

A Guide for Friends
on
Conscientious Objection to War

PART I: Is it ever right to go to war?

PART II: What if there is a draft?"

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► PART 1: Is it ever right to go to war?

The quick answer is “no!”

Individual Friends disagree about almost everything, including war and peace. Nevertheless, the official position of Friends is to be found in the book of Faith and Practice (Discipline) of each Yearly Meeting, and they all state that Christians should not participate in war. Many of the Yearly Meetings which are members of Friends United Meeting include the Richmond Declaration of Faith (1887) in their books of Faith and Practice. It has a section on “Peace,” which reads:

We feel bound explicitly to avow our unshaken persuasion that all war is utterly incompatible with the plain precepts of our divine Lord and Law-giver, and the whole spirit of His Gospel, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent or peculiar, can avail to release either individuals or nations from the paramount allegiance which they owe to Him who hath said, “Love your enemies.” (Matt. v. 44, Luke vi. 27.) In enjoining this love, and the forgiveness of injuries, He who has bought us to Himself has not prescribed for man precepts which are incapable of being carried into practice, or of which the practice is to be postponed until all shall be persuaded to act upon them....

We would, in humility, but in faithfulness to our Lord, express our firm persuasion that all the exigencies of civil government and social order may be met under the banner of the Prince of Peace, in strict conformity with His commands.¹

Should people follow their conscience-to join the military or not?

The story is told that after William Penn became a Friend, he asked George Fox whether he could continue to wear his sword. Fox answered, “I advise thee to wear it as long as thou canst.” Soon after this Fox saw Penn without his sword, and Penn explained, “I have taken thy advice; I wore it as long as I could.”²

Friends believe that everyone must follow their own conscience. Friends also know that the conscience can be distorted by culture and imperfect human thought and is not always right. Friends have always used the Bible and the wisdom of the community of faith to help fellow Christians inform their consciences. In the *Declaration of 1660*, the most famous statement of the peace testimony, early Friends used the Bible to help clarify how Christ leads:

We know that wars and fightings proceed from the lusts of men (as James iv. 1-3), out of which lusts the Lord hath redeemed us, and so out of the occasion of war We ... utterly deny ... all outward wars and

strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end or under any pretense whatsoever. And this is our testimony to the whole world.

...The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.³

The guidance of the spirit of Christ.

The emphasis in this statement is on the guidance of the Spirit of Christ rather than individual conscience. It reflects an essential belief- that all people have a “principle of God” within that is capable of responding to this guidance.⁴ The Gospel of John calls it “the Light.” It is in everyone (1:9), shows what is evil within all people (3:19-21), and guides those who follow Jesus (8:12; 12:35). Friends’ ministry concentrates on appealing to “that of God in everyone” in the hope they will respond to the light of Christ which we know is already in them. The spirit of Christ will never lead us to kill another person because each person is a temple of the Light, and may yet come to respond to it.

Don't most Christians fight for their countries?

For the first three hundred years of Christianity almost no Christians fought. They explained that because of their faith, they could no longer fight in wars. Origen wrote:

No longer do we take the sword against any nation, nor do we learn war any more, since we have become sons of peace through Jesus who is our author instead of following traditional customs...⁵

Athanasius wrote:

But when [barbarians] hear the teaching of Christ, forthwith they turn from fighting to farming, and instead of arming themselves with swords extend their hands in prayer. In a word, instead of fighting each other, they take up arms against the devil ...⁶

After Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christians developed the “just war theory.” In 1983, the U.S. Roman Catholic Bishops wrote a pastoral letter on peace which said that for a war to be just, it must pass all of these tests:

1. *Just Cause*: “to protect innocent life, to preserve conditions necessary for decent human existence and to secure basic human rights.”
2. *Competent Authority*: “war must be declared by those with responsibility for public order.”

3. *Comparative Justice*. “Every party to a conflict should acknowledge the limits of its ‘just cause’ and... use only limited means in pursuit of its objectives.”
4. *Right Intention*. “pursuit of peace and reconciliation, including avoiding unnecessarily destructive acts or imposing unreasonable conditions (e.g., unconditional surrender).”
5. *Last Resort*. “all peaceful alternatives must have been exhausted.”
6. *Probability of Success*.
7. *Proportionality*. “the damage to be inflicted and the costs incurred by war must be proportionate to the good expected by taking up arms.”
8. *Discrimination*. “the lives of innocent persons may never be taken directly, regardless of the purpose alleged for doing so.”⁷

If applied, these criteria would certainly reduce the horror of war. In modern times, no war passes the Eighth test: many more civilians than soldiers have died in each of the wars of this century. It is, however, doubtful that the “just war theory” is ever used in the real world. What church has used these tests in a real war, found it unjust and then refused to allow their membership to fight? The real problem with the “just war theory” is that it is all too easy to rationalize our own “justice” and to demonize our “enemy.”

Even though many other Christians go to war, the peace churches (such as Friends, Mennonites, Brethren, Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah Witnesses) believe that does not make it right for us to do so. Should a political theory like “just war” be more important to Christians than the teaching of Jesus in the Bible?

What does the Bible say?

The Bible has thousands of verses concerning war and peace. Here are some of the main themes.⁸

1. The goal of history — prophecies of peace.

Peace was God’s intention from the beginning. It was only after the sin of Adam and Eve that murder and war began. (Gen. 4:8ff). It was this violence that caused God to want to start all over again, and send the flood. (Gen. 6:11-13). The prophets proclaimed that God’s goal in history was to bring peace.

In the last days...

They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore. (Micah 4:1,3)

See also Daniel 2:44-45; Zechariah 9:9-10; Revelation 21:1-4 and Isaiah 2:1-4; 9:2-7; 11:1-9; 65:17-25. Many of these prophecies are connected with the coming Messiah, whom Christians recognize as Jesus. “He will be called ... Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

2. The presence of God's kingdom.

The early church understood that beginning with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost they were living in "the last days" (Acts 2:16ff, 1 John 2:18) when the prophecies of peace were to be fulfilled. One early Christian, Justin, quoted Micah 4:2,3 and then wrote:

We can show you that this has really happened. For a band of twelve men went forth from Jerusalem to teach to all the Word of God; and [now] we who once killed each other not only do not make war on each other, but .. gladly die for the confession of Christ?⁹

It was, of course, central to Jesus' teaching, that "the kingdom of God is within [or among] you" (Luke 17:21). The reconciling ways of Jesus' followers was one of the signs of the Kingdom (Matthew 6:9-15).

3. "Wars and rumors of wars."

Jesus acknowledged that "you will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but," he said, "see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come... Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved." (Mt 24:6,12,13). Part of standing firm is following his instructions:

You have heard that it was said, "love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be [children] of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous ... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Mt 5:43ff)

4. The way of the cross.

This command to love enemies is simply to follow Jesus' way of the cross, as he commanded we do (Luke 9:23ff). Just as God loved us, even when we were sinners (Romans 5:8f), so we must love others (1 John 4:7-21). Love of enemies and the willingness to accept, rather than inflict, suffering is an essential sign of the presence of the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:9-17; 12; 2 Corinthians 5: 16-6: 10; Ephesians 2:11-18; Philippians 2:5-1 1; 3:17-21; 1 Peter 4:12-19)

Again and again, Jesus warned that he would have to suffer. He refused the temptation to seize political power (Matthew 4:8- 10) and withdrew from his followers when -they wanted to make him king by force (John 6:15). When Jesus was arrested, Peter started to defend him, but Jesus said, "Put your sword away!" (John 18:1 1).

5. Liberation from oppression.

If what has gone before was all that the Bible had to say, then Biblical pacifists would be open to the charge that their faith has nothing to offer to people who long for freedom or suffer oppression in this world.

The Exodus of the Hebrew people from slavery in Egypt was the event which formed the original Biblical faith. Possibly the oldest text of the Bible is Moses' song in Exodus 15:

I will sing to the Lord,
for he is highly exalted.
The horse and its rider
he has hurled into the sea...
The LORD is a warrior;
the LORD is his name.
Pharaoh's chariots and his army
he has hurled into the sea. (Exodus 15:1,3-4)

When Pharaoh's army had cornered the fleeing Hebrews at the Sea of Reeds, the people were terrified:

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still." (Exodus 13,14).

The essence of Old Testament teaching on war is that God fights on behalf of the oppressed. The people are not to fight (c.f., Zechariah 4:6; 2 Kings 8:6ff). In fact, when the people were too strong, God would not deliver them (Judges 7:2ff).

6. The new covenant: toward a spiritual understanding of the Kingdom.

It is true that there are many texts in the Old Testament in which God is shown ordering the people into battle. God's goal was the establishment of the Kingdom of God as a nation which God would rule directly, under the charismatic leadership of the Judges. When the people of Israel asked for a king, "such as all the other nations have," the prophet told them that they were choosing against god, and that they would suffer under the king's militarism (I Samuel 8). They were repeatedly warned not to trust in military strength (Psalm 146; 33:17ff). The books of 1st and 2nd Kings recount the failure of this attempt to establish the Kingdom of God as a political state.

With the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel at the time of the captivity of Judah in the 5th century B.C., the hope of salvation shifted from an outward kingdom to a more inward and spiritual understanding of the Kingdom of God. They spoke of God's promise to create a "new heart" in individuals (Jeremiah 17:5,7-10; 31:31-34; Ezekiel 11:19). Through the prophet Jeremiah (31:31), God promised the "new covenant" where the law of God would be known in people's hearts. This is the "new covenant" which is fulfilled in Jesus (Mark 14:24; Hebrews 8:8ff). Therefore, the Apostle boasts, "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20).

7. Spiritual warfare.

In the new covenant, the battle against evil is no longer fought with outward weapons, but by the power of the spirit. The Old Testament battle texts should be seen as

“types” or “shadows” of the spiritual warfare discussed in the New Testament (Romans 12:17-21; 2 Corinthians 10:3-4). The early Friends understood themselves as participants in the *spiritual war of the Lamb* (10) in which God first destroyed the power of Satan in their own lives and, through their long-suffering witness, would eventually come to rule all the earth. (See Revelation 12:7-12; 17:14; 20:7-10). Paul writes in Ephesians 6:10-18:

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

8. “Bible prophecy” about Armageddon.

In the Book of Revelation “Mystery Babylon” is destroyed (17:1-18) at the battle of Armageddon (16:16). “Mystery Babylon” is a way of describing the spiritual evil of greed and political pride (18:1-24). Over the centuries this “mystery” has been identified by some with the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church, more recently the Soviet Union, Iran and now Saddam Hussein. The mistake is to think that by destroying a social entity one defeats evil itself. The Bible clearly teaches that evil is not just “out there”; evil is inward (Mark 7:15) and is in all of us (1 John 1:8-10). Those who welcome war in the Middle East because they think it will lead to God’s victory in the battle of Armageddon have misunderstood Biblical prophecy. According to the Book of Revelation, the victory of God is not accomplished with military might, but by “the Word of God” with a “sword that came out of the mouth” (Revelation 19:13,21). It is risky to claim to know when the final judgment of God will be—something even Jesus said he did not know (Matthew 24:36). In fact, Jesus explicitly warned against engaging in this sort of speculation (Acts 1:7). We may (or may not) be living in the final days of history. What the Book of Revelation does tell us is that those who are faithful to Christ’s way of the cross will be saved (Revelation 2-3) and that, in the end, God’s way is victorious.

Practical questions about pacifism

Does that mean we just let the enemy take over?

No. Pacifism is not passive. The early Quaker pacifists saw themselves as involved in the Lamb's War, and aggressively sought out injustice and oppression in order to confront it. Their evangelism had a strongly prophetic aspect—and they believed that the suffering they experienced was a part of the spiritual war. The history of the Christian church demonstrates that the freedom Christ gives cannot be taken away by political repression. The church has flourished under oppression, from the time of the Roman Emperors to the contemporary experience in China and the Soviet Union.

In Quaker experience, it is true that “the cross is the power of God” (I Corinthians 1:92:16). There are countless stories of how unarmed Quakers have been saved from attack during the French and Indian Wars, from robbery and from pirates.¹¹

There is also a rich tradition, extending back to before the time of Christ, of nonviolent resistance to aggression and dictatorship. During the second world war, there were important examples of successful nonviolent resistance to Hitler's plans to exterminate Jews in Denmark and Norway. In recent years, we have seen nonviolent people's movements overthrow dictatorships in the Philippines, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.¹²

Nonviolent resistance is not always successful. Of course, neither is military resistance. In the end, a Christian cannot decide how to act on the basis of effectiveness, for the ultimate question is, “what is the will of God?”

Thomas Chalkey, a Quaker minister, sailed from Philadelphia in 1707 on a ship owned by a Friend. He wrote in his Journal about what happened when a “privateer” (a privately owned ship authorized by the French government to capture English ships) chased them:

We came within sight of Barbadoes, where we meet with a privateer, which chased, and had like to have taken us; but the good providence of God preserved us... The seamen cursed the Quakers...because they did not carry guns.... I was grieved, and thus expostulated with them: Do you know the worth of a man's life? Guns being made on purpose to destroy men's lives...Live! Say they, we had rather our lives than go to France. But, said I, that is not the matter; had you rather go to hell, than go to France? They... said no more ...¹³

I believe in the U.S.— are pacifists traitors?

The greatest support any country can receive from its citizens is their efforts to bring their country into the will of God. The twin principles of freedom of religion and freedom of speech enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution are essential

to the greatness of the United States. These freedoms are only preserved when they are used. The Congress has acknowledged the legitimacy and importance of the pacifist witness by writing into the Selective Service Act, provisions for those who are conscientious objectors to war to perform civilian alternative service.

What if a bully hits me or someone attacks my family?

Under stress, people experience physical changes, the most serious consequence of which is that blood is diverted from their brains to their arms and legs. This is to prepare our bodies for “fight or flight:” the natural response to danger. Through the grace of the Holy Spirit, we hope in such situations, to find ways to act more like human beings who can make choices, rather than be trapped by instinct. The goal is to be neither “victim” nor “executioner.” Aggressors expect (indeed, want) their victim to either fight or run. When Jesus counseled, “turn the other cheek” and “walk the extra mile,” (Matthew 5:38ff) he was giving examples of how people could take a transforming initiative to humanize situations of oppression so that negotiation and reconciliation become possible.¹⁴

A regular discipline of personal prayer, and forgiveness (initiating truthful dialogue in hope of reconciliation with those who have hurt us), prepares us to be “peacemakers.” It is surprising what happens in times of conflict, when one pauses to breathe, pray, and look one’s enemy in the eye with courage and love. God can move to change the situation in response to even a wordless prayer, as one holds an adversary in the Light of Christ.

Christian pacifism is neither cowardice nor passivity. Jesus expressed anger and even used force in a way that did not hurt others (Mark 11: 12-17). The point is not to be legalistic, but to live in the spirit of creativity which leads to reconciliation.

What about the police?

Pacifism is a belief in settling disputes by peaceful means and rejection of the organized killing involved in warfare. Pacifists will draw the line at the use of force at different places. Many, pacifists, for instance, believe that civilian police forces can legitimately use force to control criminals. The difference is that the goal and motivation of police training and practice is to minimize the violence, protect life and avoid injury to innocent bystanders, whereas military action is much less discriminate, and tactically concentrates on killing people who have been designated as “the enemy.”

Am I betraying family members/friends who are in the military?

Those who join the military, disrupt their lives and risk dying for their country are to be honored for their courage. Many of the first generation of Friends were soldiers in Cromwell’s New Model Army before they came to believe that Christ called them to a different, spiritual warfare. The witness of pacifism can be misunderstood as a rejec-

tion of others who have chosen a different course. Even where there are strong differences of opinion about the correct course of action, Christian pacifists hope that their lives will be so marked by the loving Spirit of Christ that relationships will remain unbroken.

If I hunt can I be a pacifist?

Pacifists recognize that there is a natural cycle of life and death, by which plants and animals live off of lower forms of life. Hunting for food (and indeed, eating meat at all) is consistent with this kind of life. Some pacifists believe that the slaughter of animals for pleasure and the wanton destruction of the environment is wrong. Pacifism is defined as rejection of war, and does not necessarily imply the rejection of any kind of force or violence.

▶ PART II: What if there is a draft?

The Selective Service System is quite complex, and the regulations have been rewritten since the last draft during the Vietnam War so it is impossible to know how they will work in practice. There are, in fact, two systems laid out by Selective Service: RIMS (Registrant Information and Management System) and RIPS (Registrant Integrated Processing System). The main difference between them is the time line. RIMS provides for the first inductee to arrive at boot camp 14 days after the presidential order; RIPS provides a six month, 14 day, time line.

What follows is a simplified explanation. It is important that draftees seek out and receive qualified draft counseling. Many Yearly Meeting offices and offices of the American Friends Service Committee know of local draft counselors. You can contact one of the draft counseling agencies listed in note¹⁵ for a referral.

1. Draft registration:

All male citizens and permanent residents of the United States are required by U.S. law to register for the draft within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Some Friends have felt compelled by conscience to refuse to participate in the conscription system. The penalty for failing to register can be up to six years in jail and/or a substantial fine. Of the thousands of non-registrants since 1980, only 20 have been prosecuted, the last in 1984. At that time non-registrants had to serve months in jail, perform up to two years community service and pay substantial fines. Government guaranteed student loans, Federal civil service jobs, and job training are denied to those who fail to register. Many states also deny loans, entry into a state supported college, job training and even driver's license. Several Quaker and other colleges make special assistance available to conscientious objectors to registration. Contact admissions offices for information. The Fund for Education and Training (FEAT) also provides loans comparable to the federal loans to non-registrants. (Contact FEAT through the Center for Conscience and War.)

2. The draft.

If Congress were to pass a law authorizing the Selective Service System (SSS) to conduct a draft, and if the President were to order the induction of a certain number of draftees, this is what would happen. The SSS would hold a lottery to assign a random number to every day of each "Age selection group." Those in the "Age 20 selection group" would be called up first, in the order of their lottery number. (In 2001, the "Age 20 selection group is everyone born in 1981.) It starts again at Age 20 at the beginning of each new year. If the number of inductees needed exceeded those available in the "age 20 selection group," SSS would call up the next older age groups in order, up to age 25. (Example: if there was a call up in 2001 and the lottery assigned #1 to March 2, then all those born on March 2, 1981, would be the first to receive

induction notices. If the President asked for 100,000 inductions, it is estimated that the SSS would need to send induction orders to lottery numbers 1 through 55.)

3. Deferments

Classification of any sort (including conscientious objection) does not begin until the draftee has received an induction order. The registrant will receive an order to report a Military Entrance Processing Station.

Only during the period between receiving the induction order and the actual reporting date given by the induction order — which could be less than ten days — can the registrant easily make a claim for reclassification. (Registrants who realize they are conscientious objectors on the day of induction must make the claim before they are sworn in. And after they are in the military they still may file CO discharge claims.) In order to request a reclassification, the registrant should submit a Form 9, Claim for Postponement or Reclassification (under the RIMS emergency procedure) or Form 8, Claim for Reclassification (under the RIPS procedure). These forms will be available from area SSS offices and possibly from the post office. The Information for Registrants booklet is available to all registrants in advance through:

Consumer Information Center
Department 577-V
Pueblo, Colorado 81009
or online at www.sss.gov

Registrants should use Form 9 or Form 8 to make all claims that they could possibly use, as SSS considers that registrants waive any claim to classifications that they have not claimed prior to their induction. Further, under RIPS, CO claimants may waive the armed forces exam, but if they fail in their claim for CO classification, they may be waiving their right to a medical disqualification and should consult a draft counselor before making this choice.

There are nineteen possible classifications. If you are not exempt because of being an “alien” or from current or previous military service, the most likely claims for deferment or exemption are:

- a) Mentally, physically or morally unacceptable. SSS expects that 50% of inductees will be in this group. If you have a medical or psychiatric record you may fail the military physical examination. You will need a doctor’s letter.
- b) Hardship to dependents. If you provide sole and irreplaceable support to a dependent, you may qualify for a deferment
- c) Ministers may be reclassified and ministerial students may be deferred until their schooling is completed.
- d) Surviving family member. If your father, mother, or one or more of your sisters or brothers was killed as a result of military duty or is a prisoner of war or missing in action, you may be reclassified.

- e) Conscientious objector to military service, or conscientious objector to combatant military service.

Each claim requires different documentation. A draft counselor should be consulted about procedures. Form 8 and Form 9 are not claims for classification but merely result in obtaining the forms needed to make a claim for classification.

4. Conscientious Objection

Section 6(j) of the Military Selective Service Act states:

Nothing contained in this title shall be construed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service ... who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form ... the term "religious training and belief" does not include essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views, or a merely personal moral code. Any person ... whose claim is sustained by the local board shall, if he is inducted into the armed forces ... be assigned to noncombatant service ... or shall, if he is found to be conscientiously opposed to participation in such noncombatant service ... perform ... civilian work contributing to the maintenance of the national health, safety, or interest...

The key phrases in the legal definition of conscientious objection are highlighted. One does not need to belong to any particular religion, or even to any religion at all, to qualify. It is necessary to be able to show that you sincerely hold beliefs that are like a religion to you, and that — as a result of your beliefs — you would refuse to participate in any war in which you would reasonably be expected to fight.

How to apply

To apply for CO status, the registrant uses Form 9 or Form 8, and will be sent Form 22, Conscientious Objector Claim Documentation Form. COs will be expected to return their completed Form 22 and any other documents they want to submit within 10 days of the mailing of the form to the CO. Form 22 asks the registrant to indicate whether the claim is for class 1-A-0, (noncombatant member of the Armed Forces) or for class 1-0 (exemption from all military service.) The form says:

To qualify, you must establish to the satisfaction of the board that your conscience, spurred by deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs, would give you no rest or peace if you participate in combatant [or either combatant or noncombatant] military training and service in any war. You must show that you are sincere in your claimed beliefs.

The Form then asks the following questions:

1. Describe your beliefs which are the reasons for your claiming conscientious objection to combatant military training and service or to all military training and service.

2. Describe how and when you acquired these beliefs. Your answer may include such information as the influence of family members or other persons; training, if applicable; your personal experiences; membership in organizations; books and readings which influenced you.
3. Explain what most clearly shows that your beliefs are deeply held. You may wish to include a description of how your beliefs affect the way you live....you may attach letters from persons who know you and are familiar with your beliefs. You may also attach any other pertinent information you would like the Local Board to consider.

It is often helpful to save answering the first question until the last. Answers should be detailed and autobiographical. But claimants should be careful not to embellish or put in ideas that they do not actually believe. Because of the speed with which these events could happen, all potential draftees should start to gather support materials long before they receive the first draft notification letter.

Key elements in a support file are:

5-7 support letters from people who know the claimant well, and who can attest to the sincerity of the claim. Letters should be approximately one page in length and contain personal detail. A vague, impersonal letter does more harm than good. Letters from those who disagree with the claimant, but can attest to the sincerity of the claim, are helpful. Writers should answer the following questions in their letters: a) what is your relationship, and how long have you known, the applicant? b) do you believe the applicant is sincere? c) has the applicant's conduct since arriving at this belief been consistent with the claim? d) Is the applicant's claim based on deeply held moral, ethical, or religious beliefs? If possible, give examples of influences or training which you feel might have led to the development of his beliefs.

A worksheet answering the questions from the official CO claim form.

Any "evidence" of your beliefs such as papers you have written, news clippings, service work you have performed, ideas you have about your vocational choices, your lifestyle, your intentions for your family life, your religious practices.

Members and attenders of Friends Meetings (or other churches) should register their intention to make a CO claim in the business minutes of their Monthly Meetings. This can take the form of a letter to the Meeting. This will be useful evidence of the sincerity of the claim.

The claimant will be given a 20 minute hearing before a Local Claims Board. The registrant can choose up to three supporting witnesses (at least one of which should be a professional-pastor, teacher, doctor, and an advisor such as the claimants draft counselor). The hearing, however, is open to the public and the claimant may ask others to attend (and take notes).

If the claim is denied by the local board with at least one dissenting vote, the claimant may appeal in writing to the local board within 15 days of the denial. A personal appearance before the District Appeal Board must be requested at the time of the appeal. If the claim is denied by the District Appeal Board with at least one dissenting vote, the claimant may appeal in writing through the District Appeal Board to the President of the United States within 15 days of the denial. Denial at that level has no appeal. The only recourse is to refuse induction and await prosecution (which may or may not come) so that your case may be brought before a court of law.

5. Alternative service

If the Board approves the claim, the inductee will be classified I -W and will be issued an Order to Perform Alternative Service for a two year period. This work must be with a nonprofit organization in the areas of health, education, social services, agriculture, or with a government agency. The SSS will have a list of approved jobs, but the conscientious objector can find an employer, if the job fits the legal requirements. This should be arranged in advance.

In the past, many conscientious objectors have performed their alternative service through the Quaker, Mennonite and Brethren voluntary service programs. There are many such programs. In addition to Friends United Meeting, you may wish to contact:

Mennonite Central Committee—Voluntary Service
21 South 12th
Akron, PA 17501

Brethren Volunteer Service
1441 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120

Addendum: What about paying military taxes?

In addition to the question of direct military service, Friends win want to consider whether they are free in conscience to pay taxes for military purposes. The U.S. Peace Tax Fund Bill, currently before Congress, provides for conscientious objection to paying military taxes. If it were enacted, conscientious objectors could pay their taxes in full and the military portion would be designated for peaceful purposes.¹⁶ *The Handbook on Military Taxes & Conscience*, edited by Linda B. Coffin for the Friends committee on War Tax Concerns, (available from the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund) details the Quaker history and practicalities of this witness. Friends United Meeting maintains a Peace Tax Fund to hold military taxes of Friends who are conscientious objectors to paying for war preparations.

Notes

1. "The Declaration of Faith issued by the Richmond Conference in 1887," in *Friends ... one in the spirit: Authorized Declaration of faith of the Five Years Meeting of the Friends in America*, a reprint authorized by the General Board of the Friends United Meeting, n.d., pp. 28-29.
2. Samuel Janney, *Life of William Penn* (1852), in London Yearly Meeting, *Christian Faith and Practice in the experience of the Society of Friends*, 1960, selection 40.
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7. U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, "The Pastoral Letter on War and Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," 1983, I,3.
8. All Bible quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, c. 1973, 1978 by the International Bible Society, used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.
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10. See, "The Lamb's War" (1658), in *Early Quaker Writings: 1650-1700*, edited by Hugh Barbour and Arthur O. Roberts, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973, pp.107,114.
11. L. Violet Hodgkin, *Fierce Feathers and Other Stories*, London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1965, (35 pages); *The Friendly Story Caravan*, Pendle Hill Publications, 1990, (112 pages); and Daisy Newman, *A Procession of Friends*, Friends United Press, 1972, 1980, (460 pages); are treasuries of these sorts of stories.
12. See Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973, for the theory of nonviolent political power with many case studies and Ronald J. Sider, *Non Violence: The Invincible Weapon?*, Word Publishing, 1989, for a moving account of recent cases.
13. "Journal of Thomas Chalkey," in *The Friends' Library*, Vol. VI, Philadelphia, 1842, p.22.

14. This understanding of Jesus' teaching is from Walter Wink, *Violence and Nonviolence in South Africa: Jesus' Third Way*, New Society Publishers, 1987, Chapter Two "Jesus' Third Way."
15. This section is based on information from NISBCO (The National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors), and CCCO (The Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors). Both organizations provide excellent materials and counseling. The most thorough resource for draft counselors is William Galvin, Charles A. Maresca, Jr., *Draft Counselor's Manual*, 6th Ed., 2001. Also consult *Words of Conscience*, 11th Ed., 2000, a compendium of the statements of many religious denominations.

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16. For information, contact the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, 2121 Decatur Place, NW, Washington, DC 20008; www.peacetax.com.

*That which is set up by the sword
is held up by the sword.
That which is set up by spiritual weapons
is held up by spiritual weapons,
and not by carnal weapons.
The peacemaker has the kingdom and is in it,
and has Dominion over the peace-breaker,
to calm him in the power of God.
.... The days of virtue, love and peace are coming,
and the Lamb ... shall have the victory.*

George Fox, 1652

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