

DECLARATION ON PEACE AND VIOLENCE

During the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting sessions the Testimony Sub-Committee of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee spent many hours drafting the Declaration on Peace and Violence. The fourteen Friends who worked on this document did so as a celebration of the 350th anniversary of the original Declaration on Peace signed by George Fox and eleven Friends and sent to King Charles. In that spirit we invite you to add your signature before we send the Declaration at the end of September.

A Declaration from the people of God called Quakers Against all Wars and Violence in the World: an open letter to President Obama and UN Secretary Ban Ki-Moon.

Three hundred and fifty years ago Quakers addressed a Declaration to King Charles of England with their concerns about war and violence. Today we send you our Declaration of Conscience about war and violence.

In their Declaration to King Charles, Quakers spoke from their experiences of persecution and violence. In the years since, members of the Religious Society of Friends have continued to speak and act in opposition to wars and violence and have been willing to suffer for their beliefs. Quakers have been jailed and executed, spied upon, sometimes listened to and often ignored. We become conscientious objectors, object to military budgets and refuse to pay taxes that pay for war. In war and in peace we work for peace through our local congregations and organizations including the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

As George Fox wrote 350 years ago “We cannot obey, for conscience sake.” It is our experience and a central tenet of our Quaker faith that there is that of God in every human being. We realize that the peoples of the Earth are all one people and that we have a relationship through God to all people. We aspire to have no enemies. Quakers try to speak to that of God within our fellow humans. When encountering conflict, we seek to bring all parties into communication with the God that is within them. We are called to address the conditions such as poverty, injustice, inequality, oppression and environmental destruction, which contain the seeds of war.

War has many victims, among whom we count both innocent civilians and all the soldiers killed, maimed and traumatized. We recognize these victims as children of God; every human being is a breath away from the God whom we love. And there are also non-human victims. The ecosystem itself would be a casualty of a nuclear war, but all wars take a toll on creation. Our children and grandchildren are the victims of the costs of war, of for example: healthcare not provided, schools not built, and an environment not protected.

Jesus Christ said that those “who draw the sword shall die by the sword”. (Matthew 26:52) Violence breeds violence. Wars do not end violence but leave in their wake bitterness and a thirst for vengeance that are the seeds of continued violence. It is love and non-violence that work to make the world a better place.

Therefore we ask you both, the President of the United States and the Secretary General of the United Nations, to give our grandchildren a more hopeful, positive future by leading the world to invest in

peacemaking, diplomacy, development, and international cooperation, but, most importantly, we ask you to end the preparation for and waging of war.

Signers:

Ron Haldeman
Richard Mitchell
Kate Taylor
Sherilyn Brandenstein
Karen Atcheson
Deborah Jordan

Jim Crocker-Lakness
Jane Stowe
Tom Nowel
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Please sign the bottom of the previous page and mail to:

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Or you can email the names of those who wish to have their names attached to the mailed document to Ron at ronjane@igc.org