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## **CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE: BEARING THE COST**

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***“In the work of nonviolence, we try to spiritually prepare ourselves for whatever punishment might come. We recognize that the State’s act of punishing a truth warrior and the willingness of the truth warrior to consciously and voluntarily accept that suffering awakens the deeper resources and energy for truth work among all people.”***

**– Gene Stoltzfus, CPT Director 1987-2004**

As a consequence of CPT work, members of teams and delegations may face arrest or imprisonment. This may come about during a nonviolent public witness in which civil disobedience has been chosen as an option, or in a more unforeseen way, as when attempting to deter violence on the street. Members of teams and delegations accept personal responsibility for their actions and the risks involved when joining in CPT work.

Following in the way of Jesus and in the tradition of our forebears, we invite peacemakers to make sacrifices to the same degree as that expected of soldiers in time of war. This may include living under conditions of danger or serving time in jail or prison. Peacemakers who willingly enter into situations of risk know we are giving up some control of our lives and time and we accept the consequences of that action.

Within a delegation or team planning an action in which civil disobedience is likely, participants should ascertain various roles, keeping in mind that people who do not intentionally risk arrest will bear important support functions. CPT recognizes that conditions affecting each individual’s life vary and will honor the different decisions that people make in regard to risking arrest or handling subsequent legal processes.

CPT will support those arrested to the fullest extent possible, including contacting loved ones, speaking to the press, facilitating communications, and suggesting ways to raise money to cover court costs. In keeping with the notion that individuals accept the responsibility for the consequences of their actions, CPT will not normally pay fines, fees, bonds, or bail resulting from acts of civil disobedience or other actions that cause arrest of CPT delegation or team members.

Prior to entering a situation which may result in arrest or imprisonment, CPT team and delegation members are encouraged to examine their own views about civil disobedience and arrest and to discuss those feelings of conviction and/or ambivalence with the CPT group. Team members are encouraged to become aware of legal processes (arrest, arraignment, trial) and to ask questions of people familiar with the local situation. Those who go joyfully into a nonviolent public action, whether risking arrest or not, can be an important source of support, hope and encouragement to each other.

We are often asked, “What do CPTers do when they have to go to court? Do they get legal representation or do they represent themselves?” The answer is yes. In the context of civil disobedience the main purpose of going to court is to bear witness to what one is trying to represent, to point to deeply held beliefs that led to the act of civil disobedience. Acquittal is not always the best way to make such a witness. Each time a person is brought before the courts, the choice of speaking for oneself or speaking through a lawyer should be considered in light of the best way to make that particular witness.