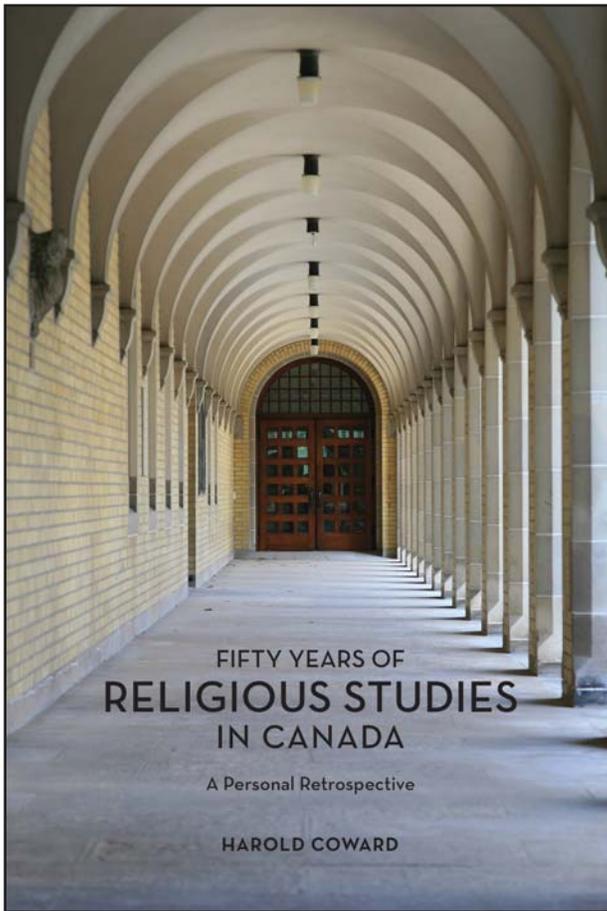


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Fifty Years of Religious Studies in Canada

A Personal Retrospective
Harold Coward

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In Canadian universities in the early 1960s, no courses were offered on Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam. Only the study of Christianity was available, usually in a theology program in a church college or seminary. Today almost every university in North America has a religious studies department that offers courses on Western and Eastern religions as well as religion in general. Harold Coward addresses this change in this memoir of his forty-five-year career in the development of religious studies as a new academic field in Canada. He also addresses the shift from theology classes in seminaries to non-sectarian religious studies faculties of arts and humanities; the birth and growth of departments across Canada from the 1960s to the present; the contribution of McMaster University to religious studies in Canada and Coward's Ph.D. experience there; the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria; and the future of religious studies as a truly interdisciplinary enterprise.

Coward's retrospective, while not a history as such, documents information from his varied experience and wide network of colleagues that is essential for a future formal history of the discipline. His story is both personally engaging and richly informative about the development of the field.

Harold Coward is a professor emeritus of history and the founding director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. He served as president of the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion and was the founding editor of the *Journal for Hindu-Christian Studies* and editor of the WLU Press series *The Study of Religion in Canada*. He has authored twenty books along with many edited books, chapters and articles. His publications include *Scripture in the World Religions* (2002), *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India and America* (2004), and *The Perfectibility of Human Nature in Eastern and Western Thought* (2008).

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