

War and Peace.

What you need to know:

- ✓ Some details about war and examples.
- ✓ The link between religion and war and peace.
- ✓ The cost of war - financial, human environment.
- ✓ Why people fight - **just war** and **holy war**.
- ✓ Alternatives to fighting.
- ✓ What religions say about war and peace.

Details about War:

Wars have happened throughout history and they are happening at the moment. The growth of the media in the 20th Century brought war into the home of everyone, especially the ones that we, as a country have been involved in.

Recent wars include the Gulf Wars (1991) when the UN (United Nations) declared war on Iraq because Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the war on terrorism focusing on Afghanistan as a result of the World Trade Centre attack on 11th September 2001. In 2003, the war between a coalition (a group) of countries led by the USA and the UK against the regime of Saddam Hussein. This was broadcast into homes 24 hours a day for several weeks.

Whilst all **religions** stress that we should live in peace with each other, Christians, Muslims and Jews believe that there are certain occasions when people should be allowed to fight. These conditions are for Just and Holy wars (we will go into this later on in these notes).

Despite teaching that we should love each other and have respect for all our fellow humans, religions have been involved in war through the centuries. Remember the example of the Crusades in the 11th to the 13th Centuries. Christians were fighting Muslims to recapture land from each other.

Current problems with terrorism have been blamed on religions, whether Christianity in Northern Ireland or Islam in the Middle East. In some cases, religion is only a label to persuade believers to follow the actions of a few.

The Cost of War:

- ✓ Financial - war is expensive. Global military expenditure (the cost) of wars is over £100 Million per hour!!!
- ✓ Human - millions of people die in wars (more than 100 million people have died as a result of war in the 20th Century).
- ✓ The environment - war causes pollution. Towns and cities are all affected, especially if it is a nuclear war.

Why do people fight?

There are many reasons why people fight. Some of them include:

- ✓ To defend their country, religion or way of life.
- ✓ To defend another country, religion or way of life.
- ✓ To take over another country.
- ✓ To remove their own government or leader (Civil War).

BE AWARE these are just some of the reasons why people go to war - there may be more. Check out your notes from this module to see what they are. For the exam, try to use these 4, but be aware there are others, revise them incase you forget these!

Just War:

This idea was first put forward by St. Thomas Aquinas in the 13th Century. It was added to later, but Aquinas is given the credit for this theory of war. For a war to be 'Just' it means that it has to be fair, right or acceptable.

This theory gives 6 main ideas that Christians will use to see if they can fight. These are:

1. War must be started and controlled by a proper legal authority,
2. A just case is required (those who are attacked deserve to be).
3. The reason must be to advance good, not evil.
4. The War must be a last resort (other ways of settling the dispute have been tried and failed).
5. There must be a good chance of success.

6. The fighting must be proportional - excessive force should not be used and civilians must be protected.

Even though these ideas are very old, they are still used today by both religious and non religious people.

Holy War:

The idea that God helps people to win war is a very old one. Jews believe that they would never have been able to occupy the Promised Land of Canaan in about 1200BCE if God had not helped them. The Battle of Jericho is a good example of this (look at Joshua Chapter 4 to 6 - but mainly 6 for the battle. If you do not have a Bible use this web address to read it on line: <http://bible.gospelcom.net/>)

There are usually three elements to a holy war. They are:

1. The war must achieve a religious goal.
2. A religious leader must authorise the war.
3. People taking part are promised a spiritual reward if they die in a holy war.

Reasons for a Holy War might be to spread their faith, to defend their faith, or to reclaim holy places or followers captured by faithless enemies. If people believe they are fighting for their God, they may be better motivated in their fight as they become fearless due to their promised reward.

Many believers of all religions are not happy with the idea of a holy war. Holy Wars are rarely just. In recent times, terrorists claiming to be Muslims have unsuccessfully tried to declare war against enemies, using religion, to try and persuade people to join in their struggle.

Alternatives to fighting:

For some people, no amount of argument about Just or holy wars will persuade them to fight. Their belief in not fighting is called **pacifism**. Religious pacifists follow their religious teaching about killing ('Thou shalt not kill'). In the past these people have been classed as cowards.

Many of these people take part in war, not by fighting, but by doing other vital (an often dangerous) support jobs like stretcher carriers, ambulance drivers or labourers.

Final thoughts:

It is very important that you know this information. Try to work both these notes and your notes together into your final notes. When doing them, ask yourself 'Is there anything here I do not know?' If the answer is 'yes' then please ask!