

**February 28, 2011**

Dear Friends and Family,

Hello! My experience this past summer with Christian Peacemaker Teams in Iraqi Kurdistan seems to me like a long time ago. But, giving a slide presentation at the White Rose Catholic Worker in Chicago recently refreshed my memory. It was good to reflect again on the experience.

The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan has changed. The bombardments along the borders by Iran and Turkey have stopped for the time being, though people expect them to start up again. In a camp for those displaced by the bombardments, that our CPT team has a close relationship with, two houses are being constructed for the neediest families. The rest of the families have given up hope for governmental assistance to build houses on the land where the camp is and have moved elsewhere.

However, in the large cities, especially Sulaimaniya (where the team lives), much is happening. As in other nations recently, thousands of people gather daily in the streets to protest corruption in the government and call for change. There has been some violence, but the political party calling for change has also called for the people to be nonviolent in their demonstrations. A group called “the White Group” has positioned themselves between the protestors and the soldiers during the demonstrations to try to prevent violence. The CPT team has joined this group. (To see a video put together by the CPT team about the White Group see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehrqUwm5Zac>.)

This past summer I learned of the beauty of the people of Iraqi Kurdistan and was glad to share about them with you and others through letters, slide presentations and personal conversations. I am also glad for the opportunity I had to support people in Iraqi Kurdistan by the human rights work our team does in partnership with local groups. I plan to return this summer for about two months again as part of my three year commitment to CPT as a reservist. I am excited about the current events in Kurdistan and look forward to returning to support those working for peace and to share their stories. (To learn more about CPT and its work in Iraq see <http://www.cpt.org/> and click on “Our Work” and “Iraq”.)

Your e-mails, prayers, and financial contributions empowered me to work with CPT in Iraq last summer. Thanks again! I would be grateful for your continued support. My trip and expenses will be between \$3000 and \$3500 this time as well. You may send contributions to Christian Peacemaker Teams, P.O. Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680. Please include a note such as, “I am aware that David Hovde will be volunteering for CPT, and I wish for this donation to support this ministry”. Again, please let me know if you contribute so that I can thank you and keep track of the money that has come in.

After learning of attacks on Christians in Iraq a few months ago, I received Christmas greetings from our team’s translator, Mohammed, wishing a “Merry Christmas to Christians everywhere”. What a blessing to have become a brother to a man from Iraqi

Kurdistan who works for peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

God bless you.

David Hovde

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