



## Commonplace

*Introduction* This is from a May 18, 2005, *Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT)* net release by Irene Erin Kindy; it is used with permission.

Quietly, as we (*members of a Christian Peacemakers Team in Colombia*) ate lunch with a local family, we listened to the news on the radio, a fairly common happening as we visit from house to house in our work. The news extensively reported a young man stabbed to death in a soccer stadium in Bogotá, the country's capital.

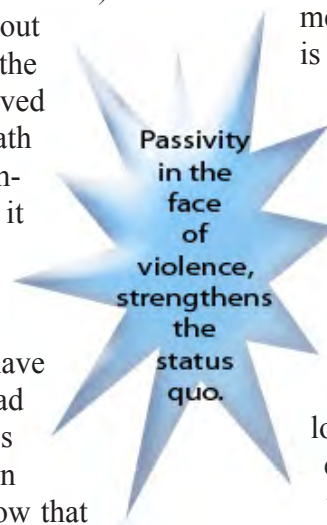
I wondered aloud why this killing received so much air time when there are so many assassinations in Bogotá and when in the smaller city of Barrancabermeja not all the murders even get reported in the news. Reporters seemed to imply that the violence of the stabbing was somehow worse because it occurred in a soccer stadium. How could it be worse than

taking someone from his house and killing him on the riverbank, shooting a son in his mother's kitchen, or assassinating someone outside a bar? Deaths like these happen regularly in Barrancabermeja.

Claudia (*not her real name*) and I reflected together about how sad it is when the pain of losing a loved one to a violent death can become so common that, unless it strikes very close, one no longer feels the events deeply. Neither one of us have had to watch the dead body of someone's loved one float by in the river, but we know that

most inhabitants of these communities have had such experiences.

Our human nature cannot withstand the realities of such frequent violence, whether around the corner or across the globe, without some sort of coping mechanism. One mechanism is to allow violence to become commonplace. A possible long-term result, for any of us, is that violence is no longer appalling; it no longer elicits the need for alternatives or moves us to action. Passivity in the face of violence — the killing of one person's loved ones to reach someone else's ends — strengthens the status quo.



*Gratitude to CPT for use of their former logo.*

*CPT is featured as an inspirational story on Hill Connections.*

*(For other CPT-related stories on this site, search for "Christian Peacemaker Teams" using Google in the masthead.)*