

Crime and punishment

Theories of punishment

The purpose of punishment is to meet some of the following aims: deterrence, Retribution, reform, Protection.

Christians and justice

There are a number of Christian teachings on justice these include:

- God is just and people should behave in the same way.
- Jesus taught that everyone should be treated fairly
- Jesus taught the Golden Rule - treat others as you would want to be treated
- On judgement Day, God will judge all humans according to how they have behaved

How Christians help

- Ensure resources are shared equally
- Giving to charity or working in areas of hardship
- Campaigning for governments and organisations to help other nations

Christian Charities

- Christian Aid - works in areas of poverty, helps those in need and campaigns against injustice and oppression of the poor, seeks to change government policy, campaigns for an end to unjust debts imposed on poorer nations
- CAFOD - Catholic Fund for Overseas Development, campaigns for justice for the poor, has campaigned against landmines, the debt owed by the third world and for the rich to be more active in helping the poor and oppressed

Muslims and justice

The following are Muslim teachings:

- On the last day God will reward those who have been just and fair towards others
- The Qur'an teaches that God wants people to act fairly towards everyone.
- Everyone is equal under Islamic law
- Justice is the basis of charitable giving in Islam
- Prophet Muhammad always acted in a just way

How Muslims help

- They give zakah which is a tax of 2.5% on every Muslim income which is given to the poor.
- Muslims are encouraged to give Sadaqah - voluntary charitable donations - and to act charitable towards others

Muslim charities

- Muslim Aid - it works to relieve poverty and secure justice for the poor and oppressed, it also aims to get richer nations to help poorer ones and remove oppression
- Islamic relief - it seeks to improve the lives of people affected by poverty, it also provides emergency food and medical relief

Christian attitudes to capital punishment

For - the Old Testament teaches that the death penalty should be used for some crimes. Jesus never taught that the death penalty was wrong, in the Middle Ages, the Christians Church used the death penalty against those who challenged the Church, St Paul teaches that Christians should accept and obey the laws of their country.

Against - It goes against the sanctity of life argument, Jesus taught revenge is wrong, most Christian Churches have spoken out against capital punishment, Jesus came to Earth to save and reform people, and the overall message of Christianity is love and forgiveness

Muslim attitudes to capital punishment

Islam is in principle in favour of the death penalty, but some Muslims disagree with it.

Shari'ah - In all countries where Shari'ah law is used the death penalty can be used. The Qur'an teaches that capital punishment can be used for some crimes.

For - The Qur'an says the death penalty can be used for certain crimes such as murder and adultery, Shari'ah agrees with the Qur'an, Muhammad made statements suggesting he agreed with the death penalty, when Muhammad was the ruler of Medina, he sentenced people to death for committing murder.

Against - The scholars of Shari'ah do not agree when or how the death penalty should be applied, the Qur'an states that capital punishment is one option - it is not compulsory, strict conditions given by the Qur'an about Capital punishment are often not met, In some countries Shari'ah has been seen to have oppressed the poor and women who receive the death penalty for adultery.

Christian attitudes to drugs and alcohol

The Bible - teaches that God created human bodies and we should not abuse them, the majority of Christians believe taking any kind of drug excessively damages the body created God created and is therefore wrong.

Drugs - Christians believe taking drugs is wrong because - the Bible teaches Christians should follow the law of the land in which they live, illegal drugs are illegal because they are dangerous, many illegal drug users turn to crime, drug abuse leads to family breakups and makes people antisocial, illegal drugs change a person's behaviour.

Reasons for drinking alcohol - the bible does not forbid it, Jesus himself drank wine and performed a miracle of turning water into wine, Jesus gave his disciples wine at the Last Supper, and St Paul told his friend Timothy to drink wine to help with digestion.

Reasons against - Drinking alcohol impairs a person's judgement and their ability to act in a Christian way, there are many other types of drink today, Alcohol today is much stronger than in the past, it is best to avoid offending other so do not drink at all.

Muslim attitudes to drugs and alcohol

Islam strongly forbids the use and sale of all alcohol and drugs, because:

- Humans were created by Allah and people should look after their bodies and not abuse them, the Qur'an says intoxicants are haram (forbidden), the effects of drugs would mean Muslims would not be able to pray or perform their religious duties, All Muslims should obey the law of the land where they live, the effects of drugs could mean that Muslims are more likely to commit other sins, Muhammad taught about the dangers of alcohol and drugs.