

DOES RELIGION CAUSE CONFLICT?

CUBE 2 | AREN'T CHRISTIANS RESPONSIBLE FOR WAR AND VIOLENCE?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Use the ThinkCube article and cited Scriptures to answer the questions. Circle the best answer.

PREMISE 1: RELIGION HAS NOT BEEN THE LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR TO VIOLENCE IN HISTORY

1. Which is a frequent nonreligious cause of warfare?

- A. Competition for territory and political power
- B. A dispute over Bible translations only
- C. Religious worship alone
- D. Personal prayer

2. What is a sound response to the claim that religion caused every major war?

- A. Ignore religious violence
- B. Examine each conflict's political, economic, and religious causes
- C. Assume all wars are secular
- D. Count only modern wars

3. What is a limitation of counting wars as religious or nonreligious?

- A. Historical motives can overlap
- B. Every conflict has one clear motive
- C. The number of deaths is always known
- D. Historians never disagree

4. What does the Thirty Years' War illustrate?

- A. Religion and politics can both shape a war
- B. Only trade matters in wars
- C. All European wars were secular
- D. Wars cannot involve religion

PREMISE 2: NON-RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES HAVE FUELED THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST WARS

5. Which regime is associated with state-enforced atheism and political repression?

- A. Stalin's Soviet Union
- B. The early Christian church
- C. The Quakers
- D. The apostle Paul

6. What did the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot demonstrate?

- A. A secular revolutionary regime can commit mass atrocities
- B. All wars are religious
- C. Genocide requires a church
- D. Atheists universally support violence

7. Which statement avoids confusing correlation with causation?

- A. Atheism by itself explains every dictatorship
- B. A regime's official ideology is one factor among several that historians investigate
- C. All secular governments are violent
- D. Every atheist endorses authoritarianism

8. What can be concluded from atrocities under both religious and secular banners?

- A. Human violence is not exclusive to one worldview
- B. Religion alone causes all violence
- C. Only secular societies commit crimes
- D. All beliefs are morally identical

PREMISE 3: WARS FOUGHT IN CHRISTIANITY'S NAME DID NOT REFLECT CHRIST'S TEACHINGS

9. What did Jesus command regarding enemies?

- A. Love and pray for them
- B. Force their conversion
- C. Seek revenge
- D. Ignore peacemaking

10. According to John 18:36, what did Jesus say about his kingdom?

- A. It is not of this world
- B. It must conquer Rome militarily
- C. It depends on forced conversion
- D. It belongs to Caesar

11. Which historical example involved both religious allegiance and political ambition?

- A. The Thirty Years' War
- B. The invention of printing
- C. The first moon landing
- D. The building of the pyramids

12. How should Christians respond to atrocities committed in Christ's name?

- A. Acknowledge wrongdoing and evaluate it against Christ's teaching
- B. Deny documented events
- C. Defend every Christian ruler
- D. Blame all victims

PREMISE 4: THE SINFUL HUMAN CONDITION IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF WAR AND VIOLENCE

13. According to James 4:1–2, what fuels quarrels and fights?

- A. Disordered desires and passions
- B. The existence of books
- C. Peaceful disagreement alone
- D. Only foreign governments

14. What does Mark 7:21–23 identify as a source of evil actions?

- A. The human heart
- B. Geography alone
- C. A lack of military strength
- D. Climate alone

15. Which command appears in Romans 12:18?

- A. Live peaceably with all, as far as it depends on you
- B. Retaliate against all enemies
- C. Seek political domination
- D. Refuse reconciliation

16. What is a central distinction in Christian thinking about war?

- A. Peace is the goal, though some traditions allow force under strict conditions
- B. All wars are always justified
- C. Peacemaking is optional
- D. War proves religion false

PART TWO | WRITTEN REFLECTIONS

1. Explain why historians should consider political, economic, ethnic, and religious motives when evaluating the causes of war.

2. What can Christians learn from mass violence committed by governments hostile to religion, without claiming that atheism automatically causes violence?

3. How do Jesus' teachings about enemies and his kingdom help you evaluate wars waged in Christianity's name?

4. Using James 4:1–2, explain how greed, envy, pride, and desire for power can contribute to war.

5. How would you answer a skeptic who points to the Crusades or the Thirty Years' War as evidence against Christianity?

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PART THREE | SCRIPTURE MEMORY (ESV)

James 4:1–2 — Find these verses in your ESV Bible and write them below.

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

What is one important distinction you will remember when someone claims Christianity is the primary cause of violence?

READY RESPONSE PRACTICE

Write a concise, respectful 3–5 sentence response to: “Religion has caused most of the world's wars.”

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INSTRUCTOR ANSWER KEY | MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. A — Competition for territory and political power
2. B — Examine each conflict's political, economic, and religious causes
3. A — Historical motives can overlap
4. A — Religion and politics can both shape a war
5. A — Stalin's Soviet Union
6. A — A secular revolutionary regime can commit mass atrocities
7. B — A regime's official ideology is one factor among several that historians investigate
8. A — Human violence is not exclusive to one worldview
9. A — Love and pray for them
10. A — It is not of this world
11. A — The Thirty Years' War
12. A — Acknowledge wrongdoing and evaluate it against Christ's teaching
13. A — Disordered desires and passions
14. A — The human heart
15. A — Live peaceably with all, as far as it depends on you
16. A — Peace is the goal, though some traditions allow force under strict conditions

GUIDANCE FOR WRITTEN REFLECTIONS

1. Wars often involve overlapping motives; single-cause labels can distort the record.
2. Discuss state repression, ideology, authoritarian power, and human choices; avoid implying all nonbelievers endorse violence.
3. Matthew 5:44 and John 18:36 emphasize love of enemies and a kingdom not advanced by coercive force.
4. James identifies selfish desires as sources of conflict; leaders and nations can act from comparable motives.
5. Acknowledge documented atrocities, distinguish motives and contexts, and assess actions against Christ's teaching.

Instructor note: The percentage of wars labeled “religious” depends on classification methods. Do not treat a count of wars as a count of casualties, or assert that any single worldview explains every conflict.