



christian peacemaker teams

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BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS TO TRANSFORM VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION



*“Just like a tree that’s
standing by the water,
We shall not be moved”*

- African American Spiritual

From the Editor

It has been an eventful quarter since our last newsletter, both in the U.S. and at Christian Peacemaker Teams projects around the world.

In times like these it would be easy to run. To hide. And for some people who are going without food or medical care - who live with daily threats of bombing, violence, and death - leaving is the only option.

For many with the capability, though, *staying* is our daily strategy of resistance; refusing to be moved is an act of peacemaking, one committed over and over: when making a pot of tea, attending school in the morning, reminding everyone of women’s role in peace processes, choosing to share vulnerably about difference, and even simply rising to start another day.

This issue, we’ll explore the themes of peacefully refusing to be moved.

Our CPT Indigenous Peoples Solidarity team is standing in solidarity at Standing Rock, where a militarized police force is blasting water protectors in sub-freezing temperatures with water from high-powered hoses, as well as shooting tear gas, concussion grenades, and rubber bullets. The Army Corps of Engineers has issued a vacate order for Dec 5, but the water protectors at Standing Rock will not be moved.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey is dropping bombs on Iraqi Kurds’ farming villages, using the response to ISIS as cover for renewed violence against Kurdish peoples in Turkey and across the border. Our CPT Iraqi Kurdish team stands with our part-

ners as these villagers stay in their homes.

In Palestine, the CPT team continues to accompany kindergartners to school. The Israeli military and many settlers attempt to make it as difficult as possible for our partners there to remain in their homes, demolishing houses, shutting down businesses, and even making it as difficult as possible for 6-year-old children to reach their school. With our accompaniment, these kids have an easier time remaining students at their local schools.

In Colombia, women remain committed to peace processes - and won’t let their contributions be written out of history.

And here, in the U.S., we stay put. We dig in. We face the inauguration of a president supported by the Ku Klux Klan; whose election ushered in a wave of hate crimes and violence; who stands accused of sexualized violence by over a dozen women; who has called for a ban on Muslims entering the country and a registry of Muslims. His vice president is one of the most virulent anti-LGBTQ politicians in the nation.

So we stay. *With your financial support*, we stand beside our most vulnerable neighbors and beloved community members, and we commit to active peacemaking in this time. We shall not be moved.

Jay Yoder, Communications and Engagement Coordinator





March along the flag road, Oceti Sakowin Camp.

Listening and Standing With

words by John Bergen, CPT Reservist

I first learned about CPT as a young child, when a member of my church joined a delegation to Palestine. This was the late 90s, and CPT was standing alongside Palestinians facing home demolitions (the Campaign for Secure Dwellings). I didn't fully understand why Israeli military forces were demolishing people's homes and taking their land, but instinctively I knew that it was wrong.

Fast forward almost twenty years, and CPT continues to stand alongside people's movements to protect community, water, and land. After I graduated high school, I went on my own CPT delegation (to Grassy Narrows), and eventually trained with CPT and served with the teams in Kurdistan and Palestine.

In these varied contexts, I caught sight of connections and intersections between experiences of oppression and strategies of resistance. I witnessed Kurdish communities using nonviolent blockades to slow dangerous fossil fuel extraction, just like the Anishinaabe

community at Grassy Narrows (Canada) did in their work to stop clear-cut logging. I saw Palestinians bravely face down teargas and live ammunition just for demanding the right to move freely on their own land, and I talked with Kurdish villagers refusing to leave ancestral homes despite repeated rocket attacks from Turkey.

So last week I found myself in a car headed to Standing Rock, North Dakota, to stand alongside indigenous communities resisting the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. If you haven't been following the ongoing resistance at Standing Rock, I encourage you to check out some of the resources available on the #StandingRockSyllabus, which provides both historical context and current commentary. The Dakota Access Pipeline (or DAPL) was deliberately routed through lands sacred to the Standing Rock tribe (and rerouted away from the majority-white city of Bismarck), and its path

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More to Learn at Standing Rock

words and image by Tim Nafziger, CPT Reservist

At one of the Standing Rock morning meetings, CPTer Chih Chun and I talked about how being at Oceti Sakowin camp is like CPT's undoing racism and undoing sexism training in the way it challenges everyone in the camp to "build a new legacy" that runs against colonization.

That work begins at the orientation that new arrivals attend every morning at 9 am which introduces them to the camp goal of indigenous-centered work to build a new legacy by being of use and then bringing it home. This means, for example, that chopping wood and working in the kitchen are sometime more important than going on a direct action.

The community is grounded in the seven Lakota values of Prayer, Respect, Compassion, Honesty, Generosity, Humility and Wisdom. The orientation looks at how personally integrating these values

is integral to resisting the whiteness and colonialism inside each of us in camp life, especially for settlers on this land.

Oceti Sakowin understands itself as a "resistance ceremonial prayer camp" and invites everyone to "walk in touch with the land and with themselves." This grounding permeates the life of the camp from action planning to morning prayers at the water. Camp life is highly organized around a gift economy in which everyone contributes to camp life and everyone can eat at one of eight camp kitchens for free.

At orientation we were invited as settlers to focus on heart space and not head space which means, for example, holding onto our questions instead of asking them immediately so that we can listen to the knowing in ourselves.

We continue to learn more everyday.



To learn more, search:

Oceti Sakowin Camp - Seven Lakota Values



LISTENING, *continued from page 3*

under the Missouri River poses a serious threat to the safety of the tribe's drinking water. Since April, members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe have nonviolently protected the waters of the Missouri, launching waves of prayerful direct action.

Prayer and ceremony truly are at the center of the resistance at Standing Rock. At the Oceti Sakowin camp where CPT currently has a presence, every morning begins with a ceremony around the sacred fire led by an indigenous elder. Every meeting and training begins with some prayer or cleansing. Many direct actions involve prayer, song, and drumming.

The call from Standing Rock has brought together over 300 indigenous tribes and nations from across Turtle Island, the largest gathering of tribes in this country in a generation. Additionally, Standing Rock has brought together the Seven Council Fires of the Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota nations, which have not come together since the Battle of the Greasy Grass in 1876 (what white male historians called The Battle of Little Big Horn). As a white settler, someone whose ancestors

benefited from the displacement and genocide of native peoples and who lives on stolen land, I know that I will not truly understand the depth of this prayerful gathering. It is too big for me to comprehend. And it is truly a humbling experience to be a small part of such a moment in the long history of decolonial struggle.

Equally as huge is the response of police and private DAPL security. During the six days I was in the Oceti Sakowin camp, I sat with people and recorded stories of police breaking ribs at peaceful sit-ins, repeatedly strip-searching young women, throwing elders in dog cages, destroying sacred ceremonial items (including peeing on them), dragging indigenous young

people from cars, and denying medical care or needed medicine after protectors were teargassed and beaten. During my last night at the camp, while serving as an international legal observer at an action, police shot unarmed protectors in the head and legs with rubber bullets, shot dozens of tear gas canisters, and as night fell and temperatures dropped below zero, began spraying water on the crowd, many of whom were gathered around a group of native young people leading song. A dozen ambulances had to be called in to deal with injuries. One elder suffered cardiac arrest, but was revived by CPR. In the end, over three hundred people were injured.

Despite this brutal violence, the prayerful and dedicated resistance continues, because this resistance is rooted in something deeper than anger at DAPL. In every place that CPT works, we build relationships with movements that tap into legacies of resistance that extend far beyond the given moment. The struggle

for peace in Colombia is decades old; Palestinians have resisted Israeli occupation for nearly 70 years; Kurds have struggled against foreign

“Each call for solidarity is also a call for us to reorient ourselves, to see ourselves as a link in the chain of nonviolent struggle that extends far beyond us.”

To learn more, search: [#StandingRockSyllabus](#)

occupiers for centuries, native communities here on Turtle Island have resisted since 1492. Each call for solidarity is also a call for us to reorient ourselves, to see ourselves as a link in the chain of nonviolent struggle that extends far beyond us.

As CPT continues to support native water protectors and their allies at Standing Rock, we know we need everyone involved in movements to protect water, land, and community. We know more Christians and people of faith need to practice listening to indigenous movements. Even when we do not fully understand the scale or depth of what we witness, we must continue to bear witness to the call for justice and peace.





One of many damaged houses in Muruke, Iraqi Kurdistan.

“We are not going to leave”

words and images by Kasia Protz

They keep drinking their tea while the Turkish war planes are hovering in the sky above their heads. “How often does this happen?” I ask pointing to the sky.

“I don’t know, it depends, sometimes six, sometimes seven days a week; it’s now a part of our daily lives.” Kak Kaninya Barchun, village leader of Muruke (wearing the blue shirt in the picture) says while continuing to sip his tea.

I’m very surprised by his relaxed manner toward the war planes, which can drop bombs on his village, home or family at any given time. His calmness makes me and the rest of our team feel safe but it also disturbs me. In what kind of the world are we living, where an innocent family has grown accustomed to the constant threat of warplanes bombing their land or home?

Turkey has bombed Muruke seven times during the last two years.

Before the bombing started twenty-three families lived in Muruke; now only nine are left. Many families left af-

ter 4 June, when the last bombing happened, very close to the village and at ten in the morning. It was an especially traumatic experience. Some of the villagers had to run to the nearby forest to hide. Miraculously nobody was hurt. It helped that at this time of the day many people were outside of their homes.

Many houses were severely damaged and till this day are standing unrepaired, because the government hasn’t offered any financial aid. Windows of the houses had shattered due to the ground shaking. Most of them were fixed from the villagers’ own money, but some cannot afford that. They use cardboard to cover holes in the windows or use the rooms with damaged windows as storage spaces. They are worried about the cold when the winter comes.

People of Muruke are worried about their animals and crops. During bombings often the grazing and planting fields are burned and some animals are starving due to the burning of the fields.

“Yes the damage of the buildings and

LEAVE, page 10





Struggles of the Olive Harvest

“If the Olive Trees knew the hands that planted them, their Oil would become Tears.” - Mahmoud Darwish

words and image by CPT Palestine

From October to the beginning of November, Palestinian farmers will attempt to harvest their olive trees, anticipating with bated breath what restrictions the Israeli Army will place on them, how many settler attacks there might be and what level of destruction their olive trees will endure. Once a happier time when picking olives was a joyful family affair, the olive harvest now attests to this generation's struggle against the Israeli occupation.

An olive tree can bear fruit for hundreds, even thousands of years. Resilient to drought and poor soil conditions, these trees are a symbol of resistance and *sumud* (steadfastness) in Palestine -- an extension of the Palestinian family that tends to them. Many of the trees, whose olives were once picked by the family's forebears, are now either inaccessible or destroyed. From 2011 to 2016, approximately 73,000 olive trees were uprooted by the Israeli Army and settlers, with 1,000 being destroyed in

October 2016 alone. Their destruction is mourned as though they were a member of the family. “These trees are like my children, they cannot be replaced,” said one Palestinian farmer, whose trees were burned in a settler attack.

According to human rights group Yesh Din, 95.6% of investigations of damage to olive trees are closed due to Israeli police investigation failures.

Area C, which covers over 60% of the West Bank, is under Israeli Military control and home to 125 illegal Israeli settlements. A Palestinian farmer, whose land falls within this area, requires a permit to access their land or must make prior arrangements with the Israeli Military to tend to their trees. Oftentimes these permits are denied or access is only granted for three days during the olive harvest season. The limited amount of time, which is often cut-back further by military or settler interference, prevents farmers from completing a full harvest,

STRUGGLES, page 10





Gold Street

words and image by CPT Palestine

Gold Street. In 2001 it was a prosperous and bustling business area where shopkeepers became rich servicing those people who needed to buy gold for their weddings. Soon it was declared part of a closed military zone and the merchants were forced to move their businesses uptown. This was another loss for the Old City, which depended on this business for survival. A pharmacist stated there were 1,500 shops operating in the Old City. Now, there are less than 150. This is the outcome when 2,000 Israeli soldiers with heavy weapons move into a neighborhood and scare all the citizens away. They came to protect the 500 Israeli settlers who forcibly moved themselves into the Old City.

Just around the corner from the CPT apartments is the main street leading to the tomb of Abraham. It was lined for about 200 yards with shops selling fancy carpets, but they are not there any more, after rampaging settlers threw fire bombs into them one day. The stores have not reopened because Palestinians have been forbidden to walk on the street, their main street, for 15 years. Many parts of the Old City resemble a ghost town, with streets

empty of people, shuttered shops, and no activity. For years many hoped that a political solution would be found and life would return to normal. But things have only gotten worse, with the reinforcement of many checkpoints and more restrictions on the movement of people in this sad place.

The Old City of Hebron is small. It takes only about 10 minutes to walk along the narrow alley, just wide enough for one car, which forms its main thoroughfare. There used to be about ten ways to enter or leave the Old City but now there are only two. And Palestinians, some 200,000 of them who live uptown, would love to visit the oldest parts of town just as people in other cities of the world love to do. But those two remaining entrances feature checkpoints and gun posts where Israeli soldiers likely will subject you to questioning, search, and examination of your ID—which if forgotten at home would result in immediate arrest and detainment. So although people generally avoid going to the Old City, they do try to live normal lives, sending their children to school, working hard, and carrying on as best they can with an incredibly strong spirit of persistence and hope.





LEAVE, *continued from page 7*

our land is a big issue, but what we are really are worried about are our children. Our children are scared! They wake up in the middle of the night from nightmares. They dream of bombs falling on them."

The trauma in Muruke is easily visible. The children are clearly scared and look up into the sky when military planes pass by. And in recent months a lot of villagers had been diagnosed with diabetes; doctors said it was due to stress.

"We are not going to leave. This is our home and our land, it belongs to us. We just want to live in peace here," one of the villagers says.

Muruke, located in Dinarte subdistrict of Akre in the Duhok province of Iraqi Kurdistan, is one of many villages affected by the cross border bombing from



A villager shows the team a picture from the last bombing.

Turkey in Iraqi Kurdistan; the problem is big and highly ignored.

However, when sitting with people of Muruke I find myself absorbed by their strength and resilience, while they drink their tea, laugh with their children and talk to us with a smile about their struggle. They certainly haven't lost their faith or hope and still believe in miracles.

STRUGGLES, *continued from page 8*

greatly reducing their source of income. The livelihoods of around 100,000 Palestinian families depend directly and indirectly on the olive harvest.

These restrictive measures act as a strategy to take more and more land away from Palestinians. If a farmer cannot access his land and tend to it, the land becomes barren and after 3 years will be declared "state land," which is almost exclusively used for the building of settlements. "We need to be on our land every day, so that we can trim the trees, plough and water the land...they [the occupation] want us to give up, so they can take it away from us," explained a Palestinian farmer.

The proximity of Palestinian land to illegal Israeli outposts and settlements means settler attacks are common. Harassment, physical violence and crop theft take place frequently during the olive harvest season, as well as the rest of the year. CPT provides a protective presence for families in Hebron as they harvest, and documents attacks.

Tel Rumeida, located in central Hebron, is an area that suffers much settler abuse

due to its proximity to the Tel Rumeida and Beit Hadassa settlements. The continued expansion of these settlements has meant that Palestinian families have had much of their land taken. One resident of Tel Rumeida pointed to where their olive grove used to be. "This has now been taken by settlers for archaeological digging," he said. The claim of archaeological sites is often used as a tool by settlers to take Palestinian land.

Settlements in Hebron are home to radical Jewish fundamentalists, who promote anti-Palestinian ideologies which results in a high level of violence in the city. Many internationals will come during the olive harvest season to help protect the Palestinian families from this violence. But attacks go ignored by the Israeli Police, emboldening those not held to account to continue their torrent of abuse. A French activist helping harvest with a family in Tel Rumeida said, "Attacks are not just physical acts of violence, they are also attacks on the Palestinian identity...we are here in solidarity to not just protect the family, but also the Palestinian culture."





"We need to do our own cartography of our memories, for a territory of peace."

– Gloria Cuartas, former mayor of Apartado. Photo: Caldwell Manners

Women of Justice

words by CPT Colombia

Over 300 women from the northeast and middle Magdalena regions gathered over two days, on November 10 and 11 to develop a proposal on their role and demands in a post-peace agreement Colombia.

Women have been the primary victims of these last five decades of war but have also been protagonists in successfully lobbying for a negotiated end to the 52 year conflict between the FARC-EP and the Colombian state. Now, with peace talks beginning with the ELN, they're demanding that the role of women be central if there is to be a just and sustainable end to the left wing guerilla's armed insurrection.

On November 25, we joined in observing the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women alongside the courageous women of the Women's Popular Organization (Organización Femenina Popular). For the last 44 years

the OFP has been a critical movement of women in creating centers of power on the margins and challenging the marginalization of women's creative anti-violence initiatives. The following is the event's Declaration of the Women's Gathering: Memory and Territorial Agenda for Peace.

"From this región, with a historical development of the popular struggle where unity has been the guarantee of triumph in the defence of human rights, we are women with peasant, agricultural, mining, popular, academic, labour union, religious, and youth experiences, and also women from several regions such as the Magdalena Medio, Barrancabermeja, Southern Bolívar, Southern Cesar, Eastern Central, and even from national and international lenses. We also welcome the presence and solidarity of our male partners and accomplices in our struggles.

"We were motivated to come together to visibilize the action of women in a context of peace in our country. We find ourselves motivated by the need to demand that the agreements between the Government and





the FARC be finalized and concluded. We recognize in these agreements the efforts and the political will to compile the proposals of women and victims, we hope that the essence of these agreements is respected as a contribution to democracy, political participation and rural development. Furthermore, we demand that the negotiating table with the ELN be installed and real progress be made with the participation of the communities and social organizations that will allow us to materialize proposals that address social justice and wellbeing.”

“From this gathering we reaffirm ourselves in our commitment to strengthen the popular unity: among women’s processes, the countryside and the city, women and men for the defence of life, water, land and territory, as part of the defence of human rights and peacebuilding.

“Our sense of womanhood demands that we welcome and support each other in the defence of the environment and respond to the care of our common home.

“Our essence obliges us to demand respect and recognition of our rights as women and to commit ourselves to the transformation of the patriarchal culture in all spheres of life.”

“From our beings as political subjects, we ratify the commitment to continue being articulators, and to move forward the processes of articulation and ratify our commitment in the mobilization.

“We declare ourselves guardians for peace, we commit to the direct and decisive participation of women in the construction of peace; which means the revitalization of local and regional cabildos (grassroots political assembly), and even an open national cabildo that can achieve a peace with the instinct and image of women.

“We left with the commitment to return to our territories to multiply and implement what was agreed on in this democratic space and to make visible the struggle of women to achieve peace with social justice.

Barrancabermeja, November 11, 2016



Mailbag

Hi Esther [Editor’s note: Esther Kern, outgoing Canada Coordinator],

When I opened the latest newsletter, I had a pleasant surprise. My Aunt Ellen and Uncle Willard Ebersole from Wichita, Kansas are pictured and featured on page 2. I appreciated reading about their dedication to giving to CPT. They are very giving people and have always lived very modestly so that they can contribute to CPT, MCC, etc. Thanks for putting the newsletter in our mailbox at church.

Blessings, Ruth

Note included with donation:

“I am so grateful for the work of CPT. Sometimes it seems as if there is so little I can do to bring peace to our world. So I gladly sent this contribution.”

Lois Claassen Unruh, Newton, KS

Written in response to Jim Loney’s letter to CPTers upon the 10 year anniversary of his kidnapping in Baghdad, Iraq

To Jim, (and all of you CPTers,)

I remember how deeply the whole thing touched me, 10 years ago, seeing the candle burning for you in your little house chapel, and how much faith people had to do all these things. I remember the prayers, and the updates and how long it seemed, and how unbelievable it all seemed when some of you came safely home, and the grief for Tom.

Thank you to all of you, for the brave work you do giving us all examples to follow.

I also remember being out at Willo’ Wind weeding with you in the garden!

A real person! Not just a story in the papers!

This is a very good idea. A positive antidote to the rampant fear running loose everywhere about tomorrow.

Hugs!

Luke Stocking’s Auntie/Elizabeth Stocking’s sister, Jan





St. Paul and St. Luke on Lesbos

words by Annelies Klinefelter

In 56 A.D., Luke the Evangelist, the Apostle Paul and their companions stopped on Lesbos briefly on the return trip of Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 20:14), having sailed from Assos (about 50 km away). From Mytilini they continued towards Chios (Acts 20:15).

In 2016, Luke and Paul would have been picked up by coastguard ships and denied entry. Paul was a Turk and Luke a Palestinian. European governments now associate both of these nationalities with terrorism.

In the many thousands of refugees now on the island there may be many Pauls and many Lukes. They would have to go through many months or years of applying and waiting in order to enter. The authorities would see the message they were bringing as revolutionary and unwelcome. The religious authorities and even the populace would not be happy with them or their comments. "Love your enemy as yourself" and "treat others as you would like to be treated" are not economically viable and practically not possible. In today's world, Luke and Paul would have been sent back as illegal immigrants, perhaps even tried as human smugglers.

The so-called Christian communities in Europe support the closing of the borders to keep refugees out of their own countries. They let Greece, France and Italy take the burden. They wash their hands in innocent blood.

Is this the Europe I want and love?

Heck NO! I love Europe with all its diversity, but this political business I find terribly hurtful and dehumanizing—for

the refugees, for myself and for my own community.

In their own time, Luke and Paul were welcomed as strangers with all the geniality Eastern hospitality accords strangers. Western hospitality does NOT exist.

The more I think and feel about this the more I am ashamed to be a Christian in this world at this time. I know; Jesus says you will always have the enemies around you. Still, I hoped that after 2,000 years we humans would have found a way to be human to each other, support each other's talents and give

each other the opportunities to develop and share them.

When I see the refugee centers here, I cry my eyes out and my warm heart feels cold as ice. How else can I deal with this contradiction?

Jesus says: "Love your enemy and turn the other cheek." Does this mean I must find a way to deal with the oppressing individuals and structures? That I must go on, knowing that in my lifetime this

problem will not be solved?

Pharaoh dealt with the refugee problem by letting the Israelites go under protest.

Will we find a Christian way to let the refugees from today enter our communities and welcome their talents and gifts? Will we heal the sick and feed the hungry and visit those in jail? Will we clothe the naked and let them marry our sons and daughters?

In the present reality, European forces seem to say "no."

But I will not give up—I will continue to go the extra mile as long as I can with the grace of God and the help of my companions.

May peace prevail on Earth.





CPT's New Steering Committee Members At-Large

Rev. Waltrina Middleton is actively engaged in social justice issues in the United States and throughout the African diaspora. Her advocacy work addresses systemic cultures of violence and racism against marginalized communities from Charleston, SC and Cleveland, Ohio, to Hebron, Palestine and Sao Paulo, Brazil. She is founder and organizer of Cleveland Action, a bridge organization and resource in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement.

She is a preacher, poet, social critic and community organizer committed to actualizing the vision of a Beloved community. Rev. Middleton, a passionate preacher and keynote speaker, has been invited to share this vision and message of faith, love and justice in diverse settings across the world including the World Council of Churches Forum on Peace and Justice in Trondheim, Norway; National Council of Churches; The Carter Center; Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference; Ecumenical Advocacy Days; Churches Uniting in Christ; Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; and as a part of a United Nations delegation addressing U.S. drug policies and mass incarceration. She is currently the Associate Dean of the Andrew Rankin Memorial Chapel at Howard University, Washington, DC and is a D.Min. Candidate, Class of 2017.



Flavio Conrado is an anthropologist, translator, organizer, scholar-activist, and a huge fan of Christian Peacemaker Teams. He holds a B.A. in Social Sciences from the University of State of Rio de Janeiro (1997), and an M.A. and PhD in Sociology and Anthropology from Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (2006). Since the 1990s he's been engaged with Peace and Disarmament, Human Rights, Child Rights and Inter-religious Dialogue/Cooperation issues in Brazil and Latin America. Recently he created a festival, called Festival Reimaginar dubbed the "Wild Goose Festival" of Brazil. It was the first-ever space of its kind for people of faith (broadly-defined) to have courageous conversations on undoing racism, sexism, capitalism, and heterosexism. Bringing together speakers from across Brazil and internationally (including CPT ED Sarah Thompson), Festival Reimaginar spawned a nationwide network of radical and inclusive faith-filled activists.

He has edited *In Harms Way: The History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (forthcoming) into Portuguese and other several works related to Faith and Justice, Spirituality, Incarnational Mission, and History and Religious Studies through his publishing house Novos Diálogos [New Dialogues]. He was raised in a Baptist tradition and now works with a missional nondenominational initiative on the outskirts of Brasília, Brazilian's capital. Through his work as a consultant he is accustomed to thinking organizationally, and building infrastructure for social movements. He is fluent in English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese.





Reflections on Difference and CPT

My first contact with Christian Peacemaker Teams came in the form of a delegation to Northwestern Ontario with the Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Team (then called the Aboriginal Justice Team), in the summer of 2014. I attended with my partner, Joel, whose involvement in the Quaker community had led him to discover CPT as an opportunity to explore spiritually grounded work in nonviolent peacemaking.

Although I shared Joel's interest, I approached the experience with a great deal of personal doubt. I am a queer-identified person, gender non-conforming and bisexual. What's more, although I value a strong personal connection to spirituality, I have not identified as a member of any faith community since adolescence. I found it difficult to believe that someone like me could find a place in a Christian-identified

believe so deeply in the cause and practice of Christian Peacemaker Teams.

In reaction to that first meeting (and what followed), I found myself able to easily and comfortably express my own identity during our delegation. This, in turn, fed back into our delegation's relationship with the indigenous community in Kenora. The day after that first meeting, we participated in a workshop on undoing racism and colonialism, run by Pauline,* an Anishinaabe woman based in Kenora. As part of the workshop, she invited each of us to share an item of personal significance.

Made braver by the previous day, I chose to share my binder, a garment I use to affect the physical expression of my gender. As I explained the significance of the item to my personal experience of gender non-conformity, I saw recognition in Pauline's expression. She shared that she herself identified as two-spirit, a gender found in many indigenous North American cultures, which is neither male nor female alone. Although our personal experiences of gender were not the same, I felt honored by the opportunity to connect with Pauline and with this element of her culture, and to earn this window into her personal experience. We both resist the cultural experience of binary gender identification, but her own experience is a direct consequence of Western colonialism, which has worked to erase indigenous identities that existed before.

This experience, to me, demonstrates the importance of difference and diversity in CPT's mission, both to its members and to its relationship to the world. I have since learned how the broadening membership and inclusiveness of CPT is a recent and ongoing change, and the product of a great deal of effort. In entering the organization as a new corps member – which would never have happened without the clear, honest welcome I have felt from every CPTer I have met so far – I am committed to playing a part in continuing this change on into the future.

**name has been changed*

We both resist the cultural experience of binary gender identification, but her own experience is a direct consequence of Western colonialism, which has worked to erase indigenous identities that existed before.

organization. I expected to feel tolerated at most, but with the assumption that in return, I would adjust to accommodate a more conservative, Christian-centric ideology. It was with this in mind that I first arrived in Kenora and prepared to meet the strangers with whom I would share the next two weeks.

The central point is this: my doubts did not survive even past that first meeting. Our delegation leader began with words of welcome that explicitly and deliberately included participants of every gender, sexuality, race, faith background, and more. The words were expressed with genuine conviction and sincerity. From that point I have begun to experience all the ways that the organization's structure, language and membership has organically developed into a commitment to openness, inclusivity, and a responsible relationship to a global community. This, above all, is why I



Act for Peace in 2017. Join a Delegation.

US/MEXICO
BORDERLANDS

January 7 - 17

COLOMBIA

April 8 - 15 (Spanish)
July 23 - August 1

IRAQI KURDISTAN

May 5 - 10
September 10 - 23

INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY

POW WOW:

May 26 - June 5
August 11 - 21

WOMEN'S GATHERING:

May 25 - June 4
September 21 - October 10

PALESTINE

February 12 - 26
May 10 - 24
August 15 - 29
October 10 - 24
November 20 - December 3



Your contribution has a direct correlation with the women's papaya farm in Las Pavas, Colombia. Help us keep accompanying the farming community. Contribute now at CPT.ORG



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- Friends United Meeting
- Mennonite Church Canada
- Mennonite Church USA
- Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
- Congregation of St. Basil (the Basilians)
- Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

USA:

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christian peacemaker teams

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Act for Peace in 2017. Join a Delegation.

US/MEXICO BORDERLANDS

January 7 - 17

COLOMBIA

April 8 - 15 (Spanish)
July 23 - August 1

IRAQI KURDISTAN

May 5 - 10
September 10 - 23

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S SOLIDARITY

POW WOW:
May 26 - June 5
August 11 - 21
WOMEN'S GATHERING:
May 25 - June 4
September 21 - October 10

PALESTINE

February 12 - 26
May 10 - 24
August 15 - 29
October 10 - 24
November 20 - December 3



Your contribution has a direct correlation with the women's papaya farm in Las Pavas, Colombia. Help us keep accompanying the farming community. Contribute now at CPT.ORG



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