



RELIGION, PEACE & CONFLICT INFORMATION BOOKLET



Introduction to religion, peace and conflict

Beliefs about war

Throughout history people have attempted to gain territory or settle disputes through fighting. Even today, somewhere in the world, it is likely that people will be injured, killed or displaced as a result of war. While all countries have laws against murder, the rules on war are different – in war, killing is generally considered to be acceptable, or at least inevitable.

This war scene from Assyria was made around 2700 years ago.

While the Christian church may speak out against killing, and the teachings of Jesus do not support it, many Christians are prepared to fight for their country or their faith. There are also many Christians who disagree with war and try to prevent it from happening. For example, Quakers will never take part in a war, regardless of the reasons for it.

The main message of Islam is peace and harmony. Muslims believe that God created everything, and humankind has the responsibility to ensure everybody lives correctly. This does not include fighting, although if the fighting is in self-defence or defence of the faith it can be justified. Muslims believe that one of the gifts that God has given humankind is the ability to make choices. If some decide to fight without just cause, it cannot be the fault of God or Islam, because the choice to fight is contrary to the will of God and the teachings of the faith.

There are four key concepts you need to know when looking at religious attitudes to war: peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

Peace

One definition of peace is the absence of war. The intention of those fighting in war is to create peace once the war is over. However, this is often difficult to achieve, as the instability and potential resentment left after a war, make it possible for fighting to break out again.

Peace can also be thought of as a feeling of happiness, wellbeing and tranquillity. Many Christians feel that this can be achieved through faith, especially in prayer. Such peace brings a calmness that helps to avoid quarrels and disputes with other people.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah looks forward to a time when God will bring peace:

"He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples.

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

Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)

There is an emphasis on peace in the Quran. The word 'Islam' in Arabic comes from the word 'salam', meaning peace or safety. The common greeting among Muslims, 'as-salamu alaikum' also means 'peace be with you'.

'The servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk humbly on earth, and who, when aggressive people address them, reply, with words of peace.'

(Quran 25:63)

Justice

Justice means to bring about what is right and fair according to the law, or making up for a wrong that has been committed. Throughout history many wars have been fought for the sake of justice.

The quote from Isaiah looks forward to a time when God, as the ultimate judge, will establish justice between nations and settle their disputes.

In Islam, 'the just' is one of the 99 names for God. Muslims believe that God has provided the laws because they help people to bring about justice on earth, and that if there is injustice, it is the fault of humankind and should not be ignored.

Justice is often linked with equality. If people are not given the same opportunities, this may be seen as unfair (or unjust) and lead to resentment. This could lead to conflict, especially if more privileged parts of the world are seen to be the cause of the inequality.

Key terms:

war: fighting between nations to resolve issues between them

peace: an absence of conflict, which leads to happiness and harmony

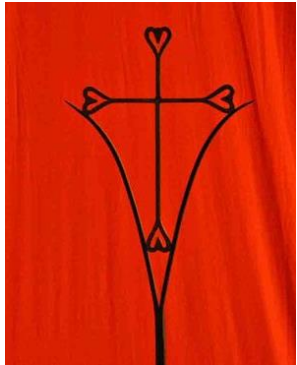
justice: bringing about what is right and fair according to the law, or making up for a wrong that has been committed.

forgiveness: showing grace and mercy and pardoning someone for what they have done wrong

reconciliation: restoration of harmony after relationships have broken down

Forgiveness

Christians and **Muslims** believe that forgiveness is an important element in living peacefully. Forgiveness means to show grace and mercy, pardoning someone for what they have done wrong. It does not necessarily mean that no action should be taken to right a wrong. However, once the wrong is righted, possibly by conflict, forgiveness should follow and no one should bear a grudge. Action to establish peace and justice should follow the act of forgiveness, otherwise it is likely that problems will reoccur. Both Christians and Muslims believe that God sets the example regarding forgiveness by offering forgiveness to all those who are truly sorry and who ask in faith.



The cross from the Church of reconciliation in Taizé, France

Reconciliation

Reconciliation is what follows conflict, when two people or groups of people who have disagreed or fought with each other make up. In March 2013, when talking about conflict between France and Mali, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said:

'We are in the process of winning the war. We also have to win the peace. And winning the peace involves a whole series of acts to help democracy and development.'
(Laurent Fabius)

This quote illustrates the meaning of reconciliation. It is more than just apologising: it involves a conscious effort to rebuild a relationship, and sometimes much work is needed to ensure that there is no more conflict.

While the concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are important in the aftermath of a war, they can also be alternatives to war. For example, Quakers believe we should use these concepts as tools for preventing conflict from happening in the first place. The Quakers are a Christian denomination committed to pacifism (non violence)

PEACE, JUSTICE, FORGIVENESS & RECONCILIATION

Look at the information on peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation and then complete the following in your book.

1. Explain the four concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.
2. Explain how these four concepts link together in the context of war and its aftermath.
3. Are any of these four concepts impossible to achieve? Explain your answer.
4. Look at the image of the cross from Taizé, which represents Christian reconciliation. Create your own symbol or design to show the idea of reconciliation. Explain your reasons for choosing your design.
5. 'Self defence and fighting to defend a faith are justifiable reasons for going to war.' Evaluate this statement.

Peace Justice™



Reconciliation

"The Grave" by Don Mclean

The grave that they dug him had flowers
Gathered from the hillsides in bright summer colours,
And the brown earth bleached white at the edge of his
gravestone.
He's gone.

When the wars of our nation did beckon,
A man barely twenty did answer the calling.
Proud of the trust that he placed in our nation,
He's gone,
But Eternity knows him, and it knows what we've done.

And the rain fell like pearls on the leaves of the flowers
Leaving brown, muddy clay where the earth had been
dry.
And deep in the trench he waited for hours,
As he held to his rifle and prayed not to die.

But the silence of night was shattered by fire
As guns and grenades blasted sharp through the air.
And one after another his comrades were slaughtered.
In morgue of Marines, alone standing there.

He crouched ever lower, ever lower with fear.
"They can't let me die! They can't let me die here!
I'll cover myself with the mud and the earth.
I'll cover myself! I know I'm not brave!
The earth! the earth! the earth is my grave."

The grave that they dug him had flowers
Gathered from the hillsides in bright summer colours,
And the brown earth bleached white at the edge of his
gravestone.
He's gone.



Violent protest and terrorism

Violence and protest

We have already seen that religious beliefs are very significant in promoting peace and reconciliation in communities and societies across the world. For a minority of people religion can sometimes motivate violence. There are examples from history of people committing violence in the name of faith. In such cases the violent actions of a minority do not represent the beliefs and teachings of that religion. **An important teaching of Islam is that fighting is allowed only in self-defence, and only against those who actively fight against you.**

'Do not kill each other, for God is merciful to you. If any of you does these things, out of hostility and injustice, we shall make him suffer Fire.'

(Quran 4:29-30)

Protest

The right to protest is considered a fundamental democratic freedom. The law in the UK allows individuals and groups to protest in public to demonstrate their point of view. If the protest involves a procession or a march, the police must be told at least six days before it takes place. The police can request alterations to the route or even apply to a court for an order to ban the march. They may do this if they feel that the march might intimidate other people or if they predict that violence will be involved.



Vehicles and buildings were set on fire in London during a violent protest in 2011

Peaceful protest was an important part of the Civil Rights movement in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s. One of the movement's leaders, a Christian pastor called Dr Martin Luther King Jr, organised peaceful rallies to protest about racial and social inequalities. Even though King was assassinated in 1968, the peaceful methods adopted by the Civil Rights movement proved successful, and equal rights legislation was passed into US law. **Martin Luther King's peaceful protests reflect the belief shared by many Christians that protest to achieve what is right is acceptable, provided violence is not used.**

Religious beliefs about violence

No religion promotes violence in their teachings, and all are generally agreed that conflict should be avoided if at all possible. Religions have some slightly different

teachings on when violence and conflict may be justified. You will look at religious justifications for violence and war later in this Religion, peace and conflict module.

Terrorism

A much more serious form of violent protest is terrorism. This is where an individual, or a group who share certain beliefs, use terror as part of their campaign to further their cause. Their violence usually deliberately targets innocent civilians and takes place in public. Suicide bombers, car bombs and gunmen shooting into crowds are all tactics used by terrorists. They believe that by killing people in this way the rest of the population will become more aware of their cause, will be scared of them and push the authorities into giving way to their demands.

'The purpose of terrorism lies not just in the violent act itself. It is in producing terror. It sets out to inflame, to divide, to produce consequences which terrorists then use to justify terror.' (Former UK Prime minister Tony Blair)

While a person who commits terrorist acts may claim to do so in the name of a religion, for example Christianity or Islam, no religion promotes terrorism. **Most Christians consider terrorist acts of violence to be wrong, especially as the victims are usually innocent people going about their normal daily business. They prefer more peaceful ways of resolving issues.**

On 7th July 2005, there were four suicide bombings in London that killed 52 people and injured over 700. Even though the terrorists involved in those bombings attached themselves to the religion of Islam, most Muslims, including their religious and community leaders, condemned the attacks, often sharing platforms with leaders of other faiths to show their solidarity against terrorism. Muslims do not agree with terrorism because terrorist acts of violence are considered to be wrong and against the wishes of God, especially as the victims are usually innocent people. There is no justification for terrorist acts in the teachings of Islam.



Application of Knowledge

1. Suggest some issues that it may be justified to protest peacefully about in contemporary British society. Explain why.
2. Do you think violent protest is ever justified? Explain why?
3. Explain how terrorists attempt to bring about the changes they want.
4. Look at the quote from Tony Blair. What is he saying, and do you agree with him? Explain why.
5. 'Terrorism is never right.' Evaluate this statement. *(In your answer you should refer to how Christian and Muslims respond to terrorism)*

Key terms:

Violence: using actions that can threaten or harm others

Protest: an expression of disapproval, often in a public group

Terrorism: the unlawful use of violence, usually against innocent civilians, to achieve a political goal

Reasons for war

Some people find it very difficult to understand why people are prepared to fight in a war and why their countries expect them to. However, it is a fact that people are prepared to do this in great numbers. In April 2015 there were around 153,000 full-time regular military personnel in the UK armed services with a further 32,000 in the volunteer reserve. Whenever the UK is involved in war, both full-time and volunteer personnel are called upon to fight. During the First and second World War, the need for fighters was so great and casualties were so high that people in the UK were ordered to fight for their country.

Greed as a reason for war

Throughout history, war has been used as a way to gain more land or territory from weaker neighbouring countries or even territories thousands of miles away. This may also be to regain land lost in a previous war. Rulers and nations can be motivated by greed to take over other countries, whose residents object to their leadership. Greed can also lead countries to invade others in order to control important resources, such as oil. In this way, rich and powerful countries can get richer and more powerful, potentially causing poverty in the defeated country when their main source of income is taken away.



Some believe that the US and UK invasion of Iraq in 2003 was more to do with gaining control of oil reserves than politics.



Around the world there are many protests against wars caused by greed for oil

Christianity warns against greed. The Bible says:

'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.'
(1 Timothy 6:10)

The Quran also warns Muslims against greed:

'God does not like arrogant, boastful people, who are miserly and order other people to be the same, hiding the bounty God has given them.'
(Quran 4: 36-37)

In the case of oil, many major oil-producing countries are governed according to Muslim Shari'ah law and principles, so any disagreement or conflict based on oil can turn into a conflict that can be interpreted as including a religious element.

Self-defence as a reason for war

Whenever one country attacks another, it expects to meet some resistance from the invaded country. Most people consider fighting in self-defence to be morally acceptable, and believe they have a right to defend the values, beliefs and ways of life that their country lives by. During the Second World War the UK fought to defend itself against Nazi invasion and also to help defeat what they saw as an evil threat to the whole of Europe. In addition to defending their own country, many people believe it is acceptable to fight to defend other nations under threat.

While there is little in the New Testament to justify the idea of fighting in self-defence, an argument can be made for it provided all other ways of solving the problem have been attempted and have failed.

The Quran permits fighting in self-defence, but Muslims are unlikely to agree to it unless other ways of solving the problem have been attempted and failed.

'Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged - God has the power to help them.' (Quran 22:39)

Retaliation as a reason for war

Wars are sometimes fought in retaliation against a country that is seen to have done. When Jesus was asked about retaliation, he gave this advice:

'But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.' (Matthew 5:39)

Others teachings also seem to suggest against retaliation:

'Do not repay anyone evil for evil... If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.' (Romans 12:17)

Although many Christians are able to follow this advice in much of their daily interaction with other people, when it comes to situations of war, they find it much more difficult.

Key terms:

Greed: selfish desire for something.

Self-defence: acting to prevent harm to yourself or others.

Retaliation: deliberately harming someone as a response to them harming you.

Muslims believe that God knows there is a human need for justice to protect innocent human lives and prevent the repetition of wrongdoing within society. It is written in the Quran that *'Fair retribution(retaliation) saves life for you, people of understanding, so that you may guard yourselves against what is wrong.'* (Quran 2:179) However the Quran and the Hadith teach that forgiveness is always the best response in order to avoid any bloodshed in society.

'If you believers have to respond to an attack, make your response proportionate, but it is best to stand fast.' (Quran 16:126)

Islam teaches that retaliation in war must be measured. Torture and mutilation are strictly forbidden under Islamic law, regardless of the wrongdoing caused by the enemy. However, Muslims believe that God offers innumerable rewards for those who choose reconciliation (forgiveness) over retaliation.

'There is cause to act against those who oppress people and transgress in the land against all justice...though if a person is patient and forgives, this is one of the greatest things.' (Quran 42: 42-43)

Towards the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, rulers in Muslim countries such as Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Libya were overthrown by Western, non-Islamic forces. Even though some of the citizens of these countries believed these leaders were not ruling according to the wishes of the mainly Muslim population, many of them fought in self-defence to save their countries from being influenced too greatly by what were seen as Western and non-Islamic aggressors. In other Muslim countries, Muslims themselves chose to fight to overthrow what they felt was an unjust government, wanting the opportunity to have a more democratic government.

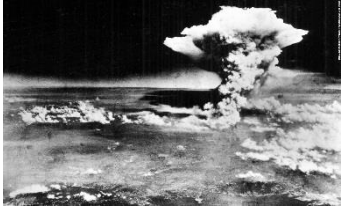
Reasons for war

Look at the information on the reasons for war and then complete the following in your book.

1. Explain how greed, self-defence and retaliation are causes of war.
2. Look at the quotes in the greed section from the Quran and 1 Timothy 6:10. What do you think they are saying about greed?
3. Which of the reasons outlined on the three reasons do you think Christians and Muslims would agree with? Explain why.
4. Do you think that there is ever any reason for one country to take over another? Give reasons.
5. Are there other reasons that you believe justify fighting a war? Explain your answer.



Nuclear war and weapons of mass destruction



An aerial photograph of Hiroshima shortly after the atomic bomb on 6th August 1945.

The use of nuclear weapons

This photo was taken just after the first atom bomb (an early form of nuclear weapon) was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, by American forces during the Second World War. Around 80,000 people died as a result of the explosion. The death toll rose to around 140,000 as many more died from radiation poisoning in the days that followed. An area of five

square miles was devastated and more than 60 per cent of buildings were destroyed. Three days later, a second Japanese city, Nagasaki, was also destroyed by a second atom bomb. Five days later, Japan surrendered and ceased fighting the allied forces. This effectively marked the end of the Second World War, which for some people justified the use of the of these weapons.

Since the end of the Second World War, many of the wealthier countries in the world, including the UK, have researched and developed considerably more powerful nuclear weapons. Despite some countries agreeing to reduce the number of nuclear weapons they possess, there are now sufficient weapons to comp[ately destroy the world we liv in several times over.

The two atom bombs dropped on Japan ended the Second World War, thus saving lives, and it is a fact that nuclear weapons have not been used in a war since. The usual justification for nuclear weapons is that they prevent world wars from occurring due to the fear of the consequences of nuclear escalation. Defenders of nuclear weapons would point out as proof of their effectiveness the relative peace within Europe since the Second World War. *Some Christians believe that the problem with nuclear weapons is not the devices themselves, but their use.*

It is a fundamental Christian belief that as creator, only God has the authority to end life that he has created. One of the Ten Commandments states 'You shall not murder' (Exodus 20:13) Some Christians believe that the use of nuclear weapons which would kill huge numbers of innocent civilians can never be justified.

Speaking on behalf of four UK churches, policy adviser Steve Hucklesby said:

'Faith groups in the UK are united in their conviction that any use of nuclear weapons would violate the sanctity of life and the principle of dignity core to our faith traditions.' (Steve Hucklesby)

Muslims also believe that the problem with nuclear weapons is not the devices themselves but whether they are used.

It is estimated that in 2015, nine nations possessed around 15,700 nuclear weapons between them. Only one of these countries, Pakistan, is classed as a Muslim country. Pakistan had around 120 nuclear weapons; the UK had around 215. As only one Muslim country has nuclear weapons, there is little pressure for nuclear disarmament amongst Muslims, possibly because they do not expect any other countries to use them against a country that doesn't possess them. Some hold the opinion that if powerful countries have nuclear weapons, nobody will dare to use them, so they help keep the peace.

Muslim attitudes towards nuclear weapons are fairly clear. They believe that God created all life on earth and that Muslims have a duty and responsibility to care for them and to work for peace. Life is sacred, and using weapons which could kill millions of people and possibly completely destroy the earth goes against the teachings of Islam. In conventional warfare, innocent civilians must be protected, but with nuclear weapons this is not possible. The Quran gives positive advice that appears to rule out the use of any weapons.

Do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands, but do good, for God loves those who do good.' (Quran 2:195)

Weapons of mass destruction

In addition to nuclear weapons, there are other weapons of mass destruction in existence.

Chemical weapons

A chemical weapon contains lethal chemicals in a bomb or shell which when released causes numerous deaths, mainly by choking, injuries and destruction of the environment. In 1993, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) made the production, stockpiling and the use of these chemicals illegal worldwide. However, since then, it is believed they have been used by the governments of countries such as Iraq and Syria against groups within their countries who they perceive to threaten their leadership.

Key terms:

Nuclear weapons: weapons that work by a nuclear reaction that devastate huge areas and kill large numbers of people.

Weapons of mass destruction: weapons that can kill large numbers of people and/or cause great damage.

Chemical weapons: weapons that use chemicals to poison, burn or paralyse humans and destroy the natural environment.

Biological weapons: weapons that have living organisms or infective material that can lead to disease or death..

Biological weapons

Biological weapons introduce harmful bacteria and viruses into the atmosphere. When they enter the food chain or water supplies, they cause illness and death on a massive scale. As with chemical weapons, they are illegal, but there are instances of their use and many countries still possess them.

As with nuclear weapons, chemical and biological weapons have the capacity to kill large numbers of people, including civilians. Although a life of a person in the military is worth the same as any other life, the rules of war allow military personnel to be valid targets. Civilians pose no threat and so they are supposed to be protected. No religion promotes the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Some people try to justify war by using this quote from the Bible:

'If there is a serious injury, you take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth...' (Exodus 21:23-24)

This quote was originally intended to introduce a sense of proportion into the way people respond to each other. Many Christians would argue it cannot be used to justify nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. It would have to read 'Many lives for a life, many eyes for an eye and a whole mouthful of teeth for a tooth'. Most Christians firmly believe that the use of weapons of mass destruction is counter to the teachings of Jesus, who was a pacifist, and therefore wrong.

The Quran does provide some justification for war in self-defence:

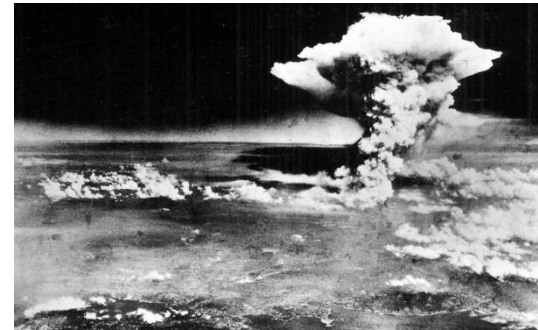
'Fight in God's cause against those who fight you, but do not overstep the limits: God does not love those who overstep the limits.' (Quran 2:190)

However, this does not justify the use of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction because by harming innocent civilians and children they breach the limits of warfare.

Reasons for war

Look at the information and then complete the following in your book.

1. Explain the effects of the first atom bomb on the city and people of Hiroshima.
2. Explain the difference between nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and biological weapons.
3. 'The existence of nuclear weapons helps to keep the peace.' Do you agree? Explain your reasons.
4. Explain why most Christians disagree with the use of weapons of mass destruction.
5. Explain what Muslims believe about whether nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction should exist.
6. Do you think the use of any of these weapons is justified?



Weapons of Mass Destruction





THE HIROSHIMA STORY



On the morning of 6th August 1945, a B29 bomber called the 'Enola Gay' dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. This is an account of what happened. It was written by Lord Philip Noel-Baker, Nobel Peace Prize winner in 1959, and read to the house of Lords in 1980.

'Hiroshima, 6th August 1945, 8.15 am, a perfect summer morning: gentle breezes, sunshine, a blue sky. A blue sky is a symbol of happiness in Japan. The streets are full of people: people going to work, people going to shop, children going to school. The air raid siren sounds but no one runs, no one goes to shelter. There is only a single aircraft in this raid. The aircraft steers a course across the city. Above the centre, something falls - 20 seconds, 30 seconds, 40... and then there is a sudden flash of blinding light, hotter and brighter than a thousand suns. Those who are looking at it have their eyes burned in their sockets. They will never look on men or things again.

In the streets below, other people are walking - a lady as beautiful as she is elegant, a businessman in charge of great affairs, a clever student, the leader of his class, a little girl, laughing as she runs. They are in the street walking. Then suddenly they are not there. The beautiful lady, the businessman, the brilliant student, the scampering little girl have vanished, utterly consumed in the furnace of the flash. There are no ashes, even on the pavement -nothing but their black shadows on the stones.

Then comes the blasts. For two kilometres in all directions, every building, every structure is levelled to the ground. The people inside are buried in the ruins of their homes. Lorries, vans, men and women, babies, prams, are picked up and hurled like bullets, hundreds of feet through the air. The blast piles its victims in huge heaps on the corner of the street - heaps seven, eight layers deep. I know a man and woman who looked for seven days for their grandson. When they found him, one layer below the top, he was still breathing, but all the doctors in Hiroshima could not save his life.

Then the fireball touches the earth... Swept by tornado winds they rush together in a single firestorm. Ten of thousands more, trapped by walls of flame that leap higher than the highest tower in the city, swiftly, or in longer agony, are burned to death. And everything goes black. The mushroom cloud rises to the very vault of heaven. It carries with it many thousand tons.

The first atom bomb weighed two kilogrammes - less than five pounds. It was a little larger than a cricket ball. It killed 140,000 people on that August day. In 1978, more than 2,000 died in Hiroshima from its long-delayed effects.'

The Just War Theory

The Just War theory:

Religions generally oppose war, but many believe fighting is justifiable if it is the only course of action that will prevent a real evil. In the 4th century St Augustine was one of the first Christians to write about the morality of war, and his thoughts were developed into a distinct set of criteria by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century. Further adaptations have been made to the Just War theory up until the present day. It seeks to lay out the conditions under which fighting is a war is justifiable, and also provides rules on how the war must be fought to ensure it is ethical. All the following conditions must apply for the war to be a 'just war'.

- The war must have a just cause (such as self defence or defending someone else. It must not be to gain territory or resources, or in retaliation).
- The war must be lawfully declared by a proper authority (that is, the government or lawful rulers of the country).
- The war must have a good intention (such as to promote good and avoid evil) and once its aims are achieved it must end. The good achieved by the war must outweigh the evil that led to it.
- Fighting must be a last resort after all other ways of resolving the problem have been tried first.
- The war must have a reasonable chance of success (it is wrong and unjust to send troops to certain death if there is no chance of winning).
- The methods used to fight the war must be proportional to achieve success. Excessive force should not be used.

The way the war is fought must obey the following conditions:

- The war must be fought by just means. Innocent people and civilians must not be targeted or harmed.
- Only appropriate force may be used. This includes the types of force and how much is used.
- Internationally agreed conventions on the conduct of war must be obeyed. The Geneva convention, accepted by the UK in 1957, lays down the rules that must be obeyed in war.

Many Christians believe that although fighting a just war is acceptable, it is much better if there is no war, just or not. Working together to avoid situations where war is a possible outcome is preferable to fighting. The United Nations, founded in 1945, encourages countries to resolve disputes peacefully. Some Christians disagree with the theory of a just war because it defends the concept of war in certain circumstances. This could lead to a general acceptance of war.

Lesser jihad and the just war theory:

Lesser Jihad obliges Muslims to fight under certain conditions. It covers fighting against non-Muslim aggressors and there are strict rules regarding its conduct. Although there is no specific just war theory in Islam, over the years codes of conduct have been developed to justify when it is right to fight and set out what is allowed during fighting.

Muslims believe that war is allowed in the following circumstances. It is generally accepted that war can be just and therefore permitted if it meets the following conditions:

- It is the last resort - fighting must be the last option when diplomacy and negotiation have failed.
- It is done in self-defence - the initial aggression should come from the other side and there should first be attempts to solve the problem without fighting.
- As lesser jihad is a religious concept, the decision to fight should be made by a state leader.
- It is done for a just cause, not to gain territory - the reason should be to protect territory from an outside aggressor or, in cases of civil war, rebel groups from within the state.
- An Islamic country has been attacked - countries are allowed to join a conflict to assist another Muslim state which is under threat.
- Another state has tyrannised its Muslim citizens - if a country mistreats its Islamic citizens, it is permissible to fight in support of fellow Muslims.

If these conditions are met, the war is thought a just one and it is believed that those who fight for the cause of Islam will receive the favour and reward of God.

'Let those of you who are willing to trade the life of this world for the life to come, fight in God's way.

To anyone who fights in God's way, whether killed or victorious, we shall give a great reward.' (Quran 4:74)

Muslim attitudes to conduct in war

The first Islamic caliph and companion of Muhammad, Abu Bakr, devised some rules that Muslim armies must obey to govern the way conflict is conducted:

- Muslim armies must not commit treachery or stray from the right path.
- Dead bodies must not be mutilated.

Key terms:

Just war: a war which meets internationally accepted criteria for fairness; follows traditional Christian rules for a just war, and is now accepted by all other religions.

Lesser jihad: the outward struggle to defend one's faith, family and country from threat.



Refugees fleeing the Syrian civil war in 2015. Is it possible to fight a war without harming civilians?



This sculpture is outside the United Nations building in New York? What do you think its message is?

The Just War Theory continued

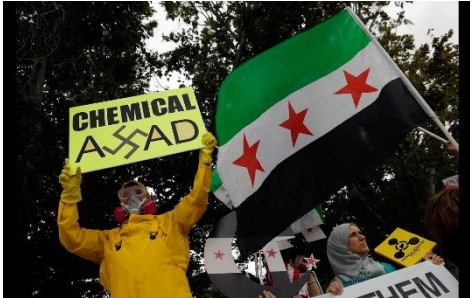
Muslim attitudes to conduct in war (Continued)

- Children, women and old men must not be killed.
- Trees, particularly fruit-bearing ones, must not be harmed because they provide food in the future.
- Animals must only be killed for food.
- People who are devout in their faith, such as monks, should not be harmed.

Although these rules are over 1300 years old and reflect different forms of conflict that were present at that time, they still retain relevance in Muslim thought. They have been revised and updated by different Muslims over the years. It has become generally accepted that:

- Wars should be fought with only the necessary amount of force (proportionality).
- Fighting should be without anger.
- Prisoners should be treated in a civilised way.
- Soldiers must be of sound mind and body.

While Muslims believe that fighting a war using these just war principles is acceptable, they believe it is much better if there is no war. Working to avoid war is a more preferable option to fighting



Demonstrators protesting against the use of chemical weapons in Syria in 2013

Muslims and followers of other religions would oppose the use of weapons such as chemical weapons because the damage they would cause is not considered proportionate and can harm innocent civilians. Their use does not fit the criteria of a just war.

Religion and the just war

Look at the information and then complete the following in your book.

1. Is it possible to fight a war without harming any civilians? Explain your response clearly.
2. Explain the meaning of Lesser Jihad. Why do you think it is sometimes used to mean a holy war?
3. Do you think attacking another country before it attacks you is ever justified? Explain your opinions.
4. 'It is acceptable to do anything to win a war if it ultimately leads to a better outcome'. Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion.
5. 'Working to avoid war is better than fighting'. Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion.



Just War

When is war the
answer?

Holy War & religion as a cause of violence

Holy War:

To many people the concept of a **holy war** seems to be a contradiction. They think that no activity that involves killing people in large numbers can possibly have any religious inspiration or justification. However, in the Old Testament there are many references to God helping the Jews to establish themselves in the Promised Land by winning bloody battles. In the Crusades (battles between Christians and Muslims in the 11th and 14th centuries), both sides believed that God was helping them to win.

For Christians, a holy war must be authorised by a religious leader with great authority. The purpose of it should be to defend the Christian faith from attack. Those who take part believe they will gain spiritual rewards, and if they die in battle they will go straight to heaven.

The concept of holy war does not feature widely in current Christian belief, but that does not mean that Christians are happy to see their faith attacked. Christians will stand up for their faith but are much more likely to use the power of argument than military strength.

For Muslims, the lesser jihad makes holy war an important concept, as it defends Islam and the rights of Muslims. During the time of Muhammad, he and his followers were forced to fight to defend themselves from attackers who disagreed with their teachings. Had they not done so, it is likely that Islam would have been wiped out. This is reflected in the Quran and even though approximately 1400 years later the way that people live has changed, the teachings in the Quran have retained their crucial importance.

Holy war cannot be declared to force people to convert to Islam. Even though enemies defeated by Muslim armies during the time it was establishing itself were encouraged to convert to Islam, this was not the intention of the fighting. In addition, holy war criteria cannot be used for financial gain. The war must be fought for God and never to allow a leader to demonstrate their power.

For a holy war to be justly declared, the faith of Islam must be under threat or the right to worship and practise Islam must be denied to individuals or groups. If this means the removal of an oppressive ruler, this is permitted. As with a just war, holy war must be the last resort, in self defence, following negotiation and diplomatic efforts to find a solution.

Conduct during holy war

Holy war must only be declared by a fair religious leader. If this happens, Muslims feel they have a duty to respond, unless their families could not survive without them. Muhammad gave instructions that some had to remain in their

villages to defend the women and children if they came under threat. He also instructed that soldiers fighting on the battlefield were expected to remain there until the battle was won. If they chose to run away from the battle, it was considered to be against God because they were making it more difficult for their brothers and comrades to be victorious. Any Muslim who is killed fighting a holy war in defence of Islam is promised a place in paradise.

Religion as a cause of war and violence

As we saw in the first paragraph, with the crusades, historically holy wars have been fought by Christians and Muslims. Both sides believed they were fighting a holy war on behalf of God. At the time the Pope assured all those who took part in the crusades that these wars had the support of God. Muslims, led by Saladin, believed they were defending holy cities like Jerusalem.

The belief in holy war has been seen by some as a justification for acts of violence, including terrorism. Some groups who attach themselves to Islam, such as al-Qaeda and Isis (IS), have been responsible for waging civil war and performing terrorist acts in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Groups that identify themselves with Islam who make threats towards innocent civilians follow a very extreme form of Islam which most Muslims strongly oppose.

In the UK, most Christians do not see the need to respond violently to what they perceive to be offensive to their religion or an attack on their faith. This does not mean they approve of such attacks; they just believe that Christian teachings do not encourage a violent response.

However, in the past there have been tensions in the UK between denominations in Christianity, especially between Protestants and Catholics. This was most recently evident in Northern Ireland during a period between 1968 and 1998 known as 'the Troubles'. Although many consider this to have been a political conflict rather than a religious one, it led to discrimination and acts of violence against both Protestants and Catholics.

Christian beliefs about war and violence

An often quoted verse from the Old Testament is 'an eye for eye, tooth for tooth' (Exodus 21:24), which is sometimes interpreted to mean that it is acceptable to return violence with violence. When this was written over 3000 years ago, individual wrongs were punished by taking violent actions against the families or tribes of the offender. The 'eye for eye' teaching tried to reduce

Key terms:

Holy war: fighting for a religious cause or God, probably controlled by a religious leader.



Christians defending the walls of the city of Acre in 1291



Saladin (1138-1193) was a highly respected Sunni Muslim leader who won back Palestine in a war judged to be holy.

Holy War continued

this violence by suggesting only the individuals involved should be punished and not a larger group of people, most of whom were innocent

For most Christians, the teachings of Jesus make it quite clear that the use of violence is not justified. In Matthew's gospel he said:

"You have heard it was said to the people long ago. 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement'. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgement."

(Matthew 5:21-22)

On one occasion, before his arrest, Jesus advised his disciples: 'If you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one'. (Luke 22:36). Some Christians interpret this as a justification for violent resistance and wrongdoing. Jesus said this after his Last Supper with his disciples as a warning that they should be prepared for difficult and dangerous times ahead once he had left them. It is unlikely that he was suggesting they should literally arm themselves with swords to respond to any future threats with violence. Elsewhere it is written:

"Put your sword back in its place", Jesus said, "for All who draw the sword die by the sword."

(Matthew 26:52)



Holy war

Look at the information and then complete the following in your book.

1. Explain the rules of conduct for a holy war. (Refer to both Christianity and Islam)
2. Why do you think many Christians do not agree with the idea of a holy war?
3. How far do you think Christians should go to defend their faith? Explain your reasons clearly.
4. Can you suggest other ways in which Muslims might defend their faith?
5. Is it acceptable for people to offend religions like Christianity and Islam? Explain your answer.



PACIFISM

What is Pacifism

A Pacifist is a person who believes that war and violence can never be justified and that conflicts should be settled in a peaceful way. They would say it is always wrong to fight, even in self-defence. Human lives are so valuable that nothing can justify putting them under threat, even using violence to help an innocent person who is being attacked. They would seek an alternative solution that does not include violence. Pacifists strongly believe that it is best to work to prevent war from happening. Promoting justice and human rights is an important part of this. If people are not denied basic freedoms and rights, they are less likely to engage in conflict. Peace is not just an absence of war; it is a sense of wellbeing and security. Being at peace with oneself helps people to avoid conflicts with others.

Christian pacifists believe that peace can come through religious faith, supported by prayer and meditation. Being at peace with oneself helps people to avoid conflict with others. The early Christians practised non-violence and would not take revenge even on their persecutors. Many Christian pacifists today take their inspiration from the life and teaching of Jesus who did not resist arrest and allowed himself to be crucified for the love of the human race. Jesus taught his followers to live and work for peace:

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.' (Matthew 5:9)

Many Christian pacifists are willing to die, but not kill for their beliefs. During the First and Second World wars many Christian pacifists refused to fight and faced punishment as a result. These people were called conscientious objectors. Many who refused to fight joined the war effort in other non-combat roles, such as doctors, nurses, cooks and mechanics. They were often dangerous jobs and some lost their lives, but they died knowing that their war effort did not involve killing other people.

The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

The Anglican pacifist Fellowship (APF) is a Christian pacifist group linked to the Anglican church. They have around 1400 members in over 40 countries. They believe that peace and justice should be brought about through non-violent means. As a Christian group they have three main pacifist beliefs:

- Jesus' teaching is incompatible with the waging of war.
- The Christian Church should never support or justify war.
- Christian witness should include opposing the waging or justifying of war.

APF founded the Week of Prayer for World Peace in 1974, and continues to have close ties with it. In addition, they produce regular newsletters, organise and contribute to special peace-related events and religious services, and work to raise awareness of the issue of pacifism.

All members of APF have to be members of the Anglican Church and must agree with the following pledge:

'We believe that as Christians we are called to follow the way of Jesus in loving our enemies and becoming peacemakers. We work to transform our Anglican Communion and the world to overcome those factors that lead to war within and between nations.'

Not all Christians are pacifist because some believe that war and conflict can be justified on occasions under certain criteria (Just war).

Islam is a religion of peace. It is difficult for Muslims to identify themselves as pacifists because of the duty of Jihad, and also because of what is instructed in the Quran:

'Fighting has been ordained for you, though it is hard for you. You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something because it is bad for you: God knows and you do not.' (Quran 49:9)

However, in all other circumstances, many Muslims share the principles of pacifism, and sympathise with the cause of pacifists. The Quran advises that if peace is offered then it must not be refused:

'But if they (non-believers) incline towards peace, you must also incline towards it, and put your trust in God: He is the All Hearing, the All Knowing.'
(Quran 8:61)

Many Muslims believe that being at peace with oneself helps to avoid conflicts with others. Many find that this sense of inner peace comes from submitting their lives to God and to their faith. Being part of the ummah (brotherhood of Muslims) gives them a feeling of solidarity and support.

Promoting peace

The Muslim peace fellowship (MPF) is a gathering of peace and justice oriented

Key terms:

Pacifism: the belief of people who refuse to take part in war and other forms of violence.

Peacemaker: a person who works to establish peace in the world or a certain part of it.

Peacemaking: the action of trying to establish peace.



The dove is a well known symbol of peace.



This peace sign was originally designed as the logo for the British CND.

Pacifism continued

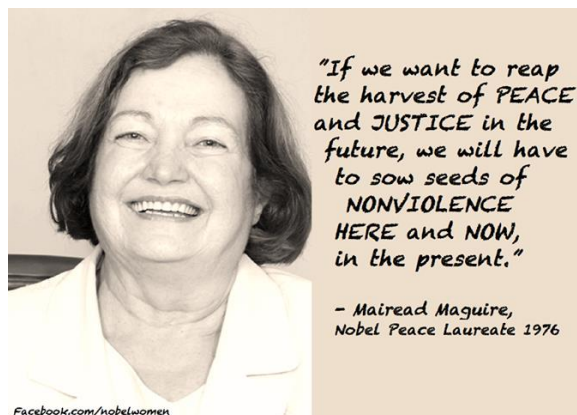
Muslims of all backgrounds who are devoted to the theory and practice of Islamic non-violence. Their objectives include:

- To work against injustice and for peace in ourselves, our families, our communities and our world.
- To affirm the commitment to peace on behalf of all Muslims.
- To explore and deepen our understanding of Islamic teachings about peace and non-violence.
- To develop faithful and authentic non-violent strategies for the establishment of sustainable social balance and the redress of wrongs.

Among their many activities, the Muslim Peace Fellowship participates in conferences and publications in order to achieve their objectives.

Case Study – A modern peacemaker

In 1976, Mairead Corrigan, a Catholic from Northern Ireland, together with Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown, became peacemakers when they formed the 'Peace People' organisation. They organised peace marches throughout the UK that gave people the opportunity to show they wanted peace, rather than the violence and killings that were a tragic feature of Northern Ireland at that time. Mairead and Betty were awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace prize for their peacemaking activities. After the Northern Ireland troubles were largely resolved and peace returned to the country, Mairead Corrigan became a tireless worker for world peace and human rights.



Pacifism

Look at the information and then complete the following in your book.

1. Should a pacifist be expected to fight in a war? Explain your reasons clearly.
2. Is being involved in a non-combat role a reasonable alternative to fighting? Explain your reasons clearly.
3. Why would some Christians say that Jesus' actions at his arrest showed pacifism in action? Explain your reasons clearly.
4. Explain fully why many Muslims find it difficult to identify themselves as pacifists.
5. How does being part of the Ummah help Muslims to feel at peace?
6. Pacifists believe that peace and justice should be brought about through non-violent means. Explain how you think peace and justice could be brought about through non-violent means.
7. **Exam Question practice:** Explain two similar religious beliefs about pacifism. In your answer you must refer to one or more religious traditions. (4 marks)



So what is pacifism?

Pacifism is based on the belief that violence against other human beings is wrong. Pacifists think that wars can never be justified so they refuse to fight in them. They are 'conscientious objectors', which means killing is against their conscience. Buddhist and Christians, particularly the Quakers, have strong pacifist traditions, but not all pacifists are religious believers.



What do Pacifists believe?

- For religious pacifists, the sanctity of life is important. All pacifists believe that every person is part of the human family and deserves respect.
- Killing goes against teachings in sacred writings.
- War causes suffering, bitterness, hatred, prejudice and greed. The suffering is out of proportion to the evil being fought.
- War damages the environment and wastes precious lives and resources that could be used to solve global poverty and other world problems.
- Quite often negotiation is needed in the end to settle disputes, so the loss of life will have achieved very little.
- Using violence to achieve freedom or other positive goals is sinking to the same level as the oppressor.

'You have heard it said, "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

(Matthew 5:38-9)

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.'
(Matthew 5:9)

'Let us then try what love can do: for if men did once see we love them, we should soon find they would not harm us.'

(William Penn, Quaker)

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatever; this is our testimony to the whole world... We 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 the kingdoms of the world."
(Quaker declaration to King Charles II in 1660)

Religious teaching from Christianity:

Above are two biblical quotes from Matthew's gospel, a statement by William Penn and the Quaker declaration. All four examples are said to highlight the idea of pacifism clearly to Christians

Victims of war

Providing help to victims of war

Those fighting in war aim to defeat the enemy with as few casualties as possible. They are fully aware though that those who fight in wars may be killed or injured. Casualties are an unavoidable part of war. In addition to the harm caused to those directly involved in the fighting, harm is also caused to their families and friends. For example, if the main wage earner dies in war, their family may struggle financially without them. If a place of work is destroyed in a war, nobody can earn a wage there. If crops are destroyed or water supplies polluted, starvation could follow for those who live in the surrounding area.

In the UK this is not such a problem because we have benefits to ensure people have enough resources to live, and if a member of the military is killed or injured, financial systems are in place to look after their family. Injured servicemen receive free health care, with some more specialised care and support being provided by charities such as the Royal British Legion (mainly through their annual poppy appeal) and Help for Heroes. **In addition, many Muslims injured in war receive support from their local community and mosques.** However, injury or death still has devastating effects on friends and families and can cause long-term emotional wounds.

There are many organisations that offer help and care for victims of war, wherever they live and whichever side of the conflict they fought on. These organisations believe that the life and welfare of human beings is all that matters.

Many Christians support such organisations because a basic Christian belief is to 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31). Jesus explained this to his followers by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The meaning he was conveying is that everybody is everybody else's neighbour, regardless of race, age, gender, religion or political beliefs.



This shelter in Greece, run by the Catholic organisation Caritas, feeds hundreds of refugees and migrants daily.

Caritas

Caritas is a Catholic organisation whose mission is to serve the poor and promote charity and justice throughout the world. They are inspired by the teachings of Jesus and the Church, providing a practical response to those suffering through conflict by saving lives and relieving suffering.

In 2015, Caritas provided food and shelter for refugees fleeing the war in Syria. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians, many of whom were elderly or children, made a perilous journey to European countries like Greece. As well as food and shelter, Caritas provided translators and legal services for the refugees, so they would know their rights and options in order to make informed decisions about their futures.

Christian Aid

One of the largest Christian organisations that helps victims of war is Christian Aid, which was set up in the 1940s. They aim to bring aid to end poverty, whatever the cause or circumstances. War and conflict often cause poverty and so Christian Aid's work with victims of war, including refugees, is an important part of what they do. They operate under the slogan: 'We believe in life before death'.

In addition to working with victims, Christian Aid also aim to eliminate the causes of poverty. In the case of war, they work to establish basic human rights and fairness in society, in the hope that wars will not be seen as necessary. They support local organisations because they believe that local people, well provided for, are likely to be the best people to deal with problems. Recent campaigns have included raising awareness of refugees in and from Afghanistan and Syria, in order to raise funds to offer practical support.



A Christian Aid week banner outside a church.

Christian Aid's main fundraising activity is Christian Aid Week. This occurs in May each year. Special envelopes are distributed to homes in the UK and then collected with a donation inside. Christian Aid also receive regular or one-off donations from the public, and support from the UK government and European Commission.

Victims of war (2)

Islamic Relief

Islamic relief is an independent non-governmental organisation (NGO) founded in the UK in 1984 by a group of concerned postgraduate students. Inspired by their faith as Muslims, and the teachings of Islam, they respond to the needs of victims of war by providing short-term aid during disasters and emergencies, as well as working alongside communities to help prepare and strengthen them in the long term. They allocate resources regardless of race, political affiliation, gender or belief, and without expecting anything in return. Their work follows the teachings of the Quran:

'Whoever saved a life, it would be as if they saved the life of all mankind.'
(Quran 5:32)



Members of Islamic Relief delivering aid supplies to victims of war.

Muslim Aid: The Beity orphanage

Muslim Aid is a British charity which was established in 1985 by leaders of seventeen Islamic organisations. Their work is governed by principles of Islam, such as compassion, empathy, generosity and helping those in need. The charity is mainly funded by donations from supporters, including money given by Zakah.

In the autumn of 2014, along with the Maram Foundation, Muslim Aid set up the Beity orphanage in Turkey to give a home to 75 young children whose parents had been killed in conflict in neighbouring Syria. They aim to keep them safe, feed and clothe them properly, provide beds for them to sleep in and ensure they receive an education in local schools. They also make sure they receive healthcare and give the children support, including the spiritual support their parents would have given them.

As the conflict in Syria continued and the number of refugees increased, in 2015 Muslim Aid started plans to build a new orphanage within Syria so that children didn't have to leave their homeland.



The symbol for the Muslim Aid charity.



Look at the information and then complete the following in your book.

1. What support do you think volunteer groups can offer victims of war?
2. Explain how Christian Aid helps victims of war.
3. Christian Aid's slogan states 'we believe in life before death'. What do you think they mean by this? How might it relate to Christian Aid's work with victims of war?
4. 'Describe the work done at the Beity orphanage.
5. Do you think that Christian organisations like Caritas and Christian Aid should help anyone who needs help, or should they help only Christians? Give reasons based on Christian teachings.
6. 'The point of war is to kill the enemy, not help them to survive.' Do you agree? Explain your thoughts clearly.