mind.

SHEREL QUIDER

Please pray for the post-Haiyan rehabilitation program in Samar and Leyte. May it be a genuine community-oriented ministry. Please pray also for our health, and for our spiritual and

SALOME HALDEMANN

Please pray for the Mindanao Social Business Summit. May the advocacy of Coffee For Peace ignite interest in people, and be the start of new friendships and partnerships.

JOHN MEL SUMATRA

Please pray for food health and blessings for everybody in the ministry and in the community.

EDDIE ISADA

Pray for continuous provision of God to the advancement of PAR principles in many tribal communities in Bukidnon.

CLAY ROJO

Please pray for the reconciliation of some evangelical leaders with the tribal elders in Bukidnon. Pray also for continuous provision for the payment of the land where our local church would put up its facility.

JUNE ROJO

Please pray for God's provision as we purchase a piece of property in Valencia, Bukidnon. We envision to build a worship center and a PAR training center for the youth — with a student dormitory on the second floor to sustain the ministry here.

TYRON ORTIZ

Please pray for the health and financial needs of my family.

DAWN ALBERT PATES

Pray for good health and provision for each member of the community and for our families as well.

KRIZ CRUZADO

Please pray for the on-going PAR and Disaster Response Network we're helping to facilitate among Christian leaders in Samar and Leyte Provinces.

JOJI FELICITAS PANTOJA

Please pray as we move our office to a new location. This will help us save on operational expenses as well as support our sustainability projects.

DANN PANTOJA

Please pray for the Church in the Philippines as we, being one Body of Christ, work together in influencing the various sectors of our society towards the transformation of our people and our land — from a state of vulgar corrupt governance to a transparent and accountable governance. May God heal our land.