

1-1-2016

The Future of Islam and Jesuit Universities

Amir Hussain

Loyola Marymount University, amir.hussain@lmu.edu

Repository Citation

Hussain, Amir, "The Future of Islam and Jesuit Universities" (2016). *Theological Studies Faculty Works*. 165.
http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/theo_fac/165

Recommended Citation

Hussain, Amir. "The Future of Islam and Jesuit Universities." *Islam at Jesuit Colleges and Universities*. Eds. Aysha Hidayatullah and Erin Brigham. San Francisco: University of San Francisco Press, 2016. 59-73.

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by the Theological Studies at Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theological Studies Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.



THE FUTURE OF ISLAM AT JESUIT UNIVERSITIES

AMIR HUSSAIN

I need to begin with a confession. I was born in a Catholic missionary hospital in Pakistan, St. Raphael's, brought into the world at the hands of a nun, Sr. Elizabeth. Almost 50 years later, I find myself teaching at a Catholic university. Holy Mother Church has a way of bringing us all back to her.

In order to talk about the future, I need to say a few things about the past. I was born into a Sunni Muslim family in Pakistan. As a child, I received rudimentary instruction in Islam from my family. However, at the age of four, we emigrated from Pakistan to Canada. As a result, I received no formal instruction or education in my religion until I was an adolescent. Had I stayed in Pakistan, I would have learned these things (instruction in Urdu and Arabic, reading the Qur'an, etc.) in elementary school.

When we moved to Toronto in 1970, I suddenly became a visible minority, as well as a member of a religious minority. The Toronto of my youth was a place where I was isolated as a Pakistani Muslim. At that time, Toronto was a far cry from the cosmopolitan city that

Amir Hussain, a Canadian Muslim, is Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University, the Jesuit university in Los Angeles. He teaches courses on Islam and world religions, and specializes in the study of contemporary Muslim societies in North America. Amir is the author or editor of five books, as well as over 50 scholarly articles and book chapters. From 2011 to 2015, he was the editor of the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, the premier scholarly journal for the study of religion.

it has since become. John Barber, a reporter for *The Globe and Mail* newspaper, echoed the sentiments of many of his cohort when he wrote of his experiences in Toronto: “I grew up in a tidy, prosperous, narrow-minded town where Catholicism was considered exotic; my children are growing up in the most cosmopolitan city on Earth. The same place.”¹ In 1970, the Muslim population in all of Canada was estimated to be some 33,370.² By 2011, the National Household Survey counted over 1 million Canadian Muslims, making Islam the second-largest religion in Canada.

I state all of this to convey that my Islam was shaped by being in a minority context, and so I had to learn about the dominant tradition, Christianity. In 1983, I began my first undergraduate year at the University of Toronto. At that time, I had no idea what I wanted to be when I grew up, I just knew that I did not want to work in the same factories that my parents did. I spent summers with my father building trucks for the Ford Motor Company, and picking up my mother at the end of her shifts from the plant where she worked making fans. Working on the assembly line made me want to pursue any other line of work. However, if you had told me then that I would become a theology professor at a Catholic university in Los Angeles, I would have said that you were crazy. At that point, I had not yet settled on my major (which would be psychology with an English minor), but I had little interest in theology and even less interest in working in a religious institution, especially one that did not reflect my Muslim background. In fact, I chose my undergraduate college (University College) precisely because it had no Christian religious affiliation, unlike the majority of colleges at the University of Toronto.

It was through the study of English literature, specifically the works of William Shakespeare and the visionary artist William Blake, that I first became attracted to the study of religion. You could not, for example, understand Blake’s poetry or art without understanding the symbolic world that he had created, which in turn was deeply influenced by the Bible. At the University of Toronto, I was fortunate to be able to learn about Blake from Professors Northrop Frye and Jerry Bentley. In trying to understand in Western stories what

Professor Frye called in one of his course titles “the mythological framework of western culture,” I had to learn about the Bible. In doing so, I realized that I also needed to learn more about my own Muslim religious tradition.

At the university, I had the extraordinary privilege of being mentored by Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the greatest Canadian scholar of religion in the twentieth century. He founded and directed the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Montreal in 1951, before moving to Harvard in 1964, where for two decades he directed the Center for the Study of World Religions. He and his wife Muriel then moved back to their native Toronto where they lived until his death in 2000.

Wilfred’s ideas on Islam were shaped during the six years that he and Muriel lived in Lahore, India (the city of my birth, coincidentally), from 1940 to 1946. At the time that he began his graduate work, before the Second World War, the study of Islam consisted almost entirely of the study, by non-Muslim scholars, of mostly Arabic and Persian texts written by Muslims. Growing up in Canada, where there were very few Muslims in 1940, he went to India, which at the time was the country with the largest number of Muslims. This was a revolutionary idea—to actually live with Muslims, and to actually ask them what they thought, and then to actually write about it. But then again, that is what one does when one is the minority; one has to learn about the majority.

They returned to Lahore in 1948, which had, after the forced migrations and massacres of Partition, become the capital city of Pakistan. It was there, in the ruins of Lahore, that Wilfred found his calling, described by Kenneth Cracknell, “so to help men and women understand each other, that religion should never again be used as an excuse for such bloodshed and such destruction.”³

We Muslims and Christians have been neighbors to each other in the past, and will continue to be neighbors in the future. That is a very important metaphor, being a neighbor. Someone once asked Wilfred, “Professor Smith, are you Christian?” If the question had been “are you a Christian,” the answer would have been a very simple “yes.”

Instead, Wilfred did what he always did when asked a question. He paused, repeated the question, and thought about his answer. “Am I Christian,” he said. “Maybe, I was, last week. On a Tuesday. At lunch. For about an hour. But if you really want to know, ask my neighbor.”

Unfortunately, there are Muslims in North America and around the world who have no interest in pluralism. They see Islam as the only true religion, and often see their own particular way of being Muslim as the only way to be Muslim. I will return to them at the end of my talk, when I mention some things we might do in the future. As a teacher, I often have Muslim students who are such zealous defenders of Islam. In hearing their rhetoric of intolerance, I think back again to Wilfred, who was for many of us who study religion, the paradigm of critical scholarship. From his deep knowledge, he was able to offer critique when it was needed. He was not a Muslim. He was not an apologist for Islam. Yet his critique never did violence to what it meant for other people to be Muslim. In *Islam in Modern History* he wrote: “A true Muslim, however, is not a man who believes in Islam —especially Islam in history; but one who believes in God and is committed to the revelation through His Prophet.”⁴ Those words were published in 1957. In 1962’s *The Meaning and End of Religion*, he continued: “...the essential tragedy of the modern Islamic world is the degree to which Muslims, instead of giving their allegiance to God, have been giving it to something called Islam.”⁵ Those words could have been written today, in the age of ISIS, al-Shebab, and Boko Haram, with equal force and validity.

It is important to stress that there are counters to this intolerance, through the pluralism and dialogue that are also happening around the Muslim world, not just in North America. At this conference, there are so many Muslim scholars doing important comparative theological work in Catholic settings.

In 2007, based out of Jordan, a number of Muslim scholars, clerics, and intellectuals issued a call to Christian leaders with the publication of the document *A Common Word Between Us and You*. That document calls Christians and Muslims into dialogue based on the two great commandments in each tradition (Mark 12:28-32), love

of God and love of one's neighbor. In 2008, Saudi Arabia sponsored conferences on dialogue for Muslims in Mecca, and for Muslims and non-Muslims together in Madrid. In January of 2009, I was one of a dozen Muslim scholars from the US and the UK who were invited to a conference at Al-Azhar University in Cairo on bridges of dialogue between the most important university in the Sunni Muslim world and the West. That conference also had Jewish and Christian participants.

Perhaps in the future, we, as Muslims, can help you, as Christians, with a new approach to evangelization, not to change each other's religions, but to help in spreading the message of the gospel, to literally evangelize. We can work together for common goals that we all share. I would be happy, as a Muslim, to live in a land where the ethical teaching was the teaching of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. Unfortunately, I don't know of such a place in either Christian or Muslim lands. But perhaps we can construct it together.

We can be seen in conflict and competition, and we have been in both conflict and competition in our history and our present as Christians and Muslims. The Great Commission for Christians and the Qur'anic teaching on *da'wa* or calling people to Islam for Muslims are certainly in competition. It is because of those commandments in our traditions that we are the two largest religious traditions in the world. But we can also be in cooperation with each other, being in what the Catholic Church describes as a culture of dialogue. I have learned the most about Catholic perspectives on this from my friend and Jesuit colleague, Fr. Thomas Michel. About this, Fr. Michel wrote:

...the focal question is not whether the church should be proclaiming the Gospel or engaged in dialogue, but rather whether Christians are actually sharing life with their neighbors of other faiths. The basic distinction is not between being a church in dialogue or one that proclaims the Gospel, but rather the option of being a church that is following the Spirit's lead to partake humanly in life with others, and thus constantly engaged in dialogue, witness, and proclamation, or else that of being a church that is closed in on itself and exists in a self-imposed ghetto with little concern for and involvement with people of other faiths with whom Christians share culture, history, citizenship, and common human destiny. When

people of various faiths live together—not simply cohabiting the same town but sharing life *together*—the question of dialogue or proclamation doesn't arise. When they work, study, struggle, celebrate, and mourn together and face the universal crises of injustice, illness, and death as one, they don't spend most of their time talking about doctrine. Their focus is on immediate concerns of survival, on taking care of the sick and needy, on communicating cherished values to new generations, on resolving problems and tensions in productive rather than in destructive ways, on reconciling after conflicts, on seeking to build more just, humane, and dignified societies.⁶

There is any number of future trajectories for Muslim–Christian relations in Catholic universities that I could discuss. In the comparative study of religion, it is crucial that we have our categories correct. Wilfred wrote, for example, not only on connections between the Bible and Qur'an, but more properly between Jesus Christ for Christians and the Qur'an for Muslims or theology for Muslims and philosophy of religion for Christians, or the Christian concept of the Spirit and the Qur'anic notion of God as *al-Hādi*, or the guide. Faith is the appropriate category of comparison in all three traditions.

In describing faith in the Qur'an, Professor Smith wrote:

Faith is something that people do more than it is something people have; although one may primarily say that it pertains to something that people are, or become. The Qur'an presents, in reverberatingly engaging fashion, a dramatic challenge wherein God's terror and mercy, simultaneously, are proclaimed to humankind, whereby we are offered the option of accepting or rejecting His self-disclosure of the terms which He, as Creator and Ruler of the world and of us, has set in our lives.⁷

I do not want to get into discussions of the Trinity here, mostly because whenever I think I understand that concept, or at least think I have some idea of how it is understood, the ground shifts beneath my feet. Recently, I was talking with a theologian who described the Trinity as being non-hierarchical and co-equal, and I thought, are not the terms Father and Son, by definition, hierarchical and unequal, to say nothing of the Orthodox notion of the Monarchy of the Father and the rejection of the *filioque* clause. But in discussions of the Trinity, I

do find useful David Burrell's writing on the Great Commandment and the *shema*:

Christian-Muslim disputations regularly opposed Muslim insistence on the unicity of God to a Christian trinitarian presentation. Yet every student of the history of Christian thought knows that it took nearly five centuries of Christological controversies, plus another century of conceptual elaboration, to hone a 'doctrine of trinity,' precisely because of the *shema*: 'Hear, O Israel, God our God is one' (Deut 6:4). So if Muslim teaching showcasing divine unity - *tawhid* - has been developed polemically over against the 'threeness' of the one God, Christians need to recall how long it took to articulate 'threeness' in God without prejudice to God's unity, so how easily 'trinity' can be misunderstood.⁸

Or, to take another example, let us consider how the Hebrew Bible is read very differently by Jews and Christians. Christians read the Old Testament through the lens of the New Testament, or at least through the prism of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Muslims, I would argue, need to understand both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament in order to properly appreciate the Qur'an. Certainly the first hearers of the revelation were familiar with the Biblical stories, or else, to take only one example, 5:27, "recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam," would make no sense. Clearly the first hearers knew something of Adam and his two sons. Here, I make a plea to Muslims to become familiar with the Biblical texts and traditions.

On the Christian side, many North Americans are surprised to learn that Muslims have a long history on their continent. Historians estimate that between 10 and 20 percent of the slaves who came from West Africa were Muslim. Thomas Jefferson began learning Arabic in the 1770s, after he purchased a translation of the Qur'an in 1765. Keith Ellison used this Qur'an when he was sworn in as the first Muslim member of Congress in 2007.

The first Muslim immigrants to North America other than slaves were from the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Many were itinerants who came to make money and then return to their countries of origin.

Some, however, were farmers and settled permanently. Mosques sprung up in 1915 (Maine), 1919 (Connecticut), 1928 (New York), and 1937 (North Dakota). From the time of the slave trade, there has been a consciousness about Islam in African American communities. Moreover, beginning with early missionary work in the nineteenth century and continuing in the 1920s, there was a specific attempt to introduce and convert African Americans to Islam. Other groups, such as the Moorish Science Temple and the Nation of Islam, exclusively targeted African Americans. When Warith Deen Muhammad took over the leadership of the Nation of Islam from his father in 1975, he brought the majority of his followers into Sunni orthodoxy. Today, the majority of African American Muslims are Sunni Muslims.

In the last half-century, the Muslim population of the United States has increased dramatically through immigration, strong birth rates, and conversion. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 allowed many more Muslims to immigrate than were previously allowed under the earlier quota system. The United States census does not ask the question of religious affiliation, so there is less certainty about the size of its Muslim population. I have seen estimates as low as two million people, and as high as ten million. My own research of America's immigration patterns, birth rates, and conversion rates – similar to those of Canada – leads me to conclude that both of these estimates are extreme. Instead, I along with many researchers estimate that there are between seven and eight million American Muslims.

Muslims are at once a very old community here, but in many ways, a very new one when it comes to building institutions. As a child growing up in Toronto, I had very few Muslim role models. The ones that were most important to me were two African American athletes, Kareem Abdul Jabbar and the Greatest, Muhammad Ali. These days, for young North American Muslims, their Muslim heroes continue to be African American athletes, but also entertainers such as Dave Chapelle and rappers and hip hop artists such as the RZA, Lupe Fiasco, or Ice Cube. For them, the connection is with other North Americans, particularly African Americans, who have

long experiences of discrimination and racism that many American immigrant Muslims face.

One opportunity that interfaith dialogue brings is increased cooperation and understanding. This interfaith work also involves the attendance of non-Muslims at Muslim rituals and celebrations and the attendance of Muslims at non-Muslim religious ceremonies. The result is an “Islam” that influences and in turn is influenced by the other traditions with which it comes into contact. As a result of the interfaith dialogue in a city such as Los Angeles, many non-Muslims are aware of some of the basic elements of Islam.

We have welcomed Muslim students into our Jesuit colleges. American Muslims are an American success story, equal in wealth and higher education to non-Muslims. *Newsweek* did a cover story a few years ago on Islam in America, highlighting a 2007 survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life which found that 26% of American Muslims had household incomes above \$75,000 (as compared to 28% of non-Muslims) and 24% of American Muslims had graduated from university or done graduate studies (as compared to 25% of non-Muslims).⁹ That Pew survey of American Muslims found that: “The first-ever, nationwide, random sample survey of Muslim Americans finds them to be largely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world.”¹⁰

At Loyola Marymount University we have over 100 Muslim students, who attend because of the excellent reputation for both education and social justice in Jesuit and Marymount colleges. Our past president, Fr. Robert Lawton, has spoken of the value that non-Catholic students (including not just other Christians, but members of other religious traditions, as well as atheists) have in Catholic universities. At the 2008 Mass of the Holy Spirit, the traditional beginning to our fall term, Fr. Lawton said this in his homily: “Non-Catholics and non-believers are not here at the University simply because we need you to pay our bills or raise our grades or SAT scores. We want you here for a deeper reason. By helping us to doubt, you help us get closer to a deeper understanding of our God, this life and this world we share.”

Muslim students can help us to understand more about faith, and we should recruit them because they can help us to be the best that we can be.

As described by Fr. Michel, there are a number of initiatives happening at Jesuit universities. In 1995, the 34th General Congregation recommended the creation in the General Curia of the Jesuits of a Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue. It also recommended the establishment in the Gregorian University in Rome of an institute for the study of religions and cultures, as well as making the Jesuit house in Jerusalem a center for study and dialogue with Jews and Muslims. It was Fr. Tom Michel, SJ, who directed that secretariat. This message of interfaith dialogue continued with the 35th General Congregation in 2008. In 2008, there was a conference on the Common Word document held in honor of Fr. Michel at Georgetown University, with a publication edited by John Borelli. There are a growing number of Muslims who teach theology in Jesuit universities, helping to advance the cause of inter-faith dialogue. One of them, Professor Irfan Omar at Marquette University, has edited a collection of Fr. Michel's essays for a book entitled *A Christian View of Islam*, published by Orbis Books. My friend, Fr. Patrick Ryan, SJ, from Fordham University, is the holder of the Laurence McGinley Chair in Religion and Society at Fordham University (the post previously held by Cardinal Dulles of blessed memory), where in 2009 he delivered his inaugural lecture, entitled *Amen: Faith and the possibility of Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue*. Clearly, there are a number of initiatives by Jesuit universities in interfaith dialogue.

As religious people, we may share a common belief that it is our duty to help each other. I am reminded here of a quote I once heard, where someone asked a Christian minister about the quote from the Book of Genesis, where God asks Cain about his brother Abel. Cain responds with the famous line, "am I my brother's keeper?" Many of us adopt that line—that we are not responsible for, and to, our brothers and sisters. This particular minister answered in a different way. "Am I my brother's keeper? Yes, because I am my brother's brother." We have several examples of people from different religions

working together to help each other. In Canada, in 2004, we voted Tommy Douglas as the Greatest Canadian in a poll by the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation). In the middle of our current health care debate, how many of us remember that the reason that we have socialized medicine in Canada is because of him? And it was his Christian roots in the social gospel movement that spurred him. Not that it was his neighborly duty, but his Christian duty to take care of his neighbor. In the current debates about health care and immigration, we see many religious groups stepping forward to help people without demanding to see their identification, as some politicians would have us do.

As Muslims, particularly as North American Muslims, we need to become more visible as individuals and communities as participants in North American life. You, the members of Jesuit colleges, can help us to do this, as we have much to learn from you here. We can increase this participation in a number of ways. We can encourage our children to value the arts and humanities. We have a large number of Muslim doctors and lawyers and businesspeople. Where are the Muslim writers and artists and musicians and filmmakers and actors and journalists? We should encourage our children in these fields, which are of course at the heart of a traditional Jesuit education in the liberal arts. If we want our stories told in the media, we need to do this ourselves. Zaraqa Nawaz has done this in Canada with her CBC television show *Little Mosque on the Prairie*.

Church colleges can also help Muslim communities through the training in Islamic theology offered by some theological schools, a wonderful example of our neighborliness. One thinks of established programs at Hartford Seminary, as well as newer programs such as Bayan College in Claremont. The Graduate Theological Union has created a Center for Islamic Studies, and Zaytuna College was accredited last month. My own university several years ago now admitted its first Muslim imam into our MA in theology. This signals an interesting partnership between theological schools who have the experience and skill to train students for ministry, and Muslim communities who have almost no seminaries of their own in North

America. Muslim communities are asking their imams, who were trained as textual scholars, to serve in roles as therapists, counsellors, social workers, pastors, and chaplains, for which they have often had no training.

As Catholics and Muslims, we need to stand with each other. I offer a plea, here, to speak out when those in your community malign us, just as we must speak out when those in our community malign you. Without naming names (I am a Canadian, and we Canadians are nothing if not polite), there are a number of people in the Christian tradition who have said hateful things about Islam and Muslims. This is particularly hurtful when it comes from Catholics, because with all due respect, you should know better. You know in your history in America about what it means to be persecuted. You know that when Americans first talked about non-white foreigners who came to this country with their strange customs, odd dress, exotic foods, home-grown hatreds and allegiance to foreign authority, they were talking about Catholics, not Muslims.

Perhaps in the future, we can move from disputes about Christology to a focus on Pneumatology, looking at how the spirit of God is at work in the world. I see that in my friend Alain Godbut from Halifax, who is working on a “Nazarene” bracelet to show our solidarity, as North American Muslims and Christians, with the persecuted Christians of the Middle East.

My university teachers about Islam were all Christians: Jane McAuliffe (Catholic), Michael Marmura (Anglican), Will Oxtoby (Presbyterian), and Wilfred Cantwell Smith (United Church of Canada). Of them, only Jane is still with us. It was she who first got me interested in the Christians of the Middle East, and who also got me to do a very different dissertation project, on contemporary Islam in North America.

I was at Notre Dame last week, speaking at the Kroc Institute. There, my friend Ebrahim Moosa raised the idea of an interfaith action circle at synagogues, mosques, and churches. What if on a Friday, we had Jews and Christians circling a mosque where Muslims prayed, and later that evening for the Shabbat services, Muslims and Christians

circled the synagogue where Jews prayed. And on Sunday, Muslims and Jews could circle the Church for a Sunday worship service. That would be a very visible symbol of our interconnectedness and our support for one another.

This would be a small step toward repaying the debt we as Muslims owe to Christians.

Many people are aware of the emigration of Muhammad and his earliest followers from Mecca to Medina in the year 622. However, there was an earlier emigration to Abyssinia that underscored the value of interfaith dialogue to Muhammad. The earliest biographer of the Prophet, Ibn Ishaq (c. 704-767), and the famed Muslim historian Tabari (838-923), discuss this migration. As people began to accept Islam they met with opposition from others in Mecca. This opposition turned to physical persecution of certain members of the early Muslim community. Muhammad gathered a group of those most vulnerable, and instructed them to go across the Red Sea to Abyssinia, a Christian country ruled by a Christian king. The emigrants were welcomed and accepted there. Indeed, the Christian king protected the Muslims against demands of extradition by the polytheists of Mecca. The emigrants stayed in Abyssinia until they rejoined the larger Muslim community in Medina.

Muhammad's act represents the first time that Muslims, as Muslims, dealt with Christians as a community. There was no sense of enmity against the Christians of Abyssinia; instead, they were seen as a people that would protect members of the nascent Muslim community. This is a very early example in Islam of the importance of pluralism and interfaith dialogue, and the debt that Muslims owe to Christians.

We can connect with each other in the poetry of our ordinary lives, exemplified in the story of Hagar. Fr. Tom Michel sees Hagar as our "Mother in Faith," and writes:

I believe that Hagar is a key religious figure and that meditation on her story can enrich the understanding of Jews, Christians, and Muslims concerning the nature of the God whom we worship and what it means to do God's will in contemporary societies. The image of Hagar and her child in the desert is part of today's reality. The low-born, hard-working

domestic laborer, used and misused and cast out by her employers, the single mother abandoned by the father of her child, the foreigner and the refugee far from her native land, desperately trying to survive, frantic in her maternal concern for the safety of her child—this Hagar I have met many times.¹¹

Let me end with an example of vision and love as the language of God. As I mentioned earlier, as an undergraduate at the University of Toronto, I had the extraordinary privilege of knowing Northrop Frye, whose last book was entitled *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion*. In his famous undergraduate course, “The Mythological Framework of Western Culture,” Professor Frye would remind us that when the Bible is historically accurate, it is only accidentally so. In the same vein, with respect to the teaching of science in places in the American Bible belt like Kansas, none of my Jewish friends think that the Bible, important as it is, is a very good science textbook. It is, however, much more important than history or science. It tells us about our place in the world. It gives us not facts, but something much more important, truths. Or to quote from Professor Frye:

What ‘the’ truth is, is not available to human beings in spiritual matters: the goal of our spiritual life is God, who is a spiritual Other, not a spiritual object, much less a conceptual object. That is why the Gospels keep reminding us how many listen and how few hear: truths of the gospel kind cannot be demonstrated except through personal example. As the seventeenth-century Quaker Isaac Pennington said, every truth is substantial in its own place, but all truths are shadows except the last. The language that lifts us clear of the merely plausible and the merely credible is the language of the spirit; the language of the spirit is, Paul tells us, the language of love, and the language of love is the only language that we can be sure is spoken and understood by God.¹²

Let us move into the future with the language of love.

¹¹ John Barber, “Different Colours, Changing City,” in *The Globe and Mail* (February 20, 1998), A8.

- 2 W.E. Kalbach and W.W. McVey, "Religious Composition of the Canadian Population," in Stewart Crysedale and Les Wheatcroft, editors, *Religion in Canadian Society* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 221-240.
- 3 Kenneth Cracknell, *Wilfred Cantwell Smith: A Reader* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2001), 6.
- 4 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 146.
- 5 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1963; reprinted, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 126.
- 6 Thomas F. Michel, *A Christian View of Islam: Essays on Dialogue*, edited by Irfan Omar, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010,), 21.
- 7 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *On Understanding Islam: Selected Studies* (Mouton: The Hague, 1981), 122.
- 8 David B. Burrell, "A Philosophical-Theologian's Journey", in Christian W. Troll and C.T.R. Hwer, editors, *Christian Lives Given to the Study of Islam* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 59.
- 9 "Islam in America," special report in *Newsweek* (July 30, 2007), 27.
- 10 Survey available from: < <http://pewforum.org/surveys/muslim-american/>>.
- 11 "Hagar: Biblical and Islamic Perspectives," in Irfan Omar, editor, *A Christian View of Islam: Essays on Dialogue by Thomas F. Michel, SJ* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 87.
- 12 Northrop Frye, *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 20-21.