



# Mission

## Café Justo/Just Coffee

EXTRA EXTRA EXTRA

Long time co-worker, **Betty Leeke** has given up her position of Just Coffee Seller Extraordinaire as of August 1, 2011. Betty has sold her car and will be coming to church and returning each Sunday on the Royal Oaks bus. Her helping hands and sunny smile at the coffee table twice a month will be greatly missed. Thank you for all of your hard work over the past six years, Betty.

We have two new members of our church family who are willing to step in and help with this vital mission project for which we are extremely grateful.

**Jeanne Miller** will help with selling on the second Sunday of each month; **Judy Dessert** will join Phyllis Diamond on the fourth Sunday. Please come to the coffee table to greet Jeanne and Judy, and thank them for volunteering for this important work.

ATTENTION NEW MEMBERS OF FAITH

For the new members who have asked why we sell Just Coffee after Sunday service twice a month, please let me add to the CAFÉ JUSTO article that was so clearly and succinctly written by our good friend Louise Collins, staff member, Editor of the Mustard Seed, and Outreach Assistant for the church. The article was published in the last issue (July – August 2011) of the Mustard Seed. Continuing with the story -----

While the concept of Just Coffee began in 2001, the story began years earlier (1980s and 1990s) when, due to the changing world economy, there began a steep drop in the price paid for the coffee beans to the farmers who grew their cash crop on the slopes of the mountains in Chiapas, the southernmost state in Mexico. The farmers lived with their families in the small town of Salvador Urbina – 2600 feet above sea level. Their farms usually consisted of two to five acre plots of lush mountain land.

During these times of intense poverty all over Mexico, thousands of people, primarily men, were leaving their homes and fleeing north either trying to find jobs in the new “maquiladoras” (factories built jointly by Mexico and U.S. companies), or to cross the border illegally to find a job in the U.S. in order to send their paychecks home to feed and cloth their families.

In the year 1998 one member of the community of Salvador Urbina fled the verdant mountainside in Chiapas after Hurricane Mitch washed away much of his community. The money he was making could not be stretched to provide for his wife and children. So Eduardo Perez Verdugo migrated over 2000 miles to the town of Aqua Prieta, in the state of Sonora just across the border from Douglas, Arizona. Eduardo found spiritual and material refuge with the Lily of the Valley Presbyterian Church in Aqua Prieta. But he was not happy without his family. During one of his breaks from work, a friend invited him to go to Phoenix to work on a golf course where he would earn \$10 an hour. At first Eduardo refused, but finally decided he could no longer refuse the offer because he could make enough money to return home sooner. In October 1999 he joined a group of Mexico’s poor attempting to cross the border illegally. This huddled mass, longing to be economically free, went through an underground travel agency, a high-growth industry in both Mexico and the United States, in order to find

jobs. Three days later Eduardo was back in the church building in Aqua Prieta, battered and bruised both emotionally and physically. The limp in his walk testified to the twisted ankle and the banged knee he suffered falling down an embankment during his night hike. The scrapes on his face gave witness to the tight passage through the unforgiving mesquite forests of the Sulfur Springs Valley. His group had been chased by the Border Patrol. Already injured, Eduardo was soon caught and promptly thrown to the ground. He tried to explain, but one Border Patrol agent kicked him in the face and put a boot on his neck in the sand and dirt. Later, his statement that, “To leave our land is to suffer” was the spark needed to draw three people together who saw the desperate need for reform.

These three were as follows: the Reverend Mark Adams, the ordained Presbyterian minister who serves as the mission co-worker at Frontera de Cristo, an unusual bi-national ministry center in Aqua Prieta, Sonora and Douglas, Arizona. The Frontera loaned the group \$20,000 to buy a small coffee roaster. The second was Tommy Bassett III from Minnesota – manager of an electronics manufacturing maquiladora in Aqua Prieta that had gone bankrupt. Tommy gave greatly of his management expertise. The third was Daniel Cifuentes, a former farmer from Salvador Urbina who began offering his expertise on growing coffee. All three of these very diversified men added to the dream called Fair Trade PLUS. Together these men began to envision *Café Justo/Just Coffee* – to bring the coffee beans from Salvador Urbina by bus to Aqua Prieta, and to roast, grind, package, ship, and sell the coffee across the border to churches in the United States at a fair price. The profits would go to the cooperative of farmers in Salvador Urbina and those who worked on the finished product and sold the coffee in Aqua Prieta. There would be no “middle men” as there are in other Fair Trade ventures.

Back in the Spring of 2005, Pastor Alice Geils-Nord (Faith Church) heard the story at a church meeting. She brought it to the Peacemaking Committee; the Committee elected to sponsor selling coffee; two members volunteered to call other local churches to inquire about the procedure and other details; Karen Highlen, staff bookkeeper, agreed to order the coffee for us, check the shipment when it arrives by UPS and pay the invoice, and we requested a place to sell the coffee twice a month in Illingworth Hall. Mark Adams and his family and Adrian Gonzales and his wife have visited here twice and about twenty of us have visited the Just Coffee Operation in Aqua Proeta. It was amazing to see how much has been done with so little!

More details will follow in later issues of the Mustard Seed. With God’s help, and that of our congregation who believe in helping our neighbors by buying a fair and just product, we will continue the sale of JUST COFFEE.\*

\*Facts taken from JUST COFFEE – Caffeine with a Conscience written by Mark Adams and Tommy Bassett III, available in the Faith Church library.  
Submitted by: Phyllis Diamond