

Misconceptions About Islam, Part 1

Many fundamental concepts of Islamic principles have been distorted deliberately by spreading these misconceptions in the mainstream media to either obscure the main ideas of Islam or to achieve political goals in the Muslim majority areas. Today, I will clarify some of these misconceptions and discuss significant subjects that always appear when talking about Islam.

What is Jihad? “Jihad” is a term often misunderstood and associated with violent radical militants. This Arabic word is frequently mistranslated as “holy war,” although there is no such thing in Islam. Holy war is something undertaken to subject others to certain religious doctrines forcibly. As we have seen, this is expressly forbidden in Islam.

The Arabic word “jihad” means struggle or striving and applies to any great effort on the personal and social levels. One strives to do good and remove injustice and evil from oneself and/or society. This exertion of effort can be spiritual, social, economic or political. For instance, one of the highest levels of Jihad is to stand before a tyrant and speak the truth. Restraining the self from wrongdoing is also a form of Jihad that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) called it “the great jihad.” Jihad is a broad Islamic concept that includes opposing

evil inclinations within the self, opposing injustice by peaceful means, exerting efforts to improve the quality of life in society, and striving by military forces on a battlefield to defend the community or oppressed people. It is interesting to notice that in all battles fought by Prophet Muhammad or his successors, Muslims used to be fewer in number than their enemies. These battles were defensive. Jihad is not synonymous with war, as that is only one possible aspect of the term, and it certainly does not include terrorism.

Indeed, the concept of Jihad is not limited to armed conflict. One finds in the Qur’an mention of “jihad using the Qur’an,” meaning invitation to truth using the best arguments, presentation of evidence and clarification of misunderstanding. And there is Jihad of the Self, which means striving to purify the soul, to increase its faith, incline it toward good and keep it away from evil. Then there is Jihad through wealth, which means spending money in various beneficial ways, including charities and welfare projects. Striving against the natural love for money is a form of Jihad. The best form of Jihad is to stop the Self from insisting on sinning.

Jihad includes the protection of societies from oppression, foreign dom-



Guest Column

HATIM HEGAB

ination, and dictatorships that usurp rights and freedom, oppression that abolishes just and moral rule, that prevents people from hearing the truth or following it, and that practices religious persecution – jihad endeavors to teach the belief in the One God and the worshiping of Him. Jihad is the work to spread good values, virtues and morality through wise and proper methods. Jihad means striving for social reform and the elimination of ignorance, superstition, poverty, disease and racial discrimination. Among Jihad’s main objectives is securing rights for weaker members of society against the impositions of the powerful and influential.

Armed Jihad is not an option for Muslim individuals or groups. The head of the state and religious leadership can only declare it if the nation or the country is under attack. Moreover, it must never be fought for worldly gain, conquest or revenge. Muslims may only engage in a battle to protect people’s lives, properties, and freedom.

I invite you to watch this video of Garry

Wills: <https://youtu.be/Srx0ovLyrnM>

Are men and women considered equal? When replying to this question, we must first define what “equal” means and identify the aspect that worries us regarding gender equality. Islam regards women as spiritual and intellectual equals of men. For a Muslim, the critical issue is who can become closest to God and earn the greatest reward. The Qur’an answers: “Whoever does deeds of righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer – those will enter Paradise, and not the least injustice will be done to them.” [Quran 4:124] Also, “For Muslim men and women, for believing men and women, for devout men and women, for truthful men and women, for patient men and women, for humble men and women, for charitable men and women, for fasting men and women, for chaste men and women, and for men and women who remember God often – for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and great reward.” [Quran 33:35]

There is no difference between men and women as far as their relationship with God is concerned. Both are equal before God, and they are both accountable before Him. Women, like men, are commanded to worship God, and both are promised the same rewards and punishments

according to their intentions and conduct.

Economically, every man and woman are independent legal entities. Both men and women have the right to own property, engage in business and inherit from others. Both have the equal right to receive an education and gain employment. Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim. Preventing women from getting an education is contrary to the teachings of Islam.

However, one fact that is now recognized in the Qur’an is that all things are created in pairs. Creating two counterparts would not have been necessary without a similar function for all. To ignore inherent physical and psychological differences is undoubtedly unrealistic, but there is no reason to assume that one sex is superior to the other. The creation of males and females means a natural division of function, meaning distinct roles for each, which are complementary and collaborative.

Thus, absolute equality between men and women is neither possible nor reasonable. But this does not mean bias in favor of men to the detriment of women. While some rulings may favor men, many others favor women. However, most Islamic rulings apply to men and women equally, and their obligations toward one another bind both.

The main distinction between the two sexes is in the physical realm, based on the equitable principle of fair division of labor. Islam allots the more strenuous work to the man and makes him responsible for maintaining the family. It allots the work of managing the home and the upbringing and training of children to the woman, which is most important in building a healthy and prosperous society.

It is also true that sound administration within any organization requires a unified policy under a just executive. For this reason, Islam expects the husband, as head of the household, to consult with his family and then have the final say in its decisions. This degree of authority does not mean that the Creator prefers men over women but is simply the logical way of apportioning responsibilities in a household. Men and women are two equally important parts of humanity, and the rights and responsibilities of both sexes in Islam are equitable and balanced in their totality. Although their obligations might differ in certain areas of life because of the fundamental physical and psychological differences, each one is equally accountable for his or her particular responsibilities.

To contact the author: hatim@gmx.us
For more information: www.icstillwater.org

Worship at the church of your choice this week

You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.



Revelation 3:17

Stillwater Bible
Proclaiming Christ, Training Believers
JB Bond, Senior Pastor

Sundays

Worship Service.....8:30 a.m.
G.R.O.W. Groups.....9:45 a.m.
Worship Service.....11:00 a.m.
Kids' Church.....11:20 a.m.

Tuesdays

Cornerstone @ The Union (RM 297).....7:30 p.m.

Wednesdays

Stillwater Bible Institute.....6:30 p.m.
Impact Youth.....6:30 p.m.
Bible Kids.....6:30 p.m.

7617 W. 6th Ave.
Stillwaterbible.org (405) 564-5794

**Crosspointe**
CHURCH

Sunday School - 9:30
Sunday AM Worship - 10:30
Sunday PM Family Service - 6:00
Wed PM Bible Study - 7:00

1807 N. Jardot
gocrosspointe.com

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

701 S. DUNCAN • 405-372-5212

SUNDAY
Bible Study • 9:30am
Worship Service • 11:00am
WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES
Begin at 6:00pm
Watch our worship service on Facebook
www.fbcstillwater.org

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

www.fumcstw.org

400 W. 7th • 372-5854

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
Worship.....8:30am & 11:10am
Sunday School.....10:00am
Closer Walk.....10 am Family Life Center

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS BAPTIST CHURCH

4th & Knoblock • 372-2744

Sunday School
9 am
Worship Service
8 am & 10:30 am

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Independent Baptist Expository Preaching

CHURCH SERVICES
Sunday10:30am
Thursday7:30pm

723 E. 17th

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

524 S. Duncan • 405-372-5580
www.stillwaterfpc.org

Sunday Worship
9:45 a.m. - Sunday School
11:00 a.m. - in person, online
On KSPI radio AM 780 & FM 94.3
and the Stillwater FPC Facebook page

Sunnybrook Christian Church

421 E. Richmond Rd • 377.0923
www.sunnybrookcc.org

SUNDAY SERVICE **SUNDAY SCHOOL**
9:45 am 8:30 am
11:15 am 9:45 am
KIDS CHURCH 9:45 & 11:15 am
GO • GATHER • GROW

**Stillwater Church of Christ**
stillwatercoc.org

Your place for "Faith, Family and Friends"
SUNDAY
Meeting Times
Bible Study.....9:30 AM
Worship.....10:30 AM
Bible Study.....5:00 PM
WEDNESDAY
Bible study.....7:00 PM

821 N. DUCK • 372-7439

Southside Baptist Church of Stillwater

1223 S. Perkins Rd.
Perfectly • Purposely • Placed

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP 11 AM + 6 PM
WEDNESDAY
YOUTH & ADULT BIBLE STUDY 6:30
Paul Hutchison - Pastor
Address - 1223 S. Perkins Rd.
Phone: 405-372-2411
Email: southsidesillwater@gmail.com

The Islamic Society of Stillwater

616 N. Washington St.
Friday (Weekly) Prayers
1:40 PM - 2:10 PM
For Daily Prayer Times
www.icstillwater.org

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church

711 N. Country Club Rd.

Sunday Mass **Friday Mass**
8:30 | 11:15 a.m. 12:10 p.m.
1 p.m. (en español) **Saturday Mass**
Tue & Thu Mass 9 a.m. | 5 p.m. (Vigil Mass)
12:10 p.m. **Confessions**
Wednesday Mass Tues-Fri | 11:30-12 p.m.
12:10 p.m. Wednesday | 5 p.m.
6 p.m. (en español) Saturday | 9:45-11 a.m.

405-372-6886 www.sfxstillwater.org

Zion Lutheran Church - LCMS

Sunday - 8:00, 10:30 AM

www.zionlutheranstw.org

John E. Wackler, Pastor

504 S. Knoblock • 372-3703

Good to the Last
WORD



stwnewspress.com draws
153,531 monthly unique visitors
who view 219,548 pages!

Stillwater
News Press