

Christian Attitudes to: Human Rights and Social Justice

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Human rights

Human rights are universal moral rights that apply to all people at all times in all situations, regardless of gender, age, race, religious beliefs or age.

Social Justice

Social Justice is promoting a fair society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity. Where everyone has access to provisions, opportunities and rights

In 1948 the United Nations issued the Declaration of Human Rights. This includes 30 articles or things that all humans should expect to be able to have or do. The Declaration says: "All humans are born free and equal in dignity and in rights"

Why campaign for human rights and social justice?

Many religious believers consider it important to campaign for issues of social justice as a response to the teachings of sacred texts, e.g. the Bible tells Christians to 'love thy neighbour'.

It is these sacred texts that inspire believers today to make a stand against injustice around the world.

FIND YOUR VOICE Christian Views

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights reflects the main principles of Christianity: **All people are children of God and created in God's image. Therefore, the characteristics of God are reflected in all beings, which means that each human has worth and value.**

Human life should not be destroyed or mistreated. Genesis 1: 26-27 states:

'Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.'

In Christianity, **each person is to be treated with agape**, meaning unconditional love - like the mother has for her children; like the love Jesus had for mankind when he sacrificed himself on the cross for the sins of humanity. Agape is a **selfless, unconditional love** that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort and even death for the benefit of another, without expecting anything in return.

Following Jesus' example, many Christian charities express agape.

Romero was born in El Salvador in 1917. He became a priest and was ordained in 1942. He became Archbishop of El Salvador in 1977.

In 1960s there was a lot of crime and **corruption** in El Salvador. Some people were very wealthy, but many people were very poor. After a close friend of Romero's was murdered, he started to speak out against the injustices and openly criticised the government. He held meetings, which had been banned by the government.

Protesters in the Church became targets of violence. Government slogans and propaganda included, "**Be a patriot - kill a priest.**"

After many threats, on 24th March 1980, soldiers burst into the chapel and gunned down Romero while he was celebrating Mass.

Oscar Romero



Anti POVERTY

Christian Aid

- Christian organisation set up in 1941
- Seek to **eradicate poverty** across the globe
- Want to ensure that **human rights are being protected** of those who are most vulnerable
- Campaign and **fund-raise** to achieve their goals
- Wants all humans to live a **free and full life** - "life in all its fullness"
- Expose the **scandal of poverty**
- To **challenge and change structures** and institutions that favour the rich and powerful over the poor and marginalised
- Following the Christian values and Jesus' example, Christian Aid show **respect for all human life**

christian aid

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Salvation Army

- Salvation Army is a Christian denomination, much like Church of England and Roman Catholic
- Wear a uniform to symbolise fighting against injustice
- Seek to make a real difference to their local communities
- They seek to serve a suffering humanity
- They fund-raise to achieve their goals
- They provide services for the local community, e.g. food drives and soup kitchens to help those in poverty
- Fight against social injustice
- Fight for human rights, e.g. the right to food and clothing
- Seek to preserve and protect the environment because of both moral and Biblical beliefs about stewardship (looking after the world for God)



"Doing the most good"

FOOD DRIVE

Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology is based on the teachings and actions of Jesus. During Jesus' life his actions helped to liberate (free) people from unjust and unfair economic, political or social conditions. **Jesus is considered to be a freedom fighter.**

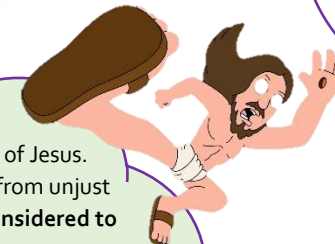
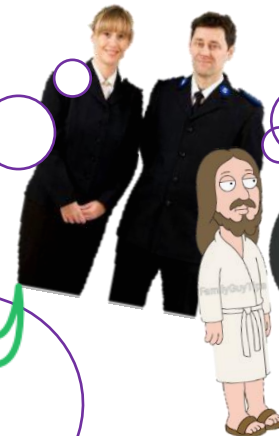
Liberation theology is the Christian idea that God has the power to change situations in the world that are unjust.

Some Christians have taken this to mean that it is right to stand up to governments that oppress their people or to challenge abuses of power. Christians may take part in peaceful protests or actively take part in supporting those harmed by injustice, for example, people who are imprisoned for political reasons and without a trial. Some supporters of liberation theology have been killed for speaking out against injustice. Among them was **Oscar Romero**.

The International Humanist and Ethical Union have been very active in supporting the **empowerment** of oppressed people.

EMPOWERMENT

Let's get fundraising!



LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR.

