

# Conflict and Peace

## Conflict in the World (Israel/ Palestine)

Israelis (Jews) believe the land belongs to them because: God promised it to them as the chosen land for his chosen people (stories of Abraham), After World War 1 the British government (Balfour Declaration) promised them a share of the land, in 1948 (as a result of the Holocaust) the United Nations established the State of Israel and it has politically been controlled by Israelis ever since. Today the Israelis feel that they are under attack by Palestinian terrorism and need to defend themselves.

Palestinians (mainly Muslim but some Christians) believe that the land belongs to them because: historically they feel they have always lived there, it has been known as Palestine since the Muslim Arabs took control in the 7/8<sup>th</sup> centuries, after World War 1 the British government (Balfour Declaration) promised them an equal share of the land, in 1948 much of the land was given to the Israelis and many found themselves homeless/ refugees. Today the Palestinians do have the 'own land' in so far as they govern the areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, however much of this is restricted and controlled by the Israeli army.

## Christianity and War:

☺ All Christians believe that they were called to bring peace to the world. Jesus said that those who work for peace are 'sons of God'. There are two different attitudes taken if a war is declared:

PACIFISM = refusing to fight	JUST WAR
<p>Christians may be pacifists because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian leaders said that Christians should not fight in wars</li> <li>• Jesus said that you should love your enemies</li> <li>• Peace will only come if people refuse to fight in wars</li> <li>• The 5<sup>th</sup> of the 10 Commandments bans killing</li> <li>• Jesus stopped Peter from using violence when soldiers arrested him – “ all who live by the sword will die by the sword”.</li> <li>• Jesus said: “Blessed are the peacemakers”</li> </ul>	<p>Most Churches say that Christians can fight if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the cause of war is just</li> <li>• the war is fought on behalf of an authority e.g. government</li> <li>• War is the last resort (last thing to be tried)</li> <li>• The intention is to gain peace</li> <li>• There is a chance of success</li> <li>• Methods used should avoid killing innocent civilians</li> <li>• Methods used must be proportional to the cause</li> </ul> <p>Christians may follow just war theory because St Paul said that Christians should obey the orders of governments “everyone should submit himself to the governing authorities” , Jesus was never against soldiers, armies protect innocent countries. Also Jesus told people to obey the government “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” – so if the government declares a war then people should fight.</p>

## Islam and War

There is no idea of pacifism in Islam, although all Muslims believe in the sanctity of life. The Qur’an asks Muslims to struggle in the name of Islam (called Jihad). A greater jihad = struggling with yourself and your desires. A lesser jihad = war “Fight in the cause of God..” (Qur’an)

Muslims have strict rules to follow in war:

1. It must be fought in a just cause
2. It must be the last resort
3. It must be led by a Muslim authority
4. It must cause the minimum suffering

5. Innocent people must not be attacked
6. It must end as soon as the enemy lays down his arms.

Muslims believe that Qur'an says that Muslims must fight if they are attacked (so in self-defence), Muhammad fought in wars, Muhammad said that Muslims must fight in wars, and the Qur'an says that anyone who dies fighting in a just war will go to heaven.

**Religious Attitudes to bullying:**

1. See it as violence without a just cause – which is sinful and unjustified
2. See humans as individuals who are important because they are created by God and in the image of God and so every person is precious to God.
3. Duty to protect people who are bullied because protecting innocent is fulfilling God's wishes.
4. The role of a steward is to protect.
5. Jesus always actively supported the weak in society.

<b>Christianity and Forgiveness</b>	<b>Islam and Forgiveness</b>
<p>Most of humanity is split from God through sin, but the forgiveness of sins comes from death of Jesus.</p> <p>They believe this because Jesus died on cross to bring forgiveness.</p> <p>In the Bible Peter asked if he should forgive his brother up to 7 times and Jesus said 77 times.</p> <p>Jesus said if we do not forgive other people's sins then we will not be forgiven.</p> <p>St Paul said we should try to live in peace with everyone.</p>	<p>Teaches God is merciful and those who repent will be forgiven. So Muslims should forgive others.</p> <p>God is compassionate and merciful to sinners, on Day of Judgement God will deal with people as they deserve, but Muslims must ask for mercy.</p> <p>The Qur'an says that Muslims should forgive (and so they must do it because the Qur'an is the word of God).</p>

**Religious Group Working for World Peace: PAX CHRISTI**

- Started by Roman Catholic Christians in France in 1945 and works in 22 countries and with the UN
- It has 3 objectives – reconciliation, peace and education.

Its main activities are:

- Making public statements about wars e.g. condemning military action in Sudan
- Criticising American government over issues like defence budget and organising public debates on morality of nuclear weapons
- Education
- The reason for its work relates back to Jesus' teachings on pacifism (hence its name Peace of Christ – in an exam you will need to look back on your notes on Christianity and pacifism to give reasons for the work in part C questions)

**Past Example Questions:**

- a. What is reconciliation? (2 marks)
- b. Outline reasons why religious people should but bully. (6 marks)
- c. Explain the teachings of one religion other than Christianity to forgiveness. (8 marks)
- d. "Religious people should believe in peace." Do you agree? Show you have considered other points of view, in your answer you should refer to at least one religion. (4 marks)