

## War and peace

The United Nations and World Peace – the UN is an international body set up after the Second World War to promote peace and cooperation.

- It uses conflict resolution. Also uses a range of methods including: arms control and disarmament to reduce numbers of weapons of mass destruction, peace talks, trade restrictions, sending peacekeeping forces and military action.
- It is concerned with issues that will have a long-term impact on world peace – fighting against poverty, campaigning for human rights, solving conflict issues.

CASE STUDY – Darfur, 2003-2007 – this was a civil war between the Sudanese army (supported by the government and an Arab military group, the Janjaweed) and a number of different mainly non-Arab groups (including the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality movement). Sudan is now split into two countries, Sudan and The Republic of South Sudan, but the situation is still unsettled.

The UN negotiated between the two sides, various peace deals were signed and broken, but the UN had some success in getting the sides to talk. They also enforced sanctions including stopping countries trading with Sudan. They sent in peacekeeping forces, and they were able to achieve some success in protecting civilians.

### Religious organisations

**Christian organisations – Pax Christi** – this is an international Catholic organisation set up to work for world peace. It is opposed to war and violence, it encourages governments to solve their disputes through discussion, economic justice and social justice.

**Muslim organisations – The Muslim Peace Fellowship** – founded in 1194 and works to promote world peace, works against injustice, and reaches out to people of all faiths and tries to develop understanding and mutual respect.

Christian attitudes to war – the Bible teaches Christians to find peace and reconciliation with their enemies, although attitudes to war continue to differ.

Bible teachings – the Bible has a message of peace, one of the titles given to Jesus was “Prince of Peace”, “Blessed are the peacemakers”, “..if someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also”, “Love your enemies...”, “For all who draw the sword will die by the sword”.

Some Christians would follow the just war theory. It has been accepted by many Christian Churches. The reasons for this include:

- Jesus taught that obedience should be shown to the government
- Sometimes violence is necessary for example on response to invasion
- There are situations where war is the lesser of two evils
- St Paul told people that they had a duty to obey those in authority
- It is right to have armed forces to protect nations

Pacifism – other Christians would prefer to follow pacifist principles, refusing to fight in wars. They believe that disputes should be settled peacefully. The reasons for this include:

- The Ten Commandments forbid killing
- Jesus taught that people should love their enemies

- Jesus stopped his own followers from using violence
- Nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction cause unimaginable suffering

Muslim attitudes to war – Islam means peace. Jihad is an Islamic term meaning struggle and there are two types, however many Muslims oppose war.

**Lesser Jihad** – this is just war theory and it allows the use of war in some circumstances these include – if it is fought for a cause, as a last resort, if it is authorised by a Muslim authority, minimum of suffering is caused, ends when the enemy surrenders, the aim is to restore peace.

**Greater Jihad** – this is the struggle Muslims face within themselves in order to make them better Muslims and bring them closer to God.

AGAINST war – some Muslims believe that war is never right because:

- Peace and reconciliation is at the heart of Islam, modern weapons cannot be used in a way that is compatible with Muslim rules about fighting in a war, Non-violence is the only way to achieve peace, violence only leads to more violence.

Christian attitudes to bullying – all Christians believe that bullying is wrong because:

- Violence without cause is against Christian teachings, every individual was created by God, Jesus taught that people should love one another and treat others as they would want to be treated, everyone should be treated with respect, the Bible teaches that God will take action against cruel behaviour, God will judge humans after death on the way that they have behaved to others.

Muslim attitudes to bullying – Muslims are opposed to all forms of bullying because:

- Islam teaches aggression or violence without just cause is wrong, every person was created by Allah and it is wrong to abuse any part of his creation, Islam teaches that Muslims should work to end injustice and cruelty, Muhammad taught that Muslims should protect and help the weak and vulnerable, all Muslims believe that on the last day they will be judged by Allah on the way they have lived their lives.

Christian teaches on forgiveness and reconciliation

- **Bible teachings** – people should forgive those they have argued/fought with.
- Reconciliation is the best way to solve conflict with family and friends
- “Love your enemies”
- “...if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him ...”

Muslim teachings on forgiveness and reconciliation

- Conflicts should be resolved using the ideas of forgiveness and reconciliation
- On the day of judgement it is believed Allah will show mercy and forgiveness to those who have done the same towards others.
- One name given to Allah is “the Compassionate and Merciful” showing Allah forgives people and Muslims should too.
- Muhammad taught people should forgive and be reconciled with those who have offended them
- The Qur’an teaches that forgiveness and reconciliation are important: “If a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from God.”