

8th September 2026

Building just and lasting peace

Suggested actions

Proposing an alternative to 'might is right'

On the 26th March sixty people were brought together by Tearfund at Lambeth Palace to explore what a 'Christ-centered' approach to building just and sustained peace might look like. The conference was in response to the increasing number of violent conflicts worldwide and a growing narrative that we live in an era where 'might is right' and that security comes through military and economic might. The conference asked if we, as Christians, were content with this increasingly dominant narrative and if not, whether we could suggest a better alternative.

Groups were asked to discuss the values and principles that should shape how we build just and lasting peace. They were tasked to consider the questions from three perspectives. Firstly as a member of their local community focused on their local environment. Secondly as a citizen of the United Kingdom, considering how we should build peace for ourselves and with those countries or regimes that are perceived as threats or that perceive us as threats to them. Finally as global citizens asking how we build peace for people within all nations across the globe.

They were then asked to suggest actions that ordinary Christians, local churches and the wider church could do that would embody these values or principles and proposed actions that local government representatives, political parties, national governments, multilateral institutions and the media could do to demonstrate the values.

We offer the list of ideas below as a starting point for discussion. The list is undoubtedly flawed, imperfect and incomplete. So what do you think? What actions could we take to build just and lasting peace locally, nationally and globally? What can we do to pursue a 'Christ-centered' approach to building just and lasting peace?

Our 'strawman' list of suggested actions follows:

For ordinary Christians, local churches, and the wider church

Map other actors or organisations that are working in your community to build just and lasting peace, including within the congregation, and look for opportunities to support or build on their work.

Increase awareness of what is happening in countries affected by violence and develop an understanding of what drives or causes violent conflict. Provide space and time to hear directly from those affected by conflict allowing them to tell their stories. This may be directly through those in the community or indirectly through online webinars or gatherings facilitated by other organisations or groups.

Create spaces, groups or times where individuals can reflect, identify and address assumptions or biases that may shape their views

Don't avoid difficult subjects but convene conversations in church spaces about current or divisive issues. Host constructive workshops with parishioners to discuss or challenge toxic narratives or ideas.

Speak out boldly to reject narratives that hijack or co-opt the Christian faith to prey on people's fears and vulnerabilities or when actions or behaviour oppress or demonise others, maintaining that Jesus's message is one of liberation, inclusion and equality.

Create welcoming and inclusive communities, offering practical assistance to those in need such as the lonely, excluded, or displaced.

Offer church spaces as places for building peace, providing hospitality, and fostering community.

Support diaspora groups by giving time and space in church buildings for them to worship in their own language and a way that feels like home.

Where situations have become polarised, provide a safe 'middle ground' to prevent further polarisation, re-humanise the other and restore constructive communication. For example a church in Leeds set out tables for tea and cake between conflicting groups at a march.

Keep peace on the agenda within the church and community by hosting events like prayer gatherings, vigils, fasts, meals or workshops.

Train parishioners in skills such as non-violent communication, mediation and peacebuilding, encouraging and enabling opportunities to put the skills into action. The difference course developed by the reconciling leaders network provides one excellent set of resources.¹

Challenge attitudes that emphasise personal sin but give little emphasis to structural sin within systems, injustices, and biases.

Ensure church finances and investments are consistent with the tenets of Christian faith and values

¹ See <https://difference.rln.global/>

For local government, national governments, and multilateral institutions

Engage in social cohesion: local and national governments should focus on the social cohesion work that is happening, and provide a place for other civil society groups (like the church) to contribute towards it.

Recognise and prioritise an approach to security that places the survival, livelihood and dignity of people at its centre, strengthening their protection and empowerment, embedding this within national defence priorities, policies and practice.

Look beyond the military as the primary tool for security, challenging the idea that sustainable peace can be established through bombs, bullets, or drones. Invest in diplomatic and development capabilities as well as responsible objective media including the BBC World Service.

Strengthen civil society at home and abroad, increasing rather than decreasing civil space. Recognise and draw on faith groups as significant peacebuilding actors.

Seek and strengthen international cooperation, rather than focusing on projecting force or building up arms. Use the UK's privilege, such as its role on the UN Security Council, to press for multilateral solutions and to stand up consistently for international law.

Work with others to hold those responsible for war crimes to account, ensuring that international law is applied equally to the most as well as the least powerful.

Identify and address the drivers of violent conflict and invest resources in reinforcing existing drivers of peace and justice. Prioritise building resilience to violent conflict and invest in local peacebuilding capabilities.

Address the ethical and legal challenges of technology, such as the use of AI and autonomous weapon systems, ensuring human oversight and accountability.

Acknowledge the UK's historical role in global conflicts, recognising that the pursuit of short-term national interest has at times facilitated violent conflict overseas.² Consequently, the UK should resist the desire to act as the global police or belief that it is able, through force, to build just, sustained peace in other people's countries.

Engage constructively with the UN80 initiative for the reform of the UN and in the 1 for 8 billion campaign to ensure a fair and inclusive process to appoint the next UN secretary general.

² In the last 50 years the UK has been involved in at least 10 major armed conflicts: the Islamic state in Syria and Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Sierra Leone, the Balkans, the Gulf War in Kuwait and Iraq and the Falklands war.

For the media

Avoid sensationalist reporting that scapegoats vulnerable groups, such as asylum seekers and refugees, or that creates division and anxiety.

Interrogate the assumptions that shape current defence thinking and the primacy of militarised responses, challenging

politicians on ever-increasing military expenditure and its impact on peace and climate change.

Avoid glorifying war and instead, focus on telling positive stories about where peace is being built at the community level, nationally and globally.

You can comment on these suggestions or suggest your own by scanning the QR code below

