Critical Issues in the Christian Mission to Muslims
WM 747

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Fall, 2011
Instructor: Paul T. Martindale, D.Min.

Course Description:
This course explores the major contemporary issues confronting those in ministry to Muslims as well as the church in the West. Emphasis will be given to the identification of the barriers to effective Christian witness and the development of biblical strategies for communicating the gospel into an Islamic context. We will analyze and discuss contemporary strategies that have been developed to contextualize the gospel for Muslims. Major topics include contextualization, dialogue of civilizations, movements within Islam, theological misunderstandings, approaches to Muslims, radical Islam, Islam in the West, and apologetics.

Course Objectives: As a result of this course students will:
1. Develop an awareness of all the major contemporary issues facing Christian work in Islamic contexts.
2. Understand the major cross-cultural, theological, and spiritual challenges westerners face when relating to Muslims.
3. Understand how Muslims interpret the Christian faith and life and where and why they tend to distort the Biblical message.
4. Evidence a growing awareness of your common humanity with Muslims.
5. Be able to identify limitations in your own worldview and culture for an understanding of the Gospel and of Islam, and for communicating the Gospel in relation to Islamic culture.
6. Identify and explain the principal assumptions and misunderstandings behind Muslim objections to Christian faith and life.
7. Learn to creatively interpret the Biblical message in relation to the worldview and culture of people in the Islamic tradition.
8. Be able to respond creatively and inoffensively with Biblical answers to the misunderstandings, objections and polemic of Muslims.
9. Be able to evaluate the theological views of Islam in relation to Christianity and develop a Biblical view of Islam.

Lecture Topics:
1. Root causes of Muslim Resistance to the Gospel.
2. Responding to Muslim Terrorism. A biblical view and perspective.
3. The cultural context of Islamic society.
4. The theological context of Islamic society.
5. Tawhid and trinity. The oneness of God and Allah in the Quran and Bible.
7. The Spirit World of Islam.
8. Developing a balanced view of Islam and Muslims.
10. An analysis of approaches to Islam.
11. Contextualization and Insider Movements.
14. Dependency issues and partnership with nationals.
15. The rescue dimension of the Gospel and Christ the Victor.
16. Conversion theory.
17. Church planting in Islamic contexts.
18. Responding to Muslim objections. Trinity and Deity of Christ.

Requirements of Course:

1. Required Reading, Textbooks: (1,532 pages total)

2. Critical Issue Research Paper
   Choose one critical issue that you think could present a significant obstacle to the church, Christian workers, or your future ministry with Muslims. Identify the biblical and ministry implications this issue presents. Identify any methods or strategies that have been employed to address this issue and list the strengths and weaknesses of each one. In a paper of 8 to 10 pages describe how this issue is significant for the national church and Christian workers, what the implications are, your analysis of strategies being used to address this, and any ideas you would have for developing a culturally-sensitive yet biblically faithful method or strategy for dealing with this issue. The paper should be double spaced using 12 pt. type with a cover sheet listing your name, mail box #, title of course, and title of the paper. Use footnotes or endnotes to cite sources for your paper and include a bibliography listing all sources cited in the paper. Any of the critical issues listed as one of the lecture topics may be used. The paper is due on Dec 11th.

3. Final Exam
There will be a final exam covering the lectures and readings in this course. The final exam will occur on the last day of class Friday Dec. 16th.

   Students will be required to attend the Miroslav Volf lecture on Thursday November 3rd when he comes to campus to lecture on his book, *Allah, A Christian Response*. You will be required to read and analyze his book and formulate 10 questions in response to the issues raised in the book. These questions must printed out along with a 3 to 5 page analysis of the book identifying any areas of concern and agreement with positions he takes in the book. The paper must be submitted to the professor before class on November 28th. During that class we will compare responses and discuss our analysis of Volf’s book.

5. Attendance
   Perfect attendance is encouraged and will greatly enhance your ability to perform well on the exams and comprehend the daily readings. In consideration of the rest of the class, please TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES during the instructional period.

6. Grading
   - Reading of assigned texts and articles 25%
   - Response Paper 15%
   - Critical Issue Research Paper 30%
   - Final Exam 30%

   The Grading Scale used in this class is as follows:
   A+, 100-97;   A, 96-94;   A-, 93-90; B+, 89-87; B, 86-84; B-, 83-80;
   C+, 79-77;   C, 76-74;   C-, 73-70; D+, 69-67; D, 66-64; D-, 63-60; F, 0-69

   Recommended Books:


