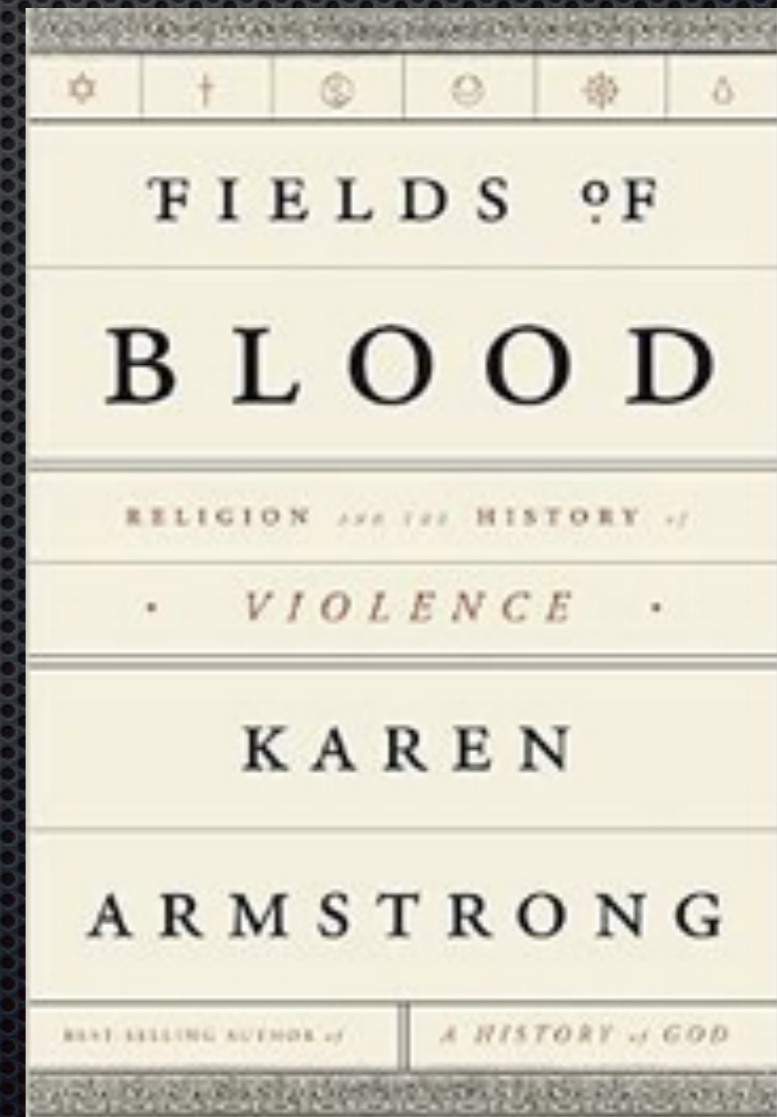


# Fields of Blood

## Religion & the History of Violence

ACTS  
Winter 2014

St David's United  
Church Calgary



# Session 04 - Agenda

1. Opening -
2. Chapter Review & Discussion
3. Media Presentation A
4. Break
5. Media Presentation B
6. Discussion
7. Closing -

# Opening

Marilyn Outtrim

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire



# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

### Christianity becomes Religion of Empire

“In 323 Constantine defeated Licinius, emperor of the eastern provinces, and became sole ruler of the Roman Empire.”

“... he moved his capital from Rome to the city of Byzantium ... which he renamed Constantinople.”

“[Eusebius] taught the Christians of Byzantium to believe that the ruthless militarism and systemic injustice of the Roman Empire would be transformed by the Christian ideal. But Constantine was a soldier, with very little knowledge of his new faith. It was more likely that Christianity would be converted to imperial violence.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

“Christianity’s universal claims seemed ideally suited to Constantine’s ambition to achieve world rule, and he believed that its ethos of peace and reconciliation were in perfect alignment with the Pax Romana. But to Constantine’s horror, the eastern churches, far from being united in brotherly love, were bitterly divided by an obscure—and to Constantine, incomprehensible—theological dispute.” [on the nature of Jesus between Arius and Athanasius]

“In May he summoned the bishops to a council in Nicaea to settle the matter once and for all.”

Theodosius I (r. 346–95) “It was he who summoned the Council of Constantinople that made Nicene orthodoxy the official religion of the empire in 381.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

### The Desert Fathers

“However provocative the circumstances, monks must never respond aggressively to any attack.”

“These monks meditated constantly on Jesus’s command to “love your enemies” because most of them did have enemies in the community.”

“The monastic movement spread more rapidly, demonstrating a widespread hunger for an alternative to a Christianity that was increasingly tainted by imperial associations. By the end of the fifth century, tens of thousands of monks were living beside the Nile and in the deserts of Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Armenia.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

### The Concept of Trinity

“... the Trinity was designed first to help Christians realize that what we call God lay beyond the reach of words and concepts.”

“The Trinity was an attempt to translate this Jewish insight into a Hellenistic idiom.”

“God, the Cappadocians explained, had one divine, inaccessible essence (ousia) that was totally beyond the reach of the human mind, but it had been made known to us by three manifestations (hypostases): the Father (source of being), the Logos (in the man Jesus), and the Spirit that we encounter within ourselves. Each “person” (from the Latin persona, meaning “mask”) of the Trinity was merely a partial glimpse of the divine ousia that we could never comprehend.”



# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

### State Violence

“... it was Augustine who would develop the “just war” theory, the foundation of all future Christian thinking on the subject. When Jesus told his disciples to turn the other cheek when attacked, Augustine argued, he had not asked them to be passive in the face of wrongdoing.”

“What made violence evil was not the act of killing but the passions of greed, hatred, and ambition that had prompted it. Violence was legitimate, however, if inspired by charity—by a sincere concern for the enemy’s welfare—and should be administered in the same way as a schoolmaster beat his pupils for their own good. ... An individual, even if acting in self-defense, would inevitably feel an inordinate desire (libido) to inflict pain on his assailant, whereas a professional soldier, who was simply obeying orders, could act dispassionately. In putting violence beyond the reach of the individual, Augustine had given the state almost unlimited powers.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

### Chalcedon

“Just as the two natures - human and divine - were found in a single person, there could be no separation of church and empire; together they formed the Kingdom of God, which would soon spread to the entire world.”

“Instead of providing a challenging alternative to imperial violence, the tradition that had begun in part as a protest against the systemic oppression of empire had become the tool of Rome's aggressive coercion.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 6 - Byzantium: The Tragedy of Empire

### The Agrarian Formula of Governance

“The monarchy depends on the army, the army on money; money comes from the land tax; the land tax comes from agriculture. Agriculture depends on justice; justice on the integrity of officials, and integrity and reliability on the ever-watchfulness of the king.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma



# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

### Muhammed founds Islam

Muhammed retreated to a cave each year where he meditated on his people and their problems. It was here that over 23 years he received the Quran (The Recitation). His message was of the one god - Allah.

The Quran acknowledged other prophets of the one god, from Moses to Jesus. It was written down 30 years after Muhammed's death. The religious commentary and the biographical history of Muhammed is called "aHadith" and is cited as often as the Quran itself.

"The Muslims formed an ummah, a "community" that provided an alternative to the greed and systemic injustice of Meccan capitalism."

"“Not one of you can be a believer,” Muhammad is reported to have said, “unless he desires for his neighbor what he desires for himself.””

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

Mecca was a place of pilgrimage and sanctuary.

“Mecca was in the grip of a social and moral crisis. The old tribal spirit had succumbed to the ethos of an infant market economy and families now vied with one another for wealth and prestige.”

“... when Muhammad began to emphasize the monotheism of his message, they became alarmed, for commercial rather than theological reasons. An outright rejection of the local deities would be bad for business and alienate the tribes who kept their totems around the Kabah and came specifically to visit them during the hajj. A serious rift now developed ...”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

### The Quran and Violence

“The Quran is not a coherent revelation: it came to Muhammad piecemeal in response to particular events ...”

“Jihad (“struggle”) is not one of the Quran’s main themes: in fact, the word and its derivatives occur only forty-one times, and only ten of these refer unambiguously to warfare.”

“There is no univocal or systematic Quranic teaching about military violence.”

“There is ... a constant juxtaposition of ruthlessness and mercy in the Quran...”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

“Muslims would interpret their revelation in radically divergent ways and, like any other faith, Islam developed in response to changing circumstances.”

“Ultimately, however, the more militant groups prevailed, possibly because by the ninth century, long after the Prophet’s death, the more aggressive verses reflected reality, since by this time Muslims had established an empire that could be maintained only by military force.”

The “Sword Verse,” -“When the forbidden months are over wherever you encounter the idolaters, kill them, seize them, besiege them, wait for them at every look-out post; but if they repent, maintain the prayer, and pay the prescribed alms let them go on their way, for God is most merciful and forgiving.”



# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

### A New Empire

[After Muhammed's death,] they fulfilled the dream that had eluded both the Persians and Byzantines and re-created Cyrus's empire. It is hard to explain their success."

"The Arabs had no experience of state building and just adopted Persian and Byzantine systems of land tenure, taxation, and government."

"There was no attempt to impose Islam on the subject peoples"

"Muawiyah moved his capital from Medina to Damascus and founded a hereditary dynasty. The Umayyads would create a regular agrarian empire, with a privileged aristocracy and an unequal distribution of wealth. Herein lay the Muslim dilemma."

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

### Divisions and Developments in Islam

“It was probably inevitable that, as Muslims made their astonishing transition from a life of penury to world rule, there would be disagreements about leadership, the allocation of resources, and the morality of empire.”

The Sunni, The Shia, The Ishmali, and The Sufi became the major sects of Islam.

“Muhammad had said to his companions: “We are returning from the Lesser Jihad [the battle] and returning to the Greater Jihad” —the more exacting and important effort to fight the baser passions and reform one’s own society.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

### Sharia Law

“Where the aristocratic adab took a pragmatic view of what was politically feasible, the Shariah was an idealistic countercultural challenge, which tacitly condemned the structural violence of the imperial state and boldly insisted that no institution—not even the caliphate—had the right to interfere with an individual’s personal decisions.”

“There was no way that an agrarian state could be run on these lines, however, and although the caliphs always acknowledged the Shariah as the law of God, they could not rule by it.”

“Nevertheless, the Shariah was a constant witness to the Islamic ideal of equality that is so deeply embedded in our humanity that despite the apparent impossibility of incorporating it in political life, we remain stubbornly convinced that it is the natural way for human beings to live together.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 7 - The Muslim Dilemma

### Jihad

“Al-Shafii formulated what would become the classical doctrine of jihad,”

“Al-Shafii argued. The human race was divided into the dar al-Islam (“The Abode of Islam”) and the non-Muslim world, the dar al-harb (“The Abode of War”).”

“What distinguished Islam from other revelations, however, was that it had a God-given mandate to extend its rule to the rest of humanity. Its mission was to establish the social justice and equity prescribed by God in the Quran, so that all men and women could be liberated from the tyranny of a state run on worldly principles.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad



# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

“The Roman clergy ... adopted the old aristocracy’s ideal of libertas, which had little to do with freedom; rather, it referred to the maintenance of the privileged position of the ruling class, lest society lapse into barbarism. As the successor of Saint Peter, Gregory believed that he had a divine mandate to rule the Christian world. His “crusade” was designed in part to reassert papal libertas in the Eastern Empire, which did not accept the supremacy of the bishop of Rome.”

“On Christmas Day 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne “Holy Roman Emperor” in the Basilica of St. Peter. The congregation acclaimed him as “Augustus,” and Leo prostrated himself at Charlemagne’s feet.

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

### The Peace of God (a knights oath)

“I will not carry off either ox or cow or any other beast of burden; I will seize neither peasant nor merchant; I will not take from them their pence, nor oblige them to ransom themselves; and I will not beat them to obtain their subsistence. I will seize neither horse, mare nor colt from their pasture; I will not destroy or burn their houses.”

“They now also introduced the Truce of God, forbidding fighting from Wednesday evening to Monday morning each week in memory of Christ’s days of passion, death, and resurrection.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

### Attacks on Jews

“It had never occurred to Urban that the Crusaders would attack the Jewish communities in Europe, but in 1096 an army of German Crusaders slaughtered between four to eight thousand Jews in Speyer, Worms, and Mainz.”

“Some Crusaders seemed genuinely confused. Why were they going to fight Muslims thousands of miles away when the people who had actually killed Jesus—or so the Crusaders mistakenly believed—were alive and well on their very doorsteps?”

“The Crusades made anti-Semitic violence a chronic disease in Europe: every time a Crusade was summoned, Christians would first attack Jews at home. This persecution was certainly inspired by religious conviction, but social, political, and economic elements were also involved.”



# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

### Attack on Jerusalem

“When they finally succeeded in conquering Jerusalem on July 15, 1099, they could only conclude that God had been with them.”

“... when they fell on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, they slaughtered some thirty thousand people in three days.<sup>59</sup>

“They killed all the Saracens and Turks they found,” the author of the Deeds of the Franks reported approvingly.

“They killed everyone, male or female.” The streets ran with blood. Jews were rounded up into their synagogue and put to the sword, and ten thousand Muslims who had sought sanctuary in the Haram al-Sharif were brutally massacred.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

“... the Crusaders were standing beside the tomb of a man who had been a victim of human cruelty, yet they were unable to question their own violent behavior. The ecstasy of battle, heightened in this case by years of terror, starvation, and isolation, merged with their religious mythology to create an illusion of utter righteousness. But victors are never blamed for their crimes, and chroniclers soon described the conquest in Jerusalem as a turning point in history.”

[It was]“... a complete denial of the pacifist strain in Christianity.”

“Five Crusader states were established, in Jerusalem, Antioch, Galilee, Edessa, and Tripoli.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

“These states needed a standing army, and the Church completed its canonization of warfare by giving monks a sword:”

“... the Knights Hospitaller of St. John were founded originally to care for poor and sick pilgrims, and the Knights Templar, housed in the Aqsa Mosque on the Haram, policed the roads. They took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to their military commander, and because they were far more disciplined than ordinary knights, they became the most professional fighting force in the West since the Roman legions.”

“The Templars, however, combined the meekness of monks with military power, and their sole motivation was to kill the enemies of Christ.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

“Muslims were now convinced that the West was their implacable enemy, and Christians seemed to think it more important to fight Muslims than to get Jerusalem back.”

“But for centuries now, Europeans had been devising a commercial economy that would result in the creation of a very different kind of state. The modern world is often said to have begun in 1492; in fact, it would take Europeans some four hundred years to create the modern state. Its economy would no longer be based on the agrarian surplus, it would interfere far more in the personal lives of its subjects, it would be run on the expectation of constant innovation, and it would separate religion from its politics.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

### Spanish Inquisition - the explosion of Jews and Muslims

“The Spanish Inquisition did not target Christian heretics but focused on Jews who had converted.”

“Spanish Inquisition has become a byword for excessive “religious” intolerance, but its violence was caused less by theological than by political considerations.”

“Seeking out dissidents in this way would not infrequently become a feature of modern states, secular as well as religious, in times of national crisis.”

“... on March 31, 1492, the monarchs signed the edict of expulsion, which gave Jews the choice of baptism or deportation.”

“In 1499 ... Muslims were required to convert ... But the Muslim converts (Moriscos) were given no instruction in their new faith, and everybody knew that they continued to live, pray, and fast according to the laws of Islam.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

### Reformation

“In 1517 Martin Luther (1483–1546), an Augustinian friar, nailed his famous ninety-five theses on the castle church door in Wittenberg and set in motion the process known as the Reformation.”

“Luther was also the first European Christian to advocate the separation of church and state,”

“Luther understood that without a strong state, “the world would be reduced to chaos,” and that no government could realistically rule according to the gospel principles of love, forgiveness, and tolerance.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

“...the Wars of Religion that culminated in the horror of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–48). ... The theological quarrels of the Reformation, it is said, so inflamed Catholics and Protestants that they slaughtered one another in senseless wars, until the violence was finally contained by the creation of the liberal state that separated religion from politics.”

“... the Thirty Years’ War, which would kill about 35 percent of the population of central Europe.”

“... there was rarely a wholly solid “Catholic” or “Protestant” response.”

# Fields of Blood - Session 04- Key Ideas

## Ch 8 - Crusade and Jihad

“It was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that religion was ejected from political life in the West.”

“The problem lies not in the multifaceted activity that we call “religion” but in the violence embedded in our human nature and the nature of the state, which from the start required the forcible subjugation of at least 90 percent of the population.”

“Somehow we have to find ways of doing what religion—at its best—has done for centuries: build a sense of global community, cultivate a sense of reverence and “equanimity” for all, and take responsibility for the suffering we see in the world. We are all, religious and secularist alike, responsible for the current predicament of the world. There is no state, however idealistic and however great its achievements, that has not incurred the taint of the warrior. ... The scapegoat ritual was an attempt to sever the community’s relationship with its misdeeds; it cannot be a solution for us today.”





BREAK

15 minutes



# Media - 23m

The Q & A after Karen Armstrong's lecture on Fields of Blood at Synagogue "6th and i", Politics and Prose series.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQc9ovrtGZ4>

# Discussion Questions

## 1. Byzantium

Discuss the transformation of Jesus' teachings as they evolved into church doctrine in support of imperial politics.

## 2. The Muslim Dilemma

How did Islamic interpretations of the Q'ran take similar approaches (mosque and caliphate) to Christian biblical understandings about the relationship between church and state? How did the two differ?

## 3. Crusade and Jihad

Discuss how the Crusades became a major historical stumbling block in Christian-Muslim and Christian-Jewish relations?

# Next Week

Book readings - to page 262:

Ch 9 The Arrival of "Religion"

# Website & Course Materials

Website:

[fob.stdavidscalgary.net](http://fob.stdavidscalgary.net)

[sduc.ca](http://sduc.ca)

Summary Presentations,

Videos are linked,

Handouts

Links to additional information

Printouts for those without internet.

# Closing

The Playing for Change folks singing Bob Marley's "One Love" - artists around the world. 5m

"It's time for the world to unite as a human race."

... Bob Marley

