

Connection of just war theory and religious

[Philosophy](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Just war theory is an interesting one simply because the phrase just war is an oxymoron. War is defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary as a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations. Implicit in this definition of war is the result of death and since justice is right action towards other death is the most unjust of things. Thus war is unjust.

Although there is the case where one country goes to war with another because the other has unjust policy and warfare if the catalysis believed to change these policies.

Jesus Christ taught us to love our enemies and when they offended us to turn the other cheek. However that was what he preached to a small sect of Jews two thousand years ago. This teaching did not only work it worked well at the time because there was no way for a few hundred or even thousand early Christians to take on the whole Roman army, which persecuting the early Christians. However things soon changed drastically. Constantine the emperor of Roman had a religious conversion and made Christianity the official religion of the state. Which changed the nature of the religion.

Christianity became main stream so to speak. Roman officials began to convert just because it might help them in the political career. The small Christian faith communities that had been in hiding for fear that they would be persecuted were able to come out and worship openly. In addition to all this the religion also became more scholarly. People became true historians and students of Christianity. The Church took on a government like hierarchical structure. From all this change religious policies and disputes were no longer settle at just the local level by a few people getting together

<https://assignbuster.com/connection-of-just-war-theory-and-religious/>

and figuring out what they thought would be best. There was a system developed to resolve these problems. It involved consulting scholars on the subject and then coming to a conclusion in committee and writing an official policy on it. This policy setting process usually happened in Rome because that was the center of power and knowledge at the time. So most of the scholars of the time resided in there. Along with most of the Roman officials because it was also the capital city of the Roman Empire. This was convenient because after Constantine's conversion there was nothing separating church and state. With church and state so closely connected it was impossible for the doctrine that all war, no matter what the reasons being, was bad to remain as it was. An empire can not be exposed to all war. War is unfortunately a necessary evil of government especially in that time period. Through this problem the theory of the just war arose. The Holy Roman Empire could not have other people attacking it and not be able to respond because of the official state religion prohibited it. From this imperial need for warfare the criteria for just war came. However it is easy to see that they were written to help the government. Many people feel that no war is just and while the Church agrees that there is sin in all war. It does say that under certain conditions that war is the only option.

The separation of church and state in the United States works to avoid the problem that Rome had. It helps to remove some of the moral guilt that is felt from warfare. It is interesting though that the United States has taken on the role of the world's police department. While the United States is not officially connected to any religion it is a government run by the people and the majority of the people are from a Judeo-Christian background. This is a

Judeo-Christian culture and from that there are certain policies and traditions that permeate all facets of life. Including war policy.

In the post World War II world the United States emerged as the premiere world power with its only rival for global dominance being the Soviet Union. This caused some interesting tension because the two countries which fought on the same side during the war. Although the Soviet Union was under a different government at the time the two nations went from being allies to complete enemies. The governments of the two countries were formed with the opposite philosophy. The United States was formed with the freedom of the individual as its central goal. The Soviet Union however was formed with the good of the state as its first priority. The Soviets were taught that the good of the many far outweighs the good of the few or the one and that through the equal sharing of goods and services all would benefit. On top of the tension that was between the two states because they were the most powerful and that their governments were based on two completely opposite political theories there was the added pressure of the nuclear arms race. In an attempt to show the world which type of government and way of life was better the two countries built up their armies and constructed enough nuclear weapons to destroy the world many times over.

After the dropping of the atomic bomb on Japan in World War Two the United States took it upon itself to be the protector of the free world. Under this title The Korean war and the Vietnam War were fought to protect these countries from communism.

In the case of the Vietnam War the reason for fighting was not completely clear. It seemed that the United States simply did not want The Soviet Unions communist way of life to occupy any more land than it already did. Once again the pro-war propaganda said that they were defending the free world. In doing so though countless lives were lost. Whole villages of innocent Vietnamese were killed in this war effort. In addition many Americans died fighting for something they did not believe in because it was not a just cause. American soldiers struggled with the commands to fight for this ideal that the government was dead set of protecting when the soldiers saw that there was no reason to do this. This struggle caused the soldiers that survived many more problems down the road. The injustice of that war filtered into everything that was connected to it. It was not merely the soldiers or their families that were effected by the injustice of the war. America society had to deal with the effects of the war. The injustices of Vietnam were not only in the mere fight but also in who was doing the fighting. The policies surrounding the drafting of soldiers for this unjust war were meant to lessen the pain or effects of plucking people out of society and sending off to commit unthinkable acts. People of draft age that were in college were exempt from going, but at the time only a small portion of the college population was non-white. This idea to not disrupt the education of Americas future leaders ended up just being another unjust act. The people that were fighting came from poorer families and they did not feel this strong need to protect this system of democracy simply because it was not helping them out. So there was injustice throughout this war. The one unjust act just begets another.

Violent action is sometimes needed whether it is just or not. War is never good but sometimes it is the only option. For crimes committed on the large scale the fastest way to stop them is with war. The example of the Holocaust in Nazi Germany comes to mind. If Germany was invading other countries and killing off the Jewish population in Europe. It was possible to be more inventive and come up with clever ways to cause the German people to reconsider whether or not their actions were just but that would have taken time. Time to come up with a strategy for the resistance and time for the effects to reach the policy makers. By that time however Germany might have controlled half the world and killed off all of the Jews in that part of the world. So that is one case that war although being wrong is an explainable option. In cases like that though the philosophy of less is more should be applied. The less warfare the better. The less killing and death the better. Unfortunately it seems that more often than not once violence breaks out it doesn't end until one of the warring parties is all but gone. The United States is guilty of this in the fight with Japan in World War II. The United States was winning in Japan and Japan's European allies had already surrendered. So the end of the war in the Pacific was in sight. However the newly developed atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima to completely demoralize the Japanese crushing them for sure. The bomb served two purposes, both of which were unjust. It ended the war in an unnecessarily violent way and it demonstrated the United States power and technological supremacy. The fact that the United States used the atomic bomb completely negates the fact that they entered the war to protect themselves. Although they were originally the defenders they took on the role of the

unjust offender when the bomb was dropped, killing thousands of innocent unsuspecting people.

While the United States has been involved a number of conflicts which did not have a direct effect on Americans. The justice of the U. S. standing up to freedom and those who are being persecuted is questionable. Standing up for the persecuted is a good thing but war is usually the wrong way to go about it. It seems that whenever American troops have been sent to other countries to fix that countries problem either the country loses its ability to stand on its own or there is unnecessary violence. I think as an outside force the efforts of the United States would better be served if they did not use force but rather took other non-violent action to change the attitudes of the wrong doers in other countries.