**‘A just war is the best form of war’**

**Evaluate this statement. (12 marks)**

A Christian would support the statement because just war theory was developed by Christian thinkers such as Aquinas. He came up with 6 criteria for a just war and said that wars should be fought in a way that sees violence as a last resort after other peaceful ways have been explored. This is consistent with Jesus’ teaching ‘those who live by the sword die by the sword,’ which means that violence is unlikely to solve anything and instead just leads to more violence.

## A rejecting view would be the idea that a holy war is better. In Islam there is the principle of military jihad, which is a holy war, and can be declared by a religious leader as a form of self defence against an attack on the religion of Islam or on Allah Himself. As the Qur’an states: “the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger … is none but that they be killed.” This means holy war is better as it is supported by the Qur’an.

A supporting view would be that just wars are better than unjust wars. Unjust wars are ones where many innocent people are killed in the conflict, and there may be living victims of war such as refugees. This goes against compassion and the sanctity of life which is taught in all religions. In Christianity, for example, there is the teaching that we are all made ‘in God’s image,’ so just wars help to respect the innocent as they are all valued by God.

Another rejecting point would be that just wars aren’t the best form of war because no form of war is acceptable. For example, Quakers, which are a denomination of Chrisitanity, are pacifists, and as such they reject any form of violence or war. This is supported by Biblical teachings such as ‘turn the other cheek,’ which means if anyone is violent towards you then rise above it and do not retaliate.

In conclusion, I personally believe that just war is best because it takes into account the ethical problems involved in conflict such as ensuring innocent civilians are not harmed. This is consistent with the teachings of all religions.