

BY INVITATION ONLY

2016 Missiology Session

Dr. Gordon Nickel

Dynamics Of Contemporary Muslim Societies:
**Christian Theological and
Missiological Implications**

Saturday, November 5, 2016

10:30AM – 2:00PM

LOCATION:

William Jessup University, San Jose Campus, 1190 Saratoga Ave., Suite 210 San Jose, CA 95129

A WORD FROM OUR SESSION ORGANIZERS:

Today, Christians seem increasingly puzzled about the identity of Islam and Muslim societies, especially in view of violent conflicts involving Muslim communities in various parts of the world. The perplexity of Christians further increases when they hear about beheadings in the name of Islam or watch the flow of refugees fleeing the Middle East. A poll from Pew Research conducted among Protestant evangelicals at the 2010 Lausanne Congress in Cape Town revealed that “nearly seven in ten of the evangelical leaders (69 percent) name Islam as more prone to violence than other religions. Far more leaders say Islam and Christianity are ‘very different’ (69 percent) than say the two faiths have ‘a lot in common’ (25 percent). And a solid majority of the leaders who express an opinion (69 percent) feel that Muslims are generally unfriendly toward evangelicals in their country.”

A small part of this has to do with conflicting media reports, but the reality is that global Islam is a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon rather than a monolithic one. Unfortunately, what makes the headlines often dominates people’s perceptions, and this in turn shapes Christian mission strategies as they are overshadowed, if

not controlled, by such reports. The challenge for understanding Islam is further complicated by the fact that an already very diverse Islam across the world stage is fluid and dynamic, with changes motivated as much by Islamic agency from within as by forces impinging “from without.”

After a season of significant church growth in the Muslim world, the latest conflicts involving Muslim and Christian populations may potentially lead to dramatic effects for witness. Given that a recent Pew Research study predicts that the number of Muslims may nearly equal the number of Christians around the world by the year 2050, it is crucial to help the Christian community become increasingly conversant with the current religious and social climate in Muslim majority contexts as they engage in witness among Muslims. To address these issues and enhance the effectiveness of Christian witness in Muslim contexts, our session will explore how the dynamics of contemporary Muslim societies shape Christian engagement with Muslims. Our goal is twofold: to survey the dynamics of Islamic societies across a range of global contexts, and to formulate Christian theological and missiological assessments in response.

GORDON NICKEL, PhD



Gordon Nickel writes and teaches on the interaction between Islam and Christianity, especially between the Qur’an and the New Testament. He approaches Islam from both academic study and personal experience. He began his study of Islam at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, where he completed an M.A. in South Asian Islam and wrote a thesis on Muslim principles of Qur’anic exegesis. He later wrote his PhD dissertation on the Qur’anic theme of “tampering with the previous scriptures” at the University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Gordon experienced the daily expressions of Muslim faith and life during 10 years of teaching in South Asia. In 2011 Brill Academic Publishers published Gordon’s monograph *Narratives of Tampering in the Earliest Commentaries on the Qur’an*. In recent years he has taught courses about Islam and the Qur’an at Associated Canadian Theological Schools, the University of British Columbia, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Columbia International University, the University of Calgary, and the Centre for Islamic Studies at South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies, Bangalore, India. His most recent book is a scholarly response to polemic, *The Gentle Answer to the Muslim Accusation of Biblical Falsification*, available from Amazon.

IAN PAYNE, PhD

Principal, Professor in Theology, SAIACS



Dr Ian Payne was brought up in Kerala where his New Zealand parents were Christian workers until 1967. Having worked as an architect, he decided to build people rather than buildings. This led to his return, with his wife Judith and three daughters, to India in 1994 to study at SAIACS. He joined SAIACS faculty as Principal in 2008. He is author of *Wouldn’t You Love to Know? Trinitarian Epistemology and Pedagogy*.

This event is sponsored by the South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) Bangalore, India. USA Contact: Claude Fletcher 408/234-8867 – claudefletcher@gmail.com

Since seating is limited, register early for this important event. RSVP by 30 October.

Email: claudefletcher@gmail.com

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