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On the Edges: Mennonite Peacemakers on Christian Peacemaker Teams

By

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Abstract

This study explores how *Christian Peacemaker Teams* (CPT) members' self-conceptions change throughout the course of their involvement with the CPT. To address this issue, I produce an ethnographic life history account of two members of CPT, Keith Rempel and Lena Siegers. This thesis offers both a descriptive survey of CPT and a record of the life histories collected through fieldwork with the organization. The thesis devotes special attention to how these CPT members understand their religious identities; specifically, their sense of being similar to or different from their families, friends and religious tradition—in this case, the Mennonite faith. Charles Taylor's theories of identity formation form the basis of this investigation of Keith's and Lena's self-conceptions. Their understanding of their faith and how it motivates the work that they do in situations characterized by violence is also examined. There are two primary conclusions. First, while CPT connects with Keith's and Lena's identities, especially as Mennonites, involvement with CPT accentuates their actual and perceived difference from their families, friends and religious tradition. Second, work with CPT also strengthens Keith's and Lena's commitments to their faith, while at the same time making it more political.

Acknowledgments

Over the course of this project, many people have offered me support, guidance and constructive criticism. My thesis supervisor, Ron Grimes, has been crucial to my project, as he has seen it from its infancy to its completion. He has been especially helpful in challenging my work and in offering advice and encouragement on my forays into fieldwork. Ron has been both a critical eye and a kind ear.

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Finally, this project would not have been possible if not for CPT's willingness to embark on this project with me. My sincere thanks for all those whom I have met at CPT meetings and my fellow delegates to Israel and Palestine. I am grateful for the help of Doug Pritchard and Angelica who both devoted considerable time to reading and discussing drafts of the thesis. Last, but not least, Keith Rempel and Lena Siegers both invited me into their homes and trusted me with their stories. I thank them for their friendship.

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Introduction

Christian Peacemaker Teams, or CPT for short, "is a program of active peacemaking supported by Church of the Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA, and Friends United Meeting."* Participants (called CPTers within the organization) are currently from both the historic peace churches and other Christian denominations. CPTers come primarily from the United States and Canada but increasingly from around the world. "Getting in the Way" is the CPT motto. What CPT wants to get in the way of is violence, particularly violence where there is an imbalance of power. Colloquially, CPT also "gets in Jesus' *way*" by loving enemies. CPT seeks to emulate Jesus' example. CPT's violence-reduction work takes the form of projects in such places as Hebron in the West Bank; Chiapas, Mexico; Barrancabermeja, Colombia; Haiti; Bosnia; and Iraq, as well as Canada and the United States. In this thesis, I describe some of what CPT has done and is currently doing, but I do not attempt to justify CPT's actions or explain the political history of the areas in which CPT works.

The main purpose of this thesis is to examine CPT through its history, work, and religious mandate, as well as through the personal experiences of CPTers. I introduce CPT and include a descriptive survey of the organization. More importantly, I focus on the collection and interpretation of life history accounts offered by two members of CPT, Keith Rempel* (age 28) and Lena Siegers (age 62). These life histories devote special attention to how these CPT members speak of their Mennonite faith, how it informs the way they speak of their experiences with CPT, and how it motivates the work that they do in situations characterized by violence. While this thesis is about CPT, it is more an

* Name has been changed.

exploration of the lives of two CPTers. Readers should gain a better understanding of what CPT is and why it does what it does through who CPTers are.

First Impressions: Keith

I met Keith Rempel for the first time on November 30, 2002. We both attended CPT's regional meeting held at a church in Toronto. He sat beside me in the circle of chairs filled with about twenty people from southern Ontario. They had been involved with CPT in a variety of ways for varying lengths of time. There was energy in the room as friends greeted each other after long absences from each other's presence. I did not really know anyone and felt very much like an outsider. I knew a few people by name, as our paths had crossed at events held by common friends. We gathered, took seats around the circle; worship and songbooks passed from one person to the next. Following a worship period of song, sharing, and prayer, the schedule for the day was established and facilitators chosen. People assumed various tasks, and the meeting went smoothly because of the delegation of responsibilities. Humour was ever present. Little stories, remembrances, and inside jokes passed back and forth effortlessly.

I called Keith in January and left a message saying I hoped to meet with him soon. He seemed excited on his return message on my machine. We met at my home in February for our first interview, where he told me his life history for the first time, and where I began to know him as a person. As I would learn in our meetings, his approach to many new things was one of curiosity and eagerness.

Keith loves baseball and tries to catch every game in Toronto, the city he now calls home. His apartment speaks to this ongoing passion, with baseballs he caught at

games and pictures of his favourite player on display. When Keith started getting involved in service work, it was as much of a surprise to him as it was to his friends. Seeing the display of his passion for baseball amidst the artifacts of his experiences with CPT, such as the colourful Latin American pictures, or the kuffiyeh (a Palestinian scarf), might confuse his friends who knew him before he ever went to Montreal on a youth service trip with his church, or to Washington D.C. on Mennonite Voluntary Service, or to Chiapas, Esgenoôpetitj, Hebron and Colombia with CPT. Having only recently become a part of Keith's life, I was be equally surprised to discover that he has time to devote to anything other than his commitments to CPT, to local Toronto activist groups and campaigns such as the recent rallies against the war in Iraq, or to his full-time job at Covenant House, a shelter and resource centre for troubled teens. He talks about these activities as though they are central to his life.

While never giving up the original interests of his youth, like baseball, Keith's sense of the core elements of his identity is surfacing in service. His life story and experiences speak to the pivotal moments of being in Montreal, Washington, and with CPT as being times when he not only learned more about others and the world, but about himself as well.

Keith completed CPT training in the summer of 2000, at the St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. Later CPT experiences were in Esgenoôpetitj, ten weeks in Hebron in winter of 2002 and in Colombia in February and March of 2003. Keith is a reservist with CPT, remaining involved with CPT on a part-time basis. He is also involved in a variety of local Toronto activist groups, such as Bloor West for Peace and Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights.

First Impressions: Lena

I called Lena Siegers (née Martens) for the first time in mid–January on a cold winter afternoon. When I explained my project, she was surprised and dubious that I would want her life history, although she agreed to participate. Even at our first meeting, as we began to tape, she queried, "So you really want my life story, eh?"

Lena was a captivating and energetic person to talk with. She surprised me with her openness, instant friendliness and sense of humour. She knew a bit about my project from Doug Pritchard, the director of CPT Canada and the person who initially approached Keith and Lena about being involved in my fieldwork. After talking more she said, "Oh, your project is about CPT*ers*, not CPT!" I answered that the project is about what CPTers can reveal about CPT, but later decided that this way of putting it was not fully accurate; my project *is* about CPTers. A by-product is that two lives tells me something about CPT.

I explained that this first meeting would include sorting out the details of our meetings together: recording, confidentiality, the process and our expectations for it. Her immediate response, quickly blurted out and interrupting my academic explanation of the protocol on confidentiality, was that we could probably just skip all of that. "I'm not a private person," Lena said, "you can't put me in any more danger than I've already been in." She was right again.

She told me a shortened version of her life history then. In that 20-minute phone call, on that sunny, snowy day, I learned that she was just back from Colombia. I learned that she feels her story was going to be different from others, since hers does not follow

any linear pattern. Lena feels her story does not follow the line it "should have," since she was born an Old Order Mennonite in the Waterloo region.

Lena is not a private person. She thinks she says more than she sometimes should, to her detriment. She fears telling parts of her story that she should not. She says, "I should be careful what I say. I'm still a Mennonite, and still want to be accepted there." Lena is a woman who recognizes the tension between sharing what needs expression and wanting me to stop her before she says too much. "Some of it I want said," said Lena. Yet, she was relieved to hear that some things could be "off the record;" that she could read my drafts in case she had regrets about things she shared. She spoke quickly; she had a lot to say. She was afraid of boring me with her stories, so she wanted me to cut her off if she started rambling.

"Your stories are why I'm doing this," I responded. "I want to hear them all."

Lena has worked as a full-time CPT Corps member in Haiti, Bosnia, Esgenoôpetitj and most recently, Colombia. Having just completed a term, she has decided to stay in Canada for the next while. As a grandmother, she is especially looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren, and loves it when they come to visit her farm near Blyth, Ontario. She also keeps busy putting together relief kits for Iraq, singing in the church choir at Brussels Mennonite Church and doing CPT presentations. With her rainbow peace flag flying in her front yard, Lena has brought home her ethic of peace.

The interviews I had with Keith and Lena, whose life stories and experiences form the basis of this thesis, allowed me only a small introduction into the complexity of their lives, their experiences, and an understanding of what makes them who they are at

this moment. Distance between my home in Waterloo and theirs outside my city made it difficult to interact with them outside our formally scheduled meetings. For all that we could not share with each other in our limited time together, I cannot overlook a point of connection. Although only for two fleeting weeks, I wore the red hat of CPT as a participant in a CPT delegation to Israel and Palestine in February and March of 2003. This participation was partly out of my own personal interest, partly for the purposes of participant observation, and partly out of a joint agreement between CPT and me as a condition of my fieldwork.

When in the West Bank, interacting with Israelis and Palestinians, there was no distinction between CPT and me. To them, to my fellow delegates, and to myself I was a CPTer. When asked about, and sometimes even challenged on, my role as a CPTer, I spoke not as a fieldworker, but as a CPTer. I could not allow myself the distance of being a researcher but had the benefit, as well as the risk, of justifying my choices to be in that place, wearing that red hat. Keith's and Lena's stories have become, at least to some extent, a shared part of my story.

It is important to mention here that my fieldwork originally included a third person, referred to only occasionally, Angelica.* After several phone conversations and one interview, Angelica decided to withdraw from the interviews for personal reasons. My limited interactions with Angelica still proved to be immensely helpful in adding dimensions as well as points of comparison to Keith's and Lena's life histories.

* Name has been changed.

Central Question and Hypotheses

This thesis explores the ways in which CPT members' self-conceptions change throughout the course of their involvement with CPT, including their identifications with their family and friends, church communities, and CPT itself. The life histories presented in the following chapters, along with a brief sketch of CPT as an organization, give an idea of what CPT is and how individuals experience it. How then does CPT fit into, relate to and affect Keith's and Lena's religious identities? I will show that CPT relates to and changes Keith's and Lena's self-conceptions in the following ways:

First, their involvement with CPT comes out of their understanding of the Mennonite faith. CPT cultivates a particular expression of the Mennonite faith that Keith and Lena sense their home church communities do not nurture as fully. CPT fits their self-conceptions as service-oriented, justice seeking "doers" and allows them to explore and develop these aspects of themselves.

Second, CPT's peripheral status in the Christian church and the historic peace church communities in particular, coincides with Keith's and Lena's identities as different from and on the edges of their family, friends and religious tradition. At the same time, CPT remains connected to its supporting communities, allowing Keith and Lena a way to continue identifying with the Mennonite church, while challenging passive understandings of pacifism in favour of an active, engaged form of peacemaking. In other words, CPT is one way Keith and Lena can challenge and transform their faith communities and religious tradition from a standpoint on the boundaries without completely removing themselves from these communities. CPT, Keith and Lena are on

the edges, but not too far. This position on the edges leads me to question whether CPT functions as a moral regenerator for potentially disillusioned Mennonites.

Finally, Keith's and Lena's experiences with CPT reaffirmed and deepened their commitment to faith, while politicising it or making it more radical. This has increased the actual and perceived distance from their social and faith communities.

This thesis describes the ways in which CPT shapes Keith's and Lena's self-conceptions, which in turn influences the nature of their actions as peacemakers, their relationships with their churches, and their understanding of their faith. The thesis also hopes to illustrate that ordinary people speak about their lived religious experience and identity in reflective and thought-provoking ways.

Religion and Life History

A definition of religion is necessary for this thesis, since it addresses the religious life history. Based on her own fieldwork experience, Pamela Klassen states, "The different meanings signalled by the same word demonstrated the necessity of understanding what religion means to both the narrator and the interpreters of life histories."[1] The same differences in terminology and meaning arose in my own fieldwork. Keith and Lena use the word faith to describe their personal spirituality as well and faith community or tradition in lieu of religious tradition. I use both faith and religion, or faith tradition and religious tradition synonymously throughout the thesis.

I appreciate Ninian Smart's definition of religion as "a six-dimensional organism, typically containing doctrines, myths, ethical teachings, rituals, and social institutions, and animated by religious experiences of various kinds."[2] This definition is helpful as it

appreciates both the believed and lived aspects of religion, and recognizes the communal and institutional nature of religious traditions. Smart's use of the word organism also pays attention to the interdependence of many parts, and to the living, and often-mutable, nature of religion. Smart's definition corresponds with three ways religion operates in Keith's and Lena's life histories. First, religion demarcates which and in what ways people relate to specific communities and institutions. Second, religion defines which and in what ways people relate to God/gods, spirits or other supernatural beings. I would add that religion also affects how people define who they are and how they live.

Another important definition is that of life history. Lawrence C. Watson and Maria-Barbara Watson-Franke define the life history as "one distinctive type of personal document.... As we see it, the 'life history' is any retrospective account by an individual of his life in whole or part, in written or oral form, *that has been elicited or prompted by another person.*"[3] Given this definition, the life history is always a negotiated narrative involving the interaction between two (or more) people, the writer of the life history, and the storyteller whose life history is recorded in some way. The life history usually takes the form of oral story telling, which an interviewer records and puts to paper later on. The life history delineates from autobiography, as autobiography is "a person's *self-initiated* retrospective account of his [sic] life, which is usually, but not always in written form."[4] Life history and autobiography are different from biography, which is a written account of another's life, usually following that person's death. Throughout this thesis, when I use life *story*, I am speaking specifically of the smaller anecdotes that compose life history.

The life history is that which makes "the process of production and negotiation evident."[5] The life history then, is explicit about the interpretive role of the writer on the presented text conveyed by the storyteller. Watson and Watson-Franke describe this process as an interpretive mediation of the individual's phenomenal consciousness.[6]

The life history emphasizes the lived experiences of the individual studied. While the final text records these experiences, a person's life stories are not bound by the verifiable nor are the memories recounted necessarily in exact chronological order.[7] The life history is a finished document of an unfinished life, but presents and interprets the life history subjectively. The storyteller may share or withhold information, and both memory and the nature of the interaction with the recorder affect what he or she shares.

Outline of Thesis and Synopsis of Chapters

Chapter 1 offers a brief descriptive survey of Christian Peacemaker Teams. It describes CPT's inception, its religious and ideological basis, its mission statement, and the work in which it has been and is currently engaged.

Chapters 2 and 3 present Keith Rempel's and Lena Siegers' life histories collected from our meetings together. These life histories are based on questions asked about their affiliation with CPT. Our interviews included other areas of their lives, for example, their larger life histories, understandings of faith, religious background and upbringing, and current religious identity. While these chapters contain only their own words, remembrances and stories, interspersed with some of my questions (in italicised text), I transcribed and edited these life stories.

Chapters 4 and 5 interpret and reflect on Keith's and Lena's life histories. Four points of reflection frame Chapter 4. First, I present the definitions of identity and religious identity that shape the way I interpret the life histories. Second, I explore the ways in which the life histories speak to Keith's and Lena's identifications as similar to or as different from their families, friends, churches and larger society. In other words, I explore the ways Keith and Lena understand themselves as identifying with these groups, as well as deviating from them. Third, I reflect on the ways Keith's and Lena's sense of similarity and difference have changed upon their return home after serving with CPT in Haiti, Bosnia, Esgenoôpetitj, Hebron, Chiapas and Colombia. More specifically, I examine the ways in which their identifications with their faith community, family and friends and other groups have been affected by their involvement with CPT. Finally, I argue that CPT functions as a moral regenerator for Keith, Lena and other CPTers. CPT's position on the edges of its faith tradition allows it to criticize and renew the Mennonite (and Christian) church.

Chapter 5 is concerned with Keith's and Lena's core identity as persons of faith. I explore what the life histories reveal about their understanding of their faith, specifically their strong identification as Mennonites, and how this faith is the basis of and motivates their lived experience. Contextualizing their life histories within the thoughts and theology of CPT, this chapter elucidates three themes in Keith's and Lena's faith stories: embracing the cross, facing fear, and taking the other's hand. Following this description of Keith's and Lena's understanding of faith, I reflect on how CPT has changed their faith. Finally, I argue that Keith's and Lena's lived faith through peacemaking with CPT is performative in nature.

Chapter 6 explains the methods I have used, as well as my motivations for doing this thesis, such as my ongoing interest in the intersection between religious groups and peace and political activism. It also examines the value of writing life histories. Finally, the conclusion discusses any unresolved issues raised in the previous chapters and offers a summary of the discussion and arguments of the thesis, the method, and the conclusions reached.

1 – Christian Peacemaker Teams

> Those who have believed in the sword have not hesitated to die.... Why do we pacifists think that our way—Jesus' way—to peace will be less costly? Unless we Mennonites and Brethren in Christ 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.[8]
> Ron Sider

CPT's Beginnings[9]

At the 1984 Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France, Ron Sider delivered the speech, "God's People Reconciling," that served as the catalyst for new visions of what was required of the communities that trace their beginnings to the 16th century Anabaptists and the Christian church. Challenging traditionally passive understandings of pacifism, Sider called for a team of one hundred thousand Christian volunteers to commit themselves to the active work of nonviolent resistance, to become people willing to risk their own lives in order to reduce violence.[10] According to CPT's director, Gene Stoltzfus, CPT came about at a critical point when peace church people were seeking new ways to express their faith.

Sider's call* prompted discussions among Mennonites and members of the Church of the Brethren, who produced "Christian Peacemaker Teams: A Study Document" (1986) and "Christian Peacemaker Teams: Discussion Guide" (1986). These two documents circulated among Mennonites throughout the United States and Canada, with responses coming from four hundred congregations and seven hundred individuals.[11] The vision for CPT officially formed at Techny, Illinois, by a group of one

* "Call," as it used by CPT as an organization, as well as by many CPTers, is a revelation from God that prompts those who hear to action. For example, some CPTers talk about being called to join CPT. The call becomes apparent to them due to circumstance, coincidence, and encouragement from people they trust. They discern a call through prayer, reflection and community support.

hundred in December 1986. At this "Consultation on Christian Peacemaker Teams," the original call for one hundred thousand reduced to a more conservative hope for one hundred people volunteering for two-year terms, with funding of $800,000. Committee members reached a compromise and proposed an even more conservative amount of funding. In 1988, the first year's budget totalled $22,200.[12] Gene Stoltzfus was hired that same year as the first, and only, paid staff person.

CPT is not independent of the various "Peace Church" conferences. At the same time, it is not simply an offshoot of or directly linked to existing programs within these conferences such as the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) or Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS). CPT emerged from within the congregations through the involvement of congregational members, and was to be coordinated by the Council of Moderators and Secretaries. Sponsoring denominations were each entitled to name one member to serve on CPT Steering Committee, which was officially organized in June 1987.

Mission Statement

At the time of CPT's inception, the original proposal included a section on CPT's purpose and goals. Its stated purpose was to "establish a new peace initiative" amongst the sponsoring churches with the hopes that this would eventually foster involvement from other Christians.[13] CPT's goal is a balance of prayerful reflection while actively positioning itself in places of conflict, identifying with those who are suffering and oppressed, and working nonviolently to reduce the violence in those places. Through this work, CPT believes it witnesses to Jesus Christ.[14]

On CPTnet,* the formal mission statement states:

> Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) offers an organized, nonviolent alternative to war and other forms of lethal inter-group conflict. CPT provides organizational support to persons committed to faith-based nonviolent alternatives in situations where lethal conflict is an immediate reality or is supported by public policy. CPT seeks to enlist the response of the whole church in conscientious objection to war, and the development of nonviolent institutions, skills and training with the spiritual lives of its constituent congregations. Gifts of prayer, money and time from these churches undergird CPT's peacemaking ministries.[15]

CPT's proposal and continuing mission seeks to base its activity in its religious tradition, that of the historic peace churches, and continually requests their active support; prayerfully, financially, and by direct involvement. At the same time, these statements speak to the original and ongoing vision of encouraging others from within CPT's original sponsoring churches and from the wider Christian Church to become involved in CPT's goal. While CPT may be a small organization, it considers itself and its work the necessary direction for Christians living in a violent and unjust world. Both statements also illustrate the importance CPT places on becoming skilled in nonviolent techniques and its belief that these skills are most effective when coupled with prayerful reflection and faith.

A curious difference between the original purpose and goal and the mission statement of 2000 is the lack of direct mention of CPT's roots in the historic peace churches: the Mennonite, Brethren and Quaker (Society of Friends) communities.* One reason may be that CPT explicitly states its roots in other sections of its historical

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* <http://www.prairienet.org/cpt>

* The Historic Peace Churches—Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren—are Christian communions which from their beginnings in the 16th and 17th centuries refused to engage in warfare or support theological definitions of a "Just War." These small groups, which grew out of the Reformation movements in Europe (the Continental Reformation of the 16th century and the English Reformation of the 17th century), have held as central the Christian calling to follow Jesus' injunctions to love enemies and not resort to the sword. Because of this stance, they have been known as Historic Peace Churches. "Theology and Culture: Peacemaking in a Globalized World." (August 2, 2003) <http://www.peacetheology.org/who.html>

overview. Another may be because CPT became the diverse Christian community it sought to be; moving from being a group of primarily Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren, to people from a wider range of Christian traditions. Fostered by Ron Sider's call for peacemakers, CPT hopes all Christians become committed to biblically based peacemaking.

> Sometimes we justify our silence with the notion that pacifism is a special vocation for us peculiar Anabaptists. It is not for other Christians. But this approach will not work. In fact, it is probably the last stop before total abandonment of our historic peace witness. If pacifism is not God's will for all Christians, then it is not God's will for any.[16]

Sider's speech, the call that served as the catalyst for CPT indicates that CPT does not want to be just a peace initiative of the Mennonite, Quaker and Brethren communities. CPT feels that it is a new peace initiative, and arguably a challenge, for all those who profess the Christian faith because it argues that active pacifism should be the norm for all Christians.

Religious and Ideological Basis

CPT began as an initiative of the historic peace churches: The Mennonite Church, the General Conference Mennonite Church, the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches (who withdrew in 1988) and the Brethren in Christ Church (who withdrew after several years). The Church of the Brethren joined soon after CPT's inception, followed by the Quakers who got involved with CPT in 1989.[17] As of 2002, CPT's supporting denominations are the Church of the Brethren, Friends United Meeting, Mennonite

Church USA, and Mennonite Church Canada.* CPT participants come from an even wider group of Christian denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church (frequently these are people who are also involved with or support the Catholic Worker Movement) and the Methodist Church. Since CPT's current sponsoring groups continue to be only from the peace church tradition, other Christian denominations seem not to have embraced CPT as much as it would like. The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America are currently in the process of joining CPT as supporting denominations, which signals the beginning of wider support from the Christian church.

CPT is inseparable from its religious basis. CPT bases its call and the manner in which it conducts its peacemaking in the Bible. In fact, CPT sees its peacemaking as authentic as long as its church congregations and the larger faith community support it.[18] CPT's scriptural call emphasizes creative public ministry and love of one's enemies as Jesus did. The same scriptural call also explicitly states that Christian peacemakers should be resolute in "the absolute refusal to kill in situations of conflict."[19] This refusal to use violence is what CPT sees as its Anabaptist inheritance, but believes it is an inheritance implicating all Christians as well. CPT seeks to actively engage the world using creative approaches and skills that are based on the example set by Jesus, which CPT argues serves to witness to all of humanity the transformation that can be accomplished by committed groups of prayerful people who will not resort to the common tactics and tools of traditional powers.[20] CPT expects CPTers to self-identify as

* Organizational Members include Baptist Peace Fellowship, Brethren Peace Fellowship, On Earth Peace, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship, and Every Church a Peace Church.

Christians, though their individual commitments to particular Christian communities differ.

CPT's theological foundations include reflection on the biblical meaning of "shalom." The Shalom embraced by CPT is an adoption, and perhaps a change of the traditional Shalom of the Old Testament. Shalom, as CPT understands it, "describes a state of wholeness, fulfillment, and right relationships. It describes peace between peoples; plenty of food, water, and shelter; and spiritual oneness with God.... Shalom encompasses both a grace that nurtures and a wrath that insists on justice."[21] Shalom, according to CPT, is an active call that prompts people to seek right relationships with God, humanity and the earth. Right relationships cannot exclude justice and thus require disciples of shalom to challenge injustice and evil.

CPT argues that this biblical understanding of shalom calls them to "...engage in a form of peacemaking which is more activist than most of [their] past efforts in relief and development. CPT would challenge militarism and injustice directly but nonviolently."[22] This optimistic challenge to militarism is not yet realized. Given that CPT is much smaller than the original hopes expressed in the study document from which I took this quotation, CPT cannot possibly look like an effective alternative for a country's established military. On a much smaller scale though, CPT does actively attempt to confront and challenge militarism, such as disarming individual soldiers, paramilitaries and guerrillas in Colombia. CPT also challenges militarism locally in North America through war tax resistance and its campaign against violent toys.

Given that CPT is concerned with challenging militarism in all its forms, it is strange that CPT uses militaristic terms to describe its organizational structure, such as

Corps and Reservists. There appears to be such an obvious tension here that I am surprised to find nothing in CPT's history or writings to indicate other options for naming its organizational structure, though there were several choices for what CPT itself would be called. Two explanations for the use of militaristic terms that I have heard from CPTers is that since CPT is a parallel structure to the military, and since CPTers have to be "disciplined, well-trained, mobile and flexible like military people,"[23] CPT reclaims words traditionally used by the military. Another reason I have heard is that since the Bible uses military metaphors, such as Ephesians' "Armour of God" (6:11-17), CPT may also consider such language appropriate and authoritative for describing CPT's own work and organizational structure.

In order to do the work of shalom, CPT asks the Mennonites and Brethren to reconsider whether it is more biblical to wait, or to act.[24] Drawing from biblical texts such as Isaiah 2:1-5; Amos 2:6-8; 5:10-15; 7:10-17; Luke 13:31-35; Matthew 23:13-33; Mark 11:15-19; John 2:13-17; Romans 13:1-7; and Acts 5:29, CPT studies and establishes a biblical tradition of confronting evil and sin, political and social powers, and working towards a peaceable kingdom where people have repented for the sin of violence and oppression. This biblical basis for action should not supersede the sometimes necessary and only available option of accepting suffering, but enables CPT to know when to confront and when to endure.[25] CPT sees its work as a faithful attempt to follow Jesus' example, and as a type of work that requires humility, patience, and a change from traditional pacifist thinking towards active involvement in the world.[26]

CPT's training of the Peacemaker Corps and Reserve Corps pays special, even primary, attention to "spiritual maturity and discipleship."[27] Leaders hope to foster

discipleship* as they aspire to serve as examples in these areas. Discipleship also comes about through CPTers conscious focus on prayer, biblical study, group worship and the incorporation of the spiritual dimension in their peacemaking activities.[28] For example, CPT meetings incorporate worship into the meeting and worship serves as the primary focusing activity. At the same time, worship carries from the meetings into CPTers activities, where worship and fasting become both a spiritual discipline for the community as well as a political statement (witness) to the larger world. A more detailed explanation of CPT's understanding of discipleship and witness occurs in Chapter 5.

With the continued recognition of the need and benefits of grounding their work within the community of the larger Christian church, CPTers seek to establish and strengthen spiritual networks. "Such groups composed of four to twelve caring, committed individuals seek: 1) to recover and strengthen the Christian nonviolent peacemaking witness, and 2) to become involved with and be supportive of one CPT member."[29] CPTers understand these networks as a powerful agent on particular projects where CPTers face violence on a daily basis. Through the prayerful support of their family, friends and church communities, CPTers feel connected to their home communities while away. CPTers also believe that prayer helps to effect change in the situations they face. When faced with impossible situations, CPT teams hope and rely on the prayers and action of their churches and other supportive communities back in North America. CPTers believe that the prayers of their communities both make apparent new possibilities for actions and reconciliation in impossible situations as well as regenerates team members. For example, Lena told me about how important prayer was to her and the rest of her CPT team in Haiti and Colombia:

* A concise definition of discipleship is modeling one's life after Jesus' example.

> Having the power of a whole huge church, and then other churches, inter-denominational, the power of having so much support; psychological, emotional, prayer support from such a huge number of people. For example, if we ran into trouble and we put out an alert it went out to *thousands* of people.... And there's huge power in that.... People who say, "Come on, go, go, go. You know what needs to be done best. You're on site, you see what's going on, we pray for you".... And in Haiti, if we hadn't had that power, we would've many times been paralysed because communications [with CPT Chicago] was nil at times.

The prayers of a large supportive community are what Lena feels effected change in impossible situations by opening up possibilities as well as renewing her team's strength to continue with their work.

The history of CPT provided by CPT's director, Gene Stoltzfus, on CPTnet includes a quotation from Ron Sider's speech from the 1984 Mennonite World Conference:

> Over the past 450 years of martyrdom, immigration and missionary proclamation, the God of Shalom has been preparing us Anabaptists for a late-twentieth century rendezvous with history. The next twenty years will be the most dangerous—and perhaps the most violent—in human history. If we are ready to embrace the cross, God's reconciling people will profoundly impact the course of history ... This could be our finest hour. Never has the world needed our message more. Never has it been more open. Now is the time to risk everything for our belief that Jesus is the way to peace. If we still believe it, now is the time to live what we have spoken.[30]

Several parts of this quote serve to situate CPT's ideological self-understanding. First, CPT understands God's nature in a particular way: as the God of Shalom, most definitely not the God of war, but a God that seeks reconciliation. Second, CPT arises out of and fulfills a history of persecution and witness via trials, martyrdom, and transience. Third, this text gives the sense that Anabaptists descendants have a special role in history, ordained by God, tested through the trials of history, and carrying a unique message of reconciliation. Fourth, Sider's message states that if Anabaptists are willing to suffer

sacrificially as Christ did, they can change the course of violence in the world. Fifth, Sider's message is urgent, and this urgency seems to legitimate his recruitment call. Descendents of the Anabaptists cannot sit idly by if the next twenty years will be as bad as Sider indicates it will be. Sider intends his message to evoke a response from the audience. The language he uses works to generate the sense of urgency necessary to mobilize peacemaking volunteers. Sider's language is almost like a militaristic recruitment call: "this could be our finest hour."

Finally, this statement is both a reaffirmation of theological roots in Anabaptism, "if we still believe it," as well as a challenge to descendents of the 16th century Anabaptists to find new ways of living their faith. John Howard Yoder speaks of church renewal in the following way:

> Far from being an ongoing growth like a tree (or a family tree), the wholesome growth of tradition is like a vine: a story of constant interruption of growth in favor of pruning and a new chance for roots. This renewed appeal to origins is not primitivism, nor an effort to recapture some pristine purity. It is rather a 'looping back,' a glance over the shoulder to enable a midcourse correction, a rediscovery of something from the past whose pertinence was not seen before, because only a new question or challenge enables us to see it speaking to us. To stay with the vinedresser's image, the effect of pruning is not to harm the vine, but to provoke new growth out of the old wood nearer to the ground, to decrease the loss of food and time along the sap's path from the roots to the fruit, and to make the grapes easier to pick. *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*[*] is not really a statement about the earlier tradition's permanent accessibility, as witnessed to and normed by Scripture in its nucleus, but always including more dimension than the Bible itself contains, functioning as an instance of appeal as we call for renewed faithfulness and denounce renewed apostasy. The most important operational meaning of the Bible for ethics is not that we do just what it says in some way that we can derive deductively. It is rather that we are able, thanks to the combined gifts of teachers and prophets, to become aware that we do not do what it says, and that the dissonance we thereby create enables our renewal.[31]

[*] The church reformed is always reforming.

Though Yoder's description of church renewal is poetic and positive, Christian churches do not necessarily warmly embrace the renewal that CPT promises. Even the historic peace churches have held CPT at arm's length for a long time. "The institutional church has not believed that success and activism are linked. In one way the development of Christian Peacemaker Teams goes along with the usual history of activist movements within church institutions. Rather than have the institution itself involved in activism, it creates a new organization outside the institution for that task. This insulates the institution from risk."[32]

Duane Ruth-Heffelbower argues that the institutional church's standoffish attitude towards activist groups "prevents the rapid change necessary for an organization to thrive in changing times."[33] I argue that the distance between the churches and CPT is in fact what is most likely to foster change. CPT finds its roots in the Anabaptist tradition by seeking the prayer and financial support of the historic peace churches, yet is removed enough to criticize it more effectively. In fact, I doubt there would even be any effective critique of the church if no person or group moved far enough away to reflect upon it. Distance is the very thing that allows people to see things in new ways. Despite (what I call) being on the edges of their churches, Keith's and Lena's life histories express hope and happiness that CPT will be more warmly welcomed than it has been, and that this has already begun.

CPT Delegates, Reservists and Corps

CPT's international work began with a delegation to the West Bank in 1989. Delegations continue to attract the greatest level of involvement, in terms of sheer numbers, likely

because it is one way for people to get involved actively with CPT if long-term service is not a viable option. This is especially the case for people who have families, ongoing careers, or studies in progress. CPT states that a primary purpose of a delegation is to create connections between communities experiencing conflict and violence and "concerned individuals, churches and groups in North America."[34] Delegates get a firsthand understanding of what is occurring within these communities, learn from and make connections with local non-government organizations working in the area, and witness, support and participate in CPT's nonviolent work. Lynch states that the types of activities in which delegations have been involved include "mediation... [and] fact-finding; accompaniment of endangered persons; nonviolent direct action; active listening; and, occasionally, informal diplomacy."[35] Upon completion of a delegation, which is usually 2 weeks in length, most CPT delegates make presentations on their experiences at churches and schools, and offer interviews or write articles for their local media in order to generate greater awareness of the situations facing the communities visited. Anyone wanting to work with CPT, either as a Reservist or a full-time member of the Peacemaker Corps, is required to participate in a delegation followed by a month-long training session.

CPT Reserve Corps are individuals who have participated in at least one delegation, and have completed CPT training. Reservists commit to a three-year term with CPT, serving from two to eight weeks per year. Since Reservists are part-time workers with CPT, they are responsible for generating their own financial support, usually from their home congregations, supporting congregations, family and friends.

Reservists work alongside full-time CPT Peacemaker Corps members on long-term projects as well as delegations.[36]

CPT Peacemaker Corps consists of those people who have completed both a delegation and training, and who have committed to full-time work with CPT for a three-year period. Corps members serve approximately three to six months working in areas of conflict (usually remaining with one of CPT's long-term projects), then return to their home community and country in order to rest as well as conduct presentations on their work. Following this short rest period, CPT Corps members return to their previous project or sometimes join another team. The longest running CPT project with a changing, but non-stop, presence has been in Hebron, beginning June 1995.[37] Full-time CPTers have their costs covered by CPT, though they are responsible for fundraising if possible. CPT receives money primarily through independent donations, but also through churches that reserve a portion of their budgets for CPT, as they would for the Mennonite Central Committee or church colleges.

CPT Corps' stated objectives are:

- To advance the cause of lasting peace by giving skilled, courageous support to local peacemakers in situations of conflict
- To provide congregations with first-hand information and resources for responding to world-wide situations of conflict, and to urge their active involvement
- To interpret a Christian nonviolent perspective to the media
- To inspire people and governments to discard violence as a means of settling differences in favour of nonviolent action[38]

Previous and Current Work

CPT began its work in 1989, with an informal delegation of one, David Weaver, to the West Bank. The following year CPT sent out several delegations, including a 12-member delegation to Iraq during the critical time of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the hostage crisis. Over the course of its existence, CPT has sent delegations to Israel and Palestine, Nicaragua, Iraq, Haiti, Chechnya, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Afghanistan, and places in Canada and the United States such as Esgenoôpetitj (Burnt Church, New Brunswick), Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows, Ontario), Indian Brook First Nation (Nova Scotia), Caldwell First Nation and Aazhoodena (southern Ontario), Secwepemculecw (British Colombia), Oneida (New York), Miami (Florida), and Pine Ridge (South Dakota).*

As of CPT's most recent annual report in 2002, 174 people participated in 21 CPT delegations in comparison to 124 people who participated in 11 delegations in 2001. There were seven delegations to Israel and Palestine, four to Colombia, three to Iraq, two to Puerto Rico, two to Asubpeeschoseewagong, one to Pine Ridge, one to Secwepemculecw and one to Oneida. Gene Stoltzfus (CPT USA) and Doug Pritchard (CPT Canada) also conducted a 4-week exploratory mission to Afghanistan in order to assess the situation in the country and to determine potential project areas. CPT hopes to begin a project in Afghanistan soon, provided they have the resources and enough trained CPTers.

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* Israel/Palestine (1 in 1989, 2 in 1991, 2 in 1992, 1 in 1993, 2 in 1995, 1 in 1996, 3 in 1997, 4 in 1998, 3 in 1999, 4 in 2000, 5 in 2001); Nicaragua (1 in 1990); Iraq (1 in 1990); Haiti (3 in 1992, 2 in 1993, 3 in 1994, 3 in 1995, 3 in 1996, 1 in 1997); Miami (1 in 1993); Chechnya (1 in 1995, 1 in 1996); Mexico (1 in 1995,1 in 1996, 3 in 1997, 3 in 1998, 3 in 1999, 4 in 2000, 3 in 2001); Puerto Rico (4 in 2000, 2 in 2001); Colombia (1 in 2000); Esgenoôpetitj (Burnt Church, New Brunswick) (1 in 2000, 1 in 2001); Asubpeeschoseewagong (Grassy Narrows, Ontario) (1 in 1999, 1 in 2000); Pine Ridge (South Dakota) (1 in 2000); Afghanistan (1 in 2001).†

Long-term CPT projects that are now closed have been in Jérémie, Haiti; Chiapas, Mexico; Bosnia; Esgenoôpetitj, Canada; and Virginia and Washington D.C. in the United States. CPT's longest running project is in the West Bank; a presence involving a continuous team living mainly in the Old City of Hebron, with Hebron and the surrounding villages being the focus of the team's work. The team's work involves things such as "school patrol," where CPTers monitor and assist children's morning journey to school through H2, the section of Hebron that is under almost constant curfew. H2 includes the Old City and the four Israeli settlements contained therein. The team responds to, intervenes in and documents crises such as home demolitions, detainments of Palestinians, the destruction of markets by military bulldozers, and flash outbreaks of violence between the Israeli Defence Force, settlers and Palestinians. The team also creates and maintains ties with other non-governmental and peacemaking organizations (both Israeli and Palestinian) and engages in non-violent acts of resistance such as helping Palestinian farmers harvest, plant trees, or clear roadblocks.

CPT has had an ongoing project in Colombia since February 2001, after receiving invitations from the Colombian Mennonite Church and the Human Rights Commission of the Colombia Council of Evangelical Churches. Working in Barrancabermeja and the region Ciénaga del Opón, CPT teams work along the river accompanying the refugee rural population who face daily physical threat from the military, paramilitary and guerrillas. CPT notes its efficacy in the area as facilitating the return of more than seventy other families to the region.[39] While much of the team's work focuses on the Opón river, CPT has had a presence in Barrancabermeja via work that includes street

patrols and public witnesses, such as denunciations, the public burning of death lists, documentation of human rights violations, fasts and public prayer.

In 2002, CPT began sending delegations and teams to Iraq before, during, and after the American-led war. During the war, CPT's team remained in Iraq as a presence to document the effects as well as protect vital infrastructure such as water treatment plants. As much of the team's presence in Baghdad relied on communication, media and e-mail releases, the team decided to leave Baghdad in favour of Amman, Jordan during the height of the war, as they were not able to communicate from Iraq. The team returned after two weeks, and have since been visiting schools, hospitals, and families both in Baghdad and the surrounding areas to document the effects of the war and ongoing military presence.

CPT has always attempted to balance overseas work with projects in North America. CPT's work in Canada has most recently been with the aboriginal communities in Esgenoôpetitj, New Brunswick and Asubpeeschoseewagong, Ontario. The Esgenoôpetitj project ended in August of 2002, after being a presence in the community for several fishing seasons. CPT started sending delegations and teams to Esgenoôpetitj in 1999 when non-Aboriginal fishers attacked the Mi'kmaq lobster fishery following the Marshall decision in Canada's Supreme Court, which affirmed Mi'kmaq fishing rights.[40]

With fact-finding delegations beginning in 1999, CPT now has an ongoing presence with the Asubpeeschoseewagong people, an Ojibway community near Kenora in north-western Ontario. The community maintains a roadblock, an attempt to prevent Abitibi-Consolidated Inc. from clear-cutting old growth boreal forests on what they consider to be their traditional lands. CPT has joined as a supportive presence at this

community's roadblock, and the Asubpeeschoseewagong people hope CPT's presence helps to prevent or reduce violence.

In the United States, CPT has worked with several urban violence reduction projects in places such as the Colombia Heights neighbourhood in Washington DC, the Lee Heights neighbourhood in Cleveland OH, and the Park Realty neighbourhood in Richmond VA. Previous long-term projects in the United States have included work with the Lakota community in Pierre, South Dakota, to prevent outbreaks of violence in a treaty land dispute. Currently, CPT has an emergency team in the Oneida Territory near Syracuse, New York, as families in the community face threats of violence, evictions and home demolitions on a disputed tract of 32 acres. CPT has been living with families facing violence, meeting with the local community and learning about the history of the land and leadership dispute, as well as meeting local and federal officials.[41]

Along with their longer-term projects with particular communities, CPT has encouraged CPTer to be involved locally in a variety of activities such the yearly School of the Americas protest at Fort Benning, Georgia. CPT also coordinated the "Oil Free Sunday" campaign and supports urban violence reduction projects in Washington, D.C.; non-violent civil disobedience; war tax resistance; and fasts and vigils. CPT has organized numerous conferences over the last twelve years exploring a variety of issues. Conferences have paid special attention to issues facing North American aboriginals, such as land issues, low-level flying over Labrador and fishing rights. CPT has also offered non-violence training sessions, workshops, "Peacemaker Congresses" and retreats for their own Peacemaker and Reserve Corps and for community groups. CPT's

"Campaign for Secure Dwellings" began December 1997, with the purpose of connecting North American congregations with families in Palestine facing home demolitions.[42]

CPT's ongoing campaign against violent toys began with the release of a packet on how to organize a "Sing-out Against Violent Toys," followed by "Violence is Not Child's Play" on how to organize toy store inspections. On top of all these activities, CPT releases a newsletter "Signs of the Times," and manages both a website and an Internet discussion forum.*

* <www.cpt.org>

2 – Surfacing in Service: Keith's Life Story

This chapter contains Keith's life history in his own words, collected from my interviews with him. I have edited for clarity and constructed the life history text into a narrative by weaving together the three interviews I had with Keith. My own questions or comments are in italicised text. Refer to Appendix 3 to see the list of questions I developed at the outset of my fieldwork, which shaped our interviews together.

* * *

I've done most of my growing up here, but I was born in Haiti. So whenever I think about life, I think something had to have started there. My parents definitely, being Mennonite meant something to them, you know? .... I bring them up because they definitely had an emphasis on service—to other people, to church, to the community, to the "poor" if you will. And so I think it's their basic influence that, maybe even more than being in Haiti, that started me out on that path...Okay, you're born in a place like Haiti, you're surrounded by poverty and all kinds of social issues and problems, and your parents are going through all that stuff, so how does that affect you?

* * *

Most of my faith development that I can remember happened at Fellowship Mennonite,* but then there's also what my parents gave me. That's two areas, but church specifically, Fellowship Mennonite Church is where I went. It's a pretty big congregation, a very professional place. But also, there was a real emphasis on different types of service. I remember, youth group is where I got exposed to a lot different things, and I didn't necessarily want to be exposed to them at the time.... My first two youth group leaders,

* Name of church has been changed.

one year one couple went off to Africa, the next year the second couple went off to Brazil. So, the emphasis on service was always very present in my face. And then, of course, there was also the youth group trips we did every summer.

* * *

I loved going. My aunts and uncles were there, people you knew from school, folks you knew from the community...I definitely felt I fit in, but I don't really feel it was a, I wasn't going because I wanted to be at church. I think that's my problem in talking about my religious beliefs. In many aspects of my life I think about myself more as a doer as opposed to a thinker. Even with CPT, well, I can't really articulate the scriptural reasons why I do what I do other than it's kind of a moralistic thing, and I just feel this is right. And if you feel this is right, than you've got to do something about it.

* * *

I've never been anywhere other than Mennonite, but I think a lot of—and I'm sure even within the Mennonite circles too—I think that the emphasis on service is a big thing. Mennonites emphasize community.... I think Mennonites tend to emphasize inter-personal, inter-community relationships more than others.

* * *

When I'm in a Mennonite place, then it feels like this natural, like I'm sure everybody does with their own cultural group that they grew up with. So it's a place where you just walk into, and whether you know people or not, you have this—I have this—underlying assumption that, "Alright, you know your safe here." Okay, and you can talk about what you want to talk about. You wouldn't have to talk about coming in and saying things you dislike about this war and having people be critical of you.

* * *

As a child growing up, what were some of the stories that you were told in your church? What were the things that stood out for you?

Yeah, you know what, I don't even. You'd think I'd remember more things that my dad would say. My dad would say, which are—and my mom would say or whatever—which were just sort of based along the line of the whole Golden Rule, like "do unto others." Or… "Don't worry about what he does. You've got to do what you know is right." Things like that. Like I do remember, I still—this is blasphemous… I just remember questioning a lot of—you hear of Jonah and the whale—or the Adam and Eve story, and just wondering, well how much of that is real? Because I want real, like actually happened, like that in that way. I think my understanding of those stories, maybe not those stories in particular, just of Christianity as sort of the more underlying messages—what are the underlying messages—regardless of did this happen like this.

* * *

In university somewhere I got this idea of, like, how do you make sense of the trinity? You know, Father, Son and the Holy Ghost. I should try and remember this. And I think I sort of thought of it as, you know, God the Father was sort of like the morals and the ethics and the rules—the rules that mom or dad would give to you as a kid. And then Jesus was sort of the walking example. Okay, you learn modelling in psychology, right? You learn based on what somebody does. Then the Holy Spirit would be more like, so if the parent died and left you, you'd still be left with everything that that parent gave you throughout life…. That's where I think mostly we live right now.

* * *

So I'm fifteen years old going to Montreal, and its like, well, why do I have to pay $150 to serve a bunch of bums soup in a soup kitchen when I could be playing baseball? And that turned out to be a pretty amazing part of my life, or a week of my life.... At that point I'd always been infatuated with city living, and I guess I still am, with issues of homelessness and poverty right here at home.

* * *

And then I went off to Washington D.C.—which was an awesome two years.... Just because Washington is so, is such an interesting city.... But it's also a city of such extremes, like rich and poor, black and white and those two things are sort of divided along those lines, literally.... These things just get you thinking about injustice within the world—rich and poor got me thinking about them. And I guess there I was working in a community of men, homeless men with AIDS and drug addiction, so you start to see people on a very human level, and that's what happened in the soup kitchen too.... On a real, more personal level, it made me want to push my service.

* * *

My involvement with CPT just came out of interest really. Oh, they're in Chiapas. Chiapas? Isn't that where the Zapatistas are from? Oh, there's a lot of talk about Zapatistas as scary people with masks, but there's something about social justice there, so let's go learn a bit more about this. And, you know, met a bunch of great people—real lucky—met one guy from Toronto about my age...somebody I was able to connect with.... It was like a hook, and somebody you look at and think: Yeah, I kind of like the way this guy is living life, and maybe I'll explore this a little more because I realize I don't have a lot of political activism. But, okay, some of these guys are my age; some of

them don't have a whole lot of experience either. Others really do, and you sort of want to be close to those folks and explore those issues. So, I headed off to Chiapas. That was enough to get me doing my training with CPT.

* * *

Did it help knowing people, then, who were connected with it?

Yeah, you feel more safe in doing it, more confidant that it could work out. You have a certain awareness that the values of the organization are probably going to line up with your own. You've got a few people that you know who are saying, "Oh you should do this," and then a couple of those people you know are in it, you know it's connected to the Mennonite Church.

* * *

I think my faith has just sort of always been there: values of peace and non-violence. And one thing I couldn't get through my head as a kid was why my dad wouldn't have a gun in the house, because what if somebody breaks in? And he would just say...guns are going to hurt you before they'll help you. And I'm thinking, you're crazy dad—as a little kid who likes watching Rambo movies and stuff—you see the gun as being the ultimate protector, to get even, and justice-maker and what not. And I think as a kid that was in my mind.

* * *

But to actually see one in Chiapas, to see one shot in Hebron.... I was doing e-mail one day and you could hear a bullet come down the lane.... It's the whole Star Wars thing as a kid, right? I asked Mark, who works for CPT: "what was that thing that sounded like a light sabre?" He said, "What do you mean?" And I said, "Well, there was a thing!

There was something out there," because there was fighting going on. "There was something out there, it sounded like a laser shooting in Star Wars." And he says, "Oh, that's a bullet going by."

* * *

So I think the biggest question: how do people—*how do people*—do that to each other, one; and what does it really accomplish, two; and obviously, so what do you do about it? And I'm not—to some extent, compared to people who live in these situations—naïve about why people do what they do, but I mean, it's pretty easy to see…it's about land control; it's about controlling people, resources, making your profits. And then, I just figure there's two ways of, either you're doing it to control people, or the other side of it is you're doing it to get a voice. But either side of it, no matter which way you come at it, what are you accomplishing in the end?

* * *

The one thing [Walter Wink] says [in *Engaging the Powers*], and it's been a constant question in my head, he says the only thing about violence: sure you can take power by violence but the only thing that that does is it changes the players in the game, it doesn't change the game itself. And you think, well yeah, it's kind of true, you know the adage, "live by the sword, die by the sword".... I think that's also a faith-based thing for me, just trying to think—always think about the other person, you know, the whole "do unto others"? And dad would just drive that one home because I could be a pretty mean kid, you know, I liked to fight. I was little self-centred… he'd always cut into me about others. And I'm like, "Dad, don't give me that crap!" And it's so true, right?

* * *

I think the thing about CPT for me is it's just interesting. It's plain—in a sick kind of way—it's "why are people willing to kill for land?" And that seems to be everywhere CPT goes, that's what it seems to be about. The Zapatistas want a voice, even the Abejas—they're Zapatista sympathizers, but they're pacifist people. But they want a voice. Palestinians too. Like, I believe suicide bombing didn't become an issue until 20 years after Occupation, but if you—I mean, that's such a mess—I think Christians are going to have to take some responsibility because, I mean, the situation wouldn't have come about—we could talk about the Holocaust—but there's a long history of racism probably right back to the biblical times...of Jewish folks not being able to own land. And there are good reasons why Hertzel thought, "We need a state of our own."

* * *

The things I try and do—my baseball habit I'd have a hard time proving—but my work, the work I've chosen I try to make an: I enjoy it, it's something I'm interested in, but it is also a commitment to my faith in God.... I always want to be involved in some voluntary activity in the community, whatever, and I always want to keep myself learning. And for me those are spiritual things or religious things because we owe to ourselves...and to our community to be doing those things. And for me that comes from a religious upbringing but also the example my parents set for me too. When people stop doing those things, then where does the world go? And my interests are people and issues.

* * *

Do you think...you'd be doing the same things if you didn't ever go to church?

I think it depends. I think church has given me a real push that way. I mean I work with a lot of people who don't go to church. We've got the ISM [International

Solidarity Movement] out there [West Bank and Gaza] who's doing similar work to CPT for, you know, not necessarily faith-based at all. A thing I struggle with right now...through all this anti-war stuff I've come into close contact with, there's always socialist folks out there, but there's international socialists, which are very active and I say, "I identify a lot with what you're doing," but I mean, they don't have a non-violent stance. They sure have a non-violence push...and when demos get going, they're not the ones that are involved in the rioting at all, but it's very much a group that I identify with—their sort of mission for change—but it's not faith-based at all. *At all.* In fact it's a Marxist group so they tend to believe that God is an excuse to avoid the world, whereas that's where I'm thankful—I do see that being used in a lot of religions—and I think Mennonites have been pretty good about using that [God] as an excuse to engage the world.

* * *

I'm curious why you feel you need to go and work as a peacemaker; or, to be a devil's advocate: "this isn't your country, this isn't your problem," why do you go? What motivates you to go and work there? How do you justify that?

I think in religious language, if not me, who? There's always that. And I do see it as my responsibility... If we know about it and we don't respond to it, then we're somehow guilty... I think there's a certain amount to, "if you are aware of a certain problem, and you have the means to participate in order to oppose it or confront it in any way, then it's your obligation to do what you can.

But who tells you that you have a responsibility to do that? Where does this sense of responsibility come from?

Well, if it happened to you and your neighbour saw it would you want him to sit by and walk away? I don't think I would. I mean, you can't tell anybody to make them truly believe that they do have a responsibility; I just believe that I do, I just feel I do, and I believe they do. Maybe that's it for me, I feel a sense that I need to, and that's backed up by a belief that others should. Saying that is a bigger; that's tougher.

* * *

Imagine a world where everybody had housing and health care and education. Wow, pretty awesome. What would I have to give up in my life to get that to happen? .... I think if there's going to be a just world, I think to a certain extent we're going to have to lose something. But as far as being a Canadian and negatively affecting; part of my thinks to myself, "well, it wasn't me, per se." But I think more importantly that that, certainly when I work with First Nations here, well, it was my ancestors. My family came to this area of the country when they were saying, "All right, you can fence off, if it's not fenced it doesn't belong to anybody, so you can fence off as much property as you want, up to this much property." Well, guess what? Those fences killed a way of life. And it killed a value system that says land doesn't belong to anybody. I guess I sort of look at it and say, "well, what can I do with my life right now? What I have. What are my opportunities and how can I be involved in these things?" I can choose to close my eyes and ignore it, totally and allow certain situations to go, or I can take an opinion. And my opinion may be wrong, it may be harming, who knows? Maybe the whole peace stance on the Iraqi war is the wrong thing to do.... But you've got to take a stance somewhere, and try to take a stand that promotes life, promotes justice.

* * *

I've been involved with various groups that have sort of built interest in the demonstrations in Toronto in around Iraq, and last year around Afghanistan, including little temporary groups we formed called "Bloor West for Peace." So you sort of get together and you do a few video showings and you try to pull people out to demonstrations, you know, raise awareness of this or that. But yeah, nothing quite like CPT. Like the thing, when you say, "have you been involved in any peace groups," I sort of use CPT as my defining line, and a big part of that now is, well do they go to the spots, and do they actively attempt to intervene in these? And most of these groups are good. They're good and they're needed and they're the thing that we need to do, but they're at home in their own neighbourhoods where we develop our minds up on what we read and what we think about; sort of our values, and not our values and what we read get taken out of there and go to the spot where there's something more real.

* * *

So I still fumble with the "why do situations come about, and what do you do about them?" The CPT is such a concrete way of doing it. I think a lot of social work programs; it is kind of a band-aid in some ways. You go to be a human presence in the hopes that your presence reduces violence, and I think that there's adequate evidence from CPT or other programs that, yeah, that does work. But it works in the here and the now, and in this small environment. Like in Chiapas, I think it was a CPTer who mentioned, well, anywhere we've been there's not been a murder. Wow that's pretty cool. But everywhere you've been, there have been all kinds of killings before you got there. And while you're there, the problems are going on elsewhere.... And I think its

more people that's needed.... And that's a big thing that needs to happen, but it's not real efficient, feasible or necessarily possible to have people in all these situations.

* * *

I guess the basic thing for CPT, I'm interested in politics, I'm interested in world issues, especially interested in conflict and conflict resolution, war and peace, and it just opens my mind in a—or it opens my eyes, maybe not my mind—opens my eyes to situations like few other things could. Like I certainly wouldn't get it watching the news. I watch CNN—I turn on CNN to hurt myself, but I also want to know what the pro-war side is saying. You hear about the demonstrations in Washington, and both in October, and now on the 18th [of February] when there's a massive one, CNN runs a line across the bottom of the screen that says tens of thousands of people gather in Washington while they're talking about the soldiers that are going over and the training that they're doing for this war and all the bad things that Saddam is saying. And then you hear a little later that—wait a minute—there was *hundreds* of thousands in January, probably 200 thousand. Some people have said half a million...but I just realize there are more sides to a story, and you can choose to be for...it's not even that, I would like to think you can choose to be for peace, or you can choose to be against it, but I think people at the top end of the U.S. administration—well I don't think they're for peace—part of me says they're for getting what they can when they can get it.

* * *

The biggest small step CPT takes is it changes minds and at least opens them up. And of course there's going to be in the situation with Israel and Palestine—some people go to Palestine, some people go to Israel—and they come back with personal experiences

[divided?] into two different points of view. So that's a tricky one to manage for me too. A tricky problem to manage.... I wish I could be honest and say I go into these places neutral, but I don't.

* * *

Do you see yourself as a CPTer, even though you're not working with CPT directly [now]?

Uh, yeah, but embarrassingly my responsibility to those values decreases. I think a certain amount of my CPTer in me comes out through the, most of my thoughts and what not, but in terms of my actions; the community really does strengthen you.... The community brings more of that out in me. It's always there influencing your thoughts though.... When I do interact with various activist crowds, you get the whole gamut—socialists and anarchists and caring citizens—that does influence the way I enter the room or the conversation.

* * *

Given your experience with CPT, what does pacifism mean to you?

When I saw that question, I thought, I don't know if I have the answer for it exactly. That came after we were talking about sort of different traditions' views on pacifism. I think about it on a very basic level, I think, well, do I have the ability to pick up a gun and shoot somebody, you know, to get and accomplish what I want? And I say, in the here and now, no, but who knows what different circumstances would bring for me? But in the here and now too, do I believe that that accomplishes anything? Do I believe that that really brings about any kind of success or help in the situation? In light of that, I say no. That only brings about destruction and pain and future problems.... Am

I willing to fight physically for an end state? [No, because I don't believe physical altercations and acts such as war can ultimately lead to a desired end state.][*]

* * *

Do your original churches know about your involvement with CPT?

Oh yeah, I come to talk to them. And I guess that's where the differences show a lot more too.... [At] Fellowship, it's a more professional environment and there's a lot more scepticism about, especially with the whole Burnt Church/Esgenoôpetitj project. Things like "You're doing what?" You know, there's more of that whole notion—which is called racist—of "those damn Natives, you give them everything and they want more." There's some of that around Hebron too, like [another CPTer] has really had to struggle to say, "Well no, this is legitimate. What I'm seeing is not what I'm twisting. I've not had some crazy Palestinian person warp my mind. This is the real thing." I just think the biggest solution is to take somebody over and show them, and say, "Here you go, and now argue with this."

* * *

How do you think they [your churches] see you, if you were to assume their voices?

From Fellowship, I think there's a good chunk of them who see it as naïve—well intentioned, but naïve. It's hard to say. Every place you go to—when you speak in Toronto—you get the crowd who comes out to denounce what you say around Hebron, so they see you as this anti-Semite, right, maybe as a Nazi. But you also get a lot of people who are really interested and are kind of inspired by the work that you do, right? And they think it's necessary, and they think, "Oh my goodness, how could you do that?"

[*] Text added by Keith after reading a draft of his life history.

How does [your current church] see you?

I think [my current church] sees it as an important part of the community. CPT is involved in a really important part too. I think that stems out of their initial vision to be a tool of justice and the current vision of most of the members to do that too. I think that they think CPT's actions are necessary in the world.

* * *

What do you see as your role, or what do you bring as a CPTer to Fellowship, to [your current church], to your family, to your community?

I just think the stories that most people aren't exposed to. Stories that a lot of people care about, in terms that they're big enough to make it to the TV screen, but you provide a—I don't know if I want to say devil's advocate—but an alternative view to it, because most people in this day and age know that they're not getting the full story from the any major media source. And hopefully the stories I bring speak to peace.

3 – I'll Go Where You Want Me To Go, Dear Lord: Lena's Life Story*

This chapter contains Lena's life history in her own words, collected from my interviews with her. Like Keith's, I have edited for clarity. I have also constructed the life history text into a narrative by weaving together the three interviews I had with Lena. My own questions or comments are in italicised text.

* * *

I was born to an Old Order Mennonite farmer in Waterloo County, back in the forties, in the middle of the second World War, and I was number eight in a family of ten. My parents knew how to live with not very much, so we were never poor—depending on who you measured us with—but I never thought we were poor, we always had lots of food, not always rich man's food, but we always had lots of food. My mother had a huge market garden, we had a one hundred acre farm, my dad did mixed farming, which was not unusual for that time—all the neighbours were also mixed farmers. I grew up in a very homogeneous community were all the farmers did similar type of farming.

* * *

The Old Order Wisler Mennonites separated from the other larger Mennonite church back around the turn of the century when the cars where beginning to come in, and a group of Mennonites decided that cars and modern things were not for them and therefore they actually started, even their uniform went more old-fashioned. I have pictures of my great-great grandparents that were dressed like anybody else would have been dressed in that era, and everybody drove horse and buggies back then. When the cars came in, the

* This is the title to a song that Lena remembers being sung when she went forward for an altar call during missionary conference weekends while she was studying at the Ontario Mennonite Bible School. Lena felt this was her theme song as a child and youth. In her presentations at churches, Lena now uses this song as part of her story about why she joined CPT.

Old Order Wisler decided to stay with the horse and buggies. And so my father and my mother were members of the Old Order Wisler Mennonite and I went to church [Martin's Mennonite Meeting House], it was only a few miles from my house; my father's farm was on the edge of Waterloo.

* * *

Hospitality was considered very important, very, very important and anybody could visit anybody. You know, you wouldn't wait for an invitation to go there, because that was the tradition...and I'm sure it had to do with the fact that there was no easy communication. Tradition that that's the way it was done. Hospitality was just, I would say, was just as important as the church service. All of life, if I look at it—if I look at the really serious Old Order Mennonites who really believed in their way of life—their religion was a total way of life. There were a few that lived for their traditions and they also read their Bibles, but there were those like my father who just believed that religion is all of life, not just going to church on Sundays. Therefore it was not that important that you go to church every single Sunday.

* * *

Women are well respected in the Old Order Wisler group—but they certainly have their role. My mother's role was not quite as traditional as some. My mother had a lot of say as to what went on in our family. My mother had a market garden and she was in control of those monies, in fact, my father allowed her to have the money from the Saturday markets because that paid for our groceries and for the fabric to make clothes and fabric to make quilts and other projects that my mother had, including relief. She was already helping with MCC at the time, even though most Old Order Mennonites back then were

not directly involved. But the Old Order Mennonites *have* been collecting for MCC for many, many years, I think since Second World War.

* * *

I had no literal concept of who God was—I just knew that life was meant to be lived and that I belonged. I received a few hints of heaven and hell when I was a student at public school, and I remember one night coming home after going to what they called a Bible club, and had been told that if you didn't do a sinner's prayer and ask Jesus in your heart, you would go to hell. Whatever this hell was. So I didn't want to go wherever that was, so I prayed to God and asked God to make my black heart white. And I've been told that Jesus' red blood would wash it white. But I remember taking my crayons and wondering how in the world could that ever happen? And I coloured and I coloured and I coloured, and there's *no way*, no matter how much red you put over top of black, it never turns white. So I said, well a bunch of that is hogwash. I knew that it could not be exactly like that. But I did pray to Jesus. I prayed to Jesus and I asked God to take care of people.

* * *

We were expected to take on responsibility at a very young age, but each one of us had a *spot and a place* in the family. So even though I was number eight, I knew that I belonged. I *knew* that I belonged. My mother didn't need another baby when I was born, and so much of my care was done by my older sisters—I had, actually I had four older sisters—but it was mostly my two oldest sisters, specifically my oldest sister, who took over most of the care of me when I was newborn, and then my sister who was seven years older than I was my babysitter. So I was *wanted* and *loved,* not handled a lot by my mother, I don't believe, but I belonged.

* * *

So I grew up in an environment, a very enriching environment, and the controls on my life were not tightly outlined. I was just, I grew up knowing that certain things were okay to do, and certain things you just didn't do, and I knew what my mother wanted me to do and what she didn't want me to do, and most of the time I never did what my mother didn't want me to do.

* * *

I knew that when I would grow up I would have a garden and I would have a family and I would have specific roles, and every spring I would plant a garden, and every spring my husband and the men would be out in the fields. I knew that I would bake special cookies for snacks for them, and that they would be big ones with lots of apple butter on them and I knew that I would milk cows. I knew that I would have chickens. I knew that everything and all of this—all those things—were very important and that my, even as my role as a child knowing that if I didn't feed the chickens at night that they would go hungry, because that was my job. And it was important. Therefore, who I was, was special.

* * *

I was a very independent child at a very young age. I would decide what I wanted to do—I didn't *need* others. I would go off on my own, and got lost several times—my family had to come and find me. When I was quite young one time I climbed through a fence into the barn, and they found me out there when I was too young to be out there alone.

* * *

I was bored in school, and any excuse I had I stayed home. I learned very easily in spite of myself. But I didn't like to be enclosed. I wanted to do *my* thing. I liked to be at home. I like to walk down the road and follow the little trickles of muddy water in the spring, and check stuff out, you know, why stuff went the way they did. But the interesting part was *I* wanted to find out. I didn't want to ask anybody. I never asked my teacher how to do anything.

* * *

I was *just* beginning to participate and understand a bit of what was going on [in the Old Order Mennonite Church], and then my father bought the car.... We left the Old Order church, and my dad went directly to St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. I think probably the fact that my oldest brother had already left the church several years earlier and was an associate pastor at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church probably made some difference. But also, my dad had relatives and friends at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church so it wasn't—for my dad—it was no big deal, because my dad was not, I wouldn't have called him...a staunch Old Order Mennonite. But he used to say, "I can live out my Christian life in any church."

* * *

Now remember, we had been Old Order Mennonite horse and buggy. I was an adolescent and had begun to accept my parents' religion. It was very much an upheaval for me, even though two of my sisters had already left the Old Order church, and one of my brothers who was associate pastor at the St. Jacobs Mennonite Church at the time. But *I* was still a little Old Order Mennonite girl. I used to wonder why my mother allowed us to wear clothes that weren't really Old Older Mennonite. My parents were

never strict believing that you have to do things a specific way, and so I wore my neighbour's winter coat that my sister had also worn, and it was not a Mennonite coat. It had fur on it that my mother removed. It was *not* navy blue and it was *not* black. It was a blue-grey colour. And I used to wish that my mother would make a nice navy blue coat with a matching hat, like my friends had in my class. But I didn't quite belong. At the same time, as I reflect back on who I was as a child in school, I always stood out for the underdog. If the kids were picking on a kid, I never participated.... I would find a way to relate to that person that was being picked on. And it used to just *hurt my guts* when the older kids would gang up on one of the girls, who were maybe, who were not Mennonite or had just moved into the community. It was terrible that way. If you didn't grow up in that community, you were not accepted. I thought that was terrible. So even back then I was already fighting for the underdog.

* * *

It was very difficult for me, and I always felt that I didn't belong there either. It was even worse! Because, I didn't have the Sunday school background, my parents never preached at us. We weren't forced to read the Bible or anything. My dad used to sometimes, my dad used the German-English Bible to get us to read a bit, and that way we learned a bit of German and he used the Gospel of John as a teaching tool for us. So we knew a little bit of Bible, but we didn't have all these Bible stories. And I realize now that it wasn't even terribly important; but, if you're fourteen and your classmates in Sunday school—15 girls who were close to my age all in one class—and they all know the Bible stories and I don't know the details, I felt left out.... I began to believe I was a bit retarded. And that was difficult for me. I became ill and I became depressive. I don't think my family

knew how depressive I was, but I became suicidal at that point and, but I don't believe my family even knows now how depressed I was.

* * *

And then when I was sixteen I asked my dad if I could go to Ontario Mennonite Bible School.... He was actually I think pleased that I wanted to go.... It was a three-month study, and if you went three years—three months for three years every winter, January, February, March—you could take a complete survey of the Bible from Genesis to Revelations. And there were also some church history courses offered. Well, I really got into this. I loved it! I loved my teachers, and I was the youngest in the school that year, but I began to see that I was a real person. I could learn these things as well as anybody else. I wasn't stupid; I was not retarded. I was accepted—teachers accepted my responses to questions, and I became a person.

* * *

I got married, and then [after my marriage fell apart] I went to university for *me*!.... At the University of Waterloo, I did English.... I really enjoyed my courses. It was either going to school, or going spending a few years in a psychiatric unit, and I decided they can't stick me in there, even though my psychologist at the time suggested—because it would be cheaper—to sign in a psychiatric ward, so that a psychiatrist would deal with me. But I decided no.... I said, "No, you can't stick me away. I'm going to stay home, but I'm going to school. My kids are now old enough, they can make their own lunches and their own breakfasts and mom's going off to school." Now, my children hated those years. And they got into stuff they should not have gotten into because I wasn't always there.

* * *

My faith is still very, very similar to what it was as a child, because everything that I do and be is part of what my faith is. My faith is part of my life, just as my father's was, and I think I learned it from him and from my mother. Faith is a part of being as much as a part of doing, but if there's no doing with the being, then it's not total. So I believe in a...—I don't know how to describe it—faith for me is all of life. Everything I do, I do and think and plan, all of that is part of my faith.... I live from day to day, and my faith here and now, believing in being and doing that which is good for all mankind is as important to me as the idea of someday going to some place that some people call heaven. I believe that here on earth—living here on earth—is as important to me as someday getting into some future place called heaven.

* * *

I'm a member of Brussels Mennonite Fellowship in Brussels, and I attend there most of the time. If I skip a Sunday service, I don't worry about it, just like when I was a kid and we'd skip sometimes.... Once a month I still do CPT reports and talk to people about violence and non-violence.

* * *

I think one of the basic doctrines of being Mennonite is to stand for peace and justice. Peace and justice for all. Now I'm somewhat disappointed in my conference [Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada] and in my church because we haven't always made that our priority. In fact, we haven't been willing to even...have a [full-time] paid position for people in peace and justice ministry in our conference. Now we *have* had part-time people, but we've never had a full-time peace and justice ministry in my church. And at

one time, our conference had actually dropped it for some reason. And when that happened, I cried. They *dropped* it. [For several years]*

Is this a role that you think you could fill?

I probably could. But I'm not sure that I could fill it in the way that—I don't think—I don't believe that the Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada as a whole is ready for the type of peace and justice that I would try to teach. And therefore—I did apply at one time, and then realized that I wouldn't get the job with what I said, and decided that I wasn't ready to do it, the church wasn't ready to do it. I believe that I'd probably do it, but I would have to adjust, I would have to comply some because of who our churches are right now. And there are some things that I would want to say that our churches aren't ready to hear.

* * *

I believe that everything that I have, at least half of it belongs to somebody else. Because I have more than I need. Even though I have no job right now...I'm still rich. I don't nearly have as much money in my bank as a lot of Mennonites do, but I actually have a savings account. And the majority of the people in the world don't have anything. And that's one reason I appease my conscience a bit, I have actually bought most of the things to make up four relief kits [for Iraq]. As I was doing this I thought of my mother. My mother would never have just done one [relief kit], even though she had ten kids, and we didn't have much money.... Now I'm not saying that my mother was any better, but my mother was taking her life seriously. [Faith and] life was not [only] going to church; life was sharing what you have with those around so you can all have instead of being haves and have-nots. We need to learn for everyone to be haves. We don't have haves and

* Added after reading a draft of her life history.

have-nots anymore. So it's not us and them, and that it becomes we. I guess I gave you a sermon, huh? And I'm not sure that our churches are ready for me to preach that sermon. Oh, I've preached that at a couple of our churches. I got some feedback from the one, they didn't like it, but they've invited me back.

* * *

I believe that CPT is a good example of folks who have committed themselves and given their lives for non-violence. So I think that's a good teaching, especially now, because many, many people are asking questions [about the war in Iraq].... So I think that our historic peace churches right now have *a huge responsibility* to do teaching on non-violence and how to be non-violent, and to live it everyday, not just when there's war. So I believe that this teaching of doing it, going out to these churches and especially working with young people is extremely important at this time. Because many of these young people, they watch SO MUCH television, and they have video nights where they watch the most horrible violence and horror movies, so what are they learning? If we as a church don't give them anything else for them to think about, then they're going to grow up thinking that violence is fun, that violence is a game, and that that's what you do, because it's everywhere.

* * *

So yeah, I could teach peace and justice, but it also has to be done in a way that people will hear it. And sometimes I really struggle with, yes I do believe in prophets and I believe that we need to push society a smidgen, and we have to keep moving towards—and I think I do better than I used to in trying to teach things, because I found that the more simple form we use, if there's any, that the more people are able to receive it from

the gut. The less sophisticated it is the more ready people are to accept it. Even in my own little church. They asked me to tell my story one time there a while ago now, and I used to, you know, I'd kind of preach at them, and it didn't work. So this one time I just told my story, but told it in a way that I might have told it ten years ago or twenty years ago, instead of the way that I might tell it today. And I used old-fashioned ways of describing it, and I used old songs of commitment that were sung back then, and I had my church singing, what is that song? "I'll go where you want me to go." And people were affected. And if you can get people affected so their emotions are touched, you might get them to act.

[Singing]

> I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord
> 'Ore mountain or plain or sea
> I'll be what you want me to be, dear Lord
> I'll go where you want me to go

* * *

The priest of the presbytery [in Jérémie, Haiti] invited CPT, they call him Père Samdi, they invited us to come to the presbytery and *be a presence*, because the FRAPH*...at the time we didn't know that they were run by the CIA, that CIA had implemented FRAPH. They called FRAPH a political party, but it was really a paramilitary, a paramilitary group who were young "punks" off the street who were already in trouble with the law. There was no real governance at the time, the military was in power, but there was no control; and these young men could do whatever they wanted to. They were given these guns; mostly handguns, pistols, and they were told to shoot anybody that would whisper Aristide's name. The village, I mean the area, St. Hélène, which is where CPT was in the

* Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti

presbytery at St. Hélène, that's a section of Jérémie, and the people of St. Hélène—probably about 90% of the people in St. Hélène—were supporters of Aristide. And they were poor people. And so FRAPH was integrated among them, because some of the FRAPH people were poor punks too. So you had some living right among the people.... So everybody feared the FRAPH, nobody trusted anybody, nobody trusted *anybody*, there was no such thing as meeting together, because if you did, you were suspect.... So for I don't know how many months, Père Samdi had not been able to hold mass in this church, but when CPT was there as a presence, Père Samdi could hold a mass, we would hold it outside of the church under a little shelter made of palm branches in the actual courtyard of the presbytery, not in the church, because the courtyard was more protected. And so as long we were there...there'd be masses on Sunday morning, once a week he'd come and do his masses. But if we weren't there, he couldn't have done them. Everybody lived in fear.

* * *

So we did have some opposition, but I never felt any direct threat to my life, but the four of us on the team at the time when they actually did bring Aristide back, and when the Americans came and they were talking about bombs and planes that had already left and were on their way to Haiti, we had made plans of what we were going to do.... But we had decided together that we wanted to stay. Other Americans and Canadians were leaving, were leaving Haiti and we decided we were going to stay with the people. And if the people were going to stay there and they were going to die, then maybe we will too, and we stayed with the people.

* * *

I had considered Afghanistan, but I knew my children would really be upset, so—but I talked about it one time. "Oh, no way, mom. You're not going to Afghanistan." And then when I seriously started talking about Colombia then at least I wasn't going to Afghanistan. So I got some opposition, but I just said, "Look, this is who I am, hey guys, this is who I am. I have some choices I need to make. And I said, "I know that it affects you too, but this is what I really want to do. This is who I am." And I have never had support from my children for my CPT work. My daughter understands what I'm doing and why, but she doesn't like me going. The boys, the boys think that, ach; I'm just wanting to travel all over the world. Why don't you stay home and rock your grandchildren? But, I feel support from my children in the sense that they support me as a person but they don't really understand why I *need* to risk my life to go to these other countries and risk my life—and if I'm going to risk my life—why don't I risk my life for *them*. But they don't realize that I am, in essence, risking my life for them too, because nobody's truly free until all people on this earth are free, and it's just—I mean, the world is a mess—and four CPTers in a little town in Haiti can't do much, but, we made an impression there and when we come back to visit we were well received and there were a lot of good things said about us.

* * *

I don't experience fear when I walk into a crisis. I don't feel it at all. My body doesn't shake, my voice doesn't shake, I talk as if nothing has happened. And I can walk right up to the guy with the gun and ask him, "What are you doing?" And then he said, "Oh, I'm fixing it." And then I go around and I shake hands with all the other guys and talk and walk into the house, and then I see a pile of weapons, and I go, "Oh, God!" But I don't

allow anybody to notice it. And they say, "Are you looking for guns?" And I say, "Well, not really, I was looking for the young man who was here, the fifteen-year-old boy. This is his bed, isn't it? And he had been stung by a stingray and I had visited him. Where is he, is he doing okay?" You know, I just sort of change the subject, because I wasn't in any position to talk about guns. And I wasn't going to imply that I'm checking up on their guns, although I was. I was more checking to see who was all in the houses, but see I had excuses to do it because I knew the people in the houses. But I'll tell you, that day too I came home from there and I was so mad, I was so angry, I was seething.... I came home and I'm yelling and swearing and using the worst horriblest language under the sun, and I stood up against the wall, and I'm howling and screaming until I started to cry, and I sat on the wall, on the floor and I go, "Bring me some sackcloth and ashes." And then I calmed down. But that was my way of getting rid of the anger.

* * *

I believe that as long as CPTers are meeting people and encouraging people, then what they are doing is a miracle. Not only for the people that they're walking with while they're walking with them, but also for ourselves when we come back here, because I think we are more whole. I as an individual...when I've had to walk into my own hatred, into my own anger, into my own fear, and I come back here I am a more whole person because of what I have experienced. Because if I grow up in an environment where I'm always secure and always have everything that I need, never have to face any kind of bad situation, then I never have to recognize any hatred within me, I never have to recognize any big anger within me. I don't ever have to really sense any real fear, and therefore I don't really know myself. And I think I'm better than those who pick up guns and shoot

each other. I know that I can be angry enough to want to kill someone. I know that I can hate enough, especially if that person's across the river and I see what he's doing over there across the river, I can hate him, I can be very angry with that person, and I can be extremely fearful of that person, but when I choose to go into the boat and go across the river, meet that person and meet him face to face, shake his hand, talk to him and close enough to him that I can feel his electromagnetic field, and I can look at his eyes and I ask him about his family, and then he asks me why I am there, and I can share a bit of me and he shares a bit of me, and we become human beings. But as long as he's across the river over there and I see him pointing his gun at somebody else that I think is unfair, I have horrible hatred, and *horrible* anger against that person.

* * *

I believe the potential to kill; the potential to do bad violence is within. And if I don't face that violence, there's a much greater chance of me acting out that violence, if I don't admit it, and if I don't face it. I cannot be a peacemaker until I have faced the violence within me. And I have experienced and felt that violence and that hatred after seeing what humans can do. It's interesting because it's easy to get drawn into becoming what you actually hate. And when you hate it enough, you can become violent. So when I see people doing destructive things to other people, and that makes me very angry, it makes me want to do those same destructive things towards those evildoers so therefore, I become exactly what I hate. So we have to be very careful with that. That doesn't mean that hate is wrong, because hate is an emotion and we can hate. Hate and anger brings us to action.

What prevents you from acting on these impulses? If you can recognize anger and hate within yourself, what prevents you from stopping short of acting on that?

Because I choose not to. I choose not to, and usually it's within a community of others who also believe in peace and justice rather than acting out against that which is hateful. It's a choice.

* * *

But I believe that if we want to really, really live what we claim that we believe in, if we are Christians and we follow Jesus then we have to do it sacrificially, and that doesn't mean that we keep two hundred thousand or even five hundred thousand dollars in some reserve in the bank while there is people out there that don't have blankets to wrap themselves in.... And yet we claim to be followers of Jesus, we call ourselves Christians, which means we're supposed to be followers of Christ, and he gave everything that he had, and he lived with practically nothing, with no security, he faced danger and he walked into it, and we say we're followers of him. He was politically involved and we dear little, sweet little Mennonites want to stay out of politics. Well I thank God that Christian Peacemaker Teams came into being and is actually addressing some of these issues and is challenging the status quo of our church. And I'm very, very excited that hundreds of people, thousands of people have changed their minds and CPT is no longer at the very, very edge of the church, but is now a very intricate part of the thought and life of many of our churches and *many* of our churches now have CPT in their budgets and I'm very excited about that.

* * *

When we get death threats, we always have some people who say, well, we're just stepping over the line, that we're going too far, that we're pushing too hard, we're taking too many risks.... Those of us who have been on the field...we know that when that opposition comes, it means that we've really been doing the right thing. And on the field we do know that we have to, sometimes we'd be a bit more careful and we'd make sure that we have a teammate with us, we can rely on each other, but we continue to take risks and every single time that CPT has had...death threats we've had large segments of our church supporting groups saying, "Oh, CPT's just going too far." But that's what CPT *does*. And CPT will continue to do it, as long as we have committed people who really believe in non-violence, and really believe in walking into fear, and really believe in not running from, but challenging and walking into situations where we know unjust things are happening. Even if it's dangerous. And that's where we follow Jesus. Jesus did NOT turn around just cause it was dangerous. And as long as we have CPTers and as long as CPT exists, I believe there will be people that will walk into their fear and will continue to do this even when their supporting group says, "WHOA!" Because if you're not [out] there you don't really see it. You don't really know for sure. And I don't believe that everybody can do CPT, and I don't believe everybody could go out there and be a CPTer, but I wish there was thousands upon thousands more people who would take these kinds of risks and not be afraid to step out of their comfort zones a bit, and they would be blessed.

* * *

Sometimes we got rained on in Colombia. Sometimes we slept in an inch of water by morning. We slept on little half-inch high-density foam pads or some of us had some

other little air-filled self-inflated cushions. It's not what you call big comfort, but people are not happier if they have a hundred thousand dollar bedroom suite. People are *no happier* than those folks on the river that slept on three, four-inch foamies.... The joy of eating a mango with a person on the river, there is nothing more pleasant than pigging out on mangos with folks who are basic farmers on the river Opóne in Colombia. Or sitting on a rock, peeling a tree-ripened grapefruit, cutting it and sharing it with children and others; sitting on a rock under a tree in Haiti after having walked ten or fifteen miles in the hot sun, and you stop and you buy a half a dozen grapefruits and you cut them in half and share them with a bunch of people. Those are sacred moments. That was like a communion.

* * *

When, because we call ourselves Christians, Christian Peacemaker Teams, sometimes it's a barrier when they first go into a community, especially with Muslim communities, like Hebron and Bosnia the same thing, I was in a Muslim community in Bosnia, you have to first prove yourself. So you can't just take for granted the people. You have to go in there and build relationships before they will trust you. And out at Esgenoôpetitj and Indian Brook and other reserves that I visited when I was out east, there was always a conversation about how can you call yourself Christian? When the churches have done all this horrible stuff to us? And that was a really big thing and every, every native reserve that I visited was always, "Well, how can you call yourself, how can you be a Christian when the church has done so many horrible things?"

And how did you answer that?

Well, then I would say, myself I would say, Jesus believed in all people and that Jesus believed in the dignity of every human person, and Christian Peacemaker Teams follows *that* Jesus, the Jesus that believes in justice, the Jesus who believes in love, the Jesus who gave his life for the poor, the Jesus who walked with the poor, the Jesus who died a political death as a, one of the worst, horrible deaths that a prisoner could die in his day, he died as a poor person. And that's the Jesus we follow. Not the Jesus of the big churches who believe in money and power and have destroyed much, and not those who would abuse and take advantage of the weak, but that we believe in walking with the weak and that we believe in a Jesus that cares when someone is hurting and that when it gets down to the crunch we do take sides. CPT likes to walk on the line and say, "Oh we're going to not take sides, or we'll try to stay in the middle." But it's impossible. When it gets down to the crunch and the nitty gritties of what is just and unjust then CPT falls on the side of the poor and oppressed.

* * *

There's problems within CPT too, CPT is humans, we are humans, we are trying to walk in a way of peace and justice, but our own personal preferences and our own baggage that we carry—emotional and psychological baggage that we carry with us—can get in the way at times of our interpersonal relationships on our teams. And also in how we relate to the people. Being a Christian organization doesn't mean that they're going to do the work any better, but we do a different work. Having the power of a whole huge church, and then other churches, inter-denominational, the power of having so much support; psychological, emotional, prayer support from such a huge number of people. For

example, if we ran into trouble and we put out an alert it went out to *thousands* of people, and at this point around the world, but especially in Canada and U.S., but actually, it does go around the world. And there's huge power in that.... I hope that people can also continue to work when that system breaks down. I hope that our trainees in Chicago and other places where they're being trained will also learn that what CPT does is *not only* what can be put on e-mail. CPT work is people with people, and doing it whether all of the information can come back to home base or not.

* * *

Our faith is increased because others are walking with us. And I believe that's the only way to be a Christian, is to be with others. One *cannot* be a Christian alone. One takes the hand of others, and then you take the hand of the next person, and sometimes that hand reaches across oceans and lands where it seems it's impossible, but the touch is there and one knows it, feels it.... It would've been very, very easy to give up and just say, "This is impossible. Let's just all go home." But when you have people counting on you and you have young parents with their children who just thank you for being there, how can you leave? So when you do leave, you cry, but you have to give those people up too, and say, "Okay, they somehow survived and their spirit will carry them through all of this even if I'm not there. Because I can't be there all the time. And my decision to leave certainly affected them, and maybe their grandchildren too.... We're not indispensable though, and there's a great power in those people that live on that river. Their decision to go back out there against great odds, you know, this shows me too how humans when they really believe in what they are doing they can do it. So if I join CPT, I have to *really* believe that I can do it. And if I imagine going out there and facing what

CPTers are facing and I panic and I can't deal with it in my imagination, I will not be able to deal with it when I do face it. If I cannot imagine myself doing those things then I should stay at home and pray for those who do go, and not go. One needs a big vision and a big dream. And sometimes take risks that look stupid. But even stepping into the face of death, sometimes it looks like it's stupid, but sometimes we learn an awful lot and sometimes we can face the adversary and actually meet him as a human being, even though he threatens us.

* * *

It's difficult for children and their spouses to accept when their mother goes off and does this, when they know she's taking huge risks with her life. It's very hard for them. It caused some problems.... But then when I almost died of cancer and I came through that one and then chose to go to Colombia, the children had already faced knowing that their mother had risked her life in Haiti, and then she went to Bosnia, which was really horrible, and then they almost lost her to cancer, and then she goes to Colombia—by that time I think they were resigned to the fact their mother's going to follow her path—and by the time I went to Colombia, it was, "Okay, that's what mother does. That's our crazy grandma." And before I left to go to Colombia, my daughter is in tears. She says, "Mom, I know you have to do this, but I don't want to lose you. I want my daughters—at that time she had two little girls—I want my children to know their crazy grandma." So yeah, they don't like me going, but they know that that's who grandma is and that's what she's going to do, so they're going to have to accept it. But for now I've chosen to stay home and get to know my grandkids.... And my brothers and sisters, they see me as this eccentric and a little bit different. They don't really understand my drummer. I think

they're a little bit afraid of it because if they accept it fully, they might have to commit more of their own life to this kind of thing. And I think that's part of what the church people too is—I mean, if you're going to totally support some idiot like me—that is, totally believe in what that person is doing, it's going to tug at your own senses and you're going to say, "Oh my God, do I have to do that, in order to be a Christian, do I have to be like that?" So, I understand where some people will stand back from me a little bit and don't understand why I do what I do, and don't really want to understand, because if they did, they might have to do it.

* * *

When I was a kid I thought faith was throwing your brain away. Now I know that faith is stepping where the ground doesn't seem solid. It doesn't mean throwing your brain away, but it does mean doing things that don't seem possible. But you don't think about it, when you have to do it, you do it. And it works. But it works a whole lot better when you're aware of the fact that there's thousands of people that are cheering you on. I remember in Haiti sometimes, just thinking of all the people. I thought of all the churches that, like, I thought of my family members and the churches they went to and those hundreds of people who were at least once a month were praying for CPT, and some of them once a week, others who were burning candles.... When I thought of all that, I mean, how can you not believe that it's going to work?

* * *

I would say I am more of what I was before. I now know that impossible things are possible, and that when a human is in a situation that is totally impossible, seems humanly impossible and really can't be done, that when one is pushed into a position or

in a situation where it needs to be done, it can be done. And that humans are capable of enduring *much* more than most of us believe.... It *is* possible to walk into our fear. It *is* possible to walk twenty miles when you're sick to your stomach, it is possible to sleep on a mat, even if there might be some bugs or animals out there that could come and visit you. It is possible to sleep when you're dead tired. It is possible to sleep even if there's guys with guns sleeping not too far away. It is possible to walk through the jungle. It is possible to find your way back even if you go out at night and you thought you knew the way and you didn't know the way and you get lost for a while, it is possible to find your way back. And that there is—yeah, in that sense—I have experienced more of what I already believed. I already believed that humans can do more than what I had been doing. But I actually had the privilege of experiencing the impossible being possible.

4 – On the Edges: Similarity and Difference

> I will try to be at the edge between my fear and outside, on the edge at my skin, listening, asking what new thing will I hear, will I see, will I let myself feel, beyond the fear.[43] Minnie Bruce Pratt

Since the approach I take in presenting and analysing the life histories in the previous chapters centres on the ways Keith and Lena understand themselves and the ways these self-conceptions have changed because of CPT, it is appropriate to introduce the definition of religious identity that I use. Drawing on Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor, I believe that our conversations, encounters or conflicts with various communities, families, and institutions create identity. Keith's and Lena's understanding of the Mennonite faith, expressed in CPT, is not merely one ideology, community or institution they encounter. Keith's and Lena's life histories testify to an experience and practice of faith that is not just one aspect of who they understand themselves to be. Rather, it infuses their whole experience of living, and shapes their dialogues with other people, communities, and institutions. While the Mennonite church and tradition is one institution with which they identify, they aim to integrate who they are and what they do with a personal sense of their faith. As Lena says in her life history, "My faith is a whole way of life."

Self and Identity: Definitions

There is a vast array of studies on the formation of self and identity, far more than could be covered in this thesis. For the purposes of being concise and clear, I have chosen to focus on the writings and theories of Charles Taylor, from which I draw definitions of identity and religious identity.

We do not generate our identities individually from within ourselves. Rather, we internalize and personalize our varying contacts with people, communities, and institutions that exist outside of us. "Part of the uniqueness of individuals results from the ways in which they integrate, reflect upon, and modify their own cultural heritage and that of other people with whom they come into contact. Human identity is created, as Taylor puts it, *dialogically*, in response to our relations, including our actual dialogues, with others."[44] Our sense of similarity or difference is always developed with or against, and thus in dialogue, with our "significant others." These dialogues and struggles shape our identities long after the actual interaction has taken place. According to Taylor, we stay in conversation with our families, friends and communities our whole lives.[45] Identity, then, relies on negotiation with others.

Charles Taylor argues against the model of modern authenticity that claims identity is completely inwardly generated (thus denying the dialogical nature of identity formation), and that this particular notion of one's self means a person has a way of being that is both true to that person, and thus particular to that person as well. As Taylor understands it, modern authenticity means living in a way that fulfills one's true self, which is an "individualized identity."[46]

Recognizing the dialogical nature of identity construction does not negate people's ability to personalize identity. People have an internalized sense of who they are that shapes the way they think, speak and act. One's parents, for example, shape who a person is, but that person is neither his or her mother nor father. Regardless, the way people are able to reflect on or speak about the world around them and their place in it relies on learning the languages and rules of those things with which they identify.

"...[P]ersons speak about themselves and in so doing make use of a language convention which has been taken over from their primary significant others. In self-reflection, for example, we use the name that other people have given us."[47] Keith and Lena define themselves as Mennonites, a religious tradition they both joined partly because they were raised in it. At the same time, their life histories illustrate that religion is inherited, interpreted, internalized and practised in personal ways, even while religious people usually form communities and institutions through which the expression of religion (in Keith's and Lena's case, worship) takes communal form. Keith and Lena are Mennonites, but what they bring to the religious tradition shapes what being Mennonite means. Keith's and Lena's life histories also both illustrate a sense of what I call being authentic, as they both have ideas about what actions, in particular, are true to themselves. For example, I believe Keith thinks he is being true to himself when he engages in active peacemaking. By stating that he sees himself more as a doer than as a thinker, Keith is also making a type of judgment on who he thinks he is and on what he considers most important.

Taylor argues that human beings have five characteristics: humans attribute meaning to their emotions; these attributions of meaning are relative; relativity of meaning-laden emotion is that which makes us human; feelings relative to a person are interpreted; and these interpretations depend on language.[48] Keith and Lena both have a way of living and telling their lives that is unique to them. The symbols, images and languages they use (or the actions they take) to describe this sense of themselves relies on dialogues with their families, friends and religious communities. For example, the Mennonite church, their families and friends, CPT, and Canadian society all shape their

sense of being unique people and the manner in which they tell me who they are. Keith and Lena also rely on my own and other anticipated readers' ability to identify with their stories and reflections while they conveyed their life histories to me. My interactions with Keith and Lena created these life histories. Another fieldworker doing a project on CPT likely would have elicited very different life histories. Who Keith and Lena are in these life histories reflects the dialogue and negotiation of our interactions.

If identity is dialogically constructed, then *religious* identity is dialogically constructed, partly through a person's relationship with God, his or her religious traditions and communities, and religious experiences that are internalized and synthesized. Keith's and Lena's religious identities also include a dialogical relationship with a particular narrative tradition. For Keith and Lena, as Mennonite CPTers, this narrative tradition is the New Testament, particularly the story of Jesus. Even more specifically, their religious identity is shaped by and gives meaning to a particular (Mennonite) understanding of the Christian narrative. Keith and Lena are made in the image of God, and are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The narrative tradition of the Bible carries over into a contemporary faith narrative as well. Christopher Rowland states: "...I recognized the inescapably narrative foundation of Christian theology as the stories of Scripture, especially that of Jesus Christ, interacted with and informed contemporary stories. That tradition of testimonies of discipleship is an important part of Anabaptist theologizing; contemporary life-experiences are part of that ongoing activity of the spirit of Jesus and a guide to understanding the ancient testimonies of those who were disciples."[49] Discipleship is central to Christian religious identity and narrative, especially Keith's and Lena's understanding of the Mennonite tradition.

Religious identity, like identity in general, takes a narrative form.

> ...[T]he identity of a person is dependant on articulation. The process of reflection takes place in the form of the telling of a life history; here, this latter notion becomes ambiguous, just as in another sense 'history' denotes not only an event but also the record of that event. It is no accident that time and record are joined in the concept of a life history, for the only appropriate articulatory form of the dialectic between objective time and the subjective sense of time is the telling of a story, which describes events and processes from the perspective of the subjects of the action and in this way constitutes the history of the protagonists as a story which can be told. The identity of a person grows out of the story she tells, revises and varies under the impression of new experiences.[50]

The narrated religious identity also asks ethical questions and responses of its audience. Telling one's life history is a dialogical act. It is internally reflective as the telling prompts the storyteller to look back and reflect upon their lives. Telling one's life history is also outwardly inviting. The teller seeks to tell his or her story in way that enables him or her to be authentic as well as selective regarding the audience. Keith's and Lena's life histories or their faith narratives as peacemakers ask for a response. They try to convince the audience, which includes me, of the justness of their work, and both invite and challenge the audience to understand and identify with who they are and what they do.

Similarity and Difference

Sitting in Angelica's cozy living room for our first interview, I had the tables turned on me. After asking Angelica whether there were any questions about my thesis and the nature of my fieldwork, Angelica asked me to share *my* life history. This request took me off guard, but I saw it as a fair question. What brought me to her living room, and why did I care about her life history or about CPT at all? As I told my own experiences,

Angelica asked me outright, "Did you always feel different from your peers?" Angelica identified part of her own story in mine. This question, asked with confidence and out of insight, indicated that those involved with CPT are people who are, or have felt, set apart from those around them. Like the CPT delegation in which I participated, there was no difference drawn between Angelica and myself. At that moment, we were both CPTers. Although I do not identify myself as a CPTer, Angelica projected her own personal identification as "different" onto my telling of my life, which seemed to fit the bill of the collective story of CPTers. I encountered this identification as different many times during my interviews with the Keith and Lena. It became clear that this was a major theme necessary for understanding Keith's and Lena's life histories. Although Angelica and I had no more interviews following that first one, I credit her with making such an important aspect of CPTers' self-conceptions so visible to me.

Keith's and Lena's self-conceptions as different need exploration alongside their self-conceptions as being similar to their families, friends, and religious tradition. CPT's own history and mission embraces the unique position of being an initiative arising out of its religious and historical tradition as well as a new movement that, because of its radical challenge to the churches, is relegated to the margins of churches and conferences. In the same way, identifications with their religious traditions, families and friends, and even North American society fill Keith's and Lena's life histories. I contend that they would not be involved with CPT if it were not for these communities. At the same time, they too sit on the edges and push the boundaries of these groups with whom they so closely identify. Sitting on the edges, and sometimes pushing the boundaries of their communities can sometimes cause them pain, frustration, and a feeling of being

misunderstood. Like CPT as an organization, Keith and Lena see themselves as different, and thus able to offer something different to their communities, while not ever being so different from them that they no longer see themselves as intrinsically bound to them.

This section will explore the ways Keith's and Lena's life histories illustrate self-conceptions of being similar to or different from their friends, families and religious tradition, how these self-conceptions both influence their decision to become involved with CPT, and how involvement with CPT has made this sense of difference more acute. CPT as an organization fits for Keith and Lena, to greater or lesser degrees, given their existing sense of pushing the boundaries of their families, friends and church communities. Identification with CPT also enables Keith and Lena, as Mennonites, to challenge their religious tradition.

Keith

Keith Rempel was born in Haiti in August of 1974 while his parents were there on a term with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS). Keith's birth story opens his life story and is an experience that shapes his life in a particular way. In our discussions, Keith often returned to the origins of his birth like a favourite chapter in a book. What Keith inherited from his place of birth and the circumstances that brought his parents to that place is a course for his life that is still unfolding before him. Keith's birth story works to set a tone of being set apart from many of his peers. Born in unique circumstances and witness to particular social issues such as poverty forms the basis of a life that then seeks to work through the memories, or the idea of that place and those issues.

Keith grew up on a farm in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. His father is a farmer, and his mother, a teacher. As a child, Keith's major interests were in hanging out, playing sports, and going to school and church. The type of orientation to the world he may have assumed in Haiti as an infant does not appear until his mid-teens, and even then, with some resistance. Regardless, he indicates that his family's and a church's emphasis on service did "rub off on him," though he feels unable to articulate this process as well as he would like. His parents seem to have played an especially significant role in his life, and their emphasis on service is what Keith sees as most influential.

> I don't know where they got their thinking from, but I was born in Haiti, and there was something to that. Dad was always involved with various committees, coaching baseball or this or that. Mom's a teacher, so that's obviously a real service-type job, and she was always into volunteering with this or that and making sure various church projects got going.... I don't know where it came from for them. I'm sure it just got passed down the line. This is why I wish I knew more about Mennonite history, why Mennonites make the choices they do. Like they came under pressure in Germany and Russia, even here with World War 2.... One of my grandpas got sent up to a work camp. Where did that thinking come from? I guess I've definitely sucked it up, and I agree with it, but how does that develop from others?

Keith speaks of his interest in service, an interest that was not even close to his interests as a child and youth, as coming out of a family tradition and his religious tradition. Keith's involvement in church youth service trips to Montreal, Washington, and Kentucky, and with MVS and CPT are all related points of identification with his church and his family and what they instilled in him. In this way, Keith feels closely connected to his family and religious tradition. Keith's identifies his family as that which shaped his central faith tenet: do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Preferring "real" stories to biblical stories, his parent's examples of the Golden Rule shape how Keith tells his own real stories. "I just remember questioning a lot of—you

hear of Jonah and the whale—or the Adam and Eve story, and just wondering, well how much of that is real? Because I want real, like actually happened.... I think my understanding of those stories, maybe not those stories in particular, just of Christianity as sort of the more underlying messages...regardless of did this happen like this." What Keith thinks he brings to his churches are the real stories of his experiences with CPT. These are stories he feels are not usually heard in the church. Keith believes that they are stories that challenge the church, and they are his unique contribution.

Keith's sense of belonging in his childhood church was not because he had any particular role in it, such as being a member of a church committee. Rather, he belonged because it was where he was raised. Many of his aunts, uncles and cousins went to the same church, as well as a number of his friends. Keith's sense of belonging in his church also connects to a sense of ideological safety. For example, he feels that his current church in Toronto, though different from his childhood church, is a place where he can openly criticize the recent war in Iraq, which was occurring during our meetings together, without misunderstanding and judgement. This safety comes from what he calls "underlying assumptions" of what everyone else believes because of a common religious tradition. The major underlying assumption Keith refers to in the case of the war in Iraq is that of pacifism. Whereas in his workplace or among other groups of people Keith might be cautious of voicing his opinions about the war in Iraq because he could not assume their rejection of the war, at his church, Keith feels freer to take a vocal stance he is fairly sure is shared by others.

Identifying himself as a Mennonite is a part of how he describes himself to others. Keith makes some very clear "I am" statements, and "I am Mennonite" is the most

explicitly stated identification. Keith is the first to admit that he is not theologically perceptive, and he knows less than he wishes about the Mennonite faith and Mennonite history. At the same time, the average Mennonite is not trained in Mennonite theology. Keith identifies as a Mennonite because that was how he was raised. The stories Keith knows, the ways of worship and his love for singing hymns (and music in general), his appreciation for the experience of communal worship, his constant emphasis on being accountable to one's neighbour, and his strong desire to orient his life towards service are all part of his Mennonite inheritance. Who Keith is cannot be disconnected from this past. This past will always shape who Keith is and becomes, even though Keith often defines who he is now in tension with the people and churches of this past.

Keith agreed with my estimation that he would probably be a different person had he grown up in another Christian tradition, and that if he had, he might very well not be a CPTer. A major reason is that Keith credits his experiences with youth service trips and later on a one-year term with MVS in Washington D.C. as leading him towards CPT. Forced to face poverty, homelessness, racism and violence, Keith needed to face questions he might have otherwise avoided. The answers to some of these questions led him in the direction of CPT. For example, when asking how situations such as homelessness and poverty come about, Keith feels that the answers, or the search for answers, implicate him. In his opinion, his middle class lifestyle affects others. It was while facing these questions during his time with MVS in Washington D.C. that Keith first connected with CPT. After meeting a CPTer who was about to join the yearly protest at the School of the Americas in Georgia, and joining the protest himself in November 1998, Keith started to think about joining a delegation with CPT. Like his other service

experiences, his delegation to Chiapas with CPT in May 2000 followed his own growing interests, solidified by the encouragement of others from his faith community. Another one of Keith's important identifications as being similar to his family, friends and religious tradition is evident in that people already working with CPT influenced his choice to join.

> *Did it help knowing people then, who were connected with it?*
> Yeah, you feel more safe in doing it, more confidant that it could work out. You have a certain awareness that the values of the organization are probably going to line up with your own. You've got a few people that you know who are saying, "Oh you should do this," and then a couple of those people you know are in it, you know it's connected to the Mennonite Church.

People whom Keith already trusted and admired and with whom he identified enabled him to take a leap in a direction he might not otherwise have gone. Keith trusted other people's estimation of who he was as a person, which allowed him to grow as a person in a particular way.

The questions that arise from doing the very work that connect Keith with his family and religious tradition is what pushes him to the edges of his family and religious community, and even social class. For example, some of Keith's questions include "Okay, you're born in a place like Haiti, you're surrounded by poverty and all kinds of social issues and problems, and you're parents are going through all that stuff, so how does that affect you?" Or, "It's like you start thinking about responsibility in the world, right?" Reflecting on violence he witnessed in Hebron, Keith asks: "I came back in a mindset of, all right, how do I overcome these feelings?" When asked how he discerns between right and wrong, Keith stated that he asks himself, "How do certain things make you feel? How would you like to come out of it?" Keith's questions revolve around a

search for the root causes of issues such as violence and poverty, often framed as theodicy, the way these issues make him feel, and his response to them. In other words, why does God allow certain things to happen and what is he going to do about it? Keith infuses his questions with a sense of responsibility. The questions Keith asks come out of his identification with a religious tradition concerned with community, but his answers to them—which, in his opinion, necessitate action—perpetuate the distance he senses from his family, friends and religious tradition because he feels more needs to be done in response to those questions than what currently is. Keith's sense of responsibility is coupled with a tacit sense of disappointment that the very tradition that brought him face to face with issues such as poverty, violence and oppression is not doing enough, actively, to change them.

Finally, Keith's identification with CPT is one that combines many other aspects of who he is. CPT is an ideological fit. It contains people Keith has known his whole life; people whom he respects and trusts. CPT also includes people Keith has never met, which allow him to confront new questions and learn new things; something Keith pursues eagerly. CPT's roots in the historic peace church tradition are the same as Keith's; he knows the hymns, the language and the theological basis for peacemaking assumed by this group. Most importantly, CPT fits Keith's identification as a "doer," devoted to service and justice. CPT fits for Keith because its community emphasis fosters further dialogue and its faith-based activism allows Keith to express what he sees as his authentic self at this moment in time.

Keith's life stories reveal several important self-identifications as being different from his family, church and friends. While Keith understands his involvement in service

work and CPT as a direct result of his family's values, his Mennonite faith and the influence of the people around him, he does understand himself as being on the edges of these groups of people and communities as well. Following the completion of his university degree in Social Development, Keith did a 2-year term with Mennonite Voluntary Service in Washington D.C. that is bar none, the key event in his life so far. He not only made his home in a different country, but in a different cultural and class situation as well. It was this period in his life where Keith began to confront questions of justice primarily in the gap between rich and poor, and how this correlated with issues of race. Keith's story speaks of his own identification with the people and the issues that "became personalized on a North American street level" to him.

The youth service trips also effected a significant change in the way Keith related to his friends, who, like most people in their teens, conformed to regular societal expectations. His friends related to him differently too. Their response to some of the peacemaking or service activities in which Keith has been involved has been amused disbelief and confusion; "You're doing what?" Keith's decision pointed to a person who was different from the Keith they thought they knew; an easy-going, friendly guy who liked hanging out and playing baseball. While being things Keith did, and still does enjoy, Keith's other growing interests in service work and justice stood in contradiction to the person his friends expected him to be. Keith's youth service trips had an important impact on the way Keith viewed, spoke about and lived in the world. He went from resenting having to serve other people, to committing his life to actively being involved in issues of social justice, poverty, homelessness, and reducing violence, to name a few.

Keith changed from feeling forced to do this type of service work, to orienting his life in that direction.

The most significant self-identification as "different from" is evident in the way Keith talks about his home church community, Fellowship Mennonite Church. Defining the community as professional and wealthy, as well as traditional and static, Keith separates his own developing identity as a peacemaker, socially aware and community-oriented activist from that of his church.

> There's a lot of really good people at [Fellowship], but even the perspective you get on life—it's much wealthier church—and it was a church started for church's sake, like most are, whereas the church I go to now—it's kind of an interesting history, it was volunteers in the Scarborough area who wanted a church and they were working in a community centre, so they sort of developed this house church.... It's just been a much different environment. Smaller, there's a lot less money to go around, but also it's more open. Like I'd say only half our congregation is Mennonite, and then there's a lot of folks from the community, and the community centre is in an Ontario housing project, so we have more stratification.

While indicating that going back to Fellowship is like going home since he knows so many people in the church, he feels a distinct divide between himself and the values and practices at Fellowship. While not severing his identification and involvement with Fellowship, continuing to sit on the edges of that community, Keith has also become increasingly active with a local Mennonite church in Toronto whose emphasis on community-oriented service and culture and class-stratification fit more closely to what Keith values now.

Keith's family is the major influence in Keith's religious life as their values have had the greatest impact on the way Keith defines his faith and his central faith tenet: do unto others. On the one hand, his youth service trips and MVS term were probably no

surprise to his parents, as these were things in which they had also been involved and consequently cultivated in their children. On the other hand, Keith's deliberate move from service work that he interpreted as a necessary type of "band-aid" work towards more political and actively resistant work pushed even his family's boundaries. Keith describes what he does with CPT as an attempt to "push the envelope about what people know or think about a situation in a way that will reduce violence in the future." In our discussions about his family's understanding and support of his work with CPT, Keith would quickly affirm that his parents supported him, but just as quickly state that they did not completely grasp why he was involved with CPT. Here, Keith again positions himself on the edges of his family, doing things differently than how they have traditionally been done.

An interesting contradiction between Keith's self-estimation and what is evident in his life history is Keith's value of doing over thinking. Keith's life history is a testament to how much reflection he is actually engaged in. Keith's life history more closely resembles a collection of thoughts on life experiences than what is normative for a life history. Keith *is* a "thinker," even though he may feel he is not as sophisticated a thinker as he wishes he were. Keith's sense of his authentic self (as a "doer") contradicts what is actually evident ("thinking"). Keith's sense of being true to himself, then, may be the desire to be true to what he wants to be, solidified by his identifications with MVS, CPT or other activist groups in Toronto.

Lena

At 62, Lena Siegers has experienced many changes. Who would imagine that the Old Order Mennonite girl that Lena was would grow up and find herself convincing paramilitaries and guerrillas to put away their guns on a river in Colombia? Lena's life history is filled with unusual dissonances: what she is compared to what she thinks she should have been; belonging yet being a black sheep; being a mother and a grandmother yet going for months with no contact with her family while in Haiti; and being stubbornly in love with life while facing potential death in Haiti, Bosnia, Esgenoôpetitj, and Colombia. Lena has even survived cancer.

Growing up as an Old Order Mennonite, Lena knew she had a place in her family and community. She knew what others expected of her. At the same time, she states repeatedly that even as a child she had a mind of her own. In telling stories of her childhood, Lena would pleasurably recall instances when she would go off on her own and be discovered by a farmer and returned home, or recounting times where she preferred exploring the outdoors, the barnyard kittens or puddles rather than doing the dishes. This independence carried over into her school and university experiences as well, clearly stating in her remembrances a strong preference for learning what she wanted, rather than what the teacher wanted; which was boring to her. Headstrong, adventurous and creative, Lena preferred to push the boundaries of her world rather than simply be and do what others expected of her.

Lena's own parents, Susannah and David A. B. Martens, were never ones to conform completely to the thinking and the traditions of the Old Order Wisler Mennonites. This same pushing of boundaries created upheaval and confusion for Lena

as a youth. Her parents bought their first car—their act of leaving the Old Order—when Lena was in her early teens. While always identifying as her own person, it is in these stories of leaving the Old Order that Lena describes sentiments of wanting to conform to other families, the church, and her schoolmates. This desire for conformity is evident in recalling her desire to have a blue or black coat like other Old Order girls in her school, or, upon the transition to St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, to know the Bible stories so she could fit in with the girls in her Sunday school class. This strong sense of difference led to a long period of depression and physical illness. Too much difference hindered the security Lena felt in knowing where she belonged and what others expected of her. It may well be that Lena's desire and ability to live comfortably on the margins of her family, church and community was only possible when she knew there was a secure and static reality whose borders reigned her safely in.

When thinking of herself as different from others, one marker of this difference is her role as a person who looked out for "the underdog." She states that fairness was always something she was acutely attentive to, and was often frustrated at her peers who would pick on classmates, often non-Mennonites, because they were different. Never a popular girl, Lena did make friends with those who seemed not to fit in anywhere as well. Lena also forms strong bonds with people from different generations than her own. Lena loves being the grandma, a role she relishes both in Canada amongst her own grandchildren and on her CPT teams. There is often a distinct age split on CPT teams, with young CPTers falling in an age range of twenty to thirty years, and then a jump to CPTers who are in or past retirement age.

Lena argues that being Mennonite is not so important to her; she could be happy in any church. Lena then promptly contradicts herself, indicating that, in fact, she would not be completely happy in militaristic churches; churches who support the state and thus the state's use of force, or churches who support "just war". In Brussels Mennonite, Lena pushes for the use of what she calls Anabaptist Sunday school materials, which indicates to me that identifying and fostering Mennonite tradition is in fact rather important to her.

> The churches that I would not be happy in are those who are quite extremely militaristic. I realize that there's militaristic people in the Mennonite Church too, but they're in the minority, and there are some churches now that have peace groups, for example, even the Catholic Church has the Pax Christi and I know groups of people in the Anglican Church that have formed peace groups and some people in the United Church as well. But there are a few churches that are extremely militaristic, but I'm very excited, because there's now a Baptist group—I forgot what they call themselves—but there's a peace group in the Baptist Church, and I'm really excited because they had asked one of our CPTers to come and speak at one of their conventions, so that's really interesting.

Perhaps what Lena means is that she *is* a Mennonite, and as her usually independent self, could live as a Mennonite in non-Mennonite churches as long as there is a base level of commonality. For Lena, that commonality, or that which she refuses to compromise, is pacifism. "I could go to their church and I could probably worship with them, but I could not identify with them." The Christian life is all-important. Other details of Christian worship, such as whether they sing in four-part harmony, are of less importance for Lena.

Like Keith, Lena feels a fit with CPT. From the first moment Lena heard that CPT even existed, she knew she would get involved. Her identification with CPT carries over from being directly involved with a project, to her actual self-definition. "I will probably be a permanent CPTer even if I won't be involved quite as intensely all the time." CPT also gives Lena a platform from which she can share her experiences and her truth.

Though Lena decided to take a break from CPT work for the next little while, she continues to do the work of CPT here in Canada.

> I'm going to continue to let people know that I'm willing to share my ideas about life, my ideas about non-violence, and I will continue to do it with CPT somewhat as my focus.
> *Do you see this as something unique that you bring to your community?*
> Well, this is something that I *can* do because I've had a lot of experience in other places.

Like Keith, what Lena brings to her home church, to her family, and to others in southern Ontario are the stories they might not hear otherwise. If it were not for Lena's sense of difference she would not have what she understands as a unique experience and perspective to share with others. "I think we need to live out who we are, sometimes with risks, but I believe that our children learn by seeing us follow our dreams and work with our commitments. And they learn a lot from watching us and seeing us live our life, more so than by preaching." Lena combats the opposition she feels from her church community and family by following who she is. She feels that her example and her commitment to her beliefs are what will ultimately lead others to understand and accept her better. At times, Lena may play down some of the difference she feels from her family and church, but the opposition she feels will not prevent her from following her calling.

Keith's and Lena's identification with CPT is also evident in an examination of the words they use to describe their beliefs and work. CPT has its own in-language; words or phrases, biblical references or hymns that have common meanings for those involved with CPT. For example, at the last CPT regional meeting I attended in Toronto, during a debriefing of a role-playing session, the topic of teammate personality types came up. One CPTer joked about how her response to the situation being role-played

would be very different from the one demonstrated. "I'm a green," she said, referring to a particular personality test I assume CPTers take during training. I had taken the same test in one of my undergraduate conflict resolution studies courses, so luckily I knew what her comment meant. Someone completely new to CPT would not know these little statements that tacitly determine who belongs.* Angelica feels that CPT delegations are crucial in-roads to learning the "rhetoric" of CPT, and gaining a fuller understanding of who CPT is and why they do what they do. Increased exposure to CPT mitigates one's misunderstanding of CPT's language and customs.

Coming Home After CPT

How has CPT changed Keith's and Lena's self-conceptions? I will address three areas in order to answer this question posed of the life histories. First, the ways in which Keith and Lena speak about themselves, their faith and how they live in the world is further politicised. Second, they feel an increased isolation and sense of difference from their families, friends and religious communities. Finally, Keith's and Lena's life histories speak of what I call a loss of "home." According to Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "[B]eing home' refers to the place where one lives within familiar, safe, protected boundaries; 'not being home' is a matter of realizing that home was an illusion of coherence and safety, based on the exclusion of specific histories of oppression and resistance, the repression of differences even within oneself."[51] Discussion about the ways their experiences with CPT have affected their faith occurs in chapter five.

* I discuss more CPT "in-words" such as witness, call, denunciations, discipleship and presence in the next chapter.

After Keith had been involved with CPT, he started getting involved with local organizations and movements with whom he had not previously been involved. His life history moves from identification with and involvement in social work related activities, such as with Mennonite Voluntary Service in Washington D.C. to more political and activist work.

> *Why was it after CPT that you started getting involved in groups like this?* Because CPT opened my eyes. It was probably going to the spot, going to Chiapas—I had heard of Zapatistas, I thought they were terrorists, I thought they were guerrillas, and they did terrorize people for a few days—but what were they thinking, what were their complaints?
>
> I think that every experience we have we can't help but be affected by it.... What are my interests, really? What do I look at? How do I look at the TV? .... So, it changes your perspective, changes your interests; motivates you to learn different things.

Keith is involved in various activist organizations in Toronto such as Bloor West for Peace and the International Socialists, involvement that seems to be a direct result of his experiences with CPT. He finds many ideological similarities between himself, CPT, and these groups, especially concerning the need to actively work to create change in the world. At the same time, he struggles with a significant difference between these groups and himself: that the groups do not discount the possibility of using violence as a tactic. Keith sees all violent acts as illegitimate, and thus the results of revolution are questionable. "What good does violence do? It creates pain and it creates anger.... It's a split instead of a bringing together. And I guess CPT would be more of a: you can bring people together on issues and make them see things in a way to work for better."

Keith feels that these groups identify closely with Marxist ideals, thus seeing God in the traditionally Marxist fashion: as an opiate of the masses or what keeps people from acting to change the world. Again, this creates significant tension for Keith whose

activism springs naturally from the ideals of his faith. As he said in one of our interviews, he sees his faith in God as the reason to engage the world, rather than the excuse to avoid issues of politics, social injustice, and poverty. Keith desires a constant involvement in groups that allow him to be involved in local and global issues, which have become even more important to him since his experiences with CPT. Yet he feels these groups are not a perfect fit. There is an ongoing sense of cognitive dissonance between who he is as a person of faith and as a CPTer, and the political or activist groups with which he identifies. At the same time, Keith resigns himself to some of this tension since he wants be actively involved in social justice movements in his time off from CPT work. Part of this resolution is an acknowledgement that he does not agree with some of the philosophies of these groups with whom he works. In addition, Keith chooses what he reveals to others about his religious beliefs and what he does not.

CPT now serves as Keith's base line for determining the value and efficacy of other groups, primarily, are they active, or are they simply another band-aid organization, and do they go to "the spot" or are they all talk?

> I've been involved with various groups that have sort of built interest in the demonstrations in Toronto around Iraq, and last year around Afghanistan, including little temporary groups we formed called Bloor West for Peace. So you sort of get together and you do a few video showings and you try to pull people out to demonstrations, you know, raise awareness of this or that. But yeah, nothing quite like CPT. Like the thing, when you say, "have you been involved in any peace groups," I sort of use CPT as my defining line, and a big part of that now is, well do they go to the spots, and do they actively attempt to intervene in these?

Keith's current job at Covenant House in Toronto and ongoing interest in social services also dovetails naturally with his CPT experiences, although his interest in

homelessness already began when he was a youth and went on a service trip to Montreal to work in a soup kitchen.

> I've always thought I've wanted to work in a shelter—homelessness has been an issue that I've thought about a lot. I could be at a changing point in life right now. Maybe that comes out of CPT, but more my interests now are focused sort of on politics, and specifically the whole issue of peace. And I think that one comes out of my Mennonite upbringing.

Working at Covenant House has been a good experience for Keith. At the same time, I am not sure how long he will be satisfied there since his life histories speak of Keith's compulsion to "push his service." Keith may continue to balance his social services work with ongoing part-time involvement with CPT, allowing him to develop roots in Toronto coupled with a challenging and fulfilling job as well as the opportunity to do more active peacemaking "at the spot."

Lena's life history does not indicate the same overt shift in political language or involvement in political activism due to her experience with CPT. Lena is also not involved in the same sort of political activism Keith is, although she has worked with several activist groups in the past. Lena's life history is more "political" because of working with CPT in the sense that she offers a sharper critique of the Christian church. Lena was direct and unapologetic in her frustration and critique of Mennonites in particular, especially concerning their life style. Work with CPT solidified Lena's ideology of simple living, and feels that Mennonites in particular have a religious tradition that requires it of them. What Lena observes instead are the rich colleges Mennonites have created and the wealthy neighbourhoods in which they live.

> There are enough Mennonites in Kitchener Waterloo, that if we really chose to live a discipline life that our forefathers tried to teach us, we could change the laws. And we could say, we refuse to live in those big houses, and we live more frugally, so that more of those people who don't

> have houses, can have houses. And we don't judge them just because they spend over half of their money on things that we think they shouldn't, I think that we still need to help them and work with them. And if we had enough Mennonite grandmothers who would be willing to rock the babies who have been born to mothers who don't know how to take care of them, we'd have a different society in Kitchener and Waterloo. But we're afraid to be different. And yet that's what we've been taught, that's our heritage is to be different. Our heritage is to live a disciplined life that is different and apart from the neighbours. But we're not doing it.

Lena's life history balances understanding and compassion for where other people are coming from with resolution that Mennonites need to challenge themselves to take more risks, actively live their faith, and assume simpler lifestyles. Mennonites, according to Lena, should embrace their difference.

While Keith indicates a greater change because of working with CPT, Lena phrases the transition very differently.

> I don't think CPT's changed me much as a person, I think CPT has made me *more* of the person that I really was and has helped me to become more of what I really am. And I've *learned* an awful lot from the experiences I've had and it's been an extremely enriching time spent learning other cultures and other languages and seeing the stresses that people live under and just being exposed. But who I am is who I am, and I've just become more of what that is with the experiences that I've had with the CPT.

Both Lena and Keith would not have joined CPT at all if it were not for who they were before CPT. Lena may also feel there has been less overt change in her life and identity because she was much older than Keith when she started with CPT. Keith's life history likely reveals a greater sense of change because his involvement with CPT occurred during formative years.

Second, Keith's and Lena's involvement with CPT over the years has had a strong influence on the way they understand their identifications as part of families, friends and church communities, as well as increasing their sense of difference from them.

Ultimately, their language of difference comes in the form of being misunderstood, not completely supported, and feeling or receiving outright resistance.

On the one hand, Keith's connection with his childhood church has decreased over the years, and he feels that many of the church members are critical of his involvement with CPT. The main reason for this is that they simply do not understand why a continued experience with CPT motivates him to do more and more active peacemaking. While Keith does not pretend to know the intricacies of the conflicts in the places CPT works, he does feel that the firsthand experience he has had in Chiapas, Hebron and Colombia has both taught him more about the conflict in these areas, and fostered his interest to learn and do more. It is, in effect, a self-perpetuating cycle.

> *Has it changed your relationships with these people?*
> Yeah, I think it has. It gives me a lot of, I mean, my thought has always come from left of centre, and it's pushed it further that way, and it aggravates people. Just the things you talk about: what are my experiences in Washington, or my views on war, or I talk about Hebron and CPT-type stuff over and over ad nausea to some people and I think they sort of ...I don't think it affected my relationship with friends as adversely, to tell you the truth, as my voluntary service did, because that—for some of my friends—was a weird thing to do, including one good friend who said, "you're going where to do what? I don't understand why the fuck you want to do that, but it's your life!" And that was a real clue that we just don't see eye to eye, we just don't see eye to eye at all.

His response to those from Fellowship Mennonite, his family, friends, and the general public who are critical of what he does is that if they would actually go to the spots he has gone to, their argument would be unfounded. The best he can do is prepare himself for the resistance he is sure he will encounter, and try to offer them stories of his experiences so they become better educated.

On the other hand, Keith's experiences with CPT have increased his identification with his current church in Toronto. Keith had attended this church for only a couple of

months before beginning work with CPT. He was drawn to this church partly because it is Mennonite, partly because it has a more diverse (culturally and economically) membership, and because Keith sees it as more community and service-oriented in its mission.

> *How does [your current church] see you?*
> ...as an important part of the community. CPT is involved in a really important part too. I think that stems out of their initial vision to be a tool of justice and the current vision of most of the members to do that too. I think that they think CPT's actions are necessary in the world.

It makes sense that he has been drawn closer to this church, since it more closely matches Keith's own experiences and values. As somebody searching for ways to integrate his CPT experience upon return to Canada, Keith fits in a church that fosters continued, active involvement in local justice issues.

Lena also indicates that she has moved further to the edges of her church community and family. As a full-time CPTer, Lena has often been gone for months at a time. It makes sense that she would feel more disconnection from her family, friends and church, as well as more pronounced reverse culture shock upon return to Canada.

> I have to actually sometimes make myself be a part of a group because I kind of like—if I could choose to be alone, eventually I like to be alone—but after I've been on a team with CPT and I come home, I'm lost at first. I don't know how to do anything anymore, I don't know how to do things for me, because there's always this team effort, and I still really miss the team.... With the CPT, you live with people with the same philosophies of life, and most of them are pretty open-minded.

At the same time, Lena feels that she adjusts to the increased difference and distance between herself and others because she has always been the black sheep.

> It's not easy to fit into society, but if you already don't fit in to begin with, I think it's easier for some of us who are already eccentrics before we ever joined CPT. We just become more eccentric, that's all. But for someone who's less eccentric than me and comes back into the community, I think

> it could be difficult. It could be difficult because some of the experiences are so extreme for CPTers.
>
> *So then it helps because you've always felt different?*
> It helps a bit. But it doesn't take the loneliness away of being eccentric. Even though you want to be alone, there's still the aloneness and the loneliness that can set in if you're not careful in how you deal with yourself. You have to make sure that—like, I have to make sure that I do some things that I really want to do, and not always just think of the things that I think have to do. And I've discovered that I'm much healthier if I do the things I want to do first.

The danger of this independence and introvertedness is that it takes much greater effort for Lena to reconnect with her various communities—especially since she lives in rural Ontario and her car is blocked in by snow for much of the winter. Lena admittedly does not even get to the regional CPT meetings as much as she would like. Her lack of attendance does make her feel disconnected from CPT community, though the intensity of their shared experiences makes the distance insignificant. Lena is always able to instantly reconnect with her teammates when she does see them.

While Keith has felt increasingly distant from his family church—where he still holds membership—Lena feels that who she is and CPT are increasingly accepted in Brussels Mennonite. This is not to say that she never meets resistance. Like Keith, Lena understands that this resistance arises out of people's lack of similar life-experience and are thus ill equipped to appreciate what she does with CPT.

> The type of person I am, it's very hard for me to have a huge circle of friends. I don't have a huge, close circle of friends at church. I'm not saying that this is typical of CPTers, but I do believe it gets harder and harder the longer one serves with CPT, one does—you don't lose your faith, I think your faith actually increases—but the comprehension or the, there's a certain distance that happens between you and—I don't really want to call it the average church person, that's not fair, but that's what it is—there's a gap there, because as a CPTer, if you've done long-term CPT, you face things or do things that the average person here has never faced.

> Like why can't people hear? Because they're not in that space. They don't have the experience or the experiences that I've had, and they're not me.... And I have to be prepared to stop and say, "Okay Lena, it's all right. People don't always think the way you do, and that's okay."

For the time being, Lena has had to choose one identification over the other. After several years devoted to full time work with CPT Lena will stay home in order to be a fully-present grandma to her grandchildren. Taking a break from CPT does not make Lena any less of a CPTer, just as being in Colombia with CPT does not negate her identity as a grandmother—especially since being the grandma is a role she relishes and establishes for herself amongst her teammates. Lena lives as a CPTer here in southern Ontario as well as when she is on a CPT project. Part of her activities are directly related to CPT, as Lena gives presentations to young and old alike on her most recent experiences in Colombia. The rest of who Lena is as a CPTer is infused in her daily life evident in her orientation to her neighbours, her continued advocacy for CPT in Mennonite churches, lighting candles as a means of reflection on war and the hopes for peace, and inner reflection and meditation.

Both Keith and Lena feel that they are CPTers even when not actively involved with a CPT project. CPT is no longer one group with which they identify, but an integral part of their self-identification. In other words, like being Mennonite, being a CPTer and their experiences with CPT shape much of how Keith and Lena speak about and understand their faith and how they understand and live in the world.

Finally, Keith and Lena both lose something when they came back from projects and delegations with CPT. Sometimes the loss happens before their eyes, already during their time on a CPT project. On my last afternoon with Lena, after we had already

finished taping, Lena continued to share her stories with me. While she was telling me about the injustices she witnessed while with the communities on the river Opón, her eyes welled up with tears. Normally a dynamic and punctuated speaker, her words became clouded with her tears. She looked at me, and said, "You know, to be a CPTer, you need to be able to let your heart be broken over and over again." Once Lena moved past her fear to the edge of her skin, the edge of all she thought she knew about herself, she was able to open her eyes and heart to all that might break it. There is risk and loss in doing this.

Sometimes what has been lost is not evident until one returns to what they had left behind. Lena spent months in Haiti with one of CPT's earliest projects before she returned to Canada, often without any way to contact her children, friends, church, or even CPT.

> You forget what life is like here. And in some ways it was almost easier just to go immediately back to Haiti again. After being in Haiti for a year and I came back to Canada—that was at Christmas time—I went shopping...and I couldn't shop. I couldn't shop. I walked up and down the aisles and there were so many things, so many things, I just choked up and I started to cry. What an injustice. Because I had been in Haiti for so long, even the next time I came home it was just awful because I came home at Christmas time again and I went to a meeting...and this was a bunch of women on welfare with their kids, and it was a Christmas party and the kids all got toys, and they said, "I don't want that! I like what that fellow over there got. I don't like this!" And I went home from there and I was so angry and so frustrated I said, "Something's so horribly wrong with this world.

Lena lost the security of her home in Canada. She lost the comfort of living in a world where she did not recognize the injustice of her lifestyle in contrast to the lives of those with whom she worked. Working with CPT means Lena and Keith cannot return to their homes as they knew them. Their experiences with CPT made the contradictions between

"skin, blood, heart, and identity and between experience, identity, and community"[52] evident in a way they could not ignore. Resolution of this contradiction means giving up home. Resolution means living at the edges, without jumping out of their skins. By this, I mean that Keith and Lena need to resolve their eye-opening and conscience-opening experiences with who they are in such a way that they change, but do not completely lose themselves.

One's home is a major determinate of dialogical identity formation. People speak of their "home church, "their home community," and their "home land." The price for staying at "home" is too high, which is why CPTers forsake it. Staying home, as Martin and Mohanty understand it, is recognizing the false security of one's home and yet refusing to change it. Home for Keith and Lena is the passive, comfortable life Mennonites have in North America, while their historic witness to peace is forgotten. For Keith and Lena, the false safety of home is the Christian church's power in the world while Christians lack the commitment to live the Gospel's call to radical discipleship. The cost is being complicit with injustice, violence and oppression in the world. The cost is lack of reconciliation with each other and God. Keith's and Lena's identities have had to change because consistently resituating themselves has necessitated it. Their homes have changed and their identities could not remain the same.

Part of the reason Keith and Lena lost "home" because of working with CPT is because they were forced to face questions that challenged their core identity, their faith. For example, when Lena worked with Aboriginal communities in Canada, these communities challenged her identification as Christian, and thus her primary motive for being there. Her answer reinterprets or reframes the Christian faith. Lena justifies her

involvement in a Christian peacemaking organization (which is an oxymoron for some communities with whom CPT works) by severing identifications with the Christian church that has perpetuated injustice in the world, and clinging to her identification with a type of Christianity that seeks justice and effectively denounces the other, false, type of Christianity.

> And out at Esgenoôpetitj and Indian Brook and other reserves that I visited when I was out east, there was always a conversation about how can you call yourself Christian? When the churches have done all this horrible stuff to us? And that was a really big thing and every, every native reserve that I visited was always, "Well, how can you call yourself, how can you be a Christian when the church has done so many horrible things?"
> *And how did you answer that?*
> Well, then I would say, myself I would say, Jesus believed in all people and that Jesus believed in the dignity of every human person, and Christian Peacemaker Teams follows *that* Jesus, the Jesus that believes in justice, the Jesus who believes in love, the Jesus who gave his life for the poor, the Jesus who walked with the poor, the Jesus who died a political death...he died as a poor person. And that's the Jesus we follow. Not the Jesus of the big churches who believe in money and power and have destroyed much, and not those who would abuse and take advantage of the weak, but that we believe in walking with the weak and that we believe in a Jesus that cares when someone is hurting and that when it gets down to the crunch we do take sides.

What Lena's life history does not reveal is a struggle with how the Christian church's historic violence and oppression of other religious or cultural groups in fact implicates her as well. By severing identifications with this oppressive reality of her religious tradition, Lena attempts to resolve a significant conflict in her identity. There is danger in both acknowledging and not acknowledging this history.

Keith's experience in Hebron has also forced him to face questions that implicate his religious tradition. Given the Holocaust, Keith feels that Israel is justified in its fear and desire for a secure homeland, even though Keith rejects the

manner by which Israel seeks security. Here again, his religious tradition, and thus the core of his identity, is challenged by his inheritance as a Christian: the perpetuation of injustice and violence that began with anti-Semitism. At my first CPT regional meeting, a CPTer stated that part of what CPT does is an attempt to address and engage in reparative work for the damage the Christian church has inflicted on the world. He understands CPT as an example of Christians making the world better rather than worse.

The issue of anti-Semitism is a thorny one for CPT, and one that CPT has actively sought to explore. One just needs to go to CPTnet and read the discussion forums to see that CPT is challenged regularly to justify what it does in Hebron. Keith finds it difficult to do presentations on his experience in Hebron because inevitably, people accuse him of being anti-Semitic.

> I came back in a mindset of, "All right, how do I overcome these feelings?" .... You spend so much of your time on one side of the fence it was hard for me not to be worried. I still am worried when I'm going into—even at a rally—like in Toronto, there's Women in Black, right? And I go there and I'm fairly comfortable, but I'm still kind of aware, I don't know this history that well...so I need to watch my step. I need to watch my step on what I say and my fears of being anti-Semitic.

Part of Keith's concern comes from being so closely connected to one side of the issue—the Palestinian side—that he cannot accurately speak to the historical and political issues of the situation between Israel and Palestine. Keith has not spent as much time in Hebron as other CPTers, and not as much time as he would like. He might feel more confident doing presentations after more time in Hebron, which would allow him the chance to learn more from both Palestinians and Israelis. The issue of whether CPT adequately addresses whether its stance furthers anti-Semitism or works to reduce it is likely one

Keith and CPT will struggle with so long as it works in such as contentious city. Having connections with a few Canadian Jews who are sympathetic to his experiences and perspectives also bolsters Keith's confidence. In Keith's opinion, these people encourage him to speak out about his perspective, even though he will always encounter resistance.

According to Martin and Mohanty, Minnie Bruce Pratt's essay on identity recognizes an "irreconcilable tension between the search for a secure place from which to speak, within which to act, and the awareness of the price at which secure places are bought, the awareness of the exclusions, the denials, the blindnesses on which they are predicated."[53] When Lena returned home from CPT, she recognized in new ways the injustice of mass consumption as she walked up and down the isles of a grocery store. Both Keith and Lena are looking for places to stand and speak what is the truth of their personal experience. Yet they face tentativeness in "speaking too much truth" since this increases their distance from their family, friends and religious tradition.

The process of leaving their secure homes and standing in solidarity with the people with whom CPTers work does not mean that Keith and Lena can leave their pasts behind. Keith and Lena, and other CPTers as well, cannot completely identify with the people they encounter in the situations where they work. Solidarity does not make one the same as another or even allow one to completely share that person's experience. Standing with the oppressed in Hebron, Colombia, Asubpeeschoseewagong or Chiapas does not mean that CPTers lose their privilege. In addition, solidarity does not automatically exclude difference.[54] The risk of cultural appropriation always exists whenever one travels, especially if a person makes another country and culture home for an extended period. Cultural appropriation also runs the risk of forgetting one's identity.

In fact, cultural appropriation is one way in which people who face the critique of their "home" and identity resolve this tension. Cultural appropriation is not a resolution, it is running and hiding and denying who one is and what one has inherited.

People can change who they are. Mini Bruce Pratt's essay "Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart" argues that identity change involves great risk, but it can be done. It is even necessary at times. When people are intentionally self-reflexive they can takes steps to shed old skins and begin to inhabit new ones. I agree with Taylor that how we understand ourselves and speak of ourselves depends on common language, images, and symbols, but Keith and Lena have lived and learned languages, images and symbols that challenge old ones. Old languages, images and symbols can no longer fully explain their identities.

What makes my task difficult as a fieldworker is that I sat and talked with Keith and Lena after they already acquired new languages, images and symbols to describe who they are and what they believe. These lenses filter their pasts. Keith and Lena speak about their childhoods with words and images they could not understand when they grew up in the Waterloo region. My own long-term, cross-cultural experiences help to understand that process of acquiring another cultural "language," and the acquisition of new lenses, but my lens never completely matches theirs.

CPT as Moral Regenerator

It is through Keith's and Lena's involvement with CPT that they challenge their religious tradition. Both identify very much as Mennonites but also feel that traditional Mennonite organizations and ideas of service need to move more in the direction of CPT and away

from "band-aid" work. This is not to say that they do not recognize the value of having organizations such as MCC, and the need for relief and development work, but that the Mennonite church also needs to be willing to confront unjust situations directly, and work at changing those things that perpetuate injustice. Lena does not want to make people feel obligated to participate in organizations like CPT, but feels she offers them a choice by her example. It was her choice to be in Colombia, and she feels it was the right one.

> *Why should they feel responsible? What would you say to them to make them feel like they had to be out there?*
> They don't have to be out there. Nobody has to be out there. I don't either. I don't have an obligation to be out there, it's my choice. We all have choices, but I would like to see more people make that choice and take that challenge, especially if they're saying they are Christians. Now I'm not saying that you have to be a CPTer to be a Christian, but I would like to see some of these Christians who don't want to be CPTers, but I'd still like to see them take some other risks. At the same time I do struggle with it, because you can't have CPT the way it's been running today, we can't have it without some rich people who want to sit back and believe in it but don't feel a calling to do it, but are willing to give of their money. And so I have a little, I struggle with that a little bit, because I'm not a businessperson.

An interesting observation is that Keith and Lena never direct their challenge towards secular society. They usually direct their challenge towards the Mennonite churches and conferences in particular, then Christians in general.

Keith's and Lena's stories also speak of a desire to preserve, to continue a Mennonite tradition of service, to belong in the church and fit in with their friends and family. Their stories also speak of the challenges that involvement with CPT has presented to them: outsiders and even those closest to them misunderstand, question and criticize their experiences. In this tension between critique of the Mennonite church and preservation of their Mennonite faith, Keith and Lena remain rooted in the Mennonite tradition, while necessarily bringing to it new stories and new challenges.

CPT is commentary and critique of the Mennonite and Christian churches, which works to shift and shape the church's identity as well. This is a loving critique. By this, I mean that by being on the edges without abandoning the church all together, and as insiders who want the best for their home churches, can prompt the reflection necessary for an organization to change.

My delegation leader told the group about his son's response to his involvement with CPT. His involvement allowed his son to re-identify with the church; otherwise he would have been disillusioned with it, perhaps leaving the Mennonite church altogether. CPT regenerates faith and commitment among those whose vision of the Mennonite faith, or of the Christian church's responsibility in the world, does not find a home in what currently exists. Lena cries over her conference's lack of commitment to hiring and maintaining a peace and justice position. CPT allows her to remain connected to the Mennonite church in the sense that it fills a large and significant hole for her. Individuals who share life stories at CPT regional meetings often mentioned issues of authenticity and "fit," stating that choosing to join CPT was a way to reconnect with his or her faith. CPT sometimes functions as a moral regenerator for otherwise disillusioned Mennonites and perhaps other Christians as well.

At the last CPT regional meeting I attended, another challenge to the Mennonite Church was coined "putting ourselves in the program." With the upcoming Mennonite Church Canada Assembly in St. Catherines, CPTers brainstormed ideas about the sort of displays and actions they might plan in order to get people's attention at the meeting. CPT sought to find ways to build greater awareness of what they do.

Some concerns arise out of CPT's functioning as a moral regenerator of the Mennonite (and I would argue, Christian) church. First, CPT's main purpose is not to reform the church, although it does actively challenge the church and Christians to discipleship of a particular sort. If CPT were to focus all its energies on transforming the church, there would be no resources and no people to do the work of reducing violence and challenging injustice in the world. CPT attempts to balance its work with awareness-building through presentations, sermons, displays, and projects such as the Campaign for Secure Dwellings that matches congregations with Palestinian families facing home demolitions.

A second concern about CPT as moral regenerator is that CPT itself might become a replacement home-church community for those involved with the organization. In this case, CPT would eventually discontinue being any sort of challenge to the Mennonite church, as CPTers would have little or no concern for continued identification and transformation of their religious traditions. In other words, CPT might simply become static and close in on itself, which would negate CPT's congregational basis. If CPT were to close in on itself, it would no longer have church connection and support. CPT could also close in on itself if it becomes a group of people who identify with CPT mainly because they feel the need to resist something. In other words, some people might base too much of their self-definition on being in opposition to something else.

A final concern is that there is an inherent risk of sliding into self-righteousness whenever people or groups considers themselves or their actions as more authentic than those of others. A loving critique balanced with one's own critical reflection can easily turn into blind judgementalism. "The temptation to self-righteousness is always strong

among those influenced by apocalyptisicm or sectarianism, and it is not difficult to find examples of self-righteousness in the stories of Anabaptist men and women, especially in seeing the church or the world "out there" as in some sense corrupt and contrasting with the pool of light which marks the faithful Christian group."[55] CPT as an organization, as well as CPTers personally, should be aware of the possibility of turning loving critique into self-righteous judgement. If CPTers do not manage to maintain humility, they may find themselves not just on the edges of their churches but pushed away outright.

On the one hand, CPT may be directly in line with its religious heritage. On the other hand, CPT may also be a movement away from its tradition in new directions, encouraging the peace churches to understand and act on their pacifist theology in radically new ways. What is the most evident in the plethora of CPT literature and in Keith's and Lena's life histories is that CPT refuses to disentangle itself from its roots, while challenging those roots to grow in new ways. In his description of the Friends United Meeting's involvement in CPT, James Lynch, quoting Johan Maurer, states that CPT "was the least under the control of their denominational bureaucracies but which had at least the potential of being the most faithful to the prophetic mission of the church."[56]

Concluding Thoughts

Keith's life history indicates a self-concept that clearly identifies with specific important institutions, a place, an age, and some hobbies. Keith has more externalized definitions of self than internalized ones. For this reason, what others say about him, what they see in him and what they encourage him to do has a significant influence in his life. His

identity seems to be a living out of particular roles. A major difference between Keith's and Lena's ways of expressing themselves and the maturity of their self-conceptions is likely related to the significant age gap between them.

Lena's life history indicates a more reflective and active sense of her dissonant roles and identifications: who she is and the way she sometimes presents herself in order to be with particular groups or people. For example, she distinguishes between the truth of what she believes and actively guiding the presentation of herself in order to be true to herself without completely alienating herself from those groups with whom she chooses to identify. For example, there are certain sections in the life history that have been removed at Lena's request because of her concern that they would create further misunderstanding and distance between herself and other people. At the same time, she wanted certain things said. We worked with the text in order to keep the truth of who she is without further alienating her from her family, friends and religious tradition.

This chapter shows how Keith's and Lena's identities as Mennonites cannot be effectively examined as separate from their other identifications, such as mother, brother, baseball player, or peacemaker. Their identifications as Mennonite and the resulting orientation to the world infuse all of their activities. As Lena put it, her faith is a way of life. The infusion of faith in daily life may be part of her socialization as an Old Order Mennonite, or simply her understanding of her faith on her own terms, but, in my estimation, it is a wholistic understanding.

Keith's and Lena's life histories also illustrate a moral hierarchy of activities. They value some activities, like simple living over other activities such as owning a car. Those very activities that Keith and Lena see as more important than others are also the

ones that generate the sense of difference they feel from their family, friends and religious tradition. At the same time, their hierarchy of activities enables me to identify them as Mennonites, since many of them (such as the primacy of discipleship) come out of Mennonite theology. The next chapter will focus on key themes of Keith's and Lena's faith, which is the core of who they are and is expressed through CPT.

5 – Faith in Action

> Jesus, after all, was not killed for his inner belief.[57]

A concise definition of faith for this thesis is a belief in and relationship with God that is shaped by a particular religious tradition, fostering in the faithful a particular way of life. Faith is at the centre of Keith's and Lena's religious identities. Faith motivates what they do, and infuses virtually every aspect of their lives. Faith is also the main reason why Keith and Lena are involved with CPT. In our meetings, both had difficulty distinguishing between religious events and sacred spaces, and mundane activities and spaces. I do not think that the inability to clearly distinguish the religious from the non-religious indicates an immature understanding of Keith's and Lena's faith. Rather, they meld faith in with all of their activities, relationships and spaces. This melding indicates the central role that faith plays in their lives.

For example, Keith understands the space of his churches in a similar way to his family's home; a sense of belonging infuses both places that he connects with people who are important to him. Faith is Keith's whole orientation to life, and how he goes about living.

> I think religion and faith is mostly: how do you live your daily life? How do you put it into practice? Those things you believe in most.
>
> The things I try and do—my baseball habit I'd have a hard time proving—but my work, the work I've chosen I try to make an: I enjoy it, it's something I'm interested in, but it is also a commitment to my faith in God.... I always want to be involved in some voluntary activity in the community...and I always want to keep myself learning. And for me those are spiritual things or religious things because we owe to ourselves...and to our community to be doing those things.

Religion is not an abstract concept for Keith, and I had to resist making it abstract when talking with him. Keith and Lena both only used the word "religion" to describe

their beliefs and activities when I introduced the word. Religion, or faith, relates to Keith's relationships with his church community, feeling moved while singing, and praying communally in church or privately as he walks.

Lena's sense of the religious is similar to Keith's: simple, without being simplistic, and that which infuses all she does and is. As a Sunday school teacher at Brussels Mennonite Church, Lena found that teaching children about faith included teaching them about the trees, flowers, and animals, and singing songs like what she sang for me at one of our meetings:

> The wind's a merry comrade,
> He comes to see where I can be
> He rattles at the window
> And cries "come out with me"
> He knows I love to play
> And run with him all day
> And so he comes and calls me
> To join him on his way

Lena finds these topics and songs just as religious, if not more valuable, as teaching children Bible stories. "I believe that our life is what we are, how we live it. And I don't think that you can separate your physical and your spiritual. It's all one and the same. I think it's okay to sing about funny things and about joyful things, to me they're just as religious as singing about Jesus."

Faith remains the key narrative to Keith's and Lena's life histories and thus cannot be easily distinguished from the rest of their lives. It is therefore important to look at what their faith is, and how this faith leads them to, is expressed in, and changed by their work with CPT. In order to do this, I will reflect on three themes of faith that are evident in the life histories and in CPT. Since Keith and Lena are Mennonites, the discussion on these themes focuses on a Mennonite understanding of them, although

Mennonites are not the only CPTers. I also bring in the voices of other CPTers and CPT from my experiences with the organization and from the books CPT includes on its suggested reading list.* These experiences include the delegation to Israel and the West Bank in which I participated, my conversations with CPTers, and CPT meetings I attended in southern Ontario.

The most important aspect of Keith's and Lena's faith is that what being Mennonite means them is just as evident in their actions as it is in their thoughts. When Keith speaks of what being Mennonite means to his parents, it is in relation to their commitment to service, evident in their having worked in Haiti. The lived aspect of faith reveals more about Keith's faith than his reflection on it possibly could.

> I think that's my problem in talking about my religious beliefs. In many aspects of my life I think about myself more as a doer as opposed to a thinker. Even with CPT, well, I can't really articulate the scriptural reasons why I do what I do other than it's kind of a moralistic thing, and I just feel this is right. And if you feel this is right, than you've got to do something about it.

Keith's emphasis on the lived expression of faith is in line with his religious tradition and even some contemporary Mennonite scholarship. For example, Anabaptist personality theory argues that inner belief or personality is shown in behaviour. "Those who deny a linkage between inner belief and behaviour see an individual's vertical relationship with God as personal and hidden. It is not affected by horizontal relationships demonstrated in outward behaviours, with the exception of gross social impropriety on a personal (though not structural) level."[58] The three themes explored in this chapter, embracing the cross, facing fear, and taking the other's hand are all facets of Keith's and Lena's faith, the core of their identities, in action.

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* Available on CPTnet.

Embracing the Cross

CPT as a Christian organization holds radical discipleship as a central value and basis for its work. Discipleship includes following Jesus' example. Discipleship is action based on Jesus' life teaching, spirit, death and resurrection. For Keith, Lena and CPT, Jesus' example promotes peace and justice, challenges traditional and political powers, and seeks to reconcile people to each other and to God. A balance of inward reflection and outward action, discipleship is an expression of faithfulness through critical engagement of the world, or, "...peacemaking with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other."[59]

For Mennonites, discipleship calls people out of their self-centeredness. As Hays states in *Engaging Anabaptism*, "To be called to follow Jesus is to be called into community."[60] This community of believers holds each other accountable and encourages each other in their "walk." The community of discipleship includes those in the present, but also connects with those who have gone before; what Angelica calls the "cloud of witnesses." CPT training opens with Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." CPT's connection to the cloud of witnesses is a way of finding connection to a tradition of radical peacemaking, which enables CPTers to continue the work of that tradition.

According to Christopher Marshall, embracing the cross sacrificially means willingness to follow Jesus' example: "In his passion, Jesus adopted the position of supreme victim of human evil and depredation. Yet he refused to respond to his victimization by victimizing those who victimized him. Instead, he absorbed human

violence without retaliation.... In so doing Jesus broke the mimetic or pay-back mechanism that lies at the heart of sin's power and unleashed the liberative power of forgiveness (Lk. 23:34)."[61] Radical discipleship involves having a spirit of willingness to face risk and even death in order to witness to and work for reconciliation. Biblical peacemakers acknowledge that, like Jesus, they may be hurt, arrested or even killed for confronting unjust powers and seeking to reconcile conflicting parties. Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, author of *The Anabaptists are Back!*, sees this type of peacemaking as a dynamic response to challenging situations, offering the oppressor a choice for a different way.[62]

CPT seeks to mitigate the violence between conflicting parties, although CPT feels that a literal interpretation of their motto "getting in the way" does not adequately speak to their full mission, which is also about getting in the "way" of Jesus. Based on Jesus' example, CPT also seeks to restore people's relationships with each other and with God. Discipleship is that which brings about CPT's understanding of Shalom: wholeness, right relationships, and oneness with God. "Biblical peacemaking is a process of reconciling someone to God.... When conflict separates us from people, it separates us from God."[63] CPT believes that peacemaking grounded in discipleship is unique and not the same as secular peacemaking groups since biblical peacemaking looks beyond the immediate relations between conflicting parties. Biblical peacemaking then is understood as the incarnation of the Gospel; faith "made flesh through deeds."[64]

Keith's and Lena's life histories, along with CPT's history, indicate disappointment with the Mennonite (and Christian) church in its forgetfulness of its tradition of active discipleship. In *Engaging Anabaptism*, Marshall distinguishes between

doctrinal and ethical Christocentrism. Doctrinal Christocentrism is "...what one believes about Christ has been more important than whether one actually obeys him in action. Christ has functioned more as the central link in the doctrine of salvation than as the primary source of Christian values and praxis."[65] CPTers see the Mennonite church as slipping into a type of doctrinal Christocentrism, and seek to renew ethical Christocentrism: scripture in practice. "In order to understand truly what is written about Christ in scripture and what is consistent with his teaching and spirit one must also walk with Christ on the path of costly obedience."[66] Faith that emphasises discipleship is the centre of Keith's and Lena's life histories, and that faith requires praxis in order to know Christ. By faith in action, Keith and Lena come to know themselves. If authentic faith for Mennonites is discipleship, then discipleship is the way Keith and Lena are authentic to their religious identities.

Keith's life history illustrates how much he has internalized the concept of discipleship. Who he is then, seeks to be in line with his identification of discipleship as a key tenet of the Mennonite faith.

> *What do you see as the foundational beliefs of your church?*
> Definitely the symbol would be the community centre I think: faith in action; our responsibility to the community, to our brothers and sisters. Faith has to be alive, you can't just go on a Sunday and say, "All right, I've done my job, I'm going home. Maybe I'll come back and confess later."

"Doing unto others" is more than not doing what you would not what someone else to do to you. For Keith, the Golden Rule involves also doing to others what they would not expect you to do; to be willing to sacrifice oneself for others.

Keith's current church in Toronto reaffirms his commitment to discipleship.

> I think one of the big things about [my current church] is just sort of their history, like because they started as a house church.... It was a real mission-oriented thing. They developed this community centre, something they wanted as a project, which reminded me a lot of this Church of the Saviour group in Washington D.C. It was a very, sort of, mission-oriented, faith in action type deal.

What Keith's church does, more so than what it says in a sermon on Sunday, is exemplify and challenge him to discipleship in everyday life. Keith's connection with his church encourages him to live a life of discipleship in Canada, where conflict, poverty and injustice do not challenge him in the same way he is challenged in Chiapas, Hebron or Colombia.

When Lena was telling me about what it means to be a Christian in the world, living in the footsteps of Jesus, she was telling me about sacrifice.

> But I believe that if we want to really, really live what we claim that we believe in, if we are Christians and we follow Jesus then we have to do it sacrificially, and that doesn't mean that we keep two hundred thousand or even five hundred thousand dollars in some reserve in the bank while there are people out there that don't have blankets to wrap themselves in.

For Lena, discipleship is not just working with CPT on various projects, but aligning her whole life to the concept of discipleship. Like her mother, Lena does not just make one relief bundle for Iraq, but dozens. She also recruits others to do the same. Like Jesus, who gave everything he had, Lena believes Christians are required to give beyond their means, risking security, and facing danger.

> And yet we claim to be followers of Jesus, we call ourselves Christians, which means we're supposed to followers of Christ, and he gave everything that he had, and he lived with practically nothing, with no security, he faced danger and he walked into it, and we say we're followers of him. He was politically involved and we dear little, sweet little Mennonites want to stay out of politics. Well I thank God that Christian Peacemaker Teams came into being and is actually addressing some of these issues and is challenging the status quo of our church.

Living sacrificially also means simple living. Lena sharply criticises Mennonites who are living beyond what is necessary and amassing and hording wealth. Her critique of Mennonites is stronger than that of other Christians and other Canadians likely because it is her own tradition, but also because she sees the Mennonite tradition as one that has historically been concerned with living simply. Simple living, like all Lena does, reflects the connection she feels and seeks with those around her. Lena seeks to extend the idea of "neighbour" (evident in her words, though I did not have the opportunity to witness it in her daily life) to all those who are affected by what she does or fails to do.

Facing Fear

I am in the Old City of Jerusalem with a CPT delegation of eleven people ranging in age from 25 to 73. Our fourteen days together are filled to the brim with activities. I awaken in the early morning to the Muslim call to prayer; different minarets echoing off the flat roofs of the buildings, down into the narrow, windy roads of the market. The group starts the day with worship, and then spends the day meeting with three or four Palestinian and Israeli peacemaking non-governmental organizations (NGO) in Jerusalem, Hebron or Bethlehem. After a simple dinner, we gather to discuss the day's events, and our reactions to what we have heard, seen and experienced. At the day's close, we pray together then head to bed.

At one of our nightly delegation check-ins, one fellow delegate shared how it was that she came to sit at that table with us in the Old City of Jerusalem. She stated that at times she "felt like a Jonah." Referring to the biblical story of Jonah and the whale, she expressed how she also had major reservations about joining the delegation, as we all did,

on the brink of the American-led war in Iraq. She understood her need to go on the delegation as willed by God. Some of us were more reluctant, or Jonah-like, than others, yet somehow we all packed our bags, got on our planes and made it to Tel Aviv. Perhaps our biblical storm was going up to Jerusalem during a snowstorm. Perhaps it was crossing military checkpoints into Bethlehem and Hebron. Maybe it was having soldiers run towards us in the night with their flashlights pointed in our eyes and their guns pointed at our bodies. CPTers put themselves in places of great risk, for what others may deem as heroic, God-willed, overly altruistic, or even misguided purposes. While this exploration of the lives and religious identities of participants with CPT explains the process of discernment of faith through which each person has decided to take these risks, it is not to say that CPTers do not sometimes feel the reluctance of Jonah, as my fellow delegate put it.

A short time after I returned home from my delegation with CPT, another fellow delegate, Al Meyer, e-mailed our group part of a presentation he had given at a church.

> I believe it was a French author of the past century (Victor Hugo?) who said, "The guillotine has a way of focusing the mind." We ask serious questions about our lives when we are contemplating death. The statement we need to sign to be on a CPT delegation makes this real:
>
> I am aware that I am entering a situation that may be tense at the present time and that there may be danger of war or other violent conflict occurring while I am there. I understand that this is a mission of peace undertaken by people of faith who believe that God has made known through the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
> I understand that I could be imprisoned, taken hostage, injured or even killed....
> I assume and accept full responsibility....
>
> What would happen if a statement like this were a part of the baptism and covenanting Covenant and Understandings we agree to with one another when we join the Assembly?

In our sharing times in our delegation of 11, it turned out that at least half of the others had given this some thought as they had signed the CPT statement. Facing the possibility of injury or death in a mission one believes in raises at least two questions:

1. Am I ready to put my life on the line in a mission to which God and my brothers and sisters are calling me?
   Do I have a faith worth dying for?
   This actually has to do with the origins of CPT. Soldiers are willing to die for their country in war. Are Christians ready to die in God's mission of making peace?
2. The second question is one with which I am still wrestling: Do I think my life is worth more to God than that of a Palestinian farmer who has just had his house levelled—or, for that matter, a poor man from West Virginia living in a ramshackle house with a dirt floor on the edge of Goshen?
   How does all this look in God's eyes?
   May our meetings Sunday after Sunday be serious occasions for strengthening each other in God's mission....[67]

This reflection highlights several import things. Discipleship, as understood and practiced by CPTers, puts people in places of risk. Facing fear tests the sincerity and strength of their faith. Facing fear relies on a supportive community, both in discerning how to be obedient to Jesus' example and in sustaining CPTers when they are on a CPT project and away from their faith community. Finally, facing fear can lead CPTers to re-examine the idea of "neighbour." Al Meyer indicated that it is easy to "love one's neighbour" when that person belongs to your cultural, religious or class group. One's willingness to face the risks involved with CPT work quickly wanes if that person realizes their notions of concern for people on the river Opón in Colombia are in fact not as sincere as they thought.

A few months after participating in a CPT delegation, I went to CPT's regional meeting in Toronto. CPTers gathered in the morning at a local Mennonite church. Greetings, hugs, and stories were shared over coffee, while others set up chairs in a

circle, news clippings were put on display, and a couple of people struggled to get the slide projector to work properly.

The worship focused everyone's attention and emotions. Steven* lead worship that morning, and he had us sing a song from CPT's worship book; a thin collection of photocopied songs stapled together into a book of sorts. Steven opened his Bible and read from it. I knew the verses well, but was not sure why they were important to this worship. Steven took his Bible and read to the group:

> After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut wood for the burnt offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. (Genesis 22:1-3)

Steven told a story, sharing about how he had decided to go on a delegation to Iraq. He told of his wife's support, even though she did not really want him to go. His voice was suddenly choked, and he swallowed several times before being able to continue. The room was energized, backs stiffened, ears were riveted, and while some people focused their gaze more steadily on the storyteller, others found somewhere else to look, perhaps trying to ease the tension. Steven's sharing became of the most personal kind. Voice quivering, he told us about having to face death. He knew there was risk; Steven had been oversees with CPT before. This was different. For Steven, deciding to go to Iraq was literally a death sentence. He and his wife made funeral preparations.

I believe that Steven was telling us about his struggle over his willingness to accept sacrifice for what he believes to be true. Was he willing to embrace the cross

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* Name has been changed.

because God asked it of him? Steven returned to his Bible and flipped through the pages to find the verses he was looking for. He found them, and read aloud:

> Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." (Genesis 33:24-30)

Steven spoke of wrestling with his fear of going to Iraq and face death, yet desired to be obedient to Jesus' call of discipleship. Wrestling with God and with his own fear, Steven talked with his church, his spouse and his children in order to discern what to do. Steven concluded our worship that morning by reading the remainder of the Genesis story of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Through prayerful reflection, Steven said he saw a new path God was offering. He did not need to go to Iraq at that moment in time. He looked around the circle of CPTers, many of whom had faced similar struggles in discipleship, and said, "If God provides a ram, it is a gift. I should accept it."

The reality of risk in radical discipleship is another way CPT feels its participants connect to the "cloud of witnesses" by aligning themselves with the Anabaptists of the *Martyrs Mirror* who faced persecution and risk yet refused to embrace or return violence. Duane Ruth-Heffelbower argues that the stories in the *Martyrs Mirror* "...consistently exemplify the refusal of persecuted Anabaptists to use lethal force to protect themselves. They also show the penchant of these people for preaching their views to their persecutors. Life or death was not the issue for these Anabaptists; obedience to God

was."[68] When CPTers willingly face their fear and the real possibility of their death they feel they are better able to discern what is obedient to God, just as Steven could only see the "ram" God offered him after wrestling with and resolving his own fear of death.

Keith and Lena both spoke about facing fear and taking risks. Keith joked that in order to work with CPT he pushes the thought of death out of his mind, an indication perhaps of his age and a sense of youthful immortality.

> *How does your faith relate to the risks that are involved when you work with CPT?*
> First, face them with ignorance: nothing's going to happen!.... I mean, you know the risk is there, but you don't think it's going to be you. I don't know if it's a [pause], I don't know how deeply I've explored it, like, it scares you when you think about getting hurt or think: I could be killed there.... I don't have a family of my own—it doesn't mean you wouldn't leave folks behind. I guess these are just excuses I think for why it's easier for me go, when you don't have to think about that.

Keith's denial of the possibility of being hurt or killed functions as a defence-mechanism as well. Discipleship may be easier when people can convince themselves that it is not costly. When I questioned Keith about whether he would take the same risks if he had children, Keith was not so flippant with his response. He might seriously reconsider his commitment to CPT; rather, active involvement with CPT projects, if he had commitments to a family of his own.

CPT does not have many active CPTers who are married and have young children. Full-time CPTers are more likely to be of either university student age, people without children, or people in their fifties or beyond. Commitments to family and careers cannot always be put aside for the cause of discipleship, as much as some people would want to be involved with CPT. For this reason, there are many supporters of CPT who

cannot see their way to becoming actively involved on project sites. Having children significantly affects people's willingness and ability to take risks.

Lena did in fact leave her children behind when she joined CPT. While none were so young that they were completely dependant on her, they were young enough that Lena knew her leaving might negatively affect them. Lena's decision to go to Haiti was likely harder to make because she was leaving grandchildren behind. Her children were old enough, though, to understand the real possibility of their mother dying in Haiti.

> It's not an easy decision to make but I also, at the same time, when you train to be a CPTer and you have signed papers that said that you're not going to hold CPT responsible if you do die, you talk to your kids about death—and I told my children to leave my body in Haiti if something did happen, because I didn't want them to have to spend the money to bring my body home, because that would've been terribly expensive. I told them they can have ceremonies without a body.

Lena is matter-of-fact in her discussion about the possibility of dying while on a CPT project. Lena's equanimity is discussing risk could be because we were discussing events that had already happened, and it is easy to romanticize the past. Lena is safe at home. Her equanimity could also be because Lena sincerely believes that living at all costs is not really living if someone else dies unjustly. It could also be because Lena has faced some of the worst possible situations, and realized that she could survive emotionally and physically. She has learned how to deal with her fear because she had to in order to continue working long-term with CPT.

> I don't think you can really explain it, when a person decides to do this kind of work. There's different ways of escaping, you either escape by standing and fighting and shooting and killing, or you run and hide, or you stand and face your fear and you deal with it. And I think what CPTer have done, especially in my personal experience, what I've learned to do—and I'm still not perfect at it—is instead of running from my fear and the fear of others, I face it. And when I face the fear in my assailant and I recognize the fear in my assailant but walk towards him and see him as a

> human being, then that fear gets pushed aside, at least for a moment. That fear, when the fear is faced or even—not really denied—but when you walk into it instead of running from it, but I think in order to be able to step into it, you have to believe in a power beyond what society as a whole recognizes....and I believe, for me, that's my faith. I know that a human can do ten times, twenty times, a hundred times more than we usually give ourselves credit for. The human spirit is—if one believes in the human spirit—it is much, much stronger than we can even *imagine*.

Lena feels that faith is being able to recognize, face, and walk with her fear. Lena feels she can embrace her fear because she knows from her work with CPT that faith means stepping where the ground is not solid.

Taking the Other's Hand

Lena describes the work she does with CPT as taking another person's hand and walking with them for a while. Fear does not necessarily overshadow faith in action. Keith and Lena found CPT work fulfilling because of the human connection involved. CPT's work seeks to build relationships with people. CPTers listen and stand with people they meet. They share the communion of eating grapefruit on a hot day in Colombia, or a dinner of makhlubeh in Beit Ummar near Hebron. Lena feels that relationship is one of the most important things CPT can do, because if CPTers are not hearing the stories of the people with whom they works, then they cannot stand in solidarity with them.

> Sometimes you have to put your own needs and emotions aside and take somebody else's hand and walk with them for awhile, but you don't do it forever, but you show them how, and then if they choose to walk the wholesome way in life, then that's good. If they choose not to, then you have also to be willing to let them go. And that's not easy either. But I've had other people taking my hand for periods of time, I believe it's okay for us humans to take each other's hands and walk together, and in essence, that's what prayer is. If I pray for you, but I'm not willing to take your hand and walk with you for a while, then my prayer is not a prayer. If I pray for the people in Colombia, but I'm not willing to give of myself in any shape or form for Colombia, then my prayer is in vain.

A major way that CPT does what Lena coins taking the other's hand is by establishing a presence in a particular community. Establishing a presence means learning and listening to the sides of conflicting parties. Presence also models Shalom, which gives parties new options for relating to each other and hope for the future.[69]

Keith and Lena see their faith as "the reason to engage the world." Their faith carries a message of reconciliation, of community and connection, and of possibilities for the restoration of broken relationships. Keith said once that he follows the Christian faith, and that it is the faith of love. Taking the other's hand, for Keith, is extending the concept of neighbour from those in his own community to those outside of it as well. Love of his neighbour is often confusing, as Keith's life history speaks of Keith's concern about working too much on one side. For example, he is unsure where to situate himself in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

> So I grew up a North American kid watching TV, and thinking, alright, Israelis—good; Palestinians—rock-throwing terrorists. That was just the image that came across my T.V. all the time, and I was, I didn't care. Whatever I was, during the first Intifada, I was 13 when it broke out, and I didn't care...I just wanted to play baseball and hockey and hang out with my friends.
> *It didn't affect your world.*
> Yeah. So you've got these crazy people who are throwing rocks, and maybe they deserve to be shot, I don't know. So the first time I ever saw the situation from the other angle was when a guy...was talking about the Occupation and the rubber bullets, and that you can't drive here and you can't drive there. I didn't totally get it, but I started to, you know, I hear things—and I think the average person does too—all right, soldiers shooting rubber bullets at kids? Yeah, of course they're going to throw rocks back and forth. And again, where does it start? I've formed my...opinions, but it made me realize that there's more of a story to this. I knew CPT by the time I went to Hebron, and our stance that we stand with oppressed peoples, and on an amount of faith I just take it from people I respect and say, yeah, the oppressed people in this situation are the Palestinians...So I wish I could say I was neutral, but I wasn't.

Keith is uncomfortable with his lack of neutrality, although he is comfortable with the fact that CPT, while aiming for neutrality, chooses the side of the oppressed. Keith is uncomfortable with what he sees his inability to make an informed stand with Palestinians because he lacks the complete picture he wishes he had. He is concerned that standing in solidarity with Palestinians means taking a stand against Israelis. As someone who is constantly searching for root causes to problems in the world, this sense of not knowing as much as he wants troubles him. Keith's reflection on these issues was more cautious than the manner in which he conveyed his thoughts on other matters. His storytelling took a more circular and digressive path as he worked through the issue of neutrality in his interviews with me.

Lena feels that taking the other's hand is not a neutral act. It also means willingness to point out injustice, actively denouncing what a person, a group, or even a state does. Taking sides relays judgement. CPT both overtly states and implies this judgement of other's actions when they stand in solidarity with a particular group. "Doing unto others" means getting in the way of those who are doing what should not be done to others.

According to Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, whose book includes reflections on CPT's peacemaking ventures, Anabaptist personality theory has three assumptions: First, people are good, and thus sin is a choice, though an inclination. Second, people have the capacity to change (in other words, to stop rebelling against God). Third, people participate in the divine through belief in and obedience to God. Fourth, one's behaviour is a testament to his personality.[70] This model provides an avenue into understanding CPT's orientation to people whose actions it challenges. CPT may see its judgement of

other's actions when they "get in the way" as an optimistic orientation to human nature. Lena says she does not want to condemn people along with their actions. Rather, she seeks to win over those who use violence to the biblical shalom of reconciliation. Lena is more secure about taking sides because she is optimistic that her work can change violent situations and offer violent people a new way.

> *How does it feel to be in a place, especially by what your doing, tells people that what they're doing is wrong?*
> I don't ever apologize for that when I know that what they're doing is wrong. But, for example, in Colombia, especially in Colombia and in Bosnia too, you could walk up to them and say, "Wouldn't it be nice if you could go home to your family," especially in Colombia.... And we would walk right up to them and often have prayers and light candles and in our prayers we would *always* pray for the young men, for their mothers, for their children, for their families, so that they could go home and be with their families, and that was really touching and some of them would be in tears.

Lena argues that she does not judge people but offers them a choice—in the case above, the chance for paramilitaries and guerrillas to see their work as an injustice to themselves and their families. What Keith, Lena and CPT do is in fact a judgement, though they see it as a "friendly" one. They want their judgment to open doors and choices that perhaps did not exist before. Keith and Lena want their judgment to be one that gives those who perpetuate violence and injustice the opportunity to put their guns down and to meet those they oppress as their neighbours.

Pointing out to others that what they do is wrong is difficult, which explains some of Keith's difficulty in communicating his thoughts to me about not being neutral. Judgement assumes authority, and Keith does not feel he is authoritative on the situation in Hebron, though he feels his experiences have opened his eyes.

> That's where CPT can become a hard thing for me, because I don't like to—I don't think anyone likes to tell people when, if you feel that they're

> wrong, then you've got to say something. Or if you feel something was wrong in a particular situation then you've got to say something. And I don't want to be told that I'm wrong, I mean, my perception of the situation could very well be very limited or what not, so it's sort of a hard spot to be in.

Keith is an awkward position: his self-conception is of a person of faith, and that faith—if committed to discipleship—puts him in places where he makes moral judgement about other people's actions.

Coming Home After CPT

Who Keith and Lena are has changed through their work with CPT. If faith is the core of who they are and how they understand and live in the world then an exploration of the ways in which CPT has affected their faith is necessary. Identifying changes in their faith was a difficult task for Keith and Lena, likely because change occurred slowly over time. Keith feels that work with CPT has politicized his faith. "I don't know how much my faith has changed. It's probably changed me a little more as a person just in terms of what I've learned. It's probably made me a little more radical, and made my faith maybe more political." In particular, Keith's life history speaks of a politicized pacifism. Keith argues that Mennonite pacifism should be an engagement with the world, rather than a separation from it. Engagement with the world means Mennonites cannot avoid the political, but rather, they should engage the political in a particular way: refusing to use violence as a tactic.

While Keith is not able to speak about the theological intricacies of his faith tradition, he does feel as though he is a part of a distinct tradition that has provided him with a particular worldview. While Keith's central faith tenet, do unto others, remains

fixed; the way he understands and acts on this has changed considerably. Keith now feels that doing unto others requires more than just serving others, it requires him to search for the root causes of injustice and challenge that injustice. Keith's ethic takes him from the soup kitchen into places of risk.

Working with CPT has also made Keith more reflective about his faith. Keith's storytelling shows that his experiences on youth service trips and with MVS and CPT were times he was actively involved in "doing," an important word in his own self-conception. He now has a better balance between his lived experiences, which he does because they "feel right," and self-reflection. While Keith does not necessarily understand himself as a self-reflective and articulate person, his stories in fact point to a lot of reflection and internal debate. His experiences with the youth service trips were pivotal and moved him to ask new questions. CPT pushed Keith to be reflective in new ways as well. Keith is a relative newcomer to CPT. I imagine that his self-reflection will become increasingly refined and mature as he continues to work with CPT and grow in his faith.

Though she has had her faith "tried by fire," Lena feels her faith has deepened because of CPT. She is not necessarily closer to her church, in fact, Lena contends with isolation every time she returns from work with CPT. Lena may feel closer to her personal faith, and rely on this experience of her faith versus a communal expression of it, because she is often isolated from her faith community and family and friends for such long stretches of time. Lena's life history illustrates how CPT is an especially alienating experience for her in ways it is not for Keith, whose involvement is for shorter periods of time with much longer stretches in Canada in between.

Like Keith, Lena defines who she is, and her faith, in relation to others. Though in Canada, and not literally doing the work of CPT in Colombia, Lena still understands her life and her choices intrinsically bound up in the lives of those with whom she has developed connections.

> Everything that I have told you, all of the decisions I make, do not just affect me, they affect my children, my grandchildren, my great-great grandchildren. They're not just ghosts, but every person I come in contact with. And I say, the decision I made to stay home from Colombia now affects my children and my grandchildren, but it also affects the people that I met on the river Opón. It affects them, and their children, their grandchildren. So everything that I do, and the choices I make today affect everybody that I come in contact with, and those who follow after. So the challenge is, how do you live in your life, what kind of decisions are you making? And then I added, and if you choose to have two houses, if you chose to have a boat and a cottage, or two cars, or three, it affects you, your children, your grandchildren, and the people you relate to and those who come after you.

What Lena does with her experiences in Colombia here in Canada reflects her ongoing sense of connection and responsibility to those she met. Meeting with church groups young and old, Lena feels she continues with the work of trying to get the paramilitaries and guerrillas to put their guns away. Lena also feels that living simply in her house is also her testament to continued solidarity with the people on the river Opón.

In Lena's life history, she states, "My faith is still very, very similar to what it was as a child." By stating that work with CPT has changed Lena's faith, I do not mean to ignore this important statement. Rather, this statement is in line with Lena's other statements of being more of what she has always been. Lena does not busy herself with complex theologizing about God. Her faith now, as it was as a child, is an acknowledgment of God's goodness, and her desire to life a life committed to faith. Like her faith as a child, Lena is still committed to watching out and caring for other people.

Lena's faith is still about balancing being with doing, even though working with CPT has changed the manner in which she does this. CPT has changed Lena faith in that Lena's understanding of neighbour has expanded to include those outside her actual geographical community, her religious community and her family. When Lena was a child, faith was sharing what she had, as she saw her mother put together relief kits. Sharing for Lena now involves sharing of herself for years at a time, putting her physical body in places that need help. Sharing now means committing her whole life to non-violence, and putting together relief kits is only one facet of Lena's faith in action. Working with CPT has also changed Lena's faith because she now feels that she can step on shaky ground, and do impossible things.

Performative Peacemaking

Faith in action is performative. By performance, I mean "a particular kind of doing...in which the observation of the deed is an essential part of its doing, even if the observer be invisible or is the performer herself."[71] According to Tom Driver, performance is both inward and outward oriented. The performance seeks to effects transformation in the performers and observers. The transformative element in a sacred context indicates the efficacy of the performance in ritual mode, versus performance as entertainment.

Keith, Lena and CPT's performative peacemaking is evident in several ways. If CPTers did not tell their stories they could neither offer a loving critic of their churches nor generate awareness and moral outrage over the unjust situations in which CPTers work. CPT presentations are an effective medium through which CPTers stories circulate to groups of people, especially since it is an activity most CPTers engage in upon return

to their home communities. In fact, the performative nature of CPT's peacemaking became abundantly clear to me during my delegation. Most of my fellow delegates planned to do presentations following the delegation, and actively engaged in the planning process during the delegation itself. In the long van rides from Bethlehem or Hebron to Jerusalem, the group would brainstorm ideas for skits, role-plays or other effective ways to convey to audiences at home what "mokzums" (Arabic for giant heaps of dirt and cement blocks to impede access to roads) or military checkpoints were like. My fellow delegates were rehearsing their performance so that it would be effective at conveying their experiences on the delegation, and provoke a response from the audience.

A recent example of the performative nature of CPT's peacemaking comes out of one the role-playing exercises CPT does at its meetings. We role-played various ways to deal with what is currently a real problem facing the CPT team in Hebron; they have been ordered into curfew along with the Palestinian population in the H2 section of Hebron. When we debriefed the role-play, we pondered what the team would actually do in response. We surmised that they might break curfew (facing arrest) when they needed to go buy food, or when they went out to do "school patrol" in the morning. Doug Pritchard responded, "We should test the rules when it highlights the injustice in the most dramatic way possible." What I think Doug meant by this statement was that if the team members were to be arrested, then it would be better that they be arrested accompanying children to school than simply going on a CPT errand for themselves. One arrest would "highlight the injustice" and gain attention, where the other probably would not. CPT uses performative peacemaking, in the case above, as a skillful way to create a desired outcome and to generate greater awareness about a particular injustice.

At that same meeting, another example of performative peacemaking became evident to me. During the 2003 war in Iraq, CPT was asked more questions than ever before because, according to CPTers, the Canadian media was seeking alternative voices. At the beginning of the war, interviews, updates and answering the media's questions were a major part of CPT's witness in Iraq. Some CPTers were frustrated about the mixed messages between what CPT did and human shields, stating that people did not fully understand the ethics of CPT in comparison with these other groups. Other CPTers felt that what CPT does, if only at a base level, is like human shields but framed biblically as "laying down your life for a friend."

In response to this conversation, another CPTer questioned, "Is all press good press?"

Dealing with the press (including generating their own press through e-mail updates, releases and maintaining the CPT website) is another way CPT presents their peacemaking activity. While preparing to go on my delegation to Israel and Palestine, I received a package from the CPT delegation coordinator filled with resources on how to inform the press about my peacemaking activities. As a delegate, I was encouraged to contact as many local media sources as possible in order to have interviews or articles written prior to, during and after my delegation.

CPTers also engage in public worship and prayer, fasts, witness, denunciations and liturgies of resistance. Lena explained denunciations as public and often published condemnations of particular actions or atrocities committed by a group (or a member of a group) such as the paramilitaries or guerrillas. Denunciations are a tactic used by the CPT team in Colombia. Other public performances include the burning "death lists."

Death lists include the names of people in the community who are targeted for assassination.

CPT would not call its own peacemaking performative. As one CPTer put it, it is not a concept germane to the organization. As Angelica said, "We're talking life and death here, we do not perform." Still, people who are not involved with CPT would perhaps interpret what CPT does as containing a performative element, as I do. By arguing that the life histories and CPT demonstrate faith through performative peacemaking, I do not intend to argue that their faith-based peacemaking is insincere. Rather, performative peacemaking is a creative tactic in difficult and dangerous situations. Sometimes the response to this particular type of doing is frightening, such as when the Colombia team (which included Lena) began receiving death threats. Lena feels they received the threats because of their very public denunciations. She also understands the death threats as a sign that the team is effective in its witness. I think performative peacemaking allows CPT to effectively set the stage, if you will, for making injustice apparent to an audience through particularly creative and symbolic acts. If CPT did not do this, it might impede their ability to generate awareness and response to urgent situations.

6 – Methodological Reflections

Methodology

I have taken several approaches in this project. First, I offered a brief descriptive overview of CPT as an organization. I surveyed published and unpublished (primarily web articles and e-mail updates) information on CPT's history, mission, and previous and current work, along with many of the books from CPT's suggested reading list. I complemented this research with getting to know the living CPT better by attending CPT regional meetings in Ontario, participating in a CPT delegation to the Middle East, and conducting interviews with Keith and Lena. The bulk of this thesis is the result of fieldwork employing methods used in writing ethnographic life histories: the study of living people through the exploration of outside literature, personal documents, and fieldwork via participant observation and interviews in order to record life stories, a "recounting through memory of lived experience."[72] By ethnographic life history, I mean method of recording aspects of a living person's life, a process emphasizing co-operation and negotiation. I did not assume this method in order to confine the narratives given to a set of categories or a system, but rather, to provide a conduit through which the interviewees' self-understandings as Mennonite peacemakers could be recorded. I explored these life histories for what they reveal about the process of religious identity formation and transformation.

I collected the life histories from six separate interviews, which were recorded on tape and later transcribed. Since our meetings needed to be scheduled (as I lived in a different city than Keith and Lena), the interviews often felt formalized. Meetings with Lena necessitated fewer questions, and the ones I did ask were not always answered

directly, but worked to spin her storytelling in a particular direction. The process of the interviews with Lena was more under her control than mine. With Keith, the process relied more heavily on my questions to prompt his reflection. The meetings with Keith were also much shorter and more task-oriented. While we did talk informally outside of the taped discussions, we did not spend a lot of time just visiting. Lena is a storyteller, and so our meetings were long. Not only did she tell me stories that made it to tape, but the nature of all our interactions were part of her telling me stories about her home, her land, her family, her cat, and her recent relief projects, for example.

In recording and presenting Keith's life stories, I relied more heavily on visual clues in order to round out what I knew about Keith outside of what he verbally conveyed to me. An issue that arose is the recording of Keith's life history is that the text is in fact not really a life history at all. Rather, Keith's life history is a collection of reflections on various issues. For the most part, these reflections are a fair representation of my interviews with Keith, since his stories were not narratives, but verbal reflection on what I imagine must be Keith's ongoing internal discussion arising out of his various life experiences. While not a life history, the text included in this thesis reflects who Keith is at this moment in time: a young man very much in dialogue with his life experiences and what they mean to him. Keith's reflections loop back in circular ways that indicate to me that he is making sense of and connecting his various life experiences. Keith's text is his working through of his identity, which may (with time) ultimately solidify into a coherent life history or a theology. It is still valuable to record and study what Keith has offered, refraining from trying to mould it into what it is not, but rather accepting it as comparable to a more conventional type of life history.

Keith and Lena invited me into their lives after I invited them to tell me their life stories and experiences with CPT. Though most willing participants, the life histories would not exist if not for my initiative. Doug Pritchard (CPT Canada) first approached them, as he was someone who could connect me with CPTers in southern Ontario, and someone they both know well.

At my first meetings with Keith and Lena, we discussed the process of our interviews, and both agreed to have them recorded on tape, for later transcription. The presence of the tape recorder did play a role in the ways in which they recounted their experiences, as did even my presence and the nature of my visit. At times both Keith and Lena would look at the tape recorder while explaining an event and either tell the story and request that it be edited later or comment directly about the recorder, usually laughing self-consciously, and verbally questioning whether or not to share their thoughts given that they would be made permanent. My reminders that they would read drafts of their life histories and potentially edit what was spoken too freely for a permanent text mitigated this fear of saying what Keith joked about as being "blasphemous."

I did only minor editing in the presentation of Keith's and Lena's life histories, such as adding punctuation where necessary, and deleting excessive repetitions and informal talking habits. However, I have reduced over one hundred pages of transcriptions to only thirty pages of text. This reduction means that I made decisions about what of their stories was most crucial to presenting their life history as I heard it; their understanding of their faith as Mennonites, and their reflections on their experiences with CPT. I then amalgamated the remaining text into a somewhat more linear, thematic and more coherent narrative.

The process of editing leads to an inevitably problematic question necessary in ethnographic life history work: "How do we get in touch with the life history as a unique, subjective product embedded in what is to us an alien cultural context, when our minds seem inescapably to force us to impose on the life history the kind of organization by which we naturally or spontaneously, but sometimes artificially, make sense of experience?"[73] The fact that other readers do not have the benefit of a personal relationship that I have had the pleasure of cultivating with Keith and Lena further compounds this problem. It is this relationship that is the key to getting in touch with the life histories. My relationships with Keith and Lena gave me a more complete understanding of who they are, which guided me in the decisions I made when editing and presenting their life histories in that I could make more informed choices about what parts were most important, and to present who they are as accurately as possible.

This relationship went the other way as well, as both Keith and Lena entrusted to me and an unforeseen audience of this thesis words, feelings and truths they would otherwise edit out of the narrative. For example, Lena felt she spoke too critically about the Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada when she expressed how she cried when they dropped the peace and justice position for several years. After reading a draft of her edited life history for the first time, she told me over the phone that the original life history is what she feels is the truth and what she said, but she wants to be more careful about how she criticizes the church. She is concerned about how "average church goers" would read it, and feels that they would not understand what she meant. This statement indicated a strong sense of the people in both the church, as well as the ambiguous audience "out there" who would read about her and CPT and misunderstand what she

does or thinks. She stated that she knows of people who think that CPTers are all "weirdos" and want to get rid of them. Placing trust in me is probably easier than placing it in an unknown audience. As Angelica once said, "I don't want to give the best gems of my life story to have them maligned by others." Angelica speaks to a very real concern about my own and the audience's empathic ability. Keith and Lena realize that our understanding of their stories is limited by our lack of shared experience.

A fear I had in the process of editing and presenting the life histories was that my choices might not be those that Keith and Lena would have made. I also considered sorting out the transcriptions for use in this thesis by those events that seemed most pivotal in their lives. This worked to some degree, as these moments were points of turning, growth and personal revelation for Keith and Lena, which served to outline the basic structure of their life histories. However, if one pays attention only to those events which are pivotal, then what of the rest? Is a period of reflection less significant in comparison to a period of action? Even CPT sees the time away from the actual CPT projects as important time. The pivotal moments do not speak to all the self-reflection and slow growth that fill the moments in between. So, while major pivotal moments in Keith and Lena lives are included, so are many discussions we had about thoughts and events that occurred outside of their major life-markers. Presented here is a text on far from complete lives. I hope what remains still captures the complexity of their lives, their faith and their experiences with CPT. In transcribing, editing and presenting these life histories my hope is that my own voice has not overshadowed Keith's and Lena's authentic voices.

My choices about which parts of their life histories were most important were mitigated somewhat by Keith's and Lena's feedback on two drafts; one draft of their life history, and another of this complete thesis, prior to final revisions. Lena's feedback to drafts was an interesting mix of being hands on and hands off. In other words, she seemed to care deeply about what was included, how I presented her story, and even how it might be interpreted. On the one hand, she also tried to feign distance from the thesis. For example, early in our first phone conversation after sending her a draft, she stated: "Of course, it's your paper, you do what you want to do, I don't care." When I asked her about the title to her life history, she said, "It's not exactly me, but maybe it's okay? It's okay with me, but will set a tone for the reader that is maybe not in the story. This is your story of what you experienced with me here." Of course, she was correct in that the life history is, in many ways, a reflection of the person I encountered in my time with her as a guest in her house. On the other hand, Lena indicated how she cared about the life history when she paid careful attention to grammatical errors, phrases, or the stories she told. After describing what she thought of the life history, and then listening to why I chose to include certain things, she stated, "All right, you did understand what I said!" At the end, her response was "It portrays who I am, what I believe and where I come from. It explains why I would join CPT." Lena cares deeply about how I present her life and her words, and the accuracy of that presentation.

Keith received his first draft of his life history by e-mail, and responded that he would read and respond to it the next day. A few hours later, I got another e-mail from him stating he had read much of it right away. Like Lena, Keith also cared a lot about things he said, and how his thoughts and experiences might appear to others. This

concern prompted him to assume pseudonyms for both himself and his churches. Having his exact words reflected back to him was strange, as it must be for many people. Like Lena, Keith wanted to clarify things he said, commenting that it might read another way to an audience, even if we both knew what he meant. Keith also left me to my own devices much of the time, giving his opinion only when I requested it. From the first time we met, Keith has willingly trusted me with his life stories.

The approach I take in the thesis is something I had thought about seriously before embarking on the project. This approach was intentional. The pace shifted from being set by me, to being set by others. Many times I waited. Others waited for me. Many times I rushed. Others rushed for me, such as when Keith and Lena seemed to sense my desire to meet for successive interviews sooner than it might have suited them, yet always graciously found time in their schedules for our meetings. My project was held in the hands of CPT as I waited in another room while CPTers discussed whether or not to allow me to conduct fieldwork, feeling panicky about my decision to embark on a venture so clearly collapsible if others did not deem it as exciting, as viable, or as important as I did. I came back again and again to the thoughts raised in this chapter, and to the method I claim to use. The challenges posed by ethnographic life history work led to constant re-evaluation and re-appraisal of both this chapter and the manner in which I proceeded with fieldwork. Despite being like a juggling act, fieldwork has been an interesting venture. Ethnographic life history as a method made that venture fulfilling.

Why Record and Write Life History?

As a scholar or religion, I pay special attention to the religious aspects of recorded life history as well as what this tells me about the lived expression of people's religious lives. Religious life histories may or may not be written by religious studies scholars, but their subject matter involves the subject's religious identity, relation to their religious community, relationship with God or gods and spirits, or their religious beliefs or practices. A significant gain in studying religious life histories is learning more about the narrative aspect of a religious tradition or a religious individual. "MacIntyre claims that narrative is 'the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions' because human actions are 'enacted narratives.' Consequently, narrative helps us to understand and interpret human actions, both the actions of self and the actions of others."[74]

In addition, by focusing on the personal religious experience, the ethnographic fieldworker and audience might better understand the diversity and the innovations taking place within that person's larger religious tradition. "What is involved here is a process of learning: to have an experience means learning something one did not know before. To repeat another person's experience means that one can potentially learn what the other person has already learned."[75] One can learn something about a particular individual through life history, though that person's story may or may not connect with the reader's own story. These stories can also be added to larger social and religious narratives. In the process of conducting and presenting religious life histories, the fieldworker—and hopefully the audience—might gain a better understanding of the practice of religion.

Another reason to study and record religious life histories is that they can tell us things we cannot discover via traditional, textual religious studies. For example, Keith's and Lena's life histories offer one way to look at religious identity formation and change through involvement in contemporary movements. In addition, "in good life histories voices take on body, and bodies speak. Another reason for entering the field is that the nature of religions itself is changing, and observing such changes requires a close up view."[76] Given that I suggest CPT functions as a moral regenerator for the Mennonite and Christian churches in flux, the "close up view" was helpful for this thesis.

My Motivations and Approach

The focus and nature of this thesis merges my academic background and ongoing interests in Mennonite theology and organizations, conflict and peace studies, and life histories. My previous and ongoing study in the field of religious studies motivates my interest in the formation and lived experience of religious or spiritual identity (in this case, the identity of Mennonite peacemakers), the practice of ethnography, and the collection and writing of religious life histories. In blending these interests, my goal is to assume a "reflective, thoughtful and compassionately critical"[77] approach.

Raised in a Mennonite home and in a Mennonite church in Winnipeg, knowledge of CPT has always been a part of my adult life. I became more familiar with CPT while I was in university, as I knew, lived with, and was friends with various people who had been involved with the organization. I had not yet met Keith and Lena. Meeting them followed a move into a new religious studies program in a new province, and after proposing this project. When members of CPT agreed to let me conduct fieldwork with

their organization at their regional meeting in Toronto, Keith and Lena were still only nameless potential participants. Following that meeting, the director of CPT Canada, Doug Pritchard, and I discussed people in southern Ontario who might be involved. I had criteria, although any combination of people might have satisfied these. I wanted three people, who covered a range of ages. I wanted at least one to have been extensively involved with CPT for a number of years, and at least one who was relatively new to the organization. I wanted at least one to be a man, or at least one to be a woman. Doug and I discussed various people, until we decided on approximately six people. Out of these six people, three were chosen who also agreed to participate, and interviews began.

Life Histories and Christian Peacemaker Teams

I doubt that all CPTers see their religious backgrounds as directly informing their need to be involved in CPT, especially those from communities not connected to the historic peace churches, those who may lack the extensive language of pacifism, praxis and social concern that exists in the peace churches. At the same time, the language used by CPTers, or perhaps adopted over the course of long-term involvement with CPT, demonstrates an Anabaptist theological basis for peacemaking. Long-term involvement changes the way CPTers talk about and understand their identities and their faith. Keith's and Lena's life histories show a gradual shift towards overt politicization of their faith and lived experience.

It would be risky to conflate Keith's and Lena's life histories as a total representation of CPTers or CPT, Mennonites or the Mennonite church. Keith and Lena are both partly typical of and distinctive from other CPTers and other Mennonites. This

thesis is not the last word on CPTers or CPT. It is instead an opening into and interpretation of CPT as two CPTers experience it. That I focused on two CPTers who are Mennonites necessitated excluding reflection on CPTers who do not come from a peace church tradition. This thesis cannot fully capture the diverse quality of experience in CPT. It is also risky to reduce Keith's and Lena's life histories to being simply about themselves. Keith and Lena are also attentive to their connection to the Mennonite community and tradition, and thus their life histories tell us something about Mennonites and the Mennonite tradition. Either completely reducing or completely conflating Keith's and Lena's life histories would miss the texture and diversity of CPT as well as the window Keith's and Lena's life histories open into CPT.

Further research should more closely attend to the diversity of CPT. A fruitful area of study would be one that explores participants who do not come from the historic peace church tradition, or even participants with CPT who are struggling with their faith or commitments to a particular church. Why is it that they find themselves working with CPT? Are there significant theological differences between them, and do such differences affect their peacemaking? Do CPTers who do not come from the historic peace churches or CPTers who are struggling with their faith adopt CPT's theology and theological language? Further research on diversity within CPT should also attend more closely to differences in gender, age and sexual orientation.

Another fruitful area for further research would be a focused study on CPT's effectiveness in the situations where it works. Keith's and Lena's life histories speak to the issue of efficacy, but I did not focus my reflection on this area of our interviews. That said, it seems relevant to reiterate part of Lena's thoughts on the matter of effectiveness.

What is success or effectiveness for you in what CPT does? How would you define that?
I believe that as along as CPTers are meeting people and encouraging people, then what they are doing is a miracle. Not only for the people that they're walking with while they're walking with them, but also for ourselves when we come back here, because I think we are more whole. I as an individual, when I have seen, when I have seen my own, when I've had to walk into my own hatred, into my own anger, into my own fear, and I come back here I am a more whole person because of what I have experienced.

Lena judges CPT's effectiveness then on both what it does in the situations where they work, paying particular attention to the relationships between people, as well as what CPT effects in the personal lives of CPTers. In her experience, CPT is effective because it fosters connection between people, gives hope for the future, and generates wholeness. I cannot assess whether Keith and Lena, or CPT as a whole, are effective in what they seek to accomplish because I have not spoken with the people with whom CPT works. All I can assess is that CPT is effective in Keith's, Lena's and CPT's estimation.

Conducting fieldwork with CPT sometimes required me to locate myself as an insider, such as when I participated on a CPT delegation or in CPT regional meetings. Fieldwork also required my to locate myself as an outsider, especially in order to describe and interpret the life histories. My goal was to assume a compassionately critical approach to the life histories. This location between insider and outsider also ensure that I am sympathetic to the subjects of my fieldwork and respectful of the trust they have placed in me, while not writing an apologetic for Keith and Lena or CPT.

Location between insider and outsider can also lends itself to misperceptions. CPT and CPTers may perceive or misperceive my identity as a fieldworker in the same way I am able to perceive or misperceive CPT and CPTers. My role as fieldworker is just as flexible as Keith's and Lena's identities. I am not sure how CPT interprets my

presence. I do know that participating in a CPT delegation was jointly beneficial, as it ensured CPT that I would be better able to understand and contextualise Keith's and Lena's life histories while somewhat justifying my presence at CPT meetings.

Conclusion

Keith's and Lena's life histories add to the concentric circles of stories. Keith and Lena share their personal stories but these fit into the larger narratives they have inherited. In other words, their stories are part of CPT narrative, part of the Mennonite narrative, part of the Christian narrative and so on. Just as CPT's story is made up of the stories brought to it by participants, CPTers' stories are collected and shaped by CPT. This is a dialogical process, just as the formation of any one person's identity is dependent on the multiple dialogical processes involved in interactions with other people, institutions, and communities. Thus, while not being completely representative of CPT or other CPTers, Keith's and Lena's life histories have revealed something about CPT and what it means to be Mennonite. While Keith's and Lena's life histories may not reveal what is characteristic of other CPTers, this fact does not invalidate that there is an inherent value in learning about the experience of another's life, even if it is not representative of the whole.[78]

In addition, Keith and Lena are creating and realizing identity in the act of offering their life histories. Here the life histories are created dialogically, as they tell their stories to me—the audience—as well as to their anticipated audience.

The collection, recording and interpretation of Keith's and Lena's life histories illustrates the process of religious identity formation and change in CPT. Always in

dialogue or conflict with their families, friends and faith communities, Keith and Lena work to resolve and embrace who they are. As both similar and different, they sit on the edges of their communities. At this moment in time, CPT seems to fit for Keith and Lena. Through work with CPT, Keith and Lena discover, challenge and grow into what they see as their authentic selves: radical disciples willing to take necessary risks in order to build connections with others, work for reconciliation in unjust situations, and thus make help to peace in the world. Whether either or both of them eventually move on to other things, or whether they remain connected to CPT for years to come, remains to be seen.

For Keith and Lena, being CPTers means belonging to a supportive community comprised of other like-minded people. It also means Keith and Lena can belong to the Mennonite church in a way that is authentic to their sense of being "doers." Similar to the way Keith and Lena sit on the edges of their communities, CPT is also on the edges. Though relegated to a position further from the embraced place CPT wishes it were in Mennonite churches and conferences, I think it is this place that enables them to offer the most effective challenge to the churches at this moment in time.

CPT may very well be effective at bringing about some measure of peace and reconciliation in the places it works. CPT *is* effective in being an organization in which Keith and Lena can ask questions and be reflective about who they are and how they are to live in and engage the world. CPT enables Keith and Lena to create friendships with other CPTers and with people they meet on CPT projects. In Keith's and Lena's estimation, work with CPT is also effective in being an organization that encourages them to grow as people of faith.

APPENDIX 1

CPT's Guiding Principles

A. The central purpose of CPT is to glorify the Prince of Peace.
B. In all its activity, CPT will use only non-violent methods grounded in an Anabaptist theology of the cross.
C. CPT is international in its outlook and does not seek to promote or undermine any nation or group although in specific situations a particular aspect of the policy of one nation or group will be challenged.
D. To the highest degree possible, CPT is non-partisan. Therefore, it always, at every phase of its activity, seeks to establish and maintain dialogue with all parties to a conflict.
E. CPT is a peace-making body, not a political party. Therefore, it never attempts to impose a specific political, constitutional or economic proposal, but rather seeks to create a context where the warring parties themselves can peacefully negotiate a solution appropriate for their unique setting.
F. CPT is not neutral on questions of injustice, poverty, hunger and oppression. Although it never seeks to impose a particular solution, CPT is not indifferent to the biblical call for justice and freedom for all people. Therefore, CPT always seeks to act in ways that promote religious freedom of worship, speech, democratic elections and equality before the law. It also seeks to foster economic justice where all are genuinely free to enjoy adequate food, housing, clothing, education, health care and meaningful work to earn their living.
G. Study, analysis and research are important aspects of CPT's program.
H. CPT will work sensitively and cooperatively with North American Mennonite agencies and departments (missions boards, MCC, etc.) and with national church leaders and others in planning and implementing the peacemaking activities.
I. It is important to remember, however, that behind these basic guidelines lies the most important factor – a clear recognition of our dependency on God's Spirit for security and leading. This suggests that in all planning CPT wait, listen, share and earnestly seek God's direction. This, above all, must remain the determinative factor in all CPT planning.[79]

APPENDIX 2

Considerations for CPT decision making for entering crisis situations

1. Is the proposed action one our constituency can support? Is there a critical mass of supporters?
2. Is there a trusted welcoming body in the crisis setting with whom we connect? Is the area one in which CPT or its supporting denominations have experience and relationships of trust established?
3. Is the action explainable as Christian witness?
4. Can we talk freely and with integrity in our constituency about what we do?
5. Is there enough stability in the area that sending people is not negligent? Is it a situation in which there is time for love and nonviolent engagement to work?
6. Are our governments part of the problem?
7. What role are we expected to play? Do we have people suited to this role?
8. Is it a situation for which we have people available who can imagine new ways of living nonviolently? Do we have people who can think fresh thoughts, develop ideas for actions that move things along in a stuck situation and leave a residue of hope?
9. Can provision be made for coping with language barriers?
10. In the context of these considerations does a process of prayer, Bible reading and discernment give a sense of leading to enter a situation?
11. Decisions to enter coalitions should be made by staff subject to the approval of the Crisis Committee, and compatibility with CPT objectives and resources.
12. Time frames should initially be spelled out for the benefit of CPT volunteers and CPT ability to sustain commitment. Extensions can be made upon evaluation of the program effectiveness, and CPT sustainability. When advisable, new personnel should be used for extensions and overlap provided. Attention must be given to the danger of burnout of CPT personnel.

Approved by Steering Committee of 13 people October 10, 1993.[80]

APPENDIX 3

Framing questions posed to Keith Rempel and Lena Siegers

- What is your life story, however you want to tell it?
- Where did you grow up?
- What is your family's (and your own) religious background?
- What was your church like when you were growing up?
- What was worship like, then and now?
- How did you understand your faith when you were growing up?
- What stories were you told?
- What was your role in church?
- What was your relationship to God?
- Describe some key people, groups and institutions (either in the past or present) that you identity with and belong to?
- Would you define yourself as Mennonite? Is that a key marker for you?
- What are some important events in your life?
- What are the framing questions of your life? Are these religious or spiritual questions?
- What are the differences between religious and non-religious events for you? What are some religious events in your own life?
- How do you decide between right and wrong?
- What are your most important values?
- Are you connected to a church right now? What is you current church like?
- How and when did you find out about Christian Peacemaker Teams?
- Why did you decide to become involved with CPT? How did you become involved?
- What were some changes you had to make in order to become involved with CPT?
- What countries have you gone to? What did you do there?
- How does your faith relate to the risks involved when you work with CPT?
- Describe your relationships with other members of CPT.
- What do you think of CPT as an organization, its mandate and its work?
- Describe your connection with your home church. Did this change when you became involved with CPT, and why?
- How do you think your church feel about your involvement with CPT?
- What do you bring as a CPTer to your current communities?
- What does pacifism mean to you?
- Why is it important to "get in the way" as CPT calls it?
- Has CPT changed who you are? How and why?
- Has your work with CPT changed others close to you?
- How did CPT affect your relationships with your family and friends?
- Describe your faith now? How does this relate to how you understand yourself now?

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