

**A brief introduction to Islam  
for the purpose of promoting prayer for  
and evangelism to our Muslim Neighbor**



**Russell Lackey**

## Contact Information

Website – [www.reflutheran.org](http://www.reflutheran.org)

### **Reformation Lutheran Church**

15750 Magnolia Ave.

Westminster, CA 92683

714-893-5183



## Contents

Preface	3
Bibliography	4
1. Islam: An Advancing Religion	5
2. The Source of Islam's Passion	9
3. Other Teaching that Arise from Islam	15
4. How do we respond?	18
A Prayer	19

## Preface

**Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns (Revelation 19:7).**

The attack of September 11 was an attack not only on the United States of America, but also on the very Lordship of Jesus Christ. The terrorists were making a theological statement as they hijacked those planes, namely: “There is no god but Thee GOD, and Muhammad is his prophet.” This, the very confession of Islam, is an insult to Christ. In fact, Islam’s most sacred writings and authoritative teachings belittle Jesus Christ. Islam denies that Jesus Christ was and is God, a central truth of the New Testament and the Christian church. Islam also denies that Jesus died on the cross. Therefore, defenders of Islam daily defame Jesus Christ and insult the glory of his gospel.

The real question for us, as Christians, is how to respond to such insults. The answer is not violence. This is not because we do not love Jesus above all things, or because we have no zeal for the glory of his name. It is because Jesus told us to expect this (Matthew 10:25; John 15:20) and then modeled for us how to react: “When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23). Instead of violence, we should seek to understand the central tenets of Islam so that we might engage the Muslim in educated thought. In addition, we should use the greatest weapon in our arsenal, namely the gospel. As Luther reminds us:

“For the Christian the only necessary armor and the strongest fortification of faith are the central articles of the Christian faith, namely, that Christ is the son of God, that he died for our sins, that he was raised for our life, that justified by faith in him our sins are forgiven and we are saved, etc. These are the thunder that destroys not only Muhammad but even the gates of hell” (WA 30/2:207).

As Christians, we have nothing to fear. It is my hope and prayer that this study will encourage you to pray for and witness to Muslims so that they too will come to know the love of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

Russell Lackey  
Ascension of our Lord, 2007

## Bibliography

- Farhadian, Charles. "Redeeming Islam." *The Westmont College Magazine* (Winter 2007).
- Fry, C. George. "Christianity's Greatest Challenge." *Christianity Today* (November 1969).
- Hamid, Tawfik. "The Trouble With Islam." *All Street Journal* (April 2007).
- Karsh, Efraim. Islamic Imperialism: A History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006.
- Koukl, Greg. "The Trouble with the Elephant." *The Plain Truth* (October 1998).
- Livingston, David. Planting Churches in Muslim Cities. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993.
- Luther, Martin. "Preface to the Tract on the Religion and Customs of the Turks." WA 30.
- Martinson, Paul Varo. Families of Faith. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.
- Morey, Robert. The Islamic Invasion. Eugene: Christian Scholar Press, 2001.
- Rahman, Fazlur. Major Themes of the Quran. Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989.
- Sabini, John. Islam: A Primer. Washington: MEEA.

**“I was ordered to fight all men until they say, “There is no god but Allah”**

Muhammad, 633

**“I shall cross this sea to their islands to pursue them until there remains no one on the face of the earth who does not acknowledge Allah.”**

Saladin, 1189

**“We will export our revolution throughout the world... until the calls ‘there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah’ are echoed throughout the world.”**

Ayatollah Khomeini, 1979

**“I was order to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah, and his prophet is Muhammad”**

Osama Bin Laden, 2001

## Islam: An Advancing Religion

The September 11 attacks have caused two diametrically opposed interpretations of their root causes. According to one school of thought, the attacks were the latest clash between Islam and Christianity. Many Christian groups have advanced this “Holy War” interpretation. The other school of thought argues that these attacks are the response to America’s arrogant and self-serving foreign policy. CNN has championed this “Marxist Critique.”

Neither of these interpretations are particularly novel. If 9/11 was merely a holy war on Christianity, why do these same terrorist target other Muslims? If 9/11 was the result of American imperialism, why haven’t Christians who live among Muslims under identical circumstances refrain from contributing to wide-scale, systematic campaigns of terror? There must be another possibility.

Dr. Efraim Karsh, professor and head of Mediterranean Studies, King’s College, University of London, has articulated a third possibility. He believes that September 11 is the result of “trends, passions, and patterns of behavior within Islam that leads to imperialistic behavior.” (Karsh, *Islamic Imperialism*. p. 2). Such trends are visible in the comments made throughout history by important Muslim leaders (see previous page).

In this chapter, we will look at the imperialistic nature of Islam. In the next chapter, we will look at the theology driving the movement.

### A Modern Parable

To help you understand the imperialistic nature of Islam, I have provided you with a modern day parable by Robert Morey:

Imagine this: One day during a lunch break from your job in Washington DC, you are waiting for a friend on a street corner when a strangely dressed couple approaches you and asks if they can speak to you for a moment. The man has a powdered wig on his head and is wearing a silk shirt, a waistcoat, breeches that reach only to his knees, silk stockings and black shoes with a silver buckle on each shoe. The woman is wearing a powdered wig and a long flowing dress that reaches almost to the crowd. They look like a couple that have just stepped out of a movie set for an American Revolutionary War film. The couple starts to explain to you that they are followers of a religion in which George Washington was a mighty prophet of Baal. Everything that George Washington taught, believed, said and practiced must be accepted as the inspired word of Baal, who is the one true God. The speeches and letters which people think came from Washington are in the English Language because that is the language of heaven. Even though there are foreign language translations of some of these writings, they really cannot be understood unless they are read in the original English. The speeches of Washington were actually written in heaven on a tablet of stone. George Washington did not really write a page of his works: they were given to him by the Angel Gabriel out of heaven. Washington merely recited them when God so ordered. The strangely dressed couple went on to explain that because Washington

was a prophet of Baal, the true God, we must live as George Washington lived. For example, all men should dress the way George Washington dressed. And all women should wear a dress such as Mrs. Washington wore. We must even eat the food that the Washingtons ate. For example, George Washington did not like peas. Thus, no one should be allowed to eat peas today. Washington's political views must be viewed as the only valid form of government. And since, he owned slaves, slavery must be viewed as being a valid political structure for today.

At that moment the alarm on the man's wristwatch goes off and he pulls a compass out of his coat pocket. After facing in a certain direction, the couple gets down on their hands and knees and bow in prayer. After they finish their prayers, they get up. You cannot help but ask them what they were doing. They explain that they must pray five times a day toward Washington DC where the Washington Memorial stands. As a matter of fact, all those who are true followers of George Washington must make a pilgrimage to Washington D.C. at least once in their lifetime. Once they get there, they must run around the Washington Memorial seven times. Then they have to run down to the end of the mall and throw some stones at the devil. The man and his wife also remark that the Washington Memorial was actually built by Adam. Although it had been subsequently destroyed at various periods, it was eventually rebuilt by Abraham and all the Biblical patriarchs actually lived at that exact spot. The Washington Memorial is a sacred site and it has always been part of the worship of God. At this point they ask for your opinion, so you give it: they cannot really be serious about this religion of "Washingtonianism". The idea of bowing in prayer toward the Washington Memorial is absurd. The memorial was not built by Adam or rebuilt by Abraham. The patriarchs did not live in Washington D.C. but in Israel. The whole thing seems ridiculous. They respond that they are in dead earnest and that they really believe that George Washington was a prophet of Baal and that his writings were the word of God.

You respond by saying: "It seems to me that you have made a religion out of eighteenth century American colonial culture. Do you really expect people at the end of the Twentieth Century to live, dress and eat in accordance with the habits and tastes of people living in the 1700's in the United States? What if the Russians were to invent a religion in which we were told that we had to pray toward Moscow five times a day? Why can't the Japanese invent a religion in which everyone has to pray to Tokyo? Why can't the Mexicans say that you must take a pilgrimage to Mexico City once in your lifetime or you will not be saved? This whole religion seems to be silly at the least and racist at the worst. Why would you expect every culture and every race of people to live the way that people lived in eighteenth century colonial America? It just does not make sense!" At this point the man opens his coat and reveals a shoulder harness with a gun in it. He says that his religion does not allow anyone to ridicule or blaspheme the holy faith. But at that moment your wristwatch alarm goes off, indicating that your lunch hour is over, with a sigh of relief, you explain that you have to get back to work. But if they would like to talk to you further, they could meet you on this street corner sometime. With that said, you beat a hasty retreat without waiting for any further response from the couple (Morey, *Islamic Invasion*. pp. 23-25).

The parable presented may seem farfetched, but in reality, it underscores the true essence of Islam. Western people have a difficult time comprehended Islam because they fail to understand that it is a form of cultural imperialism in which the religion and culture of seventh-century Arabia have been

raised to the status of divine law. The difficulty in understanding Islam is rooted in the traditional Western philosophic concept of secular – verses – sacred dichotomy. For example, the religious organizations in the West cannot set speed limits or legislate political laws. Islam cannot be viewed simply as one's private or personal religious preference. It is not just something you believe and then go on living as you please. There is no secular realm in Islamic countries. The imperialistic nature of Islam has caused its rapid expansion.

## **A Chronology of Islam's Growth**

### **Early Conquests (632-655)**

- W/in 10 years of Muhammad's death, Islam had conquered Greater Syria, Iraq, and Egypt.
- Under the first caliphs, the Muslims conquered the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Syria and Lower Egypt.

### **The Umayyads (661-750)**

- The Umayyad caliphs were Arabs, their capital was in Damascus.
- The Arab armies moved into North Africa, Spain, and Afghanistan

### **The Abbasids (762-1258)**

- Abbasids were descendants of Muhammad's uncle Abbas. Their rise came from the support of Persian converts and Arab Muslims (both groups hated each other but endorsed Abbas. Their capital was in Baghdad).
- Genghis Khan's grandson put an end to this dynasty by putting to death the caliph and sacking Baghdad.

### **The Mamluks (1291-1517)**

- The Turks (cousins of the Mongols) overthrew the Mongols and established a powerless Abbasid caliph in Egypt.
- The significance of this group was the establishment of an Arab-Turkish civilization.

### **Ottoman Empire (1453 – 1921)**

- Another Turkish group, the Ottomans, conquered Constantinople (ending the 1000 year rule of Byzantium). Constantinople became Istanbul.
- At its height of power, the Ottoman Empire controlled Anatolia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, the Hijaz, Yemen, the Crimea, Greece, Cyprus, Crete, Bulgaria, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and parts of Hungary.

### **Current Expansion**

- In 1945 there were 250 million Muslims... by the year 2000 there were over 1 Billion Muslims.
- 25 Countries are almost 100% Muslim
- 42 Countries have a Muslim majority
- 77 Country have at least 100,000 Muslim citizen
- In America
  - In 2001 there were 1.6 million Muslims (double the number from 1991)
  - In both the 1990 and 2001 studies, the Buddhist and Muslim population appears to have the highest proportion of young adults under age thirty.

**Allah offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it”**

Qur'an 33:72

## The Piety that drives Islam<sup>1</sup>

To understand Islam's advancement, one must also understand the theology that drives the religion. At the very core of Islam is "Tawhid" which means "unity, oneness." The central confession that Muslims make is simple and clear: "There is no god but God." Or to say it another way, "There is no god but Thee GOD." That is what the Muslim means by Allah. One can get a glimpse of the awe that the Muslim senses before God in the "Throne Verse" found in the Qur'an:



Allah

God there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep! To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them. And they comprehend not anything of His knowledge (Quran 2:255).

That God is One refers both to number and quality. There is only One God, period. Moreover, this God is unlike anything else, singular. This profound sense of God's singularity rings through every pore of the pious Muslim. The Qur'an reads:

Say: "He is God, One, God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, and has not been begotten, and equal to Him is not any one (Qur'an 112).

This is what they celebrate in the mosque, as they bow in prayer before God. If we were to miss this point, then we would never understand the first things about Islam.

This One God is not static and far off, but present and powerful. As creator, God is sovereign over all things. All belongs to God, everything without exception. And nothing escapes God's control. On the lips of every Muslim are the words, "Allahu Akbar!" God is greater. This is said because:

To God belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Whether you publish what is in your hearts or hide it, God shall make reckoning with you for it. He will forgive whom He will, and chastise whom He will; God is powerful over everything (Qur'an 2:284).

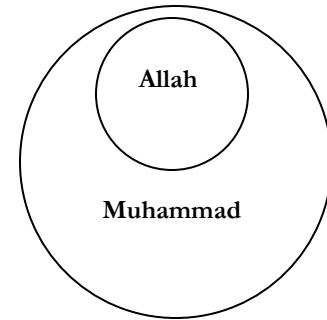
The worst sin is that of **shirk**. This means to associate anything with God. Such association would split God's unity. God's sovereignty is not to be compromised. To believe in any other god is shirk. To try to control God in some way by my own reason or strength is shirk. To disbelieve God's revelation and make it of no account is shirk. That is why the Danish cartoons caused such uproar. They mocked God's prophet and His revelation. However, it is very important to note that the real violent demonstrations occurred after the apology was given (four months after the publication).

---

<sup>1</sup> Most of this chapter's information comes from the sixth chapter of Paul Martinson's book, Families of Faith.

## And Muhammad Is His Prophet

The second circle we shall label Muhammad. If the first half of the Muslim confession testifies to God's Oneness and sovereignty, the second half brings that sovereignty into history: "...and Muhammad is his Prophet." To confess these two things is sufficient to make one a Muslim.



Tradition has it that Muhammad was 40 years old when he received his revelation from Allah. Muhammad was visiting a cave on Mt. Hira near Mecca. The angel Gabriel came to him and gave him the command to "Recite!" Muhammad was fearful and thought he was hallucinating. The angel told him again to recite and again Muhammad was reluctant. Finally after a third command Muhammad submitted.

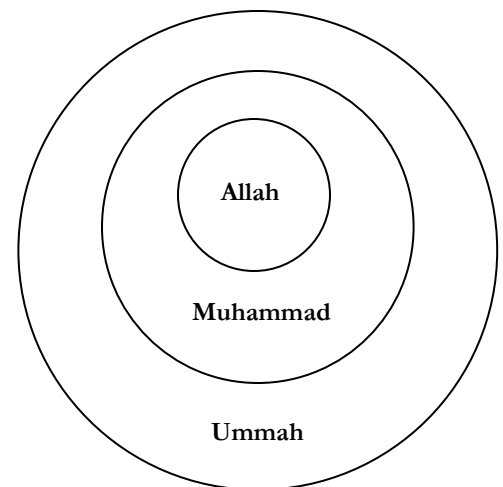
In this incident we learn two important words of Islam. The first word is "recite." The word for recite in Arabic is Qur'an. The Qur'an is a recitation. It is believed to be direct speech from God. It is not Muhammad's words, nor his thoughts about God, but God's own words spoken into Muhammad. The second word is Submission. Islam means, "to submit to Allah." Muhammad surrendered to Allah's will.

Islam does not believe Muhammad is the first prophet but the last prophet. They believe Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Job, Jonah, Elijah, Elisha, Zechariah, John the Baptist, and Jesus were among the prophets who came before Muhammad. Moses gave the Torah, David the Psalms, Jesus the Gospels, and Muhammad the Qur'an.

In 632, Muhammad made his final pilgrimage to Mecca. He spent ten days there. It was there that Muhammad apparently received the final words, "Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved ISLAM for your religion."

## The Ummah

The third circle we label the ummah. The ummah refers to the community. Those who believe in God as proclaimed by Muhammad, who are surrendered to God (Muslims), make up a single people or community. I shall briefly touch on the outer (public) marks of this community & the sources of faith.



## The Marks of Islam

There are five outer marks (or pillars) of the community. These mark/pillars connect Muslims together throughout space and time. These pillars are:

1. **Confession:** “There is no god but The God, and Muhammad is his prophet.”
2. **Prayer:** Five times a day Muslims are called to prayer. The Muzzein sings, “All is most great.” He does this 12 times (3 times in each direction). Second he says, “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah (twice).” Then he says: “I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah (twice).” Next he says, “Come to prayer (twice)!” And finally he says “Come to salvation! Come to salvation! There is no god but Allah.”
3. **Fasting:** This is done during the month of Ramadan. During this month the Muslims do not eat or drink during the day.
4. **Almsgiving:** This giving is meant for charity and for the needy. The amount to be given is a certain percentage of any income over and above what is needed for the basic necessities of life.
5. **Pilgrimage:** Every devout Muslim hopes to be able to make the pilgrimage to Mecca. It takes place about a month after Ramadan. No non-Muslims are permitted in Mecca or its vicinity at any time. It is believed that the Kaaba was built by Abraham and Ishmael. In it is a black stone, a meteorite brought from heaven to earth by Adam. For seven days there are a series of rituals undertaken. On the final day there is the most important Muslim festival, the Id-al-adha. At this time animals are sacrificed to recall Abraham’s offering of his son and the deliverance provided for by a sheep caught in the thickets.

## Three Sources of Faith: Quran, Hadith, & Book of Law

There are three sources of faith for Islam. The first, of course, is the Qur’an itself. The Qur’an is composed of 114 chapters. The Qur’an isn’t really studied in the same way that we do Bible studies. Rather it is recited (remember Qur’an means recite). It reads very differently from the Bible. There is very little narrative. There are hymns of praise, there are reminders to heed God’s goodness, there are warnings, teachings, laws, and regulations for life. Overall it conveys a sense of God’s rule and majesty. Listen to the opening chapter of the Quran:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.  
All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds.  
The Beneficent, the Merciful.  
Master of the Day of Judgment.  
Thee do we serve and Thee do we beseech for help.  
Keep us on the right path.  
The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favors. Not (the path) of those upon whom Thy wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray.  
(Qur’an 1)

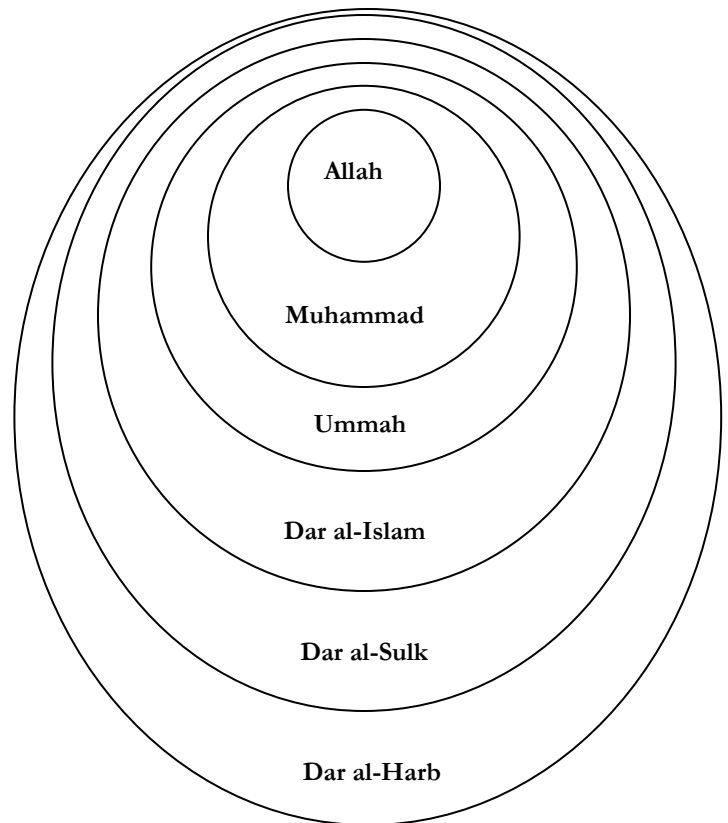
In addition to the Quran there is the hadith (a collection of brief accounts of Muhammad's life) and a large body of law that interprets both the Qur'an and the hadith. This legal body was fixed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and does allow for changes. The language, culture, and interpretation are fixed (11<sup>th</sup> century Arabic). This is why Muslim women cannot change their dress.

### Relationships of Islam with other nations:

Dar-Islam: refers to the Muslim world insofar as both countries are Muslim.

Dar al-Sulk (abode of contract): refers to that portion of the world that is not Muslim but has good relations with Islam. Here one can refer to the relationship between Cuba and Lybia or the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Dar al-Harb (abode of warfare): refers to states and people with whom the Muslim world has a hostile relationship. The U.S. and Iran.



### The Trust: The tail that wags the dog

The purpose of the Muslim is to fulfill the "Trust." According to the Qur'an, the Muslim has been given an assignment to create a moral social order (as defined by the Qur'an) on earth. Supposedly, "Allah offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it" (Qur'an 33:72).

The way the Muslim creates this "moral social order" is through Jihad. Even though the Quran does not speak in great detail about Jihad, the Hadith reveals much. According to Dr. Muhammad Muhsein Khan (translator of Hadith into English), "Muhammad commanded the Muslims to fight against all the pagans as well as against the people of the scriptures [Jews and Christians] if they do not embrace Islam." Jihad employs several different methods:

- **Jihad of the sword.** People are to be either converted or subdued through the violence of military force. They are to be converted to Islam by compulsion or by fear of being killed (vol 1, p.27). Muhammad warned the King of Byzantium, "If you become a Muslim you will be safe (vol 1, no. 6). In addition, when a Muslim murders someone during a Jihad, he gets to take the man's property.

- **Jihad of taxation.** Those who refuse to embrace Islam must pay a special tax called the Al-Jizya (vol. 4, chap. 21, pp 251-52).
- **Jihad of financial reward.** In Iraq, a free university education has been offered to any Christian or Jew who will embrace Islam.
- **Jihad of fear.** The death penalty is applied to anyone who renounces Islam and embraces another religion such as Christianity.
- **Jihad of slavery.** The only place where black chattel slavery is still practiced today is in Muslim countries. The London Economist (1/6/90) reported that Sudanese Muslims are presently capturing and then selling black women and children of the Dinka Christian Tribe for as little as \$15 a head.
- **Jihad of the courts.** Non-Muslims are denied equal access before the law. No Muslim should be killed for killing or raping an Infidel (vol. 4, no. 283).
- **Jihad after death.** A Muslim is to fight on Muhammad's behalf in his lifetime and after death (vol. 1, chapter 43).
- **Jihad of Paradise.** Any Muslim who is killed while fighting in a Jihad will go straight to the sexual pleasures of Paradise (vol. 1, no. 35).

It is important to understand that the Muslim will Jihad themselves (greater Jihad) as well as others (lesser Jihad) so that the "trust" is fulfilled.

**“Men are the managers of the affairs of women... Those you fear may be rebellious – admonish; banish them to their couches and beat them”**

Sura 4:34

## Other Teachings of Islam

Because of questions that have arisen during our class, I have added this brief section to answer such questions.

### **How does the Muslim understand eternity?**

Muslims believe eternal life is receiving either the joys of Paradise or the punishment of hell. The criterion for Paradise is living a moral life based upon the teachings of the Qur'an. For the man who builds high mountains apart from Islam, "He shall see his mountain shrink to a particle of sand."

### **What rights do Muslim women have?**

The well known Muslim scholar Ali Dashti states: "In pre-Islamic Arab society, the women did not have the status of independent persons, but were considered to be possessions of the men. All sorts of inhumane treatment of the women were permissible and customary. This practice was carried on in Islam. The Quran states: "Men are the managers of the affairs of women... Those you fear may be rebellious – admonish; banish them to their couches and beat them" (Sura 4:34). "The right to divorce belongs to the husband but not to wives." In Islamic countries such as Iran, women must carry written permission from their husband to be out of the house! Women are even denied the right to drive a car in such places as Saudi Arabia.

### **What is the difference between Sunnites and Shi'ites?**

Sunnites comprise 85 percent of the body of Muslims and adhere to the basic practices of Islam. Shi'ites comprise 15 percent of the Muslim faith. They have a majority in Iran. The origin of their split was political because Muhammad did not have an heir. The Sunnites followed Abu Bakr, whose daughter had been married to Muhammad when she was six years old. The Shi'ites followed Ali who had married Muhammad's daughter.

### **What is so important about Jerusalem?**

"Jerusalem has one of the three holy sites of Islam, namely the Al-Sakhra (meteorite). Muhammad first made Jerusalem the direction of prayer but then changed it to Mecca. Jerusalem contains the dome of the Rock (Qubbat al Sakhra). The rock makes the dome the closest place to heaven on earth. It is reported that the rock is guarded by angels; all sweet waters of the earth have their source under it; Noah's ark rested on the Rock after the flood had subsided, and here the angel Israfil will blow the last trumpet on the Day of Judgment. It is the spot where Muhammad ascended into Heaven, and various mementoes of his presence – a handprint, a footprint, the spot from which he ascended – are pointed out to the faithful"

**There are three possibilities with the Great Commission. You can go. You can send. Or you can be disobedient. Ignoring the cause is not a Christian option.**

John Piper

## How do we respond?

The question that most of us want to know is how do we respond? The answer depends on whom you ask. What I mean is that our different vocations require different responses. The government should respond differently than the church. We will look at a few different responses.

**How should the government respond?** America has the right as a government to punish evil. God gives the sword to governments. They execute His justice. America's unwillingness to use extreme force will continue to be a sign of weakness. I think America needs to flex its power (this is my opinion).

**How should the church respond?** A commitment to evangelize the Muslim world is necessary. Historically, there is little precedent for attempting to establish churches in Muslim countries. Before and after the Reformation, the Church has sailed past the Arab world, Turkey, and Persia. It has also mostly avoided the Muslim populations of India, China, Russia, and Southeast Asia. From 1890 to 1940 a number of valiant attempts were made to penetrate the Muslim world. Yet, never has there been the quantity of missionaries focusing on Muslims as have gone to non-Muslim areas.

God caused a turning point to occur in the 1960's through simple historical events that caused a new awareness of the Muslim world. In that decade, Americans witnessed black athletes change their names to Muslim names. In 1967, the Middle East exploded with the Arab-Israeli War. During this decade, a need for oil brought Americans to Muslim nations. Finally, a need for laborers brought Muslims to Europe. Of course, there are many other reasons that I have not given. The point is that the Muslim world has been brought to us.

**How should you respond?** This is the real question because most of us are not government employees and most of us are not missionaries. We will not face nations or people groups. However, we do have a chance to run into individual Muslims. This is a wonderful chance for us to witness to them.

By witnessing, I mean evangelism, dialogue, and displaying mercy. *Evangelism* means speaking the gospel. To evangelize is to make the story of Jesus known. With no verbal witness, that opportunity is not there. *Dialogue* on the other hand is public reasoning. It is the clarification or exchange of thoughts, understandings, and perspectives. Dialogue builds trust. Evangelism builds faith. In addition to these is mercy. By *mercy*, I mean Matthew 25: "I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was naked and you gave me clothes, I was sick and you healed me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Matthew 25:35-36). Mercy is important in witnessing because it opens doors shut to the gospel. I cannot help but think of how the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia as well as the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan allowed Christians to help Muslims. Eventually dialogue will grow from such displays of mercy and then evangelism.

## A Prayer

I would like to conclude the class with the following prayer:

Our Father in heaven, who gave Your only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, into death for the sins of the whole world, look with compassion on the many millions of sinners who yet sit in darkness and the shadow of eternal death. Send messengers to proclaim Your Word in the benighted corners of this earth where it has not been heard. Strengthen Your Church where she is weak or persecuted. Send teachers to reform her where she is in error. Raise up pastors in every nation under heaven. Bless those in every land who baptize and teach in Your name. Defend them from all evil, give them a rich measure of Your peace and joy, and enable them to speak Your Word with boldness. Open doors for the Gospel, and empower by Your Holy Spirit those who hear it to believe it and be saved. Let hordes of Satan not prevail against Your Church or snatch the seed of Your Word from people's hearts. Call out of darkness into Your marvelous light a kingdom of priests and a holy nation from every nation, tribe, people, and language, that many may share in the eternal banquet You have prepared for those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For His sake we are bold to come before You throne of grace, trusting in Your mercy. Amen.

Lutheran Book of Prayer