

Religion, peace & conflict

Violence & violent protest

Violence =

Protest =

Terrorism =

Christianity teaches non-violence, as Jesus said **“Blessed are the peacemakers”** and told others to turn the other cheek in the face of violence. Christians are told to love their enemies and love each other. However, God gave humans **free will** and choice and sometimes non-violent protest is ignored, so violence may be used to force change for the common good.

Do you think violent protest is ever justified?

Give an example of a peaceful protestor:

Religion & peace making

Christianity teaches to **“love your neighbour”**. If this teaching were adhered to then there would be peace. Religious groups are regularly involved in peace-keeping in war torn areas and in negotiations to prevent wars happening.

Sometimes even with all the best efforts, religion cannot keep peace because there are overriding factors, such as the craving for power, the need to react or attack or to join allies to protect others.

Peace & justice

Justice = fairness; **Peace** = to live in harmony & without fear.

Christians will fight for justice under the conditions of **the Just War theory**. Whilst God desires peace, He also desires that humans should live in justice and freedom.

Forgiveness & reconciliation

Reconciliation = making up between two groups after a disagreement

“To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable, because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you” ~ C.S. Lewis

“Forgive seventy times seven” ~ Jesus

“Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you” ~ Jesus



Pacifism

Pacifists believe that all violence is morally wrong. They will not participate in any war, regardless of the reasons for that war. An example of a pacifist Christian group is **The Quakers**.

Conscientious objectors are people who refuse to participate directly in fighting wars on the grounds of conscience. However they will assist in non-military ways such as medics, relief work and mediators. Many believe they have a peace-keeping role.

The Church of England accepts the **just war theory** and sees wars as **necessary** in certain conditions, especially in situations where wars are waged to fight injustice.

Weapons of mass destruction

Chemical weapons =

Biological weapons =

Weapons of mass destruction are capable of killing & maiming large groups of people. These weapons are considered unjust because they kill civilians. Some religious believers accept the existence of nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

The Roman Catholic Church does not agree with the use of WMD but thinks they are acceptable as a deterrent.

The Quaker Society **utterly condemn** WMD. They are pacifists, and no outward weapons are acceptable. WMD are indiscriminate and beyond control.

Responses to victims of war

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.

Many Christians support such organisations because a basic Christian belief is to **‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’**

Christian Aid =

Caritas =

Just War

Just war = war which meets internationally accepted criteria for fairness

St Paul said Christians should obey their rulers, who had been given power by God. St Augustine was the first to try to write a set of rules regarding this, and eventually the just war rules were written in detail by St Thomas Aquinas.

Sometimes if you do not fight, you allow a greater evil to happen than a war would have caused, so you have to fight.

The bible says **“For the love of money is root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money have wandered from their faith and pierced themselves with many grief’s.”**

What does the quote above tell Christians?

All the following conditions must be met for the war to be a ‘Just War’.

- 1. The war must be for a just cause.**
- 2. The war must be lawfully declared by a lawful authority.**
- 3. The intention behind the war must be good.**
- 4. All other ways of resolving the problem should have been tried first.**
- 5. There must be a reasonable chance of success.**
- 6. The means used must be in proportion to the end that the war seeks to achieve.**

TASK: Find out more about the Geneva Convention. Do you think such rules about the conduct of war should be kept?

Holy war

Holy war = fighting a fight for a religious cause or God.

Christian beliefs about war and violence:

‘Eye for an eye, tooth for tooth’
– this quote is sometimes interpreted to mean that it is acceptable to return violence with violence.

However, it was written **over 3000** years ago, individual wrongs were punished by taking violent actions against the families/tribes of the offender.

The teaching above tried to reduce this violence by suggesting **ONLY** the individual involved should be punished.

For most Christians, the teachings of Jesus make it clear that the use of violence is **NOT** justified.

“Put your sword back in its place’, Jesus said, ‘for all who draw the sword die by the sword.”

“You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgement.”

Reasons for war	Explanation
Greed	
Self-defence	
Retaliation	

Exam practice

Give **TWO** conditions of Just War theory. [2 marks]

Explain **TWO** contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about pacifism. [4 marks]

Explain **TWO** religious beliefs about war. Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer. [5 marks]

Explain **TWO** religious beliefs about why the use of violence is wrong. Refer to sacred writings or another source of belief and teaching in your answer. [5 marks]

‘Everyone should work for peace’. Evaluate this statement. [12 marks]

‘Terrorism is the biggest threat to the world today.’ Evaluate this statement. [12 marks]