Critical Issues in the Christian Mission to Muslims
WM 747

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Fall, 2013
Instructor: Paul T. Martindale, D.Min.

Course Description:
This course explores five major contemporary issues confronting those in ministry to Muslims as well as the church in the West: 1. The Islamist vision of a new world order based upon political religion with a new cultural narrative arrived through permanent jihad. Islamist jihadism as ideology for transnational Islamist movements. 2. Views of the Apocalypse in Islam and Christianity. How modern Muslims and Christians view the role of ‘the other’ in bringing about the end of history. 3. Allah and Yaweh. Are the overlapping understandings of who God is in Christianity and Islam an adequate basis for conducting a dialogue of civilizations? 4. The contextualization of Christianity into Islamic culture and religious identity. Where is the line into syncretism for highly contextualized forms of Christianity? 5. Woman, man and God in modern Islam. What is the role and place of women in modern Islamic societies today? Each of these issues will be explored with a combination of lecture and discussion format.

Course Objectives: As a result of this course students will:
1. Develop an awareness of five major contemporary issues facing Christians living and working in Islamic contexts.
2. Understand some of 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 some of the principal assumptions and misunderstandings behind Muslim objections to the Christian faith and way of 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 & Discussion Topics:
1. What is Islam? Developing an accurate view of what Muslims believe and understanding the variety of “Islands” that exist today. Avoiding caricatures and developing a Christian response to Muslims.
2. Honor and Shame. Understanding the cultural context of Islamic society and how this influences their view of the world and history.
3. The rise of Islamism in the world since 1928 and its influence today. Understanding the various forms of Islamism and jihadism as ‘religionized’ ideology.
4. Responding to Muslim terrorism and developing a biblical evaluation and response to modern forms of Islamism.
5. Tawhid and Trinity. The oneness of God and Allah in the Quran and Bible. Are the overlapping doctrines of God in Christianity and Islam an adequate basis for a dialogue of civilizations? Is Islam capable of living in a secularized public space with others on an equal basis? Is the “Common Word” a common deception or pipe dream?
6. Views of the Apocalypse in Christianity and Islam. A survey of how modern Christians have viewed Muslims and how Muslims have viewed Christians. How the competing narratives of the end of history have resulted from views of ‘the other.’
7. The role and place of women in modern Islamic societies across the world. Muslim women’s view of society, religion, and God. What does the inner world of a Muslim woman consist of and how can these preoccupations aid in reaching the Muslim woman’s heart?
8. Contextualization of Christianity into Islamic cultural forms. Can Islamic cultural identity be distinguished from its Islamic religious identity? How much of the Islamic cultural and religious identities be retained when translating Christian doctrine and forms into Islamic contexts? When does contextualization cross the line into syncretism? How can we evaluate Insider Movements fairly and biblically?

Requirements of Course:

1. Required Reading: (1,579 pages total)

2. Critical Issue Research Paper
   Choose one of the five topics of the course for more in-depth reading and research. Submit your idea for the paper topic to the professor for any input and suggestions in writing by October 23rd. In your paper identify the biblical and ministry implications this issue presents. Describe how this issue is significant for the church in the West, national churches in Islamic societies, and Christian workers. Identify what the implications are for Muslims and Christians, your analysis of strategies being used to address this issue, and any ideas you would have for developing a culturally sensitive yet biblically faithful response. The paper should be 12 or more pages, 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 to cite sources for your
paper and include a bibliography listing all sources cited in the paper. The paper is due on Dec 17th.

3. Final Exam
There will be a final exam covering the lectures and readings in this course. The final exam will be on Wednesday December 11th.

4. 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 and refrain from doing email or surfing the internet during the instructional period.

5. Grading
Reading of assigned texts and articles 30%
Critical Issue Research Paper 35%
Final Exam 35%
100% total

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:
Greenson, Kevin. 2004. The Camel. How Muslims are Coming to Faith in Christ! WigTake Resources LLC., Arkadelphia, AR


