



**Mennonite
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Celebration Story

We invite you to share with your congregation the following story by Janet Plenert, Executive Secretary, Mennonite Church Canada Witness, from a recent trip to Davao, Philippines. The story should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include this story in your church newsletter.



Coffee for Peace

The latte is artfully prepared and served with pride. A mango shake arrives with a sprig of mint gracing the top. Chairs are upholstered in locally hand-woven silk fabric.

This is not just any coffee shop; this is Coffee for Peace.

Coffee for Peace is a holistic, multi-faceted, for-profit business that supports local Mindanao coffee growers and peace building initiatives in an area of the Philippines where issues over land distribution have been the source of conflict for almost four decades.

All investors and Coffee for Peace staff must demonstrate their commitment to peace by completing the Peace and Reconciliation program offered by Mennonite Church

Canada Witness Workers, Daniel and Joji Pantoja, through Peacebuilders Community Inc. (PBCI). The first 25% of each investor's profit must be donated to the ministry of PBCI.

"It was Joji's idea," says Daniel Pantoja. "We were drinking coffee for the sake of peace with both sides in the conflict zone. We told one leader to leave his weapons outside and join us for coffee. We just listened to him talk. Then we had coffee with the guy he was fighting against, and we listened to him. Then we asked if they would be willing to have coffee with each other—and they did! So we began having coffee for peace. It was Joji's idea to make it a brand name and open a shop."

Working directly with local farmers and offering them fair prices, the Pantojas and PBCI are encouraging the revival of Arabica coffee plants over the lower-quality Robusta plants that large coffee companies prefer. Because farmers are being fairly compensated for their efforts, they are willing to engage in reforestation to provide the shade Arabica plants need. This, in turn, is having a positive impact on the local ecology.

Coffee for Peace is also promoting the local hand-woven silk industry by selling the fabric through the shop and using it to cover coffee shop chairs. The Pantojas are currently exploring ways to expand fabric production and locate other fair trade markets.

In the meantime, coffee is being served and requests for franchises are beginning to arrive—and Coffee for Peace is making a difference for the people of the Philippines.

For more information, check out the web site www.coffeeforpeace.org

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