

and meditation. Such peace brings a calmness that helps to avoid quarrels and disputes with other people.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah looks forward to a time when God will bring peace:

“ He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. ”

*Isaiah 2:4 (NIV)*

## ■ Justice

Many wars are fought to achieve **justice**. The quote above from Isaiah looks forward to a time when God, as the ultimate judge, will establish justice between nations and settle their disputes.

Justice is often linked with equality. If people are not given the same opportunities, this may be seen as unfair (or unjust) and lead to resentment. This could lead to conflict, especially if more privileged parts of the world are seen to be the cause of the inequality.

## ■ Forgiveness

Christians believe that **forgiveness** is important for living peacefully. It does not necessarily mean that no action should be taken to right a wrong. But once the wrong is righted, possibly through conflict, forgiveness should follow. Action to establish peace and justice should follow the act of forgiveness, otherwise it is likely that problems will reoccur. Christians believe that God sets the example regarding forgiveness, by offering forgiveness himself to all who ask for it in faith.

## ■ Reconciliation

**Reconciliation** follows conflict. In March 2013, when talking about conflict between France and Mali, French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said:

“ We are in the process of winning the war. We also have to win the peace. And winning the peace involves a whole series of acts to help democracy and development. ”

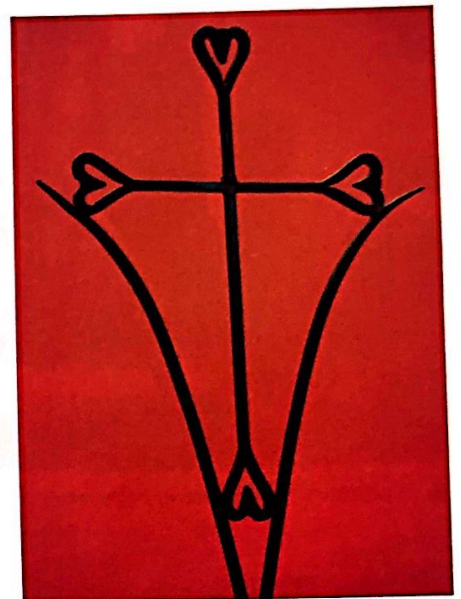
*Laurent Fabius*

This quote illustrates the meaning of reconciliation. It is more than just apologising: it involves a conscious effort to rebuild a relationship, and sometimes much work is needed to ensure there is no more conflict.

While the concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are important in the aftermath of a war, they can also be important alternatives to war. For example, Quakers believe we should use these concepts as tools for preventing conflict from happening in the first place. The Quakers are a Christian denomination committed to pacifism.

## Activities

- 1 Explain the four concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.
- 2 Explain how these four concepts link together in the context of a war and what happens after a war.
- 3 Look at the image of the cross from Taizé, which represents Christian reconciliation. How would you represent Christian reconciliation? Create a symbol or design that you think achieves this.



▲ The cross from the Church of Reconciliation in Taizé, France

## Links

Find out more about pacifism and its meaning on pages 136–137.

## Summary

You should now be aware that war is one way of resolving differences, and that concepts of peace, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are important, particularly after a war ends.