Religion and Peace:

A Case Study on Mennonite Peace Initiatives in Colombia

By

Erica Bowler

Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in
International Development Studies

Copyright Erica Bowler, 2014

Approved: Dr. Anne Marie Dalton
Supervisor

Approved: Dr. Rosana Barbosa
Reader

Approved: Dr. Martin Zelenietz
External Reader

Date: April 17th, 2014

0

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, friends, and professors who supported me through my graduate studies. I would also like to thank those who participated in this study, and for the welcome and kindness they showed me in Colombia. Without their participation, this research would not have been possible.

Abstract

Religion and Peace:

A Case Study on Mennonite Peace Initiatives in Colombia

By Erica Bowler

Abstract: The Colombian conflict has caused and unearthed various development problems. Many believe achieving peace will improve current conditions. Although peacebuilding is typically viewed as a post-conflict activity, in Colombia, peace and development are being pursued simultaneously despite ongoing war. Mennonites in Bogotá have made important efforts in areas difficult to evaluate, such as reconciliation, building relationships, and spiritual transformation – 'soft' peacebuilding activities. This thesis examines the historical development of Mennonite peace efforts in Colombia, and how these initiatives have become more focused on peace over time. It also analyses Mennonite motives, perceptions and approaches to building peace, and highlights how (secular) development methods may not apply to religious initiatives. This issue is important given the significance of religion in the Global South.

April 17th, 2014

Table of Contents

Introduction

This thesis examines the role of Mennonites in peacebuilding in Colombia from the late 1980s to the present. It focuses on Mennonites because of their early involvement in peace projects, their status as an historic peace church, and their significant contributions to peace theory and literature. The long-term Mennonite peace process was explored through interviews and oral histories.

Despite the central role that religious organizations have played in establishing peace, their involvement has been largely overlooked in peacebuilding literature. I addressed this gap by examining Mennonite peace activities in Bogotá. Aside from exploring the broader issue of the successes and failures of the Colombian peace process, the central research question was: *how have Mennonites contributed to peace in Colombia over the last twenty-five years*? The main objective was to describe how the Mennonites (self-identified members in and around Bogotá[1]) have contributed to building peace in Colombia over the past three decades. By examining religious peacebuilding, I hoped to find elements that might lead to effective, sustainable peace in Colombia, and add to a new and evolving literature on religion and development.

Colombia has experienced significant conflict since 1948[2], when a civil war between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party erupted. Since then, violence has continued and evolved as various state, paramilitary, illegal, and international actors have

---

[1] There is more than one Mennonite community in Bogotá. Many participants lived near and attended the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo. However, I did speak to Mennonites living and/or working in neighbourhoods like Berna, San Nicolás, Los Pinos, Santa Marta (in Usme), as well as in Cachipay (a town 60 km away from Bogotá). Mennonite Brethren (MB) and Brethren in Christ (BIC) pastors living in Bogotá were also interviewed, as was Ricardo Esquivia (via skype), the director of *Sembrandopaz* in the Montes de María region.

[2] Note: Some historians argue that La Violencia began in 1946. See Livingstone, G. (2004). *Inside Colombia: Drugs, Democracy and War*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press (p.42).

vied for power and resources, including land and drugs. Currently, 90% of cocaine consumed in America is produced by or travels through the country (Bouvier, 2009, p.4). Conflict over drugs, land and power in the rural regions has led to a host of development issues, including "massive" internal displacement (Fagen, 2006, p.79). In fact, Colombia has the highest number of internally displaced peoples in the world (Bargent, 2013; UNHCR, n.d.). Most migrants have fled to urban slums, which are rife with unemployment, criminal activity, and violence. Many believe achieving peace will improve current development problems (Solimano, 2000, p.2). For this reason, along with state and international attempts, many other actors are working for peace in Colombia, including religious ones like the Mennonites.

Mennonites have been involved in international peacebuilding since the 1960s and 1970s, when Anabaptist peace theology shifted from traditional non-resistance to social engagement (Driedger & Kraybill, 1994; Miller, 2000). These global changes helped spark a rediscovery of an Anabaptist identity in Colombia. Over time, Mennonites began addressing root causes of the violence through a variety of new organizations and projects (April 9A).[3] Mennonite organizations that have made contributions to peace in Colombia include: *Mencoldes*, the Colombian Mennonite Foundation for Development, which assists victims of internal displacement and natural disasters, provides micro-loans and education, and promotes human rights through dialogue and advocacy; *Justapaz* (the Christian Centre for Justice, Peace, and Non-violent Action), which provides training in mediation, promotes conscientious objection, documents human rights violations, and

---

[3] In this thesis, interviews are identified by the month in which they were conducted (April or May 2013), and the date upon which they took place. If more than one interview occurred on the same day, they are organized alphabetically (for example, April 9A is followed by April 9B, and so on).

engages in advocacy; and rural organizations like *Sembrandopaz*, which assists grassroots organizations and promotes peace, development, and social justice. Various Mennonite churches and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) support and fund these programs (as well as some of their own).

Despite the early contributions of faith-based groups, religious involvement in peacebuilding has not been examined in a systematic fashion. The scarcity of studies examining the role of religion in peacebuilding and development may be due to assumptions about development. In "CIDA's secular fiction and Canadian faith-based organisations," Paras (2012) asserts that there is a pervasive myth or "secular fiction" that secularization is a sign of development. The widespread wariness toward religion is understandable given the rise of religious extremism since the 1990s. However, the prevalence of religion in conflicts, the failure of secular peacebuilding initiatives to address religious concerns, and new developments in peace studies have led to the creation of a new field of study: religious peacebuilding.

Since 2000, a significant volume of literature has been published on religious peacebuilding (Appleby, 2000; Gopin, 2000; Sampson & Lederach, 2000; Gort, Jansen & Vroom, 2002; Abu-Nimer, 2003; Johnston, 2003; Cejka & Bamat, 2003; Coward & Gordon, 2004; Little, 2007, etc.). These scholars note the diversity in religious peacebuilding. For example, Mennonites differ from other religious groups in that they prefer to take a background role in mediation after empowering local peacebuilders. Still, scholars agree that religion can make important contributions to peace. Sampson (1997) asserts that an emphasis on reconciliation – restoring relationships – has arisen from religious groups, rather than secular ones. Building relationships is important as conflicts

6

usually take place internally rather than internationally. This means that warring factions cannot simply be separated – rather, they must learn to live together. For this to occur, relationships need to be built and inequalities must be addressed. All of this takes time.

The literature on peacebuilding indicates that short-term projects are not usually effective in achieving long-term peace. Indeed, international and citizen-based diplomacy projects have been criticized for looking for quick solutions to conflicts while neglecting to develop systems that will bring sustainable peace (Lederach, 1997, p.74). However, Mennonites are dedicated to establishing long-term peace. This can be seen in the importance they place on learning the language, understanding culture, and their conflict transformation approach. Even more crucial is their emphasis on building relationships through reconciliation. Unlike secular organizations, Mennonites view relationship building "not only as an instrument that produces an outcome," but as intrinsically valuable (Gopin, 2000, p.154). Hertog (2010) asserts that "Mennonites understand their peace work as a testimony to God, which diminishes their need for immediate outcomes or their sense of final responsibility in terms of results" (p.91).

This raises questions about the overall effectiveness of Mennonite peacebuilding, given that traditional development tends to emphasize short-term projects and tangible results (ter Haar, 2011). In addition, most methods of assessing development and peace projects contain secular assumptions, and therefore may not always be applicable or appropriate tools to evaluate religious projects. For example, methods of evaluation often contain secular assumptions about what 'successful' development should look like. Gopin (2000) points out that secular projects have a tendency to be result-oriented. This focus on efficiency can sometimes lead to burnout and an 'ends justify the means' mentality; by

contrast, Mennonites and other religious groups are often more focused on the means and character of the work than the overall outcome (p.157). Although they hope their work will produce positive change, Mennonites believe they are responsible for obeying God's commandments to serve others but God is ultimately responsible for the outcome of their work (Driver, 1989, p.109) – a belief shared by other religious actors.

To examine Mennonite peacebuilding initiatives, thirty interviews were conducted in April and May of 2013. Because this research focuses on Mennonite perceptions of their peace work as well as their approaches, motivations, and understandings of peace, participants were restricted to self-identified Mennonites, other Anabaptists (members and pastors of Brethren in Christ (BIC) and Mennonite Brethren (MB) churches), and community members familiar with Mennonite churches.

Thesis Structure

This thesis is divided into five main chapters. The first chapter reviews the relevant literature on religion and development, examining how these two interact. This section demonstrates how religion influences conceptions about 'development' and comments on the difficulty in assessing religious development initiatives. Various theories and approaches relating to peace, particularly those pertaining to religious peacebuilding, are then explored.

The second chapter provides an historical background for the thesis and is divided into three main parts. The first section details the history of the Colombian conflict, and demonstrates how historic social, economic, and political inequalities, as well as state weakness and regionalism, have shaped the 'backdrop' of the Colombian conflict. Next is an analysis of the peace process in Colombia, which shows how the failure of state-

sponsored peace processes has led to the development of civilian peace projects. The third section charts the development of Mennonite activities in Colombia and reveals how the 'rediscovery' of Anabaptist identities and a more favourable political climate encouraged Mennonites to work more intentionally to establish peace.

Chapter 3 focuses on methodology in greater depth, and presents the collected data. This information is presented thematically in response to nine major questions asked during the interview process.

The fourth chapter discusses and evaluates the responses given to the nine main questions described in the data section. The data was triangulated with existing texts and literature, as well as personal observations, to promote accuracy.

Finally, the conclusion describes methodological concerns in the field of religion and development, and argues for the adoption of an 'integral' model of development. It also describes the limitations of the study and presents the main findings, including issues surrounding the study of religion and development.

Argument

Because of lessened persecution and changes in hermeneutics, Mennonites have worked for lasting peace over the past twenty-five years by addressing root causes of conflict – poverty, unequal distribution of land, the use of violence instead of negotiation, etc. – by supporting and initiating grassroots peace projects in the hope of promoting widespread societal reconciliation. Their desire to transform Colombian society can be seen in their peace education programs, and peace and development projects as well as their conflict transformation, spiritual, and long-term approaches to building peace. Mennonite programs and advocacy campaigns have raised awareness about development

problems in Colombia and are helping to influence those in power to promote peace. Mennonite institutions, such as *Justapaz*, support pro-peace legislation and nonviolence; other projects have made tangible improvements in the lives of rural communities.

However, Mennonite attempts to promote widespread societal change have been hampered by their small population, limited resources, and varying levels of state support. Mennonite theology suggests that efficiency is not always prioritized (Hertog, 2010). Also, their long-term conflict transformation approach, affinity for grassroots activities, and tendency to focus on developing the 'soft aspects' of peace means their work is difficult to evaluate.

Still, the fact that Mennonite activities are hard to assess does not mean their work is fruitless. Mennonites have encouraged relationship building, reconciliation, and spiritual transformation – the 'soft aspects of peace – which are often overlooked in secular peace projects. Mennonites have also accompanied vulnerable people as they work to rebuild their lives in regions with limited state influence. Moreover, the difficulty in evaluating Mennonite peace projects points to large issues related to religion and development, such as the applicability of (secular) development assessments, methods, and tools to religious development projects, as well as the incongruities between secular and religious perspectives about the goals and approaches to doing development work.

Literature Review

Introduction

The goal of this study is to describe how and to what extent Mennonites living in Bogotá are contributing to peace in Colombia. This thesis also explores the relationship between religion and development, specifically peacebuilding. What follows is an exploration of the relevant literature and theories surrounding these topics, which should shed light on the collected data and provide context for the research.

Structure

<u>Part I</u> of the literature review focuses on how religion and development interact. This section argues that instead of being viewed as a mere tool for development, religion shapes how people decide what constitutes 'development' and contributes to their sense of well-being. <u>Part I</u> also raises questions about the difficulty in examining religion and development, as methods for evaluating development projects often hold secular assumptions and therefore may have limited applicability to religious initiatives.

Because peace is important, if not essential, for development, <u>Part II</u> explores various theories and approaches to building peace, including religious ones. After examining unique Mennonite approaches to peace, this thesis will argue that Mennonites are contributing to peace and development through their conflict transformation approach and focus on 'soft aspects' of peace. Although these 'soft elements' are hard to assess, they are important in building peace (Charbonneau & Parent, 2012).

<u>Part I: Religion and Development</u>

A Brief Overview

International development is traditionally viewed as a post-World War Two phenomenon, although there is some controversy over when "development" began (Cowen & Shenton, 1996; Preston, 1996). The concept of "development" is controversial and has changed over time. Its objectives often involve reducing poverty and improving quality of life. Scholars and development workers agree that religion[4] has been neglected in the field of international development (Selinger, 2004; Haynes, 2005; Deneulin & Bano, 2009). The dominance of modernist and secular assumptions within academic and development traditions has contributed to this omission (Carbonnier, 2013b; Donnelly, 2013). While definitions of religion vary, for the purpose of this study, religion is defined as "a belief in the existence of an invisible world, distinct but not separate from the visible one, that is home to spiritual beings with effective powers over the material world" (Ellis & ter Haar, 2004, p.14).

Social theorists of the 19th century, such as Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, August Comte, and Sigmund Freud, believed that the modernization and rationalization of society would lead to a decline in religiosity and religious influence in the public arena. Because this trend occurred in industrialized countries, it was assumed that developing countries would follow the same pattern, and that this would be beneficial (Carbonnier, 2013b; Levy, 2013). However, despite the global spread of the post-war development model and increased globalization, religions have remained alive and active in the public spheres of developing and, arguably, developed countries (Carbonnier, 2013b; Bano & Deneulin, 2009; Davie, 2002). While some have seen this as disproving

---

[4] "Religion" as a concept was not widespread until the 18th century (Dalton, 2013). Like conceptualizing development, defining religion is controversial. Some academics resort to describing general features of religion (see Marty qtd. in Haynes, 2007, p.14). Thomas (2005) and Haynes (2007) explore various ways of defining and understanding religion. Many introductory textbooks on religion do likewise.

the secularization theory (Berger, 1999), others like Norris and Inglehart (2004) are less willing to dismiss it altogether, though they agree that there are more religious adherents than ever before (p.5).

Because of the prevalence of the secularization theory, the literature on religion and development has, up until recently, been underdeveloped or non-existent. However, after Ver Beek (2000) openly identified religion as a "development taboo," the scholarship on the subject has increased dramatically to the point that it has become "a favoured and fashionable topic" (Donelly, 2013, p.191). Contrary to the secularization thesis, many now recognize the continuing presence and relevance of religion throughout the world. Because religion is so pervasive in developing countries and because it plays such a fundamental role in populations targeted for development, policymakers and development workers must address and attempt to understand it. To do otherwise could jeopardize development projects and lead to conflict (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Moreover, the growing sense that existing methods of development have been ineffective has led some to revisit the benefits religion could bring (Jones & Petersen, 2011).

Indeed, much of the literature has been criticized for its heavy focus on promoting religion as a tool for development (Dalton, 2013; Jones & Petersen, 2011; ter Haar, 2011). Viewing religion as an instrumental factor implies that it is outside of development (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Deneulin and Bano (2009) argue that development is an intrinsic part of religious observance as development activities are an expression of faith and represent an effort to embody the best principles of religion in everyday life. Legge (1971) corroborates this idea, arguing that "when the church is involved in development, it is doing so as an expression of God's concern for the totality of life" (qtd. in Brouwer,

13

2010, p.687). Others warn that the instrumentalist view, often adopted to prove religion's usefulness and secure funding, may cause people to overlook the paradoxes and complexities within religion and development (Gooren, 2011; Jones & Petersen, 2011).

Values

Aside from functionalism, development thinking has identified religion as a fundamental human right, a political force, and an element of well-being (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). Religion also shapes peoples' values, as well as their views about what development is and how it should be done. Early development theories focused on economic growth. By contrast, human development (inspired by Amartya Sen's 'capability approach') addresses the issue of values. Sen (2000) argues that development should expand freedoms that people can choose to value, such as the freedom to be healthy, or the freedom to be educated.

The human development and capability approach did not explicitly mention religion as one of these freedoms. Sen only briefly mentions religion as a potentially negative factor in education and in promoting violence. However, his approach demonstrates that development activities are tied to societal values. Deneulin and Bano (2009) argue that it is imperative for development workers and policymakers to accept that the projects they deem valuable may not align with the views of religious adherents. For example, religious people often value spiritual transformation over economic prosperity. The fact that 'development' is based on values raises important questions. As Chambers (2004) states, "[i]f development means good change, questions arise about what is good and what sort of change matters" (qtd. in Sumner & Tribe, 2009, p.9).

Well-being

14

Sen (2000) also argues that well-being is more than economic and material wealth – among other things, it involves choice, agency, and dignity. Although religion is not mentioned as a possible factor in well-being, Sen's work opened the door for it to be considered as a legitimate element (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). While the link between religion and well-being is controversial, some researchers have found that religious belief can promote health and psychological well-being (Fontana, 2003; Greenfield & Marks, 2007). In a study on poverty called *Voices of the Poor* (2000), researchers discovered that many poor people view religion as a central part of well-being (Narayan et al., 2000, p.38). This finding challenges traditional development concepts and practices, which have largely ignored religious elements until now (Deneulin & Bano, 2009; Marshall, 2001). Some development projects have recognized the significance of religion to well-being and development (Alkire, 2002). Moreover, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has conceded that well-being "has several dimensions of which monetary factors are only one" (Boarini, Johansson, & d'Ercole, 2006, p.6). While this is encouraging, there is much work to be done in this area.

Religion can contibute to well-being by providing a sense of meaning. Flood (2012) argues that religion helps people, who are "fundamentally meaning-seeking creatures," to understand the world, and to live meaningful, fulfilling lives (p.3). Mwaura (2007) describes how religion contributes to meaning by "offering people hope, faith, and courage to overcome life's obstacles" (p.2). Similarly, Frankl (1992) asserts that the ability to find meaning in life enables people to perservere through trials and continue living, a discovery he made while imprisoned in concentration camps during the Second World War. Frankl's research linked criminal activities, depression, and addictions to

meaninglessness. Religion plays an important role in promoting meaning, a key component of the 'good life'; this suggests that development workers, scholars, and policymakers must take it into account.

Developments in Development Thought

While religious and secular development actors both generally seek to improve the quality of life in developing countries, they tend to differ about how this should be accomplished and what 'development' looks like. Ter Haar (2011) argues that a secular worldview focuses on individualism, goals, and results, whereas a religious worldview often places more emphasis on community and the way development goals are achieved (p.17). Unlike secular actors, religious adherents often see inner transformation as a necessary condition for social transformation and economic growth (ter Haar, 2011). They also tend to see development as a long-term process. Most (secular) development thinking is short-term, involving projects that must be completed in a small timeframe after which they are deemed successful or not (ter Haar, 2011).

Because religious development projects focus less on tangible results and are long-term in nature, they are difficult to assess. Traditional (secular) development approaches and evaluative methods may need to change in order to be applied to religious development projects (ter Haar, 2011). Indeed, one of the key findings of the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development's 2007 conference was that development methods should be adjusted to make room for qualitative assessment and personal interaction (van der Wel, 2011, p.354).

In an effort to quantify the benefits of religion to development, some scholars have put forward the idea of 'spiritual capital,' which builds on the concept of social

capital. Although an official definition does not exist, spiritual capital is "people's ability to access resources believed to reside in an invisible world, which can be mobilised for the common good through forms of active engagement with them" (ter Haar, 2011, p.20). Van der Wel (2011) argues that spiritual capital not only contributes to development but also shapes the vision of development, as religious conceptions of 'the good life' include both spiritual and material benefits.

Instead of viewing religion as a mere instrument or addition to development, ter Haar (2011) argues for an integral model in which religion is fully incorporated in development. This implies that instead of amassing new development methods, people need to reevaluate their conceptions of development (ter Haar, 2011, p.19). In order to implement this holistic approach, van der Wel (2011) asserts that secular development workers and policymakers need to understand the motives, activities, and terminology of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs). Similarly, religious development practioners must understand how development organizations work. Openess, dialogue, patience, and an awareness of personal biases will also be important developing an 'integral approach' (van der Wel, 2011).

Conclusion

Scholars continue to explore the place of religion in development. Because of the prevalence and importance of religion in developing countries, it is imperative that development workers, scholars, and policymakers take it seriously. Religion is often considered to be a central part of a fulfilling life, therefore development, which seeks to promote 'the good life,' must take it into account (Sumner & Tribe, 2009). Research on religious development implies, and this thesis supports the fact, that secular evaluative

techniques may need to be altered or expanded in order to acknowledge and accomodate the differences between religious and secular forms of development. Also, recent research raises even larger questions about what development means and how it should be done.

<u>Part II: Peace and Religion</u>

The conflict in Colombia has caused and brought to light the nation's many development problems, including displacement, crime, violence, poverty, unequal distribution of wealth, unemployment, environmental degradation, corruption, etc. Many believe establishing peace will help to improve these development issues (Solimano, 2000). Indeed, some argue that "[d]evelopment and peacebuilding are intrinsically linked" (EPLO, 2011). Religious actors, including the Mennonites, are among those working for peace in Colombia. What follows is an examination of the theories and approaches to establishing peace.

Peace

Peace has been defined in many ways. In the Christian tradition, there are three different forms of peace: *eirene*, a brief absence of violence between conflicts; *pax*, the cessation of conflict brought about by inequalities in military power; and *shalom*, the existence of peace by design (Coward & Smith, 2004, p.283). The concepts of *eirene* and *pax* are somewhat similar to Galtung's concept of "negative peace," which is defined as the absence of conflict (Galtung, 1964, p.2). Colombian politicians have often taken the view that peace entails the absence of conflict. This can be seen in former President Uribe's objective of "democratic security," which involved strengthening the military in order to win the war against the guerillas (Esquiva, 2009, p.297).

In practice, viewing peace in this way is problematic because ceasefires do not usually result in longstanding peace. As Call and Cousens (2008) note, one fifth to one third of conflicts revert back to war within five years of a ceasefire (p.5). For this reason, most no longer view peace as merely the absence of violence. Instead, they focus on sustainable peace, which Hertog (2010) defines as:

> [A] situation characterized not only by the absence of physical violence, but also by the elimination of unacceptable political, economic, and cultural forms of discrimination; a high level of internal and external legitimacy or support; self-sustainability and a propensity to enhance the constructive transformation of conflicts. (p.43)

Therefore, peacebuilding can be classified as the act of bringing about sustainable peace in order to prevent conflicts from occurring or reoccurring. It is different from peacekeeping, which prevents conflict from resuming (often through military presence) and neither addresses root causes of violence nor advocates for social change; and peacemaking, which involves halting an ongoing conflict through mediation, negotiation, and other non-violent approaches (Lopez, 2006, p.22). Although peacebuilding is typically viewed as a post-conflict activity (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; United Nations General Assembly, 2012), in Colombia, peace and development are being pursued simultaneously in the midst of war (Bouvier, 2009).

Peacebuilding

Some are critical of 'peacebuilding,' arguing that the term has been applied to so many different kinds of activities and actors that it has been depoliticized and is in danger of losing its meaning (Llamazares, 2005). Denskus (2010) argues that the recent focus on evaluating the 'effectiveness' of peacebuilding has taken attention away from other important issues, such as the causes of conflict and the future of post-conflict societies,

and has given donors the comforting idea "that peace can be built and measured without challenging Western understanding of economy, governance, and social aspirations of people" (p.235). He also argues that peacebuilding initiatives in Colombia have not brought peace because they have failed to address root causes of conflict; rather, they have often served as a front for other international agendas (Denskus, 2010).

While acknowledging the limitations of building peace in the midst of warfare, other scholars assert that peacebuilding activities are reducing violence and are laying the groundwork for future peace agreements (Bouvier, 2009, p.434). As Bouvier (2006) states:

> [c]ontrary to the usual notion that peacemaking should take place before peacebuilding, post-conflict reconstruction, and reconciliation, and that humanitarian assistance should be emphasized over development, the case of Colombia suggests that concurrent pursuit of these goals can help reduce violence, mitigate conflict, and create conditions for a peace accord. (p.2)

Or, as McDonald (1997) puts it: "[t]here can be no peace without development in Colombia, and there can be no development without peace" (p.28).

Similarly, Mennonite scholar John Lederach (1997) views peacebuilding as more than post-conflict reconstruction. Indeed, he defines peacebuilding as: "a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships" (p.20). In other words, peacebuilding is a long-term investment that addresses the structural, relational and cultural elements of conflict in order to cultivate an 'infrastructure for peace' partly by building positive relationships (Lederach, 1997). This is the approach that Mennonites have taken in Colombia.

Peacebuilding Pyramid Model

Lederach's peacebuilding pyramid model describes the actors involved in peace processes (Lederach, 1997). In this pyramid, there are three levels. The top level is comprised of the elites, who are notable figures of power with the potential to influence a wide spectrum of people, ideas, and practices. These include military, political and religious leaders with high public profiles. When engaged in peacebuilding activities, elites are often involved with high-level negotiations and cease-fires. The second level is made up of mid-range actors, who have connections with elites and with locals. Mid-range actors include leaders in a variety of fields, such as education, health, local politics, and churches, as well as non-governmental organizations and humanitarian workers. Their activities tend to involve problem-solving workshops, conflict resolution training, and peace commissions. The bottom level of the pyramid comprises of grassroots leaders, such as local, indigenous, and refugee camp leaders as well as community developers and local health officials. Their peace activities involve local peace commissions, grassroots training, prejudice reduction, and psychosocial work, such as post-conflict trauma reduction (Lederach, 1997, p.37-71).

In her study on Colombia, Bouvier (2009) builds upon Lederach's peacebuilding model and proposes a refined theoretical model. She argues that Colombian society should be viewed as a social fabric. Torn by war, this fabric must be reconstructed by a variety of peacebuilding initiatives, or 'threads.' As she states:

> The web of the fabric is thus made up of threads that represent local, regional, and national efforts for peace, while the weft is formed by threads representing institutions, sectors, cultures, education, ethnicity, religion, gender and other commonalities that can bridge the different levels. These elements permeate and inform every level of Colombian society and have the potential to hold together

and give cohesion to the local, regional, and national initiatives that constitute the web of the fabric. (Bouvier, 2009, p.423)

The more peace efforts there are, the stronger the society will be. Because of its simplicity and generalizability, this thesis will draw upon Lederach's peacebuilding model. It will also make use of Bouvier's social fabric model because of its applicability to the Colombian situation.

Approaches to Peace

Scholars disagree as to which types of actors are the most effective at establishing peace. Some assert that a top-down approach is most effective and assume that changes at the top level will 'trickle-down' to the rest of the population. Indeed, considerable literature focuses on the 'top-down' approach to peacebuilding and examines institutions and statebuilding techniques that are conducive to peace (Chetail, 2009; Howard, 2008; Paris 2004, etc.). Lederach (1997) argues that peacebuilding conducted by elites does not always ensure peace at lower levels of society. He therefore asserts that mid-level leaders are in the best position to establish long-term peace initiatives because of their large social networks. Others argue for a bottom-up approach conducted by local people. Proponents of this method assume that locals, who are typically the most affected by and have the best understanding of the conflict, are in the best position to find appropriate solutions (McDonald, 1997, p.2). This is certainly the view of the Mennonites. Describing their rationale for a bottom-up approach, Merry (2000) states:

> [p]eacebuilding does not occur only at the top but also comes from micro readjustments of power in the small spaces of everyday social life, accomplished one at a time in the lives of people in situations of conflict. Without local transformations, successful negotiations by top leaders will not produce peace. Peace cannot be imposed from the top down without these long-term, incremental changes in local communities. (p.211)

Whatever the case, most scholars agree that bottom-up and top-down approaches are complimentary, and are both necessary for peace.

Others view establishing peace in terms of 'stabilization' or 'transformation.' Following the September 11 attacks, many peace policies have focused on the importance of 'stability,' which attempts to prevent conflicts from reoccurring through international intervention and mediation, and sometimes involves a military interventionist approach (Covey, Dziedzic, & Hawley, 2005). The problem is this approach tends to favour local elites (and sometimes international interests) by strengthening existing conditions instead of encouraging major reforms. Critics argue that true peace involves change, and therefore promote the concept of conflict transformation. However, proponents of this approach often differ on what requires change and how these changes occur. Some focus on liberalization – establishing democracy and market economies. Indeed, in the field of peacebuilding, there is an underlying assumption that peace involves liberalization (Richmond, 2007). Others argue that liberalization is a form of Western imperialism, as Western actors seek to establish their political and economic systems in post-conflict societies. Moreover, there is increasing evidence to show that such an approach has actually undermined peace in developing countries (Kurtenbach, 2010; Murithi, 2006; Sriram, 2007).

Peacebuilding can also be viewed in terms of diplomacy. Track-one diplomacy refers to official government diplomacy conducted by state representatives in order to bring about conflict resolution. This can involve negotiations, mediation, economic sanctions, international condemnations, and so forth. Davidson and Montville introduced the concept of track-two diplomacy, or citizen-based diplomacy, in 1981. Track-two

diplomacy is categorized by unofficial, citizen-based projects that can be led by non-government organizations (NGOs), businesses, conflict resolution experts and private citizens (Davidson & Montville, 1981). Diamond and McDonald (1996) later expanded the two tracks into nine, coining the phrase "multi-track diplomacy."

In Colombia, most government track-one diplomacy initiatives with guerilla groups, particularly the larger ones, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC) and The National Liberation Army (Spanish: *Ejército de Liberación Nacional*, ELN), have made little headway. Bouvier (2009) has described the past fifty years of national peace initiatives as a "pendulum" – since 1965, Colombian governments have alternated between efforts to achieve peaceful negotiations and violent strategies to suppress the guerillas (p.432). For example, Pastrana, President of Colombia from 1998-2002, is remembered for his unsuccessful attempts to negotiate with guerrillas. His successor, Uribe, immediately sought to suppress armed groups. While Uribe did succeed in reducing guerilla activity groups, critics argued that his approach was too militaristic. Colombia's current President, Santos, has recently engaged the FARC in peace negotiations. Because of the failure of national attempts to bring about peace, numerous citizen-based peace initiatives, some of which are religious peace projects, are currently taking place in Colombia.

Religious Peacebuilding

Religious peacebuilding is a new field of study of pre-existing religious activities made popular by the "resurgence" of religion (Hertog, 2010, p.1). Simply put, it is peace work undertaken by religious actors and organizations to reduce violence, transform conflict, and bring about positive change. Dubois (2008) defines religious peacebuilding

as actions taken to promote peace that are "motivated and strengthened by religious and spiritual resources" that have "access to religious communities and institutions" (para. 38). This is the definition employed in this work.

Because of secularist assumptions and the view that religion breeds conflict, peacebuilding theories have tended to exclude religion as a force for peace (Thomas, 2005). However, religious actors often have skills, resources, and motivations conducive to building peace. Religious leaders often hold considerable influence in communities; their efforts can lend legitimacy to peace efforts and can encourage their followers to avoid violent measures (HPCR International, 2008). Religious leaders in South Africa, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, were heavily involved in promoting post-apartheid peace through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other activities (Chapman & Spong, 2003).

Religious groups have historically provided social services in developing countries, which are important to establishing peace (HPCR International, 2008). They have the potential to function on a long-term basis within societies because of their ability to integrate into communities. For example, Mennonite peacebuilding projects often last for decades, rather than years, because they believe sustainable peace necessitates social transformation, which takes time (Lederach 1997). Another organization involved in religious peacebuilding is *Sarvodaya*, a people's organization rooted in Buddhist and Gandhian teachings that has promoted education, peace and reconciliation, and development in Sri Lanka for almost 50 years. For the first fifteen years of its existence, *Sarvodaya* grew with very little state or foreign support, and continued to grow despite periods of state harassment and violence (Sarvodaya, para. 5-6).

It is also common for religious leaders to have a developed communication network with local, national and international groups. In some countries, religious networks are more stable than political structures, and are therefore well positioned to offer support and resources in the absence of state involvement (Berger, 2003, p.5). Also, while local and international NGOs and actors often depend on international donors for support, some religious peacebuilding initiatives are funded directly by religious institutions and are therefore less susceptible to changing international priorities (Dubois, 2008). Therefore, it is clear that religious actors do have important contributions to make to peace.

Spiritual approaches are central to religious peacebuilding. Proponents of this view and other spiritual approaches assume all violence stems from internal emotions and therefore argue that inward transformation is key to changing violent interpersonal behaviour (Singh, 2005). They view violent actions as rooted in inner emotions of anger, hate, loss, pain or jealousy (Hertog, 2010). It is for this reason that spiritual leaders advocate the necessity of inner (spiritual) transformation in order to change violent actions. Buddhist teachers, such as the Dalai Lama and Thich Nath Hanh (1993), have emphasized that inner peace should serve to empower outward action. Another version of this approach holds that the practice of peace promotes inner transformation. In all spiritual approaches, however, inner transformation is considered necessary.

Thomas (1994) asserts that prejudice reduction begins with the transformation of emotions. Similarly, Gopin's (2004) eight-step process for conflict resolution begins with the inner workings of individuals. For Quaker Adam Curle (1981), awareness of the self is central to change and to peace (p.44). Agnivesh (2002) argues that the spiritual

approach to conflict transformation is fundamentally different from secular models, which attempt to reduce violence by eliminating a sense of 'the other,' because it seeks to transform the inward self in order to coexist with what is different. Lastly, Hertog (2010) asserts that spirituality allows people to internalize peace and other values, such as mercy, forgiveness and nonviolence; when these are fully integrated in one's life, they will extend to all parts of life.

Mennonites take a spiritual approach to peacebuilding. The Mennonite Conciliation Service (MCS) training manual (2000) states that spirituality leads to internal conflict transformation, which must be intertwined with external work. Also, spirituality facilitates and transcends problem solving by connecting spirits and by healing relationships. Not a replacement for peacebuilding tools, spirituality is instead the "fertile soil" out of which peace grows (MCS, 2000, p.28). Chupp (1993) concurs with this statement, asserting that conflict transformation requires more than technique – it requires inner centeredness. This centeredness (which can be nurtured through reading scripture, meditation, singing, prayer, etc.) is found in the quiet confidence in God's control over all things and a commitment to humility (MCS, 2000, p.29). Mennonites also pay close attention to the spiritual state and actions of mediators because they view hypocrisy as a major obstacle to peacebuilding (Lederach and Sampson, 2000, p.38). Therefore, internal transformation is seen as necessary or beneficial to social transformation.

"Soft Aspects"

Secular forms of peacebuilding often focus on the quantifiable, structural and rational side, or the "hard aspects" of peace – providing relief, implementing institutional

reforms, establishing ceasefires, supervising elections, etc. Religious peacebuilding, on the other hand, tends to emphasize the personal and interpersonal – the "soft aspects" of peace. These can be defined as:

> *the emotional, psychological, socio-psychological, and existential-spiritual issues involved in peacebuilding, such as attitudes, perceptions, cognitive thinking patterns, values, expectations, desire, emotions, traumas and wounds, assumptions, motivations, relationships, frustrations, intentions, concerns, taboos, principles, norms, beliefs, identities, loyalties, worldviews, and memories.* (Hertog, 2010, p.47)

'Soft' practices include healing, empowerment, trust building initiatives, changing attitudes, humanizing opponents, reforming identities, addressing stereotypes, building relationships, etc. Hertog argues that soft aspects of peace are necessary in order to bring about the hard aspects of peace. For example, judicial tools will not establish moral order without psychological, cultural, social and spiritual development (Hertog, 2010, p.56). Still, Lopez (2006) points out that 'soft' peace processes are problematic because they are difficult to define, to measure (because they are usually long-term objectives), and to implement. Even so, soft aspects are clearly an important part of peacebuilding; working together with 'hard' aspects, they can lead to sustainable peace.

An emphasis on the 'soft aspects' of peace aligns with Lopez's idea of a 'people-centered' approach. In his book, Lopez (2006) asserts that religious peacebuilders ought to view people as "the real means and ends that make peace sustainable" (p.23). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that building relationships is an integral practice in religious peacebuilding. Hertog (2010) argues that just as governments have their areas of expertise in peacebuilding, such as negotiating agreements, citizen-based peacebuilding specializes in relationship-building (p.64). Lederach and Sampson (2000) assert that Mennonites believe building relationships of trust is the key to entering conflict

situations. It is important to note that Mennonites view creating human bonds not merely as a means to an end (as a basis for negotiations), but as intrinsically valuable and sacred task (Lederach & Sampson, 2000). Central to rebuilding relationships is reconciliation.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation as a means of peacebuilding has arisen from faith-based, not secular, contexts, and is central to religious peacebuilding. Furthermore, reconciliation is by nature a long-term process (Govier & Prager, 2003, p.14). Hertog (2010) argues that reconciliation begins with inner transformation and emotional healing. Lopez (2006) asserts that reconciliation projects tend to be overlooked (and underfunded) in favour of tangible, reconstruction projects with short-term goals because reconciliation is a difficult process to measure (p.24). This is a gross oversight as reconciliation is vital to establishing sustainable development because it allows people to respond peacefully to violence (Sampson, 1994).

In Colombia, religious groups have been heavily involved in reconciliation initiatives. State actors have also initiated various reconciliation projects, such as truth commissions, but these have largely failed because they have tended to favour peace over truth and justice (Bouvier, 2009). The Alternative Criminal Sanctions Law, a draft law that entailed the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), is a good example of this. Promoted by President Uribe in 2003, this proposed legislation would have guaranteed impunity to any member of the AUC who demobilized according to the law, regardless of the crimes he may have committed (Carrillo, 2009).

Because of the vast criticism raised by international and national citizens, Uribe was forced to reformulate the legislation into the Justice and Peace Law of 2005. In theory, this law includes provisions for jail times, and access to truth and reparations for victims; however, in practice, there is little evidence to show that victims are receiving compensation and that perpetrators are being punished (Carillo, 2009; Esquivia, 2009). For this reason, NGOs and victims have largely rejected the Justice and Peace Law, "referring to it derisively as the 'Impunity Law'" and refusing to participate in its processes (Carrillo, 2009, p.135-6).

The state's inability to provide an acceptable form of reconciliation may explain why many Colombians recognize the church as the most important institution in achieving reconciliation (Fundación Social, 2005). Alternatively, citizen confidence in churches may also reflect the common rural suspicion felt toward the government and its policies and projects (Esquivia, 2009, p.307). Whatever the case, churches have been involved in promoting reconciliation, which has been increasingly necessary as demobilized AUC members have sought to reintegrate themselves into society. The Catholic Church, for example, has mediated between the government and armed groups on several occasions. It is for this reason that "many people now consider the Catholic Church [to be] a key actor in the development of peace agreements with the various armed groups, both guerillas and paramilitaries" (Gaviria, 2009, p.175). Protestant groups have also been actively promoting reconciliation. Mennonite leader Ricardo Esquivia developed a grassroots peacebuilding model – the Citizen Commissions for Reconciliation (CCR) – which now links 220 organizations along Colombia's Caribbean coast (Esquivia, 2009).

Mennonite Approaches to Peace

There are a variety of distinguishing features in Mennonite peacebuilding. First is their commitment to long-term solutions. Mennonite peacebuilding projects often last for decades, rather than years, because they believe sustainable peace necessitates social transformation, which takes time (Lederach 1997). This is different from other initiatives, which often focus on providing short-term solutions (ter Haar, 2011). Gopin (2000) argues that Mennonite spiritual communities allow peacemakers to endure the "psychological stress" and isolation associated with long-term projects (p.151). He also asserts that isolation may be the reason for the brevity of Western interventions (Gopin, 2000, p.157). Long-term involvement facilitates relationship building, language acquisition, cultural sensitivity, and a broad understanding of the conflict. It is also related to the Mennonite commitment to 'being there' as a religious community – to stand with the oppressed in spite of the risks.

The Mennonite model of peacebuilding shares several characteristics with track-two (unofficial, citizen-based) approaches. In his article, "Mennonite Approaches to Peace and Conflict Resolution," Mitchell (2000) identifies five commonalities (p.230). First, both track-two and Mennonite approaches involve voluntary participation – participants can choose when to start or abandon the negotiation process. Secondly, track-two and Mennonite models are also nondirective as mediators are generally involved in facilitating, rather than controlling, discussion. Thirdly, both models are self-determined – participants are in charge of coming up with acceptable solutions. Fourthly, both track-two and Mennonite approaches practice inclusivity. They attempt to involve all relevant

groups in the conflict resolution process. Lastly, both models are analytical – the search for peaceful, sustainable solutions requires joint inquiry and a collaborative search.

While it is clear that both approaches share important features, they also differ in several respects. Unlike Mennonite models, which take bottom-up approaches, track-two diplomacy generally focus on governments, which are believed to possess ordered decision-making structures (Mitchell, 2000, p.230). Track-two approaches, therefore, assume that a top-down process is the most effective way to initiate peacebuilding, whereas Mennonites believe that establishing peace involves "micro readjustments of power in the small spaces of everyday social life" (Merry, 2000, p.211). Lederach (1997) suggests that both approaches would overlap at the mid-range level of society.

Another important difference between track-two and Mennonite approaches is neutrality. Track-two approaches usually operate under principles of impartiality and neutrality, believing that taking sides would prove counterproductive. However, taking a neutral stance assumes that adversaries are on roughly equal footings. With their emphasis on justice, Mennonites recognize that most conflicts are inherently asymmetrical. They therefore tend to side with the 'underdogs' or the oppressed in an attempt to reduce systems of inequality (Merry, 2000). Mennonites spend considerable time with suffering communities, supporting them despite personal risks. This long-term approach facilitates a broad understanding of the conflict, allows for language learning and builds trust. Despite these differences, Mennonite and track-two approaches should be considered as complimentary, rather than as competitive (Mitchell, 2000).

Mennonites demonstrate a commitment to humility – to be "meek and lowly of heart" like Jesus. This can be observed in their constant self-analysis and in a variety of

peacebuilding practices (Gopin, 2000, p.151). First, Mennonites are known for emphasizing capacity building, rather than training. The former implies that valuable knowledge and skills exist among local populations, and that these merely require the opportunity to be developed (Mitchell, 2000, p.224). Capacity building, which is marked by respect for other cultures, is a major aspect in *Justapaz*'s (Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Non-Violent Action) efforts to develop local infrastructures through education programs (Sampson, 2000).

Humility can also be observed in the emphasis on listening and learning, as seen in Lederach's participant-centered elicitive training method (Lederach, 1995). This model recognizes that there are distinct cultural understandings of conflict, and therefore seeks to incorporate already-existing local knowledge and resources to bring about solutions. Mediators taking this approach see themselves as facilitators rather than experts (Lederach, 1995). This is different from prescriptive approaches, in which mediators transfer knowledge to locals, and secular models of mediation, which often emphasize the mastery of mediators in order to sell a service (Merry, 2000, p.209).

Scholars have noted that Mennonites refrain from taking charge in mediation in order to empower local leaders and to leave control in the hands of those involved in conflict (Merry, 2000; Kraybill, 2000; Chupp, 2000). Some assert that it would be difficult to replicate the same levels of humility in secular peacebuilding initiatives, which tend to value efficiency over character traits (Gopin, 2000; Sampson, 2000). Other characteristics of Mennonite peacebuilding include non-violence, flexible-solutions, voluntary participation and the deep religiosity that motivates their actions (Sampson & Lederach, 2000).

Conflict Transformation

One last approach to peacebuilding, which has arisen from the "Anabaptist-Mennonite framework," is conflict transformation (Lederach, 2003, para. 3). Conflict transformation is a process that changes a conflict situation, characterized by violent relationships, into a peaceful situation, characterized by harmonious and interdependent relationships (p.84). Conflict transformation, as relationship-oriented, long-term process, is markedly different from conflict resolution, which seeks to bring undesirable activities to an end in a relatively short timeframe.

The long-term transformative approach best represents the Mennonite method of peacebuilding because it acknowledges that social conflicts evolve at a variety of levels, and seeks to address problems at the personal (spiritual approach), relational (reconciliation and relationship-building), structural (justice and social change) and cultural levels (understanding culture). The conflict transformation approach recognizes the complexity of conflicts and seeks to construct an infrastructure of peace that can support long-lasting peace by promoting reconciliation and addressing social injustices. Esquivia (2009) argues that such an infrastructure can be created before a conflict has ended. It is clear, then, that such a model could prove conducive to bringing peace to the complex conflict in Colombia.

Historical Background:

Part I: A History of the Colombian Conflict

Introduction

Colombia has a long history of armed conflict. In the late 1940s and 1950s, political rivalry led to civil war; since then, violence has escalated with the onset of drug trafficking, land grabbing, and paramilitary activity. Colombia now has the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world (UNHCR, n.d.).[5] Current estimates put the figures between 4.9 and 5.5 million with 230,000 displaced in 2012 alone (International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2013). The roots of the current conflict in Colombia can be traced back to social, economic, and political inequalities that have existed since the colonial period, as well as longstanding state weakness and regional fragmentation.

Historical Background: Colonization

The first Europeans to set foot in Colombia arrived in 1499 and the first settlement was built in 1509. During colonial times, Colombia was part of the Viceroyalty of Peru and later New Granada (made up of present-day Colombia, Panama, Venezuela and Ecuador). From the beginning, the colonizers began a campaign of economic exploitation to enrich themselves. They took possession of the land by force and carried off much gold. The native people were conquered, forced into servitude, and tortured or killed if they tried to resist. Vasco Núñez de Balboa, a Spanish explorer, behaved in typical

---

[5] Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are people who have been forced to migrate (by various actors or circumstances) within their own countries. Because they have not crossed over national borders, IDPs do not have the same rights/status as refugees. They are also different from migrants because they have not moved by choice and because they perceive themselves as being displaced (Bakewell, 2011, p.22-23). In Colombia, some reasons for displacement are violence, land-grabbing, and aerial eradication (to destroy coca crops); perpetrators include state, paramilitary, certain corporations, and illegal armed groups.

conquistador fashion in using fighting dogs to chase down the natives (Simon, 2004). Over the years, "two Colombias" developed – the west, which centered on slaves and mining, and the agricultural and industrial east (Pearce, 1990). Both regions were dominated by elites, who owned great estates known as *haciendas*. These estates required a large labour force, a need met by the *encomienda* system. In this system, "a specific group of Amerindians was "entrusted" to a Spanish colonist to protect them and convert them to Christianity in return for payment of tribute," mostly in the form of labour (Hudson, 2010, p.9). Although they worked on the *haciendas*, native workers lived on *resguardos* (reservations). But as the indigenous population consistently declined, more and more reservation land was transferred to large landowners (Pearce, 1990, p.14). Eventually, African slaves were imported to work in the mines.

Colonial society was hierarchical and highly stratified. During the 300 years of colonial rule, Colombian society was divided into Europeans, the Amerindians and African-descendents. The Spanish controlled Colombia's economic and political spheres and enjoyed social prestige. By contrast, social mobility was very difficult for natives and Afro-Colombians. Mestizos, mulatos, and those of African descent (free or not) shared a similar fate. These 'undesirables' were relegated to the fringes of society and had subordinate status. Therefore, "[a]long with most of Latin America, colonialism left a legacy of a wealthy, land-owning elite who feared and despised the poor non-white majority" (Livingstone, 2004, p.35). This kind of social stratification, inequality and injustice can still be seen in Colombia today.

Along with poor whites, marginalized groups were driven away by the colonizers. Many settled in unclaimed and often isolated regions far away from Spanish rule. Over

36

time, certain frontier territories and populations were incorporated into the state, but the gradual accumulation process led to uneven state presence in these areas as local elites maintained some control (González, 2004).

While patterns of settlement during colonial times had an impact on national unity, Colombia's geography and climate also contributed to regionalism. Colombia is dominated by the Andean mountains and has three main climatic regions: the cool mountains, the mild middle-ground, and the hot valleys. The size, variety in climate, and physical barriers in Colombia created problems in transportation and communication, which reinforced the regionalism that has challenged national cohesion to this day (Pearce, 1990). As Hudson (2010) states:

> Because of its great geographical diversity, Colombia is one of Latin America's most regionalist nations, in which Colombians identify traditionally more closely with their regional origins than with the nation as a whole … Colombians refer to the sharp contrast between the major cities, which are islands of relative safety and prosperity, and the rural areas by the anarchic expression *ausencia del estado* (absence of the state). (Introduction, liii)

Rural areas, therefore, are a battleground where different actors (state, paramilitary, illegal armed groups, corporations involved in extractive industry, etc.) still struggle to control important land and resources today.

Independence & Post-Independence

Never united during the colonial period, Colombia faced similar disunity during the independence and post-independence periods. In May 1810, Cartegena made a declaration of independence from Spain; two months later, Bogotá did the same. The following "period is known as the *Patria* Boba {foolish country}, because the rulers of different regions found it impossible to unite, making it easy for the Spanish to reconquer the territory in 1815-1816" (Livingstone, 2004, p.36).

Colombians became independent thanks to Venezuelan military leader Simón Bolívar. In 1819, Bolívar liberated Colombia from Spanish rule. His dream was to unite South America into one united State, and began this venture by founding a republic known as Gran Colombia (which included modern-day Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia). However, regional elite rivalries prevented Bolívar from achieving his ultimate goals (Livingstone, 2004, p.36). In 1828, he named himself dictator over the Gran Colombia, but despite his efforts, he was unable to keep the republic together. Bolívar resigned in March 1830 and went to his deathbed lamenting 'America is ungovernable' (qtd. in Livingstone, 2004, p.36).

In the 1840s, two political parties – the Conservative and Liberal parties – were officially founded. Conservatives have traditionally been portrayed as landowners and military leaders and Liberals have been depicted as merchants or professionals. Livingstone (2004) argues that this is not necessarily accurate. This is because merchants tended to invest in land and soon became landowners as well. Livingstone (2004) states: "it is clear that within a few generations the merchant-landowner oligarchy was represented in both parties" (p.37). Pearce (1990) concurs that "clear distinctions between the parties... are not easy to establish" (p.17). Members of the elite led both parties, and their economic and political platforms were fairly similar. They did, however, disagree about the role of the church in society. The Conservatives viewed the Catholic Church as an important factor in maintaining social order; they therefore gave the Church legal and economic privileges as well as control over the education system. By contrast, the more modernizing Liberals called for a secular state.

Although the Conservative and Liberal parties did not differ greatly and were both ruled by elites, they instilled great loyalty among the general populace. Tate (2007) describes this loyalty as "one of the great mysteries of Colombian political science" (p.36). Some have compared party allegiances to religious identity (Tate, 2007). Others, like Gabriel García Márquez, note that "Colombians felt they were 'born' Liberal or Conservative" (qtd. in Livingstone, 2004, p.38). And, while the parties did not differ greatly, they did serve as channels of expression for social conflict, such as fights over land rights, regional rivalries, racial tensions, and familial conflict (González, 2004).

Party allegiances were solidified during conflicts in the 19th century. Following the independence wars, scholars count no less than eight national civil wars, fourteen local civil wars, two wars with Ecuador, three coup d'états, and several rebellions (Simons, 2004; Livingstone, 2004). Six of the eight national civil wars involved the two parties, the worst of these being the War of a Thousand Days (1899-1902) in which approximately 100,000 people (mostly non-combatants) were killed (Holmes, De Piñeres, & Curtin, 2007, p.21-22). And "[a]s Liberal and Conservative peasant armies swept through villages committing atrocities, each generation vowed to avenge the last attack and a dynamic of violence followed by reprisals emerged" (Livingstone, 2004, p.38). This hatred, inherited by successive generations, instilled Colombians with an emotional bond to their parties and led them not only to the poll stations, but also into conflicts with members of the opposite party (Dix, 1987; Hudson, 2010). These confrontations were never decisive and did not bring long-lasting peace. It is for this reason that historian Gonzalo Sánchez described 19th century Colombia as a 'country of permanent war' (qtd. in Pearce, 1990, p.17).

La Violencia

After the Thousand Days' War, a coffee boom thrust Colombia into the modern period, bringing advances in transportation, communications and industrialization. There were also increased demands for agricultural goods, which raised the value of land. This brought riches to many landowners, but the *campesinos* or peasants did not benefit much. With no labour rights, they "lived in poverty and servitude that had changed little since the colonial era" (Simons, 2004, p.40). Because they could not pay taxes, peasants were compelled to serve landowners and local authorities, sometimes transporting goods on foot like human packhorses. Because of this mistreatment, there were many unsuccessful revolts, protests and strikes over the years. In 1948, Liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, whose face appears on the 1000 Colombian peso bill, led a silent protest through the streets of Bogotá. During his campaign, thousands came to hear Gaitán denounce the elites and defend the rights of the poor. On April 9th, 1948, Gaitán was assassinated while exiting a hotel. His killer was immediately lynched by an angry mob, therefore his motives were never known. The official report stated that the man had been acting on his own, but Liberal supporters assumed he had been shot down in a Conservative conspiracy.

Gaitán's murder sparked massive riots known as the *Bogotazo*. People set buildings on fire, looted stores, attacked the Presidential palace and set off bombs. The 10-hour riot left over 3,000 people dead. Soon the conflict spread to other cities and spilled into rural areas, eventually escalating into a devastating civil war known as *La Violencia* (The Violence). Chaos ruled as Conservative and Liberal supporters fought in the countryside in an "explosion of repressed fury" (Livingstone, 2004, p.43). The war

claimed the lives of 200,000 people and affected approximately 20% of the population, directly or indirectly (Bailey, 1967).

Yet *La Violencia* did not receive its name merely from the number of people it affected, but rather for the horrendous manner in which the killings and mutilations occurred. People developed their own styles of mutilations, such as the *corte de corbata* (necktie cut), which involved cutting the victim's throat and pulling the tongue through the incision. Other atrocities are described by Bailey (1967):

> Certain techniques of death and torture became so common and widespread that they were given names such as *qpicar para tamal*, which consisted of cutting up the body of the living victim into small pieces, bit by bit. Or *bocachiquiar*, a process which involved making hundreds of small body punctures from which the victim slowly bled to death. Ingenious forms of quartering and beheading were invented... political prisoners were thrown from airplanes in flight, infants were bayoneted, school children, some as young as eight years old, were raped en masse, unborn infants were removed by crude Caesarian section and replaced by roosters, ears were cut off, scalps removed, and so on. (qtd. in Goff, 1971, p.225)

In 1957, the Conservatives and the Liberals formed the National Front, a coalition government to replace the dictatorship of Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. The two parties agreed that every four years, the presidency would alternate between the Conservatives and the Liberals. This arrangement excluded all other political parties, most notably, the Communist Party. By criminalizing protest, the National Front excluded the majority of Colombians. Without legitimate channels of dissent, those who opposed the National Front turned to other methods of objection, such as forming illegal rebel forces, to further their own political agendas.

Illegal Armed Groups

As in many Latin American countries, Marxist revolutionary groups emerged in Colombia after Fidel Castro's victory in Cuba. Colombia's landscape has proved highly

conducive to guerilla activity. Jungle regions provide good cover for guerillas and their hideouts, which are difficult to locate on the ground and hard to spot from the air. Also, mountainous areas, which are strategic locations for ambushes, have housed many Colombian rebels (Holmes, De Piñeres, & Curtin, 2007). The four main guerilla groups in Colombia were the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Army of National Liberation (ELN), the Nineteenth of April Movement (M-19), and the Popular Army of Liberation (EPL). While the last two groups demobilized in 1990, the FARC and the ELN remain active today.

Established in 1964, the ELN was inspired by the revolution in Cuba and radical members of the church. It grew to prominence in the 1980s when members demanded the nationalization of oil and extorted funds from oil companies in order to finance their military endeavors. Also linked to the Communist party was the FARC, the largest guerilla group in Colombia. In the 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union and its support, the FARC increasingly relied on the drug trade, extortion and kidnappings to finance its activities. The EPL was established in 1967. Though this Communist group "never gained significant strength," it was particularly active in the Department of Santander where it used kidnappings to gain funds (Kline, 2007, p.11). The last of the major guerilla groups, the M-19 appeared after the April 19th presidential elections in 1970. In 1974, its members made their first public appearance when they stole Bolívar's sword. However, the M-19's most infamous attack occurred in 1985 when its members seized the Palace of Justice in Bogotá and killed 100 people. In 1990, both the M-19 and most of the EPL demobilized and each became political parties.

In the 1970s, Colombia experienced a period of capitalist expansion, and economic growth. During this time, the global demand for natural resources, including coffee, oil, and later, drugs, increased. As the years progressed, impoverished farmers began producing large quantities of cocaine, a development that was "advanced by large national and multinational cartels," such as that led by the infamous Pablo Escobar (Gruner, 2007, 162). To fund their activities, guerrillas often targeted landowners and drug lords through extortion and kidnappings. In response to this, drug lords, allied with landowners, created paramilitary groups. Military officers and politicians created similar "self-defense" groups to protect people from guerillas. And thus in the 1980s, a 'dirty war' began as drug lords, members of the army, businessmen, landholders, and politicians tried to eliminate the guerillas and leftist activists.

Some of the most well known paramilitaries were the *Muerte a Secuestradores* ("death to kidnappers") death squad, which was formed in 1981. Another was the much larger United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC: *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*), which was formed in 1997 by three brothers who deserted Pablo Escobar's cartel. The AUC would later grow to an army of more than 30,000 soldiers. As paramilitary groups expanded into rural areas, they fought the guerillas for control over land – the means of drug production – driving peasants off their land and causing widespread terror and displacement. Other farmers have been displaced by violence created by resource sectors. Valuable resources like oil, coal and farmland have and still are extracted (legally and illicitly) by national and international parties. Civilians opposing the exploitation of resources in their communities have faced harassment, violence, and displacement.

Another player in the Colombian conflict is the United States. Involved in fighting the cartels in the 1980s, the Americans viewed the FARC's expansion in the 1990s as a significant threat to their capitalist, neo-liberal, and security interests. Following the Gulf War in 1990 (and, later, the 9/11 attacks), the US began expanding its sources of oil to reduce its dependence on Middle Eastern supplies (Stokes, 2005, p.3). However, guerilla attacks against oil companies and pipelines have hindered oil acquisition in Colombia. This instability also threatened the extraction of oil from Venezuela, the largest South American oil supplier to the States. In the wake of the Vietnam War, launching another overseas military campaign would not have been popular (O'Shaughnessy & Branford, 2005). Therefore, under the guise of a counternarcotic strategy, President George Bush initiated the Andean Initiative in 1990, which provided economic and military aid to the Colombian army in its war against the guerillas (Simons, 2004).

With the funds, the Colombian military and its paramilitary allies committed many atrocities. Some paramilitaries engaged in the 'social cleansing' of Colombian society by eliminating homosexuals, prostitutes, drug addicts, criminals, beggars, and street children. Guerillas and their sympathizers were also targeted, as were artists, scholars, reporters and lawyers who were considered to be threats to the political order (Pearce, 1990). As Leech (1999) comments, "[p]ut bluntly, US taxpayers were funding Colombian assassins" (p.216). In response to the human rights abuses, the United States withheld funding from 1994 until 1997 (Leech, 1999). Two years later, when President Pastrana called for international assistance, the United States would again provide aid to the Colombian military in an initiative known as Plan Colombia. Among other things, this drug-curbing initiative has been criticized for providing paramilitary groups, via the

Colombian military, with U.S. funding, and for the destruction of legitimate crops during the fumigation of coca plants (Ruiz, 1998).[6]

Human rights abuses, violence, and kidnappings continued into the 2000s. In 2002, Colombian politician Ingrid Betancourt was kidnapped and held hostage by the FARC for six years. Soon after that, Álvaro Uribe, a hard-lined rightist candidate, became the next Colombian president. Uribe clamped down on the FARC by increasing the number of troops throughout the country. In 2005, the demobilization of the AUC paramilitaries began. Though this controversial process was completed in mid-2006, its success is debatable. Uribe's administration has been marred by several scandals known collectively as the 'parapolitics' scandal. From 2006 to the present, several congressmen and politicians have been investigated for ties to paramilitary organizations. And though Uribe made some headway against the FARC, violence still continues in Colombia, particularly in rural regions where state presence is weaker. Colombia's current president, Juan Manuel Santos, is pursuing peace talks with the FARC and the ELN, but only time will tell if these negotiations will prove successful.

Conclusion

The current conflict in Colombia is very complex and has its roots in social, political and economic inequalities perpetuated since colonization. Continuous expulsion of the poor into frontier lands during the colonial era led to regionalism and uneven state presence in rural areas. From early on, political and economic power has remained in the hands of the elites while the majority of the population remains in poverty. Failure to address inequality and exclusion led to the creation of illegal revolutionary groups who

---

[6] Plan Colombia will be discussed in greater detail later on in Part II.

often used violence to gain attention. To combat this threat and protect their interests, elites created and hired their own forces. In order to finance their activities, both legal and illegal armed groups have engaged in drug trafficking, kidnapping, landgrabbing and corruption, which have prolonged and accelerated the violence. Impunity for these sorts of activities has weakened citizen trust in democratic institutions. As different actors – international and domestic – fight over land, resources, politics, drugs, and power, civilians have been caught in the crossfire and become displaced. The intense suffering and damage caused by the conflict has led many to seek a peaceful resolution. What follows is a description and an analysis of peace initiatives in Colombia that have arisen from a variety of actors.

Part II: Peace Initiatives in Colombia

International Peace Initiatives

Colombia became of interest in the international sphere during the 1980s, when American anti-drug campaigns began targeting Colombian drug cartels. In the 1980s and 1990s, Cuba supported President Turbay's (1978-82) negotiations with the M-19. Also, President Gaviria's (1990-1994) dialogues with the FARC were held in Mexico and Venezuela. Negotiations with the ELN took place in Spain and Germany during Samper's (1994-1998) presidency. In 1998, Norway began supporting a peace project entitled "Skilling the Armed Actors for Peace in Colombia" and would later assist Switzerland and Spain in facilitating ELN-Colombian government peace talks in Cuba (Schirmer, 2009).[7] However, it was not until President Pastrana initiated peace talks with the FARC

---

[7] For more on Norwegian peace projects in Colombia, including the *conversario* project in which military officers and civilians meet informally to discuss peace, see Schirmer, J. (2009). A Norwegian-Supported Peacebuilding Project: Conversations among Security Forces, Former Guerillas, and Civil Society. In V.

in the late 1990s that the international community became significantly involved in the peace process (Castañeda, 2012, p.16).

In his political campaign, Pastrana invited international actors to offer political and economic support for the peace process. He called for 'shared responsibility' – recognition that international demand was partly to blame for the drug market and, by an extension, the guerilla and paramilitary violence, which was financed by the drug trade. Pastrana's proposed plan of action, 'Plan Colombia' involved the promotion of peace with insurgent groups, namely the FARC, and the establishment of economic and social development. It also called for investment in alternative crops for coca growers. Yet, "although the plan sounded good [… m]any at the time saw it as no more than a ploy from Pastrana for getting money" (O'Shaughnessy & Branford, 2005, p.43). Indeed, Pastrana's proposal called for international powers to contribute $3.5 billion to the initiative. Fearing that these funds would be mismanaged, European governments refused to participate. However, the United States promised to send $1.3 billion – as long as Pastrana revised some elements of the strategy. US military aid transformed the plan into a top-down, military approach to peacebuilding.

Beginning in 2000, the United States supplied military aid to the Colombian government and army "as part of its 'war on drugs' and its more recent 'war on terrorism'" (Gruner, 2007, p.163). Most of the funding went towards training the Colombian army, who were equipped with Huey and Black Hawk helicopters to aid them in the eradication of coca. As a result, thousands of square kilometers of mature coca

Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building Peace in a Time of War* (pp. 399-410). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

were eradicated in the early 2000s. The fumigation of such large tracts of lands caused mass displacement in Colombia, particularly after 2002.

Plan Colombia generated much criticism. Some argued that by arming the military, which often ally itself with paramilitaries, Plan Colombia served only to fuel violence and displacement. Secondly, critics argue that the aid that funded "anti-narcotics police and their forced eradication program" contributed to displacement because it "focused on small producers, not the industrial cocaine producers" (Ruiz, 1998, p. 26). Unfortunately, as coca plants were fumigated, some food crops were also destroyed. Once their crops had been destroyed by herbicide, many peasants were forced to abandon their farms. American interventions like Plan Colombia had significant impact on the Colombian peace process. As Castañeda (2012) states:

> The US was a determinant actor in the peace process and its failure. As the main international actor in Colombia, its mistrust towards the peace dialogues and the consequent support to the Plan Colombia as an antidrug strategy marked the process. The EU appeared as a counterbalance to this position with the defence of an ideal of peacebuilding. (p.3)

However, as we shall soon see, the EU's peace initiatives had problems of their own.

The European Union (EU) refused to participate in Plan Colombia, because members believed that strengthening the Colombian military would not bring peace to the country, as has historically been the case (Fukumi, 2008). Therefore, the EU, along with other countries and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, continue to take a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding. These actors support grassroots peace movements and NGOs involved in alternative development projects, such as crop substitution, and peace initiatives, which include peace laboratories.

Castañeda (2012) argues that the EU acted differently from the US because they interpreted the causes of the conflict differently. She asserts that while the US viewed the conflict as a drug-financed terrorist attack against a state, the EU believed that the violence was a result of social and economic inequalities. For this reason, the EU's solution involved peacebuilding and promoting dialogue rather than military action designed to contain a threat (Castañeda, 2012, p.28). It is also possible that the EU responded differently to the US because it has been less affected by the Colombian conflict. While there are "important entry points" in Europe for Colombian cocaine, most of the cocaine produced or transported through Colombia has been exported to North America (Kurtenbach, 2009, p.387). Also, Colombia is much farther geographically from the EU than from the US. Because the EU does not perceive Colombia as a "direct security threat," there may be less incentive to end the conflict in Colombia through military means (Kurtenbach, 2009, p.387).

Whether or not this is the case, EU projects (like peace laboratories) address structural causes of the Colombian conflict. However, there are important limitations to its peace strategy. Fukumi (2008) argues that EU peace initiatives have not been effective in reducing illicit cultivation and that the non-military approach tends to disregard security issues, which need to be addressed in order to support social and economic development goals (p.213). Because there are few relevant written documents, the EU approach is difficult to evaluate. Lastly, the lack of communication and cooperation between the EU and the US coupled with issues of national sovereignty has decreased the efficiency of international peace initiatives.

State Peace Initiatives

In terms of national peace processes, several Colombian governments entered into negotiations with the rebels, which resulted in the disarmament of five different guerrilla groups (Bouvier, 2009, p.9).[8] The first major national peace attempt began in 1982, when Belisario Betancur (1982-1986) became the President of Colombia. Before guerilla groups had even agreed to take part in negotiations, Betancur immediately declared an amnesty. At his inauguration speech, Betancur declared: "I am extending my hand to the rebels in arms so that they may join in the full exercise of their rights.... I declare peace to my fellow citizens without any distinction... to this priority I am committed" (qtd. in Crandall, 2002, p. 68). Peace negotiations were held at the *Casa Verde* (Green House), an area that had been controlled by FARC for many years. After a year and a half of talks, the FARC and the M19 agreed to a ceasefire in 1984. In 1985, the FARC created the *Unión Patriótica* (UP: Patriotic Union), a legal leftist political party, and many guerillas joined. Soon after its formation, the UP experienced considerable violence from the paramilitary. Also, fighting between the FARC and the Colombian military escalated and the UP presidential candidate was killed. Finally, the peace talks ended when the M19, an insurgent group, invaded the Palace of Justice and took over three hundred people hostage. A bloodbath ensued as the military intervened to rescue the hostages, leaving almost half of the Supreme Court Justices and many others dead.

Guerrilla groups became more active than ever in President Barco's term (1986-1990), and homicide rates peaked. Still, because of losses in the attack against the Palace of Justice, the M-19 began negotiations with Barco's administration. In July 1989, a pact

---

[8] These include: the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL), the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabadores (PRT), Movimiento Armado Quintín Lame (MAQL), the Movimiento 19 de Abril (M-19), and the Movimiento Renovación Socialista (CRS).

was made. By 1990, under President Gaviria's (1990-1994) rule, most of their members had disarmed and joined the newly created ADM-19 political party. Other guerilla groups, such as the EPL, also disbanded at this time. While the integration of these forces into society brought new problems, this demobilization was seen as a success. In 1991, Gaviria also instituted an impressive new constitution. This charter reduced government centralization, reformed the electoral system, and declared the rights of indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, children, adolescents, etc. It also banned extradition, reduced the power of the Catholic Church and established a procedure of *tutela*, whereby victims of human rights abuses could seek protection against their oppressors. The new constitution was met with widespread approval and gave rise to the hope that sustainable peace might soon come. As Hudson (2010) writes:

> There was something in the new constitution to please almost everyone, and in its immediate aftermath the mood of euphoria was such that some Colombians hoped that the FARC and the ELN, recognizing the constitution's democratic and egalitarian bent, would agree to lay down arms and pursue their objectives peacefully under its framework. Alas, no such thing happened.... The *tutela* device corrected some injustices, but at the cost of further clogging an overburdened legal system. Other articles of the constitution, too, either did not live up to expectations or had regrettable unintended consequences. (p.58)

Still, hope remained high despite increased guerilla activity after 1991 and the continual problem with drugs. However, scandal and charges of corruption ensued when drug-traffickers made large contributions to Gaviria's successor, Ernesto Samper (1994-1998) for his Presidential campaign.

Peace talks were continued in earnest with the election of Andrés Pastrana in 1998. Pastrana, who had campaigned on a 'peace platform,' established a demilitarized FARC safe zone the size of Switzerland near San Vicente del Caguán. He also personally met with Manuel Marulanda Vélez, FARC's leader and tried to establish peace talks with

the ELN. However, the FARC showed little interest in administering the safe zone or in reducing their violent activities. Also, negotiations with them "proved even more difficult, delayed and unproductive than had been feared at their outset" (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012, p.42). The talks finally broke down in 2002 when the guerillas increased attacks on government targets, hijacking an airliner and later kidnapping Ingrid Betancourt, a presidential candidate.

The failure of Pastrana's peace talks and subsequent pessimism about a negotiated settlement had a major impact on the election of a new president later that year – President Álvaro Uribe. Uribe did not believe in peace talks. Indeed, he "made no secret his disbelief in any kind of negotiations with insurgents, apart from those arising from a position of dominance" (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012, p.43). Instead, Uribe announced that he intended to follow a strategy known as 'Democratic Security,' a hardline initiative meant to crush those who opposed the Colombian government.

As soon as he came to power, Uribe declared a 'state of internal commotion' that would allow him to use any means necessary in order to bring 'law and order' to Colombia. Even in these early times, some were concerned about how Uribe's policies might affect human rights and civil liberties, but the security issues in Colombia in 2002 meant that the majority of Colombians were more concerned with ending the violence (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012). Under Democratic Security, Uribe expanded the military and its presence throughout the countryside and began the "seriously flawed process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration" of the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (AUC) (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012, p.44). His strategy also involved a civilian component –

informant networks were created to report on illegal, guerilla and paramilitary activities and peasants were recruited as soldiers.

The success of Uribe's policies is debatable. Increased numbers of soldiers and US-supplied equipment allowed government forces to strike major blows to the guerillas, forcing them to withdraw to more remote regions of Colombia. Soon ground travel between cities became much safer. For this reason, Uribe's strategy was popular among many city-folk, who benefited as violence shifted into the rural regions (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012). However, Democratic Security was nowhere near a complete triumph. In order to secure the demobilization of paramilitaries, Uribe promised them amnesty if they confessed their crimes and returned land that they had illegally taken. After avoiding punishment, many disbanded paramilitaries simply formed new groups of thugs, thereby continuing their previous activities under different names and for other employers.

Furthermore, paramilitary violence continued to plague rural communities. Communities were also affected by hostility from government forces if they refused to support national initiatives or were accused of doing so. Indeed, "the policy of paying informants for information was having the inevitable effect of encouraging local inhabitants to accuse fellow community members of being guerrilla sympathizers, supporters or agents – and, of course, doing so secretly and perhaps profitably" (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012, p.49). Last but not least, Democratic Security created a difficult environment for civil peace initiatives.

Colombia's current President, Juan Manuel Santos, succeeded Uribe in August 2010. Co-founder of the Social Party of National Unity (Party of the U), a coalition that supported President Uribe's security policies, Santos served as Uribe's Minister of

National Defense and took a strong stance against FARC and other guerilla groups. At his inauguration ceremony, Santos promised to continue Uribe's popular security and commerce policies while also pursuing a modified program called 'democratic prosperity.' Between 2010 and 2012, Santos initiated several reforms and judicial advancements, including the Victims and Land Restitution Law, which promised compensation and land restitution for displaced peoples.

In August 2012, President Santos made a surprise announcement: secret peace talks with FARC had been taking place in Havana, and formal peace negotiations would begin in October in Oslo. To commemorate the occasion, Santos was awarded the Shalom Prize from the Latin American chapter of the World Jewish Congress for his commitment to peace. While 70% of polled Colombians claimed to support the peace talks, "far fewer thought the peace talks were likely to succeed" (Beittel, 2013, p.18). In this climate of pessimism, religious actors are providing hope, particularly in conflict-ridden areas with little state presence. As one participant in my study stated:

> the church has been a beacon of hope in terms of development for the Mennonite Brethren communities in Chocó especially because the State presence is slow and armed groups are running free. Pastors would be leaders in those communities. So it's hard to measure the overall improvements, but in small ways, we can see a change. (April 10)

Therefore, religion plays a role in converting pessimism to hope, even in the midst of war.

Civilian/Grassroots Peace Initiatives

In the absence of strong state leadership for peace, numerous civilian peace and development projects have filled the gap and are pursuing peace in the midst of war. People have been working for peace in Colombia for almost as long as the conflict has

occurred. However, it was not until the 1990s that peace activism gained widespread attention (Rodriguez, 2012, p.70). Unlike many Latin American countries, Colombians never experienced an official military dictatorship during the Cold War. In fact, Colombia has been a democracy since the late nineteenth century, and therefore "prides itself on being one of Latin America's oldest democracies" (p.4). Although the extent of this democracy remains controversial (Lorente, 2010; Collier & Levitsky, 1997), because of authoritarian tendencies and limited participation, Colombia does have an active civil society. Civil society, as Bouvier (2006) notes, is made up of "religious organizations, secular and educational institutions, human rights and other social organizations, journalists, labor unions, peasants, professionals, and a broad range of others who act collectively in accordance with shared interests, values, and goals" (p.5). These actors are involved in a variety of peace initiatives in Colombia.

Civilian action for peace in Colombia began slowly in the late 1970s and 1980s. Peace movements in these early years were "relatively limited and dispersed across the country... [and] were motivated mainly by social grievances... and demands for a negotiated solution to the armed conflict" (Fernández, García-Durán, & Sarmiento, 2004, para.4). From 1988 onward, civilian peace efforts grew as a reaction against increased violence and kidnappings. These included the nationwide *Semana por la Paz*, which started in September 1988, and a peace campaign called 'Viva la Cuidadanía' (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012). The Medellín Youth Network is another example. Established in 1990, it is an organization that trains youth in nonviolence and supports those who refuse to serve with the police, paramilitary, army or illegal armed groups. Most peace initiatives occurred in Bogotá, the political and geographical heart of Colombia.

There, civilian-led peace initiatives thrived as small groups consolidated into larger peace networks. For example, women's groups have formed networks that transcend rural/urban origins and class and ethnic lines in order to promote inclusion and to combat violence against women. Also, the number of peace organizations increased in the 1990s because peace events held during this time often led to the formation of pro-peace organizations. For example, the 1996 International Day to End Violence Against Women led to the creation of an organization called the *Ruta Pacífica de las Mujeres para la Paz*. Still, while civilian peace groups have increased, some face significant limitations with regards to security (some members have been the victims of harassment, violence, and even assassination), lack of support (financial or otherwise), disunity, and personal and political problems within the groups (Rojas, 2009, p.220-222).

Peace mobilization spiked in the 1990s as more than 50 million people participated in various forms of collective action (Durán, 2007, p. 8). People joined peace marches, initiated pro-peace organizations, and participated in peace forums. Mass demonstrations were common, particularly after the *Proceso 8000* investigation, which sought to determine whether the allegations that President Ernesto Samper's 1994 campaign had been funded with drug money were true. In 1997, a 'Citizen's Mandate for Peace, Life and Freedom' was held; ten million Colombians voted for peace and vowed to work for peace as a citizen's duty. Two years later, millions participated in the "No Más" (No More) demonstrations and subsequent events in that year. In January 2000, 18 million were involved in a voluntary electricity blackout to protest terrorism and demand peace (Durán, 2007, p. 4). Civilians continue to actively work for peace today. For example, on April 9th, 2013, on the anniversary of the *Bogotazo*, various peace

organizations and actors marched through Bogotá to call for peace. Through these types of initiatives, civilians continue to keep peace on the political agenda.

On the local level, in rural areas where there is little or no state presence, some peasants have joined together to create "peace communities" – unarmed communities that declare themselves to be neutral and independent from armed groups. These societies are meant to provide safety for returning displaced peoples and other marginalized groups. One of the earliest examples was the peace community of La India. Established in 1987, it later developed into the *Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos del Carere* (ATCC), receiving the Alternative Nobel Peace Prize in 1990. However, "[t]he idea that peace might be built locally as well as nationally and regionally really began to take hold in the last years of the decade," with support from church groups, civil society organizations, and universities (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012, p.41). Although peace communities declare themselves to be neutral and independent from armed groups, massacres have occurred. For example, the Peace Community of San José de Apartadó has been attacked several times by paramilitary and guerrillas; 170 have been killed since 1997.[9] Despite this, many other communities are engaging in non-violent action, as can be seen in those living in Mogotes, a town in the eastern Andes Mountains, and in Urabá, a northwestern region (Alther, Lindsay-Poland, & Weintrauf, 2004).

Not to be ignored, Afro-Colombians and indigenous peoples have also succeeded in negotiating with armed groups to allow for the safe passage of medicine and food, and for the release of kidnapped victims. Other citizen-based initiatives include addressing corruption, pressing electoral debates, and creating peace laboratories (often with outside

---

[9] "Peace Community, Colombia," *Amnesty International* (2009). http://www.amnesty.org/en/individuals-at-risk/write-for-rights/peace-community (accessed 22 September 2012).

support), zones of peace, and sanctuary churches, all of which are flourishing in vulnerable areas. Although impressive, these initiatives face serious difficulties. They are extremely vulnerable to violence, and often suffer from conflicts of interests. Although it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of such projects in reducing violence, Bouvier (2009) asserts that they are strengthening the democratic process by "increasing citizen participation and public accountability at the local level and, thus, are contributing new mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflict" (p.423). Also, the more a community is organized, the less susceptible it is to violence and the greater its ability to engage in nonviolent alternatives (Bouvier, 2006, p.5).

Government attitudes and responses also influence the effectiveness of civil peace projects. Historically, it has been assumed that state and civilian peace initiatives must complement each other and make long-lasting peace more likely (Mitchell & Hancock, 2012). This was why, in the 1980s and 1990s, many believed that local peace efforts – such as peace zones and local negotiations with armed actors – would help promote peace at the national level. Indeed, "[o]ne common metaphor was of some kind of expanding "leopard spot" process, whereby 'patches of peace gradually spread themselves throughout society, crowding out violence and those wishing to continue using it'" (Mitchell, 2012, p.2).

However, Mitchell & Hancock (2012) assert that national and local relationships are more complicated than this. Some governments have supported local peacebuilding; others have viewed it as an interference or a challenge to national authority. While Pastrana's government tolerated local peace projects, independent citizen-led initiatives were seen as a threat to Uribe's Democratic Security. In particular, peace communities

like San Jose de Apartadó experienced paramilitary attacks and have received government criticism about the "impossibility – and immorality – of remaining neutral" from the collective effort of combatting the 'narco-terrorist' threat (Mitchell & Rojas, 2012, p.46). Because of state disapproval, some grassroots leaders have turned to national campaigns to plead their cases. There has also been an increase in locally based but externally-funded 'Peace Laboratories' as local peacebuilders have sought support elsewhere (Rodriguez, 2012).

Religious actors have also been instrumental in supporting citizen-based initiatives. Catholic and Protestant groups, for example, have been involved in track-two mediation between the government and armed groups, and have engaged in relief work, education, development, counseling, reconciliation, and many other activities. Also, the Colombian private sectors, often criticized for being inactive in the peace process or for supporting hardline approaches, have "become increasingly involved in peacebuilding in several Colombian regions" (Rettberg, 2009, p.191). Businesses such as Indupalma, a palm oil producer in the Magdalena River Valley region, *Vallenpaz*, an organization in Cali, and *Entretodos*, an initiative based in Medellín, are all examples of business-related peace projects. Lastly, a myriad of NGOs, international or national, have also been vital in supporting peace projects throughout the country.

Despite the involvement of civilians in the peace movement, civil society is not directly involved in the current Havana peace talks, although channels for its input exist (Bouvier, 2013). Some have criticized this lack of representation, arguing that without civil participation, peace negotiations will be "insufficient and unsuccessful" (U.S. Office, n.d.). Others argue that "[t]here is no guarantee that the participation of society in

the various phases of the peace process will be exempt from risk or problems" (Zambrano & Isa, 2013, p.6). After all, Colombian civil society is comprised of diverse actors who differ greatly in opinion, interest, and agenda. Within Colombian society are a number of actors who benefit from the continuation of war, including certain business people, large landowners, drug traffickers, *bacrim* (criminal gangs), corrupt officials, etc. (Zambrano & Isa, 2013, p.5). Some feel that the peace talks will undo military gains made during Uribe's time in power, giving guerillas the opportunity to rally; others view the peace negotiations as a political maneuver to ensure Santos' re-election (Zambrano & Isa, 2013). Despite this, a survey conducted by *BBC Mundo* in September 2012 showed that 77% of Colombians supported the peace negotiations, but only 54% were optimistic about the outcome (Moreno, 2012). Such pessimism is likely due to the longevity of the conflict and the negative track record of state-insurgent peace talks in Colombia.

Conclusion

The conflict in Colombia is complex and involves a wide variety of actors who take different approaches to peacebuilding. Because of the weakness of national peace attempts, civilian initiatives, often supported by local and international groups, are being pursued in the midst of war. The goal of these peace initiatives is to create an 'infrastructure' or a social foundation that will sustain peace. According to Bouvier (2009), civilian peace projects seem to be reducing violence while also laying the groundwork for future peace agreements. This approach challenges the commonly held view that peacebuilding is a post-conflict activity (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; United Nations General Assembly, 2012). Though achieving peace would be much easier if the state managed to negotiate the end of the conflict, long-lasting peace will only occur when

structural issues and inequalities are addressed. For this reason, a combination of approaches – criminal justice, public health, conflict transformation, human rights, social capital, education, and peace and development – pursued by a variety of actors (national, civilian, local organizations and international) is necessary. As Bouvier (2009) states: "[a] more integrated approach to peacemaking within zones of conflict – one that builds on the tremendous energy and the variations between and across different levels of society – has the potential to be more effective in transforming Colombia's internal armed conflict" (p.431).

Part III: Mennonites in Colombia

Mennonite History

The Mennonite Church, one of the traditional 'peace churches,' has a long history of opposing war and violence. The Mennonite tradition began in the Anabaptist movement in 16th century Switzerland in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. The term 'Anabaptist' means 'baptized again.' Anabaptists required believers to make a voluntary statement of faith. They therefore rejected infant baptism, a stance that had both religious and political implications because almost all babies born in Western Europe were baptized into the Roman Catholic Church. Anabaptists also criticized the "unholy alliance" between the church and state (Jecker, 2010, p.2). Because of these unconventional views, European states and churches viewed Anabaptists as unpatriotic rebels and heretics, and oppressed them accordingly.

Among these persecuted Anabaptists were the Mennonites, a group named after their leader, Menno Simons. Mennonites rejected violence and war, and refused to fight in state armies or swear oaths. To support their pacifistic views, Mennonites cited biblical

passages such as 'Blessed are the peacemakers' (Matt. 5:9) and 'love your enemies' (Matt. 5:43). Mennonites also pointed to the example of the early Christians, claiming that no Christians fought in wars before the time of Emperor Constantine (Yoder, 1964), an assertion that is now disputed (Charles, 2005; Charles, 2010; Reichberg, Syse & Begby, 2006). Despite heavy persecution, the Mennonites grew rapidly throughout Europe. Later, again because of discrimination, Swiss German Mennonites left Europe for North America in the 18th and 19th centuries; Russian Mennonites would follow in the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century.

The General Conference Mennonite Church was formed in Pennsylvania. It began with John Oberholtzer, a minister who took issue with the uncompromising ways of his Mennonite congregation. He was particularly frustrated with its stubborn attachment to practices that he believed were without biblical precedent, such as rules of dress. In 1847, the church divided into the conservative 'Old Mennonites' and Oberholtzer's 'New Mennonites.' Oberholtzer was also involved with the 1860 General Conference, which unified Mennonite congregations in Canada and the United States through a commitment to missions and education, and a basic statement of Anabaptist faith. It is this group of Mennonites, which later split into the Mennonite Church Canada (2000) and the Mennonite Church USA (2002), that will be the focus of this thesis.[10]

Up until the mid-twentieth century, Mennonite church tradition was characterized by conscientious objection and a theology of nonresistance "which, at times, seemed to value only withdrawal and separation from the larger culture" (Miller, 2000, p.5). The Second World War was a key turning point for Mennonites. It marked the beginning of a

---

[10] This thesis focuses on both US and Canadian arms that formed General Conference Mennonites.

shift from traditional quietism to social activism and peacebuilding. Many felt that fascism should not go unchallenged (Miller, 2000). Some also argued that a theology of non-resistance permitted evil to occur (Epp-Tiessen, 2002). It was at this point that ideas about justice entered into the scene – Mennonites began to realize that they were called to "address systemic conditions that created injustice and violence" (Miller, 2000, p.7). This conviction grew stronger in the 1960s, and 1970s, and "culminated with a peacemaking focus in the eighties and nineties" (Driedger & Kraybill, 1994, p.133). At this point, several Mennonites embraced their role as international peacemakers and human rights advocates.

In Latin America

Though there was a Mennonite presence in Latin America in the 19th century, the majority arrived in the 20th century. There were two main groups of Mennonites in the continent: German-speaking settlers and English-speaking missionaries. The conservative German-speaking colonists were more focused on establishing a new life for themselves. These colonists came either directly from Europe or from North America, which they left because they felt educational reforms posed a threat to their Germanic culture (Prieto & Snyder, 2010). German Mennonite colonies currently exist in Argentina, Brazil, Belize, Bolivia, Mexico, Uruguay and Paraguay. By contrast, the English-speaking missionaries had been formed by the political and religious culture of North America. Their goal was to bring the Gospel to Latin America, and many of the communities they founded eventually evolved into national churches with local leadership. It was this group of Mennonites that came to Colombia.

Mennonites in Colombia

As the Spanish and Portuguese dominated Latin America, there was no significant Protestant – Mennonite or otherwise – presence in the region before independence movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After this time, some Latin American states resisted Protestant migration and influence. Others, such as the Liberal government of Colombia (1930-46), allowed the entrance of Protestant missionaries (Prieto & Snyder, 2010, p.134). While Presbyterians had been active in Colombia since 1856, most other missionaries arrived in or after 1910, when political conditions were more favorable. Protestants experienced particular growth from 1930 to 1948 when, apart from the last two years, the "Liberals ruled with tolerance" (Goff, 1968, 2/21). Many Protestant groups, including the Mennonites, began working in Colombia during this time. The Conservative parties came to power a year after the Mennonites arrived in the country. This power change brought an end to the tolerance Protestants had experienced. As *La Violencia* took hold and lines were drawn between Conservatives and Liberals, Protestants became "the object of special hatred" for the ruling party and its allies (Goff, 1968, 2/22).

The first Mennonite mission in Colombia occurred as somewhat of an accident. In 1943, the General Conference Mennonite Church in the US and Canada sent two missionaries, William Voth and Gerald Stucky, on an exploratory trip to South America. Voth had spent several years doing missions work in China; he was accompanied by Stucky, a recent seminary graduate. Their task was to locate possible sites for new missions, as China had recently closed its doors to missionaries. During their travels, Voth contracted typhus and the pair was forced to spend three weeks in Colombia instead of the planned three days (Juhnke, 1979). While Voth recovered, Stucky visited a leper

colony known as *Agua de Dios* (Water of God). There, he learned of the need for a Protestant primary school for the healthy children in the colony. Two years later, four Mennonites arrived in Colombia to begin their missionary work: Gerald and Mary Stucky, Janet Solder, and Mary Becker (Hernández Delgado, 2012, p.418).

After finishing language studies in Medellín, they began their work in 1947 in Cachipay, a mountainous municipality of Cundinamarca 60 kilometres away from Bogotá. Other Mennonite missionaries would later work in nearby sites in Anolaima, La Mesa, La Esperanza, and Estrella (Hernández Delgado, 2012, p.418). They chose to work outside cities because in the 1940s, nearly 80% of Colombia's population lived in rural areas (Miller, 2011, p.9). The site chosen for the Cachipay mission was a farm with a "two-story hotel-house" that a German had built intending it to be a retreat center for Germans in Colombia (Juhnke, 1979, p.148). However, this plan was abandoned when the Germans lost the Second World War. The Mennonites converted the building into a boarding school for children whose parents were suffering from leprosy. During *La Violencia*, the Mennonite school opened its doors to Protestant children, campesino day students, and internally displaced persons seeking refuge in Cachipay, a relatively safe area (Esquivia & Stucky, 2000).

In the early years, Mennonites were also involved with education, health, and relief work. However, like other religious groups, they were not involved in addressing the root causes of conflict (Esquivia & Stucky, 2000). This was partly because the number of Protestants was too low to allow them to exercise political influence. In 1948, Protestants made less than a tenth of 1% of Colombia's population (Juhnke, 1979, p.151). Mennonites formed a tiny part of this group; therefore, they did what they could with

limited funds and resources. As Juhnke (1979) states: "[m]ission strategy in Colombia in the early years was dictated by practical possibilities and limitations, rather than by a prescribed missions philosophy or mission board direction" (p.148). Others have argued persecution prevented Mennonites from working for peace (Esquivia & Stucky, 2000). This was certainly a factor – the establishment of the nascent Mennonite church in Colombia coincided with the start of *La Violencia*, a period marked by civil war and political rivalry between the Conservative and Liberal parties. In this conflict, the Catholic Church generally supported its historic ally, the Conservative Party, while the Protestant minority tended to sympathize with the Liberal Party.

As a result, Protestants were oppressed. Bibles were burned; houses searched and ransacked; and Protestant churches, houses and cemeteries were vandalized or destroyed. Other buildings were shut down or converted into Catholic schools or army barracks (Goff, 1968, 6/51). Some Protestants were fined, threatened, and arrested; others were tortured, maimed and murdered. Perpetrators of these actors were not punished, and one army official responsible for torturing Protestants was even promoted (Goff, 1968, 4/14). Also, because Catholics controlled the education system, Protestant children were denied access to public (Catholic) schools or were expelled. There were even cases in which Protestant children were kidnapped and forcibly baptized in an attempt to force them to become Catholics (Goff, 1968, 7/1-12).

While no Mennonites were killed or arrested, they did experience persecution and harassment. Policemen interrupted church services and threatened members with imprisonment. Rocks were thrown at Mennonite buildings. A Catholic shrine was erected directly in front of the Mennonite church in Cachipay in 1954 as an "affront" to the

Protestants (Goff, 1968, 6/30). Mennonites also experienced financial exclusion and were denied access to a variety of services for religious reasons (April 9A). Mennonite-run schools, such as the one in La Mesa, were shut down and Mennonite children enrolled in Catholic schools were ridiculed and punished for failing to observe Catholic practices. In 1965, new government legislation required all private schools to get a license and made the process so difficult that Protestant schools were unable to comply. Fortunately, the Mennonites were granted a license in 1956, making them the first Protestant school to receive one in the entire country (Juhnke, 1979, p.152). Catholic priests and members of their congregation also mocked Mennonites in public. For example, some missionaries reported hearing this song sung:

Protestant liars
Your church is not of Christ
It is of Zwingli and Luther
and Calvin, another minister

Chorus:
We don't want Protestants
coming to Colombia to corrupt;
We don't want Protestants
polluting our homeland and our faith.

Hundreds of pastors
are invading our homeland now,
they are marauding wolves
given to us by foreigners.

You do not love the Virgin
who is Christ's mother;
In hell you will find Satan,
your Father.
(qtd. in Prieto & Snyder, 2010, p.136)

Such persecution led to the foundation of CEDEC (*Confederacíon Evangélica de Colombia*) in 1950, which unified Protestant groups like the Mennonites. CEDEC (which

later became CEDECOL, the Council of Evangelical and Protestant Churches of Colombia) documented and publicized human rights violations against Protestants in the hope this would lead Colombian authorities to be more tolerant.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the "ultra-conservative, Catholic nature of Colombia" supported by consecutive Conservative governments hindered the establishment of Mennonite churches (Prieto & Snyder, 2010, p.154). However, by the 1960s and 1970s, the Mennonite presence was well established (Prieto & Snyder, 2010, p.154). Persecution lessened as political peace was achieved in 1958 with the formation of the National Front, and Vatican II Council (1962-65) reforms promoted tolerance among Catholics in Colombia (Juhnke, 1979). Other religious changes would occur with the development of a new religious movement within Latin America – liberation theology.

In the 1950s and 1960s, liberation theology sprang up within the Catholic Church. Liberation theologians focused on Jesus' social ministry and orthopraxis (right practice), arguing that Christians should work to 'liberate' the poor from unjust economic, social and political conditions. In 1968, CELAM (the Latin American Episcopal Conference) held a conference in Medellín, Colombia, where they agreed that the church should take a "preferential option for the poor" and considered forming ecclesial base communities modeled after Paulo Freire's teachings. The bishops also discussed the idea of liberating people from the "institutionalized violence" of poverty – hunger, ignorance and disease – which were preventable but sometimes ignored by governments (Chasteen, 2001, p.272). In other words, this conference called Christians to become socially active and work for justice. The Vatican disapproved of CELAM's support toward liberation theology, and attempted to slow its spread. By the late 1970s, John Paul II clamped down on the

movement, and its influence decreased after proponents were accused of using Marxist ideas.

While some applauded liberation theology, others worried that it would fuel the violent, Marxist revolutions occurring in Latin America at the time. Religious and Marxist revolutionaries held some common ideas – both shared the view that Latin America requires immediate and fundamental change; both were committed to helping the poor; and both "believed that existing power structures were stacked against them" (Chasteen, 2001, p.272). Moreover, some members of the religious community, such as Colombian priest Camilo Torres, did join Marxist guerilla groups. He was, however, the exception to the rule. Although proponents of liberation theology often saw Latin American social problems much as the Marxist revolutionaries did, few took up arms or supported conflict. Rather, "[m]ost believed that faith and good works were more powerful than guns" (Chasteen, 2001, p.271). This was the view of the Anabaptists – while they approved of liberation theology's emphasis on social engagement, ecumenical cooperation, and orthopraxis, they were wary of its potentially violent streak (Schipani, 1989).

In the late 1970s, the influence of liberation theology began to fade. Many became disillusioned when armed revolutions failed to bring about desired societal change. The non-violent Mennonite vision provided an alternative to liberation theology, which seemed to justify the use of violence (Esquivia & Stucky, 2000). In the 1960s, many rural Mennonite churches experienced stagnated growth as many of their members – particularly the young and educated – began migrating to the cities (Juhnke, 1979). Partly as a response to Colombia's rapid urbanization, Mennonites decided to establish the

Berna Mennonite Church in 1964 in Bogotá (Hernández Delgado, 2012, p.419). In 1977, a second church was founded that is now known as the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo (Hernández Delgado, 2012, p.420). In the 1990s, under the leadership of Pastor Peter Stucky, this church developed a ministry centered on assisting those in need, particularly displaced persons.

Meanwhile, new developments were occurring in Mennonite thought. Because Jesus taught his followers to love others, Mennonites have traditionally viewed violence as an unchristian response. Up until the mid-twentieth century, Mennonite peace tradition was characterized by pacifism, conscientious objection and a theology of nonresistance. However, around the time of the Second World War, some felt that a theology of nonresistance permitted evil to occur (Epp-Tiessen, 2002). It was at this point when Mennonites began to see Jesus' teachings ("Blessed are the peacemakers," Matthew 5:9) as a call to actively work for peace by addressing "systemic conditions that created injustice and violence" (Miller, 2000, p.7).

This conviction grew stronger over time, leading some Mennonites became involved in international peacebuilding and human rights advocacy (Driedger & Kraybill, 1994; Miller, 2000). At the Mennonite World Conference of 1984, BIC activist Ron Sider challenged Anabaptists to risk their lives to work for peace just as soldiers did in war. Sider's call sparked conversations in church circles and motivated the development of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), an international organization that works for peace in conflict areas throughout the world. Many other Mennonite peace initiatives demonstrate a similar desire to become actively involved in peacemaking (Sampson & Lederach, 2000). In Colombia, the shift from traditional quietism to social activism developed as

Mennonites began to address root causes of the violence through a variety of new organizations and projects.

Community development programs, initiated in the 1960s, really took hold in the 1970s with the creation of *Mencoldes*, the Colombian Mennonite Foundation for Development. Founded in 1975, *Mencoldes* was a joint initiative of the General Conference Mennonite Church of Colombia, the Mennonite Brethren Church of Colombia, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) of North America, and the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). Early development projects included rat eradication programs and rice and sugar mills in Chocó. Other projects distributed medical supplies, improved or founded schools, granted business loans, and promoted better transportation through the construction of bridges and roads (Juhnke, 1979). Also, as conflict in the rural regions led to massive displacement, *Menocoldes* began to assist IDPs (Stucky, 2009). Another Mennonite organization founded in the 1970s was the *Hogar Christiano La Paz*, a home for the elderly in Bogotá.

In 1990, *Justapaz*, the Christian Center for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action, was formed. Members of *Justapaz* focused on promoting human rights, believing that churches were not "attending sufficiently to them" for fear of being branded as communists (Esquivia & Stucky, 2000, p.134). *Justapaz* focused on conscientious objection, peace education, transformation and mediation of conflict (and training), peace sanctuary projects and the documentation of human rights violations. In 2003, *Justapaz*, the MCC, and *Menocoldes* joined together to create the Church Coordination for Psychosocial Action (CEAS) as part of the "holistic" approach to peace (Stucky, 2009, p.7). This attention to the 'soft aspects' of peacebuilding is nothing new for Mennonite

organizations – *Mencoldes* has long been involved in addressing the psychological, spiritual, and emotional needs of IDPs – and this focus is one of the characterizing features in Mennonite peacebuilding. Mennonite initiatives in rural areas of Colombia include *Sembrandopaz*, an organization that supports grassroots peace and development initiatives, and *Edupaz*, which is involved with peace education. Finally, Mennonites participate in many peace networks, including the Commission of Restoration, Life and Peace of CEDECOL, Pan y Paz, and the Coalition against the armed recruitment of youth (Hernández, 2012).

Current Mennonite Populations in Colombia

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of Mennonites currently living in Colombia. Participant estimates varied greatly on the subject. There are several reasons for this. Many Anabaptist churches are situated in poor, rural areas where the population, because of violence and displacement, is very mobile. It is therefore very difficult to count members when people are constantly coming and going. Also, the number of Anabaptists varies depending on how one classifies membership. For example, some Mennonite Brethren churches in Chocó differentiate between 'members' and 'sympathizers.' One of the reasons for this is that there are many women in the church that have common-law husbands. Churches prevent women in these sorts of relationships from being baptized and becoming full members, though they can be leaders and are often involved in the church ministries for years (May 9A).

While establishing an exact number of Anabaptists in Colombia is difficult, it is estimated that there are 3,000 Anabaptists (Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, and Brethren in Christ) attending nearly 70 different churches (Stucky, Janzen & Valencia, 2013;

Mennonite World Conference, 2012). According to the 2012 World Directory, the Mennonite Brethren Church has 1,700 members in 44 churches; the Brethren Christ Church has 80 members in their two churches in Bogotá; and a third of Colombian Anabaptists – 1,045 members within 21 churches – belong to the Christian Mennonite Church of Colombia. Therefore, in a country of 47 to 48 million, the number of Anabaptists is very low. However, while "Mennonites are not very numerous in Colombia ... they sure are loud" (April 10). Despite their small population, Mennonite activities are noticed in Colombia.

Conclusion

Mennonites have a long history of working for peace, a trend that can be observed in Colombia today. For the first three decades or so, Mennonite groups were predominantly involved with preaching, as well as health, linguistic, educational and relief work (Stucky, Jantzen, & Valencia, 2010). As time passed, oppression lessened and Mennonite populations grew. The nature of Mennonite work changed in the 1960s and 1970s, when global developments in Mennonite views about non-resistance led to involvement in international peacebuilding and human rights advocacy (Driedger & Kraybill, 1994; Miller, 2000). As Mennonites in Colombia (including second-generation missionaries or pastors) began to rediscover their Anabaptist identities, explicit peace projects emerged. Such initiatives have grown and developed up until the present. Mennonite perceptions of these peace projects, which are documented in the following methodology and data section, are insightful and speak to the difficulty of studying religion and development.

Methodology & Data

Introduction

The primary research question of my study was: *how have Mennonites contributed to peace in Colombia over the last twenty-five years*? The goal of this research was to describe how Mennonites (self-identified members) in Bogotá have worked for peace. This thesis also examines Mennonite understandings of peace, the motivation behind their work, and how they view their own peace projects.

To examine these issues and questions, thirty interviews were conducted in Colombia (in Bogotá and surrounding areas) with participants within or familiar with Mennonite communities. Participants were chosen according to availability and knowledge of subjects relevant to this thesis. This study was less historically focused than originally anticipated, as most participants were better able to describe current or recent peace initiatives than earlier ones.

Research

This research was situational, and involved "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2). This case study examined Mennonite perceptions of and approaches to peace – data that could not be accessed through quantitative methods such as surveys. It was, therefore, a qualitative study. This method of research allowed for a detailed, in-depth examination of human experiences and perceptions. The research framework or direction could be quickly and easily revised as new information emerged. The qualitative research method also facilitated the observation of subtleties and complexities that could have been missed by more positivistic enquiries. For example, while some participants refrained from openly

criticizing the militaristic, "peace" or stabilization initiatives led by Colombian and American forces, their body language, expressions, use of sarcasm, and tone revealed how they really felt. But most importantly, the qualitative method provided primary data that matched my research goals and question: *how have Mennonites contributed to peace in Colombia over the last twenty-five years*?

This question (a 'how' question) meant that the research would be descriptive (Yin, 2009). A descriptive study is necessary before the evaluation of Mennonite peace projects can occur (Punch, 2005). The research was descriptive because while some documents detailing Colombian Mennonite history do exist, few focus on the development or character of Mennonite peace initiatives in Colombia. The study was also exploratory, as it sought not only to provide a general picture of Mennonite peace activities in Colombia, but also to search out the underlying motivations and methods of Mennonite peacebuilding.

Rationale

Because of financial and time constraints, a single, case study was conducted. This method was ideal because the main objective was to "generate in-depth understanding" of Mennonites living in a particular area (Simons, 2009, p.21). It was also appropriate because this study examined Mennonite peace work "within its real-life context" (Yin, 2003). The research was conducted in Bogotá. It may not be a "typical example" of Colombian Mennonite peace work as there are regional differences (rural vs. urban) and because most Mennonite peace initiatives take place in rural regions. Although this was a highly contextual case, focusing on one Mennonite community action in a country, some of the explored issues, such as Anabaptist identity and issues

surrounding development and meaning, and themes, such as the focus on soft elements and grassroots peacebuilding, will apply to other Mennonite communities and, to a certain extent, to other religious groups.

There were also important reasons for conducting this unique case study in Bogotá. Many Mennonite headquarters, organizations, and churches are located in the capital city. My main contacts resided in Bogotá, including my local point person and translator, Amanda Guldemond, who acted as a 'gatekeeper' to the Mennonite community. Also, there were important safety concerns. In particular, rural regions of the country often experience intermittent warfare. In light of travel warnings issued against such regions, Saint Mary's University did not allow me to conduct research outside Bogotá. While there are parts of Bogotá that are unsafe, caution and common sense limited the danger.

Limitations

As with any research method, there are limitations to performing a qualitative study. Time, resources, and a budget limited the size of the study, and the analysis and interpretation of data was time consuming. Subjective or interpretive studies such as this one are subject to misinterpretation. My presence as a researcher may also have influenced participants' responses. Lastly, the nature of the research meant that findings were less generalizable, as the study focused on a single context.

More specifically, finding written sources in English that detailed the development and character of Mennonite peace initiatives in Colombia was difficult. For this reason, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. This flexible, conversational style allowed me to gather as much information as possible and to engage

with participants about relevant issues, subjects, and experiences during the interview (Bryman, Teevan, & Bell, 2009). Unlike surveys or other methodologies, the interview method meant that I was not restricted to an unchanging set of questions – I could guide and re-direct them while with participants. This was useful, as different participants were more familiar with certain topics than with others.

Data Collection

Interviews began in mid-April and finished in mid-May. Many interviews were conducted in English as most Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) workers were from North America or were bilingual. I also conducted one in French with an MCC worker from France. However, the majority of participants spoke Spanish; because of my limited Spanish abilities, it was necessary to hire a translator. Participants were asked whether or not they wanted their identities to remain confidential. Most chose confidentiality, as observed in the cited interviews, but some agreed or preferred to have their names included in this thesis.

Over the course of seven weeks, thirty participants were interviewed. These included MCC workers, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) workers, Mennonite pastors, and people who worked at *Mencoldes*, *Justapaz*, and the Mennonite seminary in Teusaquillo. Other interviews were conducted with participants affiliated with World Vision, the Lutheran Church, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) as well as pastors from the Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ churches. Seven community members affected by Mennonite peace projects were also interviewed. These participants were able to provide a more objective evaluation of the effectiveness of Mennonite peacebuilding. Because the study was an exploration of Mennonite perceptions about peace, those

outside the Anabaptist community were not interviewed. Exploring outsider perceptions of Mennonite peace projects would be an interesting area of future research.

Assessment of Data Collection

In general, the interview process went well. This flexible style allowed me to gather as much information as possible and to focus on different topics with different participants. For example, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), *Mencoldes* and *Justapaz* workers commented on the specific projects they were working on in Colombia whereas Mennonite World Conference (MWC) workers provided a general picture of global Mennonite activities. The conversational interview style also seemed to put participants at ease, and most of them were very willing to answer questions over tea and coffee.

Originally I had planned to make my research more history-focused, citing oral histories as my main method of research. In reality, the majority of participants did not have sufficient knowledge or experience to provide oral histories. These participants commented on historical events they were familiar with as well as current Mennonite activities. Only about three or four participants had first hand knowledge of Mennonite activities from 1980 onward. Still, they provided important information.

Using the oral history method had certain distinct advantages. The oral history method facilitated the examination of first-hand narratives and made the history more personal, as participants were living links with the past. Also, oral testimony highlighted the accounts of grassroots peacebuilders and community members, individuals whose stories are often overlooked. Methodological disadvantages included misinformation and omitted information, as participants may have forgotten events or sought to enhance their

roles in the peacebuilding process. Moreover, participants' experiences may not reflect the 'bigger picture' of the Colombian situation.

In order to combat these problems, oral data was cross-referenced or "triangulated" oral data with existing historical texts (as indicated in previous chapters) to verify accuracy. Texts located before the study began included *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding*, which provides a written history of Mennonite peace initiatives. Another important resource was a Masters thesis, written by Wyse, about Mennonite peace education programs in Bogotá. However, part of my methodology included a search for other existing documents. Before leaving for Colombia, I guessed that Colombian Mennonite organizations would have more sources on site. I also hypothesized that the reason I had been struggling to find written accounts was that many existed in Spanish, not in English.

This turned out to be somewhat true. While in Colombia, participants recommended some interesting Spanish sources, such as chapter 10 of *Intervenir antes que anochezca: mediaciones, intermediaciones y diplomacies noviolentas de base social en el conflict armado colombiano* by Esperanza Hernández Delgado (2012), which examines the Mennonite Church's experiences in mediation in the Colombian armed conflict. Other Spanish sources include manuals published by *Justapaz* such as *Construyendo la Paz en Ambientes Eclesiales* (2005) and *Construyendo la Paz – Aprendizajes desde la Base: El Conflicto Colombiano y la Iglesias Sanctuarios de Paz* (2006). English sources included an unpublished thesis by Elizabeth Marie Miller (2012) entitled "Religious Persecution and Protestant Ecclesiological Formation during Colombia's *La Violencia*: Adaptation and Resistance with Colombian Mennonite and

Mennonite Brethren Communities." Participants also recommended reading a thesis by James E. Goff (1968), which explores the persecution of Protestants in Colombia from 1948-1958. A more detailed history of Mennonites in Colombia is currently under development. These sources all proved invaluable in writing my historical background chapters.

Organization of Data

To analyze the data, the information was organized or "coded" into sections and searched for common themes, patterns, and relationships. The data section is organized into themes that correspond to central interview questions. While questions differed somewhat depending on participant knowledge and time limits, most participants responded to 10 main questions. The first ("could you tell me a bit about your background and your involvement with Mennonite churches in Colombia?") provided context and put participants at ease. Responses to this question are not included in this thesis, but participants included currently and previously employed workers at MCC (some of whom were involved with other projects, such as the SEED program and CEAS), *Menocoldes*, *Justapaz*, Mennonite World Conference (MWC), the Seminario Bíblico Menonita de Colombia (Mennonite Seminary), the Mennonite Church of Colombia (IMCOL), World Vision, and Christian Peacemaker Teams); Mennonite, MB, and BIC pastors; church members; and/or community members with ties to Mennonite churches in and around Bogotá.

The data section contains answers to the following nine questions:

1) How do Mennonites define or understand peace?

2) In what ways and with what approaches do Mennonites build peace?

3) What motivates Mennonites to work for peace? Why do they do what they do?

4) What are Anabaptist (MB, the BIC, and the Mennonite Church) relations like in Colombia?

5) How do Mennonites relate to Catholics in Colombia? Are historic Catholic-Protestant tensions still present?

6) Have Mennonites experienced persecution in Colombia?

7) How have Mennonite peace initiatives changed or developed over time?

8) How do Mennonite peace initiatives differ from a) secular ones?

b) religious peace projects?

9) Are Mennonite peace projects effective?

Data

      The following are the responses to the 9 central questions detailed above. It must be stressed that Mennonite beliefs are not always unique to their denomination – many other Christian groups share similar convictions and approaches – however, the focus of my research was on Mennonite perceptions of peace and their contributions to peacebuilding in Colombia. It is also important to note that although I sought to discover general 'Mennonite' views about peace, their motivations, and contributions in Colombia, Mennonites do not all believe or act in the same ways. Mennonites in Bogotá are a heterogeneous group, varying according to age, gender, status, background, etc. This diversity is reflected in the different responses to my questions. However, there were also many similarities within participant responses. These reflect a general Mennonite consensus about certain subjects and are highlighted in this data section.

1) How do Mennonites define or understand peace?

The most common word to describe peace in Mennonite circles is 'shalom,' a term so commonly used that it has become a cliché. As one church member stated, half amused, half exasperated: "there's a magic word in the Mennonite world: shalom. ... It's always shalom, shalom, shalom" (May 7B). Just over 50% of participants mentioned 'shalom' when defining peace. Mennonites see shalom as a holistic peace (April 6A; April 6B; April 14; April 24B; May 9A; May 10). Or, as one participant put it:

> Peace for Mennonites is the Hebrew concept of shalom that involves not only inner peace, but also harmonious relationships with others, including enemies, and taking care of nature, and transforming structures to promote social justice. So peace involves relationships – personal, family, church, social, etc. The difference is that some churches/religions have the concept of *pax romana*, which the last government (Uribe's) really promoted – the proposal of democratic security, peace achieved by the military and the absence of war... but there's always this tension of conflict. Other churches also have the Greek concept of *eirene*, which is more inner peace – if you have peace with yourself and God, then that's enough. But Mennonites want peace at every level. (April 23A)

Because peace is viewed holistically, Mennonites recognize that there are many elements to peace: education, health, community, internal transformation, justice, reconciliation, as well as social, economic, political equality. They also recognize that violence can take many forms. Participants asserted that the wide-ranging Mennonite approach allows them to work for peace in a variety of ways with a variety of other organizations and actors.

While approximately half participants mentioned 'shalom' by name, 77% spoke about the importance of justice. Some focused on social justice and equality, the idea that all humans should have their basic needs met. As one participant stated: "Justice is tied to it [peace], because if one person has nothing and one person has plenty, how can there be peace? Justice and peace go hand-in-hand – it's a cycle" (April 14). Ricardo Esquivia, Director of *Sembrandopaz*, said: "Peace is a dynamic moment when people can satisfy their needs within an ethical framework. … We have conflict when our basic needs aren't

met" (April 17). Partly as a way to combat the unequal distribution of wealth, many Mennonites advocate for simple living and responsible use of the earth's limited resources. Tied to this are biblical concepts of stewardship and of "having enough" (April 14; April 24A; May 6). This involves re-defining or being realistic about what a person really needs and is a traditional Anabaptist emphasis. A commitment to asceticism would reduce conflict over resources and would help to ensure that everyone had what they needed to live. As one person stated: "there's so much conflict over resources … if people were satisfied with enough, then there wouldn't be the need for [fighting]" (May 6).

When talking about peace, 46% of participants also mentioned concepts like "reconciliation" – the idea of building and restoring relationships between groups and individuals. This can be seen in ministries of reconciliation that promote inter-church alliances, advocacy, and social services for victims of conflict (April 23B). One MCC worker described a reconciliation project in Mampuján Viejo, a small town in the Montes de María region of Colombia. In 2000, paramilitaries accused the townspeople of being guerilla supporters, and they were forced to flee from their homes. In response, *Sembrandopaz* (with MCC funding) initiated a story quilt project to encourage healing and supported the ongoing reconciliation process between community members and those that displaced them (April 10). Other participants mentioned restorative justice as a practical example of reconciliation (April 22B; May 3A; May 6), because it involves rebuilding relationships among victims, offenders, and communities. One participant described how Anabaptist scholars, such as Howard Zehr, have made important contributions to this field (April 22B).

Several participants also described peace in terms of non-violence (April 10; April 16; April 22B; April 23A; April 24C; May 8; May 9B; May 10). Although there is some disagreement about whether violence is always wrong (for example, some believe in self-defense), Mennonites discourage the use of arms and violence. This is why many have been conscientious objectors in previous wars and why Mennonites have worked so hard to promote conscientious objection in Colombia and throughout the world. In Colombia, some participants backed up their non-violent stance by arguing that 60 years of warfare had not brought their country peace (May 9B). As one participant stated "[w]e support the idea of change through peaceful means" (April 10). She then went on to recount a story about a Mennonite rice-processing project in a rural region of Colombia. Paramilitary leaders approached the Mennonite church involved and asked for a tax. The church refused, arguing that it did not support armed groups, and the paramilitaries reluctantly backed down (April 10).

Non-violence also requires people to be pro-actively working for peace. Commenting on non-violence, one *Justapaz* worker said:

> [Non-violence is] a life position that implies building relationships based on respect for others, even when they think differently ... [it is] the possibility of finding common points of view that will let us construct peace. We're not just talking about physical aggression; it's also in dialogue, attitudes… because I can do more damage with a word than with an action" (April 16).

Therefore, non-violence does not mean giving in to evil; rather, it involves justice and a respect for human dignity. It also shows that violence is not the only way to respond to conflict. The Mennonite commitment to non-violence can be seen in their historic refusal to participate in wars and promotion of conscientious objection, a key activity of *Justapaz* in Colombia.

It is important to note that Mennonites seek to end violence, not conflict. Conflict, they argue, is "recognized as a part of life" because life involves relationships (April 22B). Mennonites argue that conflict is not inherently bad – it can be transformed into something positive (April 22B; May 8; May 10). As one participant stated:

> From a personal perspective, Mennonites say that conflicts aren't bad, but a lot of time people run away from conflict. I think we need to realize that within peace, there are conflicts but the conflict is something with humans – you're always going to have conflicts. How do we resolve these conflicts in a healthy way, in these spaces? (May 8th)

For this reason, Mennonites advocate strongly for non-violent conflict transformation and promote non-violence in day-to-day activities.

Peace also involves a spiritual component and internal transformation (April 14; April 23B; April 24B; April 24C; April 26; May 6; May 9A). One MCC worker argued that this aspect of shalom is "what the general [mostly secular] peace movement tends to ignore" (May 9A). One participant argued that the war and violence in Colombia had led people to become "sick in... [their] souls" almost as if there has been a "bad spirit over them" (April 23B). He implied that conflict had affected the spiritual component of humans, which needed to be healed. This aligns with the Mennonite concept of shalom, the holistic view of peace. Like other Christians, Mennonites believe that humans have a spiritual dimension that must be addressed. One respondent stated: "I think most Mennonites would argue that without some sort of spiritual dimension, I think most Mennonites would be skeptical that peace is possible without addressing spirituality *in some way*" (May 6). However, inward transformation requires and is proven by outward action. One participant cited James 2:14-26, arguing that "[i]nward change has to lead to action. That's not to say that our faith depends on actions, but "faith without action is

dead"" (April 14). She went on to say that "other churches focus too much on inward transformation and not enough on action" (April 14). Another argued that a person's internal transformation should be marked by changes in his or her relationships (April 26).

Lastly, Mennonite understandings of peace are rooted in the Bible. Mennonites believe that Jesus advocated for and demonstrated a life of non-violence and peace, and that Christians, as his followers, should do likewise. Other churches have criticized this interpretation as being "unrealistic, idealistic and irresponsible toward society and literalistic" (April 24B). However, Mennonites do not see it this way. As Mennonite Pastor Peter Stucky stated:

> Personally, I understand that peace is not a marginal addition to the Gospel nor a Mennonite quirk – peace is central to the Gospel. The posture of God toward His enemies makes peacemaking with one's enemy central to the gospel. If it hadn't been for God's approach, there wouldn't be a Gospel. The Gospel is that God made peace with his enemies. In Romans 5, we read that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That while we were still enemies, God sent his Son... Because if God had treated... [sinners] as we treat our enemies, we would have been eliminated.. but God didn't. On the contrary, Jesus died for us and forgave us and reconciled and called us to reconciliation with himself. (April 24B)

A key role of the church, therefore, is to demonstrate this divine model of peace. This is why Mennonites sometimes use the term 'peace church' to describe churches that are committed to following Jesus' peaceful example (April 16A; April 16B; April 24B; May 3A).

2) In what ways and with what approaches do Mennonites build peace?

Bottom-Up

In general, participants agreed that Mennonites tend to take a bottom-up approach to development and peacebuilding (April 10; April 14; April 16A; April 16B; April 17;

April 22; April 23A; April 23B; April 24B; April 24C; May 6; May 9B; May 10). Most of their projects focus on the grassroots level, where the majority of society is found. Since the early days of their work in Colombia, Mennonites have been working with "vulnerable people and victims – women, children, etc." (April 23B). The early Mennonites worked with the children of lepers and Protestants – social outcasts. Currently, Mennonites work with communities in poor areas of Bogotá (including Los Pinos and San Nicolas), Barranquilla, Ibagué (partly through a project called Seeds of Hope), and in other locations throughout the country.

The Mennonite preference for grassroots peacebuilding reveals their traditional distrust of governments. As one participant stated: "there's just a really strong suspicion that people in government are selfish, self-centered, don't care that government structures themselves are alienating, bureaucratic, they exist to serve the interests of power, they don't exist to serve the interests of the poor, so why should we even talk to them?" (May 6). Others argue that political involvement can lead to moral and religious compromise: "[w]e've seen that the Christians who've gotten involved have been gobbled up by those kinds of structures and compromises" (April 24B). For this reason, Mennonites often prefer to work for political and social transformation through advocacy and other methods.

The Mennonite mistrust of government varies according to context. For example, MCC workers expressed that Mennonites in Canada have a better relationship with the Canadian government than those in the United States, perhaps because of different emphases on militarism. For example, MCC has accepted funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (this decision is controversial in Mennonite

circles), but not from USAID (May 6). Also, in Bogotá, Mennonites tend to be rather distant from and distrustful of the government (April 22; April 23B; April 24B; May 6; May 9A). However, in Chocó, it is relatively common for MB church leaders to run for mayor or town council and be part of the Afro-Colombian community council, an alternative form of government (May 9A). Law 70 allows Afro-Colombians to form community councils, which have a certain level of independence and governance in local settings. Therefore "it's a far cry from 'we avoid any kind of political spaces' approach. It's not government in the traditional sense... but it is government in the traditional Afro-Colombian sense. And they would participate quite actively in that" (May 9A).

These examples demonstrate that Mennonite positions about the State vary and depend partly on context and democratic possibilities. They also reveal that Mennonites are "by no means" apolitical (May 9A). However, Mennonites do generally take a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding, preferring to work through alternative, non-political channels. Indeed, "the ideal vision ... for social change is to have grassroots organizing to the point that you get a big enough and strong enough mass of people asking for the government to do something, then the government has to do it – to change policies" (May 6). Mennonites also encourage church and community members to be politically conscious and active citizens. As one participant stated: "If the community doesn't advocate for and against different policies, ... if the community isn't conscious that if they keep electing corrupt people, nothing's going to change" (April 16A). Therefore, Mennonites hope that changes at grassroots levels will 'trickle-up' and spark top-level transformation.

Broader Activities

Although Mennonites tend to take a bottom-up, community-oriented approach, many recognize the importance of working at higher levels (April 17; April 22B; April 23B; April 24B; April 24C; April 30; May 3B; May 6; May 7B; May 8; May 9A; May 9B; May 10). As one participant stated: "if we really want to be a part of larger change, we cannot just work with grassroots. We have to engage at a higher level" (April 22B). Another added: "[i]f the community doesn't advocate for and against different policies, nothing's going to change" (April 16A). Therefore, Mennonites do work for structural change through advocacy and dialogue. Individual Mennonites have been working for peace at broader levels of society. As Paul Stucky stated:

> I think there's been an intentionality to build connections at the middle and upper range in terms of that pyramid that John Paul [Lederach] describes, and I think that's happened, and there are plenty of examples of that... Ricardo [Esquivia] himself has been a representative at the National Peace Council. Peter [Stucky] right now is the representative at the City of Bogotá Peace Council. (April 24C)

Mennonites have also worked as consultants or advisors in "spaces of peace for the government," engaged in advocacy with embassies, and some have been involved with dialogue and mediation with illegal armed groups, such as the ELN and FARC (April 17).

While *Justapaz* works with communities and churches, it is also engaged with higher levels of society. Indeed, this organization plays a role in:

> the broader arena of civil society, in the development of government programs, and in bridging peacebuilding activity across the sectors and levels of Colombian society... It is actively linked through multiple networks and direct cooperation with constituencies at all levels of peacebuilding process and, as such, is strategically situated to foster the development of an infrastructure for peace (Sampson, 2000, p.257).

Functioning as a middle-range actor, *Justapaz* engages in political advocacy regarding conscientious objection in order to change legislation and policies. *Justapaz* also publishes an annual report detailing the human rights violations experienced by

Protestants and offering political recommendations. This report, entitled *A Prophetic Call*, is used for advocacy at national and international levels. The US government also uses data from *Justapaz*'s reports (US Department of State, 2012). Lastly, *Justapaz* promotes dialogue in conflict areas to encourage peaceful negotiation and resolution (April 16A; April 16B; April 23B; April 24A; April 24B; April 24C; May 9B).

To conclude, Mennonite organizations in Colombia work with communities – those directly affected by conflict – but are also dialoguing with different levels of government at the same time. As one participant stated:

> I would say that there's an intermediary approach – being in the middle – and connecting both sides. Which ... is a bit unique. Not the only ones who do that, but it is a bit unique to actually try to not just speak on behalf of the communities, which a lot of NGOs do here, but to actually help people from communities to meet with high levels of government – not speak for them, but to be the bridge. (May 9A)

For example, in Arauca, Mennonites are helping communities to dialogue with mining and oil companies and with regional governments. Therefore while Mennonites have an affinity for grassroots movements and bottom-up peacebuilding, they do recognize the importance of working for peace at multiple levels, as can be seen in their varied peace activities in Colombia. It is also interesting that several participants were familiar with John Paul Lederach's peace pyramid model (they brought up in conversation without prompts), and were able to discuss how Mennonite organizations fit within the pyramid (April 23A, April 24C, May 3A, May 9A, etc.).

3) What motivates Mennonites to work for peace?

Peace has always been an important part of Anabaptist and Mennonite identity. Since the Reformation, Mennonites have believed that violence is wrong. For centuries,

they have been viewed as unpatriotic, disloyal and sometimes cowardly for constantly refusing to take up arms to defend their countries. This commitment to non-violence has led to oppression. Therefore, like the Jews, many Mennonites feel strongly attached to their identity as a persecuted people (April 14; April 16A; May 6; May 10). Context also plays an important role. For example in Colombia, MCC's work is centered on peace because the need for peace is so strong. As one MCC worker noted: "The Colombian program in Latin America [has peace] ... as a cross-cutting theme. That's not necessarily the norm in other countries" (May 6). By contrast, MCC's program in Bolivia focuses more on appropriate technology and agricultural programs (May 6).

Over 90% of participants asserted that the primary motivation for Mennonite peace work was theological or faith-related. Romans 5 describes how even though humans were sinners or enemies of God, Christ died for them. This is why some participants referred to the Gospel message as the 'Gospel of Peace' (Eph. 6:15; Romans 10:15). Instead of punishing humans, God took the path of non-violence by providing the means for peaceful reconciliation. As Mennonite pastor Peter Stucky stated: "If that hadn't been God's posture toward his enemies – a peace stance, a non-violent love – there would be no Gospel. So peace is not a marginal interest of what might be a central Gospel – that *is* the Gospel" (April 24B). Jesus's teaching on the Sermon of the Mount, which states, amongst other things "love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you," (Matt. 5:44) merely elaborate on this divine model of non-violence. If God used this non-violent model, then surely Christians should adopt this too. Moreover, Christians can show their love for God by loving their fellow human beings in a Christ-like way. While most of these theological concepts are widely accepted within Christian circles, some

participants believed Mennonites are more likely to emphasize the centrality of peace to the Gospel and insist on non-violence at any cost (April 16B; April 24C; May 1C; May 1D; May 5).

4) What are Anabaptist (MB, the BIC, and the Mennonite Church) relations like in Colombia?

Participants remarked that tensions exist between Anabaptist groups in Colombia, particularly in Bogotá. This has partly to do with personality clashes, but geographical proximity also plays a role. As all three denominations work in the capital city, there seems to be a stronger need to emphasize differences in order to justify variations in denomination. In other parts of Colombia, Anabaptist denominations do not coexist in the same areas; therefore the issue of identity is not as important as it is in Bogotá. For example, Mennonite Brethren working in Chocó or Cali will sometimes refer to themselves as 'Mennonites,' not because they are unaware of their denomination, but because there are no other Anabaptist groups to compare themselves with. However, in Bogotá, the MBs always refer to themselves as 'Mennonite Brethren' to distinguish themselves from the Mennonite Church (May 9A).

Tensions between the Mennonites, MBs, and BICs did not start in Colombia – these conflicts are rooted in the historic development of Anabaptist denominations. As one participant stated:

> You know, the three denominations are a result of church splits, and church splits tend to lead to divisions and barriers. You split because you can't get along, and over the years, you tend to create exaggerated sense of why you're so different from one another, and that was imported here just like it tends to be imported in most other countries where these denominations exist side by side (May 9A).

And of course, stereotypes reinforce division. Mennonites have been viewed as leftist, MBs as conservative, apolitical or rightist, with BICs being extremely varied. However, many of these stereotypes simply depict the actions or positions of certain church leaders, and are not necessarily representative of the entire denomination. Indeed,

> there is much greater diversity *within* one of those three denominations than if you're going to take an average; the average of each church would probably be pretty similar because of the diversity within the denominations on everything – on every possible subject – you can find positions all over the map within every denomination. (May 9A)

Those working at MCC, an organization that supports Mennonite, MB, and BIC projects, have attempted to break down stereotypes by highlighting the variety of thought within denominations. There have been improvements in inter-denominational cooperation. Several participants mentioned the efforts of Bonnie Klassen, MCC area director for South America and Mexico, in promoting unity (April 10; April 24B; April 24C; April 26; May 3A). For example, Mennonite Brethren have been encouraged to partner with the Mennonite Church in *Mencoldes* and CLARA, the Latin American Center of Anabaptist Resources.

5) How do Mennonites relate to Catholics in Colombia?

The nature of current Catholic-Protestant relations in Colombia is debatable. Conditions for Protestants have certainly come a long way since *La Violencia*, when they experienced active persecution from Conservatives and Catholics. Mennonite-Catholic collaboration can also be seen in some parts of Colombia. For example, the Mennonite Church is part of the Foundation for Peace and Development in Montes de Maria on the Atlantic coast. The founders of this project were Catholic bishops and Mennonite leaders.

Justapaz has also worked on joint projects with the social pastorate of the Catholic Church (April 24C; May 9A).

However, while participants agreed that international or top-level relationships have improved significantly between Catholics and Protestants, connections that have been especially promoted by the Mennonite World Conference (MWC), interactions in Colombia remain, on the whole, somewhat tense (April 10; April 23A; April 23B; May 3B; May 6; May 7A; May 8; May 9A). As one participant stated: "On a national level, there's a good environment. The Catholic Church has accepted Mennonites as a valid facilitator, and they have common projects for peace" (April 23B). Therefore, despite international and national efforts to forge inter-church partnerships, and despite the fact that Protestants no longer experience overt persecution (partly because acts of discrimination are illegal), tensions still exist.

Much of this has to do with power relations. 80-90% of the Colombian population is Catholic. Because of its size, presence, and historical hegemony, the Catholic Church is by far the largest and most influential religious actor in the country. This can cause Catholic leaders to dominate certain activities and exclude or ignore minority religious groups like the Mennonites. As one participant asserted: "there's an imbalance, because the Catholic Church has so much power and money and we're just a little church, but we do a lot as well, though it's definitely uneven" (April 23B). Another commented:

> We have worked at joint encounters on peacebuilding. But in all honesty, it is hard to work together between an elephant and a mouse. My perspective is that much of the tensions in the attempts of collaboration have been because the Catholic Church is enormous and the Mennonite Church here is miniscule. The Catholic Church doesn't need the Mennonite Church, it doesn't do them any favours to work with the Mennonite church, they don't gain much, they don't perceive that they gain much from working with the Mennonite Church. So over time, the

relationship always leans toward the Catholic Church's terms. ... it's that power difference that makes it pretty hard. (May 9A)

Some Catholic leaders have also refrained from acknowledging the contribution of Protestant churches in joint initiatives because they do not consider Protestants to be equal partners or equally involved in development (May 8). Mennonites have been "stigmatized for not being Catholic" and excluded from projects because of their religious identity (May 8).

Conditions for Protestants are generally worse in rural areas. Indeed, "the more rural you are, the stronger the divide is ... between Catholic and Protestant" (May 6). One of the reasons for this is the lack of state control in these regions. Although Colombian legislation may forbid religious discrimination, "the law doesn't make it out to ... [rural] areas" (May 8). Instead, religious tolerance is often dependent on the benevolence of traditional authorities, such as Catholic priests. Others believe that urban dwellers are more tolerant of religious diversity than their rural counterparts (May 6; May 8). As one participant described:

> [I]n urban settings, people are a lot more cosmopolitan, more tolerant of certain kinds of differences. And it's easier to be anonymous. I mean, you don't really care who this random person is that happens to be going to an evangelical church, it has nothing to do with you. But if it's your cousin who is also your neighbour and maybe you even share farmland, it makes a big difference about whether they're following a Protestant church leader or the priest. (May 6)

It is clear, then, that Mennonite-Catholic relations are contextual and vary throughout the country.

6) Have Mennonites experienced persecution in Colombia?

While overt religious oppression has diminished in Colombia, Mennonites still face persecution. Some Protestants were victims of violent attacks carried out by

members embroiled in the armed conflict. Others were strategically targeted because of their peace work and activism (April 22A; April 23B; May 6; May 9A; May 9B). Earlier non-religious persecution came in the late 1980s and 1990s as a reaction against Mennonite promotion of conscientious objection (May 9A). For example, in 1997, the Ministry of Education closed the Mennonite seminary in Bogotá because of its peacemakers program (along with *Justapaz*), which supported young people seeking exemption from military service (May 9A). Similarly, key Mennonite figures and leaders have been persecuted for their activism. Some have been threatened and blacklisted. Others have been forced to relocate within Colombia or even leave the country for fear of being killed. One participant also claimed that the phone lines at Mennonite organizations have been tapped (May 9A).

In some regions, Mennonite pastors have been targeted for opposing the cultivation of drug-crops and for refusing to pay taxes to armed groups (May 3A). Commenting on this, one participant stated: "Some of them have had to leave town or their cities, or some of them are still living there, but they get the protection of their own communities – church members that are able to walk with them during the day as bodyguards without guns to protect them" (May 3A). Unfortunately, Mennonites and other religious actors are not the only ones to experience persecution and intimidation – human rights defenders, farmers, indigenous communities, unionists, journalists, and anyone else attempting to right for rights are under threat in Colombia (May 9B).

7) How have Mennonite peace initiatives changed or developed over time?

Early Mennonite work began in Cachipay, where they started a school for the healthy children of lepers. Children of day laborers, campesinos, and persecuted

Protestants also attended. As Peter Stucky, who grew up in Colombia, stated: "Looking back and analyzing it, the work started here with the most marginalized peoples" (April 24B). He also described the persecution Mennonites experienced during *La Violencia* and how, along with Communists and Free Masons, they were seen as enemies of the Catholic Church and Colombia itself.[11] One participant argued that this persecution led early Mennonites to downplay their peace emphasis to reduce friction with other Protestant groups. He stated: "I think Gerald [Stucky] made a wise decision to start with service work during persecution and later enter into the political aspect" (April 17). Others concurred that persecution led Protestants to band together, as evidenced by the creation of CEDEC (later, CEDECOL) in 1950, a council that unified Colombian Protestants and published reports about Protestant persecution. In the 1990s, Mennonites would push for the development of a Commission for Human Rights and Peace within CEDECOL; once officially recognized, its name was changed to the Commission for Life, Restoration and Peace, and is still very active today.

However, several participants argued that the early missionary focus on service work was not so much a conscious avoidance of political activism but more a product of divergent views about Anabaptist identity (April 24B; April 24C; May 7A; May 9A). As Peter Stucky stated: "the point wasn't to emphasize differences between evangelical groups but to emphasize similarities and work together. But I think also one would have to say that the whole Anabaptist consciousness was very different at that time then it is now" (April 24B). Similarly, Paul Stucky commented:

---

[11] This is also noted on p.418 in Hernández Delgado, E. (2012). *Intervenir antes que anochezca. Mediaciones, intermediaciones y diplomacias noviolentas de base social en el conflicto armado colombiano*. Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga: Bucaramanga, Colombia.

If I were to reconstruct that, I wouldn't say that they deliberately downplayed the peace and non-violence thing as much as they probably just had a different emphasis. Maybe even in their own theological understanding, it wasn't as clear [...] So I don't think they spoke of their work in terms of peace, but certainly the kinds of things that they did was acting in solidarity with the most marginalized people (April 24C).

The early focus on service instead of peace work in Colombia reflected trends in global Mennonite thought at the time.

Indeed, Anabaptist theology and identity has changed dramatically since the Second World War. Changes in Anabaptist thought began during WW2 with Harold S. Bender's[12] call to recover the original vivacity of Anabaptism, and grew during the 1950s and 1960s with the foundation of Mennonite institutions, increased Anabaptist research, conscientious objection, and service activities. The transition from quiet non-resistance to non-violence and active peacemaking only began in the 1960s and 1970s, and spread in the 1980s with increased international activities (Driedger & Kraybill, 1994; Miller, 2000). Addressing the Mennonite World Conference in 1984, Ron Sider challenged Anabaptists to work more actively for peace, risking their lives if need be. Soon after, Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) were formed and sent out to assist war-torn countries. Therefore, Anabaptist international peace activities and peace literature were still developing in the 1980s. This helps to explain why early Mennonite missionaries focused less on peace than they currently do.

According to Paul Stucky, early Mennonite missionaries like his parents did not have "as clear a vision" about Anabaptist identity and peace (April 24C). This would change when new missionaries and second generation Mennonites, such as Paul and Peter

---

[12]Harold S. Bender, was the President of the American Society of Church History, and Dean and Acting President of Goshen College. Bender gave his famous speech, "the Anabaptist Vision," at the Milbank Chapel at Columbia University in New York City on December 28th, 1943.

Stucky, began to explore what it meant to be an Anabaptist. As one participant said:

> Anabaptist identity [...] was probably implicit in the early decades with the missionaries, but it wasn't explicit, and so when the second generation of Mennonites here began to explore 'who are we?' and 'what are we doing?' then, they sort of discovered 'oh wow, this applies to us. We're living in a context of oppression or violence similar to the 16th century, and how are we going to approach this?' (May 9A).

In the 1960s and 1970s in Bogotá, people seeking better lives were often drawn to the insurgent groups, which were seen to be an "interesting, romantic, effective option" (May 9A). In this atmosphere, the new Anabaptist vision provided an alternative to supporting government or revolutionary forces. For, at the time, "almost nobody talked about settling the conflict with negotiations, with non-violent means or anything like that – it was all 'who is going to win the shoot-out?'" (April 24B).

Several participants estimated that the Anabaptist awakening in Latin America began in the 1980s and 1990s (April 16A; April 16B; April 22B; April 26; May 7A; May 9A). One participant stated that "there were probably some peacebuilding efforts" in Colombia during the 1960s and 1970s, these were not structured, institutionalized, or significant until the 1980s (May 9A). The Anabaptist awakening was encouraged by SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary. This organization began publishing books and translating works in the early 1980s in order to make Anabaptist literature available. Anabaptist conferences and dialogues in Latin America also promoted Anabaptist consciousness. Moreover, 1989 saw the foundation of CLARA, the Latin American Anabaptist Resource Center, and *Justapaz*, which lobbied for the right to conscientiously object to military service. Participants agreed that conscientious objection, which was also being promoted by Mennonites in Central America during the time, was the first Mennonite peace initiative in Colombia.

While conceding that other groups and individuals have worked for conscientious objection, participants agreed that Mennonites were the major players in this effort. This movement highlighted a commitment to nonviolence and also a readiness to challenge and influence political leaders. Commenting on MCC changing views on societies in conflict, one participant stated: "[MCC] workers in different places [...] realized that it didn't matter how much support or aid they were giving to communities – a day of bombing would ruin it all. So MCC realized that they needed to impact their politicians" (April 22B). In other words, Mennonites realized that they needed to be involved in advocacy, social activism, and political engagement rather than simply refusing to use violence. One participant described this shift as "going from non-resistance to active non-violence," and asserted that some Colombian churches have embraced this movement while others are "just starting [...] to get the concept" (April 17).

Participants identified other changes have occurred in the Colombian Mennonite approach to peace. Strategies have shifted depending on the availability of resources and the ability to have a presence in certain regions. Other factors influencing Mennonite peace initiatives include different sources of funding, technological advancements (such as skype, email, etc.), and the development of new networks (April 16B). Mennonites have also realized that there is a need to strengthen churches – developing church leadership, communication skills, the capacity to organize and mobilize, political participation, non-violent conflict transformation, strategic planning, etc. – before social ministries and peace projects can be developed. As one participant stated: "Originally, we worked with churches to have a social ministry to do their peace projects. We also have this focus on sanctuary churches. But to get to that point, we figured out that the church

needed inner structural strengthening before doing other projects" (April 16A). The FOAP (Organizational Strengthening and Church Action for Peace)[13] program was designed to strengthen churches so that they can develop peace within surrounding communities.

Participants gave different responses when asked whether Mennonites were the first to initiate peace projects in Colombia. Some mentioned the Catholic Church's early involvement in promoting peace (April 17; April 30; May 8; May 9A). Others were somewhat dismissive (May 1A; May 22), and described the paradoxical nature of Catholic peace work, arguing that it "lights candles for the devil and for God" (April 24B). While the Catholic Church has been involved with important peace dialogues and mediation, it has also allied itself with violent governments and has historically been complicit in the Colombian conflict. Others stated that while peace had been an explicit Mennonite focus for many years, other churches, such as the Lutherans and Presbyterians, have been involved in peace work for many years. All participants stressed that Mennonites are not the only ones currently working for peace. While participants were divided about whether Mennonites were the first to work for peace Colombia, all agreed that "after almost 20 years, we've found that the theme of peace is not exclusive to the Mennonites. There are many [...] thinking and acting similarly" (April 17).

8 a) How do Mennonite peace initiatives differ from secular ones?

<u>Spiritual Dimension</u>

Most Mennonites have no problem working with like-minded secular organizations to promote peace, and value their initiatives and the contribution of political

---

[13] *Fortalecimiento Organizacional y de Acción de las Iglesias* (FOAP)

sciences, social sciences, and anthropology (April 23A). While many commonalities exist between Mennonite and secular peace initiatives, the major difference participants pointed to is, understandably, the religious or spiritual dimension (April 10; April 22B; April 23A; April 23B; April 24B; April 24C; May 3A; May 7A; May 9A; May 10). Unlike secular actors, Mennonites believe that peace work is "part of a religious calling, part of being a Christian, part of the church" (April 22). Therefore, as previously stated, their motivation is different. Engaging in peace work is an inherent element of being a responsible, active Christian. Spiritual beliefs often lead Mennonites to focus more on forgiveness, love, relationships, and reconciliation than secular actors do. One MCC worker discussed how along with regular counseling activities, CEAS (Coordinación Eclesial para la Acción Psicosocial or Church Coordination for Psychosocial Action) has a "spiritual wing" that can bring about a "new kind of healing that's not necessarily available with ... secular organizations" (April 10). Because they argue that humans have a spiritual component, Mennonites believe spiritual healing is just as necessary as psychological healing (April 22B). Similarly, some believe Mennonite reconciliation is a "[m]ore in-depth process than secular organization[s]" have because it is based on divine reconciliation modeled by Christ (April 10).

Community-oriented

Some participants also believed that Mennonites are more relationship or community-oriented than most secular organizations (April 22B; May 1C; May 8; May 9A). One MCC worker said: "[w]hat secular organizations that provide humanitarian aid lack is bringing a sense of community and identity to the people they work with" (April 22). In Colombia, churches provide people with a sense of community – they are, in

102

general, safe spaces where people can meet, worship together, and form friendships. Churches provide support and welfare, and allow for networking. Some provide childcare, meals, and other social services. Mennonite commitment to community can also be seen in their attempts to include communities in the creation of development projects and policies. Furthermore, Mennonite development workers, pastors, and missionaries tend to live within the communities they work with, often for years and decades, in order to help and truly understand them.

8 b) How do Mennonite peace initiatives differ from other religious projects?

Mennonites share many characteristics with other religious groups in Colombia. Most participants refrained from commenting on Muslim[14] or Jewish[15] peace projects. This may be because they had little or no knowledge about these initiatives, because few if any of these projects exist, or, and most likely, the participants automatically associated "religious peace initiatives" with Christian groups (which, to be fair, constitute the vast majority). Mennonite peace projects are particularly similar to other Protestant ones, therefore it is difficult to pin point specific divergences. Some participants were unable to do so, asserting that Mennonite peace initiatives were "pretty much the same" as other religious (Christian) peace projects (April 23B; April 24A; May 1B; May 3A; May 22).

---

[14] There are approximately 14,000 Muslims in Colombia (The Pew Forum, 2009). There are centers for Islamic faith, Islamic schools, and mosques in various regions of the country, including Maicao, Bogotá, Barranquilla, Cartagena, Bucaramanaga, Santa Marta, Pereira, Armenia, etc. While Muslim organizations are involved in charity work, I could find no specific information about Muslim peace projects in Colombia. Individual Muslims may be involved in peace-related activities.

[15] I could find no information about Jewish peace projects in Colombia. The Jewish population is very small in Colombia – estimates are at 2,500 – and most live in urban areas, particularly in Bogotá, where there are four synagogues (American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, 2014). Most Jewish organizations in Colombia appear to promote Jewish identity and religiosity. However, Jewish organizations in Cali have joined together to form the *Unión Federal Hebrea* [Federal Hebrew Union], which provides spiritual and social resources. The *Unión Federal Hebrea* appears to be involved with "Proyecto Tzedaká." Although this foundation is not explicitly linked to peace, it does promote development through educational, health, child-care, and housing programs, among other things.

Others disagreed, stating that while there are many similarities, Mennonites do have certain emphases that distinguish them from other groups.

Although Mennonite churches vary, they tend to place less emphasis on proselytizing than other religious groups, including other Anabaptist denominations (April 10; April 16A; April 16B). This may be why the Mennonite church has been criticized for low rates of growth. As one person asserted:

> For Mennonites, we feel that it's our role as followers of Jesus to act like him even if we don't think anyone will change. We want to respect others. A big criticism of the Mennonite Church is that they haven't grown as a church. We don't evangelize to bring people to the Mennonite Church. Proselytizing isn't a big emphasis for the Mennonite Church of Colombia. Many churches evangelize to bring people into the church – to grow the church. Mennonites bring the Good News, but they're not doing it to increase membership. (April 16A)

Some participants also expressed the opinion that Mennonite churches are generally more respectful of differences than other religious groups, especially Catholic ones (April 16A; April 16B; April 23B). One participant argued that the Mennonite approach was very different to the "egotistical" Prosperity Gospel (May 9B). Others mentioned that Mennonites are more open to working with other religious groups than Catholics are, arguing that this showed Mennonites are more inclusive (April 16A; April 16B; May 8). While this could be true, it may be that Mennonites are willing to work with other groups because they represent a small minority. Catholics, on the other hand, can afford to be selective because they have more influence and power.

Some also argued that Mennonites tend to include communities in decision-making processes, whereas Catholics are more likely to decide what must be done without consulting communities (April 16A; April 16B; April 23A). Commenting on their work with Jesuits from the Social Pastorate of the Catholic Church, two *Justapaz* workers

104

stated: "[w]e really note the difference when we work with them. They decide for others... The Mennonite Church promotes a collective model in the middle of a culture that is very individualized. That's why it's important that the church community makes decision" (April 16A). Two participants also mentioned that Mennonites tend to promote the role of women in the church (April 16A; April 16B).

Lastly, while other religious and secular groups have worked for peace, Mennonites are known for their peace emphasis. Participants argued that while other groups, like the Presbyterians, Lutherans and Catholics, have worked on peace initiatives, Mennonites have been the most direct and intentional (April 24B; April 24 C; May 3B; May 7B). One participant stated:

> I think that we probably have been one of the religious groups that has made this [peace] more explicit and been more deliberate at it – not the only one, but I think we've been pretty intentional about it. And also, probably within us, some churches more than others. And probably the Mennonite Church more than the Mennonite Brethren and the Brethren in Christ. (Paul Stucky, April 24 C)

The Mennonite emphasis on peace can be seen in their efforts to promote conscientious objection. Some secular, church and Islamic groups support the military and believe the Colombian army should be even stronger (April 23A). Still, many promote non-violence. However, while other groups and individuals have promoted non-violence in Colombia, the Anabaptists, and Mennonites in particular, seem to be the most vocal and active in challenging obligatory military service. As one participant stated: "I think that's our added value: nonviolence and conscientious objection. ... we're trying to stop the obligatory military service" (April 16B). Most active in this realm is *Justapaz*. This center has been working to make conscientious objection a fundamental right in Colombia's constitution for almost 25 years. Even though a constitutional court recognized

105

conscientious objection as a fundamental right in 2009, this has not been codified in legislation and participants expressed that it would take time for laws to be recognized and put into action.

9) Are Mennonite peace projects effective?

It is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of Mennonite peace initiatives in Colombia. Participants themselves were not sure how to answer this question. Some shrugged and smiled, seemingly unconcerned with the question. Others gave an affirmative answer, but they also stressed how their small population and resources limited their impact. One argued that the kind of work they do (relationship building and "changing thinking") meant that it is slow and hard to evaluate (April 17).

Despite their uncertainty or unwillingness to comment on the impact of their work, participants were quick to give credit to other organizations, religious and secular, that are working to bring peace to Colombia. Still, participants described how central peace is to Mennonites – although other groups and organizations work for peace, Mennonites see peace as the key part of their identity and their area of specialization (April 10; April 16A; April 16B; April 24C; May 1A; May 22). According to one participant:

> There has been a change in the way we see and think and view things. For a lot of denominations at the beginning, they weren't so interested in peace, but today it's a priority. Now churches and civil society and international organizations are taking these into account and realize the need for policy changes. Now, many people are working for peace – this is an indirect result of the Mennonite Church, though they don't recognize this. (April 16A)

Therefore, while participants recognized that Mennonites have not been the only actors (religious or secular) to work for peace, their focus on peace and peace projects have inspired others to value and work for peace.

106

Participants also mentioned renowned Anabaptist scholars who have made important contributions to the literature on peace. Several participants mentioned John Paul Lederach's name, some describing how he had visited Colombia several times to give talks, and had been invited to speak at Catholic universities (April 16A; April 16B; April 23B; April 24C; May 3A; May 9B). One participant also discussed how Mennonite terms and concepts, such as 'conflict transformation' and 'nonviolence,' are commonly used within the Colombian peace movement (May 9A). Also, the growing acceptance of non-violence (the realization that peace cannot be attained through violence) among Colombians, particularly religious ones, may reflect the 'success' of Mennonite peacebuilding. Lastly, participants were quick to describe the role of Mennonites in promoting conscientious objection (April 10; April 16A; April 16B; April 17; April 23B; April 24A; April 24B; April 24 C; May 7A; May 7B). Indeed, Mennonites were the first to work for conscientious objection. While they are not the only ones to do so, *Justapaz* is widely recognized as the 'go-to' organization for this, and churches of different denominations often refer young men to *Justapaz* (April 16A; April 16B). To conclude, although participants were hesitant to evaluate the effectiveness of Mennonite peace initiatives, they did believe their work is important and that it is having a positive impact on Colombian society.

Conclusion

This chapter discusses how and why I conducted my study on Mennonite contributions to peace. Participant responses to the central nine interview questions were also recorded. The implications of these responses are explored in the following discussion section.

Discussion

Introduction

This discussion section analyzes the responses to the nine key thematic questions in the data section by evaluating and comparing these answers to relevant literature and my own observations to promote accuracy. These nine themes relate back to the goal to describe how Mennonites in Bogotá have worked to establish peace in Colombia in order to gain insight about building sustainable peace in Colombia.

This study sought to explore Mennonite perceptions of their work as well as their motives for doing peace work, understandings of peace, and approaches to peace. Because the study was qualitative, it was necessary to interpret the data. I did this by grouping or coding the data according to themes arising from specific interview questions. Reflective analysis, depending on "my own intuition and personal judgments to analyze the data," was also used (Dooley, 2002, p.343). After sorting the data into categories, participant responses were compared to relevant literature on Mennonite peace projects, religious peacebuilding, and religion and development.

Definitions of Peace

One of the first questions I asked participants was how they defined peace. As previously noted, participants often mentioned "shalom" when talking about peace. Participant understandings of shalom – as a holistic peace characterized by harmonious relationships – align with definitions of shalom found in the literature (Woodley, 2012). They are also similar to definitions provided in Mennonite publications. One *Justapaz* manual describes shalom as: "the integral/complete salvation of God; the personal, familial, spiritual, and social recovery which not only restores the dignity of people in society, but also constructs it with non-violence as the lifestyle in day-to-day interpersonal and national relationships" (Gáfaro and Stucky, 2006, p.290). Moreover, participant understandings of shalom align with Hertog's (2010) "soft aspects" of peace and literature on religion and peace in general. Indeed, when describing shalom, scholars and writers have described it as a holistic peace characterized by justice, reconciliation, well-being, and harmonious relations between God, humans, and nature.

Scholars also agree with participants that peace involves more than the absence of violence (Sherman, 2011; Coward & Smith, 2004), but is rather a "vision of what ought to be and a call to transform society" (Yoder, 1987). Rogers, Bamat, and Ideh (2008) add that the Hebrew term shalom "conveys a desire for wholeness, fulfillment, completion, unity, and wellbeing, thereby encompassing both reconciliation and justice" (p.5). Lastly, Nessan (2010) describes shalom as a call to give special attention to the needs of the vulnerable. Perhaps this accounts for participant statements about how Mennonites have historically worked with the most marginalized groups in Colombia (April 24B).

While the broad Mennonite concept of peace allows them to be well-rounded and inclusive, it may also be too general, idealistic, and difficult to quantify. Moreover, it is

difficult to say whether the pervasive usage of the term 'shalom' among participants reflects actual Mennonite thought and practice, or whether members are merely parroting a well-known concept. Still, the wide variety of Mennonite peace initiatives reflects an understanding of the importance of taking a multifaceted approach to peace. Also, familiarity with peace concepts within Mennonite circles suggests that they recognize the value of peace. Lastly, understanding peace as shalom, or harmonious relations, explains the Mennonite emphasis on dialogue, reconciliation, and mediation to "build bridges" (Hernández Delgado, 2012, p.423).

While approximately half of participants mentioned "shalom," I was surprised that even more (77%) linked peace with justice. In the Mennonite understanding of peace or "shalom," the emphasis on harmony does not mean smoothing over social problems and inequalities; rather, harmony is achieved once these problems are addressed. Viewing justice as a crucial part of peace accounts for Mennonite efforts to raise awareness about the problems in Colombia through advocacy campaigns and by lobbying the government. My surprise at the importance of justice in Mennonite conceptions of peace may reflect an underlying assumption that peace and justice cannot be pursued simultaneously – the idea that justice is often sacrificed for peace. It also highlights simplistic conceptualizations of peace as involving healing and truth, and justice as being synonymous with punishment.

Although participants described peace as going "hand-in-hand" with justice (April 10; April 14), few elaborated on how the two could be pursued at once. Interestingly, participants did not mention "transitional justice." This term has been applied to Colombia despite criticism that no "transition" has occurred since the war has not ended

(Saffon & Uprimny, 2007). Instead, some participants mentioned restorative justice (April 22B; May 3A; May 6), which Anabaptist scholar Howard Zehr defined as "a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things right as possible" (p.37). This model assumes that because crime damages relationships, justice should involve restoring relations amongst victims, offenders and community members.

While restorative justice has been criticized for trivializing crime and for having little effect on recidivism (Morris, 2001), this approach to crime resonates with the Mennonites' focus on reconciliation, a major component of the Mennonite understanding of peace. Many believe that just as God reconciled humans to Himself through Jesus, Christians are called to be agents of reconciliation. The idea is to work for peace by rebuilding and restoring the inter-connected relationships within communities and societies.

Mennonite concepts of justice were not thoroughly explored in this thesis. However, comments related to restorative justice and reconciliation raise questions about establishing peace in Colombia. For example, forgiveness is an important element in restorative justice and reconciliation, but what if victims are unwilling to forgive? Eisikovits (2014) argues that forgiveness may not be necessary – victims could "seek legal rather than private justice" or, if they have the necessary resources (a big 'if' in Colombia), they could physically move away from perpetrators (3.2.4). Others argue that reconciliation cannot occur before restitution is given (Corntassel & Holder, 2008). Although the Colombian government's track record for providing reparations to victims

is poor (Carillo, 2009; Esquivia, 2009), this does not mean that restitution should not be pursued.

Mennonites acknowledge that when relating to another person, there is always the possibility of disagreement or conflict. However, they strive to resolve conflict in non-violent ways. This commitment can be seen in their promotion of conscientious objection. The commitment to non-violence can also be observed in their manuals for teaching mediation and non-violent transformation of conflict, which stress the importance of communication and active listening (Gáfaro & Stucky, 2006).

This strict non-violent stance raises questions about the most effective ways for bringing about peace. Is violence ever acceptable as a means for securing peace? Do government and police forces have the right to forcibly control insurgent groups? Should citizens have the right to defend themselves from attacks? As mentioned in the historical background section, those adhering to strict policies of non-violence, such as peace communities, do not always fare well against armed actors. While Mennonites hold different opinions about self-defense, most would argue against governmental use of violence. In the Colombian case (where government-sanctioned military, paramilitary and police forces have committed human rights abuses), such a position is understandable and appropriate.

More importantly, the non-violent stance is growing in popularity. Many churches and individuals within Colombia's current peace movement support and insist upon using non-violent methods to establish peace. This change in thinking may have come from realizing the futility of violence after witnessing years of war, or as a result of active peace activists and educators. It may also reflect contemporary trends, and the

proliferation of peace literature and research in Colombia. Whether or not Mennonites have helped spark this non-violent trend, it is clear that they, unlike some other groups and churches, have been adhering to non-violence from the beginning. While there is a variety of thinking in Anabaptist circles, most would agree that "real peace is finding a solution without using weapons – ever" (April 22B). And given this strict stance, it is possible that Colombian Mennonites have influenced others working for peace to value this approach.

Peace Approaches

In general, participants claimed Mennonites mostly take a bottom-up approach, an assertion that is corroborated by scholars (Miller, 2000; Mitchell, 2000, etc.). One reason Mennonites are attracted to grassroots activities is they see Jesus as someone who opposed the dominant culture by humbly "walking with the poor" (Myers, 2011). Anabaptist scholar Kraybill (1990) describes the kingdom of God as an "upside-down kingdom," which places God's countercultural values and the poor above the dominant values and power figures of the world. Therefore, by working with the poor, Mennonites believe they are following a divine model of humility. Moreover, this commitment to humility can be seen in their affinity for capacity building (Mitchell, 2000), participant-centered elicitive training (Lederach, 1995), and accompaniment (April 30).

The tendency for Mennonites to take a bottom-up approach has both advantages and disadvantages. Proponents of this approach believe internal change will lead to social change, and focus on conflict mediation training. They do this to promote a culture of peace, which develops as pro-peace values gradually spread from person to person. Some participants expressed the belief that if enough people and communities are transformed

and committed to peace, they will "make so much noise" that those in power will be forced to listen and make structural changes (May 10). This can also be seen in the Mennonite strategy of creating peace sanctuary churches, which can model nonviolent behaviour and beliefs that will potentially spread outward into communities (Gáfaro & Stucky, 2006).

This strategy of using churches to model peace is somewhat similar to the "leopard spot" concept discussed in the literature review – that pockets of peace will eventually expand and engulf areas of violence (Mitchell, 2012, p.2). This concept is problematic because some governments perceive grassroots initiatives as interfering with national peace attempts (Hancock & Mitchell, 2012, p.161). Moreover, "elites tend to have far more ability to impact the grassroots than vice-versa" (Hancock & Mitchell, 2012, p.172).

Even so, transformation at the personal and local level is important. History has shown that neglecting to transform individuals and beliefs can hinder positive social change. For example, despite legislative or "structural" changes that were brought on by the Civil Rights Movement in America to discourage racism, racial discrimination was and still is a problem because some individuals' prejudices have yet to be changed. Therefore, altering beliefs is important; however, it does take a long time. Indeed, when commenting on Mennonite efforts to promote peace in rural Colombia, one person stated: "it's a slow work – very slow – because it's a work that involves changing thinking [... and] when you need to change mentalities [...] it's very slow, because it's hard to get someone to think differently" (April 17). Even though the process is long, this participant argued that it is advancing.

114

Others criticize the bottom-up approach for being too individualistic. Lebranc (n.d.) asserts that this kind of approach sees the individual as the primary agent for change when really, "conflict brings *groups* to the fore (individuals acting as members of groups) instead of individuals free from any social constraint" (p.18). For this reason, individual transformation may not be effective in preventing violence. Also, Lebranc (n.d.) argues that "neither a "cognitive" relation to the past (knowledge of prior periods of extreme violence or civic education) nor adherence to humanistic values can provide reliable fortification from political collective violence" (p.18). This assertion seems to be validated by historic trends. In 1948, when the United Nations passed Genocide Convention, the world responded "never again." Unfortunately, despite education, research, and global awareness, these atrocities were committed repeatedly throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Similarly, knowledge of past conflict and increased education have not prevented more bloodshed in Colombia.

Mennonites use several different peace strategies and work at a variety of levels. According to John Paul Lederach's peacebuilding pyramid, *Justapaz* can be seen as a mid-range actor rather than a grassroots level organization because it bridges the gap between grassroots and broader society (Lederach, 1997). On the one hand, *Justapaz* works at the grassroots level through community development (through CPTC – Building Peace through Community Transformation[16]) and, more specifically, through churches. This can be seen in their work with Sanctuaries of Peace Program, which demonstrates the vision of churches being 'sanctuaries of peace' – spaces of refuge where Christians model the non-violent example of Christ – as described in *Justapaz* manuals (Arrieta &

---

[16] Construyendo Paz desde la Transformación Comunitaria (CPTC)

Justapaz 2005; Gáfaro, & Stucky, 2006, etc.). *Justapaz* is also involved with FOAP, which seeks to strengthen church leadership so leaders will actively work for peace within their communities according to their Anabaptist identity. Moreover, *Justapaz* provides resources and training in mediation, conflict transformation, human rights, and conscientious objection.

MCC Colombia has also played an important role in working for peace at broader levels of society. In April 2013, MCC launched The Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia (DOPA). This campaign encouraged churches in Colombia and North America to pray and pressure governments to promote peace and justice in Colombia (Sears, 2013). MCC Colombia is also advocating against mining, partly through MCC Ottawa's Mining Justice Campaign; migration and displacement, in partnership with the Observatory of Mining Conflicts in Latin America (OCMAL) and MCC's Advocacy Program of Latin America and Caribbean (LACA); urban violence, partly through the Fear Not Campaign; and land, including issues like land titling, land grabbing, etc. Other items on MCC Colombia's agenda include peace and reconciliation, the Peace Talks (2012 onward), conscientious objection, the use of child soldiers, recruitment, and demobilization (Colombia Advocacy Issues, n.d.). In doing this, MCC Colombia is assisted by many partner organizations and other MCC offices in Washington, Ottawa, and at the UN. MCC's Seed (or *Semilla*) program also promotes community advocacy and young adults in the program provide MCC with details about local issues.

To conclude, the Mennonite affinity for grassroots work has many advantages, and is made more effective by completing middle-level approaches. More attention to mid-range activities, and perhaps some top-level attempts with the right policymakers and

figures, may also be beneficial.

Motivation

Asking participants why they and why other Mennonites work for peace was important, because these motives reveal how Mennonites understand their work and why they approach their work in the manner that they do. Participants generally agreed that they believed peace work was a natural extension of their identity as followers of Christ (April 10; April 11; April 14; April 16A; April 16B; April 17; April 22A; April 22B; April 24A; April 24B; April 24C; May 1A; May 1C; May 6; May 7A; May 8; May 9A; May 9B; May 22). However, the members of the three Anabaptist denominations in Colombia (MB, BIC, and Mennonite) disagreed as to how much social work and how much 'church work' they should be doing. This disagreement highlights differing opinions about the purpose of the church, and how to balance social and spiritual ministries.

In response to the third question, several participants discussed how as followers of Christ, they should be trying to act like Jesus in their everyday lives. After all, Jesus is considered to be the 'Prince of Peace,' who demonstrated God's love by loving and dying for humans, most of whom rejected him. Indeed, "[f]or the Mennonite Church, peace has its basis in the love of God as revealed in creation, in God's story with his people, and in the life and message of Jesus Christ" (Called Together, n.d., p.37). There is, then, a Christological basis for Mennonite interpretations of peace.

One interviewee mentioned the phrase "the Kingdom of God is now and not yet," emphasizing the fact that while perfection will exist in the End Times, Christians are still required to work for justice now. In other words, it is not enough to address the spiritual

needs; Christians must take a holistic approach by addressing temporal needs, as Jesus did. Many Mennonites and Christians of other denominations have taken this to heart. They have been heavily involved in assisting those in need and calling attention to root causes of inequality through advocacy. Because of this, Mennonites have been criticized, both by secular and religious actors, for being "too political" (April 24B; May 9B). Some churches have accused Mennonites of being "Liberation Theologians" and "Leftists," wondering why they are so active in the political sphere and so critical of the government (April 24B).

These criticisms demonstrate the controversy over the role of church in society and about what ministry should look like. There is considerable disagreement even within Bogotá's Anabaptist circles about how much emphasis should be placed on social activism and religious instruction. Of the interviewed Mennonite, MB and BIC, there was a general consensus that Mennonite churches placed a greater emphasis on and had been more involved with social work. This is supported by the many Mennonite initiatives in Bogotá. One reason for this difference is that the Brethren in Christ (BIC) churches were established much later (in 1984) and have far fewer members. There are only two BIC churches in all of Colombia, and both are situated in Bogotá. With less presence in the area and less time to develop social initiatives, it is not surprising that they are less socially active. Internal conflict may have also slowed the progress of BIC peace and social ministries.

Mennonite Brethren (MB) churches too seemed less active. This may be due to differences in individual pastors' visions for the church or because original missionary founders put more of an emphasis on traditional religious activities than social work. It

118

may also reflect disagreement as to the role of church in society or different approaches to peace. Some MBs believe Mennonites put too much emphasis on social work and not enough on preaching the Gospel, whereas some Mennonites believe the MBs are too focused on 'traditional pastoral activities' at the expense of social justice (April 26B). One MB pastor expressed his frustration at being constantly pressured by the Mennonite Church to engage in social advocacy when he is already busy with pastoral duties, such as working with the youth and marriage counseling. As he stated: "if I say I'm working for peace within families and marriages, they say "that's nothing – there's a lot of injustice in the country." So then I feel guilty that I'm not working for peace" (April 26B).

The same pastor asserted that peace should be built from the inside out in a process he called "building a culture of peace" (April 26B). First, a person becomes "at peace with God"; conversion begins a process of inward transformation. This change should become evident in transformed relationships in the home and active service within the person's church, which will help the person grow in faith and discover his or her gifts. It is only after these three stages occur should a person become involved in exterior spaces. One participant argued that Mennonites jump too quickly from the first step, individual change, to the fourth step, societal change (April 26B). This, he argued, does not allow a person to develop spiritually and ignores the importance of family.

Therefore, differences in MB-Mennonite focus may reflect a different approach and vision of peace – one that is more focused on internal transformation and community/church development over social activism. That being said, it is very difficult to say whether these views are representative of MB thought within Bogotá, let alone in other diverse regions of Colombia.

Anabaptist Relations

While Mennonites are deeply involved in peace work, several participants spoke about or implied that tensions exist between Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren (MB), and Brethren in Christ (BIC) churches in Colombia (April 14; April 26; May 6; May 8; May 9A).

Reasons for conflict include personality clashes, theological differences, issues of identity, and stereotyping. Historic factors may also play a role in current tensions. Church schisms generally occur because members are unable to settle their differences, and therefore tend to lead to bad feeling and hostility between groups (May 9A). Anabaptist groups are no different. In addition, different leaders have different priorities, and it appears that some Anabaptist churches are more involved with peace work than others. This could reflect divergent views about the church's role in society. It is also possible that churches less involved with peace work have yet to "rediscover" traditional Anabaptist identity.

Tension between Anabaptist churches in Colombia begs the question: how can Mennonites hope to achieve peace when they have trouble getting along with other Anabaptist denominations in Colombia? Fortunately, it appears that interdenominational relations are improving. However, if Colombian Anabaptists are to provide a united front for peace, much more progress must be made in this area (especially at grassroots levels).

Mennonite-Catholic Relations

At the global level, as participants stated, relations between Mennonites and Catholics have improved considerably. From 1998-2003, the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and the Catholic Church took part in the first official international

dialogue in order to "overcome the consequences of almost five centuries of mutual isolation and hostility" (p.3). Leaders hoped that although differences existed between the two groups, the fundamental and shared belief in Jesus Christ combined with a space for dialogue would promote greater understanding, respect, and peace. The conclusions of these talks are summed up in a common report, which discusses Mennonite and Catholic histories and theologies in an effort to heal memories. These talks represented an important step in reconciling two very different churches. Also, in March 2013, Mennonite World Conference President César Garcia sent a letter of congratulation to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for the election of Pope Francis.

Participants seem to be correct in their assertions that Catholic-Mennonite relations have generally improved in Colombia. The Second Vatican Council (1962-65), for example, promoted tolerance for other faiths (Juhnke, 1979). Also, the 1991 Constitution of Colombia marked increase tolerance for Protestantism and other minority religions. This can be seen in article 13 and 19 of the constitution:

> **Art. 13**: All individuals are born free and equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection and treatment by the authorities, and to enjoy the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities *without discrimination on the basis of* gender, race, national or family origin, language, *religion*, political opinion, or philosophy. (emphasis added, p.5)
> **Art. 19**: Freedom of religion is guaranteed. Every individual has the right to freely profess his/her religion and to disseminate it individually or collectively. All religious faiths and churches are equally free before the law. (p.6-7)

This Constitution also dropped Roman Catholicism as the state religion, although many argue that the Catholic Church continues to enjoy preferential treatment due to its dominance and historical importance. Still, making religious discrimination illegal has helped to promote religious tolerance.

While Mennonite-Catholic interactions are more cordial at the global level, relations between Mennonites and Catholics have also generally improved in Colombia. Nowadays, open hostility (as observed in the time of *La Violencia*) is rare. However, discrimination and suspicion still exist, particularly in rural settings, where "little pockets of exclusion and persecution" can still be found (May 8). This inter-church tension reflects imbalances in power and underlying hostility in collective Protestant historical memory for the persecution experienced in the 20th century. Although international advances in religious reconciliation bode well, only time will tell whether Colombian churches will overcome obstacles relating to hegemony and historical memory.

Mennonite Persecution

Participants were asked about Mennonite persecution in Colombia because I thought levels of oppression might be linked to Mennonite peace work and social activism. Religious persecution appears to have been the primary cause of oppression during the early years of Mennonite activities in Colombia. As described in my historical background section, during *La Violencia*, government forces and members of the Catholic Church persecuted Mennonites and Protestants for their faith and perceived political allegiances. However, while some Protestants were killed for their faith during this time, records indicate that Mennonites were not as violently targeted, perhaps because of the location of their missions or because of their low populations.

While overt and widespread oppression has lessened, Mennonites and other Christians still experience persecution in Colombia. *Justapaz*'s report, *A Prophetic Call*, continues to document human rights violations experienced by Colombia's Protestant population. According to one report, 68 cases of human rights violations were committed

against Colombian Protestants in 2010 (A Prophetic Call, n.d., p.2). Cox and Rogers (2011) assert that Christians are still being persecuted for their faith in Colombia, particularly in southern regions controlled by the FARC (p.21).

Others are less sure whether the oppression experienced by Christians in Colombia should be classified as religious persecution. Although they do not rule out religious persecution, Marshall, Gilbert, and Shea (2013) contend that the oppression Christians in Colombia experience may have more to do with standing against "repressive regimes... guerillas.... and against vicious drug cartels" (p.18). Similarly, participants in this study felt that the reasons for persecution have changed (April 22A; April 23B; May 6; May 9A; May 9B). Instead of being persecuted for religious reasons, Mennonites and other Christians, like other outspoken Colombians, have been targeted for their peace work and political activism. Although this is possible, if not probable, it is hard to say how many Mennonites have been specifically targeted for activism and how many have simply been unfortunate victims of Colombia's violent armed conflict. Still, oppression may indicate that opposing actors perceive Mennonite work as effective.

7) Historical Development of Peace Initiatives

Some have argued that under persecution and for the sake of unity, the early Mennonite church decided to downplay its traditional peace focus (Esquivia & Stucky, 2000). While persecution did affect Mennonite work in Colombia, the main reason peace was not explicitly emphasized in early Mennonite activities was that Anabaptist identity was very different then from what it is now. Active peacemaking was not on the Mennonite agenda on a global scale during the early years of Mennonite missions. Also, the small size, low influence, and persecution of the early Mennonites meant they were

not in a position to actively work for peace. As one participant stated: "I don't think they viewed themselves as 'we're going to be an agent for peacebuilding here,' it was more about 'we need to survive here'" (April 9A). Later, when Mennonite numbers grew and the political climate became more favourable, Mennonites began to act upon their rediscovered Anabaptist identity.

Mennonite vs. Secular Peace Initiatives

Comparing Mennonite peace projects with other peace projects was important because this study sought to discover whether Mennonites had something unique to add to the peace process in Colombia. Participants stated that the emphasis on spiritual transformation as an element of peace sets Mennonites apart from secular understandings of peace. This is a generalization, as the Colombian peace movement is very diverse. However, it does make sense that religious groups focus more on spiritual or internal transformation than secular actors. Some interviewees also viewed Mennonites as more "community-minded" than other groups. While secular groups also focus on grassroots communities, religious actors like the Mennonites are perhaps more prone to this because the motivation for peace is based in a life commitment, a shared vision, and set of practices. More research should be conducted on how secular and religious projects can complement one another. Lastly, dialogue between secular and religious actors should be encouraged in order to promote understanding and cooperation.

Mennonite vs. Other Religious Projects

Participants were divided about whether Mennonite projects differed from other religious (which, in their minds, almost always meant "Christian" – an understandable conclusion, as Christianity is the dominant religion in Colombia) peace activities. Still,

124

the major differences mentioned include less proselytization and more inclusiveness. Lower rates of proselytization may reflect the divergent focuses of individual pastors. It is also possible that Mennonites do not evaluate their success based on rates of conversion or membership. Rather, like many other Christian groups, they simply do what they believe God wants, and leave the results up to Him. This philosophy is significant in evaluating the work of religious groups, and will be discussed later.

Furthermore, lower rates of proselytization may indicate that Mennonites have a slightly different understanding of evangelization from other Anabaptist and Christian groups. Participants believed addressing people's temporal needs is just as important as ministering to their spiritual ones, as Jesus did both. However, Anabaptist groups in Bogotá differ on how to balance social and spiritual ministries. This raises questions about the role of the church in society. If religious groups focus too much on administering to social needs, they risk losing that which makes them unique – the spiritual component. On the other hand, those who limit their vision to spiritual development may lose their relevancy. For this reason, Mennonite groups must be careful to remain rooted in scripture while MB and BIC churches should consider becoming more involved in social activism. Inter-denominational dialogue and respect could facilitate this process.

Participants also asserted that Mennonites are more inclusive than Catholic groups, as they seek to involve and empower communities rather than imposing their ideas on them. This is supported in the literature on Mennonite peacebuilding. Gopin (2000) argues that humility, greatly prized by Mennonites, can be seen in their approach to peace (p.151). Mennonites emphasize listening, accompaniment, and capacity building

125

(using and developing community knowledge). Similarly, Mennonites often refrain from taking charge in mediation in order to empower locals to develop solutions, set goals, and control conflict transformation (Merry, 2000; Kraybill, 2000; Chupp, 2000). This is sometimes referred to as the "elicitive training model" (Lederach, 1995). Merry (2000) argues that the humble Mennonite approach is very different from secular models of mediation, which often emphasize the mastery of mediators in order to sell a service (Merry, 2000, p.209). Mennonites are also generally more prone to taking a bottom-up approach than Catholics. This may reflect differences in church structures. Mennonite churches are less centralized and more community-oriented whereas Catholic churches, which the exception of basic ecclesial communities, are traditionally more hierarchical.

Effectiveness

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of Mennonite peace initiatives. First, Mennonites tend to take a bottom-up approach, which can be difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate (Lebranc, n.d.). Secondly, Mennonite activities are often more focused on the 'soft aspects' of peace (Hertog, 2010), as can be seen by the emphasis they put on reconciliation and building relationships. Thirdly, Mennonites have historically taken a long-term approach to building peace. Mennonite peacebuilding is often a long, slow process, as it involves changing people's thinking (April 17). Fourthly, scholars have noted that Mennonite workers often become, "as much as possible and as appropriate, a part of the communities in which they were serving" (Miller, 2000, p.16). Mennonites recognize that conflicts are long-term processes that require long-term solutions (Miller, 2000; Merry, 2000, etc.). This can lead them to continue working for peace when others believe the task to be hopeless (Merry, 2000). However, the long-term nature of their

work also makes it more difficult to assess effectiveness. Lastly, the broad Mennonite understanding of and approach to peace means that they are involved in a variety of different peace projects. This makes their total impact difficult to evaluate.

Also, most standards of evaluation have secular assumptions about what constitutes a 'success.' Gopin (2000) points out that secular evaluation techniques tend to value efficiency and tangible results over character traits, like humility and spirituality, or relationships, which Mennonites consider to be innately valuable rather than merely instrumental to peacebuilding:

> This is where the Mennonite model might have something to teach in terms of what becomes the focus of our entry into situations of conflict and what we call success or failure in the field. The creation of human bonds across cultural lines, the opening up of relationships among groups through the agency of intermediaries, the solidarity expressed with those who suffer should be highly valued by agencies, whether or not a settlement of a particular conflict is achieved in the short term. These relationships should be considered a success in and of themselves. Evaluation would then involve the question of how well the group did at creating and living out those relationships, in addition to an assessment of any specific conflict resolution outcome. (p.156)

Like other religious actors, Mennonites judge effectiveness more on the motives, meaning, and manner of the work rather than the results.

In addition, religious groups like the Mennonites believe their development work to be a divine calling, and an intrinsic, obligatory part of their identities as followers of God (Deneulin & Bano, 2009). As Driver (1989) states, the church "is moved to struggle for social justice not so much because of the amount of "good" that can be accomplished, but predominantly because she *is* a servant community" (Driver, 1989, p.109). In other words, Mennonites and other religious actors believe that they are responsible for obeying God's commandment to live as Jesus did – ministering to people's spiritual and social needs – but not for the final outcome because "the battle belongs to the Lord" (1 Samuel

17:47). There is, then, a detachment from the result. Mennonites may be hopeful that their activities will produce tangible, positive effects – this can be seen in their prayers, hymns, and many peace activities – but ultimately, the responsibility lies with God.

With these difficulties in mind, some general conclusions can be drawn from the data. There is evidence to suggest that Mennonites are contributing to positive change and peace in Colombia. Mennonite projects are helping marginalized communities, often in areas where state presence is limited, to develop and live peacefully in the midst of conflict. Bouvier (2009) argues that peace and development programs, such as Mennonite-run alternative crop projects in the Magdalena Medio region, are the most likely to bring about peace because they deal with root causes of conflict. Moser (2000) also praises these projects because they address development issues at the structural and interpersonal levels while also seeking to foster an active and informed population through education.

Also, Mennonite projects and advocacy campaigns are raising awareness about conflict in Colombia and are helping to influence politicians and change policies to promote peace. It is also clear that Mennonites have come a long way in developing Anabaptist identities and peace projects since they first arrived in Colombia. And, because of resources, faster development, key leaders, and interpretations of the role of church in society, among other things, Mennonites seem to be more involved in promoting peace than other Anabaptist denominations in Colombia.

Lastly, Mennonite scholars, like John Paul Lederach, are recognized for their contribution to the literature on peacebuilding. Lederach has even visited Colombian universities (including Catholic ones) to speak about peace. Mennonite terms like "non-

violence" and "conflict transformation" are said to be commonly used within the Colombian peace movement (April 9A). The very fact that peace is such a 'hot topic' and that non-violence is accepted as the best method to achieving peace may be partly due to Mennonite influence. Moreover, Mennonites are the primary actors pushing for conscientious objection in Colombia – other churches have referred those looking to become conscientious objectors to *Justapaz* (April 16A; April 16B; May 9A). Also, although it is not widely recognized or acted upon, court ruling states that people have the right to conscientiously object. This, I believe, is a clear result of Mennonite efforts, and it is an important step in the right direction.

While Mennonites are contributing to peace in Colombia, it is difficult to say how much. Although Mennonite peace initiatives probably have encouraged pro-peace sentiments in Colombia, it is likely that the current peace emphasis has more to do with public disillusionment about the conflict and a changing political climate. Also, the tendency to avoid involving themselves in politics may be preventing Mennonites from making a broad impact or promoting structural change. Mennonites are also selective about their sources of funding, which can limit the size and scope of their projects. However, it is probable that these two characteristics are protecting the integrity of Mennonite peace activities. Also, while the right to conscientiously object from military service was technically declared to be a right in 2009, in practice, this right is often dismissed. And, "[u]nfortunately, there does not appear to be much political appetite for making this happen" (Wiebe, 2013). Therefore, although Mennonites have made a difference at the individual and community level, because of their small size, population,

and low levels of influence, it does not appear that they have initiated widespread change, and it seems unrealistic to expect them to.

Conclusion

After examining the data, it is clear that Mennonites have important and unique contributions to peacebuilding. The impact of their work might increase if relationships between other Anabaptist denominations and Catholic groups were improved. This analysis also raises important questions about the relationship between peace and justice, the benefits of non-violence, the role of church in society, and the effectiveness of Mennonite peace projects. The following section will explore the question of efficacy by examining the applicability of secular assessment tools in evaluating religious initiatives.

Conclusion

This section focuses on the difficulty of assessing Mennonite contributions to peace, and how this problem reflects secular assumptions about development that need to be addressed if the field of religion and development continues to grow. More appropriate methods of assessing religious peace and development projects are also explored. The conclusion finishes with some of the limitations of the study and highlights further questions or areas of research.

Religion and Development

This thesis sought to describe and examine Mennonite contributions to peace, or the impact of their work. However, while researching, I discovered that some of my objectives – such as evaluating the effectiveness of Mennonite peace projects – reflected secular assumptions about development and were not representative of how the Mennonites view their peace work. Social scientists tend to judge effectiveness based on the impact of religious activities. However, for religious people, the act of providing social services is not necessarily tied to results, but to the manner and reason for which it is done (ter Haar, 2011, p.17). Other scholars have made this observation as well. While

observing Pentecostals assisting drug addicts in Hong Kong, Miller and Yamamori (2007) described the following:

> Our question about their 'success' rate was met with mild irritation. We obviously did not understand their mentality. Not only do they not have budgets or strategic plans, but they don't keep records of this sort. Their job is to love people, not to write annual reports for funding agencies. (p.102)

In other words, religious actors believe their development work to be a divine calling, and an intrinsic, obligatory part of their identities as followers of God (Deneulin & Bano, 2009).

Although Mennonites and other religious groups do hope their efforts will "produce good fruit" (Matt. 7:18), they see their development work as part of their identities in Christ, who is ultimately responsible for the outcome. This is the reason Mennonites and other religious groups will continue working for peace even when it seems as if they are making little progress. While building relationships facilitates peacebuilding, Mennonites see relationship formation as intrinsically valuable, whether or not it leads to peace. Also, religious groups like the Mennonites are just as concerned, if not more so, with how peace is being pursued rather than the outcome of their work. For example, Mennonites insist upon a non-violent, spiritual, and relationship-oriented approach to peace. They have also refused to work with some actors holding opposing motives, including US and Colombian states. To accept funding – even funding that might promote peace projects – from these sources would compromise the integrity of Mennonite peace work.

This thesis also sheds light on issues that scholars are currently examining, such as why secular activities have not been more successful and the alternatives that are being suggested. International development has traditionally been secular with a heavy

emphasis on economic growth. The idea or sentiment that development has 'failed' has led some to explore alternative forms of development, including those based in religion. Religion has served to challenge secularization theories. It has also brought another dimension to the forefront: the concept of meaningfulness. Future studies could focus on role of religion in bringing meaning and as part of living the 'good life.'

Another important issue highlighted by this thesis is the nature of peace. While secular and some religious actors, including liberation theologians, have argued for structural change, other religious groups like the Mennonites insist that internal peace is necessary for social transformation (ter Haar, 2011, p.18). Furthermore, this thesis raises questions about weaknesses in secular development, such as the failure to adequately account for 'soft' aspects of development and peace. Other scholars have noted this issue. For example, van der Wel (2011) asks: "Do Western agencies perhaps focus too much on measurable things, at the neglect of 'soft', qualitative factors like meaning, joy, hope social cohesion, and identity?" (p.353). More study on these topics could prove important in the study of religion, peace, and development.

The discussion section provides insight into Mennonite peace initiatives and describes the difficulties in evaluating their work. It would be desirable to have more concrete results, but this thesis has shown that for some groups, looking for tangible results is not faithful to what they see themselves doing. This speaks to the difficulty in examining religion and development – as development often has secular assumptions and methods, traditional evaluative tools may not always be appropriate or applicable to religious initiatives. For example, traditional development thought tends to be short-term (ter Haar, 2011, p.19). However, Mennonite activities and many other religious

development projects are often long-term projects. Therefore, "[d]evelopment approaches that incorporate a spiritual dimension will need to be placed in a much longer timeframe" (ter Haar, 2011, p.19).

For this reason, if the field of religion and development continues to grow, it may be advantageous to reflect upon traditional development assumptions and consider that new evaluative techniques may be necessary. This was one of the conclusions of the Knowledge Centre Religion and Development's 2007 conference – that new methodologies involving qualitative assessment and personal relations were required in the growing field of religion and development (van der Wel, 2011, p.354). This conference also found that "[s]ocial science methods, such as recording people's own networks and the use of visible markers or material effects of immaterial aspects of life, were seen as useful ways to access and describe the immaterial dimension of life" (van der Wel, 2011, p.355). The human development approach, and concepts like social and spiritual capital (which were discussed in the literature review section) also provide other possible methods of assessment.

Human Development

As mentioned in the literature review, religion may fit within the human development approach. This model shows that societal values shape peoples' conceptions about development. However, this model may not adequately account for religious development. More appropriate is the integral human development model, which views development as holistic, and ultimately futile without a spiritual component (Deneulin, 2013, p.58). Furthermore, "[w]hile integral human development endorses science, technology, and progress, it also asks the crucial questions of development for whom, by

134

which means, and for what ends. As Tyndale notes, for religious movements in general 'the debate about development is a deeper one, related to an understanding about what it means to be human'" (Kartas & Silva, 2013, p.213). Proponents of integral human development identify sin as the cause of social problems and assert that spiritual and physical dimensions of life are inextricably linked (Deneulin, 2013, p.58). The assertion that the sacred and secular are not separate must be explored further as it has important implications for development.

Social Capital

The literature review discusses how the concepts of social and spiritual capital may prove useful methods for religion and development, as social and spiritual relationships are both crucial to religious groups. There are several methods used to measure social capital, which Lin and Erickson (2008) define as *"resources embedded in social relations and social networks"* (p.4). These include the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 1997), the Global Social Capital Survey (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001), and the Barometer of Social Capital (Sudarsky, 1999), which was first used in Colombia. Other categories (Putnam & Goss, 2002; Furbey et al. 2006; Hauck, 2010) and research methods (Silverman, 2004; Halpern, 2006; Onyx & Bullen, 2000) have been developed to deal with a micro, macro, and multi-level analyses. These methods of assessment could help (secular) development to appreciate the importance of relationships, which are so valued in Mennonite and other religious concepts of development.

Spiritual Capital

Spiritual or religious capital, "a sub-set of social capital," could prove even more important to the field of religion and development (ter Haar, 2011, p.20). There are

various definitions of spiritual capital, some of which understand it as capital generated from religious activities (Iannaccone, 1990; Stark & Finke, 2000; van der Wel, 2011; Wong, 2013, etc.), while more secular definitions (Zohar & Marshall, 2004; Miller, 2006) view this type of capital as promoting ethics, altruism, and 'the greater good.' These secular conceptualizations of spiritual capital are unlikely to prove useful to the field of religion and development because they "take religion out of spiritual capital," which is the main point (Adjibolosoo, 2013, p.32). However, religious interpretations of spiritual capital may prove useful to development as "individuals are able to convert religious capital into other forms of capital, such as human or social capital" (Wong, 2013, p.175). Moreover, spiritual capital can contribute to well-being. The World Value Survey found that participants who declared "God is important in my life" were happier than their counterparts, leading "economist Richard Layard to conclude that 'personal values' are one of the big seven contributors to individual well-being" (Beard, n.d., para. 6). As more studies are conducted on spiritual capital, researchers may discover useful methodologies for the field of religion and development.

Because religious actors view development differently, secular methods of evaluating development projects may not be applicable to religious initiatives. Human development, social and spiritual capital may prove useful in developing more appropriate ways to evaluate religious peace and development projects. However, while new methodologies are important, developing new perceptions about development may be even more critical. Ter Haar argues that "for sustainable development to take place in those countries where development has been least successful, it is not so much new policy instruments that are needed as a new vision of what development means, and how it can

be translated into specific policies" (ter Haar, 2011, p.24). Rather than viewing religion as an additional factor or another tool for development, scholars are beginning to call for an integral model of development that involves social, spiritual, and material transformation (ter Haar, 2011). Adopting this holistic model may help development workers, policymakers and scholars to realize that "development is not only about efficiency and effectiveness, but is also about people re-connecting to themselves, to others, and to the great web of life" (van der Wel, 2011, p.359).

Limitations and Further Questions

Linguistic barriers limited this study. Because of limited understanding of Spanish, most sources used were written in English. This case study research was conducted in order to understand Mennonite peacebuilding holistically, "not by controlling variables but rather by observing all of the variables and their interacting relationships" (Dooley, 2002, p.336). For this reason, levels of religiosity, gender, class, occupation, role in the church, education level, nationality, etc. were not controlled. It would be interesting to discover how these factors may have influenced participant responses.

This study was also highly contextual as it focused on one group of Mennonites in action. Mennonite views and communities vary tremendously within different regions of Colombia, and throughout the world at large. Some participants mentioned that in certain parts of Colombia, Mennonite churches were hard to distinguish from other evangelical churches. Others did not focus so much on peace because of different or lack of knowledge about traditional Anabaptist identities, and different emphases (stressed by church leadership and the founding missionaries). Also, peace work varied according to

137

levels of violence. For example, MCC's program in Bolivia focuses more on technology and agricultural programs, rather than peace, because the violence is not as acute as in Colombia (May 6).

Although the results of my case study are very contextual, some elements – such as the focus on relationships, reconciliation, and tendency toward a grassroots approach – can be observed in other Mennonite communities. Therefore, the research is not generalizable in terms of context, but it is representative of general views and peacebuilding activities of Mennonite communities. It also raises important methodological questions about measuring the work of religious actors as many hold philosophies and approaches that (secular) research tools may not take into account.

This thesis focused on Mennonite motives for doing peace, their understanding of peace, and their perceptions of their own work in Colombia. Because of this, the majority of participants were Mennonites. It would be interesting to find out what other people – religious and non-religious, state and non-state, etc. – in Colombia think about Mennonite peace work and whether they are aware of Mennonite activism. This would have given a better picture of how much Mennonites are impacting the broader Colombian society. Further studies might explore how other groups perceive Mennonites and their role in bringing peace to Colombia, or might compare different Mennonite communities to see how perceptions about peace differ.

Conclusion

Although they have not always worked explicitly for peace, it is clear that Mennonites have been involved in several different peace projects throughout Colombia. Even though the current peace emphasis in Colombia probably has more to do with public

disenchantment and a changing political environment, Mennonite peace initiatives have encouraged pro-peace sentiments. Mennonites have a tendency to work at the grassroots level, as observed in their work with impoverished communities. They are also engaged in broader society, which can be seen in their advocacy campaigns. Mennonites have made important strides in areas difficult to evaluate, including promoting spiritual transformation, reconciliation, building relationships, breaking down stereotypes, etc. – 'soft' peacebuilding activities (Hertog, 2010). Therefore, although Mennonites are a small religious group in Colombia, their long-standing, explicit peace emphasis and their many peace and advocacy projects have had a positive effect on the Colombian peace movement.

Interview Questions:

<u>Background Questions:</u>
How are you involved with Mennonite work in Colombia?

How long have you been involved with/witnessed Mennonite peace work?

Were you involved with the Mennonite community growing up?

<u>Mennonites & Peace:</u>
Why is peace important for Colombia?

Can religion play a role in bringing about peace?

How do you/how do Mennonites define or understand peace?

In what ways and with what approaches do Mennonites build peace?

How are Mennonites working toward peace? What activities are Mennonites doing to bring about peace?

How do Mennonites start peace work? How do Mennonites choose with whom and where to work?

What motivates Mennonites to work for peace? Why do they do what they do?

What are Anabaptist (MB, the BIC, and the Mennonite Church) relations like in Colombia?

How do Mennonites relate to Catholics in Colombia? Are historic Catholic-Protestant tensions still present?

Have Mennonites experienced persecution in Colombia?

How have Mennonite peace initiatives changed or developed over time?

How do Mennonite peace initiatives differ from a) secular ones?
                                                                          b) religious peace projects?

Do you think Mennonite peace initiatives have been effective in promoting peace? Why?

How has Mennonite peace work affected peace at the a) family-level b) community/local-level, c) national-level?

What improvements can be made?

Are there any stories you would like to tell me about Mennonite peace work?

List of Interviews

1) April 10: MCC worker
2) April 11: Pastor for Colombian Mennonite Church/IMCOL
3) April 14: MWC worker
4) April 16A: *Justapaz* worker
5) April 16B: *Justapaz* worker
6) April 17: Ricardo Esquivia, Director of *Sembrandopaz*
7) April 22A: MWC worker
8) April 22B: MCC/CEAS worker
9) April 23A: World Vision and VP of Mennonite Church
10) April 23B: *Justapaz* worker
11) April 24A: *Justapaz* worker
12) April 24B: Peter Stucky – Pastor of the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo
13) April 24C: Paul Stucky – Involved with CEAS, and formerly with *Justapaz*
14) April 26: Mennonite Brethren Pastor
15) April 30: Christian Peacemaker Team worker
16) May 1A Interviews with a member of the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo
17) May 1B Interviews with a member of the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo
18) May 1C Interviews with a member of the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo
19) May 1D Interviews with a member of the Mennonite Church of Teusaquillo
20) May 3A: César García – Director of MWC
21) May 3B: Brethren in Christ Pastor
22) May 5: Member of Mennonite church in San Nicolas, Soacha
23) May 6: MCC worker
24) May 7A: Former Mennonite Church President and involved with the Mennonite Seminary in Teusaquillo
25) May 7B: Anabaptist working with a Lutheran Church
26) May 8: *Mencoldes* worker
27) May 9A: MCC worker
28) May 9B: *Justapaz* worker
29) May 10: SEED Coordinator and MCC worker
30) May 22: Interview with church member of the Mennonite church in the Santa Marta neighborhood in Usmé

References

Abu-Nimer, M. (2003). *Nonviolence and peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and practice*.
Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

Adjibolosoo, Z. (2013). *Spiritual capital: Its meaning and essence*. Bloomington, IN:
WestBow Press.

Agnivesh, S. (2002). Processes of Reconciliation in India. In J. D. Gort, H. Jansen, &
H. M. Vroom (Eds.), *Religion, conflict and reconciliation: Multifaith ideals and
realities* (pp.251-259). Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Allen, T., & Thomas, A. (2000). *Poverty and development into the 21st century*.
Oxford: Open University in association with Oxford University Press.

Alkire, S. (2002). *Valuing freedoms: Sen's capability approach and poverty reduction*.
Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Alther, G., Lindsay-Poland, J., & Weintrauf, S. (2004). *Building from the inside out:
Peace initiatives in war-torn Colombia*. San Francisco: American Friends Service
Committee.

American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. (2014). Colombia. *Jewish Virtual Library*.
Retrieved from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/colombia.html

Anderson, M. B., & Olson, L. (2003). *Confronting war: Critical lessons for peace
practitioners*. Cambridge, MA: CDA.

Appleby, R. S. (2000). *The ambivalence of the sacred: Religion, violence, and reconciliation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Arrieta, A. L., & Centro Cristiano para Justicia, Paz y Acción Noviolenta, Justapaz. (2005). *Construyendo la paz en ambientes eclesiales*. Serie 3. Bogotá, Colombia: Centro Cristiano para Justicia, Paz y Acción Nonviolenta-Justapaz.

Avruch, K. (1998). *Culture and conflict resolution*. Washington: USIP Press, 1998.

Bailey, N. A. (1967). La Violencia en Colombia. *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, *9*(4), 561-75.

Bakewell, O. (2011). Conceptualising displacement and migration: Processes, conditions and categories. In K. Koser & S. Martin (Eds.), *The Migration-displacement nexus: Patterns, processes and policies* (pp.14-28). New York: Berghahn Books.

Balchin, C. (2011). Religion and development: A practitioner's perspective on instrumentalisation. *Ids Bulletin, 42*(1)*,* 15-20.

Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A social learning analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

Bargent, J. (2013). Colombia leads the world in displacement due to conflict and organized crime. *InSightCrime*. Retrieved from http://www.insightcrime.org/news-briefs/colombia-leads-the-world-in-displacement-due-to-conflict-and-organized-crime

Baum, G., & Wells, H. (1997). *The Reconciliation of peoples: Challenges to the churches*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Beard, S. (n.d.). Examining, evaluating and exploring Spiritual Capital. *Ekkelesia*. Retrieved from http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/research/spiritual_capital

Beed, C. and C. Beed. (1999). A Christian perspective on Neoclassical Rational Choice Theory. *International Journal of Social Economics* 26(4), 501-520.

Beittel, J. S. (2013). Peace talks in Colombia. *Congressional Research Service* [prepared for members and committees of congress]. Retrieved from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R42982.pdf

Berger, J. (2003). Religious non-governmental organizations: An exploratory analysis. International Society for Third-Sector Research and John Hopkins University. Retrieved from http://www.global.ucsb.edu/orfaleacenter/luce/luce08/documents/Harvard%20Summary%20paper.pdf

Berger, P. L. (1999). *The Desecularization of the world: Resurgent religion and world politics*. Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center.

Boarini, R., Johansson, Å., & d'Ercole, M. M. (2006). Alternative measures of well-being. *OECD Statistics Brief*, *11*, 1-8. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/std/na/36967254.pdf

Boutros-Ghali, B. (1992). *An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping*. New York: Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council.

Bouvier, V. M. (2006). Harbingers of hope: Peace initiatives in Colombia. *United States Institute of Peace*, 169, 1-20.

Bouvier, V. M. (2009). *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war*. Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Bouvier, V. (June 2013). Civil Society and the Peace Table [blog post]. *Colombia Calls*.

Retrieved from http://vbouvier.wordpress.com/2013/05/02/civil-society-and-the-peace-table/

Brittain, J. J. (2010). *Revolutionary social change in Colombia: The origin and direction of the FARC-EP*. London: Pluto Press.

Brouwer, R. C. (2010). When missions became development: Ironies of 'NGOization' in mainstream Canadian churches in the 1960s. *Canadian Historical Review, 91*(4) 661-693.

Bryman, A., Teevan, J. J., & Bell, E. (2009). *Social research methods*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bushnell, D. (1993). *The making of modern Colombia: A nation in spite of itself*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Buttry, D. (1994). *Christian peacemaking: From heritage to hope*. Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press.

Cahill, L. S. (1994). *Love your enemies: Discipleship, pacifism, and Just War Theory*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Call, C. T. & Cousens, E. N. (2008). Ending Wars and Building Peace: International Responses to War-Torn Societies. *International Studies Perspectives*, 9(1), 1-21.

Called together to be peacemakers: Report of the international dialogue between the Catholic Church and Mennonite World Conference 1998-2003. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.mwccmm.org/sites/default/files/report_cathomenno_final_eng.pdf

Carbonnier, G. (2013a). *International development policy: Religion and development*. Geneva: Graduate Institute of Geneva.

Carbonnier, G. (2013b). Religion and development: Reconsidering secularism

    as the norm. *International Development Policy*, *4*(1), 1-5. Retrieved from

    http://poldev.revues.org/1351

Carrillo, A. J. (2009). Truth, justice, and reparations in Colombia: The path to peace and

    reconciliation? In V. Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war* (pp.

    133-156). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Carroll, L. A. (2011). *Violent democratization: Social movements, elites, and politics in

    Colombia's rural war zones, 1984/2008*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre

    Dame.

Castañeda, D. (2012). The European Union in Colombia: Learning how to be a peace

    actor. Paris: L'Institut de Recherche Stratégique de l'École Militaire.

Cejka, M. A., & Bamat, T. (2003). *Artisans of peace: Grassroots peacemaking among

    Christian communities*. New York: Orbis Books.

Chambers, R. (2004). *Ideas for development: Reflecting forwards*. Brighton, Sussex,

    England: Institute of Development Studies.

Changing Minds. (2010). Values Development. Retrieved from

    http://changingminds.org/explanations/values/values_development.htm

Chapman, A. R., & Spong, B. (2003). *Religion & reconciliation in South Africa: Voices

    of religious leaders*. Philadelphia, Pa: Templeton Foundation Press.

Charbonneau, B., & Parent, G. (2011). Peacebuilding, memory and reconciliation:

    Bridging top-down and bottom-up approaches. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis.

Charles, J. D. (2005). Between pacifism and jihad: Just War and Christian tradition.

    Downers Grover Ill.: InterVarsity Press.

Charles, J. D. (2010). Pacifists, patriots, or both?: Second thoughts on pre-Constantinian

early-Christian attitudes toward soldiering and war. Logos: a *Journal of Catholic*

Thought and Culture, *13*(2), 17-55.

Chasteen, J. C. (2001). *Born in blood and fire: A concise history of Latin America*.

New York: Norton.

Chaux, E., & Velásquez, A.M. (n.d.). Peace education in Colombia: The promise of

citizenship competencies. Retrieved from

http://psicologia.uniandes.edu.co/documentos/echaux/Chaux_%20Velasquez_%20

Peace_%20Education_%20in_%20press.pdf

Chetail, V. (2009). *Post-conflict peacebuilding: A lexicon.* Oxford: Oxford University

Press.

Chupp, Mark. (1993). Conflict transformation: A spiritual process. *Conciliation*

Quarterly, *12*(3), 6-7.

Chupp, M. (2000). Creating space for peace: The Central American peace portfolio.

In C. Sampson & J. P. Lederach (Eds.), *From the Ground Up: Mennonite*

Contributions to International Peacebuilding (pp.104-121). New York: Oxford

University Press.

Clarke, M. (2013). *Handbook of research on development and religion*. Cheltenham:

Edward Elgar Pub.

Clarke, G. (2006). Faith matters: Faith-based organisations, civil society and international

development. *Journal of International Development, 18* (6), 835-848.

Collier, D., & Levitsky, S. (1997). Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in

comparative research. *World Politics*, *49*(3), 430-451.

Colombia Advocacy Issues and Connecting Points [handout]. (n.d.). Mennonite Central
    Committee Colombia.

Colombia: Improved government response yet to have impact for IDPs. (2012)
    International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Retrieved from
    http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/colombia

Colombpia: Civilian peace initiatives in Colombia. (2013). *PBI Colombia*, *19*. Retrieved
    from
    http://www.peacebrigades.org/fileadmin/user_files/projects/colombia/files/colomP
    BIa/121128_boletin_english.pdf

Corntassel, J., & Holder, C. (2008). Who's sorry now? Government apologies, truth
    commissions, and indigenous self-determination in Australia, Canada, Guatemala,
    and Peru. *Human Rights Review*, *9*(4), 465-489.

Covey, J., Dziedzic, M. J., & Hawley, L. R. (2005). *The quest for viable peace:
    International intervention and strategies for conflict transformation*. Washington,
    D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Coward, H., & Smith, G. (2004). *Religion and Peacebuilding*. New York: State
    University of New York Press.

Cowen, M., & Shenton, R. W. (1996). *Doctrines of development*. London: Routledge.

Cox, B., & Rogers, B. (2011). *Very stones cry out: The persecuted church: Pain,
    passion and praise*. London: Continuum International Pub.

Curle, A. (1981). *True justice: Quaker peace makers and peace making*. London: Quaker
    Home Service.

Culbertson, R., & Pouligny, B. (2007). Re-imagining peace after mass crime: A

    dialogical exchange between insider and outsider knowledge. In B. Pouligny, S.

    Chesterman, & A. Schnabel (Eds.), *After mass crime: Rebuilding states and*

    communities (pp.271-287). Tokyo/New York/Paris: United Nations University

    Press.

Dalton, A. M. (2013). Beyond functionality: Religion and international development.

    Canadian Journal of Development Studies, *34*(2), 158-174.

Davidson, W. D., & Montville, J. V. (1981). Foreign policy according to Freud. *Foreign*

    Policy 45, 1981-1982.

Davie, G. (2002). *Europe – the exceptional case: Parameters of faith in the modern*

    world. London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Denskus, T. (2010). Peacebuilding does not build peace. In A. Cornwall & D. Eade

    (Eds.), *Deconstructing Development Discourse: Buzzwords and Fuzzwords*

    (pp.235-243). Practical Action Publishing & Oxfam GB: Rugby, Warwickshire.

Deneulin, S. (2013). Christianity and International Development. In M. Clarke (Ed.),

    Handbook of Research on Development and Religion (pp. 51-65). Cheltenham:

    Edward Elgar.

Deneulin, S., & Bano, M. (2009). *Religions in development: Re-writing the secular script.*

    London and New York: Zed Books.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, I. (Eds.) (1994). *The handbook of qualitative research*.

    Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Diamond, L., & McDonald, J. (1996). *Multi-track diplomacy: A systems approach to*

    peace, 3rd ed. West Hartfield, Connecticut: Kumarian Press.

Dix, R. H. (1987). *The politics of Colombia*. New York: Praeger.

Donnelly, G. (2013). Reading the "signs of the times" : "centering" religion and

development. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, *34*(2), 189-202.

Dooley, L. M. (2002). Case study research and theory. *Advances in Developing Human

Resources*, *4*(3), 335-354.

Driver, J. (1989). The Anabaptist vision of social justice. In D. S. Schipani (Ed.),

Freedom and discipleship: Liberation Theology in Anabaptist perspective

(pp.101-111). Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Driedger, L., & D. Kraybill. (1994). *Mennonite peacemaking: From quietism to activism*.

Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press.

Dubois, H. (2008). Religion and peacebuilding. *Journal of Religion, Conflict and Peace*,

1(2). Retrieved from http://www.religionconflictpeace.org/volume-1-issue-2-

spring-2008/religion-and-peacebuilding

Durán, M. G. (2007). Peace mobilization in Colombia and the role of the Roman

Catholic Church (1978-2006). Prepared for the Fourth Annual International

Conference of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, June 2007. Retrieved from

http://cpn.nd.edu/conflicts-and-the-role-of-the-church/colombia/the-churchs-role-

in-peacebuilding-in-colombia/peace-mobilization-in-colombia-and-the-role-of-

the-roman-catholic-church-/

Dyck, C. J. (1993). *An Introduction to Mennonite history: A popular history of the

Anabaptists and the Mennonites*. Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press.

Eisikovits, N. (2014). Transitional justice. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Retrieved April 5, 2014 from http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice-transitional/

Ellis, S., & ter Haar, G. (2004). *Worlds of power: Religious thought and political practice in Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Enns, F., & Harder, H. (2007). *The peace church and the ecumenical community: Ecclesiology and the ethics of nonviolence*. Kitchener, Ont: Pandora Press.

Epp-Tiessen, E. (2002). *Pursuing peace: The essence of Mennonite Central Committee*. Winnipeg, Canada: Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

Esquivia, R. B., & Gerlach, B. (2009). The local community as a creative space for transformation: The view from Montes de Maria. In V. Bouvier, (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war* (pp. 295-310). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Esquivia, R. B. with Stucky, P. (2000). Building peace from below and inside: The Mennonite experience in Colombia. In C. Sampson, & J. P. Lederach (Eds.), *From the ground up: Mennonite contributions to international peacebuilding* (pp. 122-140). New York: Oxford University Press.

Fagen, P. W., Juan, A. F., Stepputat, F., & Lopez, R. V. (2006). Protracted displacement in Colombia: National and international Responses. In N. Van Hear & C. McDowell (Eds.), *Catching fire: Containing forced migration in a volatile world* (pp.73-114). Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Fernández, C., García-Durán, M., & Sarmiento, F. (2004). Peace mobilisation in Colombia: 1978-2002. *Conciliation Resources*. Retrieved from http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/peace-mobilisation-colombia-1978-2002

Fisher, R. J. (2001). Social-psychological processes in interactive conflict analysis and

reconciliation. In M. Abu-Nimer (Ed.), *Reconciliation, justice and coexistence:*

Theory and practice (pp.25-45). Oxford: Lexington Books.

Flood, G. (2012). *The importance of religion: Meaning and action in our strange world*.

Chichester, West-Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Fontana, D. (2003). *Psychology, religion, and spirituality*. Malden, MA: BPS Blackwell.

Frankl, V. E. (1992). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*.

Boston: Beacon Press.

Fukumi, S. (2008). *Cocaine trafficking in Latin America: EU and US policy responses*.

Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate.

Fundación Social. (2005) Percepciones y opiniones de los Colombianos sobre justicia,

verdad, reparación y reconciliación. Retrieved from

http://derechoshumanosypaz.org/ encuesta_completa.pdf

Furbey, R., Dinham, A. Farnell, R., Finneron, D., Wilkinson, G., Howarth, C., Hussain,

D. & Palmer, S. (2006). *Faith as social capital: connecting or dividing?* Bristol,

UK: The Policy Press.

Gáfaro, M., & Stucky, P. (2006). *Construyendo la paz – Aprendizajes desde la base: El*

Conflicto Colombiano y la iglesias sanctuarios de paz. Serie 1. Bogotá, Colombia:

Centro Cristiano Para Justicia, Paz y Acción Noviolenta, Justapaz.

Gallón, G. G., & Welna, C. (2007). *Peace, democracy, and human rights in Colombia*.

Notre Dame, IN: Univ. of Notre Dame.

Galtung, J. (1964). An editorial. *Journal of Peace Research 1*(1), 1-4.

Garcia, C. (March 14, 2013). Letter of congratulations to the Most Rev. Brian

Farrell, Secretary Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity, congratulating for the appointment of Pope Francis. *Mennonite World Conference.* Retrieved from: http://www.mwc-cmm.org/sites/default/files/website_files/mwc_letter_to_vatican_-_francis_election.pdf

Gaviria, H. F. H. (2009). The Colombian Church and peacebuilding. In V. Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war* (pp. 295-310). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Goff, J. E. (1968). *The persecution of Protestant Christians in Colombia, 1948-1958: With an investigation of its background and causes* [thesis]. Cuernavaca: Centro Intercultural de Documentación.

Gooren, H. (2011). Religion and development revisited: Some lessons from Guatemalan micro enterprises. In G. ter Haar (Ed.), *Religion and development: Ways of transforming the world* (pp.141-157). New York: Columbia University Press.

Gopin, M. (2000). *Between Eden and Armageddon: The future of world religions, violence, and peacemaking.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gopin, M. (2004). *Healing the heart of conflict: 8 crucial steps to making peace with yourself and others*. Emmaus, Pennsylvania: Rodale.

Gopin, M. (2005). World religions, violence, and myths of peace in international relations. In G. ter Haar & J. J. Busuttil (Eds.), *Bridge or Barrier: Religion, Violence, and Visions for Peace* (pp.36-42). Boston: Brill.

Gort, J. D., Jansen, H., & Vroom, H. M. (2002). *Religion, conflict and reconciliation:*

Multifaith ideals and realities. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

Gott, T. (1971). *Guerilla movements in Latin America*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

Govier, T., & Prager, C. A. L. (2003). *Dilemmas of reconciliation: Cases and concepts*. Waterloo, Ont: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Gray, V. J. (2008). The new research on civil wars: Does it help us understand the Colombian Conflict? *Latin American Politics and Society*, *50*(3), 63-91.

Greenfield, E. A., & Marks, N. F. (2007). Religious social identity as an explanatory factor for associations between more frequent formal religious participation and psychological well-being. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, *17*(3), 245-259.

Gros, J. (2009). The challenge of pluralism and peace: The changing relationships among the churches in Colombia. *International Review of Mission, 98*(2), 342-359.

Gruner, S. (2007). Contested territories: Development, displacement, and social movements in Colombia. In P. Vandergeest, P. S. Bose, & P. Idahosa (Eds.), *Development's displacements: Ecologies, economies, and cultures at risk*, (pp.155-186). Vancouver: UBC.

Guerra, N. G., Rowell, H. L., & Spindler, A. (2003). Community violence exposure, social cognition, and aggression among urban elementary school children. *Child Development 74*(5), 1561-1576.

Halpern, D. (2005). *Social capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hauck, V. A. (2010). The role of churches in creating social capital and improving governance in Papua New Guinea: Lessons for working in fragile situations. *Public Administration and Development*, *30*(1), 49-65.

Haynes, J. (2007). *Religion and development : Conflict or cooperation?* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hefferan, T., Adkins, J., & Occhipinti, L. A. (2009). *Bridging the gaps: Faith-based organizations, neoliberalism, and development in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Hemmer, B., Garb, P., Phillips, M., & Graham, J. (2006). Putting the "up" in bottom-up peacebuilding: Broadening the concept of peace negotiations. *International Negotiation, 11*(1), 129-162.

Hertog, K. (2010). *The complex reality of religious peacebuilding: conceptual contributions and critical analysis*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.

Hernández Delgado, E. (2012). *Intervenir antes que anochezca. Mediaciones, intermediaciones y diplomacias noviolentas de base social en el conflicto armado colombiano*. Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga: Bucaramanga, Colombia.

Holmes, J. S., De Piñeres, S., & Curtin, K. M. (2008). *Guns, drugs, and development in Colombia*. Austin: University of Texas.

Howard, L. M. (2008). *UN peacekeeping in civil wars*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hudson, R. A., & Library of Congress. (2010). *Colombia: A country study*. Washington, D.C: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress.

Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research (HPCR) International. (2008). Debates. *Peacebuilding Initiative*. Retrieved from http://www.peacebuildinginitiative.org /index.cfm?pageId=1766#two

Human Rights Watch. (2007). Congressional testimony on democracy, human rights,

and US policy towards Colombia. *Human Rights Watch*. Retrieved from

http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2007/04/23/congressional-testimony-democracy-human-rights-and-us-policy-towards-colombia

Hylton, F. (2006). *Evil hour in Colombia*. London: Verso.

Iannaccone, L. R. (1990). Religious practice: A human capital approach. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, *29*, 297-314

IDMC. Current IDP figures. *International Displacement Monitoring Centre*. Retrieved from http://www.internaldisplacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/A7E1B7BD7528B329C12575E500525165?OpenDocument on 21 September 2012.

Inglehart, R. (1997). *Modernization and post-modernization: Cultural, economic, and political change in 43 societies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2013). *Global overview 2012: People internally displaced by conflict and violence*. Geneva: Norwegian Refugee Council. Retrieved from http://www.nrc.no/arch/_img/9674184.pdf

Jecker, H. (2002). The 'Anabaptist Tradition': Reclaiming its gifts, heeding its weaknesses. *The Courier* [Mennonite World Conference], 4, p.2-3).

Jeurissen, R. (1993). *Peace and religion: An empirical-theological study of the motivational effects of religious peace attitudes on peace action*. Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House.

Johnston, D. (2003). *Faith-based diplomacy: Trumping realpolitik.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Johnston, D., & Sampson, C. (1994). *Religion, the missing dimension of statecraft*. New

York: Oxford University Press.

Jones, B., & Petersen, M. J. (2011). Instrumental, narrow, normative? Reviewing recent
work on religion and development. *Third World Quarterly*, *32*(7), 1291-1306.

Jones, J. C. (2009). U.S. policy and peace in Colombia: Lost in a tangle of wars. In V.
Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war* (pp. 353-370).
Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Juhnke, J. C. (1979). *A people of mission: A history of General Conference Mennonite
overseas missions*. Newton, Kan: Faith and Life Press.

Justapaz & Cedecol. (n.d.). Summary Report 6/7. *A Prophetic Call*. Retrieved from
http://apropheticcall.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/summary-pc-6-and-7.pdf

Kartas, M., & Silva, K. T. (2013). Reflections on the role of religion and faith in
development discourse. In G. Carbonnier (Ed.), *International development policy:
Religion and development* (pp.209-219). Geneva: Graduate Institute of Geneva.

Kline, H. F. (1999). *State building and conflict resolution in Colombia, 1986-1994*.
Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama.

Kline, H. F. (2007). *Chronicle of a failure foretold: The peace process of Colombian
President Andrés Pastrana*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Kraybill, D. B. (1990). *The upside-down kingdom*. Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press.

Kraybill, R. (2000). Reflections on twenty years in peacebuilding. In C. Sampson &
J. P. Lederach (Eds.), *From the ground up: Mennonite contributions to
international peacebuilding* (pp.30-44). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kurtenbach, S. (2010). Why is liberal peace-building so difficult? Some lessons from

Central America. *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 88,

    95-110.

Leiter, D. A. (2007). *Neglected voices: Peace in the Old Testament*. Scottdale,

    Pa: Herald Press.

Levy, C. (2013). Bringing religion into development studies. *Canadian Journal of*

    Development Studies, *34*(2), 153-157.

Laplante, L. J., & Theidon, K. (2006). Transitional justice in times of conflict:

    Colombia's Ley de Justicia y Paz. *Michigan Journal of International Law 28*(1),

    49-108.

Llamazares, M. (2005). *Post-war peacebuilding reviewed: A critical exploration*

    of generic approaches to post-war reconstruction [Working Paper 14], Bradford:

    Centre for Conflict Resolution.

Lebranc, S. (n.d.). A critique of 'bottom-up' peacebuilding: Do peaceful individuals

    make peaceful societies? Retrieved from http://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-

    00646986

Lederach, J. P. (1995). *Preparing for peace: Conflict transformation across cultures.*

    Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*.

    Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Lederach, J. P. (2001). Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Processes.

    In R. G. Helmick & R. L. Peterson (Eds.), F*orgiveness and reconciliation:*

    religion, public policy, and conflict transformation (pp.193-204). Radnor, Penn.:

    Templeton Foundation Press.

Lederach, J. P. (2002). *A handbook of international peacebuilding: Into the eye of the storm*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lederach, J. P. (2003). Conflict Transformation. *Beyond Intractability*. G. Burgess & H. Burgess (Eds.) Retrieved from http://www.beyondintractability.org/bi-essay/transformation

Leech, G. (1999). Fifty years of violence. *Colombia Journal*. Retrieved from http://colombiajournal.org/fiftyyearsofviolence#n23

Lester, M. P. (2010). Threads of healing. *A Common Place*, *16*(4), 4-13.

Lin, N., & Erickson, B. H. (2008). *Social capital*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

European Liaison Peacebuilding Office (ELPO). (2011). *Linking Peacebuilding and Development*. Retrieved from http://www.eplo.org/assets/files/2.%20Activities/Working%20Groups/PeDS/EPLO _Statement_Linking_Peacebuilding_and_Development.pdf

Little, D. (2007). *Peacemakers in action: Profiles of religion in conflict resolution*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Livingstone, G. (2004). *Inside Colombia: Drugs, democracy and war*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press.

Loewen, H., Nolt, S. M., Duerksen, C., & Yoder, E. (1996). *Through fire & water: An overview of Mennonite history*. Scottdale, Pa: Herald Press.

López Pérez, E. (2006). *No peace without "forgiving-justice": Love in politics*. Leuven: Centre for Peace Research and Strategic Studies.

Lorente, R. (2010). An analysis of Colombia's democracy [blog post]. *E-International*

Relations Students. Retrieved from http://www.e-ir.info/2010/04/15/an-analysis-of-colombia's-democracy/

Luttwak, E. (1994). The missing dimension. In D. Johnston, & C. Sampson (Eds.), *Religion: The missing dimension of statecraft* (pp.8-19). New York: Oxford University Press.

Marshall, K. (2001). Development and religion: A different lens on development debates. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *76*(3/4), 339-75.

Marshall, P. A., Gilbert, L., & Shea, N. (2013). *Persecuted: The global assault on Christians*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Mayton, D. M. (2009). *Nonviolence and peace psychology: Intrapersonal, interpersonal, societal, and world peace.* New York: Springer.

McDonald, G. (1997). *Peacebuilding from below: Alternative perspectives on Colombia's peace process*. London: Catholic Institute for International Relations.

Mennonite Conciliation Service. (1992). *Mediation training manual: Skills for constructive conflict transformation*. Akron, PA: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

Merry, S. (2000). Mennonite peacebuilding and conflict transformation. In C. Sampson & J. Lederach (Eds.), *From the ground up: Mennonite contributions to international peacebuilding* (pp.203-217). New York: Oxford University Press.

Miller, D. E., & Yamamori, T. (2007). *Global Pentecostalism: The new face of Christian social engagement*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Miller, E. (2011). Migrants learn mission in Latin America: Colombian Mennonites and

Mennonite Brethren in a context of rapid urbanization, 1957-1980. *Mission Focus*, *19*(1), 9-18. Retrieved from

http://www.ambs.edu/publishing/documents/Mission_Focus_Vol_19.pdf

Miller, J. S. (2000). A history of the Mennonite Conciliation Service, International Conciliation Service, and Christian Peacemaker Teams. In C. Sampson & J. P. Lederach (Eds.), *From the ground up: Mennonite contributions to international peacebuilding* (pp.3-29). New York: Oxford University Press.

Miller, L. M. (2006). *Competing in the New Capitalism: How individuals, teams and companies are creating the new currency of wealth*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse.

Mitchell, C. R. (2012). Introduction: Linking national-level peacemaking with grassroots peacebuilding. In C. R. Mitchell & L. E. Hancock (Eds.), *Local peacebuilding and national peace: Interaction between grassroots and elite processes* (pp.1-18). London: Continuum.

Mitchell, C. R., & Hancock, L. E. (Eds.). (2012). *Local peacebuilding and national peace: Interaction between grassroots and elite processes*. London: Continuum.

Mitchell, C., & Rojas, C. (2012). Against the stream: Colombian zones of peace under Democratic Security. In C. Mitchell & L. E. Hancock (Eds.), *Local peacebuilding and national peace: Interaction between grassroots and elite processes* (pp.39-67). London: Continuum International.

Moreno, C. (Oct. 2012). Colombia peace talks: After delays, government officials and

FARC members to meet. Retrieved from

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/16/colombia-peace-talks-

start_n_1969059.html

Morris, A. (2001). Critiquing the critics. A brief response to critics of restorative justice.

The British Journal of Criminology, *42*(30), 596-615.

Moser, C. (2000). Violence in Colombia: Building sustainable peace and social capital.

In A. Solimano (Ed.), *Colombia: Essays on Conflict, Peace, and Development* (pp.

9-77). Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Moser, C. O. N., & McIlwaine, C. (2004). *Encounters with daily violence in Latin*

America: Urban poor perceptions from Columbia and Guatemala. New York:

Routledge.

Murithi, T. (2006). African approaches to building peace and social solidarity. *African*

Journal on Conflict Resolution 6(2), 9-33.

Mwaura, P. N. (2007). Alternative vision for transforming development: Perspectives

from Christianity with particular reference to new Christian expressions in Africa

[conference paper]. *Kenniscentrum Religie en Ontwikkeling* (*Knowledge Centre*

Religion & Development). Retrieved from http://www.religion-and-

development.nl/ documents/publications/lecture%20mwaura%20christian

%20perspective.pdf

Myers, B. L. (2011). *Walking with the poor: Principles and practices of transformational*

development. Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books.

Narayan, D. (2001). Voices of the poor. In D. G. R. Belshaw, R. Calderisi, & C. Sugden

(Eds.), *Faith in development: Partnership between the World Bank and the churches of Africa* (pp.39-48). Washington, DC: World Bank.

Narayan, D., & Cassidy, M. F. (2001). A dimensional approach to measuring social capital: Development and validation of a social capital inventory. *Current Sociology*, *49*(59), 59-102.

Nessan, C. L. (2010). *Shalom church: The body of Christ as ministering community*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Newman, I., & Benz, C. R. (1998). *Qualitative-quantitative research methodology: Exploring the interactive continuum*. Carbondale y Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press.

Nhất, H. (1993). *Love in action: Writings on nonviolent social change*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press.

Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2004). Sacred and secular: Religion and politics worldwide. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Onyx, J., & Bullen, P. (2000). Measuring social capital in five communities. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *36*(1), 23-42.

O'Shaughnessy, H., & Branford, S. (2005). *Chemical warfare in Colombia: The costs of coca fumigation.* London: Latin America Bureau.

Paras, A. (2012). CIDA's secular fiction and Canadian faith-based organisations. *Canadian Journal of Development Studies, 33*(2), 231-249.

Paris, R. (2004). *At war's end: Building peace after civil conflict.* Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press.

Pearce, J. (1990). *Colombia: Inside the labyrinth*. London: Latin America Bureau

Research and Action.

Pietersen, J. (2002). My paradigm or yours? Alternative development, post-

development, reflexive development. *Development and Change*, *29*(2), 343-373.

Plant, S. J. (2009). International development and belief in progress. *Journal of*

International Development, 21(6), 844-855.

Preston, P. W. (1996). *Development theory: An introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Prieto, J., & Snyder, C. A. (2010). *Mission and migration*. Intercourse, Penn: Good

Books.

Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to social research: quantitative and qualitative*

approaches. Second Edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Putnam, R. D., & Goss, K. A. (2002). Introduction. In R. D. Putnam (Ed.), *Democracies*

in flux: The evolution of social capital in contemporary society (pp. 3-19). Oxford:

Oxford University Press.

Reichberg, G. M., Syse, H., & Begby, E. (2006). *The ethics of war: Classic and*

contemporary readings. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Rennick, J. B. (2013). Is religion a force for good? *Canadian Journal of Development*

Studies, *34*(2), 175-188.

Rettberg, Angelika. (2009). Business and peace in Colombia: Responses, challenges, and

achievements. In V. Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war*

(pp.191-204). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Rodriguez, M. (2012). Colombia: From grassroots to elites – How some local

peacebuilding initiatives became national in spite of themselves. In C. Mitchell &

L. E. Hancock (Eds.), *Local peacebuilding and national peace: Interaction*

between grassroots and elite processes (pp.69-91). London: Continuum

International.

Rogers, M. M., Bamat, T., Ideh, J., & Catholic Relief Services. (2008). *Pursuing*

just peace: An overview and case studies for faith-based peacebuilders. Baltimore:

Catholic Relief Services.

Rojas, C. (2009). Women and peacebuilding in Colombia: Resistance to war, creativity

for peace. In V. Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war* (pp.

207-224). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Ruiz, H. A. (1998). *Colombia's silent crisis: One million displaced by violence*.

Washington, DC: U.S. Committee for Refugees.

Saffon, M., & Uprimny, R. (2007). Transitional justice without transition? The

Colombian case and its challenges to the transitional justice paradigm [Paper

presented at the annual meeting of The Law and Society Association, TBA,

Berlin, Germany]. Retrieved from http://allacademic.com

Sampson, C. (1997). Religion and peacebuilding. In W. Zartman & J. L. Rasmussen

(Eds.), *Peacemaking in international conflict: Methods & techniques* (pp. 273-

316). Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press.

Sampson, C., & Lederach, J. P. (2000). *From the ground up: Mennonite contributions to*

international peacebuilding. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sampson, C., Weaver, H., & Lederach, J. P. (2003). *Positive approaches to*

peacebuilding: A resource for innovators. Washington, D.C.: Pact Publications.

Sarvodaya. (n.d.). About. Retrieved from http://www.sarvodaya.org/about

Schellenberg, J. A. (1996). *Conflict resolution: Theory, research, and practice*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Schipani, D. S. (1989). Liberation theologies. *Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online*. Retrieved 4 November 2013, from http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Liberation_Theologies&oldid=89012.

Schirmer, J. (2009). A Norwegian-supported peacebuilding project: Conversations among security forces, former guerillas, and civil society. In V. Bouvier (Ed.), *Colombia: Building peace in a time of war* (pp. 399-410). Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace.

Schrock-Shenk, C., & Mennonite Conciliation Service. (2000). *Mediation and facilitation training manual: Foundations and skills for constructive conflict transformation*. Akron, Pa: Mennonite Conciliation Service.

Schwartz, D., & Proctor, L. J. (2000). Community violence exposure and children's social adjustment in the school peer group: The mediating roles of emotion regulation and social cognition. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 68*(4), 670-683.

Selinger, L. (2004). The forgotten factor: the uneasy relationship between religion and development. *Social Compass,* 51(4), 523-543.

Sen, A. (2000). *Development as freedom*. New York: Anchor Books.

Sherman, A. L. (2011). *Kingdom calling: Vocational stewardship for the common good.* Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.

166

Silverman, R. M. (2004). *Community-based organizations: The intersection of social capital and local context in contemporary urban society*. Michigan: Wayne State University Press.

Simons, G. L. (2004). *Colombia: A brutal history*. London: Saqi.

Simons, H. (2009). *Case study research in practice*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Singh, T.D. (Ed.). (2005). *Toward a culture of harmony and peace*. New Delhi: New Delhi Peace Summit.

Shore, M. (2009). *Religion and conflict resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. Farnham, England: Ashgate Pub.

Smith, C. H. (1981). *Smith's story of the Mennonites*. Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press.

Smock, D. R. (1995). *Perspectives on pacifism: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim views on nonviolence and international conflict*. Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

Solimano, A. (2000). *Colombia: Essays on conflict, peace, and development*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

South Commission. (1990). *The challenge to the south: The report of the South Commission*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sriram, C. L. (2007). Justice as peace? Liberal peacebuilding and strategies of transitional justice. *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations 21*(4), 579-591.

Sriram, C. L. (2008). *Peace as governance: Power-sharing, armed groups and contemporary peace negotiations*. Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

167

Stark, R. & Finke, R. (2000). *Acts of faith: Explaining the human side of religion*.

      Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Stokes, D. (2005). *America's other war: Terrorizing Colombia*. London: Zed Books.

Strickland, R. A. (2004). *Restorative justice*. New York: Peter Lang.

Stucky, G., Jantzen, A. E., & Valencia, H. G. (June 2010). Colombia. *Global Anabaptist*

      Mennonite Encyclopedia Online. Retrieved 23 November 2012, from

      http://www.gameo.org/encyclopedia/contents/C6522.html

Stucky, P. (2009). The local church addressing psychosocial needs of armed conflict

      victims – Colombia. *Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office Publication*

      39(3), 6-8.

Sudarsky, J. (1999). "Colombia's Social Capital: The National Measurement with the

      Barcus." Retrieved from

      http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTSOCIALCAPITAL/Resources/400219-

      1150464137254/sudarsky.pdf

Sumner, A., & Tribe, M. A. (2008). *International development studies: Theories and*

      methods in research and practice. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Tate, W. (2007). *Counting the dead: The culture and politics of human rights activism*

      in Colombia. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ter Haar, G. (2011). Religion and development: Introducing a new debate. In G. ter

      Haar (Ed.), *Religion and development: Ways of transforming the world* (pp.3-25).

      New York: Columbia University Press.

Ter Haar, G., & Busuttil, J. J. (Eds.). (2005). *Bridge or barrier: Religion, violence and*

      visions for peace. Leiden-Boston: Brill.

Ter Haar, G., & Ellis, S. (2006). The role of religion in development: Towards a new

    relationship between the European Union and Africa. *European Journal of*

    Development Research, 18(3), 351-367.

The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. (Oct. 2009). *Mapping the global Muslim*

    population: A report on the size and distribution of the world's Muslim

    population. Retrieved from

    http://www.pewforum.org/files/2009/10/Muslimpopulation.pdf

Theisen, G. (1974). The case of Camilo Torres Restrepo. *Journal of Church and State*

    16(2), 301-315.

Thomas, A. (1994). Our resistances to interreligious dialogue. *Reconciliation*

    International 9(5), 1-2.

Thomas, S. (2005). *The global resurgence of religion and the transformation of*

    international relations: The struggle for the soul of the twenty-first century. New

    York, N.Y: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tschingi, N. (2004). Post-conflict peacebuilding revisited: Achievement, limitations,

    challenges. New York: International Peace Academy. Retrieved from

    http://www.un.org/esa/peacebuilding/Library/Post_Conflict_Peacebuilding_IPA.p

    df

United Nations General Assembly. (2012). *The causes of conflict and the promotion of*

    durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Retrieved from

    http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/reports/SG%20report%20on%20the%20Causes%20

    of%20Conflict%20-%202012.pdf

UNHCR. (n.d.). Internally displaced people figures. *The UN Refugee Agency*. Retrieved

169

from http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c23.html

Uprimny, R., & Saffon, M. P. (2007). Uses and abuses of transitional justice discourse

in Colombia. *PRIO Policy Brief* 6, Oslo: PRIO.

U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. (2010). Colombia. *International*

Religious Freedom Report 2010. Retrieved from

http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010/148744.htm.

U.S. Department of State. (2012). *2011 Report on International Religious Freedom:*

Colombia. Retrieved http://www.refworld.org /docid/502105ce2.html

U.S. Office on Colombia. (n.d.). Colombian civil society working for peace.

Understanding Colombia Series. Retrieved from

http://www.usofficeoncolombia.org/understanding_colombia/pdf/civilian_peace_i

nitiatives.pdf

Utstein, D. (2004). *Towards a strategic framework for peacebuilding: Getting their act*

together. Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Van der Wel, L. (2011). Integral development: Religion and development cooperation

in the Netherlands. In G. ter Haar (Ed.), *Religion and development: Ways of*

transforming the world (pp.345-359). New York: Columbia University Press.

Van Ness, D. W., & Strong, K. H. (2010). *Restoring justice – An introduction to*

restorative justice. 4th ed. New Province, N.J.: Matthew Bender & Co., Inc.

Warfield, W., & Jennings, Y. (2012) A ZoPs approach to conflict prevention. In C.

Mitchell & L. E. Hancock (Eds.), *Local peacebuilding and national peace:*

Interaction between grassroots and elite processes (pp.19-38). London: Continuum

International.

Webel, C., & Galtung, J. (2007). *Handbook of peace and conflict studies.* London: Rutledge.

Werner, E. K. (2012). Peacemaking: From practice to theory. *Library Journal, 137*(5), 132.

Wiebe, J. (April 10, 2013). Street round ups and check points: Military recruitment in Colombia [blog post]. *MCC Ottawa office*. Retrieved October 23, 2013 from: http://mccottawaoffice.wordpress.com/2013/04/10/street-round-ups-and-check-points-military-recruitment-in-colombia/

Woodley, R. S. (2012). *Shalom and the community of creation: An indigenous vision*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Wong, S. (2013). Using religious capital to alleviate poverty? A case study of cross-border migration in south China. In G. Carbonnier (Ed.), *International Development Policy: Religion and Development* (pp.174-191). Geneva: Graduate Institute of Geneva.

Wyse, J. L. (1995). *Education in alternatives to violence in Colombia* [Masters Thesis]. University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida.

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Los Angeles, Calif: Sage Publications.

Yin, R. (2009). How to know whether and when to use case studies as a research method. In K. Punch (Ed.), *Case study research: Design and methods* (pp. 2-23). Los Angeles: Sage.

Yoder, J. H. (1964). *The Christian witness to the state*. Newton, Kan: Faith and Life Press.

Yoder, P. B. (1987). *Shalom: The Bible's word for salvation, justice, and peace.*
Newton, Kan: Faith and Life Press.

Zambrano, L., & Isa, F. G. (2013). Participation of civil society in the Colombian
peace process. *NOREF: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre*. Retrieved
from
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/colombia%20peacebuilding.
pdf

Zehr, H. (2002). *The little book of restorative justice*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Zohar, D., & Marshall, I. N. (2004). *Spiritual capital: Wealth we can live by*. San
Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004.

Research Ethics Board Certificate Notice

The Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board has issued an REB certificate related to this thesis. The certificate number is: ___13-067___ .

A copy of the certificate is on file at:

Saint Mary's University, Archives
Patrick Power Library
Halifax, NS
B3H 3C3

Email: archives@smu.ca
Phone: 902-420-5508
Fax: 902-420-5561

For more information on the issuing of REB certificates, you can contact the Research Ethics Board at 902-420-5728/ ethics@smu.ca .