

Getting in the Way:
Stories from Christian Peacemaker Teams

Study Guide by Tricia Gates Brown

Chapter One

“Someone to Take Care of You” — Jim Loney

- 1) After accepting the abstract idea of laying down one’s life for peace, Jim is forced to consider the real possibility of laying down his life. Does taking steps of faith, such as Jim does in the chapter, force us to work out our real commitments to peacemaking?

- 2) Both Jim and George have family members who are reluctant about their trip to Iraq. When is it important to take actions that are contrary to loved ones’ wishes?

- 3) How did the many years of sanctions against Iraq contribute to the current situation in Iraq?

- 4) What did this chapter teach you about Iraq that you did not already know?

- 5) How can we as peacemakers honor the life of George Weber?

Chapter Two

“This Place Where My Feet Stand on the Earth” — Matt Schaaf

- 1) List ways in which the Treaty of 1873, between Canada and the community of Asubpeeschoseewagong, has been broken.

- 2) The young people of Asubpeeschoseewagong took action to blockade logging trucks. Do young people experience fewer barriers to active peacemaking than do adults?

- 3) How is reserve life incompatible with the traditional Anishinaabe way of life? In what ways did the Anishinaabe make use of their entire “traditional land use area”?
- 4) What does Matt mean by the phrase “getting *out* of the way” in his journal entry?
- 5) In what ways are white North Americans “younger siblings” of first nations people?

Chapter Three

“Blueberries, Rubber Boots, and Boat Rammings” — Matthew Bailey-Dick

- 1) How is peacemaking both an outward activity and an “inward journey,” as Matthew calls it on page 56?
- 2) White North American CPTers working among first nations communities in Canada have found themselves confronted with their own racism. How can we as peacemakers prepare for the “disillusionment” about ourselves that often comes as a result of peacemaking activities?
- 3) How were the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) actions narrated in this chapter inconsistent with Canadian Supreme Court decisions that preceded them?
- 4) What are some of the “tools” of peacemaking that Matthew mentions?
- 5) Matthew is repeatedly interviewed about the boat ramming while the Mi’kmaq fishers who were present are not. How does this raise questions for Matthew about his role? How do we as peacemakers keep this sort of situation from happening?

Chapter Four

“Standing in the Gap” — Mark Frey

- 1) What are H1 and H2?
- 2) How does proximity or personal contact (as opposed to distance) work in favor of nonviolence?
- 3) How do the Palestinian leaders and the Israeli officer on page 74 model mature leadership?
- 4) Why do you think the *shabab* want to stir up trouble?
- 5) Why is Mark’s cool detachment in his confrontation with the soldier (top of page 75) contrary to peacemaking?

Chapter Five

“Witnessing Demolition, Fasting for Rebuilding” — Dianne Roe

- 1) How does personally witnessing injustice propel us in our efforts to oppose it? Do you think personal observation of injustice is a necessary motivation for every peacemaker?
- 2) How do the actions of the CPT team in the field correspond with the actions of CPT supporters back home?
- 3) What are some reasons for doing a public fast? What motivated the CPT team in this chapter to fast publicly?
- 4) The CPT team in Dianne’s chapter was intent to direct attention to the stories of Palestinian families and not to themselves. Do you think they did this effectively?

5) Why is “putting a human face” on an issue of injustice so important?

Chapter Six

“Sometimes You Have to Bend So You Don’t Break” —Wendy Lehman

1) Why is Joan’s approach inappropriate in Hebron?

2) Considering the outcome, do you think the CPT team should have done the tree replanting action?

3) What do you think of Wendy’s refusal to sign the statement?

4) What are some of the strategic benefits for peacemakers in risking arrest?

5) What did Wendy learn from her jail experience that she possibly could not have learned otherwise?

Chapter Seven

“From the Violence of the Stick to the Violence of the Stomach” — Joanne L. Kaufman

1) Describe some of the unique challenges of the CPT Haiti project?

2) How is story-gathering a work of peacemaking?

3) What does Joanne’s story convey about the importance of self-care to peacemaking?

4) What do North American CPTers have to offer to communities like those of the Dondon region of Haiti? What do North American CPTers learn/gain from working in such areas?

5) Think about ways in which global economics plays a role in the conflict in Haiti. Construct a list out of the group's responses.

Chapter Eight

"People of Faith Occupy a Military Base" — William Payne

- 1) What is the relationship between the X'oyep refugee camp and the military base in the story?
- 2) How did the Abejas originally form? What are their unifying beliefs and characteristics?
- 3) CPT was invited to work in Chiapas by the Catholic diocese there. Why is it important for CPT to receive an invitation, as is their practice, before working in an area?
- 4) Name some ways in which the Lenten tent served as a powerful symbol and statement in Chiapas. How did it energize and embolden people who came to it?
- 5) How did the presence of the Abejas and the CPTers at the tent impact the soldiers on the base?

Chapter Nine

"Low-Intensity Warfare and a Girl Named Adela" — Tricia Gates Brown

- 1) What does the term "low-intensity warfare" mean?
- 2) What are some of the challenges to peacemakers working in a context of low-intensity warfare?
- 3) Why do you think children are so good at breaking down barriers between strangers? What

can we as adults learn from them?

4) What do you think contributes to the Abejas' uncommon endurance, grace, and vision?

5) How have particular relationships in your life contributed to your development as a peacemaker?

Chapter Ten

"Dispatches from the Front" — Bob Holmes

1) In what ways is song a powerful peacemaking tool?

2) Who are the FARC? Who are the AUC?

3) How are rumors and fear used as primary weapons in the war in Colombia?

4) Why is "accompaniment" such an effective peacemaking strategy in the Opón River region?

5) Why do paramilitaries in Colombia target union leaders?

Chapter Seven

"Singing Through Our Fears" — Carol Foltz Spring

1) Why was the *campesino* in the first scene of the story unable to do what Scott and Carol were able to do?

2) In your experience, is fear something that builds over time?

3) Where do some people, Carol for example, pick up the idea that it is “unchristian” to feel fear?

4) What practices have helped you as a peacemaker in confronting despair and hopelessness?

5) How is courage different from fearlessness?