

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH- Red Bud, Illinois**  
**Adult Bible Class “Islam: A Religion of Peace or a Life of Fear?” (Session Six)**

A. History: The Immediate Empires After Muhammad’s Successors

“Islam advanced territorially in two ways—through military conquest and through peaceful methodologies. Military conquest was the dominant approach in the early period, but peaceful methodologies eventually replaced it. Sometimes these two methods went on side by side, sometimes separately” (Roland Miller, Muslim Friends, CPH, 1995, page 333).

Umayyad (AD 661-750) Capital- Damascus. During this period the mosque took on a new prominence not only as a place of worship but also as a display of artistic excellence (calligraphy of the Quran). Muslim armies marched through Spain and into France until they were stopped by the forces of Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours in AD 732. These rulers were known and criticized for their luxury and indulgence, concerned for politics, not piety.

Abbasids (AD 750-1258) Capital- Baghdad. This was the golden age of Muslim civilization. This time saw the high point of Muslim art, science, philosophy and literature. They made an alliance with Charlemagne (ca. AD 800), Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Later, though, this was the time of the European Christian Crusades (AD 1099-1291). “The Crusades contributed to European expansion and the modern world. As the crusaders came into contact with Middle Eastern culture, many developed a taste for the spices, silks and other Eastern luxuries. Thwarted in their ability to travel overland through Muslim territories, Europe sought alternate ways to travel—sea routes. This indirectly led to the European discovery of the Americas” (Roland C. Ehlke, Speaking the Truth in Love to Muslims, Northwestern, 2004, pages 30-31).

B. Numbers and Growth

“Islamization begins when there are sufficient Muslims in a country to agitate for their religious privileges...From 60%, nations experience unfettered persecution of non-believers of all other religions (including non-conforming Muslims), sporadic ethnic cleansing (genocide), use of Sharia Law as a weapon, and *Jizya*, the tax placed on infidels.” (Peter Hammond, Slavery, Terrorism and Islam: The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat).

<u>Year</u>	<u>In United States</u>	<u>In the World</u>	<u>Percent of World’s Population</u>
1900		200 million	12.3%
1970	100,000		
1981	2 million	720 million	16.25%
1990	4 million	800 million	18%
1995	5 million	One billion	19%
2001	6 million	1.2 billion	20%
2008	9 million	1.5 billion	22%

C. Sources

The Holy Bible- “Many of the ideas of Christianity that Muhammad had and that he passed on to his followers were either mistaken ideas about the Bible or heretical views that were not in the 66 inspired, canonical books of the Bible. Muhammad’s conceptions would not come out in the Qur’an and give countless people confusing and wrong ideas about the Bible and about Jesus” (Ehlke, page 13).

Muslims “say the original *Injil* (“gospel”) which Jesus received from God was the pure and unadulterated Word of God, but Christians made changes in it during the course of its transmission through the centuries. Therefore, they believe, the Bible of today is unreliable. Many Muslims feel that everything of value in the original *Injil* is to be found in the Qur’an, the last and perfect revelation” (Ernest Hahn, How to Respond: Muslims, CPH, 1995, pages 40-41).

“Readers of the Bible will find in the Qur’an familiar figures such as Abraham, Moses, David, John the Baptist, Jesus and even the Virgin Mary, who appears more often than she does in the New Testament, and is the only woman mentioned in the Qur’an by name. But their stories differ radically from those found in the Bible. IN the Qur’an all the previous prophets are Muslims” (Kenneth Woodward, “In the Beginning, There Were the Holy Books,” Newsweek, February 11, 2002, page 55).

#### D. Teaching

*Jihad* (“struggle”)- Moderate Muslims and Islamic sympathizers will say that the greater *jihad* is internal, engaging in a spiritual struggle against sin and Satan in one’s own life as reflected in earlier passages of the Quran. Muslim terrorists and Islamic critics point out the later passages of the Quran where *jihad* is applied to the physical realm, the righteous warfare that is to be carried out against non-Muslims. *Jihad* remains in force until Judgment Day. “*Jihad* is the belief that one should engage in a holy struggle to preserve Islam against non-Muslim beliefs... Since Muslims cannot be sure if their good deeds sufficiently outweigh their bad, *jihad* is the only way they can be certain of heaven... The events of September 11, 2001 were an illustration of *jihad* being carried out” (Ehlke, pages 95, 97-98). “Historically, from the time of Muhammad onwards, *jihad* as physical warfare in support of the message of Islam has been a reality for the Muslim community. Hence it comes as no surprise when even terrorists easily appeal to these source materials to justify their actions, not to speak of their teachers who teach the theory and art of terrorism” (Ernest Hahn, “Jihad in Islam: Is Islam Peaceful or Militant?,” Issues in Christian Education, Fall 2004, page 24). The word *jihad* is to the Muslim believer what the word “crusade” means to a Western Christian.

**What does the word “crusade” mean to us?** \_\_\_\_\_

(e.g. “I am on a crusade to build a waterpark in Red Bud.” or the Billy Graham Crusade)

**What might a Muslim think of when he hears the word “crusade”?** \_\_\_\_\_

#### E. Divisions (Sunnis, Shi’ites, and others)

*Wahhabis*- Based in Saudi Arabia, this is a radical Sunni Muslim movement founded by Ibn Abdul Wahhab (AD 1703-1792). Wahhabis from the start were willing to kill civilians who opposed them. In recent years they have worked to overthrow “the American Empire.” They have trained a generation of students for that pursuit through a network of *madrassas* (Islamic religious schools) funded by Saudi oil money. Most of the 9/11 terrorists were Wahhabis from Saudi Arabia. They believed that their actions which condemned them to hell in Islam (alcohol, prostitutes, etc.) would be made up for by their spectacular act of *jihad*. “It’s clear that the 9/11 terrorists were familiar with Quranic verses promising that good things will happen to all who die in a campaign to spread Islam” (Marvin Olasky, “Islam Vs. Liberty”, World, September 10, 2011, page 77).

In September of 2004 the U.S. State Department labeled Saudi Arabia one of the world’s worst religious persecutors. Beyond this, our government did not take any punitive action against Saudi Arabia. “According to unofficial estimates by government investigators, at least 50 percent of American mosques may receive some funding from foreign governments or institutions, mostly Saudi Arabia. The danger is obvious: if Saudi Arabia is exporting its Wahhabi Islam to this country via imams, pamphlets, Qur’ans and buildings, how long before a warped version of this extremist ideology intersects with a vulnerable group of teenagers” (Lisa Miller, “American Dreamers”, Newsweek, July 30, 2007, page 30).

**Why has the United States gone out of its way to treat Saudi Arabia as an “ally?”** \_\_\_\_\_

**How should this effect our nation’s energy policy and dependence on foreign oil?** \_\_\_\_\_

#### F. Correspondence and Contrasts Between Islam and Christianity

Prophets- Muslims believe that there are 124,000 prophets that Allah sent. The number listed in the Quran is between 25-29. Nineteen are from the Old Testament, three are from the New Testament. While Muhammad is the final and most important prophet of Allah, Jesus (Isa) is the second most revered prophet in Islam. There are nearly 100 references in the Quran to Him. The purpose of the prophets is to convey Allah’s will to the people.

#### G. Christian Witness to Muslims (Focus on Jesus!)

**1 Peter 3:15 But in your \_\_\_\_\_ set apart Christ as \_\_\_\_\_. Always be \_\_\_\_\_ to give the \_\_\_\_\_ for the \_\_\_\_\_ that you have. But do this with \_\_\_\_\_ and respect.**

“If Muslims go beyond the Quran to find out more about Isa, and if patient and respectful Christians have the opportunity to teach about Him, the world will change... Christians should take Muslims for friends. Christians should have neither a centuries-old memory for wrongs nor a designation of some people as enemies, because God can change them into friends... We need to pray that God will somehow break through to teach more Muslims the gospel of grace—and that He’ll school more Christians to live by that gospel” (Marvin Olasky, “War of the Centuries”, World, September 20/27, 2008, page 84).