

Thank you Your Royal Highness, Vice Chancellor, Professor Suleiman and valued guests, for joining me to formally inaugurate the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Centre for Islamic Studies at the University of Cambridge.

The mission of the Alwaleed Bin Talal Foundations, which His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed and I co-chair, is to help address some of the most pressing issues of our time around the world. We believe in commitment without boundaries, regardless to religion, geography or economic status. Furthermore, we share a sincere ambition to build bridges among peoples, nations and faiths, as the world is filled with individuals and communities who share far more similarities than differences.

Establishing the Alwaleed Centres at the leading universities in the West AND in the East will facilitate dialogue among some of the world's leading scholars and foster greater mutual understanding. This is based on Prince Alwaleed's passionate belief that every individual should strive to bridge the gaps between faiths and cultures especially because of globalization and unavoidable interaction. Fortunately, across our Centers we find the young people leading the way. The Centre of Islamic Studies here in Cambridge organized a 12-week student visit of UK and Afghani students in Cairo. As you can imagine, at the beginning of the program, the Afghani students sat together on one side of the room, while the UK students sat on the other. By the end of the trip you could not separate the two groups from each other. The melting away of boundaries was visible in only 12 short weeks! It is this kind of interaction that promotes peace in the world.

The cooperation of leading scholars at the various Prince Alwaleed Centres, in the University of Cambridge, the University of Edinburgh, Harvard University, Georgetown University, American University in Cairo, and American University of Beirut is crucial in order for us to fully understand each other. It is through this kind of dialogue and scholarship that we can begin to break down the boundaries that continue to limit our society's development and cohesion.

As we look to build mutual understanding, my husband and I are very grateful to have found such a principled and dedicated partners, like the University of Cambridge-- a partner who vigorously upholds the Alwaleed Foundations' ideals of integrity, excellence and intellectual interest.