

## **“Will you really protect us without a gun? Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping in the U.S.”**

### Abstract

The habits of direct violence in U.S. society continue to pose dangerous and dehumanizing trends. As scholars and activists cultivate alternatives to the use of violence, a key need involves providing direct experience for U.S. residents to explore and see the power of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. In this paper I ask the following questions: How can the international unarmed civilian peacekeeping models influence the U.S. in the form of domestic peace teams? What are the accomplishments and the challenges for local peace teams with an eye toward further development? First, I describe some broad trends in the international work of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Second, I analyze the accomplishments and challenges for the Michigan Peace Team and Ceasefire in Chicago. Third, I integrate these insights to recommend key contributions from each program toward developing more domestic peace teams. I briefly provide a recent example and analysis of implementing these recommendations in the DC Peace Team.

The habits of direct violence in U.S. society continue to pose dangerous and dehumanizing trends. Although we have access to great material and educational resources, the character of our society too often corresponds to the “culture of death” as described by some Catholic leaders. U.S. youth homicide rates are ten times higher than other leading industrial countries. We are the most heavily armed society in the world with 90 guns per 100 citizens, with Yemen being second at 61 per 100 citizens. U.S. citizens own about one-third of the world’s firearms and over half of new guns worldwide are purchased in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> In terms of our military, we spend about 45% of global military spending which is more than the next 29 biggest spending countries combined. We also lead the world by far in selling military arms to other countries and we have over 700 military bases around the world. As we saw with the Occupy movement, our police are increasingly militarized in weapons and in hiring. Further, gun massacres have been repeatedly occurring in the U.S. over the past few years. Yet, we continue to have some leaders and residents call for increasing arms in our society.

As scholars and activists cultivate alternatives to the use of violence, a key need involves providing direct experience for U.S. residents to explore and see the power of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. This more direct experience will cultivate our imagination and the character to

more seriously support alternatives to legalized violence, whether by the police or the military. Therefore, in this paper I ask the following questions: How can the international unarmed civilian peacekeeping models influence the U.S. to develop domestic peace teams? What are the past accomplishments and the future challenges for domestic peace teams with an eye toward further development?

I explore these guiding questions by first briefly describing some broad trends in the international work of unarmed civilian peacekeeping, particularly in the Nonviolent Peaceforce. However, my focus is on domestic peace teams, so I am not offering an in depth analysis of international groups in this paper. Second, I analyze the accomplishments and challenges of the 19 year-old Michigan Peace Team, which has been combining international and local peacekeeping. Third, I analyze the accomplishments and challenges for the 13 year-old Ceasefire, which primarily provides local street outreach workers and violent interrupters in Chicago, but has also been recently branching out nationally and internationally. Finally, I integrate these critiques to recommend selecting elements from each program useful toward developing more domestic peace teams. I briefly provide a recent example and analysis of implementing these recommendations in the DC Peace Team.

## **I International Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping**

In the following stories, imagine how analogies can be drawn from these international examples for domestic situations in the U.S., i.e. with gangs, criminal and human rights investigations, and the role of police.

"During a recent tense situation (in Mindinao Philippines), with two armed groups threatening each other from opposite sides of the village but only 200 meters apart. Villagers were frightened and prepared to leave. Nonviolent Peaceforce members came in and communicated with both armed groups to defuse the situation. Part of the reason for

the flare-up... was a misunderstanding, with one armed group interpreting a threat from the other when none was intended."<sup>2</sup>

"In 2007, Peace Brigades International accompanied the Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners in eastern Columbia to enable them to conduct investigations into extrajudicial killings. Due to the presence of the oil industry, it is a highly militarized region where the campesinos have suffered at the hands of all parties. The investigations took the committee into remote areas too dangerous to go without PBI as well as to the headquarters of the army general alleged to have committed most of the killings. The local people were given the tools to gain access to justice."<sup>3</sup>

"The concept of being unarmed is an interesting concept for military personnel but apparently one that is becoming more common in peace operations. There is no doubt in my mind that being unarmed is the correct posture in Bougainville (Papua New Guinea). Relying on the local people to ensure the safety of peace monitors reinforces that peace in Bougainville is the responsibility of the local people. They are only too aware that should the safety of the Peace Monitoring Group be placed at risk there is a very real danger that the peace process will falter. This was emphasized on a number of occasions when Bougainvillians assisted patrols in difficult circumstances." (Major Luke Foster, Australian Defense Force, 1999) "The decision to go into Bougainville unarmed caused some angst in the Australian Defense Force at the time, but it was the right one. At least two occasions I had encountered could have gone differently if we had been armed." (Andrew Rice, Australian Dept. of Defense, 1999)<sup>4</sup>

Some of the main civil society or non-governmental organizations involved in unarmed civilian peacekeeping include the Nonviolent Peaceforce, Peace Brigades International, Christian Peacemaker Teams, and Witness for Peace. In contrast to intergovernmental organizations, which also field unarmed civilian peacekeeping activities, non-governmental organizations often differ from them in their methods.<sup>5</sup>

International, unarmed, civilian peacekeeping organizations, such as the Nonviolent Peaceforce, generally engage in the following types of practices. 1) It monitors human and civil rights as well as ceasefire agreements. 2) It offers prevention of violence during volatile situations, such as elections or referendums. 3) It offers cross-community convening, bridging and linking of actors at multiple levels. 4) Through accompaniment it offers protection of at-risk human rights activists and groups such as minorities, internally displaced persons, refugees, or

aid organizations.<sup>6</sup> 5) It also offers protective presence for activists and communities in order to open space for them to do their work, to operate in declared peace zones, and even at times some groups participate in local nonviolent direct actions. 6) It prepares for and at times engages in bodily interposition between hostile and violent parties.<sup>7</sup>

For example, responding to an invitation from Sudanese organizations, the Nonviolent Peaceforce deployed a field team to the region of Mundri and Western Equatoria State in Southern Sudan in May 2010. In March 2012, the Nonviolent Peaceforce placed up to eight field teams across Southern Sudan. Each team includes eight to twelve persons consisting mostly of Sudanese nationals. The teams focus on the protection of civilians from violence, the prevention of escalating violence, and peacebuilding. The protection element includes creating safe spaces, especially where armed intervention would be counterproductive or an overreaction. The safe spaces also allow meaningful dialogue to take place. The teams also offer workshops and training events to the communities on an ongoing basis. Living and working in the communities they protect generates the capacity to react flexibly, with trust from the community, and with context-appropriate responses. The teams focus particularly on protecting women and children, and have formed five all-female teams of peacekeepers to help identify sexual and gender-based violence. The Nonviolent Peaceforce has offered protection in refugee camps; has been asked by the UN High Commission for Refugees to send three teams to Jongeli in response to a threatened genocide; and has helped 40,000 internally displaced persons return after a single killing sparked a series of killings, home burnings and internally displaced person's. Prevention entails working with partners, including state representatives, to develop an early warning and timely response program. For the Nonviolent Peaceforce, the peacebuilding element focuses on local solutions to

local problems. Teams do not intervene directly in peace talks, but do help establish Peace Committees comprised of key actors from opposing communities.<sup>8</sup>

When these practices are effective, one of the reasons is the level of respect that internationals receive. The Nonviolent Peaceforce's commitment to nonpartisanship and nonviolence also function as key reasons for their effectiveness. With this approach, they more easily gain the trust of all the parties and based on this trust get access to areas. This type of access based on trust is often more reliable than when it is based on the threat of violence.<sup>9</sup>

Another reason peace teams succeed is due to the "world is watching" phenomenon. This creates a deterrent for some as well as an invitation to the hostile parties to live in accord with their better selves. Parties engaged in violence often pay attention to third parties because of concern for reputation, to avoid blame or retribution, and sometimes for personal moral beliefs.<sup>10</sup> When peace teams clearly stand within the community through their close relationships with locals like village elders, or through local membership on the peace team, then they also become more effective.<sup>11</sup> For instance, Nonviolent Peaceforce always works at the invitation of and in close collaboration with, local non-governmental organizations. Currently, this organization often works with the consent of all conflicting parties.<sup>12</sup>

### *Challenges*

Whether a local invitation is required is an ongoing debate in the organization. Some think the invitation is necessary to avoid "peace imperialism" and ensure that local drivers lead the process as well as local needs are truly being met. Others argue that international standards of human rights and recent commitments to Responsibility to Protect justify unarmed peacekeeping even without apparent local invitations under some circumstances. For instance, researchers on a similar organization called Peace Brigades International suggest that the method of

accompaniment could be expanded to situations of "humanitarian intervention."<sup>13</sup> Further, a representative of the government of the Philippines reflecting on the presence of the Nonviolent Peaceforce in his country remarked, "the presence and engagement by civil society groups does not pose a threat to the country's sovereignty, and neither does it lead to the risk of 'internationalizing' an internal conflict such as we have."<sup>14</sup>

Reflecting on this debate from the experience of Catholic institutions, John Paul Lederach, William Headley, and Reina Neufeldt offer some insight. Lederach points out how in some countries, such as the Philippines and Columbia, the Catholic Church enjoys a "ubiquitous presence." This describes the reality of Catholics operating at multiple political and social levels of the conflict and often being on both sides of the conflict, including the armed actors. This ubiquitous presence along with the transnational reality of the Catholic Church provides a unique opportunity to enjoy trust with the conflict parties, gain access, and develop effective civilian peacekeepers. Most Catholic leaders in these contexts described their activity as "accompaniment" even including armed actors. This activity included advocacy, observation, conciliation, facilitation, meditation, and meeting basic needs.<sup>15</sup> The respect of armed actors these Catholic leaders and members of Nonviolent Peaceforce enjoy illuminates other kinds of power, often called integrative power, based on transcendent desires, shared humanity or human dignity, and assertive invitation to relationship rather than destruction. This respect counters claims made by other scholars that a military only respect or obey other military members.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Headley and Neufeldt describe how Catholic Relief Services (CRS) developed peacebuilding initiatives. CRS is based in the U.S. but operates internationally. For instance, in the Philippines CRS built relationships with peace groups from both Catholic and Muslim communities. CRS accompanied these partners to launch a culture of peace education

curriculum, develop zones of peace, create community development projects, and participate in interfaith dialogue.<sup>17</sup> By engaging holistically, i.e., the full person, and transforming ubiquitous presence, CRS generated effective peacebuilding.<sup>18</sup> From these Catholic examples, we can glean that partnering with such institutions in certain countries more readily generates both the appropriate “local” validity along with the value of transnational power.

Some of the other key challenges that international unarmed civilian peacekeeping efforts face includes the following. There are massive profits realized by those involved in the arms trade, and this means entrenched support for armed approaches to violent conflict. Not only are there big, short-term financial payoffs for armed approaches, but there is also an established custom of using violence by economically powerful countries. These habits came into play in recent examples of Libya, and especially Syria, which presently has ongoing support in arms by such countries for both armed sides of the conflict. In turn, there continues to be lack of awareness of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Those who are aware still too often lack attention to and under appreciate the value in the breadth of this work. Hence, both political will and funding sources continue to be inadequate for research, pilot programs, and deployments.

Nevertheless, there is some positive movement and concept development occurring in some UN agencies, in part due to the successes of the Nonviolent Peaceforce.<sup>19</sup> Another reason for the increasing attention to “civilian peacekeeping” is the wave of criticism regarding traditional, militarized UN peacekeeping.<sup>20</sup>

## **II Michigan Peace Team**

In light of this brief look at some international examples of unarmed, civilian peacekeeping with their successes and challenges, I now turn to analyze two U.S. based models in order to discover what we can learn for the future development of U.S. domestic peace teams.

## *Background*

In the 1980's, renowned peace activist Fr. Peter Doherty engaged with others in work to end nuclear weapons with the Michigan Faith and Resistance group. During the first Gulf War in 1991, this group put their bodies in the way of B-52 bombers in Iraq. They physically went into potential target areas and made their presence known to U.S. authorities in order to dissuade them from bombing certain places. This experience led them to consider starting a peace team, one in the image of Gandhi's vision for a *Shenti Sena*, i.e. peace army. Fr. Doherty created the Michigan Peace Team (MPT) in 1993 "in response to the growing need for civilian peace-makers in the U.S. and abroad."<sup>21</sup> Fr. Doherty has served on peace teams in Bosnia, Haiti, Mexico, and Palestine.

MPT's goal is to seek a just world grounded in nonviolence and respect for the sacred interconnectedness of all life. Their mission is to create a nonviolent alternative to militarism and violence through empowered peacemaking. MPT has four broad goals: 1) recruiting, training, and placing peace teams both domestically and internationally; 2) educating the public to the vision and practice of nonviolence, particularly as it relates to nonviolent conflict intervention; 3) cooperating, supporting, and participating with local peace and justice groups, in so far as it relates to their mission; and 4) providing training in active nonviolence designed for the specific needs of the participants.<sup>22</sup>

To attain these goals they offer basic and advanced trainings. These include skill building, examining examples of empowerment related to conflict situations, and exploring the theoretical and spiritual basis of nonviolence.<sup>23</sup> This basis includes appreciating the interconnectedness of all humans and the earth, and this energizes self-reflection, centering, and

group reflection.<sup>24</sup> In addition, MPT offers international team trainings to place peace teams around the world.

MPT always operates based on an invitation from a local group and usually in a non-partisan manner, which entails protecting all parties from various types of violence. However, they acknowledge that due to intense power differentials, sometimes acts of solidarity are all one can do to create space for dialogue and justice. In regards to the police, MPT members see themselves as neither part of the police nor opposed to the police. Sometimes the police have appreciated MPT's peaceful presence, and coordination has occurred in Michigan. Yet, there is support in MPT for gradually replacing the police or transforming the police into nonviolent, civilian peace teams.<sup>25</sup>

### *Accomplishments*

MPT has accomplished a range of trainings and placement of peace teams both internationally and domestically. Internationally, MPT has prepared groups for engagement in Juarez, Mexico, Israel/Palestine, Bosnia, Haiti, Chiapas, Iraq, and Indian communities in Canada. Domestically, MPT has provided peacekeepers or training in response to the riots at Michigan State University in 1998, for Pride marches, Klu Klux Klan rallies, death penalty executions, the National Republican Convention, Indian reservations, and at the U.S./Mexico border. MPT has had a five-year presence in Israel/Palestine, which has contributed to a significant difference on the ground. Fr. Peter Dougherty explains that these peace teams have proven to “create space for individuals and groups to take back their own power in situations of oppression.” Further, they confirm that ordinary people can do extraordinary things.<sup>26</sup>

MPT has created an active non-hierarchical organization that operates by consensus as a way to live and model its vision. This includes their core community, i.e. the legal board of

directors, their staff and their violence reduction peace teams on the ground. MPT has also empowered many younger people, especially through their internships. Further, they always maintain an equal balance of women and men.<sup>27</sup>

### *Challenges*

The greatest challenge for MPT is the limited funding. This has led to curtailing the expansion of some efforts. Another of MPT's main challenges is recruiting past participants in their Israel/Palestine peace teams to return as “anchors.” Anchors provide a stabilizing force for the teams. Further, Israel has refused to issue visas for some returning members. MPT also acknowledges the need for more diversity, such as more non-whites. All core members are presently white, but some minorities are trainers. The staff is also all white, with some African-Americans working as paid employees in the office. Further, the lack of awareness of the domestic potential for peace teams presents a challenge. Hence, MPT works to educate its local community and other communities in the U.S.

What would be some constructive ways to increase the ethnic diversity of MPT and thus, their credibility in certain high-risk neighborhoods? How can education about such peace teams be sustainably enhanced, and what sources of consistent funding can be drawn on?

### **III Ceasefire/Cure Violence**

Ceasefire, recently re-named Cure Violence, offers some possible responses to these questions. But, before entering into this second model, below is an extended quotation about *Latina* mothers in East Los Angeles during the early 1990's gang battles. This sets the stage for thinking about the kind of courage and power that unarmed persons can harness in gang violence situations. These mothers...

"were searching for a solution to the heavy toll that gang violence was taking in their neighborhood. Thirteen gangs were active in their (Catholic) parish, and gang killings and injuries were an almost daily occurrence. During a particularly violent period, the women were gathered in their prayer group, praying for a solution to this carnage.

That day, the meeting's scripture reading was: 'Jesus Walking on the Water' (Matt. 14:22-33). As the mothers prayed, one of their number — electrified with a sudden sense of discovery and consternation — shared with the others what she saw as the parallels to their own predicament. The storm on the Sea of Galilee was the gang-warfare in the streets of Boyle Heights. Fearing for their own personal safety, they had retreated behind the locked doors of their homes like the disciples huddling together in their fragile boat. They believed that the only way they would be saved was to get securely out of the line of fire. But, like those in the boat, their paralysis ultimately did not ensure them that they would be secure; they could be killed by misdirected gunfire blasting their homes or they could be shot in broad daylight walking to the market. They were as likely to become victims as much as Jesus' first century followers were. Both groups could capsize and lose everything in the maddening storm.

"Then," the woman told the others, "Jesus appears." We, like the disciples, want him magically to solve the crisis. We cry out to him, implore him to save us. But instead, he says to us, 'Get out of the boat. Come on: get out of the boat. Leave the illusion of security behind. Get out of the boat and walk on the water. Walk on the water — enter the violence-saturated streets — and we will calm the storm together.' 'What are you saying?' the others asked, a little edgy. She explained that she felt they were being called to walk together in the midst of the war zone of the gangs. The others looked at her as if she had suddenly gone mad.

Yet, after a long discussion, that night seventy women (and a few men) began a *peregrinacion* — a pilgrimage or procession — from one gang turf to the next throughout the barrio. When they encountered startled gang-members who were preparing for battle, the mothers invited them to pray with them. They offered them chips, salsa and soda. A guitar was produced — they were asked to join in singing the ancient songs that had come with them from (the Mexican regions of) Michoacan and Jalisco and Chiapas. Throughout the night, in thirteen war zones, the conflict was bafflingly, disorientingly interrupted. People were baffled; the gang members were disoriented.

Each night, the mothers walked and within a week there was a dramatic drop in gang-related violence. The members of the newly formed Comite Pro Paz En El Barrio had responded to the emergency of the violence being waged in their locality by "breaking the rules of war." By nonviolently intervening and intruding, they had challenged the old script of escalating violence and retaliation and created, for a time, a new and more creative script. Theirs had been more than a physical journey through their neighborhood. Most significantly, it had been the fundamental spiritual journey from the war zone to the house of love.

By entering this zone of danger, they had created a momentary space for peace. In that space, all the parties were able to glimpse their humanness. The gang-members were able to see, many for the first time, other human beings caring about them. At the same time, the women were able to let go of their paralyzing fear and anger long enough to see the human face of members of the gangs. It is no accident that the women christened their night-time journeys 'Love Walks.' But this project did more than briefly interrupt the escalating cycles of violence.

By provoking a confrontation with their humanness, they unleashed a process of communication and transformation. Their activity changed the gang-members and themselves. The women listened to the deep anguish of the gang-members about the lack of jobs and about police brutality. This led them, in turn, to develop a tortilla factory, bakery, and child-care center, creating some jobs and giving the gang-members an opportunity to acquire job skills. It was also a space where conflict resolution techniques were learned, because people from different gangs worked together in these projects. The women then opened a school. And they shifted from a 'Neighborhood Watch' mode — where they were the eyes and ears of the police — to a group trained to monitor and report abusive police behavior, a development that has redefined the relationship between the Los Angeles Police Department and the barrio."<sup>28</sup>

### *Background*

In 1995, Dr. Gary Slutkin of the University of Illinois began talking more about violence as an issue of public health. He made the connection between disease epidemics like the Cholera and AIDS that he had fought in Somalia, and the epidemic of violence in the streets on Chicago. His work arose in the broader context of similar developments and approaches to violence from the early 1980's within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to this preventive public health approach, violence was too often being addressed in the U.S. through reactive measures—increased police presence, longer prison sentences, tougher gun laws.<sup>30</sup> In this context, Ceasefire arose. Ceasefire is a Chicago-based violence prevention program, which is administered by the Chicago Project for Violence Prevention (CPVP) as part of the University of Illinois' School of Public Health in Chicago. Ceasefire began in 1999 and had expanded to cover about 25 program areas within Illinois in the next few years.<sup>31</sup>

The goals of Ceasefire were first the changing operative norms, beliefs, attitudes, and values, regarding violence. A second goal was to provide on-the-spot alternatives to violence when residents, especially gangs, were making behavior decisions. A third goal was to increase the perceived risks and costs of involvement in violence among high-risk people.<sup>32</sup>

To attain these goals they hired "culturally appropriate messengers" with sufficient street savvy. Most staff had been in trouble, turned their life around, and now wanted to help others do the same. CPVP uses a decentralized, "local host" model which entails identifying community-based organizations to administer and house Ceasefire locally. The administrative home at the University of Illinois in Chicago offers training, facilitation of meetings, the securing of funding, and information on best practices.<sup>33</sup> Outreach workers and interrupters get about 75-80 hours of training per year not including some host agency training. The training modules include communication techniques, crises management, "life before and after" Ceasefire, and anger management.<sup>34</sup> Ceasefire also engages in large public education campaigns, marches and vigils held often after neighborhood homicides.

Outreach workers promote education campaigns along with identifying and providing counseling and services to individual clients considered "high risk." This status is based on arrests, time in jail or prison, being on probation or parole, involvement in gangs, and never getting past grade school.<sup>35</sup> Violence interrupters joined Ceasefire in 2004 since most outreach workers could not get access to key decision-makers in the gang culture. They focus on mediating conflicts and violence prevention.<sup>36</sup> Ceasefire also builds community partnerships and coalitions to access services, distribute education materials, and populate the marches. The local faith community has been regarded as one of their most important partners.<sup>37</sup> Presently Ceasefire is replicating its work in other cities such as Baltimore and New York, as well as forming

national partnerships with similar organizations.<sup>38</sup> Ceasefire has also recently replicated its work in Iraq as well as collaborated with similar organizations in London and South Africa.<sup>39</sup> In 2011, an award-winning documentary called "The Interrupters" told their story and has been part of a national campaign by the Student Peace Alliance to advocate for federal legislation supporting such programs around the country.<sup>40</sup>

### *Accomplishments*

A 2008 evaluation of the program by members of the U.S. Department of Justice analyzed 16 years of data on selected sites. Violence has gone down in six of the seven areas examined. In four sites, shootings have gone down 17-24% due to the program, and persons shot or killed were down 16-34%. Gang homicide patterns significantly declined in five of the seven areas.<sup>41</sup> Ceasefire has also accomplished considerable improvements for individual clients. For instance, after the parents, the outreach workers were typically rated the most important adult in their lives. Of the 76% of clients who reported needing a job, 87% of them got job-seeking assistance. Of the 37% who wanted to get back into school, 85% got assistance. Of the 34% who wanted to disengage from gangs, virtually all of them got assistance.<sup>42</sup> A 2012 evaluation of their replication in Baltimore called Safe Streets has also shown significant positive impact.<sup>43</sup>

### *Challenges*

Although Ceasefire has demonstrated some significant accomplishments, it still faces a number of challenges. Ceasefire experiences funding instability, primarily because it relies on yearly appropriations of state funding for the sites.<sup>44</sup> This arrangement also creates a large number of small and arguably under-funded projects that focus on small areas rather than fewer more well staffed sites that could focus on larger areas. Offices regularly close temporarily. In

2007, all but two sites had closed, while two other sites raised money to operate on their own without CPVP's assistance. Twenty or so violence interrupters continue to work.

Ceasefire also struggles with high staff turnover, largely due to the instability of funding, the demands of the job, high-risk backgrounds of staff, and drug testing. This turnover affects outreach worker-client relationships that cannot easily be rebuilt with another staff member.<sup>45</sup> Sites were short-staffed and often did not offer health and retirements to the employees. Wage policies are set by the host organization and many salaries are low, although Ceasefire recommends outreach workers get paid at least \$25,000 annually, just barely over the poverty line for a family of four.<sup>46</sup>

Further, relationships with the police create a complex set of conditions. On the one hand, Ceasefire needs the immediate information about violence that police usually have. Police serve on hiring panels for staff positions. Cooperation occurs but sometimes connections are broken from distrust on both sides. On the other hand, many staff members keep a distance from police to avoid "de-legitimizing" their work with clients and gangs.<sup>47</sup> Due to past experiences, clients often distrust the police. Further, the threat and use of violent force by police risks distorting the credibility of Ceasefire's message to avoid violence.

Political and host agency agendas impact the selection of sites and the level of implementation of Ceasefire approaches. Politically influential actors more easily bring Ceasefire to their areas, while some needy sites with more violence get passed over.<sup>48</sup> Experienced local host agencies often have their own agendas that neglect some key aims of Ceasefire or promote a different set of values. For instance, some religious host agencies would use church membership as a standard for hiring. Other host sites would neglect Ceasefire tasks thought to make little sense in their community.<sup>49</sup>

#### **IV Developing Domestic Peace Teams**

What can we learn broadly from the international models and from the MPT and Ceasefire about developing domestic peace teams in the U.S.? The international models offer domestic peace teams the following. First, they offer legitimization of unarmed civilian peacekeeping. The existence and effectiveness of this work across cultures and in various types of violent conflict provides some social legitimization for the development of domestic peace teams in the U.S. Second, they illuminate the reality of the increasing interconnectedness of systems of violence that exist within and often across national boundaries, and thus require partnerships in unarmed civilian peacekeeping. Third, they offer an extensive set of practices for intervening and accompanying a wide variety of people and groups living in immediate danger. This experience should be considered for potentially enhancing some of the training modules for domestic peace teams.

MPT functions as a combination of international and domestic peacekeeping. As one of the few experienced and active organizations in the U.S. with this combination, it provides a unique range of field experience to draw from for developing domestic peace teams. MPT also offers extensive experience in providing trainings to the people of Michigan but also to various groups in the U.S. considering local peacekeeping initiatives.

Further, MPT's extended training experience significantly illuminates the theoretical and spiritual basis for nonviolence. Paying close attention to these elements creates the conditions for a more sustainable commitment and helps participants integrate nonviolent peacemaking into their daily lives as a virtue beyond the particular peacekeeping initiatives. This is in part illustrated in their decision-making structure and also in their equal balance of women and men. MPT also offers extensive stories of empowerment in its training and work. This provides

examples and extends our imaginations about peacekeeping, and contributes to the development of virtues. Consistent with the virtue of nonviolent peacemaking, MPT aims for reconciliation and to discover the truth that is in each person, even in the oppressor or enemy. MPT's willingness to protect all people from violence, including those in the Klu Klux Klan, as well as to offer protection from the police also provides a contribution to developing local peace teams.

Ceasefire offers street credibility by hiring staff that have lived the local street life, been locked up, and have so experienced deep transformation. These real life examples and models of being stuck in the throes of violence, and experiencing the transformation of one's life provide immeasurable value to Ceasefire's clients, but also to the broader local community. Too often in U.S. society we doubt the possibility of radical transformation or conversion, and we tend to define, identify, or value persons by their worst acts. Ceasefire offers our society a way out of this cultural violence. Its particular approach to violence as a disease epidemic, as a public health issue challenges those whom treat violence simply as crime or even a tool in the multi-faceted toolbox of public policy makers. Further, Ceasefire offers an example of diversity because it primarily hires and works with Latin Americans and African-American populations. Its efforts also model a focus on empowering the underprivileged in the local community. At the same time, it offers an example of how to partner with privileged-based resources such as a university and the police, as well as to draw on both state and federal funding programs. Finally, Ceasefire offers thorough, credible, and positive evaluations of its work done by members in and funding from the U.S. Department of Justice.

I think if we integrate these key contributions, especially from MPT and Ceasefire, into our efforts in developing domestic peace teams, then we would realize these benefits. First, such peace teams would offer stronger relationships overcoming alienation due to gender, race, and

class. Creating better organizational structures in peace teams would generate a stronger civil society and thus deepen social solidarity. Second, such peace teams would likely be more applicable to the daily lives of all related parties, and thus more sustainable. This benefit arises from being local but also arises from the type of virtue-oriented training that is offered by MPT and to some degree by Ceasefire. Third, such peace teams transform persons and communities so they become the kinds of people more likely to support nonviolent peacemakers in conflicts existing beyond their local community and country. This benefit arises particularly by hiring models of transformation, as exemplified by Ceasefire, and by close interaction with international efforts, as exemplified by both MPT and increasingly by Ceasefire.

Fourth, such peace teams provide a rich opportunity for educational institutions. For instance, they could offer transformative community-based learning experiences for college or high school courses. They also can enhance the growing development of Peace Studies in academic institutions and provide opportunities for both research and evaluation of peace teams. In the near future, they could be a key element of a Peace Leadership Training Program at colleges and universities. This would provide an alternative to ROTC programs, especially for schools grounded in intellectual traditions more congenial to peace leadership.

Fifth, I suspect such peace teams would more likely get sustainable funding when they combine the contributions of both Ceasefire and MPT. The recent research on the US Peace Index offers evidence for how much economic value and savings are possible if we invest more heavily in peacemaking. Their research indicates that if the U.S. got to Canada's level of peacefulness then it would potentially create 2.7 million jobs along with a potential savings and additional economic activity of \$361 billion per year.<sup>50</sup> Or, if each state got to the level of the most peaceful state, i.e. Maine, then we would save \$274 billion per year.<sup>51</sup>

### *DC Peace Team*

The preceding analysis illuminates how we might develop domestic peace teams in the U.S. I participate in the DC Peace Team, which is a more recent initiation attempting to integrate the insights of this analysis.<sup>52</sup> The DC Peace Team involves largely African-American ex-prisoners whom represent the National Homecomers Academy, and other mostly white community leaders and students from Little Friends for Peace, local universities, etc. Little Friends for Peace offers peacemaking spaces and skills training for younger children from about 4-18 years old. Also included in the DC Peace Team are international trainers in restorative justice, peace education, and unarmed civilian peacekeeping.

The DC Peace Team began meeting in January 2011. Our mission is to cultivate the virtue of nonviolent peacemaking and key corresponding practices by committing to empower ordinary civilians to increasingly serve their communities as nonviolent peacekeepers, peacemakers and peace builders.<sup>53</sup> We developed a set of primary objectives through the end of 2012 and will revise these for 2013. The 2012 objectives included deepening relationships between peace team participants, our core partners and their communities; outreach to similar oriented organizations and persons; to build capacity through trainings for each other and emerging leaders in our communities; and to initiate a response to some of the needs for both accompaniment and monitoring in our communities.

For instance, in 2012 the DC Peace Teams showed the Ceasefire documentary to various community groups to educate and invite participation in our work. We also offered two basic trainings in alternatives to violence for 50 diverse people, including 7 Homecomers, and trained another 10 people as trainers. Some of these Homecomers led and will lead other trainings, such as our second basic training. The Homecomers also provide Safe Passage, i.e. accompaniment of

school children on their walk to school within risk-filled, dangerous neighborhoods each morning of the week. From November 2011 through May 2012, the DC Peace Team collected data on incidents of violence in a highly populated gathering place in DC, i.e. Gallery Place, well known for outbreaks of violence and harassment by the police. This initial phase of engagement phased into monitoring and proactive presence once a week on a weekend evening. The DC Peace Team members spoke with the youth, security guards, and business managers about the incidents and the needs. Some of the storefront security guards expressed interest in training for nonviolent conflict intervention skills, and thus, they were invited to attend future training.

After a DC Peace Team retreat, the group analyzed their work and concluded that the Gallery Place initiative faced some notable limits. Rather than being a neighborhood, this location was more of a gathering place for people from other neighborhoods. This made it more difficult to build trust with so many different people coming at irregular times. It also was difficult to evaluate our impact in part because we didn't have the numbers to be there more than one evening a week. Therefore, our group decided to shift our attention to a particular school and neighborhood to experiment with a comprehensive DC Peace Team approach. We began this initiative in September 2012 at Aiton Elementary School through the presence previously established by the Homecomers. Although it is beginning with peace education for ten 4<sup>th</sup> graders struggling in school, our hope is to develop various trainings for teachers, staff, and parents to empower the local talent and energy.

Our training program has also advanced to another level. The DC Police agreed to have us offer a two-day training to 50 school-based officers. We hope this will be the beginning of a regular engagement with the police for mutual learning and diminishment of police violence as we seek to transform the policing institution. A key challenge will be earning their trust in order

to open their imagination the broader potential of nonviolent conflict intervention. Another advance in our training is offering restorative justice skills to Georgetown University staff and students who are working with youth in the juvenile justice system.

Our unarmed civilian peacekeeping has also advanced to include engaging particular events, such as local demonstrations that often give rise to hostility and even direct violence. For example, we've offered this peacekeeping at a Westboro Baptist Church demonstration at Arlington Cemetery. Our goals were to defuse hostility and cultivate empathy in those present, both from Westboro and those upset with their presence. These events offer great opportunities to practice our skills and to build awareness in our community about the DC Peace Team. However, they are limited as far as they are usually one-time events, with occasional but little follow-up so far.

Imagining more long-term, the DC Peace Team has initiated conversations with both Ceasefire in Chicago and Safe Streets in Baltimore about best practices and further potential collaboration. Both Georgetown and American Universities are considering how to leverage their research and evaluation capacity for the DC Peace Team, just as the University of Illinois in Chicago and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore have done for Ceasefire and Safe Streets. There are many details and nuances of this unfolding story, but, for now, may our imagination be stirred toward the possibilities for each of our local areas within this transforming tide of unarmed civilian peacekeeping.

## **Conclusions**

This analysis of unarmed civilian peacekeeping has engaged a brief look at some international models and a closer look at two domestic-based models. The goal was to discover the fruitful trajectories for developing domestic peace teams in the U.S. We have discovered the

broad set of practices in international models as well as the unique capacity they offer for building trust with all parties in a violent conflict. However, key limits persist in our society including awareness, political will, and funding, as well as habits of violence along with the massive profits in arms. Our two domestic-based models have drawn on some of these international elements. Michigan Peace Team offers extensive experience in trainings, a sharp focus on the theoretical and spiritual elements of nonviolence, and a commitment to reconciliation arising from sensing the truth in and dignity of all parties. Ceasefire offers street credibility, unique models of surprising transformation, ethnic diversity, strong evaluations, and some funding tracks. Although key limits persist in both domestic models, we can combine their contributions for developing better domestic peace teams. The DC Peace Team is one initiative attempting to do just that over the past 2 years. A learning curve exists, but there are some exciting possibilities emerging regarding a rich range of trainings, police engagement and transformation, and a comprehensive neighborhood focus. Funding remains a key challenge, particularly for the lower-income members, as all of the efforts are passion driven volunteer hours.

Mapping some of these trajectories is an exciting endeavor. But as a society we are in the early phases of the “experiments with truth,” as Gandhi would say, and in creating a "culture of life" as Catholic leaders often proclaim. As social scientists and people of wonder as well as hope, let us join our wisdom and energy to walk together down this road of developing domestic peace teams.

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<sup>1</sup> MacInnis, Laura, "U.S. Most Armed Country with 90 Guns per 100 People," in *Reuters*, Aug. 28, 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/08/28/us-world-firearms-idUSL2834893820070828>

<sup>2</sup> Schweitzer, Christine, "Introduction to Civilian Peacekeeping: A Barely-Tapped Resource," ed. C. Schweitzer, (Sozio 2010), 7. <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/civilian-peacekeeping-barely-tapped-resource>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> For example: the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, and the UN.

<sup>6</sup> One of the intriguing trends in international unarmed civilian peacekeeping is the growing recognition in humanitarian aid or economic development groups of their need for protection. For instance, organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and UN Agencies have developed positions on this topic. International Committee of the Red Cross (2008) "Enhancing Protection for Civilians in Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence. <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0956.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Schweitzer, 11-12. Their practices are often more broadly described as monitoring and observing, modeling and training, accompaniment and protective presence, and interposition.

<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, Eli, "Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers: A Virtue Ethic for Catholic Social Teaching and U.S. Policy." Wipf and Stock, 2012, pgs. 217-218. See also Nonviolent Peaceforce, "Sudan Project: Strategy." <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/fieldwork/allprojects/sudan-project>.

<sup>9</sup> Wallis, Tim, "Best Practices for Unarmed Civilian Peacekeeping," ed. C. Schweitzer, (Sozio 2010), 29. <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/civilian-peacekeeping-barely-tapped-resource>.

<sup>10</sup> Carriere, Rolf, "The World Needs 'Another Peacekeeping,'" ed. C. Schweitzer, (Sozio 2010), 21. <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/civilian-peacekeeping-barely-tapped-resource>.

<sup>11</sup> Schweitzer, 13-14.

<sup>12</sup> Carriere, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Mahoney, Liam, and Euren, Luis, *Unarmed Bodyguards: International Accompaniment for the Protection of Human Rights*, (Kumarian Press: West Hartford, CT, 1997), p. 254.

<sup>14</sup> Seguis, Rafael, "Broadening the Concept of Peacekeeping: The Contribution of Civil Society to Unarmed Protection of Civilians," at a High-Level Briefing of the UN, Mar, 23, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Lederach, John Paul, "The Long Journey Back to Humanity: Catholic Peacebuilding with Armed Actors," in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, ed. R. Schreiter, S. Appleby, and G. Powers. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010), 29-31.

<sup>16</sup> Tshiband, S., "Peacekeeping: A Civilian Perspective," in *Journal of Conflict Criminology, Vol 1, No 2 (2010)*, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Headley, W, and Neufeldt, R, "Catholic Relief Services: Catholic Peacebuilding in Practice," in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, 133-134.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>19</sup> Seguis, "Broadening the Concept of Peacekeeping," and Tshiband, "Peacekeeping: A Civilian Perspective."

<sup>20</sup> Tshiband, "Peacekeeping: A Civilian Perspective," 1.

<sup>21</sup> Michigan Peace Team, "home." <http://michiganpeaceteam.org/>

<sup>22</sup> Michigan Peace Team, "vision." [http://michiganpeaceteam.org/michigan\\_peace\\_team\\_vision.htm](http://michiganpeaceteam.org/michigan_peace_team_vision.htm)

<sup>23</sup> Michigan Peace Team, "training." <http://michiganpeaceteam.org/Training.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Nicole R., Interview, May 11, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Nicole R., Peter Dougherty, Sherry, Interview, May 11, 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Dougherty, Email Correspondence, Sept. 2011.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Butigan, Ken, "Walking on Water," Jan. 16, 2006. <http://paceebene.org/nvns/nonviolence-news-service-archive/walking-water>

<sup>29</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Violence Prevention Timeline of Violence as a Public Health Issues," <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/overview/timeline.html>

<sup>30</sup> "California Takes a Public Health Approach to Violence," Aug. 1, 2011.

<http://ceasefirechicago.org/education/california-takes-a-public-health-approach-to-violence>

<sup>31</sup> Skogan, W., Hartnett, S., Bump, N., and Dobbs, J., "Executive Summary Evaluation of Ceasefire-Chicago," (U.S. Department of Justice, May 2008), 1.

[http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/ceasefire\\_papers/executivesummary.pdf](http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/ceasefire_papers/executivesummary.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Skogan, 1-2.

<sup>33</sup> Skogan, 3-4.

<sup>34</sup> Perez, Frank, National Director of Ceasefire, Interview, Oct. 7, 2011.

<sup>35</sup> Skogan, "Brief Summary: An Evaluation of CeaseFire-Chicago," 2.

[http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/ceasefire\\_papers/summary.pdf](http://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/publications/ceasefire_papers/summary.pdf) ; Skogan, "Executive Summary," 10.

<sup>36</sup> Skogan, "Executive Summary," 12-14.

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- <sup>37</sup> Skogan, "Executive Summary," 15.
- <sup>38</sup> Ceasefire/Cure Violence, "National Partners,." <http://cureviolence.org/community-partners/national-partners/>
- <sup>39</sup> Ceasefire/Cure Violence, "International Partners." <http://cureviolence.org/community-partners/international-partners/>
- <sup>40</sup> James, Steve and Kotlowitz, Alex, "The Interrupters," 2011. <http://interrupters.kartemquin.com/>; Student Peace Alliance, <http://www.youthpromiseaction.org/>
- <sup>41</sup> Skogan "Executive Summary," 17; "Brief Summary," 3.
- <sup>42</sup> Skogan, "Brief Summary," 2.
- <sup>43</sup> Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, "Evaluation of Baltimore's Safe Street Program," 2012. <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/73802.safestreetevaluationfinal.pdf>
- <sup>44</sup> For instance, a typical budget is about \$240,000 per year.
- <sup>45</sup> Skogan, "Executive Summary," 6.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 7. Violence interrupters most often get hired on a series of short-term contracts.
- <sup>47</sup> Ibid., 16.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid., 5, 9. All supportive political leaders attempted to use Ceasefire in their campaign materials and at times political leaders attempted to play a role in hiring.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 5.
- <sup>50</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, "US Peace Index," 2011. <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/info-center/us-peace-index/>.
- <sup>51</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace, "US Peace Index--Executive Summary," 2012. <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/USPI-2012-Executive-Summary.pdf>
- <sup>52</sup> [www.dcpeaceteam.wordpress.com](http://www.dcpeaceteam.wordpress.com)
- <sup>53</sup> McCarthy, *Becoming Nonviolent Peacemakers*.