

A Quaker Declaration of War

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Friends, I want to ask you to consider joining me in a Declaration of War.

Not a shooting war; we have plenty of those, and that's part of the problem. Instead, I invite you to declare the Lamb's War, the Hundred-Year Lamb's War.

The Lamb's War is an ancient Quaker term, referring to a struggle for peace and justice carried on both internally and out in the world. (Those who are uncomfortable with this biblical phrase can think of it as a New Century of Peace Work.) And why the *Hundred-Year* Lamb's War?

Consider the direction of our country and its role in the world. Those in power in Washington have set the United States on a course to run the world, not for a year or two, but for a very long time. Indeed, the "manifesto" for this grandiose project came from a group calling itself the Project for a New American Century. Century. Not decade.

That vision has now been codified by the White House in the National Security Strategy of the United States, an official document which makes it formal policy to maintain American world supremacy by force and eliminate all actual or potential rivals to U.S. power, while remaking the world in our image, regardless of such niceties as the desires of the people, international law, or even the rules of war.

You probably know all this, but it bears repeating. It's not easy to figure what to call this drive. I think something like "messianic hegemonism" is the most precise; but that's a mouthful, and I'll just call it imperialism for short.

By whatever name, it's a crackpot scheme, full of grave hazards for the world. It's also increasingly clear that it's not compatible with either genuine democracy or civil liberties. So we have seen in the past months the unabashed construction of a thick wall of secrecy around formerly open corridors of power, while at the same time huge holes have been driven through what used to be the Bill of Rights.

Further, the enormous financial costs of this plan cannot be borne without deep damage to both our economy and our already inadequate social safety nets. That much is already obvious. And it's not all: I predict that if this plan goes forward for many more years, the military draft will be back, too. Right now, the top Pentagon and White House officials, most of them draft dodgers themselves, don't want this, and I believe they mean it.

But we're already seeing that the far-flung frontiers of this new American empire can't be policed for very long without many more troops under arms than we now have. It just can't be done. A return to conscription would bring back a form of involuntary servitude which was once regarded, rightly, as one of the deepest government invasions of our personal liberties as free citizens.

Many of us hope that with the next election there could be a regime change in Washington, and a shift of direction. I share those hopes. But even in the best case, it seems clear to me that cleaning up the damage and rebuilding will be the work of many years. Besides, my own political aspirations are tempered by bitter experience: in my lifetime more than one new presidency has begun with lofty goals and ended in shattered dreams, done in by deception and betrayal. The Psalmist spoke wisely when he urged: "Put not your trust in princes." (Ps.146:3)

You know all this too. And I think you know something else: that as hazardous and misguided as our regime's crusade is, there are other crusaders out there as well, people who think it would be a great stroke for the glory of God, to kill you, and me, and all our children, right now, even if it meant killing themselves in the process.

For the glory of God. Not for oil; not for political power; not for money. *The glory of God.* Since that terrible Tuesday morning which none of us will ever forget, I've gotten to where I can more or less live with most of the memories; but this part of it, that all the mass killing was done for the glory of God, still leaves me shaken.

So let me be clear: just because people in the Pentagon and the White House are paranoid, doesn't mean there aren't

other people who are out to get us; because some of them are, and they're armed and dangerous.

The question that haunts me in the face of all this has probably been haunting you too, namely: What can we do about it?

That's the question I want to address here, and I want to do so as one Quaker speaking to other Quakers, along with some other like-minded folks. Why am I being so sectarian about this? Doesn't the threat of religious war and the American drive for empire threaten those outside our little circle of Friends?

Of course it does, and I'm not ignoring the larger world. But my focus is on Friends because it is an article of my faith that the Religious Society of Friends has been gathered by God as a people to do a particular piece of work in the larger, mysterious divine plan for mending the world. And it's by discerning our particular work and pursuing it faithfully that we'll make our best and most important contribution to the larger world. Our piece may not be the biggest, or the flashiest. It's not better than any other; but it is important, and above all it is OURS. It is our calling, and we dare not neglect it, or try to trade it in for somebody else's.

This piece of work we usually refer to as our Peace testimony. The phrase describes a current that runs like a deep river through our 350-year history. But this river of testimony is a wandering stream, with many twists and turns. It's not a self-defining witness; it's our task, in worship and study and struggle, to discern its direction and call for us in each new era in which we find ourselves.

A major part of this ongoing discernment is the work of answering the question of what to do. My answer is that it's time for us to declare war, the Hundred-Year Lamb's War.

I say this as a Friend who for the past nineteen months has been living in Fayetteville, NC, close by Fort Bragg, one of the larger and more important military bases.

As Director of Quaker House there, my job has put me up close and personal with the U.S. war machine. And from that continuing experience, I've come to some unexpected conclusions: I think that much of what Quakers need to know today, for peace witness in the New American

Century, we can best learn from, of all unlikely groups, the U.S. military.

That's right: believe it or not, I think the war machine has much to teach us about peacework, maybe even the most important things for our time. Let me explain why:

To begin with, let's acknowledge what most others in the world know, that the current U.S. war machine is one of the most superbly efficient destructive forces the world has ever seen. To be sure, many things about the military, especially as a human society, are deeply flawed, even self-defeating. But when it comes to its principal mission, which is blowing up things and killing people, it simply has no peer. It's not just big; it's not just costly. It's also the best in its bloody business.

How did it get that way? What has made it so effective? There are many factors going into this performance; but I want to focus on three which, I believe, could also be applied nonviolently, to building an adequate Quaker peace witness:

1. The military thinks and plans for the long term, and with big picture strategies.
2. The military is careful to "secure its base."
3. The military makes training a top and continuing priority, at all levels. And throughout, it respects what it calls the "tooth to tail" ratio.

Each of these characteristics could, I believe, be a major asset to Quaker peace witness. And in each of them, I also believe, the Society of Friends today falls far short of its potential, and what is called for by the situation we confront.

Let's start with the first of these lessons, taking the long view and thinking strategically. These are really two sides of the same coin: strategy is a way of looking ahead; and taking the long view incorporates the past into that process.

The importance of this two-sided process for Friends was brought home to me last spring, preparing for a week-long workshop on Lucretia Mott. During this study, I began to notice a striking pattern in her work. Lucretia worked for an end to legal slavery in the U.S. for fifty years. (I call her Lucretia because, after reading several hundred pages of her letters and lots of other material besides, it feels like we're on a first-name basis.)

Fifty years working against chattel slavery—and she lived to see the end of that peculiar institution, though of course not the end of racism. And when Lucretia began this labor, Friends as a body had already been working to end slavery for the previous fifty years. That's a hundred years of Quaker labor on this one issue.

Or take women's rights. Lucretia personally worked on this cause, not for fifty, but for sixty years—and she did not live to see its first major breakthrough, winning the right to vote. That took forty more years after her death in 1880. There's another hundred-year project.

Then we come to the issue of ending war. Lucretia worked on this too. And as a very optimistic person, she believed the world was making progress toward permanent peace in her day. But reading her sermons on peace now often makes my heart sink—because she's been gone for more than 120 years, and instead of progress, the world has unquestionably slid rapidly backwards on this life-or-death matter.

What does all this math add up to? Simply that the Quaker testimonies for an end to legal slavery, for peace and women's equality were not fads or pastimes for dilettantes. They were dead-serious, hundred year projects—and in the case of war, a century was just for starters.

You might think, given this recurrent pattern, that Quakers would be used to taking a long view. But by and large I believe you'd be mistaken, especially if you saw how the military does it. For instance, we've already seen that the military is thinking in terms of an "American century." They're planning decades ahead, getting ready to stop even potential adversaries from challenging its supremacy. The plans may be madness and folly, but they're making them.

But the long view for them also includes the past as well as the future. Each service has a corps of professional historians, and it's a sure bet that some of them are already at work in Iraq, gathering data and interviews on the latest U.S. war. They'll write thick books recounting and analyzing it in detail, comparing and contrasting it to other wars, ancient and modern.

This is a venerable tradition. Their big books are not widely read outside military circles, and maybe because of that they tend to be hard-hitting and candid. Their purpose is not propaganda, but to help the military learn what worked and what didn't, which leaders and units performed well or badly, and why or why not—all so they can do it better next time. There is even, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, a Center for Army Lessons Learned. Makes sense, doesn't it?

Now, how do Quakers compare in this area? My own unsystematic but ongoing research is not encouraging. Here's a typical case: in the summer of 2003 I gave a short quiz to a group of about 30 active Friends. I wrote three lists of names on the blackboard: one list was of some moderately notable American generals; the second was of some central figures in Quaker peace witness. I'll get to the third list in a minute.

The names on the first list, the generals, were familiar, at least vaguely, to many of us. This didn't surprise me; after all, the military has built or helped stock more than 300 military museums in this country, plus many more war memorials. When we moved to the list of Quaker names, almost nobody recognized any of them. One name on the list was Lewis Fry Richardson—the Quaker who invented the field of peace research; he's the Isaac Newton of that field. Nobody there had heard of him.

That we didn't know the Quaker names didn't surprise me either; Friends have been witnessing for peace in this country for more than 340 years. There are a handful of books about it. But how many Quaker peace memorials are there?

Almost none, unless you count the Mary Dyer statues. And the only peace museum in the U.S. that I know of, is in Chicago. I visited it once, thought it was wonderful, and wished there were more.

Think about that for a minute; 300 for war, 1 for peace, and none for Quaker peace work. But why not? There's plenty of Quaker material: in Pennsylvania, for instance, during what William Penn called his "Holy Experiment," he and his successors managed to keep peace with the natives for seventy years, from 1680 to 1750, without an army. No

other American colony had a record that came anywhere close. But is there a museum which illustrates and celebrates this Quaker peace landmark? Or any of the others down the centuries, of which there are many? Not a chance. How many of us even know about this?

So what do we Friends have instead of a sense of our history, or a long view of our future?

That's where the third list in the blackboard quiz came in. It turned out all of us knew all the names on that list. Here are only three: Bob Edwards, Scott Simon, Susan Stamberg. In other words—and this is a demographic characteristic I've verified lots of times with unprogrammed Quaker groups—instead of a common history, we have a common radio network; today we're not Hicksites or Orthodox anymore; we're the National Public Radio (NPR) Quakers.

What's my knock on this? After all, I too listen to NPR, almost every day. It's simply this: when we're more familiar with broadcast personalities than we are with our own heritage and its implications, then too many of us are caught up in a media culture that reinforces in us an atomized, moment-to-moment, ahistorical kind of consciousness which is the very antithesis of a long-term view and coherent strategizing.

What's the result of being so "embedded" in this media culture? It's not only that it purveys lots of misinformation and lies. It also dissipates our attention, helps scatter and diffuse our energy, and narrows our horizons.

Some of us may think we're beyond that because we take in "Talk of the Nation" instead of Rush Limbaugh. (For readers unfamiliar with these names: "Talk of the Nation" is a prominent program on NPR, while Rush Limbaugh is the most well-known of the conservative radio talk show hosts; my research suggests few unprogrammed Friends listen to the latter, while many attend to the former.) But my Friends, that's like thinking we're not part of the petroleum economy because we drive our Volvos and Odysseys instead of Hummers.

Who are we kidding? A preoccupation with the media, even the best, trains us to see an ever-changing parade of trees, while missing the forests, or the earth beneath them.

And the American mass media, yes even NPR and PBS, are also extremely parochial. It's almost all about us: America and Americans, the rest of the world is chronically presented in relation to us.

This learned self-centeredness is especially troubling in relation to war: Several million Congolese have been killed in a decade-long civil war; but few Americans are among the casualties, and what do we know about it? The Liberian civil war has gone on for years; but this summer it's on the screen, because the U.S. embassy was shelled. Colombia, Chechnya, and many other equally horrendous wars drag on, and by and large we hardly notice.

Is this an exaggerated view of the overall state of American Quaker consciousness? Maybe. But another poll I frequently take among Friends is to ask how many in a group have been to a meeting or a protest about Iraq in the past year, and consistently almost every hand goes up. Then I ask who's been to a similar meeting or protest about the Congo, or Sudan, or Colombia, and the hands are very few.

Why is that? Can it really be that the Spirit, That of God, the Light of Christ Within, wants Quakers to see the world from this same, media-driven America-centered perspective? I don't believe it. And this leads me to ask, how much of our peacework is Spirit-led, and how much of it is media-driven?

Spirit-led, versus media-driven; that's a distinction worth pondering, I think. It's also why I very much admire those Friends who are the glaring exceptions to this rule, who like David Zarembka of St. Louis has focused on the Great Lakes region of Africa, where horrible wars and slaughter took place not long ago, and which are now off the media radar screens, where they were featured only briefly anyway.

When so many of us end up knowing more about "All Things Considered" than about what worked and what didn't in Friends' epic struggle against slavery, or the other long term Quaker testimonies, I fear we've traded in a precious birthright for a collection of the coffee mugs and tote bags given out during NPR fundraising campaigns.

Let me come at this another way: Suppose the U.S. Army's generals got the bulk of their military knowledge from daily news broadcasts, and hardly any of them knew who Stonewall Jackson was, and how he outsmarted the Union army, or why all of Hitler's Panzer tank divisions couldn't stop George Patton in Europe? What would happen to their brigades and battalions when these men led them into battle?

Similarly, if we don't work diligently and deliberately to overcome that atomizing media conditioning, as Quaker peace workers we're cooked. The only "Lamb's War" we'll be good for is a Hundred-MINUTE Lamb's War, if that.

The Quaker women and men I have known who were giants of peace witness, were very different from each other, but they had one important thing in common: on their issue, on their concern, they knew what they were talking about. Whether it was the Law of the Sea Treaty, or how to build a sanctuary movement to save central American refugees from the Reagan administration's covert wars, or even advising antiwar GIs on how to get safely out of the country, they knew their stuff. And they didn't attain this depth and credibility from 5-minute news reports. It took work, experience, study, and time, not to mention courage, worship, and spiritual strength.

The same thing goes for looking forward and thinking strategically, planning a Hundred-Year Lamb's War. Can we figure out where we want to be in twenty or fifty years, and plan realistically to get there, or at least be headed continually in the right direction? I believe that's what we are called to do.

To this end, along with reading Lucretia Mott's letters this spring, I also read a Marine Corps strategy manual. I wanted to begin to get a sense of what this kind of thinking might mean. And one thing it means is setting several levels of goals, based on realistic analyses of ourselves and our history, our strengths, weaknesses, and various other factors—and doing the same thing with our adversaries.

At the highest level, this yields grand strategy. That's what we saw in the White House National Security Strategy: to maintain American preeminence, while we remake the

world, by squashing any real or imagined rival. For Lincoln in the Civil War, as I understand it, the grand strategy was similarly straightforward: blockade the Confederate states along the coast, split them in two down the Mississippi river, and then starve or crush their forces one chunk at a time. And that's more or less how it worked out, though of course real wars are never that neat.

Under the umbrella of grand strategy come operational goals, the major plans for achieving the grand strategic objectives. An example of this is what Colin Powell said about Saddam Hussein's army in the first Gulf war—do you remember? he said: "First we're going to cut it off, then we're going to kill it."

I won't have much to say much about our own operational goals here, even though that's where the sexy stuff is, when some get arrested or take other dramatic risks. I'm going to pass by all that, mainly for lack of time, and out of respect for the limits of your ability to sit and listen to me talk. They will have to be hammered out in a broad, ongoing discussion, from which an informed consensus can emerge.

I'll only note in passing that it will be a mistake to think that the most important of such goals is the next election. This essentially continuous horserace will increasingly be an obsession in the media for the next year or so, and if it becomes ours as well, then we'll still be lost in the wilderness. Instead, I hope we can begin to approach that election from the perspective of a Hundred-Year Lamb's War. Then, no matter which way it turns out, we'll find more opportunities, and sustain hope.

My Friend Lucretia Mott comes back to mind here. Lucretia only rarely referred to elections in the many letters and sermons I read. I suspect that's because she fully expected that attaining equality for women would take a lifetime of labor, and even longer. She was also clear that there were many ways of making social change, while presidents came and went. And she knew her Bible, too, so no doubt the Psalmist's verse about not putting our trust in princes was familiar to her. For us today, I hope a concept like the Hundred-Year Lamb's War may help us see the forest behind and encompassing the electoral trees. If it's

going to take at least that long to make any headway, I believe some grand strategic concepts can help us make the most faithful use of our limited resources.

And I believe that taking a long-term view of our witness can help us overcome the disempowering effects of the moment-to-moment media fixation. It can put the media in perspective, making them an asset for our larger work, instead of a distraction from and even a substitute for it.

So let's see if we can think like Lucretia for a few minutes. I want to offer for your consideration three goals which could form the over-arching strategic basis of the Hundred-Year Lamb's War, a framework for a century of work:

First: To make the United States into a law-abiding member of the international community, one that respects human rights both internally and externally.

Second: To move the three great monotheistic religions to a place where they conduct their rivalries without violence or bloodshed. And

Third: To make the Religious Society of Friends a meaningful player in both arenas, one that can go the distance.

The Hundred-Year Lamb's War could serve as a Quaker counterpart and alternative to the plan for a century dominated by American military might and the rival drive for a fanatic theocracy. Even partial progress toward these ends would make the world a safer place and increase our chances of surviving the clash of crusaders and their bloody visions.

Let's take a quick look at these three goals:

First, getting the U.S. to be a law-abiding, human rights-friendly international citizen. Only a few years ago such an idea might have seemed a foregone conclusion, even redundant. But now it's downright radical, and even under the best of circumstances, it will take decades to reconstruct the major elements of international law and order that have been undermined or demolished in the recent past.

Second, peaceful rivalry among the monotheisms, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. To me this is at least as important a goal as taming the American empire, and

probably more difficult. And for this, a century is likely a very short time. After all, we don't often recall that it took western Christianity about three hundred years and rivers of blood to reach a similar place internally.

Three hundred years of war to figure out that the differences between its various Christian sects could be settled in some other way than by one group exterminating another. (Even then, many of them still thought it was just fine to slaughter other monotheists, such as Jews and Muslims, right down to our own time.)

This substantial if imperfect truce among most European Christians is both one of our culture's highest achievements, and one of its least known. Where are the peace museums celebrating the way most Western Catholics and Protestants finally learned to stop killing each other—and recalling the significant Quaker role in that process?

This saga, which we know so little of, could be an asset, a model, and warning as we set out to play a part in ending the current religious warfare. And make no mistake: many of the wars and rumors of war that threaten us today and tomorrow will be religious at bottom.

Here I differ from many of my more left-wing colleagues, because I don't think it's all about oil, or Halliburton and other multinational corporations, though yes, these all play their parts. It's about God, and who gets to play God, and be the enforcer for the divine.

And then there's the *third* goal of the Hundred-Year Lamb's War: making the Religious Society of Friends a long-term player.

What would it mean to plan a Quaker peace witness on such a long-term basis?

Would deciding to be part of it make any difference when we got back home to our meetings?

Would it reorder any priorities, lead us to do something different next week, or next month?

Would it change the usual routine of following one media-hyped "crisis" after another, and fixating on the endless horse race of electoral politics?

I believe it could make a difference. And the way to approach those differences is to consider the other two lessons I've taken from the military, starting with doing what an army in action does first, which is to **secure its base**.

For an armed force heading into combat, securing the base means making sure they have the supplies, the transportation, the food and bullets to fight their battles, safe places to store them, and hospitals to take care of the wounded. More broadly, it means keeping Congress and the public hypnotized by militarist propaganda, that's how they keep recruits signing up and mega-billions in tax money flowing to the Pentagon.

Remember those 300-plus war museums? They are not just about the past; they are also strategic investments in shaping present and future public awareness, and they pay handsome long-term dividends. They tell—and re-tell, and re-tell—a simple story: *For America, war is necessary, war works, war is exciting, war is worth it, and war is almost painless.*

What would “securing our base” mean for Friends? Let me suggest three things for starters:

First, it means build our meetings. Build them spiritually, first and foremost; and physically, and numerically. That's our base; without them we're nothing..

Second, to this growing base of strong meetings, let us add a national network of twenty or more replicas of Quaker House. If we're going to be mounting a Hundred-Year Lamb's War, we will need more projects like Quaker House, which have fulltime, professional staff. They will be regionally controlled, but able to see beyond their back yard, and with sufficient support to keep them going for at least the 35 years that we've managed to survive in Fayetteville.

These projects would reflect the fact that there's plenty of peace work to be done. As the Bible says, the fields are ripe for the harvest, so let's pray that the Lord of the harvest will send laborers—and then have someplace for them to work from when they do appear.

Another reason to build these new projects is that we need to support and develop our own pool of expertise and skill, without supplanting our decentralized, lay-led meeting

structures, and this is a way to do that. In my time, too many of the best activist Friends have had to go elsewhere to exercise their gifts and follow their leadings, and not a few have thereby been lost to us. It's been our own homegrown Quaker brain drain.

Each of these new projects will have its own mission, as we do, fitted to its situation and the concerns of its sponsors. Some could well be the homes of peace museums. But whatever their particular agendas, these new projects should all be well-networked, in touch with each other regularly for cooperation, learning and self-defense. If they're well-designed, these new projects won't break our bank accounts; and anyway, we're not a poor church.

Support for these new projects need not be all Quaker, just mostly. The remarkable religious peace movement brought to light by the latest Iraq war offers many new opportunities for supportive networking, if we will only go out and get to work on it. (That's another helpful hint that the military understands well, but our government evidently does not: allies are good, especially in a long-term struggle.)

Building and securing our base is also closely related to the third major lesson I've taken from the military, which is the **priority of training**. If we're going to mount the Hundred-Year Lamb's War, then from Day One we had better be about the business of training the next generations to be ready to take over for us, not least so they can fix our mistakes, because their turn will be coming soon. That training needs to be a central part of all our programs.

I well remember the later letters that Lucretia Mott wrote to Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and other founding colleagues in the women's movement. In them she spoke often and gratefully about the second generation of strong, smart young women activists who were emerging. She encouraged them, she praised them—and she quietly called on her other elder fore-mothers to give them a helping hand, and then get gracefully out of their way.

Yet here, Friends, is another area where I'm afraid we're in pretty sad shape. If most of us know so little about the rich and important history of Quaker peace witness, its failures as well as its successes, how are we supposed to improve and

transmit this heritage and this work to new attenders and to our children?

One telling indication of the situation on this front for me came a couple of years ago. I asked a question to a roomful of teachers in Quaker schools, "How do you teach Quakerism? The general answer, after a long, embarrassed silence, was: "Mainly by osmosis." I was tempted to ask if they also taught math and science by osmosis; but that would have been flippant.

Or maybe not. Can we imagine an instructor at West Point or the Air Force Academy teaching navigation, or artillery, or strategy, by osmosis? No wonder their graduates are the best in their business. And military's training priorities do not stop with the academies training future generals and admirals. Not at all.

The services are just as serious about training those who will be sergeants and petty officers. This fact is obvious to me every day that the artillery out on Fort Bragg rattles our windows at Quaker House: the troops there only fight wars occasionally. But they train all the time. In this respect, the 82d Airborne at Fort Bragg had nothing on Lucretia Mott. May that soon come to be true of the rest of us as well!

The army emphasizes training because they know the answer to a basic question, namely: If they don't prepare their own new leaders and troops, who will? The answer, of course, is nobody.

By and large, however, too many unprogrammed Friends (I speak here of my own branch; pastoral Friends can judge themselves) seem to have forgotten both the answer and the question. But if we don't train new Quakers in the past and present of Quaker worship and witness, who will? And without that, what kind of future can either have?

To prepare new and young Friends to carry on the Hundred-Year Lamb's War, we'll need a lot more original and substantive Religious Education material, and a lot more teachers, than we have now. And this religious education I'm imagining is not just for kids, it's not just for classrooms, and it's not just for First Days.

It will also be an integral part of the work of all active Quaker organizations. It already is, in the best of them:

FCNL and the Quaker UN Office and Pendle Hill have youth interns every year, as part of their ongoing work. And I can't neglect to mention the unique Quaker Leadership Scholars Program at Guilford College.

Good as all these are, they're not enough. In close to 40 years among Friends, I've seen too many committed young Quakers forced to go outside our ranks for the chance to learn service and to put their ideals into action. And many of them haven't come back. To sustain the Hundred-Year Lamb's War, we need to turn that around, and the sooner the better.

Much of that work may seem humdrum, routine, and unrelated to the exciting and scary business of war and peace as reflected through the mass media. And yes, routine some of these tasks may be, unlikely ever to show up on the news. But are such tasks part of the bigger strategic picture? You bet they are! Important parts too.

The Army understands this: it's what's behind a phrase I mentioned awhile ago, the "tooth to tail" ratio. That's army-talk for the fact that for every soldier who actually fires a weapon or drops a bomb, there are ten to twelve more behind her or him, in a long and often humdrum line. Most will never be noticed by the action-obsessed "embedded" war reporters, but from the long-term, strategic perspective, every link in the chain has its place.

The same goes for us. For many Friends, a role in the Hundred-Year Lamb's War may mean teaching First Day School, balancing a growing meeting's budget, deepening our worship, caring for those who are hurting or spiritually lost among us; in other words, securing our base. Or pursuing a leading to really understand, say, Islam.

So that's what I meant when I began by saying we need to declare war, the kind of war our tradition recognizes. I urge you to pursue this conversation about how Friends can prepare to help redeem the calamitous nuclear hubris of the American Century, and to play our part in overcoming the ancient impulse to make war for the glory of God. That's easily the work of a hundred years.

But how do we connect the Hundred Year grand strategy with the tasks of today? What could we do today to help launch and advance the Hundred-Year Lamb's War?

Of course, there is no Friendly Pentagon, no broad-brimmed Chiefs of Staff to issue our marching orders—though I can't help recalling that it wasn't so long ago that Quakers did wear uniforms, and our guiding handbooks were called Books of Discipline, which is a favorite military term, so these concepts may not be as alien to Quakerism as some today tend to think. Nevertheless, Quakerism is not an army, and each of us is called to find our own leading, our own place in the tooth-to-tail ratio, working together with others as way opens. I think of us as pieces of a patchwork quilt, odd and irregular in shape, size, color and texture, but worked by the Divine Quilter, so that all our peculiarities somehow fit together the way they're supposed to.

Fortunately, the goals of the Hundred-Year Lamb's War provide a very broad quilt. There's room under it for Friends whose pieces are concerned with women's issues, the environment, racism, or poverty. It can also cover very different styles, from inside lobbyists to outside agitators, scholars and visionaries, lone wolves and committee junkies.

So I don't think making these connections between the overall plan and the everyday will be that hard to do. Still, if this notion of a Hundred-Year Lamb's War speaks to you, but you'd feel better with a To-Do list, here are several suggestions for getting started on it, in ascending order of challenge.

First, you can write a check to your meeting—and add a zero to your usual amount. What's the connection between that and the Hundred Year Lamb's War? Easy: it will help to secure our base. And if you don't write checks to your meeting, as I didn't for most of my early years among Friends, I suggest it's time to start.

Second, read a good book about Quaker history and witness. I don't mean some pamphlet or magazine article either. There's been a lot of exciting scholarship in the last twenty years, challenging many of our comfortable notions

about our Quaker selves. So get one or more of these, and learn what it has to teach you.

And then, find another one. And you might also pick up the Bible; it was one of Lucretia's strongest and most reliable weapons of spiritual warfare. To do all this you might have to turn off the radio for awhile; but just for awhile. What's the connection here? It helps develop the long-term view that we need so badly.

Third, you can start a discussion/planning group in your meeting and with other meetings about the Quaker House-type project that could best serve the needs and opportunities for long-term peace work in your area. Will it offer GI counseling? Counter-recruitment? A peace museum? Ongoing public education? Youth work? All of the above? What alliances would help make it happen? The connections here are: More base-building, and new training facilities. And you can commit to sticking with this seeking even if it takes a decade to bear concrete results. We've got a century to work with, remember.

Fourth, you could learn Arabic. It's a fundamental tool for being of use in serious peacebuilding in relation to Islam.

Or, how about Hebrew? It's a humbling fact that learning foreign languages is one of the hardest things to get American college students to do these days. This in my view is another indicator of how far so many of us have been assimilated into the imperial outlook: everywhere Americans go today, other people learn English. It's the language of power in the new American Century. Yet learning another group's language is the key to opening the door to true cross-cultural understanding and reconciliation. Do American Friends in particular have the gumption to break out of that circle of privilege? It's not a matter of guilt, but simple competence.

Fifth, and perhaps most challenging, after you've read a couple of these meaty new books I mentioned, and done some Bible study, you can sign up to teach First Day School.

Adding to the challenge of this call is the fact that to fulfill this part of the Hundred-Year Lamb's War objectives, you'll need a lot of material that doesn't exist yet; so you

may have to research and write it, or figure out how to support someone else who can.

Remember the message of all those war museums and memorials? "War works; war is exciting; war is almost painless." We have a different story to tell, and re-tell:

"There is another and better way than war. It can work; it HAS worked; it can work again. We can make it happen."

There's plenty of material for the telling of this story in America's Quaker past and present, but it's vastly under-utilized, a lamp shamefully hid under a bushel.

Oh—I almost forgot; there's one more thing. This is for unprogrammed Friends generally, rather than as individuals: if we're going to secure our a base so it can truly sustain a century's worth of Quaker peace witness, a Hundred-Year Lamb's War, there's one other drastic change we can't avoid.

Yes, Friends, we're going to have to just give it up, and learn how to sing.

That's right, I said *sing*. Together.

Like the Methodists, and the evangelicals.

Why? It's no mystery: I was a rookie activist in the civil rights movement. And later, I've had jobs where there were labor unions. In both these movements, and lots of others, when they were at their best and most powerful, music was one of their key assets, for inspiration, for morale, for courage and inspiration.

A singing church, like a singing movement, has hope, and a future. So we're going to have to just bite the bullet, and get with the program.

And by the way, the military figured this one out too, a long time ago. If you are tempted to snicker at military music, you're making a mistake. It keeps the troops marching; it's done it for centuries.

I'm not the one, by the way, to lead this change in our customs. That's for others, and maybe the next generation.

But one way or another, we've got to do it, Friends.

Can't you see? There's a war on!



About the Author

Chuck Fager was raised in a Catholic military family, and came to Friends in 1966 after working with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Alabama and filing as a Conscientious Objector. Among his many articles and books are *Without Apology: The Heroes, the Heritage and the Hope of Liberal Quakerism*, also *Selma 1965: The March That Changed the South*, two Quaker mystery novels and numerous stories. This essay grew out of his current work as Director of Quaker House, a Friends peace project in Fayetteville, North Carolina, near Fort Bragg (www.quakerhouse.org). Chuck is a member of State College (Pennsylvania) Monthly Meeting

About the Wider Quaker Fellowship

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, works to facilitate loving understanding of diversities among Friends while we discover together, with God's help, our common spiritual ground, and to facilitate full expression of our Friends' testimonies in the world. Friends World Committee's Wider Quaker Fellowship program is a ministry of literature. Through our mailings of readings, we seek to lift up voices of Friends of different countries, languages and Quaker traditions, and invite all to enter into spiritual community with Friends.