

# Understanding Christian's Perspective on Peace and War

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**Abstract:** Problems of peace and war continues to be debated in theological and moral traditions of Christianity. This paper tries to pick two points. First, the Christian view of peace and war. In the Christian view of peace (peace) is indispensable to justice (justice) and include the dimensions (inner peace) or a spiritual dimension (spiritual peace). This understanding is different from a more secular outlook mean peace at the level of exterior dimensions (outer dimension). Secondly, this paper contradict two major traditions in Christianity regarding the place of Christians in the war and their obligation to participate. The tradition of pacifism which Christians are generally held before St. Augustine, argues that Jesus forbade Christians at all involved in the war or arms. This tradition believes that peace is achieved only through peaceful means. Conversely, Just War tradition that was developed by St. Augustine considered that Christians are obliged to participate in the war when the purpose of war is to bring peace and uphold justice. St. Augustine in two main principles that must be met, namely Jus Ad Bellum (Justice of War) and Jus in Bello (Justice in War).

**Keywords :** Peace, War, Pacifism, Just War, Christians

**Abstrak:** Masalah damai dan perang terus menjadi perdebatan teologis dan moral dalam tradisi kekristenan. Tulisan ini mencoba mengangkat dua hal pokok. Pertama, pandangan Kristen tentang damai dan perang. Dalam pandangan Kristen damai (*peace*) tidak bisa dipisahkan dengan keadilan (*justice*) dan mencakup dimensi dalam (*inner peace*) atau dimensi spiritual (*spiritual peace*). Pemahaman ini berbeda dengan pandangan sekuler yang lebih mengartikan damai pada level dimensi luar. Kedua, tulisan ini mengkontradisikan dua tradisi besar dalam kekristenan terkait posisi orang Kristen dalam perang dan kewajiban mereka berpartisipasi. Tradisi *Pacifism* yang umumnya dipegang orang Kristen sebelum St. Augustine, berpendapat bahwa Yesus melarang sama sekali orang Kristen turut terlibat dalam perang atau mengangkat senjata. Tradisi ini percaya bahwa damai hanya dicapai lewat cara-cara damai. Sebaliknya, tradisi Just War yang di kembangkan oleh St. Augustine menilai bahwa orang Kristen berkewajiban berpartisipasi dalam perang bila tujuan dari perang adalah membawa damai dan menegakan keadilan. Pemahaman St. Augustine inidi tuangkan dalam dua prinsip utama yang harus dipenuhi yaitu Jus Ad Bellum (*Justice of War*) dan Jus in Bello (*Justice in War*).

**Kata kunci :** Perdamaian, Perang, Pacifism, Just War, Umat Kristiani

## Introduction

War and peace are inextricably tied together when it comes to discussion and debate. Historically, it is an inseparable part of human existence. Throughout century, people have been trying to develop the concept of war, analyze the cause of it and necessary means to bring peace or what conditions are necessary for peace.

War and peace are subject to moral, theological, philosophical and political construction. In ancient times, for example, Greek thinkers such as Thucydides, Plato and

Roman statesman, Cicero, devoted their time<sup>104</sup> and knowledge to define and discuss about war.

Their different backgrounds shape their understanding about war; as a result they view war differently. As an historian Thucydides, in his monumental work, Peloponnesian war, Thucydides describes war between Sparta and Athens as it is rooted in human appetite for power, to pursue political ambitions and to

<sup>104</sup> An indispensable collection of essays about ethics and war by great thinkers from ancient times through to present day is made available in Gregory M. Reichberg, Henrik Syse, and Endre Begby (eds), *The Ethics of War: Classic and*

conquer more territory. Lebow succinctly points out that Thucydides and Morgenthau understood politics as a struggle for power and unilateral advantage.<sup>105</sup> Likewise, as a philosopher, Plato understands war as the realm of human activity but he is more concern on how to create peace than specifically talk about origin of war. However, Plato clearly says that every city is in a natural state of war with every other.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, if war is pursued, the guardians of the state are the ones to participate exclusively in the conduct of the war.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, as an orator and stataman, Cicero is more interested in the lawness of war and justice of war. In his work "On Duty" section 35, he said, "Wars ought to be undertaken for the purpose of peace and bring justice."<sup>108</sup> According to Reichberg, Syse and Begby, Cicero is one of the first thinkers to insist on the need for developing a legal and normative framework for war.<sup>109</sup>

On the other hand, modern times war thinkers such as Hobbes and Clausewitz makes war and security as the primary subject of their

discussions in relation to the function of the state in respondin to external threat. Hobbes asserts that war is part of nature which can not be eliminated. He argues that the state of nature is a state of war.<sup>110</sup> Meanwhile, Clausewitz understands war as the realm of chance, risk and uncertainty,<sup>111</sup> and war is the continuation of politics by other means where the object in war is not military victory;<sup>112</sup> rather, it is to bend the enemy to one's will.<sup>113</sup> Interestingly, both Hobbes and Clausewitz conclude that states lived under the condition of perpetual conflict tending toward "pure war."<sup>114</sup>

In addition, from the middle Ages to the modern time, many thinkers, particularly Christians, have also talked about war in terms of ethical norm; i.e right or wrong. War attracted attentions among Christians both Catholic and Protestant. Much debate and longstanding discussion have taken place since the early Christian period on the issue of attaining lasting peace and proper attitude on which Christians should take a stand in regard to war. In searching for the correct path, Christians point to example of Jesus life, biblical passages, historical records and teaching of the Church fathers. This paper will try to answer the questions: what is Christian perspective on peace? What is

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*Contemporary Readings* (UK:Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

<sup>105</sup> Lebow, Richard Ned, Classical Realism. In Dunne, Tim., Kurki, Milja, and Smith, Steve, 2010, *International Relations Theories: Diciplines and Diversity*, 2nd. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 63

<sup>106</sup> Copleston, Frederik, S.J, 1993, *A History of Philosophy, Volume I: Greece and Rome*. New York: Doubleday, p.240

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, According to Plato, idea state has three classes; interior class (Artisans), and superior class called guardians (philosophers or the ruler and military / soldiers or auxiliary). Auxiliary supports the decision of the rulers.

<sup>108</sup> Reichberg,,Gregory Syse, M. Henrik, and Begby, Endre (eds), 2006, *The Ethics of War: Classic and Contemporary Readings* . UK:Blackwell Publishing, p.52

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p.51

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<sup>110</sup> Reichberg,,Gregory Syse, M. Henrik, and Begby, Endre (eds), *The Ethics of War*: p.441

<sup>111</sup> Gray, Colin, S, War, 2006, *Peace and International Relations: An Introduction to Strategic History*. London & New York: Routledge, p.15

<sup>112</sup> Walzer, Michael, 2004, *Arguing about War*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p.ix

<sup>113</sup> Gray, Colin, S, War, Peace and International Relations, p.7

<sup>114</sup> Kolodziej, Edward A, 2005. *Security and International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.59

Christian position on warfare?

### Definition of Peace

Peace can mean many things to different people. The concept of peace itself has undergone a significant shift, from more restricted meaning to a broader one. In the past, peace was perceived as the absence of war or negative peace. This definition is narrowly translated from the Greek *eirene* and Latin word *pax* to mean the absence of war. This negative concept remained unchanged till new inception was introduced by Galtung in 1969.

Widely acknowledged as the father of structural violence, Galtung expanded the traditional view with a more modern concept. According to Galtung, peace is not only the absence of war but the absence of violence both personal and structural (positive peace). Galtung argues that structural violence is built up into the very structure of society and cultural institutions and prevents people to exercise their potential. Galtung then goes on by introducing cultural

violence. According to Galtung, cultural violence is any aspect of a cultural that can be used to legitimize violence and its direct violence or the violence built into the structure. Galtung's definitions of peace and violence have been used as reference in peace and conflict studies and international framework to promote human rights.

### Christian's Definition of Peace

Galtung's definitions of both negative and positive peace, however, emphasize outer dimensions. In Christian's view, peace is always connected with love and justice and includes inner or spiritual dimension. Love is understood as attitude and action. It derives from Greek word *agape* to mean love and charity. Equally, Christian holds view that there will be no peace where there is no justice and no justice where human persons do not have their basic human rights. It is therefore, all social systems based on peace and justice must be built on the concept of the human person and human rights.

Many scholars have argued that Christians derive their concept of peace from teaching of Jesus. The genesis of Christian

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<sup>115</sup> Musto, Ronald G., in his book, *The Catholic Peace Tradition* (New York:Orbis Books, 1986) traces the etymology of peace. He points out that the Latin word, *pax*, is a close relative of the Latin *pacisci*, meaning to agree, or to come to some form of pactum, agreement, to bring about a condition of free of conflict. ...Peace for Rome therefore mean a sense of security and an absence of war brought about by Roman's conquest. Similarly, from the time of Homer (c.800 B.C) the Greek word *eirene* mean much the same as the Latin and English terms for peace: the opposite of war. Hebrew word *salom* and Arabic *salaam* contains the meaning of order also implied by *pax* or *eirene*.

<sup>116</sup> Johan Galtung, *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, 3, (1969)167-191.

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<sup>117</sup> Johan Galtung, *Cultural Violence*, *Journal of Peace Research*, 27, 3, (1990)291-305.

<sup>118</sup> Pilgrim platform: ordinary Christianity for the world. <http://www.pilgrim-platform.org/agape.htm> (accessed, 10 February 2013)

<sup>119</sup> Encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty*. April 11, 1963. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html) accessed, 20 February 2013

concept is also acknowledged by Webel and Galtung:

Spiritual and religious leaders from the Budha and Jesus to Gandhi and the Dalai Lama have been inclined to equate peace and love, both the inner dimensions and the manner in which people who are spiritually developed interact with others, most acutely who may hate and envy them.<sup>120</sup>

Love and Justice as the foundation of peace in Christianity have also been extensively expounded by Christian leaders in written documents such as official church statements or pastoral letters and also through speeches and sermons. Pope Paul VI in his message for the World Days of Peace Message, for example, profoundly says:

*"...nor can one rightly speak of peace where no recognition or respect is given to its solid foundations: namely, sincerely, justice and love...it is for the protection of these values that we place them beneath the banner of peace..."*<sup>121</sup>

Similarly, Desmond Tutu, a church leader and the noble peace laureate 1984, says:

*"...There is no peace because there is no justice. There can be no real peace and security until there be first justice enjoyed by all the inhabitants of that beautiful land. The Bible knows nothing about peace without justice, for that*

<sup>120</sup> Webel, Charles and Galtung, Johan (ed), *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies* (London: Routledge, 2007), 6

<sup>121</sup> *Pontifical Commission: Iustitia Et Pax "Ways of Peace: Papal Messages for the World Days of Peace* (Vatican, 1968-1986), 4-5

*would be crying, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace." God's shalom peace, involves inevitably righteousness, justice, wholeness, fullness of life, participation in decision making, goodness, laughter, joy, compassion, sharing and reconciliation."*<sup>122</sup>

Many Christians realize that the peace message has its roots in the holy bible. In both Old and New Testaments, the concept of peace is laid down. Christians often make reference to the verses in the bible to point to the concept of peace; as it has been claimed to have provided a clear picture. In Old Testament, for example, it says 'Justice will bring about peace; right will produce calm and security.'<sup>123</sup>

Similarly, in the New Testament, Jesus teaches his disciple about 'true peace'. He offers message of peace, love, and nonviolence. "My peace I give unto you," Jesus offers. Jesus message of peace is unique as it requires total commitment. In Joint Pastoral Letter of the West German and French Bishops, it says, 'The Gospel of Peace is a biblical name for the message proclaimed by Christ...The peace which Christ brings and promises is very different from the peace which the world can give or take, win or lose.'<sup>124</sup>

St. Augustine, one of the great Christian

<sup>122</sup> Nobel Lecture, December 1984. [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-lecture.html), accessed, 20 February 2013.

<sup>123</sup> Is. 32:17, New American Bible.

<sup>124</sup> Schall, James V. SJ (ed). Joint Pastoral Letter of The West German and French Bishops: Out of Justice, Peace and Winning The Peace, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1984), 33.

thinkers, in his masterwork, *The City of God*, views peace as 'tranquilitas ordinis, a tranquility of order in which he means only peace coupled with a measure of justice qualifies as authentic peace.'<sup>125</sup> Similarly, St. Ambrose (c.330-c.397), another most cited Christian thinker points out the connection between peace and justice and inner dimension. He notes, 'peace is the virtue of the humble, who refuse involvement in dissension, cruelty, debauchery, and wealth and who follow justice.'<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, for Christian, Sermon on the Mount, lays the basis for their understanding of peace and ethical lives. It provides a biblical account on which Christians base their position on questions of peace and war. Thus, it is often regarded as a blue print for Christian life. The sermon presents the essence of the teaching of Jesus which includes Lord's prayer and the Beatitudes. Jesus introduces a new teaching of love, even of enemies as opposed to the old law of retribution. St. Augustine said Sermon on the Mount as 'a perfect standard of the Christian life.'

The gospel of peace proclaimed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount has moved Christians to promote peace and generated peace Christian movements over the centuries. Christians realize that peacemaking is a gift that Jesus gives as a model to imitate. It is a call to be a peacemaker and it is a perennial duty. The conference of European Churches (CEC) in its ninth assembly 1986 carrying the theme "Glory to God and Peace on Earth, affirmed the call to

be peacemaker:

*"...the God who calls us to be peacemakers is God of forgiveness and hope, of life and light. It is not too late to repent. Peace, with justice for the world's poor, is possible. We will not give way to sin of despair. We pledge ourselves and the churches to work with all who are prepared to break down barriers of fear and distrust, to move from cold war to warm peace, from hostile coexistence to cooperative coexistence. In many men and women who do not know Christ we recognize the wisdom and the love of God."*<sup>128</sup>

The message calls Christians to forgive, promote justice and support every initiative to abolish nuclear weapons. Calling to be peacemakers, however, divide Christians into two peace traditions particularly on addressing war: pacifism and just war. This divergence arises as Jesus does not give clear statement on what Christians should stand in regard to warfare. These two streams of traditions remain in tension throughout history.

Understanding these two traditions, pacifism and just war, are important as they raise much discussion and debate when it comes to the position of Christians, particularly the early Christians on the way peace is promoted. The debate and discussion, in fact, still take place till now and divergence of opinion and practice still exists. Bainton in introduction to his book tries

<sup>126</sup> In Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, 48.

<sup>127</sup> In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus blessed the peacemakers and declared that they would be called sons of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mat 5:9).

<sup>128</sup> Reuver, Marc, 1988, *Christians as Peacemakers: Peace Movements in Europe and the USA*. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, in the Foreword



to point out the development of Christian views on war and peace. Bainton says:

*“Broadly speaking, three attitudes to war and peace and were to appear in the Christian ethic: pacifism, the just war, and the crusade. Chronologically, they emerged in just this order. The early Church was pacifist to the time of Constantine. Then, partly as a result of the close association of the Church and state under this emperor and partly by reason of the threat of barbarian invasions, Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries took over from the classical world the doctrine of the just war, whose object should be to vindicate justice and restore peace. The just war had to be fought under the authority of the state and must observe a code of good faith and humanity. Christian elements added by Augustine were that the motive must be love and that monks and priests were to be exempted. The crusade arose in the high Middle Ages, a holy war fought under the auspices of the Church or of some inspired religious leader, not on behalf of justice conceived in terms of life and property, but on behalf of an ideal, the Christian faith.”*<sup>129</sup>

The shift of the Christian stance on war and the way to promoting peace has been interesting subject. Particularly in regard to position of the

<sup>129</sup> Roland H. Bainton, 1961. *Christian Attitudes Towards War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-Evaluation* London: Hodder and Stoughton. p.14.

early Christians on pacifism, different arguments have been raised about whether early Christians are really pacifist and what the reasons not to take up arms and being committed pacifists.

### **Pacifism Traditions**

Pacifism is rooted in religious traditions. Most religions at least have the concept of pacifism which resist violent acts. Gandhi, for example, used the concept of ahimsa occurring in Bhagavad-Gita as translated to mean 'nonviolence or non-harm.'<sup>130</sup> He then expand the concept to include a number of different injuries and promote ahimsa as a principle to guide human in their thoughts, words and deeds.<sup>131</sup>

Different from realist and just war traditions which believes that ends justify means and the war is sometimes can be morally justified, pacifism takes very different approach that any forceful acts, although the ends is good, constitute a violation of human dignity and more importantly violation of God's command and bring more harm than good.

Pacifism itself has a long religious tradition particularly rooted in Christian traditions. Early Christians are committed to pacifist stance. Early Christians believe that it is a sin to participate in bloody and violent acts such as war. Reichberg, Syse and Begby point out during the first three centuries AD, the mainstream of Christianity adopted a moderate pacifist stance.<sup>132</sup> They claim this pacifism has two

<sup>130</sup> Johansen, Jorgen, 2007. *Nonviolence: More than the absence of violence*. In Webel, Charles and Galtung Johan, eds, *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*. New York: Routledge, p.146.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid

<sup>132</sup> Gregory M. Reichberg, , p.61

sources of inspiration: Christ's clear injunctions to non-violence in the New Testament, and the view that the world is evil and will soon wither away.<sup>133</sup> Also, Sorabji argues that major Church Fathers in the early centuries thought that Christians should be pacifist.<sup>134</sup>

Similarly, modern Christian who is faithful to Christ teaching and early Christian faith, some so-called 'peace churches' such as Quakers, Mennonites, the Amish and the Church of the Brethren take a path of being pacifists. They interpret the Sermon on the Mount literally as adherence to pacifist doctrines. Some Christian societies such as Pax Christi and the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) hold similar view. In fact, the motto of the FOR movement is the appeal of A.J. Muste, a theologian and pacifist "There is no way to peace. Peace is the way."

Rooted in Latin words *pax* and *facere*, which mean 'to make peace' these pacifist groups believe that authentic peace can be achieved only through peaceful means and never through violence such as wars. They adhere to the idea that violence is morally wrong and therefore unjustifiable ; and international disputes must be settled by arbitration rather than by conflict.<sup>135</sup> They believe that human beings are naturally peaceful. Therefore, they argue that civilians should be trained in nonviolence way.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

<sup>134</sup> Sorabji, Richard, and Rodin David, in their introduction to *The Ethics of War: Shared Problems in Different Traditions* edited by Sorabji, Richard and Rodin, David, ed 2006. Oxford: Ashgate, p. 3

<sup>135</sup> Janzekovic, John, 2006, *The Use of Force in Humanitarian Intervention: Morality and Practicality*. Hampshire: Ashgate, p.44.

<sup>136</sup> Fahey, Joseph J., 2005, *War and the Christian*

Mennonite theologian, John Howard Yoder, illustrates this pacifist belief as follows:

*"Christian whose loyalty to the Prince of Peace puts them out of step with today's nationalistic world, because of a willingness to love their nation's friends but not to hate the nation's enemies, are not unrealistic dreamers who think that they by their objections all wars will end. The unrealistic dreamers are rather the soldiers who think they can put an end to wars by preparing for just one more....Christians love their enemies not because their enemy are wonderful people, nor because they fail to respect their native land or its rulers; nor because they are unconcerned for the safety of their neighbors; nor because another political or economic system may be favored. The Christian loves his or her enemies because God does, and God commands His followers to do so; that is the only reason and that is enough."*<sup>137</sup>

In answering the reasons of being pacifists, Fahey points out four reasons: repudiation of idolatry (the worship of false gods), the imminent eschaton (second coming of Christ), an aversion to Rome and Love of enemies. From these four reasons, according to Fahey, love of enemies is the strongest one.<sup>138</sup>

*Conscience: Where Do You Stand*. New York: Orbis Books, p.66

<sup>137</sup> Barash, David P. (ed), 2000, *Approaches to Peace: A Reader in Peace Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.213

<sup>138</sup> Fahey, Joseph J. 2005, *War and the Christian Conscience*, p.42.

Fahey goes on to say 'Christians refused to serve in the armies because they rejected the 'eye for an eye' ethic and accepted Jesus' command to love their enemies. For these Christians, participation in war and military service were not compatible with the gospel of reconciliation.'

Meanwhile, Sorabji argues that early Christians tend to being pacifists for several reasons. First, There was a tension between the Old Testament with its bloodthirsty wars and the New Testament with Christ's injunction, if someone takes your coat, to offer your cloak also, and if struck on one cheek, to turn the other (Matthew 5:39–40, Luke 6:29). Second, early church fathers teaching show clearly that they are pacifists. For example, Tertullian says Christian cannot forsake all for Christ if he is a soldier, and he takes the injunction to turn the other cheek as reinterpreting the ancient Judaic law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.<sup>140</sup>

In addition, Origen held that Christians should not fight and explains that war was necessary for the ancient Jews, but now would be forbidden them by Rome.<sup>141</sup> Although pacifism is not popular and attract fewer followers and almost impossible to be used as states foreign policy, the tradition shows that loving enemies, non violent way as Jesus has called and the faith of early Christian faith have become a model among pacifists in their effort to attain peace and some successful movements have been achieved.

<sup>140</sup> Sorabji, Richard, Just War from Ancient Origin to the Conquistadors Debate and Its Modern Relevance. In Sorabji, Richard and Rodin, David, ed, The Ethics of War: p. 15

<sup>141</sup> *ibid*

## Just War Traditions

The idea of just war has actually been developed by Plato, Aristotle and Cicero. However, it is through Augustine that the idea of just war is systematically developed and gains popularity and become the framework for modern humanitarian interventions. The contributions of later just war theorists such as Aquinas, Vitoria, Grotius and Walzer make just war tradition is more appealing and preferred.

'Just war tradition,' formulated by St. Augustine takes different position from the interpretation of pacifism. Just war doctrine permits war under certain circumstance. The key word here is "just." Walzer defines "just" to mean justifiable, defensible, even morally necessary.<sup>142</sup> Therefore, a war to be just should be based on two principles *Jus ad Bellum* (Justness of War dealing with when it is just to go to war) and *Jus in Bello* (Justice in War dealing with how it is just to behave in the course of a war). More additional criteria have been added to the one first formulated by Christian thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas. Both Augustine and Aquinas formulate only three criteria in *Jus ad Bellum*: legitimate authority, just cause, and right intention. National Conference of Catholic Bishops added four more criteria: Comparative justice (Concerning means of waging war), Last resort (all peaceful alternatives have been exhausted), probability of success (to prevent irrational resort to force), proportionality

<sup>142</sup> Walzer, Michael, Arguing about War, p.x

<sup>143</sup> Coates, Anthony, Culture, The Enemy and the Moral Restraint of War. In Sorabji, Richard and Rodin, David, ed, The Ethics of War, p. 215. Other Christian thinkers such as Vitoria and Grotius also



(damage to be inflicted and the cost incurred must be proportionate).<sup>144</sup>

The criteria of Jus in Bello has not much been discussed by Christian thinkers. Two criteria are mostly introduced under Jus in Bello are discrimination (target of attack only against persons taking part in the hostilities) and proportionality (only minimal force is used to achieve objectives). Augustine does not discuss about the principle of discrimination principle explicitly. He is more concerned about the conditions of war prisoners. As Sorabji puts it, Augustine requires one to keep faith with the enemy and show mercy to prisoners and the defeated after the war has been undertaken.<sup>145</sup> Another Christian thinker, Vitoria also shares this view that combatant prisoners must be protected.<sup>146</sup> Their thought inspired the introduction of modern international law on the treatment of war prisoners that prisoners of wars (POW) should be treated as civilians and not as active combatants.

Just war supporters develop the idea as they believe that Christian should participate in just war and should not take part in unjust wars. They propose contextual interpretation, arguing that the teaching of Jesus can not be applied to the every circumstance. They argue that there are also some passages in the bible that implicitly show that Just War or joining military service is permissible. Hence, the passages are interpreted to support a less pacifist stance.

<sup>144</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace, May 3, 1983. In Gregory M. Reichberg, , p.670

<sup>145</sup> Sorabji, Richard, *Just War from Ancient Origin*, p. 17

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, p.21

There are six principal passages in the New Testament, which at least, used by just war advocates to demonstrate their position; Mark 12:13-17, John 2:13-16, Matthew 10:34-39, Luke 22:35-38, Luke 22:49-53, Matthew 8:5-10, John 15:12-17. In John 2:13-16, for example, it depicts about the cleansing of the temple of exploitive merchants by Jesus. This passage is suggested by just war advocates as a precedent for permissible violence as Jesus is using violence method to secure a peaceful end.

Another argument raised by just war advocates is war is an inevitable consequence of life as there would be always wars. The percepts in the Sermon on the Mount, as it is argued, could not be taken literally amidst the ordinary circumstances of life. Therefore, according to just war proponents, war is not always wrong and to some extents, it is permissible to take up arms to confront injustice and against evil. Augustine regards this as loving obligation. Augustine thought that war is always a sin and hence he tried to reconcile Christian pacifism with the world as it actually is. This Augustinian view has brought a new status to the Christian view on war. As a fact, till now vast majority of Christian churches accept the just war model as a method to created peace and bring justice.

Despite divergence on the warfare, both pacifist and just war adherents are committed and united to make peace. They realized that peace is the greatest desire for all human being. Over the centuries, both have made impressive records of peacemaking initiatives which significantly contribute to international peacemaking. The most impressive record they have made was starting Christian peace movement in 1970s. The movements exerted a great influence on

public opinion and influenced political leaders and governments. The movements successfully gained international support and church communities in their appeal against the use and possession of nuclear weapons. Their appeal bears fruit. Many churches have rejected the possession and the use of nuclear weapons. Catholic Church takes similar stance but still permit a minimal nuclear deterrence.

Christian's commitment to peace making initiatives continues to the present day. For example, in 1980 American Mennonite church played key role in mediating an agreement between Nicaragua government and rebel movement on the East Coast of Nicaragua. This marks new era of peace. The Mennonites church even takes a further step. They send abroad on their peacemaking missions to live in designated conflict zone for several years to help build local institutions and enhance local peacebuilding capacities.<sup>147</sup> Similar step is also taken by catholic lay organization, Sant' Egidio. In addition to its dramatic interventions to promote peace in Burundi, Congo, Algeria and Kosovo, Sant' Egidio facilitated the mediation that brought Mozambique civil war to an end in 1992.<sup>148</sup> Many individual Christians, for example, Bishop Ximenes Bello, have also played significant role to promote peace and justice in East Timor which brought him to receive Nobel Peace Prize in 1996.

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<sup>147</sup>Smock, David, Special Report. Catholic Contribution to International Peace, 9 April 2001. United States Institute of Peace. <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr69.html>. Accessed 25 February 2013

<sup>148</sup>Ibid

## **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that peace is the greatest desire among Christians. All Christians share the same concept of peace and are called to be peacemakers, promoting love, justice and grow in spiritual lives as Jesus has shown. Christians understand this concept as a gift. Being inspired by the same faith, Christians take a leading force in peace making initiatives and peace movement.

In addressing warfare, however, Christians are divided into two peace traditions: pacifism and just war. Pacifists are fully committed to promoting peace through non violent way, rejecting war and taking up arms or countenance the use of force. Just war advocates, by contrast, perceive war as something that is not always wrong and it is also a way to bring peace and restore justice. Despite the divergence, these two traditions have been Christian's heritage and will remain the precious heritage. Both views on war substantially have given much insight to the modern war theory and shape people attitude on warfare.

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