CREATING A CULTURE OF PEACE

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**THE ARMS TRADE**

- While many countries face financial crises and economic recession, military expenditure, arms production, and arms transfers have continued. - Military expenditure in 2009 was £960 billion (1918 billion in 2008) (SIPRI World Military Expenditure 2010).

**Key facts**

- Britain is the fourth largest military spender in the world.
- Pax Christi believes that, to respond to conflict creatively, we need to be prepared to use non-violent means to resolve conflicts.
- The Arms Trade is a major threat to our security. Britain’s independent nuclear weapons system, Trident, is to be replaced at a cost estimated by Greenpeace to reach £70 billion by 2014.

**What do we do?**

- Pax Christi organises a service and action each year on Ash Wednesday outside the Ministry of Defence.
- Pax Christi campaigns against the renewal of Trident by writing to our MPs.
- Pax Christi protests against the Defence bill, including rallies.
- Pax Christi supports SAPP (Sustained Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel), which sends people to accompany peace activists and peace groups.
- Pax Christi runs a postcard campaign against the separation wall between Israel and Palestine.

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

- Pax Christi believes that nuclear weapons are illegal and immoral. Their use is never justified due to the scale of destruction they would cause. Pax Christi rejects the argument that nuclear weapons prevent war, believing that their continued existence is a major threat to our security.

**Key facts**

- Nuclear weapons were first used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. People close to the centre were reduced to shadows - even their bones burnt. The radiation caused cancer and birth defects in future generations.

**What do we do?**

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- Pax Christi organises a service and action each year on Ash Wednesday outside the Ministry of Defence. Pax Christi sends messages to the people of Bethlehem each Christmas.
- Pax Christi supports organisations in Palestine-Israel working for justice and peace. Members send peace messages to the people of Bethlehem each Christmas.
- Pax Christi organises Smallest SAPP (Sustained Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel), which sends people to accompany peace activists and peace groups.
- Pax Christi runs a postcard campaign against the separation wall between Israel and Palestine.

**PALESTINE AND ISRAEL**

- Between 1946 and 1967, wars, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians left, or were forced out of, their homes. Over four million Palestinians, mostly on Palestinian land, are living in refugee camps. Israel has illegally occupied Palestine since 1967.
- Between the late 1980s and May 2010 1635 Israelis and 7044 Palestinians were killed in the ongoing violence in Israel/Palestine.
- Pax Christi believes that many of the conflicts in the world today are fuelled by the situation in Israel/Palestine. Finding a peaceful solution, based on justice, is essential to combating terrorism.

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**THE ARTS TRADE**

- 31% of all young people have suffered from bullying by happening in our world and take positive action for peace.
- 5678 of schools, universities and youth projects do art and music every year to run peace education days, retreats and international gatherings of young peacemakers.

**Key facts**

- In 2008/9 the UK spent £42.6 billion on defence compared to £7.2 billion on overseas aid (MOD / DfID).
- 27 young people were killed in London between January 2009 and July 2010. Nineteen of these were victims of knife crime. (Guardian)

**What do we do?**

- Pax Christi encourages people to look at the arts and music to help ensure that churches, local authorities, pension funds etc do not invest in arms companies.
- Pax Christi works with Pax Christi teams in 180 countries, local and international organisations, and with church leaders in over four million Palestinian refugees.

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**ACTION:**

- Have you been working for peace? Send your story and photos to Pax Christi at www.paxchristi.org.uk
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**International Catholic Movement for Peace**

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**Advisors:** have you been working for peace? Send your story and photos to Pax Christi and we will put them on our website www.paxchristi.org.uk
People wanted to build a more peaceful Europe for making contact with others from countries once at war, through visits and walking together on Pax Christi peace walks.

In 1952 young people took part in a Pax Christi peace walk from Assisi to Rome, where they met with the Pope who gave official recognition to Pax Christi’s work.

Pax Christi was founded in 1945 by Catholic Christians in France to promote reconciliation with the German people after the Second World War.

Emma 14.

Many Pax Christi members are pacifists, and reject any use of violence. Other Pax Christi members follow the just war tradition and use Pax Christi funds to help set up a network of peace education in the schools.

Today we have organisations like the United Nations and international courts to help resolve disputes, without resorting to war. War creates more conflicts which can lead to further violence. War is also costly. Money could be better spent on preventing conflict and eradicating poverty at home and overseas.

People join Pax Christi because they believe that Christians should work for an end to war and violence and find better ways of making contact with others.

Many Pax Christi organisations are active in children’s peace education, and help to build relationships which can lead to further peace.

Pax Christi believes in peace based on justice. Peace is not just the absence of violence, but a world where human rights are respected, basic needs for food, water and shelter are met, and people feel safe and valued in their schools, families and communities.

The process of reconciliation starts when people try to understand each other’s experience and imagination, and find better ways of resolving conflicts.

The just war tradition states that war should only ever be a last resort. Most modern wars do not meet the just war criteria because of the number of civilian casualties.

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