

Professor David Thomas MA (Oxon), MA (Cantab), PhD (Lanc)

Professor of Christianity and Islam
Nadir Dinshaw Professor of Interreligious Relations

[Department of Theology and Religion \(/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx\)](/schools/ptr/departments/theologyandreligion/index.aspx)

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About

For many years one of my specialist interests has been the history of religious thought in Islam and the structure of Islamic religious thinking. A particular aspect of this is relations between Muslims and followers of other faiths, especially Christianity. I have made this a major topic of my research and writing.

Qualifications

- MA Oxford, English Language and Literature
- MA Cambridge, Theology and Religious Studies
- PhD Lancaster, Islamic Studies and Culture

Biography

Professor Thomas has been a specialist in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations for many years. After undergraduate work at Oxford, he worked in the northern Sudan, where his interest in Islam was kindled. He took this further in theological studies at Cambridge and in PhD research at Lancaster.

Professor Thomas worked in parts of the UK for some years on relations between the churches and Muslim communities, and in 1993 he was appointed Lecturer at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak. In 2004 he was promoted to Reader in the Department of Theology and Religion, and in 2007 was appointed Professor of Christianity and Islam. In 2011 he was made Nadir Dinshaw Professor of Interreligious Relations.

Teaching

Professor Thomas teaches Introduction to Islam at undergraduate level, and modules on Christian-Muslim Relations and Islamic Philosophy at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Postgraduate supervision

Areas of supervision

- Encounters between Christianity and Islam
- Mutual influences between the two faiths
- Arabic textual studies
- Islamic religious thought
- Christians in Islamic societies
- Muslims in Christian societies

Currently supervising

- Ahmad Sanusi Bin Azmi, The Prophet Muhammad in the Qur'an and Islamic biographies
- Mohamad Azmi Haji Mohamad, Muslim scholars on the place of Muslims in Europe
- Mehmet Kahveci, Turkish portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad in the early twentieth century
- Ralph Leo, The Christian Puritan Jonathan Edwards and the Muslim *muwahhid* Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab
- Charles Ramsey, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan in the Christian Bible
- Nighat Saleem, Employing the Prophet's Hadith to discern Islamic teachings about the role of women in public
- Heather Serjeant, Changing attitudes in the British military towards Muslims
- Nabila Shah, The portrayal of Muslims in early modern British theatre
- Abdud Younus, South Asian tafsir works

Research

My main areas of research are Islamic religious thought and the history and theology of Christian-Muslim relations. These are largely expressed in the following current research activities:

Christian-Muslim Relations, a bibliographical history (<http://www.brill.nl/christian-muslim-relations-bibliographical-history-volume-2-900-1050>) an AHRC-funded project, aims to compile a definitive history of works written by Christians and Muslims against and about one another in the period 600-1900. The outcomes are published by E.J. Brill, Leiden, in print **online** (<http://www.brill.com/publications/christian-muslim-relations-bibliographical-history>) by Brill. By July 2013, 5 volumes appeared covering the period **600-1500** (<http://www.brill.com/publications/christian-muslim-relations-bibliographical-history>). I head an international team of 25 specialists who are currently working on volume 6, covering the period 1500-1600.

He is Islam editor of **The Encyclopaedia of the Bible and its Reception** (<http://www.degruyter.com/databasecontent?dbid=ebr&dbsource=%2Fdb%2Ffebr>), which traces the reception of themes and figures from the Bible in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, world faiths, literature, music, art, theatre and film. Published by De Gruyter, Berlin, it will appear in 30 volumes over 12 years, of which 7 volumes have appeared.

He is managing editor of the Brill series **The History of Christian-Muslim Relations** (<http://www.brill.com/publications/history-christian-muslim-relations>).

and senior editor of the journal **Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations** (<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cicm20/current>).

Publications

- 'Christianity in Islamic theology: the case of al-Juwaynī', in C. Belo and J.-J. Pérennès (eds), *Mission in dialogue. Essays in honour of Michael L. Fitzgerald*, Louvain, 2012
- *Understanding Interreligious Relations*, ed. with David Cheetham and Douglas Pratt, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013
- *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History, volume 5 (1350-1500)*, Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History, volume 4 (1200-1350)*, Leiden: Brill, 2012.
- *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History, volume 3 (1050-1200)*, Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- 'Miracles in Islam', in *The Cambridge Companion to Miracles* ed. Graham Twelftree, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011
- *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History, volume 2 (900-1050)*, Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- 'Christian voices in Muslim theology', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36, 2009, pp. 357-80 (published 2010)
- 'Apologetic and Polemic in the Letter from Cyprus and Ibn Taymiyya's Jawab al-sahih li-man baddala din al-Masih', in Yossef Rappoport and Shahab Ahmed, *Ibn Taymiyya and his Times*, Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- 'Christian voices in Muslim theology', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 36, 2009, pp. 357-79.
- *Christian-Muslim Relations, a Bibliographical History, volume 1 (600-900)*, Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- *Christian Doctrines in Islamic Theology (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 10)*, Leiden: Brill, 2008
- Article 'Abu `Isa al-Warraq', *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 3, Leiden: Brill, 2008
- 'Arab Christianity', in K. Parry ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2007
- *The Bible in Arab Christianity*, ed. (*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 6*), Leiden: Brill, 2007
- *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, ed. with E. Grypeou and M. Swanson (*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 5*), Leiden: Brill, 2006
- 'Receiving and Acquiring Wisdom in Islam', *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 33, 2006, pp. 439-52
- 'Regard and Disregard in Early Relations between Muslims and Christians', *Chronos* 14, 2006, pp. 7-30
- *Muslim-Christian Polemic during the Crusades, the letter from the People of Cyprus and Ibn Abi Talib's Response*, ed. with R. Ebied (*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 2*), Leiden: Brill, 2005
- *Christians at the Heart of Islamic Rule, Church Life and Scholarship in `Abbasid Iraq*, ed. (*The History of Christian-Muslim Relations 1*), Leiden: Brill, 2005
- *A Faithful Presence, essays for Kenneth Cragg*, ed. with Clare Amos, London: Melisende, 2003
- *Early Muslim Anti-Christian Polemic, Abu `Isa al-Warraq's 'Against the Incarnation'*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002

Expertise

The religious history of Islam and main theological movements; history and theology of Christian-Muslim relations, particularly in the attitudes of Muslims towards Christians and Christian beliefs

Alternative contact number available for this expert: **contact the press office** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx>)

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