



Thought for the day



Peace

“God has called us to live in peace.” 1 Corinthians 7:15

May 20th 2013

In 2002 as the US and its allies pondered the wisdom of going to war in Iraq, more than a third of the world's population were already involved in conflict. 30 countries around the world were fighting in 37 armed conflicts – that is a combined population of 2.29 billion people.

Some, like the Israel-Palestine conflict, are long-term disputes that still show no real sign of resolution. Others, like the confrontations between Hindus and Muslims in the Indian state of Gujarat, are ongoing disagreements that have spilled over into serious violence. But all take a toll on everyone concerned – not just the governments, not just the combatants, but all of the people who live in the vicinity of the war.

An armed conflict is a political conflict involving armed combat between armed forces of at least one state, or one or more armed fractions seeking to gain control of all or part of a state.

The majority of conflicts in the world today are civil wars.

For the people living in war, basic human securities are lacking. For them, armed conflict goes beyond the television pictures or column inches. It is a daily reality which drives them off their land, deprives them of food and water, kills their family and hinders any chance of development.

Peace is not just the opposite of war. Peace is more than that

The Mandarin language uses three symbols/words for peace:

和平

The first word literally means ‘rice in the mouth’, or economic security. The second means ‘a woman with a roof over her head’ or social security. The third means ‘two hearts beating together in understanding and friendship’ or human security.

For the people living in war, those basic securities are lacking.

US President Dwight Eisenhower once remarked, ‘every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed’. Sixty years later the face of warfare may have changed, but President Eisenhower's words ring as true as they ever have.

The majority of armed conflicts in the world today are civil wars.

Living in Britain today it can be hard to appreciate what it must be like for others living in a country torn apart by war. But if we stop and think about it, it should not be too hard to imagine two factions fighting for control over a strip of land.

The country to the north and south of the border between England and Scotland was for centuries the battlefield between the two nations. The border country and its people suffered terribly as a consequence. Civilians were robbed and killed by both the English and Scottish armies, crops were burned and property was destroyed.

For many people around the world this is not something they learn about in history but a life they have to cope with on a daily basis.

How would your life be different if the Scottish and English were still fighting over the border?



A refugee camp in Jordan

Civil wars break out in countries often between two groups who do not like each other due to cultural, religious or political reasons. Protests and disagreements lead to violence, which is then retaliated and leads to what can be thousands of deaths and a war

spanning years or even decades.

It can be easy to look at others and judge them because they are different to us. Many people are prejudice against others because of the way they dress, what they look like, a disability, the colour of their skin or where they are from.

What is a prejudice?

What do you think causes people to be prejudice?

If everyone was just like you and looked just like you they world would be a boring and confusing place. J K Rowling would never have written the Harry Potter books, your favourite artist would never have made their music. Diversity is a good thing; it makes the world an interesting place to live. However, diversity can seem like a problem when people do not respect the right of others to be different and hold a different opinion to them. Armed conflicts around the world have started because a group of people are victimised because of their different religious or political views. People should not have to live in a world of intimidation, harassment, abuse and fear, especially not here in Britain.

Consider how you treat others. Do you judge others on what they wear, what phone they have or what they believe?