

# [Does religion cause war](https://assignbuster.com/does-religion-cause-war-essay-samples/)

When dealing with the concept of religion, the primary idea that would be brought to our thoughts involve the concept of peace. I think that in the teachings of any religion, even with the vaguest interpretation we could have discerned, the central virtue would be incorporated with peace. However, because of differences with each form of religion, there would always be a cause of argument. These arguments would create the major conflicts and revolutions between people having these different point and views in their own religion.
The world history would tell us that there are cases wherein religion was used by some to foster war to other nation. A major example of this is the Crusades which were expeditions of Christians in Europe during the 12th and 13th centuries for the recovery of Israel (Wiegand, 2011). Although the frontline issue of the Crusade is to rescue the Holy Land of Israel from its perpetrators and for other countries to be converted into the Christian religion; it doesn’t change the fact that this movement caused violence and struggle toward its enemies. They thought that it is appropriate to force people to convert into their religion (Wiegand, 2011). Another recent event which is speculated to be caused by conflicts with religion is the bombings of the World Trade Center (Poole. 2011). Regarding these thoughts, the big question is, does religion really causes war? In this paper, some cases and articles, which relates the concept of religion and war, will be discussed and try to answer the question if the prime mover for the development of war is religion, or is it something else behind it.
Religion can be defined as set of beliefs concerning the cause and nature’s purpose of the universe, or the practice of religious beliefs (Poole, 2011). In the definition, the word “ belief” is the key word for religion relies on what people believes in. The religious belief is the basis for the everyday living of a certain individual or group of people. Religious beliefs are the main factors which influences the decision-making and principle an individual have. Hence, many people have the notion that religion is one of the major causes of war. However, I think that this is not always the case for different interpretations and views of several form of religion do not always go about conflict and hence is not always a predisposition to the formation of war.
Religion has been entailed in the formation of war since its creation. There are many form of religion which is practiced in the world today. Some of the popular religion includes Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Taoism, Buddhism and many more. All of these religions are similar in a sense that its followers abide by its teachings and their belief and way of living is almost entirely dependent on it. However, each religion has also differences. For example, Christian individuals who were in an Islam community are forbidden and persecuted for exercising their religious beliefs. They cannot freely act as a Christian in that community. This persecution usually creates the conflict between religions. The Christian must choose between honoring their beliefs and being persecuted (Poole, 2011). The United States, according to a poll by ABC news, consist of 83% Christians (ABC News, 2004). This may be because Christianity is widely practiced in America so Christians can freely exercise their Christianity (ABC News, 2011). In other areas of the world, it is the Islam religion which is not fully tolerated. Although the Muslims were not persecuted, they experience discrimination and torment (Wiegand, 2011). The war that is more evident in our society today usually occurs between the Christian and Muslim communities.
Other people believe that their religion is the supreme religion among others. They are very confident and proud that they belong to that religion for they believe that their religion is the best one. They also believe that their way of interpreting their holy book or teachings is the only one that is right (Palk, 2011). This is also one of the causes of conflict and war between religions. This supremacy ideology has made other religions choose the inappropriate way of using their faith. Some religious parties decided to start serious conflicts with other religion which have ideologies that contradict their belief (Wiegand, 2011). One example of this involves the two subgroups of the Islam religion, which are the Sunnis and Shiites. These two groups are in a conflict due to contradicting beliefs between them and because each group thinks that their group is superior to the other. (Palk, 2011). Each group believes that their interpretation of the teachings and ideology of Islam is more appropriate and other people should convert to be like them.
Another example of how religion can cause war is that a religion, along with its group of followers, can be the victims of a war or conflict just as easily as they can be the ones to start a war or conflict. An event which portrays this example was during the World War II (WWII) wherein there are major conflicts between the Nazi party and the Jewish people. The Jews were greatly perished in the war because of their religion and other aspects of their way of living (Poole, 2011). In Germany, the Nazi party, along with its supporters, despised the Jewish people so much that it already involves mass killing of them. It is because they believe that the Jews, along with their belief and religion, were supposedly the cause of everything that was creating havoc in their country at the time (Wiegand, 2011). These are just few of the many conflicts and events that have happened in the past do to religion, religions followers, and their beliefs.
The conflicts causing wars might not be entirely attributed to religion but also to the conflicts with territories. Every territory is likely to contain a certain type of culture of people that practice a certain type of religion. When one territory fights to another territory because of conflicts with the relationships between the two, the two different religious beliefs of both territories are also challenged. The war which is primarily about conflicts with territory will then be converted into a war because of differences in religion. Usually, the main problem which causes the war involves the possessions of land, gold or oil and has nothing to do with religion. People who are in opposing views of religion causing war will argue that this war happened throughout history fighting over possession like oil or gold. This is happening now in African nations (Wiegand, 2011). This want of possessions created the individual wars regarding religion. The Christians of America and the Muslims of North Africa turned their focus away from the land and focused on the cultures differences. These cultural differences include religious views (Wiegand, 2011).
Some religions instead of having conflict, such as a war, will argue instead of having a conflict. For example, Buddhist monks will set themselves on fire instead of conflict (Varma, 2011). This is a way of protesting without causing conflicts such as wars (Varma, 2011).
With all these events in the world history which can create a connection between religion and war, some will still insist that religion does not cause war. They would argue that it is the people’s thinking and selfish intentions which uses the religion that causes the war. They would say that it is man causes war for various reasons such as hunger, greed of money, greed of land, also greed of power. Greedy opportunistic people who crave absolute power and authority are the cause of religious wars. For them, religion gave politicians and the rich individuals the tools to control their workers and servants. Clever individual intelligently exploited the ultimate human fear of death. This can be achieved, for example, by creating an abstract concept of Heaven and Hell so that they could induce their workers to maintain loyalty and obedience through the fear of sin and death. Some would even use natural acts of nature to authenticate their ingenuous fabrication. They would convince the gullible workers that these natural disasters were demonstrations of Gods wrath upon them for their various misgivings from time to time. When a competing religion threatens the economic control of another then terrorism and persecution is used to destroy the competition. Religious wars have more to do with wealth, power and greed, than it has to do with righteousness and piety.
Even if we try to create the most perfect religion so that everyone would just prefer it, it will be impossible to do it. A religion would always have contradicting ideology with another religion whatever happens. And this will not be accepted, which is a fact that everyone can’t deal with. I think that embarking the concept of peace, along with respect to their belief, is essential to stop these wars. As a conclusion, it is inevitable that religion causes war. However, it should be noted that it is not necessarily the number one main cause of war. There is usually another issue that has made cause for war and not the individual’s beliefs. A culture’s beliefs may not start the fire but as history shows one’s beliefs fuels the flame.
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