

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 29 Oct - 10:30AM. Archie Higgin speaking
Sunday 05 Nov - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking
Sunday 12 Nov - 10:30AM. Remembrance Sunday
Sunday 19 Nov - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking
Sunday 26 Nov - 10:30AM. Advent Sunday
Sunday 03 Dec - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking
Saturday 09 Dec - AIM session: Biblical counselling
Sunday 10 Dec - 10:30AM. Dr Andy Boakye speaking
Sunday 17 December - 10:30AM. Carol service
Sunday 24 December - 10:30AM. Service
Sunday 31 December - 10:30AM. Service
Sunday 07 January - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking

What does Jesus think about war?

"He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire." (Psalm 46:9 NIV11)



War is nothing new. Archaeologists have discovered evidence of armed conflict from approximately 10,000 years ago. In the Nataruk region of Kenya remains of several people were unearthed who show signs of violent injuries such as skull trauma and arrow lesions. It looks as if they were caught in a violent raid or intergroup warfare.

Sadly, there is no evidence of war disappearing any time soon. The numbers of countries experiencing violent conflict is on the rise. Is there anything we can do? Should we participate in war, or take a pacifist stance?

thewatfordchurch@gmail.com

Peacemaking

Although Jesus was probably not thinking about war specifically when he said this, it applies.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

How can we be peacemakers in our world today? I include a list of suggestions, some of which we can participate in, and others we can pray about. They are taken from Gushee's online [post](https://goodfaithmedia.org/revisiting-the-10-practices-of-just-peacemaking-theory/), 'Revisiting the 10 Practices of Just Peacemaking Theory', <https://goodfaithmedia.org/revisiting-the-10-practices-of-just-peacemaking-theory/>. Go to the site for more detail on his ideas.

1. Support non-violent direct action
2. Take independent initiatives to reduce threat
3. Use cooperative conflict resolution
4. Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice; seek repentance and forgiveness
5. Promote democratic, human rights & religious liberty
6. Foster just & sustainable economic development
7. Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system
8. Strengthen United Nations & other international organisations
9. Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade
10. Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary organisations

The early church

Tertullian was one of the early church fathers. Writing at around 200AD he said:

"Now inquiry is made about the point of whether a believer may enter into military service. The question is also asked whether those in the

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

military may be admitted into the faith... A man cannot give his allegiance to two masters – God and Caesar.... How will a Christian man participate in war? ...For the Lord has taken the sword away. It is also true that soldiers came to John [the Baptist] and received instructions for their conduct. It is true also that the centurion believed. Nevertheless, the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, disarmed every soldier.”

‘Just’ War?

State and church were effectively one unit after the legalisation of Christianity under Constantine (ruled the Roman Empire, AD 306 to 337). The question of justifying war from a Christian standpoint became a state *and* church issue. Augustine was perhaps the most influencing of theologians writing on the issue (although he was building on the thinking of predecessors). He codified the ‘just war’ concept which states that a war is justified if the following conditions are met. It must have:

1. A just cause
2. A last resort
3. Lawful public authority
4. A reasonable hope of victory
5. A balance towards potential good
6. Right conduct and means

Whether you agree with this justification or not, we should bear in mind that warfare has changed since the 300-400s.

Power in your pocket

One way we can help care for God’s creation and people is to think about how we spend our money. For example, cocoa and coffee are items we all enjoy, but the farmers in resource poor countries often receive a pittance for these luxury foods that we can easily take for granted.

Fairtrade is one organisation we may be familiar with - Fairtrade works with thousands of farmers
thewatfordchurch@gmail.com

and workers so they can improve their living standards, invest in their communities and businesses, and protect our shared environment. In the UK, their trade is worth over £1 billion per year.



When I was at the supermarket this week, I found the above items which carry a fair trade logo – along with the whole host of other logos on other products, claiming to be sustainable. These items cost more than I would usually spend, and are not my usual brands, so in the interest of research I felt that was important to sample the produce!

There is lots more to say about Fairtrade which you can find here: <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/what-is-fairtrade/>

So have a think about the brands you choose. I will in future consider buying more from the Fairtrade range. I’m keen to hear what other recommendations readers may have – I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes, Penny

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>