Revelation, Translation, and Interpretation in Christianity and Islam

WASHINGTON, D.C.—“Islam and Christianity alike give a high valuation to the conviction that God speaks to us. Grasping what that does and does not mean . . . is challenging theological work.” So concludes Archbishop Rowan Williams at the end of Communicating the Word, a new work on Christian-Muslim dialogue. Featuring the insights of internationally known scholars from both faiths, the essays collected in the book focus attention on key scriptural texts while also engaging with both classical and contemporary Islamic and Christian thought.

Communicating the Word explores themes crucial to these religions, like the different ways in which Christians and Muslims think of their scriptures as the “Word of God,” the possibilities and challenges of translating scripture, and the methods—and conflicts—involving in interpreting scripture in the past and today. Caner K. Dagli, of the College of the Holy Cross, recommends the book, saying, “There are very few people, specialist or otherwise, who will not learn much from this rich and varied volume. It is rare for interreligious exchange to take place at such a sustained level of quality, and much of the authors’ contributions manage to feel both erudite and direct.”

This volume is a record of the seventh Building Bridges seminar, held in 2008 at Villa Palazzola, near Rome. The seminar is an annual forum for theological dialogue between leading Christian and Muslim scholars. The 2008 conference was convened by Archbishop Rowan Williams, one of the world’s most prominent Christian leaders and theologians.

The Reverend Dr. David Marshall is the academic director of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Building Bridges seminar and a research fellow at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University.

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