

Tom Fox

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Tom Fox mit Kindern

Thomas ('Tom') William Fox *[1951](#), † [2006](#), lebte in [Clearbrook, Virginia, USA](#), wurde 2006 als [Geisel im Irak](#) ermordet.

Fox war ein amerikanischer gewaltfreier Friedensaktivist, der als Vertreter der [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) zwei Jahre bis zu seinem Tod Friedensarbeit mit CPT in Kooperation mit irakischen [Menschenrechtsorganisationen](#) im Irak leistete. Die CPT sind eine der wenigen noch im Irak aktiven Hilfsorganisationen.

Die [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) (CPT) sind Friedensaktivisten der [Mennoniten](#) und [Quäker](#), die weltweit gewaltfreie Aktionen gegen Kriege durchführen. Mittlerweile erfahren sie für ihre gewaltfreie Friedensarbeit Unterstützung aus vielen christlichen Gemeinden. CPT entsendet Teams ausgebildeter Friedensarbeiter in Krisensituationen und militarisierte Regionen an verschiedenen Orten der Welt. Im Mittelpunkt der Arbeit steht die Dokumentation und Veröffentlichung von Menschenrechtsverletzungen, besonders in Bezug auf die Misshandlung von Gefangenen. Außerdem vermittelt CPT Kontakte zwischen Irakern und lokalen sowie internationalen Menschenrechtsorganisationen.

Zitat: "CPT war die erste Nichtregierungsorganisation im Irak, die die Misshandlungen von irakischen Gefangenen in Gefängnissen der multinationalen Truppen publizierte. Anfang 2004 gab das Team einen umfassenden Bericht heraus, der die Zeugnisse von ehemaligen Gefangenen über Misshandlungen enthielt und machte diesen bei hochrangigen US-Behörden bekannt. Als der [Abu Ghraib](#) Gefängnis-Skandal später in diesem Frühjahr Schlagzeilen machte, wurden Teammitglieder von CPT zu einer primären Quelle von Information für Journalisten und andere Organisationen. Aktivitäten des Teams im Irak 2004-2005 waren: Begleitung von Irakis zu US-Militäreinrichtungen, um nach Verwandten zu suchen, die dort möglicherweise festgehalten wurden, und um Entschädigung für Verwundung, Schaden an Eigentum und Diebstahl, die mit Aktivitäten der US-Truppen zusammenhingen, einzufordern."

Nachfolgende Texte sind Kopien von Artikeln aus dem Internet, die wir im April 2006 gefunden haben. Weitere Informationen und nutzbare Bilder sind auch auf der Homepage von Christian Peacemaker Teams zu finden: www.cpt.org
Leider alles Englisch, aber vielleicht hilft es Euch ja trotzdem:

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"Having grown up the Southern U.S. and having a very racist father, it was a very bizarre experience hearing almost the same comments being made against Iraqis that I heard as a child being made against blacks. The same venom, for lack of a better word, was coming out of their mouths as they denigrated the people, culture and societal norms of Iraq.

The final grain is that I have no previous background in peacemaking, having spent the last ten years working for a natural foods company and before that having spent the remainder of my adult life as a musician."

: Why are we here?

If I understand the message of God, his response to that question is that we are to take part in the creation of the Peaceable Realm of God. Again, if I understand the message of God, how we take part in the creation of this realm is to love God with all our heart, our mind and our strength and to love our neighbors and enemies as we love God and ourselves. In its essential form, different aspects of love bring about the creation of the realm.

"Be patterns, be examples in every country, place, or nation that you visit," George Fox wrote, "so that your bearing and life might communicate with all people. Then you'll happily walk across the earth to evoke that of God in everybody. So that you will be seen as a blessing in their eyes and you will receive a blessing from that of God within them."

I have read that the word in the Greek Bible that is translated as "love" in the word "agape". Again, I have read that this word is best expressed as a profound respect for all human beings simply for the fact that they are all God's children. I would state that idea in a somewhat different way, as "never thinking or doing anything that would dehumanize one of my fellow human beings."

As I survey the landscape here in Iraq, dehumanization seems to be the operative means of relating to each other. U.S. forces in their quest to hunt down and kill "terrorists" are as a result of this dehumanizing word, not only killing "terrorist", but also killing innocent Iraqis: men, women and children in the various towns and villages.

Fox's final posts to his blog (in late October, about a month before his abduction) were dispatches from a trip with nineteen Palestinian Iraqis to the Syrian border where the Palestinians hoped to crossover and win refugee status. The unusual mission was a perfect example of CPT's creativity in the face of limited resources.

"We are gathered around a campfire sharing chai (tea) and fellowship," Fox writes. "'We' consists of nineteen Palestinian men, women and children (ages one to thirteen) who have either been born in or have lived most of their lives in Iraq. 'We' also consists of three CPTers, one member of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams and CPT's translator (who is also Palestinian). We are camped at the Al Walid border crossing between Syria and Iraq and are awaiting news from the Syrian government. News of whether or not the Iraqi Palestinians, who are currently barred from entering Syria, will be granted refugee status by the United Nations, which will be recognized by the Syrian government.

"But why would these people want to leave Iraq now? Iraq is now on its way to democracy. The tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein has been gone for two and one half years. The reason is quite simple: the new Iraq government's security forces have made Iraqi Palestinians primary targets for harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture-induced confessions to crimes they didn't commit and, in some cases, death. All in the name of demonstrating how well the government's campaign of ridding Iraq of foreign terrorists is going.

Day one: "It is midday and the temperature in this desert region of eastern Iraq is around one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. People have enough water, but the intense heat is still taking its toll on the men, women and children. There are dozens of tractor-trailers waiting to cross the border. One of the drivers sees the group and pulls his rig close to the sidewalk, creating a protective shadow for shade."

Day Three: "The U.N. has arranged for the community to have two meals per day at the border-crossing cafeteria. The Syrian cafeteria manager is talking to community members about how things are going. One person mentions that there is very little to do as they await word from the Syrian government regarding their status. Soon afterwards a soccer ball appears and is given to the community. Both children and adults find it a welcome source of recreation."

Day seven: "The five children are getting bored and anxious. CPTer Sheila Provencher and the CPT translator have decided to start a one-hour 'school' every morning for the older children. Provencher will teach English and the translator will do art. The first English lesson is teaching words about the weather using the 'Itsy, Bitsy Spider' song."

Day eight: "The Syrian government still refuses to allow any of the Palestinians to enter Syria as refugees. Two members of the community pay a social call to one of the Syrian officials in charge of the border crossing. At the conclusion of their visit they invite the officer to come meet everyone at the camp. He arrives several hours later as members of the community are gathered under the star filled sky next to a roaring campfire. Community members offer him tea and the conversation goes on late into the night."

"The ongoing difficulties faced by Fallujans are so great that words fail to properly express it." Words from a cleric in Fallujah as he tried to explain the litany of ills that continue to afflict his city one year after the U.S.-led assault took place.

"All the men in the mosque were from my neighborhood. They were not terrorists." Words from a young man who said he left a room of men either injured or homeless thirty minutes before the raid on his mosque, the same mosque shown in the now-famous videotape of an American soldier shooting unarmed men lying on the mosque floor.

"Last week [CPT Iraq team member] Maxine Nash and I visited a friend of the team at his home. Nuir (not his real name) invited us for dinner and to spend the night. A number of things related to that visit seemed quite 'normal' for life here in Baghdad. But trying to put in the context of what is normal in North America really strained my imagination.

"Visiting their home: Nuir picked us up after dark to minimize the possibility of our being seen going into his house. Maxine and I wore Iraqi head coverings, again to minimize the likelihood that someone might see him bringing Westerners to his home. Imagine: You live in North America and you invite some friends who are visiting from Japan over to your home. You tell them not to arrive until after dark and to please wear the caps and jerseys of the local high school football team to help them blend in.

"Children: Their son doesn't live with them. He lives with a grandmother. One reason for this is security. The grandmother lives very close to his school so he stays with her to avoid walking home through areas that have had numerous instances of kidnapping and robbery. The family lives in a second story apartment and their daughter can't play outside in their neighborhood due to the lack of security. She can only play outside at the grandmother's because she has an enclosed backyard. Imagine: Your children are confined inside your home at all times. The only outside activity they have is when you visit a relative who has a walled enclosure around his or her backyard.

10 March 2006

In grief we tremble before God who wraps us with compassion. The death of our beloved colleague and friend pierces us with pain. Tom Fox's body was found in Baghdad yesterday.

Christian Peacemaker Teams extends our deep and heartfelt condolences to the family and community of Tom Fox, with whom we have traveled so closely in these days of crisis.

We mourn the loss of Tom Fox who combined a lightness of spirit, a firm opposition to all oppression, and the recognition of God in everyone.

We renew our plea for the safe release of Harmeet Sooden, Jim Loney and Norman Kember. Each of our teammates has responded to Jesus' prophetic call to live out a nonviolent alternative to the cycle of violence and revenge.

In response to Tom's passing, we ask that everyone set aside inclinations to vilify or demonize others, no matter what they have done. In Tom's own words: "We reject violence to punish anyone. We ask that there be no retaliation on relatives or property. We forgive those who consider us their enemies. We hope that in loving both friends and enemies and by intervening nonviolently to aid those who are systematically oppressed, we can contribute in some small way to transforming this volatile situation."

Even as we grieve the loss of our beloved colleague, we stand in the light of his strong witness to the power of love and the courage of nonviolence. That light reveals the way out of fear and grief and war.

Through these days of crisis, Christian Peacemaker Teams has been surrounded and upheld by a great outpouring of compassion: messages of support, acts of mercy, prayers, and public actions offered by the most senior religious councils and by school children, by political leaders and by those organizing for justice and human rights, by friends in distant nations and by strangers near at hand. These words and actions sustain us. While one of our teammates is lost to us, the strength of this outpouring is not lost to God's movement for just peace among all peoples.

At the forefront of that support are strong and courageous actions from Muslim brothers and sisters throughout the world for which we are profoundly grateful. Their graciousness inspires us to continue working for the day when Christians speak up as boldly for the human rights of thousands Iraqis still detained illegally by the United States and United Kingdom.

Such an outpouring of action for justice and peace would be a fitting memorial for Tom. Let us all join our voices on behalf of those who continue to suffer under occupation, whose loved ones have been killed or are missing. In so doing, we may hasten the day when both those who are wrongly detained and those who bear arms will return safely to their homes. In such a peace we will find solace for our grief.

Despite the tragedy of this day, we remain committed to put into practice these words of Jim Loney: "With the waging of war, we will not comply. With the help of God's grace, we will struggle for justice. With God's abiding kindness, we will love even our enemies." We continue in hope for Jim, Harmeet and Norman's safe return home safe.

November 25th, 2005 -- The Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Iraq team went through a discernment process, seeking to identify aspects of our work here in Iraq that are compelling enough to continue the project and comparing them with the costs (financial, psychological, physical) that are also aspects of the project. It was a healthy exercise, but it led me to a somewhat larger question: Why are we here?

If I understand the message of God, his response to that question is that we are to take part in the creation of the Peaceable Realm of God. Again, if I understand the message of God, how we take part in the creation of this realm is to love God with all our heart, our mind and our strength and to

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It seems as if the first step down the road to violence is taken when I dehumanize a person. That violence might stay within my thoughts or find its way into the outer world and become expressed verbally, psychologically, structurally or physically. As soon as I rob a fellow human being of his or her humanity by sticking a dehumanizing label on them, I begin the process that can have, as an end result, torture, injury and death.

"Why are we here?" We are here to root out all aspects of dehumanization that exists within us. We are here to stand with those being dehumanized by oppressors and stand firm against that dehumanization. We are here to stop people, including ourselves, from dehumanizing any of God's children, no matter how much they dehumanize their own souls.

Four members of Christian Peacemaker Teams were abducted this past Saturday, November 26 in Baghdad, Iraq. Join Arundhati Roy, Tariq Ali, Noam Chomsky, Cindy Sheehan, Denis Halliday, Rashid Khalidi, and Many Others in Calling for the Urgent Release of Peace Activists Held in Iraq...

- [Sign the petition now!](#)

Related Links

- [BY TOPIC: Abduction of four CPT members in Iraq](#)

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Christian Peacemaker Teams has been present in Iraq since October 2002, providing first-hand, independent reports from the region, working with detainees of both United States and Iraqi forces, and training others in non-violent intervention and human rights documentation. Christian Peacemaker Teams is a violence reduction program. Teams of trained peacemakers work in areas of lethal conflict around the world.

There Are No Words

“The ongoing difficulties faced by Fallujans are so great that words fail to properly express it.” Words from a cleric in Fallujah as he tried to explain the litany of ills that continue to afflict his city one year after the U.S.-led assault took place.

“All the men in the mosque were from my neighborhood. They were not terrorists.” Words from a young man who said he left a room of men either injured or homeless thirty minutes before the raid on his mosque, the same mosque shown in the now-famous videotape of an American soldier shooting unarmed men lying on the mosque floor.

“There haven’t been any funds for home reconstruction available since the change in Iraqi government last January.” The words of a civic leader from Fallujah as he showed CPTers the still-devastated areas of his city.

There are no words. A city that has been demonized by Americans and many Iraqis, using the words “the city of terrorists.” A city that its residents call “the city of mosques.” A city that even its residents have to enter at checkpoints, often taking up to an hour to traverse. A city that is being choked to death economically by those same checkpoints.

CPTers and a member of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams came to Fallujah to meet with friends and contacts to ask them if the city was planning on doing something in remembrance of the tragic events of last November when U.S. forces attacked their city of 300,000 to root out, by U.S. estimates, 1,500 terrorists.

What we heard in response were words of remembrance, resistance and resilience. The cleric said that a number of civic leaders had come to him with a proposal for an action in remembrance of the anniversary. Their proposal was to raise funds to contribute to relief efforts for the victims of the earthquake in Pakistan. He said that a teaching of Islam is to always look to aid others in need before asking for aid yourself.

The cleric said that he recently traveled to another Middle Eastern country and during his visit he met with a cleric from Libya. The Libyan cleric said that in his city, and in other places in Libya, parents are naming newborn girls “Fallujah” in honor of the city. The cleric said that more than 800 girls had been named Fallujah in his city alone.

Words are inadequate, but words are all we have. Words like “collective punishment” and

“ghettoize” come to mind for the current state of life in Fallujah.

What words or deeds could undo the massive trauma faced by the people of Fallujah every day?

Everywhere we went during the afternoon young boys listened to our words and the words of those with whom we were meeting. I kept wondering what was going on in their minds as they relived the events of a year ago and the ensuing trauma. What effect will these events have on their lives as they grow up?

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On March 10th, 2006, after more than three months as a hostage in Iraq, his body was found by police in a Baghdad neighborhood.

WAITING IN THE LIGHT

Intermittently during his time in Iraq, Tom Fox posted to a blog he titled [Waiting in the Light](#). Visitors to the blog were greeted with a quote by George Fox, the founder of the Religious Society of Friends, or the Quakers, amongst whom Tom Fox worshipped for 22 years.

"Be patterns, be examples in every country, place, or nation that you visit," George Fox wrote, "so that your bearing and life might communicate with all people. Then you'll happily walk across the earth to evoke that of God in everybody. So that you will be seen as a blessing in their eyes and you will receive a blessing from that of God within them."

Tom Fox traveled to Baghdad with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) in late November 2005. On October 1st, in a post time-stamped 10:01 AM (local time where he had his home in Clearbrook, Virginia), he introduced himself cautiously to whomever was listening:

"You should take these first impressions of Baghdad with several grains of salt," he wrote. "The first being I have only been in the city for seven days and have never been to the Near East before. The next grain is that I have only been a CPTer for fifty days having just taken the training in Chicago in July and August 2004. The final grain is that I have no previous background in peacemaking, having spent the last ten years working for a natural foods company and before that having spent the remainder of my adult life as a musician."

A committed Christian pacifist, Fox next quoted from the Gospel of Thomas (a text as unfamiliar in mainstream Christianity as the model for Christian nonviolence that Fox and CPT were attempting to build in Baghdad):

"Do not lie and do not do what you hate."

With that, Fox launched into a succinct indictment of what he saw as an unbroken line of brutally mishandled power in Iraq:

"It has become increasingly evident to me that after stripping away all the rationales for the US invasion of Iraq, what is left is the reality that the current U.S. Administration felt compelled to invade from a basis of hate. I can envision them saying, 'Saddam is evil. We hate evil. Therefore we need to rid the world of this evil man and his cronies.' I can see that actions taken by Saddam could lead them to feel hatred towards him. He and his associates built palaces and enclaves where they lived in luxury while across the Tigris River was a slum where over a million residents of Baghdad lived in poverty and squalor. He maintained control of the country by devoting huge amounts of material resources to his military and security forces, a decision that allowed the infrastructure of the city to deteriorate. And most hateful of all was his use of imprisonment and torture to keep the population of Baghdad living in a state of fear.

"My impression of Baghdad in my first seven days is that most of the American and Iraqi interim government officials have sequestered themselves in palaces and enclaves, which has served to disconnect them from the majority of the population. These officials are devoting a significant amount of material resources to maintain both military and contracted security organizations while the already marginal infrastructure continues to deteriorate. And in the continuing cycle of hatred ... there are elements of the society that are using terrorist tactics to try to destabilize the American forces and the interim government. Their actions and the response by the American forces keep the population in a state of fear and uncertainty. An insurgent mortar round aimed at an American target might just as well fall into a residential area. If a person is unlucky enough to live in an area where insurgents are suspected of living ... his or her own life and property are at risk when an Apache helicopter launches its vast arsenal of lethal weaponry."

"Do not do what you hate," Fox repeats three times at the end of his first post, repeating the mantra three times, the text becoming smaller each time until it seems a whisper, or, in the wake of his tragic death, a desperate cry from the beyond.

A REJECTION OF FIGHT AND FLIGHT

Many of Fox's posts ring ominous now that he is gone. His second post, simply titled "Safety," plays with the word a bit, pitting his own metaphysical sense of the word against that of the armed convoys, insurgents and neighbors who surrounded him in Baghdad.

"The building across from our apartment houses the Baghdad offices of a political party. They have at least two armed guards patrolling outside with their Kalashnikov rifles 24/7. Most offices, apartment buildings and hotels (and even places of worship) employ full-time armed security guards. It is culturally acceptable in this part of the world for people to have at least a rifle or pistol as part of their household possessions. The U.S. forces here in Baghdad are of course armed with a bit more ... And [there are] the small number of insurgents whose weapons lack the sophistication of the U.S. [but] never seem to lack for ammunition ... On some level I'm convinced that I'm living in the most heavily armed city in the world.

"Excluding criminals, terrorists and psychopaths, my sense is that most people would describe their need to possess a weapon in terms of safety ... I'm trying to imagine what it would be like if we had a pistol or rifle in our CPT apartment here ... would I feel safer than I do now? As with our neighbors at the political party office, I would assume we would need to keep the weapon 'on display,' so to speak. My sense is that people feel that letting 'the bad guys' know that they have a weapon acts as a deterrent. So would I feel safer? I am clear that I would not feel safer.

"But heck, if I'm wrong and if in fact guns do create a feeling of safety, then I'm already living in the safest city in the world right now, so what do I have to worry about?"

Kidnapping was always on Fox's mind. No doubt it was always on the mind of any foreigner in Iraq.

Fox confronted his ultimate fate in his third post, which he began, as he often did, with a quote, this time from Gandhi:

"If an attacker inspires anger or fear in my heart, it means that I have not purged myself of violence. To realize nonviolence means to feel within you its strength - soul force - to know God. A person who has known God will be incapable of harboring anger or fear within him [or her], no matter how overpowering the cause for that anger or fear may be."

Here is how Fox applied Gandhi's very challenging, some would say impossible, notions to post-invasion Baghdad:

"When I allow myself to become angry I disconnect from God and connect with the evil force that empowers fighting. When I allow myself to become fearful I disconnect from God and connect with the evil force that encourages flight. I take Gandhi and Jesus at their word - if I am not one with God then I am one with Satan. I don't think Gandhi would use that word but Jesus certainly did, on numerous occasions. The French theologian Rene Girard has a very powerful vision of Satan that speaks to me: 'Satan sustains himself as a parasite on what God creates by imitating God in a manner that is jealous, grotesque, perverse and as contrary as possible to the loving and obedient imitation of Jesus.'

"If I am not to fight or flee in the face of armed aggression, be it the overt aggression of the army or the subversive aggression of the terrorist, then what am I to do? ... Here in Iraq I struggle with that second form of aggression ... how do you stand firm against a car-bomber or a kidnapper?"

"It seems easier somehow to confront anger within my heart than it is to confront fear. But if Jesus and Gandhi are right then I am not to give in to either. I am to stand firm against the kidnapper as I am to stand firm against the soldier. Does that mean I walk into a raging battle to confront the soldiers? Does that mean I walk the streets of Baghdad with a sign saying 'American for the Taking' No to both counts. But if Jesus and Gandhi are right, then I am asked to risk my life and, if I lose it, to be as forgiving as they were when murdered by the forces of Satan. I struggle to stand firm but I'm willing to keep working at it."

"NOT A LIFE SPENT BEHIND GATES AND WALLS"

The kidnapping and murder of aid worker Margaret Hassan in November 2004 was a tragic anomaly when it happened: a person so clearly focused only on helping Iraqis, a person with a clear record of authenticity and integrity, abducted and murdered without any regard for a remarkably diverse and international appeal for her release.

When Tom Fox grappled with that tragedy in his blog, he left us with words we might now use to grapple with his own horribly parallel fate:

"She lived a life with the people of Iraq," Fox wrote, "not a life spent behind gates and walls."

"Finally it seems as if she gave away her life. Individuals who resort to any means in order to justify their ends appear to have taken it from her ... CPT in Iraq prays that these individuals can reconnect with their humanity. We pray for healing for her family, friends and coworkers. We understand that the Quran teaches that an innocent person who is killed travels as quickly as does light to the gates of Paradise."

"While Margaret's light may now be in Paradise her physical presence is no longer with the people of Iraq. We ask all people who have lived in her light and all who seek the light to resolve to continue the work she began. She lived a life of courage in the midst of fear. We are called to do the same, no matter what the consequences."

"Margaret modeled an extravagant way of living for others."

IMAGINE

Amidst Fox's grappling with the tough issues of conquering fear in one of the most fright-filled places on earth, there were portraits of ordinary life lived in extraordinary conditions.

In one of his last posts of 2004, Fox writes of a visit to a friend's house, and asks us to forget if we can the "broad strokes" in American and even Arab media and wrap our minds around the war as experienced in every corner of Iraqi life.

"Last week [CPT Iraq team member] Maxine Nash and I visited a friend of the team at his home. Nuir (not his real name) invited us for dinner and to spend the night. A number of things related to that visit seemed quite 'normal' for life here in Baghdad. But trying to put in the context of what is normal in North America really strained my imagination.

"Visiting their home: Nuir picked us up after dark to minimize the possibility of our being seen going into his house. Maxine and I wore Iraqi head coverings, again to minimize the likelihood that someone might see him bringing Westerners to his home. Imagine: You live in North America and you invite some friends who are visiting from Japan over to your home. You tell them not to arrive until after dark and to please wear the caps and jerseys of the local high school football team to help them blend in.

"Getting around: On the way to and from their home we saw lines of cars, some stretching for several miles, waiting to get gas. There is a major fuel crisis in the country with the price of fuel going up dramatically in the past month. The price has increased as much as 500% on the regular market and 2-3000% on the black market. Imagine: You get up in the middle of the night or even spend the night parked in a line waiting for the gas station to open. If you don't have the time to do that, you pay twenty times more than what you have been paying, knowing that it will affect the amount of food and other necessities you can purchase that week.

"In their home: Nuir lives with his wife and two children, ages six and eleven. We spent most of the night with kerosene lamps for light because their neighborhood is getting only about two hours of electricity per day. He has a battery-powered converter that gives the family enough power to run a couple of lights and the television for an additional three to four hours. Imagine: You have to structure your home life around two hours of electric power a day. That will limit your ability to do things like use a computer, play music, listen to television or use any electric appliances you might have like a washer and dryer.

"Children: Their son doesn't live with them. He lives with a grandmother. One reason for this is security. The grandmother lives very close to his school so he stays with her to avoid walking home through areas that have had numerous instances of kidnapping and robbery. The family lives in a second story apartment and their daughter can't play outside in their neighborhood due to the lack of security. She can only play outside at the grandmother's because she has an enclosed backyard. Imagine: Your children are confined inside your home at all times. The only outside activity they have is when you visit a relative who has a walled enclosure around his or her backyard.

"Business: Nuir has a small shop selling stationery items and business is suffering. Many of his customers come from outside the Baghdad area. They are not able to come to his shop because it is extremely dangerous to drive on the roads leading into the city. Bandits force cars off the road to rob the passengers. Religious extremists do the same looking for foreigners or people from religious sects other than their own to either assault or kill them. Imagine: The customers for your business can't reach you for fear of being robbed or killed traveling on the main highways into your town.

"You might imagine that this family's circumstances are much worse than those of other friends, contacts and partners of CPT in Iraq," Fox writes. "Actually their circumstances are better than most. Imagine."

A LAND OF SHADOWS AND DARKNESS

When news of the abduction of Tom Fox, Jim Loney, Harmeet Sooden and Norman Kember hit, Rush Limbaugh spoke words that were echoed endlessly by conservative pundits and bloggers: "Part of me likes this," he said. "Well, here's why I like it. I like any time a bunch of leftist feel-good hand-wringers are shown reality."

Fox's blog is a clear indicator, if one was truly needed, that his abduction was not the beginning of his reality-check in Iraq.

On Christmas Day 2005, just about one year prior to his abduction, Fox framed the reality he had been shown in Iraq with typical raw eloquence. He describes "a very clear image" that came to him at a CPT team worship soon after the kidnapping of Margaret Hassan:

"It was of a land of shadows and darkness. But within that land candles were burning; not many but enough to shed some light on the landscape.

"I have been reflecting on two very bright and powerful lights I have had the privilege of getting to know in Iraq over the last several months. One is an Iraqi who is a member of the Dominican Order. The other is a teacher who also works for a human rights organization. Both have no illusions regarding the dark times their country is facing. But both have a vision of a land of peace that they are working to bring to fruition. As for the current situation in his country the Dominican Father says, 'I am prudent. I try to be wise. But I have no fear. This is my rule - I have no fear but I seek prudence and wisdom.' The human rights worker said, 'I believe that the foundation of all major religions (Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism) is peace. But it is a peace from within not a peace imposed from without.'

"Fearless, prudent and wise. We in CPT need to work to find a balance between all three of these character traits. But is it my sense that removing ourselves from the shadows and darkness will never create the capacity for those living in the shadows to grow in the light."

Fox left Iraq shortly after this post for a visit to Israel and Palestine and then a couple months of rest back home in America.

On February 27, he gave a talk at Northern Virginia Mennonite Church and posted it on *Waiting in the Light*.

"Being part of Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraq has led me to many 'firsts'," he told the Northern Virginia congregation, "first time in a war zone, first time being targeted as 'the enemy' due to being an American, now the first time to stand before a religious community as a member of CPT and give a talk during a worship service. And I would have to say that I am more nervous about this 'first' than I was about the others.

"As a member of a silent Quaker Meeting one aspect of the Mennonite tradition I have learned to appreciate is that of looking to Scripture as a basis for one's spiritual journey. And so it seemed appropriate to use a passage from scripture as the basis of this talk. The passage that I was led to use this morning is from the Letter of James.

This is from the first chapter of James, verses 19-22. 'Each of you must be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to be angry. For a person's anger cannot promote the justice of God. Away then with all that is unclean, and the malice that hurries to excess. Quietly accept the messages planted in your hearts, which can bring you salvation. Only be sure that you act on the messages and do not merely listen to them.'

"We did a lot of listening in Iraq with CPT and the stories we heard were not always easy to hear. And after hearing them I would often find myself becoming quick to pass judgment on others and quick to become angry. The first times I participated in human rights documentation was last September. We interviewed an Iraqi, Dr. Ammad, who had been detained by American forces in May of 2003. He was imprisoned for six months during which time he was subjected to many of the interrogation methods you are all too familiar with. He said that the people abusing him told

him they were FBI (but if you have read over the FBI documents recently released by the Freedom of Information Act on the ACLU website these people were probably contracted security pretending to be FBI) ... I was taking the notes as he described how they pulled out one of his fingernails. I listened as he described the beatings and showed us the scars. I felt myself becoming very angry at the thought of these horrible actions being done by my own countrymen and women.

"James says that, 'A person's anger cannot promote the justice of God.' No matter if we succumb to anger, harden ourselves against anger or absorb anger; none of these ways can promote the justice of God. But does that mean we are not allowed to feel anger? James says that we need to be slow to anger and that first we need to listen carefully, next to put some words to our feelings and then finally express our anger. But clearly he does not say 'never become angry' ... So then what do we do with our anger? James says we need to turn that anger over to God and then, 'Quietly accept the messages planted in our hearts'."

One month later, Fox was headed back to Iraq.

Tom Fox, 54, lived in Clearbrook, Virginia and was a dedicated father of two children. For the past two years, he worked with CPT in partnership with Iraqi human rights organizations to promote peace. Fox was a practicing Quaker for 22 years. While in Iraq, he sought a more complete understanding of Islamic cultural richness and was committed to telling the truth to U.S. citizens about the horrors of war and the effects of U.S. policies and practices ordinary Iraqi civilians and families. Fox was an accomplished musician who played the bass clarinet and the recorder. He loved to cook. He also worked as a professional grocer. Fox devoted much of his time to working with children. He served as an adult leader of youth programs and worked at a Quaker camp for youth. He facilitated young people's participation in opposing war and violence. Fox was a quiet and peaceful man, respectful of everyone, who believed that "there is that of God in every person" which is why work for peace was so important to him.

On March 10th, 2006, after more than three months as a hostage in Iraq, his body was found by police in a Baghdad neighborhood.

Intermittently during his time in Iraq, Tom Fox posted to a blog he titled [Waiting in the Light](#). This is part two of a look back at Fox's words (read part one [here](#)).

"HOW DO I STAY WITH THE PAIN AND SUFFERING?"

Tom Fox returned to Iraq in early April 2005. His first post from Iraq later that month is a window into the violence with which Iraqis have been living daily. The post begins with a visit from a "young Iraqi man whose family raised more than twenty thousand dollars from contributors worldwide to pay for medicine for the hospitals and clinics at Fallujah."

It had been only a few months since "Operation Phantom Fury," a punishing American attack on Fallujah intended to flush the city of insurgents. Just a week before Fox's post, an article on the MSNBC website described the scene there:

"Fallujah today is still in almost total lockdown. Traffic backs up for hours as every vehicle is searched before entering the city. And there is still an overnight curfew. All the measures are aimed at keeping Fallujah from falling back into the hands of insurgents.

"While security remains a top priority and concern, the biggest challenge now is rebuilding Fallujah after the most devastating urban combat of the war. Fewer than half of the 250,000 people from Fallujah have been able to return since the Marine offensive ... 9,000 homes were destroyed and thousands more were damaged.

Homeowners line up daily to file for compensation -- but out of 32,000 claims, only 2,500 have been paid."

Back to Fox's first post from Iraq following his return to Baghdad, which, for Fox's grieving family, friends and supporters, may offer some guidance for moving forward in the face of profound suffering.

The young Iraqi man with twenty thousand dollars for Fallujah, Fox writes, "has asked that CPT accompany the delivery of the supplies into the city. During his visit, he gave us the grim news that four people he knew have died in the last several days. The day before his visit the father of one of his friends became a target for kidnappers. When his friend's father resisted, the kidnappers opened fire with their weapons, riddling his body with bullets. Our visitor had to help take the body to the morgue.

"Later, another young man who is both a college student and a journalist visited us. He told us that a car bomb detonated within several hundred feet of his house. No one in his family was injured, but two people driving near the booby-trapped car were killed. The driver died instantly but the passenger died as the young man and friends tried to get him to a hospital.

"Yesterday we met with an Iraqi human rights worker who documents issues of detainee abuse. He gave us information about a 13-year-old boy who is being detained along with information on inhumane living conditions at the Multi-National Force detention camps.

"The ability to feel the pain of another human being is central to any kind of peacemaking work. But this compassion is fraught with peril. A person can experience a feeling of being overwhelmed. Or a feeling of rage and desire for revenge. Or a desire to move away from the pain. Or a sense of numbness that can deaden the ability to feel anything at all.

"How do I stay with the pain and suffering and not be overwhelmed? How do I resist the welling up of rage towards the perpetrators of violence? How do I keep from disconnecting from or becoming numb to the pain?

"After eight months with CPT, I am no clearer than I when I began. In fact I have to struggle harder and harder each day against my desire to move away or become numb. Simply staying with the pain of others doesn't seem to create any healing or transformation. Yet there seems to be no other first step into the realm of compassion than to not step away."

Here, Fox quotes Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron, from her book *The Places that Scare You*: "Becoming intimate with the queasy feeling of being in the middle of nowhere makes our hearts more tender. When we are brave enough to stay in the nowhere place then compassion arises spontaneously."

Fox adds: "Being in the middle of nowhere really does create a very queasy feeling and yet so many spiritual teachers say it is the only authentic place to be. Not staking out any ground for myself creates the possibility of standing with anyone. The middle of nowhere is the one place where compassion can be discovered. The constant challenge is recognizing that my true country of origin is the middle of nowhere."

"SOMETHING BEYOND RATIONAL, INTELLECTUAL ANALYSIS"

Reading Fox's blog, it is evident that the rotating CPT team in Iraq was constantly in conversation about the utility and sanity of their presence in Iraq. In a post from May 2005, he writes:

"Many people have said that there is no logical, rational reason for CPT to be in Iraq right now. The level of violence, which subsided after the [December 2005] elections, has risen each week until now the attacks and kidnappings of Iraqi officials, civilians and internationals are as bad or worse than the months leading up to the election. The infrastructure of the country continues to deteriorate. The people of Iraq appear weary. The people of Iraq are angry. The people of Iraq placed so much hope in the election process but now it seems as if the elected officials are subsuming to the politics of factionalism. This week, a member of [Iraq's] Provisional Assembly

was entering the Green Zone to attend a session and he apparently seemed threatening to U.S. military guards. They arrested him by subduing him on the ground with a soldier's boot on his throat. When he did make it into the assembly session he was so distraught that he wept. Crying in public is not something that is a cultural norm in this society for a man. Why is CPT here when the 'principalities and powers' seem to be in total control? What can a few (currently three) of us do in the face of such massive physical and structural violence?

"We are throwing ourselves open to the possibility of God's grace bringing some rays of light to the shadowy landscape that is Iraq. We are letting ourselves be guided by something that is beyond rational, intellectual analysis. Gardens beneath which flow rivers can again be the dwelling place for the people of Iraq. Everyone whose government and corporations are playing a role in this land needs to throw open the book of their heart. They need to let their Light run before them as they bring redemption to those in power who are seeking to rule from a place of fear, violence and shadows. That truly would be the highest achievement."

WHY? WHAT? WHO?

In his next post, just a few days later, there is more of Baghdad's signature chaos:

"In Baghdad today, four clerics (three Sunni and one Shi'a) were assassinated. The bodies of two other Sunni clerics who had been abducted last week were found. A suicide car bomber detonated his vehicle in the Abu Cher market killing nine Iraqi National Guard troops and injuring twenty-eight civilians. Two engineering students were killed when a bomb (or rocket) struck their classroom at a local school. The dean of a high school in the Shaab neighborhood was assassinated. One judge, two officials from the Ministry of Defense and one official investigating corruption in the previous Interim Government were assassinated. In all, thirty-one dead, forty-two injured and seventeen abducted. Rumors abound in Baghdad about who is responsible for all the attacks but no one has claimed responsibility. And yet compared to some days in recent weeks here in Baghdad the number of dead and injured was fewer in number. So comparatively speaking it was a fairly quite day here in Baghdad. Children walked to their schools and people went to work. Shops opened for business and the seemingly endless parade of military, police and private security vehicles went about their business."

Then Fox asks us to superimpose the conditions Iraqis live with daily on to our own major cities:

"Imagine if these events took place in one day in Washington, D.C. or London, England. A state of emergency would be declared (Baghdad has been under a state of emergency for almost six months) and martial law would be imposed. Many civilians would probably stay home and some might leave the area. There would be nothing else on the media except coverage of the bloodshed. Life as normal would cease, as the populace would look to their government for leadership in bringing the chaos under control. The populace would demand that this complete breakdown of the social fabric be mended immediately. But eventually the populace would look for answers. Why did these horrible events transpire? What led up to this total meltdown of civil society? Who created this nightmare situation?

"Why? What? Who? The 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes described the ultimate nightmare of any society as being 'the war of the all against the all.' Such is the state of existence here in Iraq. When the U.S. led invasion tore away the facade of the state of Iraq, a torrent of religious, ethnic, tribal and cultural tensions that had festered for generations was unleashed. I have not heard one person say that Saddam was a wise or revered leader. But I have heard many people say that while they lived under the threat of violence with Saddam, they prefer that life to the bloodshed, chaos and anarchy that surrounds them now.

"No one seems to offer a solution that does not entail more guns, more restrictions on basic human rights, more soldiers, more barbed wire and concrete barricades, more 'security' and less freedom. Sooner or later the insurgency will run out of suicide bombers and weapons. Sooner or later the ringleaders will be captured or killed. But what will remain will be one of most restrictive, oppressive police states in the world.

"Spreading freedom and democracy.' 'The war of the all against the all.' It was a fairly quiet day in Baghdad.

Fox's next post to *Waiting in the Light*, which he titled "Tunnel Vision," begins with notes from a CPT meeting with a U.S. Army colonel in the heavily fortified "Green Zone" and highlights a problem endemic amongst U.S. war planners and some of the military brass who helped to carry those plans out:

"Iraqis always seem to have lots of guns in their houses.' A U.S. Army colonel was making reference to how prevalent gun ownership is in Iraq. We were meeting with him in his office in the Green Zone. Draped across his high back chair was an ornate leather holster with his service revolver.

"The colonel described the work of a sergeant who is an expert in constructing artificial limbs. The colonel said proudly that no one in Iraq has the equipment or expertise that this young man has. Yet there did not seem to be an acknowledgement of why there is such a demand for artificial limbs in Iraq at this time.

"The Iraqi NGOs we work with have a lot of trouble developing a level of trust between them. He noted that when his office organizes a conference of NGOs in the Green Zone often they don't want to follow the set agenda but need to express their lack of trust for the U.S. military and for each other. Yet he failed to mention the years of totalitarian rule by Saddam followed by two years of anarchy, neither of which would tend to develop trust in any institutions.

"All of us took a nine hour seminar on understanding Iraqi culture when we got here a year ago.' The colonel said his unit would be going home at the end of the month after a year in Iraq. As is the case with many U.S. military and civilians working in the Green Zone, the colonel said he has never set foot on a street in Baghdad. He has never been inside the home of an Iraqi family nor has he seen any of the historical or cultural sites of the country.

"It would seem easy to characterize the colonel as hypocritical and bigoted. I am not the greatest judge of character but I kept having an image of him on the North Rim of the Grand Canyon holding up a tube from a roll of paper towels and describing what he saw. We are all finite creatures with a very limited field of vision. But what I do (and it is my sense that the colonel does this also) instead of opening up my field of vision to include things that I don't understand or agree with is to make my field of vision even narrower. 'Out of sight, out of mind' is an old saying that seems rather apt in this case. The colonel seemed very confident that the vision of the world he described was an accurate and complete one. And this was true. Within his extremely limited world-view, his vision was indeed clear. But what about the vast universe he was not seeing? What about the vast universe I'm not seeing? How do we all expand our vision to see things we don't want to see? How do we stop putting 'out of sight' things we don't agree with? I wish I had an answer but I don't even know where to start."

"I'M WONDERING IF I HAVE SWALLOWED POISON..."

There are moments of perfect tenderness in Fox's writings. Moments where you lay down thoughts like "why did they stay" and you just want more of what he is seeing and feeling.

"Our apartment is across the street from a park," Fox writes in late June 2005. "Many evenings around the time we are gathering for supper a mother and her three children walk by our living room window. The western sun illuminates her face and the faces of her young children. I don't know her but in a way I feel I do. She looks tired. So many, many people here in Iraq are so very tired. She looks a bit fearful. Will today be the day when the insurgents set off a car bomb near the park? Will today be the day when the young men of the Iraqi National Guard, riding like cowboys in the back of their pickup trucks, get trigger happy and start shooting with her and her children in the line of fire? Yet day after day I see her taking her children to the park. Underneath the fatigue and the fear I can sense the hope and the courage in her heart. It reflects on her children as does

the setting sun reflect on the nearby Tigris River. She gives me courage to face the overwhelming difficulties of life in this broken land. She is living in the present moment fully aware of the dangers and uncertainties and yet she has not given up hope, she has not given in to despair, she has not let herself be driven into hiding by men with guns and bombs. She is my teacher. She teaches me how to live fully conscious of the horrors of today and still be able to envision a future of promise, peace and plenty."

In jarring contrast to Fox's park scene, there is, in his next post, a scene at the Baghdad airport, where he spends three consecutive days waiting for a flight out of Iraq. He was headed back home for another break from Baghdad.

"Spending three days in the Baghdad airport waiting to see if the sand and dust would let up enough to allow flights to arrive (and then allow me to leave) was more stressful than I imagined. Of course, six trips on the airport road may have been a factor in increasing my stress level.

"There were a number of internationals in the same predicament I was in. Many were people I've had very little contact with in my time in Iraq. Some were private security contractors who work for the large international firms ... and are paid substantial sums (many 1,000 dollars a day) to protect international facilities and personnel. Others worked for NGO's and organizations that were business related, such as a firm that did management training for Iraqi entrepreneurs. I took the opportunity of being stuck there to try and get to know a number of them.

"Perhaps the stress of cancelled flights and having to reschedule and arrange transport back to the Green Zone or other international facilities made their comments harsher than would be the case under different circumstances. But nonetheless, I was dismayed with what seemed, to me at least, to be very racist and colonialist statements by almost every contractor or entrepreneur I talked with.

"Having grown up the Southern U.S. and having a very racist father, it was a very bizarre experience hearing almost the same comments being made against Iraqis that I heard as a child being made against blacks. The same venom, for lack of a better word, was coming out of their mouths as they denigrated the people, culture and societal norms of Iraq.

"Equally disturbing for me was the colonialist attitude of most of the business- connected internationals (most of the contractors I talked to were South African or English and most of the businessmen were American and all except one were white males). [There were] remarks like, 'We have to show them how it's really done,' or 'They don't have a clue how it's done in the West.' There seemed, to me at least, to be no attempt at understanding, much less respecting, the culture of the people they ostensibly are here to work in partnership with.

"The colonialist attitudes are harder to grasp. Is colonialism something unique to white, male Westerners? (I include myself in this category.) Do we see Iraq the same way as Kipling saw India, that of being 'the white man's burden' to bring Western civilization to the uncivilized Arabs and Kurds?

"Those three days at the airport are woven deeply into my spirit. I'm wondering if I have swallowed poison that will harden or embitter me. Or perhaps I have been blessed with a ... remedy of absorbing just enough poison to begin to cure me of my own subconscious racist and colonialist tendencies and then be able to help others cure themselves. Time will tell."

GATHERED AROUND A CAMPFIRE

Back home in Virginia, Fox stayed glued to events in Iraq through news and correspondence with colleagues still in Baghdad. He was back in Baghdad himself in a matter of a few short weeks.

His first posts after his return looked again at the chaos and dangers of Iraq. He looked at the future, too, reviewing the first draft of an Iraqi constitution and asking: "Is this democracy or yet another chapter in the ongoing saga of sectarian and religious divisiveness in the country?"

Fox's final posts to his blog (in late October, about a month before his abduction) were dispatches from a trip with nineteen Palestinian Iraqis to the Syrian border where the Palestinians hoped to crossover and win refugee status. The unusual mission was a perfect example of CPT's creativity in the face of limited resources.

"We are gathered around a campfire sharing chai (tea) and fellowship," Fox writes. "'We' consists of nineteen Palestinian men, women and children (ages one to thirteen) who have either been born in or have lived most of their lives in Iraq. 'We' also consists of three CPTers, one member of the Muslim Peacemaker Teams and CPT's translator (who is also Palestinian). We are camped at the Al Walid border crossing between Syria and Iraq and are awaiting news from the Syrian government. News of whether or not the Iraqi Palestinians, who are currently barred from entering Syria, will be granted refugee status by the United Nations, which will be recognized by the Syrian government.

"But why would these people want to leave Iraq now? Iraq is now on its way to democracy. The tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein has been gone for two and one half years. The reason is quite simple: the new Iraq government's security forces have made Iraqi Palestinians primary targets for harassment, arbitrary arrest, torture-induced confessions to crimes they didn't commit and, in some cases, death. All in the name of demonstrating how well the government's campaign of ridding Iraq of foreign terrorists is going.

"But why the Iraqi Palestinians? First they are easy to find. Most live in two large compounds in Baghdad. Second, they are defenseless. Iraqi Palestinian's are barred from owning firearms. Third, they have no political clout. They can't vote, own property or even own a car. Fourth, they are small in numbers. The total population in Iraq is around 23,000. Fifth, Saddam used them to promote his political prestige with Sunni Arabs in the Middle East by giving them subsidized housing, a fact that was resented by many Iraqis. They were forced out of those apartments during the first months of the U.S. led invasion.

"On the bus ride up from Baghdad the community asked CPT to be a protective nonviolent presence through the Iraqi and U.S. checkpoints. After Ramadi, where the danger is bandits and kidnapers, the community said it would be a protective nonviolent presence for CPT.

"So here we are gathered around a campfire in the desert. We spent the first night sleeping on the sidewalk at the Syrian side of the border crossing. Trucks roared by all night making sleep almost impossible. Yet several said it was the best night's sleep they had gotten in months. No sirens, no gunfire, no house raids in the middle of the night, no one being hauled away by Iraqi security forces perhaps never to be seen again.

"I asked one man what he would do if the U.N. and Syria were unable to reach a solution and they were told to return to Iraq. Would he, and his family, return? 'Never,' he said, 'we will either stay here or die before we return to the certain death of Iraq.'"

Having set the scene, Fox provides a short log of his time with the Palestinians:

Day one: "It is midday and the temperature in this desert region of eastern Iraq is around one hundred degrees Fahrenheit. People have enough water, but the intense heat is still taking its toll on the men, women and children. There are dozens of tractor-trailers waiting to cross the border. One of the drivers sees the group and pulls his rig close to the sidewalk, creating a protective shadow for shade."

Day Three: "The U.N. has arranged for the community to have two meals per day at the border-crossing cafeteria. The Syrian cafeteria manager is talking to community members about how things are going. One person mentions that there is very little to do as they await word from the Syrian government regarding their status. Soon afterwards a soccer ball appears and is given to the community. Both children and adults find it a welcome source of recreation."

Day seven: "The five children are getting bored and anxious. CPTer Sheila Provencher and the CPT

translator have decided to start a one-hour 'school' every morning for the older children. Provencher will teach English and the translator will do art. The first English lesson is teaching words about the weather using the 'Itsy, Bitsy Spider' song."

Day eight: "The Syrian government still refuses to allow any of the Palestinians to enter Syria as refugees. Two members of the community pay a social call to one of the Syrian officials in charge of the border crossing. At the conclusion of their visit they invite the officer to come meet everyone at the camp. He arrives several hours later as members of the community are gathered under the star filled sky next to a roaring campfire. Community members offer him tea and the conversation goes on late into the night."

"THIS SAD WEARING AWAY OF THE HEART..."

Fox's border diary was last thing he posted to his blog. One month later, he was an international headline, not because of his bold and thoughtful attempts to build relationships of trust and integrity in Iraq, but because of his abduction. Today he is a headline because of his death.

On his last visit home, in a late August post to *Waiting in the Light*, Fox opened with a quote from Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman medical doctor in the United States:

"I must have something in life which will fill this vacuum and prevent this sad wearing away of the heart."

He pulled the quote from his planner.

There were deaths that week in his Quaker community; he was saturated with images of the destruction of Hurricane Katrina; and there was more tragedy in Iraq.

Fox's August reflection, borrowing from the Blackwell quote he begins with, seems a fitting end to this look back at the words of a dearly loved and dearly missed peacemaker:

"Is there something in life that will fill this vacuum and prevent this sad wearing away of the heart?" he wrote. "I have no idea but I do know that my heart feels differently when I consider the unknowable realms of disease and natural disaster compared to the man-made disasters that bring about death and destruction.

"Four months ago the UN commissioned a study to look at Iraqi casualties since the beginning of the U.S. led invasion ... The study stated that 40,000 Iraqis have probably died from violence since March of 2003. That includes death from U.S., Iraqi and insurgent violence. And 70% of those casualties were innocent non-combatants, mainly women and children.

"The only 'something in my life' I can hold onto is to do what little I can to bring about the creation of the Peaceable Realm of God. It is my sense that such a realm will always have natural disasters. It is the 'man-made' disasters that we are called upon to bring to and end."

WHO WE ARE: We are Langley Hill Monthly Meeting, of the Religious Society of Friends, the Meeting of Tom Fox, the member of the Christian Peacemaker Team from America that is being held hostage.

WHAT WE ARE DOING: We are holding a 24 hour vigil beginning at 4:00 pm EST on Wednesday, Dec 7 for Tom and all the members of the CPT as well as those who have taken him hostage and the many individuals and families that have been negatively impacted by this war. We will also have a public candlelight vigil at the Clarendon Metro Park, Arlington, Virginia, on Wednesday, Dec 7 from 7:00-9:00 pm, EST. We will read the text of Tom's work as found on his [weblog](#). Bring candles and dress warmly.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING: For each and everyone to join us in either:

1. Holding a simultaneous candlelight vigil in your community
 2. If you cannot attend a vigil, then hold your own personal vigil, put a candle in your window or in your front lawn
 3. Read Tom's postings found on his website [waitinginthelight](#)
 4. Read the statement from Langley Hill Monthly Meeting (included below)
 5. Hold Tom and his fellow peacemaker team members in the Light, seeking their safe and immediate release, and hold all those in the Light who suffer similar situations in Iraq and those who have taken such offenses against these individuals and their families.
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We know that many people throughout the world have made efforts to secure the release of these hostages and we are grateful for their support.

AN APPEAL TO THE PEOPLE HOLDING TOM FOX AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAM,

Tom Fox, now being held captive in Iraq, is a beloved and longstanding member of our Quaker worship community. One of our strongly held beliefs is that if we listen, God can guide our lives. Before Tom went to Iraq, we considered with him his sense that he was being inspired by God to do what he could to relieve the suffering of individual Iraqis and to serve peace and justice. We were aware of the danger he faced. He went with our support and continues to have our support and love. We know Tom very well and can affirm that he is neither a spy nor an evangelist.

The tenets of our Quaker faith ask us to work for peace in the world and to respect that of God in everyone. That is what led Tom to go to Iraq. We believe strongly in justice, mercy, and peace. We opposed this war as we oppose all wars. We believe in a God that is compassionate and merciful, as do the people of Iraq.

We ask you as an act of justice, mercy, and devotion to release Tom and the other Christian Peacemaker Team members so that they can continue their work on behalf of those who suffer.

Releasing the captives, so that they can continue to serve the Iraqi people, would be an act of dignity and courage.