

Seattle Mennonite Church PIT Service April 3, 2005

Questions for a Nation at War:

Why?

Why War?

Why is war so attractive to power, as if victory requires death of the innocent?

Strength is not the number of people who are killed at your command, but the number who are saved by your actions.

Why does violence pursue first the ones who left it unprovoked?

The first victims are the last offenders; the first offenders attack the victims.

Why must the defenders take responsibility for the brutality of aggressors, invoking more brutality to halt it?

It is not that violence begets violence, but that evil attracts evil.

Why do governments force people to draw the line between necessity and value, as if by giving up my own morality I can save the morality of others?

The second I pick up a gun is the second I encourage you to do the same, to sacrifice your own morality for my mortality.

Why are so many preventable deaths seemingly unpreventable?

If you fight for a worthy cause, your death will be worthy, and all you really want is a death not in vain, a death more meaningful than life.

Why must I give up everything, home and land and life, to halt the murder of all other lives?

I asked only for peace, sought only peace, and I find myself in the midst of a thousand rebels with a thousand guns and not a single cause.

Why are the young sent to war, as if they are less corruptible, less vulnerable, to fear and death and terrorism?

Once upon a time, I was a child; I went to war a child, I returned a child at war...and then I returned not at all.

Why do armies seek to destroy, as if annihilation is synonymous with victory?

Victory is in the eyes of the beholder, but dust is still only dust.

Why am I left at the end, left to forgive the murders of my mothers and fathers, friends and lovers, brothers and sisters, mentors and tutors?

All that I had in my life until now belongs to God, but God, are you still holy? Are you still there?

Why am I left to forgive the murderers of my life, my love, my innocence? Innocence can't be lost, but when my soul is dying, how can it be reclaimed?

How do I forgive the unforgivable war which took the lives I valued more than anything else?

The only thing more beautiful than life is a life worth living; a life is not worth living if you cannot share it.

Why, at the end of the destruction, am I left to forgive all the sins of war in order to reconcile my own life and restore peace to others?

I never chose to destroy the peace; I do not know how to put the pieces back together.

How do I prevent war from raging in my own mind, instilling me with the desire for death?

The world turned and left me here, but I never want to give in to its corruption. I never want to be so desperate that another death will make my life better.

My Friends....

War is among us. War is upon us. War is within us. Everyday, we face a nation at war, a nation fighting to stay on top of the world, to keep the world under our heel. We are on the brink of becoming a military society.

One military analyst said America will be either the world's superpower or a nation without conscription—but very likely, it cannot be both. If we intend to sustain our current military force in the world, a draft will be necessary by mid-2006.

Friends, my 18th birthday is in mid-2006.

So I ask you, my fellow Americans, what will you do?

In World War 2, Mennonites had the strongest record as conscientious objectors—three in every five refused to go to war.

Today, I beg you to make a choice—not a yes or a no, but an action, either for peace or for war. Will you be America the beautiful, the brave, and the peaceful?

Or will you be America, the conquerors, the fighters, the nation constantly at war?

We can save lives, if we act now. Let's bring peace to America, not with our thoughts, but with our actions. With our faith, our love, and our constant prayer.