

# Non Sola Scriptura

Essays on the Qur'an and Islam  
in Honour of William A. Graham

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## 4 The *Masjid* in the Qur'an

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In the mid-1960s, Charles J. Adams (1924–2011), an Islamicist who studied the history of religions with one of the discipline's founding figures, Joachim Wach (1898–1955), at the University of Chicago, expressed the frustrating dissonance he experienced between his two areas of specialization:

[I]t has proven increasingly difficult to see a direct and fructifying relationship between the activities of Islamicists and those of historians of religion. . . . [T]he great themes which have dominated the horizon of historians of religions in recent decades have not been such that would throw light on the Islamic experience or speak to the problems occupying Islamic scholarship.<sup>1</sup>

His observation was shared by Isma'il al-Faruqi (1921–1986), a Muslim intellectual and scholar of comparative religions who was responsible for introducing a venue for the study of Islam at the American Academy of Religion in 1973.<sup>2</sup> Similar to Adams, al-Faruqi, in the mid-1960s, observed,

Even today, no historian of religions proper has had anything to say that would catch the attention of men of knowledge in the Islamic field. At the root of this shortcoming stands the fact that Islam was never regarded as an integral part of the subject matter of history of religions.<sup>3</sup>

A couple of decades later, Richard Martin (1938–2019) began his landmark edited volume on *Approaches to Islam in Religious Studies* by echoing Adams and offering a similar diagnosis of the fields: "Islam should receive greater attention in religious studies" because "our understanding of Islam as religion and our

- 1 Charles J. Adams, "The History of Religions and the Study of Islam," in *The History of Religions: Essays on the Problems of Understanding*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa with the collaboration Mircea Eliade and Charles H. Long (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 178, 180.
- 2 Richard C. Martin, "Islamic Studies in the American Academy: A Personal Reflection," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78/4 (December 2010): 898.
- 3 Isma'il Ragi A. al-Faruqi, "History of Religions: Its Nature and Significance for Christian Education and Muslim-Christian Dialogue," *Numen* 12 (1965): 40.

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