**JUST WAR THEORY ADDITIONAL NOTES**

**Introduction**

**Just war**: Although war is regarded as bad, if it is FOR Justice it could be considered less wrong. From early times Christians have tried to justify war and to make rules and conditions for it.

**Holy war:** Some religions have claimed that wars can be holy if they are fought in the name of God.

**Pacifism:** Refusal to use violence or to fight in wars.

**Conscientious Objector:** Person who refuses, on the basis of conscience, to fight in a war. COs can serve in non-combatant roles, e.g. stretcher-bearer. CO does not have to be a pacifist, he may just object to a particular war.

**Prisoner of conscience**: Someone imprisoned for what they believe or who they are, not for what they have done.

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| **Fact file*** Total global military expenditure = approx. $1.5 million a minute.
* WWI killed 9 million men, and seriously wounded over 21 million more.
* 50% of victims in WWII were civilians.
* 90% of victims in wars today are civilians.
* Between 200,000 and 400,000 women were raped in Bangladesh during a nine-month conflict in 1971.
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**Causes and effects of war**

Humans have a violent streak in their nature, probably because of fighting for survival for thousands of years. The main causes of war today are:

* Politics / ideology *e.g. Communism Vs Capitalism*
* Religion *e.g. Protestant Vs Catholic, Muslim Vs Jew*
* Nationalism *e.g. Getting rid of a foreign rule*
* Race / ethnicity *e.g. Serb Vs Croat*
* Lust for power / money *e.g. Seizing land of other nations, e.g. Hitler*
* Revenge *e.g. Being defeated in a previous war*
* Economics *e.g. Fighting to provide better resources for own people*
* Injustice *e.g. Fighting an oppressive situation or regime, fighting for justice*
* Fear *e.g. Defence against a threatening military enemy*
* A powerful individual/group *e.g. a dictator who tries to rule others by force*

The main effects of war are:

* Millions of deaths – more than 30,000 people die every month because of war.
* Many die because countries spend money on weapons, not clean water, food, health or education.
* Massive environmental damage.
* 90% of victims in war are innocent civilians –
* Massive refugee crisis (e.g. Afghanistan today), resulting in starvation, misery and death.

**Bible teaching used to support war**

In the Old Testament, people are sometimes commanded by God to go to war. In Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges, God often tells his people to fight and destroy foreign tribes to gain the Promised Land (Israel).

“The lord your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little…..the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed……..no one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them.”

Deuteronomy 7:22-24

The Old Testament Prophet, Joel, tells the people that God wants them to go and fight.

“ Prepare for war! Rouse the warriors! Let all the fighting men drawn near and attack.”

Joel 3:9-10

“ The Lord is a warrior.”

Exodus 15:3

“ You shall not kill.”

Exodus 20:13.

“Kill” refers only to unlawful killing, not other forms of killing, e.g. war.

“ There is a time for killing, and a time for healing, a time for tearing down and a time for building up, a time for tearing and a time for mending, a time for love and the time for hate, a time for war, and a time for peace.”

Ecclesiastes 3:2-8

Christians use these quotes in a discussion about war and the use of violence to show that there are times when war is justified. God cannot be totally opposed to war in all circumstances.

**The example of Jesus**

**Jesus used anger and violence once!**

“Jesus entered the Temple Area and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changes and the benches of those selling doves.”

To some Christians this means that it can sometimes be right to be violent when people are being cheated or treated unfairly.

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

Matthew 10v34

**Jesus came into contact with soldiers, but never once told them they were wrong to fight.**

Jesus healed a Roman centurion’s servant (Luke 7:1-10). This story shows a well-respected soldier being praised by Jesus for his faith. Jesus never told him he was wrong to be a soldier.

Christians might use these examples in a discussion about war and the use of violence to support the view that sometimes war and violence is the best way of making sure that there is Peace and Justice.

**Christian attitudes to war**

Christian attitudes to war on the use of violence have changed over time.

* The very earliest Christians were pacifists.
* When Christianity became the Roman Army’s official religion, these Christians were expected to fight.
* Later, the Church believed it was right to go to war to defend the innocent, or if the war was a “holy war”, i.e. defending Christianity.
* The Crusades: in the Middle Ages, Christians led “The Crusades”. Jerusalem was under Muslim rule, so the Church fought to recapture Jerusalem and stop the Muslims from expanding their empire. They used war because they believed God was on their side and they were fighting evil.
* Today, most Christians agree that violence and war is sometimes necessary to fight evil, and bring justice and peace to the world. Some Christians are Conscientious Objectors. A few are pacifists.

**The Just War Tradition**

In the 4th Century, St. Augustine set out two conditions for a Just War (later added to by St. Thomas Acquinas and others) – ALL of these conditions should hold if a war is to be considered JUST.

1. PROPER AUTHORITY - war should be declared by a proper authority e.g. a government or king
2. JUST CAUSE – the war must be started for a good reason – e.g. self-defense, and not because of greed, etc..
3. RIGHT INTENTION – the war must be fought to establish good, or fight evil
4. LAST RESORT – it must be a last resort, when everything else has been tried, e.g. diplomacy
5. PROPORTIONALITY – the amount of force used must be only enough to succeed - no more
6. WIN POSSIBLE – it should be possible to win the war
7. JUST METHOD - no civilians should be involved, and no deliberate unnecessary cruelty.

**P**oor **A**nnie **J**ust **C**ouldn't **R**esist **I**an's **L**atest **R**omantic **P**roposal **W**ithout **P**laying **J**elly **M**arbles

Until the 20th century, it was possible to fight a just war. Most Churches supported their countries when they were at war. Very few Christians were pacifists.

BUT, many Christians and churches began to change their minds about war in the 20th Century: Why?

World War I: 9 million dead and 21 million injured started to change people’s minds. Christians began to feel they had been wrong to support and encourage this!

World War II: most Christian churches agreed it was important to fight Hitler, but many were unhappy about the methods used, e.g. “carpet bombing” cities such as London and Dresden. Both sides deliberately targeted civilians. 50% of those killed were civilians. This went against the “Just War Theory” because civilians were being killed, and unnecessary force was used.
Atomic Bombs: 1945, 2 atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the Second World War. Some Christians believed that this was necessary to bring a swift end to the war. Other Christians were horrified – thousands were vaporised; radiation killed thousands more; adults and children developed cancer; for years after babies were born dead or seriously deformed. Many Christians said it was totally against Jesus’ teaching, and should never be allowed to happen again.

Today, most churches agree with the Just War theory, but many Christians believe it is impossible to have a “just war”.

**Church teaching on war**

**Roman Catholic Church teaching**

The RC has a poor history of pacifism, e.g. The Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition

* Today, it encourages their members to pray and work for peace.
* A war should be a last resort but sometimes it is a necessary evil.
* It encourages Catholics to fight evil, but allows them to use their consciences.
* If someone does not want to fight on religious grounds, they are encouraged to do a non-combatant role, e.g. stretcher-bearer, nurse, etc..
* Nuclear weapons must only be used as a deterrent and must never be used to attack whole populations or cities. Countries who have nuclear weapons should work towards reducing them.

**Church of England teaching**

* War is sometimes “an unfortunate necessity”, to prevent even worse evil.
* A Government has a duty to defend its people, therefore war may sometimes be right and just.
* Individuals should follow their own consciences about whether or not to fight in the war.
* “ Church and the Bomb” Report, 1983: Britain needs some kind of nuclear weapons as a deterrent, but countries should work together to try to get rid of nuclear weapons.

**Methodist Church teaching**

Accepts the right of individuals to follow their own consciences about whether or not to fight in a war.

“ The Christian pacifist does not necessarily condemn the use of every kind of force, but refuses to employ force unnecessarily or to destroy others. For example in either personal or state violence.”

The Methodist Church in What the Churches Say, CEM 1995