

## Christian Peacemaker Teams: Uniquely Christian Identity Meets Mainstream Peacemaking

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### Abstract

This paper will explore the links between religion and human rights as embodied in the work and mission of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and Muslim Peacemaker Teams (MPT). The paper compares models such as those of theorists Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in providing a framework in which to understand, critique and build on the work of CPT and MPT. The CPT and MPT groups “get in the way” of violence through placing themselves in conflict situations for the purpose of reducing all forms of violence against civilians. Born out of the “Peace Church” traditions of Christianity in the 1980s, the movement has expanded to spark formation of the less formalized Muslim Peacemaker Team. The two groups now collaborate through shared training exercises and goals. CPT and MPT present a unique example of the integration of religion and human rights. While CPT have worked more extensively and published their experiences more broadly, both groups exemplify the potential synergy of groups who draw on religion in order to advance human rights. As CPT has a more formalized organizational structure, the paper focuses on this group in order to lay out principles from which both operate. As such, the questions of how human rights and religion are interconnected become very clear in the work of CPT. CPT main goal is to reduce violence against civilians through putting themselves in harms way; in addition, CPT also conscientizes the broader public through publishing accounts of their work, particularly on the internet. CPT works to establish networks of faith communities, human rights organizations, etc. to effect macro-level change, even as their most tangible work is very micro-level. CPT and MPT clearly operate out of a profoundly religious foundation. An emphasis on regular spiritual reflection, communal spiritual experience, and public and private prayer underlines this. Some of the groups’ other specific micro-level tactics include civil protest, maintaining a

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non-evangelical or proselyte identity, avoiding perpetuation of injustices and living out the teachings and examples of peacemaking from the Prophet Mohammed and Jesus. Part of the troubling paradox that necessitates the paper is the degree to which conscientization proves most effective among homogeneous and similar groups. The story of CPT member Tom Fox illustrates this principle. While recent John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimates place the number of Iraqi deaths at more than 650,000 since 2003, the abduction and death of Fox in 2005 captured a tremendously disproportionate amount of Western media attention. The obviously discriminatory media and general public attention is something that groups like CPT must both combat and utilize in order to draw attention to and bring change surrounding conflict situations. In so doing, groups like CPT and MPT seek to bridge the barriers that the media and powerful nation-states perpetuate. This paper seeks to take seriously the dignity of both Muslim and Christian efforts.

**Keywords:** Peacemaking; Christian; Muslim; Reduce Violence.

### **Introduction:**

A major shift emerged out of the 1984 Mennonite World Conference gathering in Strasbourg, France. Before the gathered leaders from the various Mennonite bodies, Ron Sider challenged the entire ethos of the Mennonite peace stance:

We must take up our cross and follow Jesus to Golgotha. We must be prepared to die by the thousands. Those who believed in peace through the sword have not hesitated to die. Proudly, courageously, they gave their lives. Again and again, they sacrificed bright futures to the tragic illusion that one more righteous crusade would bring peace in their time, and they laid down their lives by the millions.

Unless we ... are ready to start to die by the thousands in dramatic vigorous new exploits for peace and justice, we should sadly confess that we never really meant what we said, and we dare never whisper another word about pacifism to our sisters and brothers in those desperate lands filled with injustice. Unless we are ready to die developing new nonviolent attempts to reduce conflict, we should confess that we never really meant that the cross was an alternative to the sword. (Stoltzfus, 2001: 9)

Traditionally, Mennonites had been a people of quietism and sectarianism. A strong commitment to pacifism and nonviolence led to resistance to military service, but was very reactionary and self-preservationist. Sider's call pointed to a new kind of action; one which required being proactive and *making* peace.

Picking up the proverbial cross that Sider outlined, Gene Stoltzfus founded Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in 1988. The following two decades have seen much growth in the work of CPT. Modest expansion and new situations have led to clarification of values and methods in the organization, but the emphasis on peace and justice has remained paramount. The recent kidnapping of four Christian Peacemaker Corp (CPC) members and subsequent death of member Tom Fox have brought much attention to the relatively small organization.

Questions arise out of this new attention: How are Christian Peacemaker Teams different from other peace groups? What basic models of praxis does CPT follow? How does CPT fit within existing

models of activism? How have the recent kidnappings effected public perception of CPT?

This paper will address the preceding questions, pulling from a variety of CPT accounts and experiences. In comparing CPT to other human rights work models, the emphasis will focus on the general tools CPT uses, with some broader conceptual analysis as well. As a basic framework from which to begin, the “Christian” in CPT must be addressed. Analysis clearly shows that while decidedly not evangelistic, Christian Peacemaker Teams build on a firm foundation of faith to which many existing principles of conflict resolution and movement building are added in forming an organized peacemaking force.

### **1. “Christian” Peacemaker Teams**

As Sider’s appeal for action clearly showed, the impetus for CPT came out of a deeply Christian conviction. However, by the 1980s the problem for Mennonites was not a non-belief in the Biblical and traditional peace stance, but a belief in “in-activism.” The example of Christ as a peacemaker and a tradition—dating from the sixteenth century—of pacifism among the Anabaptist Christian denominations had firmly rooted Mennonites, Brethren and Quakers in nonviolence and gained them a reputation as “Peace Churches.”<sup>1</sup> However, these groups, particularly Mennonites, had become exceedingly provincial as they attempted to withdraw from the secularizing effects of mainstream American culture. As a result, Mennonites conveniently used their religious pacifism as a means of staying out of military involvement,<sup>2</sup> but did not put the principles they espoused into action.

While the principles of pacifism and nonviolence ran deep in church tradition and doctrine, the concept of active peacemaking was new in the 1980s. Building on the work of Mennonite Central Committee’s Peace Section and in conjunction with the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church, the Brethren in Christ Church, the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Church of the Brethren in North America, CPT came out of a calling to become more active in peacemaking in an official sense.<sup>3</sup> In a 1986 report of an Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the Council of Moderators and Secretaries at the 1984 Mennonite World Conference, committee chairman Don Shafer wrote:

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1. See: “Frequently asked questions about CPT.” (2000). Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/publications/faq.php>.  
2. See: Kraybill, 2000: 31.  
3. See: Miller, 2000: 26.

Today our churches face another critical moment in peacemaking history. We are engulfed by an ever escalating arms race. Nuclear holocaust threatens the future. Violence and terror stalk the earth. Again, as a people of peace, we ask what God is calling us to do in this new situation. One new creative possibility that we as a people have not fully tried to develop is a biblical approach to non-violent direct action. (Shafer et al, 1986: 2)

The initial report proposed a force of 100 to 200 volunteers who would form the CPC. Formative, conceptual work pointed to the Bible as a direct source of inspiration for CPT. “Shalom in the Bible means right relationships—first with God, then with neighbor and also the earth. CPT will seek to model, witness to and promote that three-fold shalom.” (Shafer et al, 1986: 3) A warning against unhealthy posturing surfaced immediately, as well; however, an early call for whole-hearted faithfulness joined it. The report indicated CPC members were to avoid developing a “Martyr Complex: The goal is faithfulness, not glory or martyrdom. It is immoral to seek death.” But went on to say, “But it is also wrong to refuse to risk death for the sake of obedience to the crucified and risen Lamb.” (Shafer et al, 1986: 6)

This understanding of obedience fit with Stoltzfus’ attempt and Sider’s challenge to remedy traditional Mennonite passivism. In Shafer and the committee’s words, CPT was to be a “biblical approach to non-violent direct action.” Therefore, from its inception, CPT has followed a technique that is “not passive. It is not inaction. It is action that is nonviolent.” (Sharp, 1973: 64) Today, the concept of “divine obedience” to the point of being arrested for civil disobedience or demonstrating is used in CPT circles and reflects that organization’s founding principles.<sup>1</sup>

The variety of names from which Shafer and the Ad Hoc Committee chose helped clarify the active approach that formed CPT’s charter. In filing the committee’s report, Shafer reported that along with “Christian Peacemaker Teams,” the committee was given the suggested names of Anabaptist Peace Guard, The Lamb’s Reconcilers, The King’s Reconcilers, Reconcilers of the Kingdom, Jesus’ Conciliation Movement, Anabaptist Peace Teams, Christians for Non-Violent Reconciliation, Love Guard, and Cross of Christ Guard.<sup>2</sup> All the

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1. See: Lehman, 2005: 95.

2. See: Shafer, 1986: 6.

suggestions held strong references to religious imagery, which the word “Christian” captures. In choosing the final name the committee reinforced a commitment to active endeavor through choosing an active noun, “Peacemaker,” and illustrated the importance of unity in peace work through choosing the word “Teams.”<sup>1</sup> While the unity aspect reflects broader social movement beliefs, the language and actions of CPT gives them a uniquely Christian identity.

Following the charge their name describes, Christian Peacemaker Teams actively choose to follow Jesus Christ in their actions and reinforce their individual and communal spiritual lives throughout their work. CPC members are understood to be Christians and “teams engage in regular spiritual reflection,” with both “public and private prayer emphasized.”<sup>2</sup> Various team members point to the regular fellowship time as important. Wrote CPTer Matthew Bailey-Dick, “When we miss our daily team worship, we lose focus.”<sup>3</sup>

Prayer is a central focus of this worship experience. Prayer is also one way that CPT connect with the broader faith communities that support them. The spiritual experience of the CPT is heightened by an awareness that people across North America are praying for any given team.<sup>4</sup> CPTer Erin Kindy wrote that Janet Morley’s *Bread of Tomorrow* served as an important source for personal reflection and team worship, showing that prayer plays a central role in the CPT experience. The following prayer from *Bread of Tomorrow* was written by Kathy Galloway and is inspired by the Biblical books of I Kings and Luke:

Do not retreat into your private world,  
That place of safety, sheltered from the storm,  
Where you may tend your garden, seek your soul,  
And rest with loved ones where the fire burns warm.

To tend a garden is a precious thing,  
But dearer still the one where all may roam,  
The weeds of poison, poverty, and war,  
Demand your care, who call the earth your home.

To seek your soul it is a precious thing,  
But you will never find it on your own,  
Only among the clamor, threat, and pain

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1. See: Hoffer, 1951: 117.

2. “Frequently asked questions about CPT.” 2000. Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/publications/faq.php>

3. Bailey-Dick, 2005: 60.

4. See: Bailey-Dick, 2005: 65.

Of other people's need will love be known.

To rest with loved ones is a precious thing,  
But peace of mind exacts a higher cost,  
Your children will not rest and play in quiet,  
While they still hear the crying of the lost.

Do not retreat into your private world,  
There are more ways than firesides to keep warm.  
There is no shelter from the rage of life,  
So meet its eye, and dance within the storm. (Morley,  
1992: 66)

A number of pertinent themes come forth in this poem, most notably the call to step forward out of a "private world" and into the crying, to "dance within the storm." Such poetic prayer clearly captures the sense of calling that CPTers feel in entering places of conflict and turmoil.

In addition to a communal spiritual experience, CPT workers express their faith through other avenues. CPT activist Tom Cordaro's explanation that peacemaking and civil protest find roots in the Biblical narrative helps provide context for these actions. Cordaro points to the first of the Biblical stories of resistance coming already when Hebrew midwives in Egypt refused to kill the male children.<sup>1</sup> Following in this tradition clearly lends CPTers a peace of mind that gives them energy for their work and could not be found elsewhere. Such is the frame of reference that led CPTer Jim Loney to write the following words after the housekeeping staff at his Iraqi hotel returned his dirty and used towels to his room: "Thanks be to God for secondhand towels. Thanks be to God for everything." (Loney, 2005: 35)

While maintaining strong spiritual grounding, CPT also maintains a specifically non-evangelical identity. This status comes through quickly from official documents, such as CPT's website, which reads; "CPT does not participate in any missionary activities...While CPTers have chosen to follow Jesus Christ, they do not proselytize."<sup>2</sup>

This stance comes from an understanding of being called to peacemaking. Since CPT works with a variety of other organizations and in a variety of settings, being involved in mass conversions would stifle the work CPT does. In addition, some things Christians have

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1. Cordaro, 1989.

2. "Frequently asked questions about CPT." 2000. Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/publications/faq.php>

done in the past have marred the Gospel of Jesus for many people—from a variety of backgrounds. CPTer Matt Schaaf wrote of one such ironic example from his work in Canada. “Our Christian tradition provides us the strength to live in a sacred, reciprocal relationship with First Nations, but instead we bring flooding, residential schools, deadly mercury, and clear-cut logging. We have the land. The Indians have only the Bible.” (Schaaf, 2005: 48)

The CPT goal in a situation like this is obviously not to perpetuate injustices, often done in the name of Christianity, but rather to offer hope and solidarity to marginalized people. In so doing, CPT presents a genuine, perhaps new, glimpse of Jesus’ example and call. In the First Nations setting this meant CPTers ended up “being charged with obstruction simply for being present and operating video cameras.” (Bailey-Dick, 2005:57)

## **2. Tools and Models of Peacemaking**

Upon this foundation of Christian faith, Christian Peacemaker Teams add tools and concepts from the broader peacemaker and rights movement communities. As the title of the official book of CPT stories, *Getting in the Way*, illustrates, CPTers place themselves in dangerous situations for the purpose of reducing violence. Currently, CPT has forty-five full-time corps members and over 130 reserve members. In 2006, the current full-time teams operate in At-Tuwani and Hebron, West Bank; Colombia; Kenora, Ontario; and Iraq. The variety in types of conflict they address directly is evident in the different places they operate. CPT also sends delegations to both permanent operation locations and other interest areas.<sup>1</sup>

At the heart of CPT operations are the following eight “Nonviolence Principles,” printed in the late 1980s as guidelines for the emerging organization:

1. We will harbor no anger but suffer the anger of the opponent.
2. We will refuse to return the assaults of the opponent.
3. We will refrain from insults or attack.
4. If arrested, we will not resist.
5. As members of nonviolent demonstration we will follow the direction of the designated spokesperson. In the event of serious disagreement, one should remove oneself from the action.

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1. Brown, 2005: 15.



6. Our attitude, as conveyed through words, symbols and actions, will be one of openness, love and respect toward all people we encounter.

7. We will not damage any property.

8. We will not bring or use any drugs or alcohol.<sup>1</sup>

The guidelines outline conduct in general, but also point toward awareness of the difficulties peacemaking brings. Today CPT use a variety of structural tools and contingency plans to make their efforts as safe and efficient as possible.

Political scientists Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's boomerang model can be applied with slight modifications to the work of Christian Peacemaker Teams. A general recognition of the nuances and limitations of conceptual frameworks is built into such an assertion. The Keck and Sikkink boomerang conceptualization comes from their model as shown on page 13 of their 1998 work, *Activists beyond Borders*. The first major component of the model is the presence of systemic obstruction at a local level.<sup>2</sup> This elimination of voice, choice and dissent most often comes in the form of state abuse of power. Though non-governmental organizations on the ground try to empower the citizens of state A, the concerns of the many are squelched. In the case of Argentina in the 1970s this meant disappearances of dissenters to the military regime.<sup>3</sup> Other tactics may include denying passports or visas for internationals to visit or citizens to leave a country; censorship or government takeover of the media; government propaganda campaigns; etc. In another recent, though slightly different type of example, the United States government has labeled public admonishment of the Bush administration "unpatriotic" in an attempt to quiet criticism. This could also be classified as a state blocking voice and redress.

The boomerang model's initial step leads to a series of alternative avenues being taken on the part of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The heart of this next process is the flow of information. As NGOs team up with other NGOs across the globe transnational advocacy networks (TANs) are formed. New players on the scene include intergovernmental organizations and other states. "For example, during a 1977 visit, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance carried a list of disappeared people prepared by human rights NGOs to present to members of the [Argentine] junta." (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 105)

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1. Christian Peacemaker Teams. "Nonviolence Principles." u.d.

2. Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 13.

3. Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 103-104.

The process then works to involve this array of international players in applying pressure to state A. Thus the name of the boomerang pattern as the momentum for human rights that was stopped initially is diverted into an arch shape and comes back around to put pressure on the original target.

Keck and Sikkink also highlight a number of political tools to help TANs more effectively package their message and reach their goals. China in the first half of the twentieth century serves as one example of church groups bridging the most influential intergovernmental organization connections. One of the information tools used was a fifty-five-city tour in the United States by a Chinese woman by the name of Pearl in 1939-40. This was an example of the TAN tool of information politics. As Pearl told her story the pressure in the United States to change some of the political environment, as well as socio-political practices, like foot binding, increased.<sup>1</sup> Other tools include packaging messages into symbols for mass consumption, using leverage to get companies and other power brokers to conform to demands, and holding politicians accountable.<sup>2</sup>

The boomerang pattern can be seen clearly in the work of Iraq where CPT members like Jim Loney entered the country before the current U.S.-led invasion in 2003. Under Saddam Hussein's regime dissent was virtually nonexistent. In this case, however, the ultimate action of state B—the United States—was not the goal of NGOs like CPT. In teaming with such groups as Muslim Peacemaker Teams and Iraq Peace Team (a group affiliated with Voices in the Wilderness), CPT has locked into a TAN of peace workers in Iraq.<sup>3</sup> At this point the boomerang model reflects more the need to change U.S. policy and military action. As Iraqis are under the ultimate authority of U.S. occupation forces, the United States becomes the state A that is nonresponsive. The coalition of NGOs that these teams represent works to inform the media and voters around the globe of the current situation and how the choice their governments are making affects real people.

Christian Peacemaker Teams' work in Hebron also follows many of Keck and Sikkink's boomerang model principles and political tools. In 1994 "The [Israeli Defense Force (IDF)] put all Palestinians in Hebron under curfew for two months, while allowing the settlers to roam the streets freely. By the time a Christian Peacemaker Team arrived there a year later, people expressed as much bitterness about

1. See: Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 63-64.

2. See: Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 18-25.

3. See: "IRAQ: Muslim Peacemaker Team training in Karbala." 2005. Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/archives/2005/feb05/0004.html>

the collective punishment imposed upon them as they did about the massacre.”(Kern, 2000: 188) In addressing these injustices one of the simplest tools that CPT and other groups use is symbolism. CPT uses a simple uniform of a red hat and red armband. This serves to identify group members to others and helps group members easily pick each other out in a crowd and communicate. Interestingly, the symbol mirrors the “red cap of liberty” worn France in 1792.<sup>1</sup> However, for CPTers the red cap serves more of practical purpose, accompanying such “standard equipment” as passports, cell-phones, cameras, and a press list in their Hebron work.<sup>2</sup> Another example of symbolism in Hebron came in 1997 when CPTers fasted for seven hundred hours.<sup>3</sup> The symbol of fasting showed solidarity with their Palestinian hosts and also struck historical and Biblical chords because of the connections vis-à-vis fasting and Gandhi and religious practices.

CPTers involve themselves in a variety of other activities, outside of the sometimes glamorized marches or poster material like standing in front of a gun. A short recording of one day’s events noted the following:

Tuesday 11 April 2006

Art Arbour and Dave Corcoran led a tour of twenty-five people from the Holy Land Trust through the Old City of Hebron.

John Lynes accompanied a Palestinian neighbour to the Civil Administration compound in Hebron, where she had an appointment to file a statement about the behavior of Israeli soldiers who had raided her home in 2005. They had removed some personal belongings. Outside the compound soldiers admitted Palestinians six at a time, after which soldiers forced the gate shut against the Palestinians' bodies. Soldiers prodded them through the wire fence with the barrel of their weapons to stop them pushing. Lynes and the woman he was escorting went through another entrance. The proceedings were entirely in Hebrew and Arabic, so Lynes was unable to follow them. The woman expressed gratitude for his presence in the intimidating

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1. See: Sharp, 1973: 136.

2. See: Frey, 2005, 69.

3. See: Roe, 2005: 83.

environment.<sup>1</sup>

The first paragraph highlights the important work of reporting and information dissemination that CPTers do. "Spending an hour or so hunched over the keyboard of the laptop can result in a press release that gets the word out to dozens of media contacts and hundreds of CPT supporters across North America." (Bailey-Dick, 2005: 59) CPC members are taught specifically how to deal with the media. According to Bailey-Dick, CPTers are taught that "if you cannot answer or don't like a question you are asked in an interview, unapologetically answer a different question." (Bailey-Dick, 2005: 64) *Getting in the Way* editor Tricia Gates Brown identifies impacting the broader church through storytelling as a goal of CPT's work. One way of doing this is through hosting delegations of people from organizations and affiliated churches, as the daily log excerpted above illustrates. The large number of email and internet material CPT publishes serve as another primary informational tools utilized by the group. Another unique way CPT both raise awareness and provide a specifically spiritually-grounded experience in both target communities and among supporting church communities is through prayer vigils. Prayer certainly helps ground CPTers and also provides people in distant home communities with a way to reach out. Prayer vigils also help conscientize those who participate, as well as those who observe these events. "A prayer vigil brings the search for truth into the public place."<sup>2</sup>

As the media training shows, CPT work to be effective in their efforts. Maintaining plans for situations is one way of keeping the CPT active. Wrote CPTer Mark Frey in describing one aspect of contingency plans, "I am on arrest support, which means at all costs I am to avoid arrest, so that at least one person can call lawyers, supporters, media, and the [central CPT] Chicago office." (Frey, 2005: 75) Thus the "ultimate obedience" must be tempered in order to maintain the viability of the group and ensure safety of those in the field.

Another essential marker of TANs that CPT employ is networking with other NGOs and rights organizations. Of the CPT fast in Hebron in 1997, CPTer Dianne Roe wrote, "We received an outpouring of support from many Israeli friends in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and elsewhere. Visitors from Sabeel (a Palestinian Christian Liberation Theology organization in Jerusalem), Rabbis for Human Rights,

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1. CPTnet editor, Webster, NY. e-mail to CPTnet. "HEBRON UPDATE: 11-15 April 2006." 22 April 2006. Available at: [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org).

2. "Frequently asked questions about CPT.", 2000. Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/publications/faq.php>

Israelis and Palestinians for Nonviolence, and a United Methodist group in Jericho also showed their support.” (Roe, 2005: 83)

These connections serve as invaluable resources to CPTers when needing a lawyer after being arrested or in helping to activate broader support for Palestinian issues among the wider Israeli society.

Most CPT methods are what peacemaker and educator John Paul Lederach describes as “bottom-up” methodology. The daily work of CPTers clearly shows this as they visit with neighbors, as shown above in John Lynes’ actions, or “pick up trash, fix broken benches in the park, or play with local children.” (Kern, 2005: 188) In contrasting “bottom-up” peacemaking against the “top-down” work of meeting with government officials, Lederach recalls his own work at the grassroots level, which often included meeting with “elders’ conferences, as well as the involvement of women’s associations and other members of the civil society, such as intellectuals, businesspeople, traders, and artists, particularly poets.” (Lederach, 2000: 52) Such work often characterizes the daily activity of CPTers.

However, CPT does work at the macro level in some instances. In working in Hebron CPTers helped draw attention to water issues, which brought change when “The mainstream Israeli public expressed outrage when they saw footage of the settlements in the West Bank with swimming pools and well-watered lawns and then learned that Palestinians in Hebron did not have enough water for drinking and washing.” (Kern, 2005: 190) When Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sent a fact-finding mission to Hebron following this outcry the CPT work added “top-down” dimensions because of the high profile of the situation.

In addition, CPTers often communicate with civil or military authorities when entering a community or situation. In Hebron this meant writing a letter to the Israeli police in Hebron stating reasons for being there.<sup>1</sup> The team also talked with an IDF captain to explain the roles that CPT had already played in Haiti and Hebron. In CPTer Kathleen Kern’s experience the captain was impressed when they said they were pacifists and would stand between him and an attacker.<sup>2</sup> This type of direct communication with government officials fits squarely within Keck and Sikkink boomerang model, as well. But as the case of the Palestinians’ poor drinking water illustrated, CPT is most influential when they are able to reach and

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1. See: Lehman, 2005: 97.

2. See: Kern, 2005: 191.

conscientize a wide audience.

The kidnapping of four CPTers in Iraq in 2005 was one such situation. The kidnappings on November 26, 2005 in Baghdad, Iraq drew massive attention from around the globe.<sup>1</sup> Tom Fox, James Loney, Norman Kember and Harmeet Sooden were abducted by a group identifying itself as radical Islamists. Coverage the story grew in the following months, due in part because the CPTers came from the United States, Great Britain and Canada. This particularly increased the international nature of the event in the already volatile and media-saturated Iraqi context until their release in March 2006. An incident like this shows that the times when CPT most often approach macro-level status occur when their influence is increased and they are able to reach a wider audience.

The coverage of the kidnappings and then Fox's death illustrate the power of the presence of internationals in settings of conflict like Iraq. Much of the "violence reduction" power CPT holds is in deterring all parties—including the United States military, Israeli Defense Forces and "insurgents"—from attacking targets they know internationals will be in or abusing people in front of international witnesses. Fox's kidnapping and death showed the media attraction and public support—or at least dialogue, as not all people support work like that of CPT—that relatively few people can draw when working strategically. The memorial service for Fox at Eastern Mennonite University showed how the communication and witness flows well across international borders. The high turnout at the memorial service reinforced the communal support that CPTers rely on from home communities. It also attested to the conscientizing effect CPT have and the increased visibility the group gained from the hostage situation and Fox's subsequent martyrdom.

While the comparison between the boomerang model and the work of CPT warrants considerably more exploration and analysis, the links between the two and explanatory benefits clearly exist. CPT uses information politics and the arched boomerang model that Keck and Sikkink outline. Case studies like the CPT work in Hebron and the ones Keck and Sikkink express in their literature mirror shared principles. As such, the correlative properties can usefully flesh out the ongoing work of CPT.

### **3. Criticism and Self-Assessment**

With the work in volatile situations and aggressive measured that are required, CPT faces criticism and their motives and methods are

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1. "Statements of Support." Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/iraq/response/supportstatements.htm>

sometimes questioned. The writing of various CPTers attests to the constant self-evaluation that CPT maintain as they participate and dialogue with others. CPTer Kern—one of eight charter members of CPT—outlines some of the most frequent issues in her chapter in Lederach's *From the Ground Up*. One important one for a pacifist organization is the characterization of relationships with the military. Pacifism is not “unproblematic” amidst situations of conflict.<sup>1</sup> Kern said the specific views of interaction often vary by person, but that as a whole CPTers usually take into consideration the wishes of their hosts in considering this. Thus, while in Haiti CPTers talked with American soldiers deployed there because their Haitian hosts asked them to.<sup>2</sup> Kern's chapter also addresses the questions brought up by CPTers going to police because doings so “would show reliance on the power of the gun.” (Kern, 2005: 195) In the Hebron experience asking for help from the IDF may also get CPTers special treatment, which could hurt relations with Palestinians hosts, but could also lead to forced evacuation for “safety reasons.” Thus, the practical issues of going to military authorities for protection even outweigh the ethical and integrity-related ones in the Hebron situation. This item does tie into criticism CPT drew after the hostages' release, however, because many in the media felt CPT did not adequately acknowledge the role of military force and soldiers in rescuing the CPTers.<sup>3</sup>

Kern also addresses a few other criticisms of CPT work. A major one is accusations of partisanship that peacemakers often face. She notes that because CPT only go where they are invited she understands why they may look biased at times.<sup>4</sup> Ideally, two parties would invite CPT to a site. In the case of Hebron, this would entail both Palestinians and Israelis hosting CPTers. However, in reality, those in power—which is the IDF in the Hebron setting—rarely, if ever, engage outside intervention.

Another issue Kern writes about is the economic injustices and inequalities CPTers and other peacemakers and other relief workers run up against. In Hebron the contrast is not as drastic as in places like Haiti, she wrote, but CPTers must still deal with the privileges, both economic and otherwise, that they bring as internationals. Specific to physical resources CPT has developed “a policy against giving handouts, based on the collective wisdom and experience of

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1. Goode, 2006.

2. Kern, 2005: 194.

3. Ben. “Reaping What You Sow.” Available at: <http://frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=20371>

4. Kern, 2005: 192.

Mennonite aid and development workers over the last few decades.” (Kern, 2005: 196)

Lastly, Kern recognizes the paradox of using the media as a tool for peace work. In peacemaking work the resolution of conflict is the goal, but without viable conflict there is little to report. In addition, CPTers do not want to draw attention to themselves, but rather to the injustices their hosts face. Recalling a specific attack in Hebron, Kern wrote that she recognized the paradox in her approach to the media: “I did not want to appear like I was soliciting pity or admirations, but I thought trying to appear like it was no big deal almost made me seem more conceited.” (Kern, 2005: 197)

Another type of potential problem can occur if supporters become “over-conscientized” or “burned-out” through reading documentation from groups like Christian Peacemaker Teams. People living in comfortable situations that hear only parts of what CPTers do may become jaded and feel helpless. Many people may want to live outside of their bubble and engage in more explicit ways in human dignity conversation, but quickly begin to become complacent after helplessly ingesting dose after dose of horrible or mundane stories. Take, for example, the following account from a February 9, 2006 CPT email:

Saturday, 21 January 2006

John Lynes and Art Gish spent several hours between Kiryat Arba and Hebron, interacting with Jewish worshippers. They watched soldiers trying to stop a ten-year-old Israeli settler boy from throwing stones at Palestinians in the area. An adult reminded the boy to not throw stones on Sabbath.<sup>1</sup>

In this account simplicity, irony and a whitewashing of emotion mix. The simplicity is appealing. The writer is unassuming. She does not judge the boy nor tell the reader what to think. The irony is that the reason the boy is told to stop throwing stones at human beings is because it is Shabbat. However, while the lack of emotion in the narrative helps maintain a distance, it also seems to reflect potential disengagement. Clearly, there is no easy way to both become actively involved and engage in emotive ways, yet also report effectively and provide a viewpoint of an “objective” observer.

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1. CPTnet editor, Webster, NY. e-mail to CPTnet. “HEBRON UPDATE: 20-29 January 2006.” 9 February 2006. [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org).



## Conclusion

The work of Christian Peacemaker Teams does raise questions of integrity and methodology. However, analysis clearly shows that a firm spiritual grounding maintains CPTers through difficult situations and continual self-assessment. As Christians, CPTers follow the call and example of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup> They choose to network with other groups, whether Christian or not, in ways that fit with Keck and Sikkink's boomerang model of TAN methodology. The large number of sister organizations that CPT maintains attest to the integrity of the work that CPTers do have. In particular, the calls from many Muslim groups to let the kidnapped CPTers go shows even more so the degree to which CPT has high standards and is recognized across religious lines and internationally.<sup>2</sup>

Central to the CPT approach is an understanding of the importance of the community and the value of the individual in all places. In the words of CPTer Bailey-Dick, "I realize that our first act of peacemaking must be to listen. I realize, too, that we must convey to our North American sisters and brothers that violence is not only happening 'out there,' in places like Hebron and Bogotá, but right here in our own land." (Bailey-Dick, 2005: 57) The necessity of groups like CPT will undoubtedly continue—for, in sharing the stories of many and conscientizing people at home, CPTer Roe acknowledges that "The human face that we helped the world to see is still streaked with tears." (Roe, 2005:87) Out of this understanding comes a promise for the persistent work of the future, but also leaves a primary question CPTer Murray Lumley raised, "What is the future of CPT—given the recent hostage crisis and the fact that CPT has had trouble recruiting new members as experienced ones retire from service?"<sup>3</sup> The answer to this question remains uncertain in many ways, but the constant work of CPT will certainly rest on the ongoing calling of Christians to follow in the radical example of Jesus Christ, for it is out of this mission that Christian Peacemaker Teams originated.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Erin Kindy. Personal email message to author, 19 April 2006.

2. "Statements of Support."  
<http://www.cpt.org/iraq/response/supportstatements.htm>

3. Murray Lumley. Personal email message to author, 19 April 2006.

4. Access to the ongoing work of CPT and frequent updates and news releases is Available at: <http://www.cpt.org/>.

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