

Unit 1. September/October 2016

Christian Church may speak out against killing, teachings of Jesus do not support.
Some, such as Quakers, disagree with war and actively try to stop it from happening.
Some Christians are prepared to fight for their country and faith.
Keywords: Peace, War, Justice, Forgiveness, Reconciliation.
These concepts can be important in the aftermath of war, or, in the case of Quakers, used as tools to prevent conflict from happening in the first place.
Teachings:
Prophet Isaiah: He will judge between the nations and settle disputes for many people.
Nations will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Violence, Protest and Terrorism.
Key words: Protest, violence, terrorism.
Protest is considered a democratic freedom. Protest is allowed in the UK – in case of marches, police must be told 6 days before and given time to make alterations to route.
Case Study: Riots, 2011. Unplanned protest that descended into violence. Peaceful march planned in response to a shooting. Followed by looting, damages and rioting. Religious, community, political and official leaders sought to repair divisions within the community post rioting.
Case Study: Martin Luther King- Christian pastor organised peaceful protest about racial and social inequalities. Resulted in equal rights legislation and perceived as a good example of effective, peaceful protest.
No religion promotes terrorism. Christianity disproved terrorism on the grounds of the risk to innocents.

Reasons for war
Key words: greed, self-defence, retaliation
Teachings: For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people eager for money have wandered from faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. (Timothy)
‘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
‘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
Most people consider fighting in self-defense to be morally acceptable providing that all over problem solving methods have been tried. They have a right to defend the values, beliefs and way of life their country lives by.

Nuclear War and WMD
Key words: Nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, biological weapons.
Case studies: Hiroshima, 140,000 died as a result of atomic bomb dropped by US.
Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND). Aims to create an agreement for elimination of nuclear weapons according to a fixed timetable. Pray for peace and letters to spread campaign.
Since WW2, many countries have developed WMD’s. Usual justification is that they prevent war due to fear. People would use example that there has been peace since WW2 as proof.
Teachings: Only God has the right to end life. You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13) WMD’s are counter to the teachings of Jesus.
‘If there is a serious injury, you are to take a life for a life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth’. – Exodus 21:23. cannot be used to JUSTIFY nuclear weapons – used for a sense of proportion.
1993- Chemical Weapons Convention. Production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons illegal.

War and Peace
Christian Attitudes

Just War
4th C – St Augustine wrote about the morality of war. Developed into criteria by Thomas Aquinas in 13thC. Conditions under which fighting a war is justifiable and rules for ethical war.
Must have a JUST CAUSE – must not be to gain territory or resources. Must be declared to the correct AUTHORITY. Government or lawful ruler. INTENTION has to be to defeat wrongdoing and promote good. The good must outweigh the evil of war.
LAST RESORT. All other methods of peace must be tried first.
Reasonable chance of SUCCESS.
Methods used to fight must be PROPORTIONAL to success. No excessive force.
Must be fought by JUST MEANS.
Only APPROPRIATE FORCE.
INTERNATIONALLY AGREED CONVENTIONS, such as the Geneva convention, must be obeyed.
Many Christians believe that although fighting a Just War is acceptable, no war is better. Founded in 1945, the united nations encourages countries to resolve conflict peacefully. Some Christians believe that the theory of Just War is wrong as it could lead to general acceptance of war

Holy War and religion as a cause of violence.
Key words: Holy war.
Contradiction? Crusades – both sides believed that God helped them to win. In the Old Testament, God helped the Jewish establish themselves in the promised land through battle.
Must be authorised by a religious leader with great authority. Should be to defend Christian faith from attack. Those who take part believe they will go straight to heaven. Not widely followed in current Christian faith. This is an older idea. In the past, there have been tensions between Christian denominations. (protestants and Catholics), such as in Ireland between ‘68 and ‘98 also known as “The Troubles”.
Teachings: “You have heard it 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 shall be subject to judgement” Matthew 5:21-22.
“Put your sword back in its place for all who draw the sword shall die by the sword”. Matthew 26:52.

Pacifism and Peacemaking.
Key words: Pacifism, peacemaker, peacemaking.
Not all Christians are Pacifists. Pacifists believe they should work at preventing war. Promoting justice and human rights is an important part of this. Being at peace with oneself helps avoid conflict with others.
Teachings: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God”. Matthew 5:9
Some people refused to fight in WW1 and 2 and were punished. These were conscientious objectors. Many joined the war effort in non-combat roles such as nurses, mechanics etc. Friends Ambulance Unit – founded by Quakers.
Anglican Pacifist Fellowship. 1400 members in +40 countries. Week of prayer for World Peace. Regular newsletters. “overcome factors that lead to war with and between nations”
1976- Mairead Corrigan, Catholic created Peace People. Organised marches and given Nobel Peace Prize for peacemaking activities.

Religious responses to Victims of War
Casualties are unavoidable in war. Also harms friends and family.
Teachings: ‘Love thy neighbour as yourself’ Mark 12:31. Parable of the good Samaritan.
Caritas: Catholic. Serve the poor and promote charity and justice throughout the world. 2015 – food and shelter for refugees fleeing war in Syria. Also translators and legal services.
Christian Aid – 1940s. Aim to end poverty. ‘Life before death’. Also want to eliminate the causes of poverty. Basic human rights and fairness. Christian Aid week – every May – fundraising activities. Public donation as well as gov support.

Main message of Islam is peace and harmony. Muslims believe that God created everything and humankind has the responsibility to ensure everyone lives correctly.

Key words: War, peace

Post war, factors that make peace difficult are financial difficulties, personal difficulties and new government take over. Emphasis on peace in the Qur'an. Islam comes from Ssalam which means peace or safety. A common muslim greeting is 'as-salum alaikum' meaning peace be with you.

Teachings: "The servants of the lord of mercy are those who walk humbly on the earth and who, when aggressive people address them, reply with words of peace. "

Muslims believe that God offers forgiveness to those who are truly sorry and who ask in faith.

Violence, Violent Protest and terrorism.

Key terms: violence, protest, terrorism.

There are examples of people committing violence in the name of faith. In such cases, the violence of the minority do not represent the beliefs and teachings of that religion.

Teaching: Fighting is only allowed in self-defense and only against those who actively fight you. "Do not kill each other for God is merciful to you. If any of you does these things, out of hostility, We shall make him suffer Fire". Qur'an 4:29 - 30

"Do not take life which God has made sacred" Qur'an 17:33

Case Study: 7/7. London. 4 suicide bombers killed 52 people and injured +700. They attached themselves to Islam but most Muslims condemned these attacks and worked with other religious leaders to promote peace. No justification for terrorist acts in Islam.

London riots: 3 Muslim men killed trying to protect a petrol station. 300 men (mainly Muslim and Sikh) gathered to pray for them and debated how they should respond. Decided to persuade those considering violence to not do so. Helped move towards peace.

Reasons for war

Key words: greed, self-defence, retaliation.

The Qur'an warns against greed. "God does not like arrogance, boastful people, who are miserly and order other people to be the same, hiding the bounty that God has given them" Qur'an 4:36 – 37.

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

The Qur'an permits fighting in self-defense but all other problem solving methods should be attempted first. "Those who have been attacked are permitted to take up arms because they have been wronged – God has the power to help them" Qur'an 22:39

The Qur'an teaches that forgiveness is always the best response. "If you (believer) have to respond to an attack, make your responses proportionate, but it is best to stand fast". Qur'an 16:126.

Torture and mutilation are strictly forbidden under Islamic law.

Nuclear war and WMD

Key words: Nuclear weapons, Weapons of mass destruction, Chemical weapons, biological weapons.

Estimated that in 2015, 9 nations possess 15,700 nuclear weapons between them. 1 is a Muslim country. Pakistan has around 120 nuclear weapons. UK had 215. Little pressure for disarmament among Muslims. Some hold the opinion they help keep peace out of fear.

Life is sacred. Nuclear and WMD'd go against the teachings of Islam. Innocents must be protected.

Teachings: "Do not contribute to your own destruction with your own hands, but do good, for God loves those who do". Qur'an 2:195

"Fight in God's cause against those who fight for you, but do not overstep the limit." Qur'an 2:190 (some justification for fighting in self defense but not using nuclear weapons.

Iraq and Syrian governments have both used chemical weapons, against Muslim belief, on their own populations.

Peace and War
Islamic Attitudes

Just War

Key words: lesser jihad, just war.

Lesser Jihad obliges Muslims to fight under certain conditions. No specific just war theory but general criteria.

Muslims believe war is allowed in the following circumstances:
 LAST RESORT- diplomacy has failed
 Self-defense – initial aggressor should come from the other side.
 Lesser Jihad is a religious concept – decision to fight should be made by state leader.
 JUST CAUSE – not for territory or resources
 Islamic country has been attacked
 Another state has mistreated its Islamic citizens.

If these conditions are met, it is believed that those who fight will receive favour. However, they would prefer there to be no war.

Abu Bakr devised some rules for how conflict should be conducted:
 Muslim armies should not commit treachery or stray from the right path
 Dead bodies must not be mutilated
 Children, women and old men should not be killed.
 Trees must not be harmed as they provide food for the future.
 Animals only to be killed for food.
 Devout people such as monks should not be harmed.

Teachings: "Let those who are willing to trade life of this world for the life to come, fight in Gods way. To anyone who fights in Gods way, we shall give a great reward". Qur'an 4:74

Holy war

Lesser jihad makes holy war an important concept. Muhammad and his followers were forced to fight to defend themselves from attackers. Had they not done so, it is likely that Islam would have been wiped out. Cannot be declared to force people to convert, taking over other countries or allowing a leader to demonstrate his power.

For a Holy war to be declared, the faith of Islam must be under threat. Muhammad instructed that some remain in the villages to protect the women and children. Can only be declared by a fair religious leader.

Some use Holy war as a justification for terrorism. Some groups who attach themselves to Islam such as al-Qaeda and Isis (IS) are some examples. This goes against the teachings of the Qur'an.

Case Study: Charlie Hebdo. Jan 2015. 2 brothers killed 11 workers at the Charlie Hebdo magazine in retaliation for them drawing cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, which is HIGHLY offensive in Islam. Most Muslims, although they did not agree with the work of the magazine, condemned the brothers as acting unacceptably and going against the will of God, even though they felt their faith was being attacked. In the UK, Muslim Action Force protested against Charlie Hebdo using 'peaceful demonstrations of sensitivities of Muslims in defending the Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Pacifism

Key words: pacifism, pacifist.

It is difficult for Muslims to identify themselves as pacifists due to lesser Jihad. However, in all other circumstances, Muslims share the principles of pacifism. The Qur'an advises that if peace is offered then it must not be refused.

The Muslim Peace Fellowship (MPF) is a gathering of peace and justice orientated Muslims of all backgrounds, devoted to nonviolence in Islam. They work against injustice, to affirm peace, deepen understanding of Islamic teaching and develop faithful and non violent strategies for the redress of wrongs.

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