

Four members of Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) in Baghdad abducted & taken hostage.

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This event is horribly dismaying for me, as I've known members of CPT since before I ever ventured to Iraq.

Back in November of 2003, while sitting in Amman, Jordan waiting to go into Iraq, I met a member of CPT who had been working in Palestine. He told me he was walking with Palestinian children as they went to school, in order to prevent them from being attacked by Israeli settlers.

Later I would learn that this same individual had returned to Palestine and was beaten so severely by Israeli settlers that he was hospitalized for several weeks.

Last Thanksgiving, November 24, 2004 I shared a meal with members of their team in Baghdad, along with several of our Iraqi friends. We gave thanks together for being in Baghdad in solidarity with our Iraqi brothers and sisters. All of us — the CPT members and myself — were then and remain fully committed to getting out the truth about the illegal and immoral occupation of Iraq.

On the website of CPT is a quote of scriptural reference which reads, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

This is what the members of CPT do in Baghdad. I've seen them do this first-hand. They graciously opened their files of documents to me when I was working on stories about Iraqis who have been in US military detention centers inside Iraq. They have worked extensively on fighting for the rights of Iraqi detainees and supporting their families. The team documents home raids conducted by the US military, and have worked to assist internally displaced people (refugees) inside of Iraq who are left homeless by heavy-handed US military operations such as those in Fallujah and Al-Qa'im.

In addition, CPT has been instrumental in bringing media attention to villages and towns in Iraq which have suffered collective punishment by the US military.

Each of the members of CPT in Iraq I have met are committed to non-violence and being a truthful witness to the ravages of war and occupation. They have been accused by their captors of being spies or missionaries. This is simply not the case. If there is any group operating in Iraq today who works tirelessly to end the suffering of Iraqis, it is CPT.

photos at

http://dahrijamailiraq.com/gallery/view_album.php?set_albumName=album40

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