

May 8, 2004

Dear Chapel Hill Friends Meeting,

I'm writing this letter to let the meeting become aware of my personal decision regarding the Selective Services. I hope this letter to be documentation of my faith, beliefs and reasons for coming to the conclusion of recognizing myself as a consciences objector.

Throughout my life as a Quaker, and a member of the Chapel Hill Friends Meeting I have become aware of my personal faith, guided by teachings of Quakerism, that have helped shape my beliefs regarding my objection to warfare, and killing of other people. I strongly believe that violence is not the answer, and there are many other ways of conflict resolution that don't entail bloodshed. The idea that killing another human being will solve a problem or justify another wrong seems unmoral, and against the teachings of God. I believe all people have that of God in them, and are to be treated with that respect, and viewed as equal under the eyes of God. And with that being the case, I don't feel I could justify killing against my faith as a mechanism of resolution.

Another option that I know many pacifists take when dealing with this situation is to declare themselves incapable of fighting in the Army, but to accept another non-combat position in the military. This is something I have considered, but realized it still undermines my faith and beliefs. To accept a non-combatant position would still be supporting the military in the greater scheme of things, and participating in the killing of others. I also feel that to accept a non-combatant position instead of fighting would be very hypocritical, and weak. I feel that my belief is strong enough that I must follow it the entire way, and not take the easy way out, by supporting the military in a non-combatant role.

This decision has come from a long process of deep thought, and inner seeking to find my true faith respecting this complicated and possibly life changing choice. I do truly believe though that this decision reflects my personal beliefs and faith towards an issue I strongly believe in. I will stand strong by my decision and endure all possible consequences that may come from it, but I will know I'm doing what I believe is right under my faith.

Nicholas A. Mann