

Religion, Peace and Conflict:

Why do people go to war: To defend their beliefs, religion and way of life or to extend these to others. To remove leader or government. To defend ally or weaker countries that are unfairly attacked. To stop atrocities such as genocide. For revenge.

- **Greed:** Selfish desire for something. To gain land, to gain wealth, power or important resources such as oil. Rich and powerful countries get richer potentially causing poverty in the defeated countries. Christianity warns against greed – **Scripture/Sacred writings:** ‘For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil’ (1 Timothy 6:10)
- **Self-defence:** Acting to prevent harm to yourself or others e.g. when another country attacks yours– many think self-defence to be morally acceptable. Believe - right to defend values, beliefs and way of life. E.g. WWII from the Nazis.
- **Retaliation:** Deliberately harming someone as a response to them harming you. Against a country which is seen to have done something very wrong. E.g. Invasion of Afghanistan after Sept 11th 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre. Christians do not agree with retaliation. **Scripture/Sacred writings:** Christianity - ‘Do not repay anyone evil for evil.’ (Romans 12:17-19) Muslims taught God offers innumerable rewards for those who seek reconciliation not retaliation.
- **Triabalism** – tends to trigger wars where a group of people fight for their own independent state.
- **Honour** – wars fought to defend the honour and dignity of a country.

Consequences of war: **Positive:** Freedom from an occupying power (a foreign country that has taken over the government), or the replacement of a corrupt government. **Negative:** Deaths and injuries of armed forces and civilians. Destruction of economy and infrastructure. Disease and famine. Fresh water supplies contaminated. Homelessness - refugees. In war, human rights abuses happen and the innocent are killed.

Peace: Absence of conflict leads to happiness and harmony. Aim and goal of all people. Many religions - a time to come where there is peace. E.g. Kingdom of Heaven/paradise - goal for all. Peace on earth is a step towards that.

Islam and Peace: Muslims seek a just and peaceful world. The root of the word Islam means ‘Peace’ and Muslims say ‘Salaam’ (Peace be upon you) to greet each other. This religion promotes goodwill. The Qur’an teaches that peace and reconciliation are better than fighting. Muslims should not seek revenge as it is wrong to return evil with evil. Muslims should forgive others. Muslims can help the world become more equal through Zakah – 2.5% of their additional money, can be given to the needy, donated to charities which are involved in peace making and supporting victims of war. **Sacred writings/Scripture:** Islam - ‘Paradise is for...those who curb their anger and forgive their fellow men.’ (Quran 3: 134) ‘None of you truly believe until he wishes for his brothers what He wishes for himself.’ (Prophet Muhammed pbuh)

The Muslim Peace Fellowship: MPF – a gathering of peace and justice orientated Muslims - devoted to Islamic non-violence. They work against injustice/ develop non-violent strategies. E.g. conferences and publications.

Pacifism: Christian teaching against War: Jesus taught his follows to be peaceful. Christian pacifists today follow the example of Jesus who did not resist arrest and allowed himself to be crucified for love of the human race.

Quakers are strict pacifists and will not fight. Life is sacred and so should not be destroyed. **Sacred writings/Scripture:** Christianity - Jesus said ‘Love your enemies’ (Bible - Matthew 5:44) One of the Ten Commandments teaches ‘Thou shalt not kill’ (Exodus 10:13). All humans are made in the ‘image of God’ (Bible – Genesis 1:27) deserving absolute respect. Jesus – ‘Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called the sons of God.’ (Bible Matthew 5:9). The Society of Friends (Quakers) are Pacifist and have a peace testimony. **‘Turning the Tide’** (Quaker organisation) It aims to show how cycles can be broken through non-violent strategies. The Quaker office at the United Nations promotes peaceful prevention and resolution of armed conflict.

The Anglican Pacifist Fellowship: AFP is a Christian Pacifist group. Believe peace and justice should be brought about through non-violent means. Believe: Jesus’ teaching is incompatible with war, the Christian Church should never support or justify war and should oppose it. The AFP founded the Week of Prayer for World Peace in 1974. They produce regular newsletters, organise and contribute to special peace-related events and religious services.

International Day of Peace: observed around the world on 21st September. UN declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace. 24 hour cease fire. 1 minutes silence local noon time. **The United Nations** now has 192 member states. Encourages countries to settle their differences without fighting.

Maired Corrigan: a Catholic from Northern Ireland, who helped form the ‘Peace People’ organisation. Organised

peace marches in the UK about Northern Ireland. Mairead was awarded (alongside Betty Williams) the 1976 Nobel Peace prize. After peace in NI, Corrigan became a tireless worker for peace and human rights.

Conscientious objector: an individual who refuses to fight in a war because of their beliefs

Pacifism: wrong to use violence. There is no situation in which the use of violence can be morally justified.

Conflict: Before the actual fighting starts, there is conflict - disagreement; armed conflict the actual fighting.

Sanctity of Life: The idea that all human life is God-given precious and should not be destroyed by humans.

Protest: The right to protest - fundamental democratic freedom. UK law allows peaceful demonstration in public. Need police permission. No right to protest violently e.g. riots in Tottenham in 2011. Peaceful protest seen in Civil Rights Movement, USA in the 1950's/60's. Martin Luther King Jr (Christian Pastor) organised peaceful rallies to protest about racial inequalities. No religion promotes violence in their teachings. Peaceful Non-violent protests include speeches, marches and sit-ins. Violent protests include riots and bombings.

Terrorism: Much more serious form of violent protest. Terrorism is the unlawful use of extreme violence, usually against innocent civilians, to achieve a political goal or a shared belief and to spread fear.

Reasons for Terrorist attacks	Why others disagree
Fighting for God or to defend Faith	Those targeted are innocent
Fighting for Social Justice or against political injustice.	Murder is wrong under all religious law
Fighting Poverty	Terrorists are power driven rather than religious activists
Asserting their religious beliefs	Their causes are illegitimate
Fighting because their wishes won't be heard any other way.	Places that are terrorist strongholds are places of fear for ordinary people.

Terrorists believe terrorism will raise awareness of their cause and will push the authorities into meeting demands. Terrorists who are motivated by religion believe God will reward them for doing his will. No religion promotes terrorism. Are e.g. of people who were classed as a terrorist but later seen as a legitimate leader e.g. Nelson Mandela in South Africa. 7/7 bombings in London in 2005 were carried out by people who claimed to be Muslims but most Muslims including leaders condemned the attacks. Muslims do not agree with terrorism as it goes against the wishes of Allah. **Sacred writings/Scripture:** Islam - 'Do not take life, which Allah has made sacred' Quran 17:33)

Justice: sense of fairness applied, making right a situation which has been unjust. Religion is meant to bring justice to the world, and to fight injustice. Many wars are about, or include the abuse of, justice, so many religious people feel duty – bound to fight against this. **Sacred writings/Scripture:** Christianity - [Proverbs 31:8-9](#) "Speak up for the people who have no voice, for the rights of all the down-and-outers. Speak out for justice! Stand up for the poor and destitute!" [Isaiah 58:6-9](#) "This is the kind of fast day I'm after: to break the chains of injustice,"

Religious believer who tried to achieve justice: Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Christian living in Germany during the rise of the Nazi party. He believed in pacifism and spoke out against the human rights abuses of the ruling Nazis. He defied Nazi rule by helping Jews escape the death camps and even though he opposed killing, was part of a group that planned to assassinate Hitler. He was eventually arrested and executed for treason by the Nazis.

Forgiveness: This is the belief we need to move a relationship forward with someone who has done wrong to us, by accepting their apology and putting their wrong doings behind us. It is a central teaching of Christianity.

Reconciliation: Most religious people will be involved in reconciliation after war. The Quakers are pacifists who try to bring sides together and help them resolve issues so that they can live peacefully.

Example of forgiveness: Eric Lomax: Was a British soldier who was tortured by the Japanese whilst a prisoner on the Burma Railway during WW2, but was able to forgive one of the tormentors Nagase Takashiki. **Sacred writings/Scripture:** Christianity - 'For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins' (Matthew 6: 14-15) 'And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive your sins' (Mark 11:25)

Christian teaching FOR War: The Bible teaches Christians to defend the weak and fight against evil. Jesus came in contact with soldiers but didn't say they were wrong to do this job. Jesus turned over the tables and benches in the Temple when he saw people misusing it. Some Christians - way of showing love, soldiers risk their lives for

others. Just War needed to protect innocent lives and defend the sanctity of life. Restore Justice.

Just War: a war which is morally right to fight. 'Just' war - seeks justice, fought with justice, and ending when justice is attained. St Thomas Aquinas – Just War: Started by the authority of the state. Just Cause - right intention (to remove evil). Last resort. Only enough force must be used to achieve the goals. The good achieved must outweigh the evil which led to war. WWII - last resort, started by British Government, Hitler invaded other countries, peace now restored. However questionable whether bombing civilians was proportional or not. **Sacred writings/ Scripture:** Christianity - Romans 13:1 "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, The authorities that exist have been appointed by God." John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

Muslim teachings FOR War: In Islam must only be waged according to the principles of Allah's justice. This is Lesser Jihad. If break the rules of war - will face Allah's justice on the Day of Judgement. Rules include: to keep suffering of innocent civilians to a minimum. Not to destroy crops and plants. Not to harm prisoners of war. War declared by religious leaders. Not to target places of worship. **Sacred writings/Scripture:** Islam - '*Those who believe fight in the way of Allah, and those who disbelieve fight in the way of Shaitan*' (Qur'an 4:76)

Jihad: means to 'strive or struggle in the name of Allah'. (Islam)

Holy War: (Christian) a war fought in the name of God, for a religious purpose, with God on your side. Must be: started by a religious leader, to spread the faith, to recover Holy places or can be for revenge for things done by another faith against believers. E.g. The Crusades - to recover the Holy Land for Christianity (sacred places where Jesus lived) which was under Muslim control. Pope said it was the 'will of God' - promised a huge spiritual reward. Historians are concerned about the war (money/land/trade). **Scripture/ Sacred writings:** Christianity - "Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors!" Joel 3 v9

Victims of War: War has many victims besides soldiers. Survivors can have long-lasting physical and mental injuries. Cities are destroyed, homes lost, families and friends separated and children orphaned. Refugees

Christian Aid: Helps victims of war. Set up 1940's. Aim to end poverty including that caused by war. Work with victims of war including refugees. Motto is 'We believe in life before death'. Work to gain basic human rights and fairness in society to help prevent poverty caused by war. Support local organisations as believe local people are best placed to solve problems. Fund raise in Christian Aid week, regular giving, and one off donations, get support from UK government and European Commission. Recent campaigns e.g. to raise awareness of refugees in and from Gaza, Afghanistan and Syria, in order to raise funds and offer practical support. **Scripture/Sacred writings:** Christianity – 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Mark 12:31). Jesus told: Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) - teaches all are neighbours no matter race, age, religious or political beliefs.

Weapons of Mass Destruction or WMD's are weapons that can kill large amounts of people at once cause huge destruction and death. These include biological (living-disease-causing bacterium or viruses), chemical (non-living toxins – chemicals that poison and burn) and nuclear weapons (atomic bombs – nuclear reaction).

Nuclear Weapons: cause huge devastation. Afterwards, radioactive fallout kills more than the original explosion. The weapons today could, if used, destroy life on Earth. *For:* Act as a deterrent (make people less enthusiastic about attacking) so that wars are not started in the first place – this helps to keep the peace. Countries that possess nuclear weapons can be considered safer than those without. They cannot be dis-invented and so it is better for them to be used as a deterrent. *Against:* pose an unacceptable risk to humanity. The proliferation of nuclear weapons makes the chances greater that an irresponsible government or terrorists might obtain them. The destruction they would cause cannot be justified for any reason. All religions oppose the use of nuclear weapons and support disarmament.

Nuclear weapons or any weapon of mass destruction **does not fit with waging a Just war** as they are **not proportional** and therefore do not meet the conditions. **Christian Pacifists would be against the use of any WMD** as they take life which God has made sacred and go against the 10 Commandments which teaches 'Do not kill' Exodus.

CCND: The Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND) are Christians attached to the CND. The CCND campaign against the use and development of WMD and for peace. Organise conferences (local and National), acts of protest, letter writing, lobbying MP's and educating others for peace and disarmament.

Do religions cause war?

How religious teachings and beliefs are interpreted could lead to war (difficult to understand). E.g. Muslims taught: fight for the name of Allah but also the greatest sin is to take another man's life.	Religions and religious teachings do not cause violence or war. Religious teachings are all about peace and understanding.
Some think fighting for religion, claim that their religion is under attack. Some fundamentalist groups e.g. ISIL believe need an Islamic state	For the people at the top perhaps their own power is the most important. Violence goes against the religion not TRUE religious believers e.g. ISIL
Religion is involved in war e.g. Israel v Palestine (Jews vs Muslims). If religious divisions rise to the surface in a war, it is a root cause.	Conflict is more about politics, power, land and self-defence and religious divisions then rise to the surface because of the tension caused.
Religious beliefs have divided people throughout history. Where splits have occurred violence has erupted. E.g. Bosnian crisis saw Christian ethnic cleansing of Muslims	There are many similarities between religions and what they want for communities. There are many who work across religious divides to help others, save lives and solve conflicts e.g. Corrie Ten Boom WWII
Religious leaders may call for the end of a war but that doesn't mean it actually happens. The religious extremists often do not want to see an end to war.	Religious leaders often call for the end of war. E.g. the Pope and Syria. Religions often work to maintain peace and prevent the outbreak of war. If people adhered to the teachings of their faith e.g. in Christianity love your enemy and do not kill then there would be peace. Religious groups are also regularly involved in peace-keeping in war torn areas in in negotiations to prevent wars happening.