



MISSION NEWS

Canadian Jesuits International (CJI)

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The challenge of peacebuilding: Lessons from Colombia

Gathering of women peacebuilders in the Conquista barrio of Cúcuta, Colombia.

Mauricio García Durán SJ is Director of Jesuit Refugee Services–Colombia, Regional Director of JRS for Latin America and Coordinator of the Latin American Jesuits Migration Network.

For 50 long years, armed groups have embroiled Colombia in conflict. During the most intense period from 1990 to 2004 – when, according to international standards, it reached the level of a “major armed conflict” – it affected practically the entire country. The consequences for the civilian population have been enormous: more than 230,000 people killed and more than 7 million people forcibly displaced by the violence. The rural, aboriginal and Afro-Colombian populations have suffered disproportionately.

In response to the intensity of the conflict, there have been numerous, serious attempts to construct peace.

Such attempts have combined strategies of peace that have been employed in other countries with “protracted armed conflicts.” Depending on the circumstances, locations and affected populations, different combinations of “peacekeeping,” “peacemaking” and “peacebuilding” have been applied.

First of all, it is necessary to contain the devastating consequences of a conflict on the civilian population. In Colombia, this has implied strategies of “civilian peacekeeping” which involves maintaining a national or international presence to discourage armed actors from targeting the population. It also involves forms of civil resistance, such

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The vision & mission of CJI

The vision of Canadian Jesuits International is a world of peace, justice and integrity of creation, transformed through active commitment and finding God in all things.

The mission of CJI is to love and to serve by working with people struggling for social justice and dignity in the world. Together with Jesuit and other partners, CJI responds in solidarity, through awareness-raising and advocacy in Canada and supporting partnerships in the Global South.

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A word from Jenny Cafiso, CJI Director

When we chose the theme for this issue of the newsletter, I didn't know I would be writing these words while images of the victims of the chemical attacks in Syria, many of them children, were pouring through the media. They are a shocking reminder that now is the time to work for peace.

We invited three Jesuits who live and work in situations of conflict to share their reflections on what are the key elements for building lasting peace. Theirs are not theoretical musings, but reflections based on lived experiences and years of commitment to peace rooted in courage, faith and love for the people.

The sad thing is that we had many people to choose from to write these reflections. Many CJI partners are working in situations of conflict which can range from open warfare to violence due to inequality, exclusion or conflict over resources. The realities are different, but they all speak of the link between injustice and violence, of the complexity of war and of peace building.

Fr Melo from Honduras, echoes what Fr Mauricio, Fr Rohan and many others say, that the women, men and young people who work for peace in the midst of violence and death, with courage and determination, are small lights which shine in the darkness and like the hummingbird, bring new life, drop by drop.

It is thanks to you, our readers and friends across Canada, that we can support partners like these in Colombia, Jamaica and Honduras who are working for peace. Here we also honour the memory of three people who have recently departed, Don and Dorothy Newton and Diana Brand, who throughout their lives and even in death had an unwavering commitment to the people that CJI supports. Their spirit lives on in every person who works for peace.

We too are called to work for a lasting peace based on justice. We too can begin to light up the darkness of the night.

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The challenge of peacebuilding: Lessons from Colombia

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as demarcating communities and territories of peace where people oppose the use of violence.

Secondly, “peacemaking” is required, that is, negotiating peace agreements with armed groups. Since 1989 several rounds of negotiation have taken place in Colombia. Recently, during the administration of President Juan Manuel Santos, negotiations over a four-year period (2012–2016) with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) came to a successful conclusion. This year, negotiations with the National Liberation Army (ELN) have begun.

Thirdly, once peace agreements with distinct armed groups have been signed, many “peacebuilding” initiatives are needed. In Colombia, these have included not only processes of demobilization, disarmament and the reintegration of combatants, but also concrete plans for the economic, political and cultural wellbeing of the victims of conflict. Much work is also required to promote reconciliation.

It is important in the interest of peace not to give up when there are setbacks or when a particular peace initiative appears to be collapsing. In Colombia, the peace agreement with the FARC has had its fair share of obstacles. The agreement that was signed in August 2016 contained articles on: integrated rural reform; political participation; a solution to the scourge of illicit drugs; support for the victims of the conflict; transitional justice; guarantees of security, ceasefire and the termination of hostilities; and the disarmament of the guerrillas. Nevertheless, in the

national referendum of 2 October, the agreement was voted down by a small margin. As a result, several points had to be renegotiated to incorporate conditions set by those who opposed the agreement.

On 14 November 2016 a new agreement was signed and endorsed by the Congress. When the ceasefire came into effect, there was a significant reduction in the level of violence. Since then there has also been progress in the demobilization and disarmament of the guerrillas. However, due to deep polarization in the country with respect to the war and peace process, there still exists the real risk that the agreement could end up shipwrecked in the current, stormy, pre-electoral context.

The people of Colombia look with hope and expectation at the advances already achieved in the implementation of the peace agreement. Yet the challenges to the distribution of the benefits that it promises are significant. On the one hand, the persistence of some armed groups poses a threat for rural populations in zones where there are illegal activities. On the other hand, there is

a lot of uncertainty about the implementation of the many complex promised mechanisms for rural development, political participation and transitional justice, which guarantees access to the truth and compensation for victims, including the restitution of their land.

In this context, Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) is working to accompany the communities that are in vulnerable situations, under threat of being displaced, so that they are more resilient and able to remain in their territory. Likewise, JRS helps victims who are already internally displaced to access their legal rights, so that they can fully integrate. We walk with the people, so that they are empowered and become agents of reconciliation in their own context. And this is something that can be effective, not only in Colombia, but in the many other places where peace is lacking and where conflict threatens to destroy people’s lives and communities.

CJI supports the work of JRS in Colombia among vulnerable and internally displaced people. See www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=319. ■



D. Rueda/SJR LAC

Transformative community dialogue on the substitution of illicit crops with cacao, in Magdalena Medio, Colombia.

Inner-city violence and goodness in Jamaica

Fr Rohan G. Tulloch SJ is chair of St George's College in Kingston, Jamaica, and chair of the Youth Commission for the Archdiocese of Kingston.

Famous Jamaican musician Bob Marley wrote the song "No woman, no cry." This song took on new meaning for me when I worked in St Anne's Parish in Western Kingston, an inner-city community. At the end of a gun battle, I would listen for the cries of women to ascertain if anyone was shot, and tragically, it was not uncommon to hear the screams and the wailing of women as they mourned the loss of loved ones.

Violence is real. Violence is sinful. It robs people of their dignity and creates an atmosphere of fear. For residents of Jamaica's inner-city communities, violence is all around them.

Having ministered for five-and-a-half years at St Anne's Church, I watched as people who are already poor fell further into dire poverty. There is a strong link between poverty and violence in Jamaica. Many young people become involved in crime because they lack family support systems and the basic means of survival. They join gangs knowing full well the real possibility of being arrested or being killed in a shoot-out. They do not see an alternative.

What is the response of the Society of Jesus in Jamaica in light of the reality of violence and lack of opportunities? Our approach is one of listening to the people for what they think is best for them. For example, in 2010, we re-opened a kindergarten school as the result of town hall meetings with the community. At first we had only 16 students, but now in 2017 the school is at capacity with 75 students.

Numerous projects like this have arisen from dialogue in various forms with the community. We have part-

nered with other organizations to run parenting workshops. We employ social workers to work with women and children. We dialogue with gangs to identify alternative sources of income. We try to ensure that once a young person is accepted into university, we find the resources to enable him or her to attend. And recently, through our newly constructed Parenting Opportunity Centre, we hope to provide parents with a variety of opportunities to hone their parenting skills. We have come to the realization that a stable family is the best support system for a child in the inner city.



Providing stability and support: young students graduate from Marcus Garvey School, an outreach of the Jesuits in Kingston, Jamaica.

While projects like these are important, nothing beats witnessing to the Gospel by simply being present. We do this by walking the streets and creating a space so that people can be social and engage in conversation. We strive to bring out the goodness in the people, even when that goodness is deeply hidden or when they are no longer able to see that goodness in themselves.

We have no control over outcomes ultimately, but we can continue to plant

the seeds of love. While as Jesuits and Christians we aim for structural change to reduce poverty and inequality that breed violence, we also try to effect change one life at a time. As we continue to strive to be with the people, we hope to create an atmosphere for young people to dream and to value themselves as important.

Fr Rohan Tulloch was recently pastor of St Anne's Church in Kingston, Jamaica, and director of Jesuit Youth Ministry (Jamaica). CJI has supported a number of St Anne's community outreach projects in Western Kingston. See www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=322. ■

Sowing peace in Honduras: Like a dancing hummingbird

Fr Ismael Moreno Coto SJ (aka “Padre Melo”) is director of Radio Progreso and ERIC (Reflection, Research and Communications Team) in Honduras.

Out of the immensity of violence, death, exclusion and fear emerge signs of peace and civic engagement. The signs are small, but do exist. Imperceptibly, they strengthen the liberating faith of the poor like a hummingbird which, with slender beak and indefatigable wings, zips about depositing life drop by drop.

“Madres-Maestras”

In the most conflict-ridden zone of San Pedro Sula, one of the most violent cities on the planet, there are several dozen women, who have either seen their sons killed brutally or have coughed up the “war tax” to buy their sons’ survival. They are organized in a program called “Madres-Maestras” (Mothers-Mentors).

They are poor women. Many can’t read or write. They organize in order to transform their surroundings into a place of peace, of play for their children and of artistic apprenticeship. They have no guarantee that their children will come home after school. They don’t know if the gangs will compel their sons to enter their ranks. Nonetheless, they have decided to fight against the adversity.

For these mentors life is hard. But they have learned to overcome the violence. They have learned to sing while learning, and have managed to identify the central social problem, even more persistent than the violence: corruption. A corruption that

manifests itself at all levels, beginning with the complicity of families in criminal extortion, extending outward to schools and neighbourhood organizations, infiltrating municipal corporations and infecting state institutions. It also pervades the churches.

Consuela is a religious sister, who works as an advisor to the program. Her work helps her re-read the Gospel. For her, these masterful mothers, like Mary of Nazareth, blaze trails so that their children can grow in “years, wisdom and grace,” awaiting the day when “the powerful are cast down from their thrones and the lowly are lifted up.”

Consuelo testifies: “My work is to walk alongside them, and they help me enter into an experience of the Church from below. They bear an enormous load, and I try to help reduce the weight. I feel that they also shoulder the burden of my own weight and wounds. Together we are healing ourselves.”

“Paso a Paso”

“Paso a Paso” (Step by Step) is another program, run by lay base communities in the sector of Rivera Hernández, the bloodiest in San Pedro Sula. Inspired by Archbishop Oscar Romero, it daily welcomes 300 girls and boys, cared for by committees of mothers who share readings and handicrafts. The program takes place around a beautiful neighbourhood tree, “the tree of life,” which symbolizes their harmony with Mother Nature.

The gangs create havoc and do great harm, but they respect the mothers and the volunteers and children of “Paso a Paso.” These are experiences of peace and civic engagement from the bottom. Thus begins the light of a movement that shines out from the margins. Like a mustard seed; like the dancing beak of a hummingbird.

CJI supports ERIC / Radio Progreso. See www.canadianjesuitsinternational.ca/?p=6466. ■

Women in solidarity in San Pedro Sula, Honduras.



This Peace Business

By Greg Kennedy SJ

Keys, socks, sons and brothers...
these are the things that disappear.

There goes St. Anthony
on his hands and knees
a holy wreck of a man
reduced to acute workplace anxiety
by the open wound of solicitudes
of solicitations
bleeding out from his in-box.

Upper management puts out memos:
*"Peace!
Move it!"*

He's on the phone
he's pushing stock
but the numbers in the ledgers
keep coming out red.
This is more than a Sales Department
dilemma...
it's a Human Resources disaster
and St. Anthony can't find
the dime to make it work
at all levels as company policy.

God knows,
changing corporate culture is slow
and Jack, after years
with a gun in the jungle,
can't remember well how to fit
back in the box;
but he's already bending over
and climbing in...
now it's up to us to make music
from other things beside the handle
that causes him to spring.

Fr Greg Kennedy is a Canadian Jesuit studying for a Licentiate in Sacred Theology at the Javeriana University in Bogota, Colombia.

Don and Dorothy Newton: Their spirit lives on

When Don and Dorothy Newton married in 1991, they had a lot in common. Both were widowed and had children from previous marriages. Both were active members at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Ottawa and volunteered in their community. Both of them liked to travel. And both of them shared a desire to "do some good in the world," as Dorothy said.

It was this shared desire that led to their decision to leave legacy gifts in their wills. Each of them made a choice and for Don it was Canadian Jesuits International (CJI). He made it in the form of an annuity and life insurance policy. He felt that CJI's work in education and community development in the Global South was important and wanted to see it continue.

Don Newton was born in Montreal in 1920 and attended Loyola High School and College. That foundation was a motivating influence for his life of service to others, in the Netherlands during World War II and back in Montreal. With his first wife, Gertrude, he helped raise five children. After retiring to Ottawa, Don remained active hosting refugees, delivering Meals on Wheels and helping as a publishing associate for the Lonergan Research Institute.

Dorothy Newton (née Monette) was born in Ottawa in 1925. She worked for Metropolitan Life and later for the CBC. With her first husband, Paul, she raised two daughters. Over the years, she was an active member of the Catholic Women's League and her sorority Beta Sigma Phi. She was also a volunteer at St Patrick's Retirement Home and Meals on Wheels.

Don passed away in 2012 and Dorothy at the end of 2016. Their legacy of love is cherished by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It is also cherished by all the other people they touched

Dorothy and Don Newton



through lives of service, and through the work they support with their legacies.

We are grateful for their lives and their generosity. ■

Diana Brand: A faithful, generous friend

Edith “Diana” Brand was a wonderful friend and supporter of Canadian Jesuits International (CJI). She passed away peacefully in her sleep on 1 February 2017, and is greatly missed by many people, including her great-great-grandchildren. CJI director Jenny Cafiso remembers first meeting Diana many years ago: “When I was a young adult, she and I were involved with Youth Corps, a program of the Archdiocese of Toronto. We were on kitchen duty for the Family Peace weekends, and I learned a lot from her over the many hours spent peeling carrots and potatoes! Her energy and passion were contagious.”

Diana has befriended and supported CJI in different capacities, but perhaps she is best remembered for her pivotal role in helping Canadian Jesuit Fr Ed McGuire to establish Gandhi Ashram, a school with

a music focus for poor children in Kalimpong, in the Jesuit Province of Darjeeling, India. Diana related how her involvement started in the summer of 1983: “I can still remember Fr Ed showing me a piano with the keys missing and saying it was his dream to start an orchestra. I really thought he was a crazy Jesuit!”

Not long after, Diana received a cable from Fr Ed asking her to bring some musical instruments to India. She soon realized he had no money for them and so she ended up buying about 25 to 30 herself. She was met in Kolkata by Fr Ed and Fr Anthony Sharma SJ, who later became the first Bishop of Nepal. They travelled to Gandhi Ashram and Diana stayed for several weeks. “When I



Diana Brand (left) with Ping Teow, a friend of CJI

saw how the kids handled those first instruments, I was shocked,” she recalled. “The first concert was given in my honour before I left – ‘Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.’”

Diana’s Christian devotion and her work with children will be sorely missed. We thank God for her life and ongoing support through the donations loved ones have made in her memory. ■

Making a bequest to CJI in your will

The mission of the Society of Jesus is to serve faith and to promote the justice of God’s kingdom in dialogue with cultures and religions. Through your gifts to Canadian Jesuits International (CJI), you can share in this mission and be in solidarity with thousands of people in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Some of our supporters, after providing for their loved ones in their wills, have chosen also to include

CJI as a beneficiary. It is their way of ensuring that their life commitment to the poor and to fulfilling God’s promise of justice and peace continues after their death.

Remembering CJI in your will can be as simple as adding a provision to leave some of your assets to Canadian Jesuits International. Your gift can be a specific amount or a percentage of the residue of your estate. There is a 100% tax credit for the amount of your bequest and addi-

tionally the knowledge that your gift will have a lasting impact in an area of great need.

Please consider making a lasting legacy of love and service. Our staff can provide you with additional information, so you can make a gift that is appropriate to your personal circumstances and also tax-effective.

Call Isabel today at 416 465 1824 or toll free at 1 800 448 2148, or email her at iperezdoherty@jesuits.org. ■

“Diaspora as Mission”

In December 2016, Fr Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator SJ spoke at a public event in Etobicoke, Ontario, on the topic “Diaspora as Mission.” The event was co-sponsored by CJI, the Jesuits in English Canada and the Pontifical Missions English Canada chapter. Fr Orobator, who served as Principal of Hekima College University in Kenya, was recently appointed President of the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM).

In his talk, Fr Orobator explained how the church in Africa feeds into the soul and life of the global church. He noted that a more balanced and inclusive understanding of mission in the global church is needed in order to bring to fruition the gifts of cultural exchange and encounter in a rapidly changing world, and he emphasized that the African diaspora has many gifts to offer the church in the North, as well as globally.

While some participants from the African diaspora noted that contributions from their community were not



Fr Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator SJ speaking in Etobicoke.

always welcomed, Fr Orobator said they must persevere in demonstrating that their adopted country is their home, and that *everyone* belongs to it and comes with gifts for its growth. ■

CJI on Radio Maria

Radio Maria Canada interviewed CJI Director Jeny Cafiso and Youth and Outreach Coordinator Uju Umenyi about the work of Canadian Jesuits International and its outreach program in Canada. The interview aired at 6:00 pm EDT on 10 April on Radio Maria’s English-language program SweetGrass, which is dedicated to issues of social justice. CJI is planning further programs with SweetGrass, some of which will feature international visitors from CJI projects. ■

Pi Day fundraiser for Togo

On March 14, International Pi Day (3.14), members and friends of the Catholic Women’s League in the town of Consul, Saskatchewan, sold 40 pies and raised more than \$700 to support the Centre Espérance Loyola (CEL) in Togo. CEL was the first Jesuit centre in sub-Saharan Africa wholly dedicated to the struggle against AIDS. Thanks to parishioners in Consul, who hold a fundraiser for CEL every year, the work to alleviate the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS continues. ■

BE A PEACEBUILDER!

Please support CJI. Your contribution will help to bring justice and build peace in Colombia, Honduras and Jamaica, as well as in other countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Please give generously by making a one-time or a regular monthly donation.

All donations are tax deductible. All personal information is held in accordance with Canadian Government Privacy Policy.

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Thank you for your support!