The Church of England and Islam: contemporary Anglican Christian-Muslim relations and the politico-theological question, 1988-2012

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Abstract

The thesis proposes that an ecclesial turn has taken place in the contemporary Church of England’s reflections on Islam that seeks to root relations with Islam in the prior identity of the church as a participatory community within the life of the trinity. This ecclesial turn in Christian-Muslim relations resonates with a broader reorientation in political theology that seeks to address the question of how public space is shared with Muslims by beginning with a traditioned account of God and the Church. A summary of historical Christian theologies of Islam in the wider Christian tradition culminating in the seminal documents of Vatican II demonstrates the persistent attention to questions of the trinity and the need to hold together both theologies of dialogue and evangelism in the Christian-Muslim encounter. The historical context for Anglican Christian-Muslim relations is then outlined, highlighting recurring themes of loyalty and nationhood that underscore the significance of the politico-theological question. Analysing specifically the documents on other faiths produced by the Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008, a move to inter-religious relations is revealed that eschews earlier attempts at novel theologies of religions. The work of Kenneth Cragg and Rowan Williams will be seen to be vital influences on this move as part of a school of scholarship that draws together an evangelical, missionary stream with a catholic sensibility of presence, both dependent upon a sacramental vision of the world. A retrieval of traditions will be seen to have shaped the contemporary understanding of relations with Islam including an attentiveness to the experiences of the broader Anglican Communion. This retrieval amounts to a consolidation of traditional Anglican themes, re-interpreted for the contemporary reality of religious diversity, exemplified in Cragg’s adaptation of the kenosis theology of the Lux Mundi school. This retrieval is also a widening of the canon in the recovery of other Christian traditions. Thus, Williams retrieves the contemplative tradition of the Desert Fathers and the Eastern Orthodox sensibilities of the Russian émigré movement in his account of Islam. Both theologians will be seen to situate themselves within the retrieval and renewal of sources exemplified by the Catholic Church in Vatican II. Williams and Cragg also situate themselves within the sacramental, comprehensive vision of Richard Hooker, thus embodying a very Anglican engagement with Islam. Notable developments in historical Anglican
political theology are analysed and critiqued in the light of their responsiveness to a
traditioned account of Anglican Christian-Muslim relations and their ability to support
the diversity of encounters with Islam that the historical analysis suggests is
necessary. The thesis concludes that the theological legacies of Cragg and Williams
and their resonances with the wider canon of Christian tradition provide a rich
resource for Anglican encounters with Islam that confirm the endeavour as an
ecumical task.
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_In memoriam_ Bishop Kenneth Cragg

1913-2012
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CHAPTER 1
Introduction

i. Context and Central Thesis

Since the Act of Supremacy in 1534, in which the King replaced the Pope as the head of the English Church, the Church of England has been established by law. This set the pattern for the civil realm being synonymous with the church within the broader Westphalian move of the European Reformation.¹ There has been a growing diversity of religions, whether through the presence of Catholic recusants, who were effectively “other faiths” at the time of the Elizabethan Settlement, or Jews, Puritans and Muslims, ever since the English Reformation. In terms of the law, the state has been slow to recognise the reality of religious diversity such that Russell Sandberg can quote Pastor Thwackum in Fielding’s Tom Jones as an accurate reflection of the identification of church with state as late as 1749:

“When I mention religion, I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.”²

It is in the negotiation of Christian-Muslim relations where a presumption that the Church of England is the default repository of “religion” in public life is manifestly untrue that this thesis is set. How the Church of England assesses and make space for the present reality of Islam in its midst is thus both a theological and a political study that this thesis will be seeking to explore.

Though the earliest recorded legal reference to Muslim presence was in 1764, when it was decided that a Muslim could swear his oath on the Qur’an, settled communities in

Britain only began to be established from the end of the nineteenth century. From being small communities in British ports, Muslim presence began to grow in scale with the economic immigration from the Indian subcontinent to industrial towns and cities after the Second World War. By the 2001 national census, there were up to two million Muslims in the United Kingdom, representing about 3% of its total population. Preliminary figures from the 2011 census show that Muslims in England and Wales represent 4.8% of the population (amounting to 2.7 million people). This thesis is concerned to explore the Church of England’s account of Islam and how it configures space for Islam in the public realm. With the growing reality of religious diversity, what theological resources enable the Church of England to move from the unitary church-state model to an engagement with Islam as a religious other?

The thesis will propose that an ecclesial turn has taken place in contemporary Anglican reflections on Islam that seeks to root relations with Islam in the prior identity of the church as a participatory community within the life of the trinity. The motif of hospitality will be seen to be a key theme for this ecclesial turn, which has echoes within the wider Church. The work of Kenneth Cragg and Rowan Williams will be seen to be vital influences on this ecclesial turn which seems to eschew the novel schema of theologies of religions that were entertained in Anglican documents during the 1980’s and 1990’s. Instead, a retrieval of traditions will be seen to have shaped the contemporary understanding of relations with Islam. This retrieval amounts to a consolidation of traditional Anglican themes, re-interpreted for the contemporary reality of religious diversity, exemplified in Cragg’s adaptation of the kenosis theology of the Lux Mundi school. This retrieval is also a widening of the canon in the recovery of other Christian traditions. Thus, Williams retrieves the contemplative tradition of the Desert Fathers and the Eastern Orthodox sensibilities of

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the Russian émigré movement in his account of Islam. Both theologians, representative of the Anglican ecclesial turn in interfaith relations, will be seen to situate themselves within the retrieval and renewal of sources exemplified by the Catholic Church in Vatican II, which was vital to its own reappraisal of other faiths. The ecumenical vista of the ecclesial turn will be confirmed by the extent to which reflections on Islam from the wider Anglican Communion have shaped Christian-Muslim relations, too.

Chapter 2 will provide an account of Christian-Muslim relations both historically and in the light of the seminal event of Vatican II. This account will confirm the importance of the trinity as both a point of distinction from and a basis for relations with Islam in the formative encounters of the Catholic Church, the Eastern Church and of the Eastern Orthodox tradition.

Chapter 3 will analyse the Church of England’s own relations with Islam with specific reference to the Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008 as important milestones reflective of the ecclesial turn. The thread of influences through the formative documents of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion will highlight the roles of Kenneth Cragg and Rowan Williams. The bracketing of the thesis between the dates 1988 and 2012 highlights the significance of the 1988 Lambeth Conference as the first, doctrinal, Anglican account of Islam. The end of Rowan Williams’ period as Archbishop of Canterbury and the death of Kenneth Cragg in December 2012 signal an appropriate era to Anglican responses to Islam. Both the contributions of Williams and Cragg will emphasise that a unity in difference rather than despite difference has been the characteristic shift within Anglicanism. From speculative proposals for a shared common core between Christianity and Islam, Williams and Cragg embody a theology of relations that enables a diversity of encounters, conducive of dialogue and proclamation, partnership and challenge. The impulse for this relationship will be seen to be a trinitarian monotheism that roots the ecclesial community as a sacrament of God’s presence in a sacramental universe, characteristic of “Christian Presence”.

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Having established an ecclesial turn in relations with Islam, Chapter 4 will focus on the corresponding politico-theological framework within which these relations are set. The themes of natural law, *kenosis*, Anglican retrievals of patristics, the trinity, and the whole notion of an “ecclesial turn” have parallels in the subject of political theology within Anglican history. Thus, potential resources for grounding a political theology out of an ecclesial ontology will be analysed with particular reference to the work of Cragg and Williams. The natural law principles of Richard Hooker and the Caroline Divines, Maurice’s incarnationalism, the *Lux Mundi* school, and William Temple will be among dialogue partners for the formative Christian-Muslim relations articulated by Cragg and Williams. Finally, their respective political theologies will be assessed in the light of their continuity and discontinuity with Anglican political theologies. For Cragg, his exposition of the Qur’anic natural law principle of *khilāfa* will be expounded as a creative adaptation of Anglo-Catholic *kenosis* theology tempered with a Reformed attention to individual and structural sin. Williams’ “interactive pluralism” will reveal a synthesis of Neville Figgis’ pluralism, Russian émigré apophatic theology and the contemplative tradition of the Church Fathers. Both Cragg and Williams, from their different traditions and emphases, demonstrate a widening of the canon of Anglican political theologies, reflective of an ecclesial turn but indicative of a particularly Anglican attentiveness to context. In both instances, they eschew any programmatic structure for the political arrangements of the nation but rather foster a dynamic which is paradoxically able to be open to the presence of God in the Muslim while determining that the shape of that judgement is always Christ-like. The thesis will argue that Cragg and Williams provide a creative re-appropriation of tradition that is faithful to Anglicanism and the broader Church, and allows appropriate space for Islam to be truly other in a plural economy.

The thesis is unique in bringing into conversation Anglican Christian-Muslim relations, and political theology. There have been isolated studies of Anglican theologies of religion or Anglican responses to Islam. There are a number of studies

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examine Anglican political theologies in the light of contemporary diversity and the specific challenge of Islam. There have, however, been no attempts to explore the impact of the theology of relations with Islam on the understanding of the politico-theological question. This thesis, then, bridges the discourse of Christian-Muslim relations with that of political theology.

ii. The Church of England and “Anglicanism”

An immediate challenge to the project of this thesis is the fact that there is no clear magisterium within the Church of England. Indeed, the complexity of the tradition has led Alister McGrath to make the withering comment that “Anglican theology” is too often a gloss for “theology originating from Anglican writers”, rendering many Anglican ecclesiologies mere tautologies. Allied to the many pitfalls awaiting a coherent analysis of the ecclesiology of the Church of England is the inherent confusion around what is meant by ‘Anglican’. There is no adjective which describes the nature of that part of the Anglican Communion specifically located in England. And yet the word that is used to describe the global communion of churches that derive from the originating Church of England, ‘Anglican’, connotes Englishness. So, whilst the original usage of the word ‘Anglican’ was descriptive of national character,

11 By contrast, we may note Karl Rahner’s observation on the magisterium for the Catholic Church that “the doctrinal pronouncements of the Church are not only the starting-point, but also the abiding norm of all dogmatic theology.” Rahner, Karl. Theological Investigations, Volume II Man in the Church (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), p. 2 n. 2. See Ganeri, Martin. “The Catholic Magisterium and World Religions”. In, A Catholic-Shia Dialogue, edited by Anthony O’Mahony, Timothy Wright, and Mohammed Ali Shomali (London: Melisende, 2008): 26-42
from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it has also begun to be used as a “distinct theological position”.

Even with these confusions of self-description, the ambiguities and histories of the task are betrayed. Figures presented by the Anglican Communion in 2010 suggest that there are an estimated 78 million Christians that are part of the “Anglican Episcopal family” worldwide. These represent forty-four different churches across thirty-four provinces. It must be noted from the outset that when we talk of the “Anglican Church” that is shorthand for the Communion of the forty-four churches which includes the Church of England. The Church of England’s website presents various statistics to assess the scale of its influence. Out of a population in England of around 49 million, 1.7 million take part in a Church of England service each month. Though “Almost half the people in England regard themselves as belonging to the Church of England”, regular Anglican worship seems to be attended by only about 3.5% of the English population. What is striking in global terms, then, is that global Anglicanism accounts for 78 million Christians while the Church of England, on the basis of regular worshippers, constitutes only 2% of that total figure.

The actual situation is more nuanced than these bald statistics suggest. As the Church of England’s website outlines, major Christian festivals such as Christmas witness an influx of worshippers (3 million participate in a Christmas Day or Christmas Eve service), suggestive of the residual appeal in the Christian heritage of the nation in the Church of England. Each year, around 12 million people visit Church of England cathedrals. One in four primary schools and one in sixteen secondary schools in England are Church of England schools, representing 1 million pupils. Despite the breadth of the institutional influences of the Church of England, though, there is an

14 Statistics quoted from the “Anglican Communion Information Leaflet” downloaded from http://www.anglicancommunion.org/resources/acis/ on 15th February 2010
15 http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/thechurchofenglandtoday/ Interestingly, this particular statement is underlined on the information on attendance in contrast to the other statistics. Downloaded on 15th February 2010
inescapable fact of contemporary minority status not merely in English society but also for its position within the Anglican Communion globally.

The originating church community for the Anglican movement worldwide is now part of a much greater body that retains a formal direction from the Church of England through the Archbishop of Canterbury’s role as one of the four instruments of unity. As Mark Hill explains, though, none of these four instruments of unity are in themselves sufficient to speak for, act on behalf of, or dictate to the Communion as a whole. Aside from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s role in calling for and inviting to the usual ten-yearly Lambeth Conference, the Church of England is at least formally and demographically one constituent part of what it means to be Anglican today. The significance of being able to clarify the distinction between the Anglican Communion and the Church of England is heightened by the unique status that the latter has as a church established by law. Across the forty-four different churches and estimated 78 million Anglican Episcopal Christians, the Church of England remains the only one that is established by law, inextricably tied to the temporal governance of the state where the reigning monarch is the Supreme Governor of the church.

Identifying what may be ‘Church of England’ or ‘Anglican’ political theologies is a task fraught with complexity when one notes the composite nature of the United Kingdom, too. David McClean’s summary of the legal framework for state and church relations helpfully outlines the variegated picture that belies any simplistic equation between the Church of England and national government. Scottish and Northern Ireland legal systems vary from that in England and Wales. The Church of England is established by law, the Queen its Supreme Governor, yet she is a member of the established Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The Anglican Episcopal churches in Wales and Northern Ireland have been disestablished. While legislation is often enacted separately for each country within the United Kingdom, there is still an

17 The Church of Scotland
overarching legal system through the United Kingdom Parliament which “is thought effectively to reserve constitutional questions affecting Church and State.” 18 As David McClean observes, “The Church is closely bound up with the business of the State”. 19

Twenty-six bishops of the Church of England sit in the House of Lords: the second seat of legislature for the United Kingdom. The ecclesiastical law of the Church of England is an integral part of English law. The Church of England is called upon to preside at major, national acts of celebration or mourning such as a coronation, the memorial service for the Falklands War, the funeral of Princess Diana, the service to remember the losses of the 9-11 terrorist attacks and the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton. The continued presence of the Church of England at those events with an especially “royal” dimension underlines the inherited synthesis of ecclesial identity and national sovereignty.

So, whilst recognising that the Church of England is rooted in the geographical space that is England, its orbit of influence and concern, and indeed its self-identity, engenders currents flowing across the whole of the United Kingdom. Thus, debates around the nature of “British” identity and its relationship to the Christian faith and specifically the Church of England come within the orbit of the politico-theological question.

Although the Church of England formally came into being at the Act of Supremacy of 1534 under Henry VIII, the identification of the Church in England with national aspirations and character is evident long before this date. Older scholarship has suggested that a consciousness of English nationhood was only realised at the Reformation within the European-wide movement towards the nation-state. Adrian Hastings convincingly marshals the evidence of more recent scholarship for an English self-identity that was at turns fostered and restrained by the Church in

19 McClean, David. “State and Church in the United Kingdom”, p. 560
England going back before the Norman invasion of 1066. So, most emblematically, the Venerable Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, about the year 730, presents a territorial and spiritual unity which was far from the political reality of the separate regional kingdoms of the time. Tellingly the territorial unity of the English Church expansively locates *Brittania* as the scope of the story of the ‘*gens Anglorum*’. The story of the Scots and the Christian witness that predates Augustine of Canterbury, supremely in the martyrdom of St. Alban, all serve to provide a perception of the binding Christian consciousness for the as-yet unformed state. Ironically, the Norman Invasion, rather than suppressing this national consciousness, provided the means and the vision for a more aggressive assimilation of regions such as Cornwall under the eventual *lingua franca* of English. The confusion and complexity of an English Church and a British nation with all the ambiguous claims and constituencies of each region of the United Kingdom is therefore a contemporary reality with longstanding precedent.

The Church of England’s self-identifying sense of continuity with the pre-Reformation Church in England and its evident interweaving of ecclesial and national identities are exemplified in the on-going relevance of pre-Reformation canon law to the state and the church. The Church of England has never seen itself beginning *ab initio* in 1534. The original reformers were not “anti-Catholic”, they “merely wished to renew the one Church in Christ by removing abuses...and to return to the faith and practice of what they described as the ‘primitive’ church.” We shall see, then, that Anglicanism cannot reckon without the confluence of Catholic tradition in its midst. Yet while the Church of England asserts continuity with pre-Reformation English Catholicism, the rupture of the abrogation of papal authority will reveal the characteristics of peculiarly Anglican notions of authority.

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21 Hastings, Adrian. *The Construction of Nationhood*, p. 36
It must be acknowledged that the challenges of diversity are especially creative for the 
exploration of ecclesiology. As Paul Avis says, “Self-conscious identity has not been 
required where Anglicanism has been the norm”.24 Whether we are talking of the 
Catholic Church’s appraisal of ecumenical and global realities at Vatican II, or the 
Anglican Communion’s struggles with its own internal diversity, intentional 
ecclesiology seems to proceed from the challenge of difference:

“Ecclesiology, one might suggest, is a response to need—where there was little 
major division and few international problems there was little need for 
reflection on the nature of the worldwide church.”25

It may be added, as Paul Avis asserts, that ‘Anglicanism’ as a subject for 
ecclesiological discussion, has only recently deepened in intensity: “when national 
ties had been weakened, pluralism of religious expression was becoming acute, and 
the social and political aspects of religious belief and practice were beginning to grip 
the attention of theologians.”26 It must be acknowledged, then, that this effort to 
assess the political theology of the Church of England in relation to Islam occurs at a 
time when the Anglican Communion’s internal bonds are strained and when 
fundamental questions about the nature and vocation of Anglicanism are being asked.

iii. The Church of England and Eastern Orthodoxy

We have already noted the Church of England’s self-identity as a Reformed Catholic 
Church in continuity with the foundational creeds of the early councils, correcting 
what were regarded as the errors of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. The 
 writings of the Church Fathers are especially significant to Anglican theology and 
ecclesiology and necessitate a brief comment about the relationship between Eastern

24 Avis, Paul. Anglicanism and the Christian Church, (Edinburgh/New York: T & T Clark, 2002), p. 4
25 Chapman, Mark D. “The Dull Bits of History: Cautionary Tales for Anglicanism”. In, The Anglican 
Covenant: Unity and Diversity in the Anglican Communion, edited by Mark D. Chapman, 
(London/New York: Continuum, 2008), p. 95
Orthodoxy and the Church of England. It will be apparent in the analysis of Christian-Muslim relations that the influences of the patristic milieu and contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy have a major role to play in the Church of England’s engagement with Islam.

The conciliar nature of Anglicanism and the rejection of the titular role of the pope have, for many years, generated mutual empathies and cross-currents with Eastern Orthodoxy. Mark Chapman has commented on the particular influence of St Cyprian on the articulation of the dispersed authority of Anglicanism to the sixteenth and seventeenth century Anglican divines such as Bishop John Jewel (1522-1571) and Archbishop Laud (1573-1645). That the church is not primarily established by human order but is essentially a spiritual sacrament is foundational to Hooker’s Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity and at one with Eastern Orthodoxy’s conception of the *ekklesia*. Nicholas Lossky has been a particular Orthodox student and admirer of Anglicanism and has noted the indebtedness of Hooker and Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626) to the Church Fathers and the Orthodox temper. Citing Article XIX of the *Thirty Nine Articles*, Lossky identifies a thread of sacramental and eucharistic ecclesiology from the patristic inheritance through the English Reformation, to Hooker, the seventeenth century Anglican divines, and contemporary Eastern Orthodoxy:

“through which the Orthodox are reminded of the inseparable character of the Word of God and participation in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.”

Nicholas Lossky’s affection for the Anglican tradition motivated him to write one of the most authoritative texts on the theology of Lancelot Andrewes, an Anglican divine

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he frequently returns to in emphasising an ecclesiology of the eucharist built upon creation and kenosis.29

For Donald Allchin, (1930-2010), a Church of England clergyman who reciprocated Lossky’s inter-ecclesial affection, Hooker and Andrewes, “the two most influential writers of the classical period of our theological literature” embodied “theology of a patristic kind”.30 Allchin notices traces of the doctrines of perichoresis and theosis inimitable to Orthodoxy in Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Polity*.31 The participative ontology that Hooker outlined sets the worshipping Christian community within the life of the trinity, the church enlivened by the prior grace of God. What Allchin wishes to stress is what Lossky as an Orthodox recognises in Anglicanism: that the Church of England sought a renewal of the teaching of the Fathers in its formative period. Allchin and Lossky can both see that a theology of theosis, sourced from the Church Father St. Gregory of Nyssa, is being retrieved in a famous Pentecost sermon of Lancelot Andrewes: “Now to be made partakers of the Spirit, is to be made partakers ‘of the divine nature’”.32 The events of creation and incarnation lead to the participation of the church in the godhead around the humble fellowship of the eucharist.

Hooker’s threefold cord of scripture, reason and tradition have parallel counterparts in the Orthodox appreciation of “scripture, tradition and Church” in a “comprehensive unity with interdependent parts.”33 The participatory, spiritual ontology already noted gives these elements liturgical priority. It is in the reading of the scriptures and creeds around the sacrament of the eucharist that the church is found. The economy of this participatory liturgy is no less than the trinity. As Matthew Steenburg states,

30 Allchin, A. M. *The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge: The Encounter between Orthodoxy & the West* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), pp. 95-6
31 Allchin, A. M. *The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge*, pp. 96-8
32 Quoted in Allchin, A. M. *The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge*, p. 99
“Orthodox ecclesiology is understood in incarnational and Trinitarian terms.” And, “The Church is seen primarily as a place of encounter, where God is not so much learned about as met.” The sacramental character of church, then, accords with Anglicanism and Orthodoxy’s preference for lex orandi, lex credendi.

A superficial reading of sacramental ecclesiology would suggest a very high view of Church that would arguably make it unable to find connections and identifications with those outside the Church. For the purposes of this thesis, such an ecclesiology may be unpromising for an encounter with a decidedly non-trinitarian faith like Islam. Yet for Rowan Williams, it is the apophatic Eastern Orthodox tradition that helps us to see the Church as a “mystery” and paradoxically open to the encounter with the other. It must be noted that Williams’ primary doctoral research was on Vladimir Lossky, father to Nicholas, and arguably one of the most significant twentieth century Orthodox theologians. Williams’ own indebtedness to Orthodoxy is widely known. Indeed, he has been described as “Orthodox in an Anglican form” by, incidentally, his doctoral supervisor Donald Allchin. That God is so entirely other to humanity and yet the Church participates in the godhead sacramentally, creates the paradox of revelation in the place of hiddenness. God cannot be known; no words can describe the utter transcendence of the Being who is beyond the limited categories of humanity. Such is the temper of the contemplative spirit: the via negativa of Orthodoxy. As Williams states, describing the Church as sacrament: “The word works within a nest of significances to do with hiddenness and manifestation, and it allows a paradoxical element to the process of revelation itself: God breaks silence and yet that breaking imposes another kind of silence or darkness.” The unfolding encounter

with God reveals how much the Church *does not know* of the glory of God; the very life of God in trinity poured out in self-giving love and somehow *known* in that process of emptying. The contemplative tradition located by Williams, and intrinsic to the participatory ontologies of Hooker and Andrewes, are guaranteed by the events of creation, incarnation and crucifixion. God enters into creation, an “other” wholly other to God, yet a creation imbued with the life of the triune God. In the crucifixion, the self-emptying that flows from the act of creation reaches its natural conclusion in the glory of negation. The Church then “becomes sacramental as a whole when it penitently redescribes itself in the light of the self-giving of God.” Thus, F. D. Maurice can write that “the truth of God is not something which we hold, it is something which holds us.”

It is, for Allchin, the “co-inherence of human and divine”, recognisably apparent in the patristic theology of Maximus the Confessor, that is a vital strand needing to be recovered, in Hooker, Andrewes, and indeed the nineteenth century Oxford Movement. The church’s sacramentality is an ecclesiology demonstrative of creation, incarnation and crucifixion which propels an inclusive vision of the world; a very Anglican “comprehensiveness”.

Charles Miller similarly argues for the continuity of this patristic sensibility in Andrewes and Hooker in the Oxford Movement. Miller cites William Palmer (1811-1879) and John Mason Neale (1818-1866) as two Anglican clerics that sought to recover the Church of England’s sympathies with Eastern Orthodoxy and the Church Fathers. The emphasis of Palmer and Neale on “the complementarity of theology and prayer, as well as a sense of the need for a vibrant doctrine of the Holy Spirit in theology, worship and life are all leading us to rediscover eastern Orthodoxy.”

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38 Williams, Rowan. “The Church as Sacrament”, p. 119
41 Miller, E. C. *Toward a Fuller Vision: Orthodoxy and the Anglican Experience*, (Wilton: Morehouse Barlow, 1984), pp. 61-102. Charles Miller is a parish priest of the Church of England and has written extensively on the subject of eucharistic ecclesiology, bringing the Anglican tradition into conversation
The Oxford Movement’s understanding of creation and incarnation as central to ecclesial self-understanding reached its apotheosis in 1889 with the publication of the celebrated collection of essays entitled *Lux Mundi: A Series of Studies in the Religion of the Incarnation*. The contributors, including bishops and theologians of the Church of England, were ostensibly responding to the challenge of modern biblical criticism through a recovery of the doctrine of the incarnation. The patristic and Orthodox influences are especially apparent in the legacy of editor and contributor Charles Gore (1853-1932). Gore, as Bishop of Birmingham, was later to be instrumental in the foundation of the Theological Academy of St. Sergius in Paris in 1925, the instigation of the first Anglo-Russian Student Conference at St. Albans in 1927 and in the setting up of the publication of *The Journal of St. Alban and St. Sergius* (later *Sobornost*) in 1928. The Theological Academy of St. Sergius, partly financed by the Church of England through the advocacy of Gore, became a focal point for the revitalisation of Eastern Orthodox theology through the rich contributions of the Russian émigré movement in Paris. This movement, typified by Vladimir Lossky but also including luminaries such as Sergei Bulgakov, Nikolai Afanasiev, Georges Florovsky, Alexander Schmemann and Paul Evdokimov, ensured a vibrant confluence between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy.


43 Miller, E. C. *Toward a Fuller Vision*, pp. 117-8

44 The seminal work here to which Rowan Williams’ doctoral research was committed to exploring is Lossky, Vladimir. *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1957)

45 See Nicholl, Donald. *Triumphs of the Spirit in Russia*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1997) for an appreciation of the Russian Orthodox legacy that, though written from a Catholic perspective, has been a popular resource for many Anglican clergy engaging with the Eastern Orthodox tradition
It was Afanasiev who made the clarion call that “the eucharist makes the Church” and Florovsky who argued for a “neo-Patristic synthesis” that demonstrate the move in Orthodoxy towards a renewal of the tradition through the retrieval of its own ancient sources. The “liturgical theology” articulated by Schmemann was of a piece with an Eastern Orthodox recovery of the sacramental character of the Church, rejecting neo-Scholasticism’s emphasis on the hierarchical order of the ekklesia. The conciliarity that is intrinsic to Anglicanism was echoed in the concept of sobornost among the Russian émigrés: “the conviction that church life is a collaborative and yet hierarchical ordering of life.”

The reverberations of this retrieval were not just felt by Anglicans such as a young Michael Ramsey (1904-1988) in attendance at these early Anglo-Russian Student Conferences, and later Archbishop of Canterbury. The recovery of patristic resources was to be characteristic of the ressourcement and aggiornamento of the Catholic Church’s Vatican II Council. The contributions of the nouvelle théologie school of Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou and Yves Congar to the documents of Vatican II are indebted to the neo-patristic synthesis that rooted the life of the Church in the practice of the eucharist. As Tracey Rowland has argued, the nouvelle théologie school was energised and complemented by the recovery of the Church Fathers within the Eastern Orthodox tradition itself.

The effort to identify sympathies between Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy, then, is at heart an ecumenical enterprise and not one that somehow closes off the

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46 See Nicholas, Aidan. *Light from the East: Authors and Themes in Orthodox Theology*, (London: Sheed & Ward, 1995) for an overview of major theological themes particularly amongst the Russian émigré movement


48 Ramsey was to later write *The Church of England and the Eastern Orthodox Church*, (London: SPCK, 1946) which was to argue for the understanding of relations with Orthodoxy for an appreciation of the identity and vocation of Anglicanism, p. 8

mutualities inherent in other Christian traditions. The indebtedness of the Church of England to Eastern Orthodoxy is but one expression of the indebtedness that all Christian churches have to the Church Fathers. The resonances between Anglicanism and Eastern Orthodoxy have encouraged the sense that there is a particular proximity between the two traditions, though. Timothy Ware has acknowledged the close identification between Anglicanism and Orthodoxy noting a number of historic joint committees towards unity. In 1935, a Joint Conference of Anglican and Romanian delegates concluded by stating that “full dogmatic agreement may be affirmed between the Orthodox and the Anglican communions.”

50 Sergei Bulgakov famously declared that “We may hope that the reunion of Orthodoxy and of the Episcopal Churches of England and America will be an accomplishment of the not too distant future”. 51 As Eric Mascall admits, there may be a significant degree of romanticism and optimism in the perception of these ecumenical relations from both Anglicans and Orthodox, 52 yet there remain palpable resonances in ecclesiology vital to this inquiry.

The latest formal efforts at Anglican and Orthodox dialogue are embodied in the Cyprus Statement entitled The Church of the Triune God. Once again, the centrality of the Church as sacrament within the life of the trinity is affirmed as intrinsic to Anglican and Orthodox ecclesiologies:

“the Church’s understanding of Jesus Christ cannot be adequately treated in isolation from Trinitarian theology, Pneumatology and ecclesiology. The ecclesial experience and reality is so inextricably interwoven with Christ that our vision of his Person contains within itself our vision of the Church.”

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In what may have seen to be an excursion into Anglican-Orthodox relations, it will be apparent that elements of Orthodoxy theology are a vital component to what I argue is

50 Ware, Timothy. The Orthodox Church, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 325
51 Bulgakov, Sergius. The Orthodox Church, (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1988), p. 191
the ecclesial turn in Christian-Muslim relations, foundational to any credible Anglican political theology. How this participatory, trinitarian ontology is retrieved in the development of ecclesial self-understanding for the engagement with Islam will become clear in Chapters 3 and 4.

iv. Islam and the Political

I am taking a broad understanding of political theology, utilising the definition of Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh outlined in their introduction to *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* as an “analysis and criticism of political arrangements…from the perspective of differing interpretations of God’s way with the world.”54 Thus, from the theology of Christian-Muslim relations presented in Chapters 2 and 3, an articulation of “God’s way with the world” through the inter-religious encounter, what political arrangements then follow? What space within the body politic does the Church of England envisage for Islam?

The vigour of British Islam has prompted contemporary questions of the Church of England and wider society that make the question of this thesis of particular note. As Mona Siddiqui has said, “for many people the debate about religion and society is essentially a debate about Islam and society.”55 Muslims have witnessed their transition from being migrants to being citizens56 and gradually developed sophisticated tools and forums for interacting with the British political system as religious communities.57 This presence, though, has challenged deeply held assumptions about the nature of religion in public life, raising issues for the Church of England as the national church.

For many commentators, reaction to the publication of *The Satanic Verses* in 1989 epitomised the hitherto hidden difficulties that British society had in accommodating Islam. On the one hand, as Baxter has argued, “the Rushdie affair spoke intensely of a Muslim sense of identity and place in British society.” British Muslims were asserting their freedom to be at home in a country where their religion should not be blasphemed by portrayals of Muhammad in a novel. On the other hand, the burning of books and the *fatwah* issued on the author, Salman Rushdie, scandalised a liberal society that assumed the rights of freedom of expression. That the private realm of religious devotion might have public import seemed to be the great shock of the Rushdie Affair. The Church of England was no mere bystander to this debate, at that time benefitting from the privilege of a blasphemy law that could theoretically have protected it from similar literary defamations of Jesus. The church was caught between a Muslim community that was calling for an “equalizing upwards” and a secularizing agenda that would revoke all such privileges such that there would be a legal and political system that was religiously neutral. Is the Church of England a partner with Islam in protecting the ideal of religion in British public life? Are the freedoms of speech and religious liberty so tied into the Anglican, ecclesial influence on the state that Islamic protestations to the state are alien intrusions potentially dangerous to British culture? Or is the role of the Church of England to help steer, as gatekeeper to the religious impulse, a tolerant diversity accommodating secularist and religious sensibilities? These are among the questions brought to the fore by the Rushdie Affair.

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61 Baxter, Kylie. “From Migrants to Citizens”, p. 184
This thesis is not an examination of the arguments for and against the establishment of the Church of England. Rather, taking the present reality of a vestigial establishment, Christian-Muslim relations are set in the context of the Church of England’s role in Britain’s public life. As Julian Rivers argues in his *The Law of Organized Religions*, “In spite of increasing levels of religious diversity, this book could almost have been called ‘the law of church and state’.” The residual marks of Anglican establishment on the state’s understanding of religion are woven through the British political and legal system. Thus, there is no definitive pristine establishment or disestablishment; rather, there is a continuum from the Elizabethan Settlement that equated citizenship with Anglicanism, to a wholly secularized polity where all faiths are privatized with a neutral legal and public square. The contemporary Church of England operates along this continuum.

“Secularism” can be a process that fosters the distinction between the private and public spheres, matters of religion discretely kept within the community of faith: “secularism-as-separation”. It can also be “secularism-as-indifference” where the state operates with a single body of law that makes no allowances for religion. Religion effectively operates “in the gaps”, giving way to the priority of a purportedly neutral state. The reality for Britain is that it inherits a history with Christian, and indeed Anglican, fingerprints evident throughout, and subject to the pressures of both secularism-as-separation and secularism-as-indifference. The Anglican “fingerprints” are evident in such public structures as the independent canon law of the Church of England, the legal duties of clergy as clerks in holy orders, the existence of church schools and chaplaincies, or the presence of bishops in the House of Lords. In all these structures and more, the Church of England has modelled a way of being “religious” in public. As Sophie Gilliat-Ray has noted, non-Christian religions have followed the pattern of the Church of England in integrating their faith into British

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62 For the a comprehensive, contemporary account of the establishment debate see Morris, R. M. (ed.) *Church and State in 21st Century Britain: The future of church establishment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)


public life. Muslims have mirrored the example of the Church of England in the setting up of Muslim schools, for example, or prison chaplaincies underlying the importance of the Church of England to other faiths, even as a “broker” of the expansion of other religions.

Seeing that Britain exists in this in-between of establishment and secularism, there is a more pragmatic question facing the Church of England about how it conceives of the public presence of Islam. The possibilities of partnership or exclusion depend upon the prior Christian understanding of what Islam is in relation to the Church. Since the Rushdie affair, there have been a number of other notable landmarks that have made the image of comfortable co-existence seem overly optimistic. The Islamist inspired atrocities of 9/11 and 7/7 have raised the profile of Islam's own potential to exist with plurality: to make space for their own “other”. As Philip Lewis states, there is a “frank supercessionism written into Islam” that inhibits curiosity of the “otherness of the other”, and especially Christianity. The “resurgence of religion” that Mona Siddiqui hinted at as a largely Islamic theme is energised by its self-understanding as a wholly political religion: Islam offers a total system for living that unites legal government with religious direction.

The unity of religion and state, the dīn wa-dawlah, of Islamic aspiration is traditionally crystallised in the Medinan polity of Muhammad’s success. Thus, minority status and plurality, in this economy, are incomplete stages towards the full realisation of Islamic power. For the purposes of this thesis, I will be concentrating on, for the most part, the political implications to Christian-Muslim relations of the Sunni Islamic tradition from which the Medinan polity obtains as archetype, and not

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Internally, Islam is engaging with vigorous reappraisals of how this may translate into the diversity of western democracies. Tim Winter’s explorations of British Muslim identity encourage a creative retrieval of historic strands of Islam conducive to an embedded identification with a dominant culture. Abdullahi An-Na’im proposed a reformation of the Shari’a so as to present an Islamic basis for universal human rights. Farid Esack responds to the question of authorisation in Islam by using the Qur’an as a manifesto for a preferential option for the poor and the oppressed much as Christian liberation theologians began to do in the interaction with Marxism in the 1960s. Tariq Ramadan has famously sought a reconfiguration of the dichotomies of dār-al-Islām and dār-al-harb. For him, the pre-Medinan sense of Islam being a minority community as dār-al-da’wa, abode of invitation or mission, is much more pertinent to modern self-identity and peaceful co-existence. We shall see later in this thesis how Kenneth Cragg has also sought to highlight the importance of a Medinan sensibility within Islam, a trajectory of political dominance, that needs to reckon with contemporary realities of religious diversity and democratic government. For the Sudanese leader of the “Republican Brothers” and religious thinker Mohamed Taha (1909-85), (and mentor of An-Na’im), Medina was a historical concession rather than an on-going political aspiration for Muslims. The Mecca to Medina shift

68 See Bill, James A. & Williams, John Alden. Roman Catholics and Shi’i Muslims: Prayer, Passion & Politics (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), pp. 93-116 for a comparative study of Christian and Shi’a political theologies highlighting the precedence of the mujtahid as living representatives of the imamate for Shi’a Muslims in contrast to that of the Medinan polity to Sunni Muslims

69 Winter, T. J. British Muslim Identity: Past, problems, prospects (Cambridge: The Muslim Academic Trust, 2003). Tim Winter, as a convert to Islam, also writes as Abdal Hakim Murad (b. 1960). He is Shaykh Zayed Lecturer in Islamic Studies at Cambridge University and a significant interlocutor in Christian-Muslim relations


72 Ramadan, Tariq. Western Muslims and the Future of Islam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 72-75

of Islamic political identity that Cragg identifies as so crucial to the politico-theological question is thus a substantive debate among Muslims.

Even within Islamist groups, there are efforts at revisionism such that dhimmitude is superseded by citizenship as the most appropriate framework within which to view cooperative life with non-Muslims in an Islamic state. The project “Critical Muslim”, fostering open and diverse debate on “the great debates of our times” would suggest that the nascent “Arab Spring” represents the spilling over of the crisis of this internal debate within Islam.

The realities of those strands of Islam prohibitive of co-existence alongside the creativity of reforming tendencies means that the Church of England’s understanding of Islam must reckon with its diversity. Any consequent political theology must be able to engage publicly with Islam as a potential agent or obstacle of shared citizenship whilst being conscious that Islam represents just one among many other faiths that must be engaged with. It will be apparent from the research that a widening of the canon to the breadth of encounters with Islam historically and globally gives the Church of England this empirical experience of diversity. Underlying the thesis of the ecclesial turn is a proposal that the Christian-Muslim endeavour is a necessarily ecumenical task.


75 “Critical Muslim” is a quarterly magazine which seeks to “look at everything and challenge traditionalist, modernist, fundamentalist and apologetic versions of Islam as well as the established conventions and orthodoxies of dominant cultures. We seek new readings of religion, culture and politics with the potential to transform the Muslim world and beyond.” From the back cover of the inaugural issue: “The Arabs Are Alive”, Critical Muslim, January-March 2012, edited by Ziauddin Sardar & Robin Yassin-Kassab (London: C. Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 2012)
CHAPTER 2
Searching for an Anglican Appraisal of Islam through the wider Christian Tradition:
Retrieving from History, Expanding the Canon

Christian-Muslim Relations Part 1

2.1 Introduction

Having outlined some of the contours of Anglican ecclesiology that may precede the encounter with Islam, there remains a fundamental task of identifying and locating the essence of Islam to the Church. As Jacques Waardenburg has said, “The first issue is simply that of identity: who are the Christians and the Muslims about whose relations we speak?”

Because the originating story of Islam draws from the Christian narrative, it suggests that a historical perspective to this quest is necessary. If, as Sydney Griffith believes, Islam is a “template and foil” of Christian and Jewish religions, the earliest encounters between the respective faiths should contribute significantly to this question of identity.

When the resources in the formative encounters between Christians and Muslims available to the Church are identified, the locus of the Western Christian tradition that eventually gives rise to the Church of England will be analysed. The Latin Church provides the intellectual and cultural milieu for the English Reformation and thus the

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77 For Sydney H. Griffith, The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), “the Qur’an and early Islam are literally unthinkable outside of the Judeo-Christian milieu in which Islam was born and grew to its maturity”, p. 159

Roman Catholic Church’s encounter with Islam is a crucial point of reference for any Anglican consideration. As the Church of England broke away from Rome, there was a splintering of ecclesial identities, often along territorial lines, definitively so with the Westphalian settlement of 1648 (cujus regio, ejus religio: “the ruler determines the religion of his realm”).

A third, important potential resource for the Church of England’s encounter with Islam, then, is those church traditions that have a similar responsibility to state territory, whether reformed, Eastern or Orthodox churches, in contrast to the global self-identity of Catholicism. Finally, before examining the specific pronouncements and traditions within the Church of England for its engagement with Islam in Chapter 3, a summary analysis of issues affecting the contemporary context of Christian-Muslim relations will be undertaken.

2.2 Early Christian resources for encounter with Islam: retrieving a neglected tradition

James Sweetman notes some of the common worship practices of Christians and Jews in seventh century Arabia, exhibiting a rich pattern of public faith recognisable among the nascent community forming itself around Muhammad. The perception that the original form of Islam was deeply shaped by the Christian and especially Jewish faiths has been more recently underlined by Gerald Hawting. It is perhaps not surprising then that one of the earliest Christian assessments, by John of Damascus (645-753 CE) in his De Haeresibus, attributes Islam as a Christian heresy. John of Damascus views Islam entirely through the lens of the Christian faith; as a distortion of the Christian tradition. The trajectory of revelation, initiated by God towards

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humanity in scripture and through his servants the prophets, mark shared features of familial resemblance. The corresponding responsibility of humanity to a Creator God, in humanity’s role as vice-regent or steward, under the shadow of a Final Judgment likewise posit Christianity and Islam as decisively missionary and global faiths, albeit with differently conceived “missions”.

John of Damascus provides us with an ambiguous admission of that family resemblance in his labelling of Muslims as “Ishmaelites” and “Hagarites;” nomenclature that evokes a common heritage traced back to Abraham but also the derogation represented by Islam’s perceived waywardness. Ishmael is the son of promise but the fruit of Abraham’s unfaithful grasping; Hagar, the second-best bearer of covenant future. Whether one acknowledges “Hagarite” as a Christian insult to Islam or self-styled indebtedness to Abrahamic roots, as Patricia Crone and Michael Cook have suggested, the title suggests something of what Kenneth Cragg terms the “de-ethnicising” nature of Islam. The followers of Islam are monotheists in the tradition and pattern of Hagar whose legacy runs as counter-point to the aspiration of the ethnic nation in Judaism. Hers is a privilege that is not constrained by a territorial inheritance nor identified with a specific chosen people. Hagar, who was decidedly “not chosen”, did not bear the risk of a God invested in the prospects of a nation, and thus an understanding of a God who could not be humbled. Thus, at the origins of Islam there is the universalising potential without the apparent “divine fellow-feeling” of election intrinsic to the biblical tradition.

It would be misleading to regard Islam as fully formed entirely in response to the Christian and Jewish faiths at the time of Muhammad, though. As Wensinck points

83 Sweetman, J. W., Part One, Vol. 1, p. 65. It must also be noted, though, that Patricia Crone and Michael Cook have argued for the “Hagarene” nomenclature as welcomed and indeed self-styled by Muhammad to claim the Abrahamic inheritance of an Islamic monotheism from within Judaic and Christian roots, though their more recent work has served to qualify this judgment: Crone, Patricia & Cook, Michael. Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World, (New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)


85 Cragg, K. The Order of the Wounded Hands, p. 97
out, it was over three centuries later that a coherent system of Islamic theology and jurisprudence became apparent.\textsuperscript{86} If Islam was developing as a religion in contradiction to Judaism and Christianity in this intervening period, the resonance of so many of the theological disputes to today is remarkable, though. The celebrated exchange between Caliph Mahdi and Timothy I, Patriarch of the Church of the East (728-823), results in a Muslim accusation that the Christian worships three gods and the innuendo that God had sexual intercourse with Mary. The mockery in the Caliph’s questioning of the Christian belief in the crucifixion of Jesus seems to point to a persistent thread that delineates the frontiers between Christian and Muslim theology to this day.\textsuperscript{87} In the Caliph’s rejection of the plausibility of Timothy’s faith is both an affirmation of that which is distinctive to Islam and a refusal to accept the Christian’s own self-understanding. The doctrine of God’s unity, \textit{tawhīd}, prioritises the victory and potency of God over any notion of suffering and vulnerability. In this economy, the Jesus that is prophet can never be Christ crucified. The Christian sees God’s unity in the self-giving love of the cross, however, and the incarnation as the Creator’s generous and supernatural identification with his creation. For Muslims, these are beliefs that are refused by distortion.

Much as John of Damascus’ writings helped provide a Greek apologetic for Christians encountering Islam, Theodore bar Koni in his \textit{Scholion} (c.792) was at pains to affirm the reasonableness of the Christian faith for Syriac-speaking Christians in the eighth century.\textsuperscript{88} It is evident from this work that Christology, the scriptures and the crucifixion, with the all-pervading doctrine of the trinity, were vital themes needing to be explained and justified to Muslims. Michael Ipgrave believes that both Arabic and Greek Christians were forced to reflect on the \textit{hypostases} of God in Christ the Word.

\textsuperscript{87} Gaudeul, J. M., \textit{Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History II}, Texts, (Rome: Pontificio Istituto di Studie Arabi e d’Islamistica, 2000), p. 185. Timothy’s response cleverly combines a theological rationale with the evidence of witnesses: “So that this expectation of everlasting life and of the world to come be firmly impressed upon the people, therefore, it was fitting that Jesus Christ rise from the dead; and so that he rose from the dead, it was fitting and right that he first die; and so that he die it was right first that his death – also his resurrection – be witnessed by all.”
\textsuperscript{88} Griffith, S. H., \textit{The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque}, p. 44
amongst their burgeoning Muslim neighbours in this period as central to the philosophical challenge presented by Muslims.\textsuperscript{89} Thus, even at this earliest stage, Islam’s acceptance of God’s immutability rejects the Christian inflection on this doctrine; an inflection that allows for an outpouring without which God remains “sterile in His inaccessible height.”\textsuperscript{90}

The first known Christian composition in Arabic \textit{On the Triune Nature of God} (c. 755) affirms boldly “that God and his Word and his Spirit are one God”\textsuperscript{91} as a clear rebuff to Q 4:171 with its accusation that Christians worship more than one God. This repeated recourse to the Christian orthodoxy of the trinity required the prior dismantling of misperception (idolatry) and highlights the significance of respective understandings of scriptures. The New Testament account of Jesus’ death and resurrection, his embodiment of the fullness, as \textit{logos}, of the Creator God, let alone the Hebrew scripture’s covenant between YAHWEH and the Jewish people, are necessarily redundant to Islam. As Jacques Jomier observes, “For Muslims, Islam is not simply God’s final revelation but also God’s first.”\textsuperscript{92} The implications are that Islam does not merely supersede the Christian revelation but negates it \textit{ab initio}:

“What Jews and Christians now recognise as their scriptures do not coincide with the Qur’an, God’s full and final revelation. Since God’s word does not change, this lack of consonance must result from more or less intentional alteration or corruption of the

\textsuperscript{89} Ipgrave, M. \textit{Trinity and Interfaith Dialogue: Plenitude and Plurality}, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003), p. 193

\textsuperscript{90} Sweetman, \textit{Part One, Vol. 1}, p. 87. A similar point about the Christian theology of the incarnation in relation to Islam is made by Ng Kam Weng: “Muslims rightly reject any attempt to ascribe ultimacy to anything outside of God. The Christian shares this insistence but goes further by insisting that such negation should be redemptive. In this regard, God’s sovereignty should include his ability to enact the drama of redemption within the flux of history. Otherwise God would remain in splendid isolation and irrelevant to humankind.” Weng, Ng Kam. “Jesus Christ – Eschatological Prophet and Incarnate Savior: A Christian Proposal to Muslims”. In, \textit{Christ the One and Only: A Global Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Christ}, edited by Sung Wook Chung, (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005): 180-202, p. 200

\textsuperscript{91} Griffith, \textit{The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque}, p. 55

text.”

In drawing from tradition to present itself as the original revelation, there is then, in turn, an abrogation of that tradition.

The inference in Islam that Christian and Jewish scriptures are corrupted is reflected on by Peter the Venerable (1094-1156) and dismissed summarily as “a tradition without any foundation, and without proof, the author of which is unknown.”\(^{94}\) The essential dilemma is that the “inference” that has produced this tradition rests with Muhammad and the Qur’anic account of the Christian’s story.

Anthony O’Mahony proposes that there is a formative “objectively deficient understanding” of the Christian faith by Islam and wonders whether that understanding can be rehabilitated within contemporary Muslim-Christian dialogue.\(^ {95}\) There has been a tendency to blame that formative distortion on the confusion and sectarianism of the Eastern Churches in the seventh century.\(^ {96}\) Sidney H. Griffith’s work, however, suggests a richer and more creative responsiveness to the challenges of Islam in the seventh century that retains the elevated Christology and trinitarian hue. For Christian apologists writing in Arabic, the inevitable consequence of the Islamic negation of the Bible as authoritative was an appropriation of Islamic idiom and even referencing of the Qur’an as support for the reasonableness of the Christian faith. The *Summary of the Ways of Faith in the Trinity of the Unity of God, and in the Incarnation of God the Word from the Pure Virgin Mary*\(^ {97}\) reveals Christians utilising the first phrase of the *shahādah* in the confession of their faith and the existence of “secret Christians” whose Christology sets them apart from their Muslim

\(^{93}\) O’Mahony, Anthony. “Christianity, Interreligious Dialogue and Muslim-Christian Relations”, p. 84

\(^{94}\) Sweetman, *Part One, Vol. 2*, p. 80

\(^{95}\) O’Mahony, “Christianity, Interreligious Dialogue and Muslim-Christian Relations”, p. 92

\(^{96}\) perhaps the towering influence in this regard is Kenneth Cragg’s *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991). Cragg’s judgment that “Islam was insistently set against what seemed to put in question divine sovereignty. The Christianity with which it cohabited so long gave its theology a temper of mind and an ambition of dogma ill-tuned to a vocation within Islam” (p. 89) epitomises the perception that the earliest Christian encounters with Islam were inadequate to the task

\(^{97}\) see Griffith, S. H. *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*, pp. 52-3 for details of the copy process that dates back to 877 CE
counterparts. Even where Christian theological language accommodates to Islamic frameworks, the author continues to assert the doctrine of the trinity believing that “once Christians have given way on this issue, the distinctiveness of their faith is eclipsed.”\textsuperscript{98} This picture of Christian contextualisation, as opposed to syncretism, is reinforced by the Eastern, Arabic Christian theology of Theodore Abu Qurrah (c. 755-c. 830) who defends the practice of the veneration of icons from the accusation of idolatry by Muslims. The context was plainly one where Christians were accommodating their Christian worship to the external pressures of the Muslim community. Abu Qurrah provides a Christian theological justification in Arabic that is responsive to the questions raised by Islamic misunderstanding. In that sense, then, we have “the beginnings of Christian theology in Arabic.”\textsuperscript{99}

The Arabic Christian milieu in the early Islamic period also witnessed the development of an apologetic in the idioms of Islamic discourse. For example, the doctrines of the trinity and the incarnation were defended in terms of the Qur’an’s beautiful names for God.\textsuperscript{100} Almost without exception, though, the doctrines of the trinity and the incarnation were seen as vital beliefs to be conveyed as reasonable and in a language that was accessible to Islamic sensibility.\textsuperscript{101} This echoes the Greek Christian sentiments of John of Damascus for whom “the Muslim idea which separates from God that which is essential to His being and life, namely Word and Spirit, is a mutilation of God.”\textsuperscript{102}

A popular Christian apologetic of the time, \textit{Kitab al-masa’il wa l-ajwibah} (the “Book of Questions and Answers”) by Ammar al-Basri (c. 850) deploys the idioms of Islamic texts and defers respectfully to the Muslim Caliph’s role in support of true religion.\textsuperscript{103} In laying this groundwork of cultural and political sensitivity, the question and answer format is used to commend the Christian faith’s inner coherence and logic

\textsuperscript{98} Griffith, S. H. \textit{The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque}, p. 58
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid. p. 60
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid. p. 75
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid. pp. 93-4
\textsuperscript{102} Sweetman, J. H., \textit{Part One, Vol. 1}, pp. 65-6
\textsuperscript{103} Griffith, S. H. \textit{The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque}, pp. 83-5
at the expense of Islam. Contemporary Anglican articulations of the trinity as a basis for relations with Islam, configured contextually to Islamic interlocutors will be seen to characterise two major lectures by Rowan Williams and be indicative of the ecclesial turn of this thesis, consistent with a wider canon of tradition.  

One of the earliest known Christian texts on Islam emphasises the violent and sensual nature of Islam, distinguishing it from the true religion of the Christian faith, and thus providing a foretaste of later assessments. An unholy trinity of “bloodshed, Antichrist, the sensual nature of paradise” serves to underline the essential otherness of Islam and to prefigure the apocalyptic framing from which the subsequent surrender of Jerusalem in 637 was viewed.

The Christian-Muslim exchange between Timothy I (728-823), Patriarch of the Church of the East, and Caliph al-Mahdi reveals further insights into the nature of theological debate between Christians and Muslims in the formative years of Islam. This became an “apologetic catechism” for the Syriac-speaking Christians living amongst Muslims but was translated and became a resource for Arabophone Christians too. As with the pattern of so many of the apologetic works of the time, there is a question and answer challenge to the Christian from the Muslim. Central to this encounter is the vital role of Muhammad as prophet: “How is it that you accept Christ and the Gospel from the testimony of the Torah and of the prophets, and you do not accept Muhammad from the testimony of Christ and the Gospel?” The flip


105 Doctrina Jacobi Nuperbaptizati: a text written in Greek by a Palestinian Jewish convert to the Christian faith, Griffith, S. H. The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque, pp. 24-5

106 Griffith, S. H. The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque, p. 25

107 Griffith, S. H. The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque, p. 48

side of a defence of the trinity and the incarnation would seem to be the refusal of Muhammad’s prophethood, bearing as it does a message that denies Jesus’ divinity, death and resurrection.

Timothy’s reply consolidates the prophetic vocation of Jesus in sacred scripture, this revelation amounting to a “mirror”\(^{109}\) of God, contrasting Muhammad, as being “from the earth” with the Holy Spirit, who comes from God. Timothy even quotes the Qur’an in invoking the limitations of Muhammad, exhibiting a sophisticated contextual engagement that affirms the doctrine of the trinity. Throughout the discourse, the repeated basis for authority is sacred scripture; counter-challenges proffered by Muslims to argue for the corruption of the Bible. The natural progression of the debate leads to the definitive challenge from the Caliph, “What do you say about Muhammad?”\(^{110}\) The sophistry of Timothy’s reply (“Muhammad is worthy of all praise, by all reasonable people, O my Sovereign. He walked in the path of the prophets, and trod in the track of the lovers of God”\(^{111}\)) betrays the balance of the power equation in the conversation and “more than a hint of political compromise”.\(^{112}\) The delicacy with which Timothy felt obliged to deal with the question of Muhammad likewise sets a recurring pattern through history, arguably epitomised in the omission of any assessment of Muhammad from Vatican II’s treatment of Islam within *Nostra aetate*.\(^{113}\)

\(^{109}\) Ibid. p. 249

\(^{110}\) Ibid. 251

\(^{111}\) Ibid. p. 251

\(^{112}\) Ibid. p. 69. Timothy goes on to say, “Who will not praise, honour and exalt the one who not only fought for God in words, but showed also his zeal for Him in the sword?” We do not know whether this is a backhanded compliment casting common aspersions on the violent nature of Islam

\(^{113}\) For an alternative, contemporary position that argues for a measure of Christian acknowledgement of the prophetic role of Muhammad, see Kerr, David. A. “’He Walked in the Path of the Prophets’: Toward Christian Theological Recognition of the Prophethood of Muhammad”. In, *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, edited by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Wadi Zaidan Haddad, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1995): 426-446. Kerr analyses seven different Christian perspectives on Muhammad, including Kenneth Cragg, and concludes by suggesting that both Christians and Muslims need to come together for “a new statement of the nature of revelation”, revelation being the vital doctrine underpinning any assessment of prophethood, pp. 441-2
The rapid military expansion of Islam in its formative years created reverberations that were to begin a process of setting Christian and Muslim states in opposition to each other.114 It is interesting to note Agapus writing of the fall of Damascus to Muslims in the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (c. 575 - 641):

“When Heraclius saw the routing of the Greeks and news reached him at Antioch of what the Arabs had done to the Persians, he was seized with wrath and indignation and was utterly discouraged. He wrote to Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia, ordering them not to fight with the Arabs any longer and no more to oppose the will of God.”115

The casting of Muslims as instruments of God in judgment against the Church would be a motif that recurs in later centuries when Christian Europe is conscious of its borders besieged by Islam.116 For Louis Massignon in the twentieth century, it led him to characterise Muhammad as a “prophète negatif”: the vehicle of God in calling out the errors and omissions of the Church.117

Perhaps understandably, the heightening polarisation between the Christian and Islamic empires served to deepen the insecurity of the Eastern Church for which Arabic was becoming the lingua franca. As the Christian-Muslim interface increasingly took on a political hue, the minority, Eastern Church in formerly Christian lands became largely detached from the wider Church family. As Kenneth Cragg notes, the cultural Islamisation that resulted, supremely realised in the medium of Arabic, led to the Eastern Church being “bound over to a language that is bound over to Islam.”118 In Sweetman’s view, there was a gradual weakening of the theological resilience of the Eastern Church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries occasioned by the simultaneous Islamic cultural dominance and detachment from and

114 Sweetman, J. H. Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 5
115 Ibid. p 9
116 see, for example, John Wyclif’s words on Islam in Geudeul, J. M., Encounters & Clashes: Islam and Christianity in History I, A Survey, p. 156: “I am bold to say that this antireligion will grow until the clergy return to the poverty of Jesus Christ, and to its original state.”
118 Cragg, K., The Arab Christian, p. 31
by the Latin Church and Byzantine churches.\textsuperscript{119} The effective annexation of the Eastern Church was welcomed and encouraged by Muslim rulers who would view a Christian religion that felt bound to Byzantium and Rome as outposts of a rival state.\textsuperscript{120}

Friedmann describes the complex of juristic approaches to the various non-Muslim minorities; Eastern Christians becoming a marginal and vulnerable group within Islamic hegemony. Christians and Jews were generally treated less harshly than polytheists but if someone had converted from Islam then the protection of \textit{dhimmitude} could be negated, for example. Additionally, the special regard given to Arabia as home of the prophet Muhammad tended towards the expulsion of all non-Muslims from cities like Mecca and Medina.\textsuperscript{121} Friedmann’s conclusion from the array of Hadith and juristic discussions is that “frequently the impression that the humiliation of the unbeliever is more important than his conversion.”\textsuperscript{122} The emphasis seemed to be on heightening the disparity between the superior Islamic faith in the realm of daily, practical and public acts rather than in religious persuasion. The public debasement of non-Muslims was manifest in regulations that stipulated the superior height of Muslim dwellings and riding postures as much as it reinforced the priority of Muslims in positions of actual governance.

Uncompromising attitudes to those that converted from Islam, reflected in the common Shari‘a injunction to execute the apostate,\textsuperscript{123} and the daily humiliation of qualified Christian citizenship\textsuperscript{124} under Islamic rule combined to undermine the resilience of the Eastern Church in the Middle East and to hasten its introversion.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{119} Sweetman, \textit{Part One, Vol. 2}, pp. 12-3
\bibitem{120} Ibid., pp. 57-8
\bibitem{121} see Friedmann, Y. \textit{Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition}, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 13-86
\bibitem{122} Friedmann, Y. \textit{Tolerance and Coercion in Islam}, p. 37
\bibitem{123} “Most classical jurists agree that the execution of the unrepentant apostate is the proper punishment for his transgression”, Ibid. p. 127
\bibitem{124} Sydney Griffith is disparaging about the idea of \textit{dhimmitude} equating to a form of citizenship: “if the term ‘citizen’ can even be meaningfully used of people whose presence in the body politic is merely tolerated”, Griffith, S. H. \textit{The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque}, p. 16
\end{thebibliography}
Within Arabia, the Islamic predominance that permitted the pursuit of a sacred vocation to rid the region of idolatry was, according to Friedmann, also motivated by the aspiration of religious uniformity. Being the final revelation complete with a text and a law, Islam within its formative territories had no need of the “other”. Interestingly, as Islam expanded, the juristic debate would witness inevitable questions about the status of non-Muslims in non-Muslim lands; cities with mixed governance or what were termed “frontier” towns. Here, the Islamic discourse is far more pragmatic and allows for the expedience of shared citizenship where Islam is held to be faithfully observed and in the interests of the expansion of the faith.

What is clear, though, is that Islam is regarded as a total system that would, and should, inexorably supersede other systems of religion and law. The ferocity reserved for apostates, epitomised in Ibn Taymiyya’s dictum that “the apostate is more crude in his infidelity than an original unbeliever” reflects a theological trajectory that presumes that the lived experience of Islam, both personally and geographically, demands obeisance.

There was thus a religious and a political momentum pushing the Eastern Church in the Middle East to the margins. As the Christian and Islamic communities hardened into respective territorial empires, Islam “was destined to be a geographic as well as a spiritual ‘other’, for Christendom could hardly find room for so potent an adversary in its midst.” The widening distance between the two faiths fuelled the growth of apocalypse and legend as literary responses to the actual and perceived threat of Islam that was engendered by the totemic fall of Jerusalem. Pope Urban II’s announcement in 1095 of the First Crusade to free the Holy Land from Muslim rule, liberating

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126 see, for example, Yahya Michot’s commentary on Ibn Taymiyya’s reflections on the status of Mardin, a mixed city outside of the then Islamic empire, to Muslims. Michot, Y. Muslims Under Non-Muslim Rule: Ibn Taymiyya on fleeing from sin; kinds of emigration; the status of Mardin: domain of peace/war, domain composite; the conditions for challenging power, (Oxford/London: Interface Publications, 2006)
127 Friedmann, Tolerance and Coercion in Islam, p. 123
Eastern Christians and protecting pilgrim routes, thus brought into sharp relief an already burgeoning mutual hostility. As Jules Michelet notes, “For a long time Europe and Asia, the Christian and the Muslim religions, two sisters, two halves of humanity, had lost sight of each other. With the Crusades they found themselves face to face once more. Their first glance at each other was one of horror.”

For some of the Christians living under Muslim rule, the harsh realities of dhimmi status were coupled with the inevitably isolating effects of the mistrust often felt by the Crusaders to their fellow Christians. Courbage and Fargues quote one Crusader’s sentiments thus: “We expelled the Turks and the pagans, but we could not expel the heretics, Greeks and Armenians, Syrians and Jacobites.” The Eastern Church therefore faced the dilemma of demonstrating loyalty to their Muslim authorities whilst exhibiting a religious affinity with a foreign invading force that was in turn theologically and culturally alien.

It would be wrong to view the period of the Crusades as an essentially bipolar conflict between Christian and Islamic civilisations, though. Benjamin Kedar reveals a far more nuanced complex of relations that suggests evidence of pockets of communities of thriving Eastern Christians prior to the arrival of the Crusaders. Some of these Eastern Christians were employed in subsequent Frankish administrations as Arabic-

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130 dhimmitude is the status given to Christians and Jews within shari’a law as a protection of their minority status within Islam. Dhimmitude required the payment of a tax (jizya) and penalties that reinforced the superior status of Muslims in the community. See Friedmann, Y. Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) for a full account of formative dhimmi regulations
131 Courbage & Fargues, Christians and Jews Under Islam, p. 51
132 It must be remembered that dhimmitude afforded a degree of protection that the atrocities of Christian Crusaders often denied: “the non-Muslim communities living under Islam experienced far less expulsions and persecutions than Jews, or ‘deviant’ Christians, living under medieval Christendom”, Friedmann, Y. Tolerance and Coercion in Islam, p. 93
writing clerks and the Latin Church achieved a union with Maronite Church in the twelfth century that exists to this day. Perhaps most significantly for the purposes of this study, though, Kedar notes the variety of experiences of Christian-Muslim encounter under Frankish rule that belies the caricature of consistent conflict. There is evidence of conversion to the Christian faith by Muslims and even spying by Muslims against sultan Baybars on behalf of the Franks. It seems that where Christian rule was obtained peacefully, there were precedents for the exercise of religious freedoms and even comparative prosperity for some Muslims who had otherwise suffered from penal tax regimes under Muslim-Syrian rule.

There is evidence that Muslims under Latin rule in Sicily were granted religious freedoms and a degree of prosperity. This may have shaped the more constructive approach to coexistence by Tancred, a leading Norman Crusader from southern Italy, in his treatment of Muslims in some regions of the Levant. The complexity under the apparent surface of hostility of the Crusades may also be relevant in considering the frequently lauded harmony of the Andalusian convivencia. Within the realities of nearly three hundred years of peaceful shared citizenship of Christians and Jews under Muslim rule, are the stories of mutual mistrust and tension and the persistent efforts at erecting cordons sanitaires between the corrupting influences of the respective outsiders. Indeed, before the Christian re-conquest of Spain in 1492, “convivencia was already moribund” under the militant rule of Islamic Almoràvides and Almohades tribes. Conversely, if all Islamic governance in Andalucia was not tolerant, neither was all Christian rule repressive of religious diversity. Thus, the Christian re-conquest of Toledo offered patterns of the convivencia found in the

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134 Ibid. p. 157
135 Ibid. pp. 153-4, 156
136 Ibid. pp. 158-9
137 Ibid. pp. 160-1
138 Ibid. pp. 167-9
139 Ibid. pp. 139-40
140 Ibid. p. 145
142 Ibid. p. 72
popularly celebrated Muslim rule of Cordoba.\textsuperscript{143} It would seem that the Iberian peninsula’s isolation from the rest of Europe inhibited the ability of Christendom Europe to reflect fully on the lessons of Christian-Muslim co-existence\textsuperscript{144} much as the Eastern Church’s experiences also failed to be incorporated.

Set against the well-documented atrocities of the Frankish conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 we must recognise the positive patterns of Latin Christian encounter with Islam in order to move beyond what Sydney Griffith describes as the “mutual invective and recrimination”\textsuperscript{145} between Christians and Muslims that seems to have been set in this period. That much of the Latin Church’s discourse on Islam became increasingly subject to caricature and ignorance,\textsuperscript{146} though, and framed in political rather than theological terms, meant that the wealth of the Eastern Church’s formative engagement with Islam was largely lost to the West.\textsuperscript{147}

The history of Christian-Muslim relations through the lens of the Crusades is well documented and their impact on the contemporary scene will not be repeated in this study.\textsuperscript{148} However, the patterns from the experiences of the Eastern Church in the

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  \item \textsuperscript{143} Ibid. p. 96
  \item \textsuperscript{144} Ibid. p. 72
  \item \textsuperscript{145} Griffith, S. \textit{The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque}, p. 22
  \item \textsuperscript{146} see, for example, Sweetman, J. H. \textit{Part Two, Vol. 1}, p. 64, which recounts the legend propagated by Jacob of Vitry that there was an image of Muhammad in the Mosque of ‘Umar in Jerusalem. This is in stark contrast to Arabic Christians who were far better informed about the theological challenges of Islam and conscious of the rebuke of \textit{tawḥīd} to the Christian doctrine of the trinity. See Ipgrave, M. \textit{Trinity and Interfaith Dialogue}, pp. 191-3
  \item \textsuperscript{147} even though it may be argued that the Eastern Church’s reservoir of theological resources for engagement with Islam was largely lost to the Latin Church, there remained exceptional models of inquiry and reflection, not least in the first Latin translation of the Qur’an (1143 CE), commissioned by Peter the Venerable and written by Robert of Ketton (c. 1110-1160 CE). This “intelligent paraphrase” was still being cited in the seventeenth century by Hugo Grotius: Bosworth, C. E. “The Study of Islam in British Scholarship.” In, \textit{Mapping Islamic Studies: Genealogy, Continuity and Change}, edited by Azim Nanji, (Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997): 45-67, pp. 48-9
  \item \textsuperscript{148} see for example, Goddard, Hugh. \textit{A History of Christian-Muslim Relations} (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), Riley-Smith, Jonathan. \textit{The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) and \textit{The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading}
\end{itemize}
preceding period under Islamic rule suggest some worthwhile inquiries for the Church of England’s encounter with Islam today. These inquiries offer a resource for a contextual articulation of the trinity that permits a retrieval from history and a widening of the canon integral to this thesis of Anglican Christian-Muslim relations.

2.2.1 Early Christian resources: Summary

The earliest Christian judgments on Islam suggested that it was a Christian heresy but very quickly the separate theological shape to Islam became apparent. Theological discourse is remarkable for its resonance with on-going inter-religious controversies and in the study of the nature of God’s revelation to humanity. The primary point of contention with Christianity for Muslims was the nature of the godhead. Much of the available evidence suggests a profound attention to the significance of the doctrine of the trinity in the earliest encounters with Islam, even whilst in positions of considerable vulnerability. The status of respective sacred texts, too, is vital to issues of authority in the course of debate as is the prophethood of Muhammad. There is an evident process of theological enculturation of Christian theology, both in the Arabicisation of language and in the cultural and religious adaptation of Christian doctrines and concepts to an Islamic audience.

As the gulf widened between Christian and Muslim empires and the Eastern Churches became increasingly isolated and marginalised, the coherence and resilience of this theological adaptation weakened. This marginalisation was both the result of the hardened resolve of political Islam, especially in the heartlands of Arabia, and in the growing gulf between the Eastern Churches and Latin Christendom. While the Eastern Churches in the Middle East were pushed away from the Latin Church, they still exhibited a deep understanding of Muslim rule and religion. This knowledge was


149 Arinze, Cardinal Francis. “Christianity and the Realities of Life Today.” In, World Christianity: Politics, Theology, Dialogues, edited by Anthony O’Mahony and Michael Kirwan, (London: Melisende, 2004): 19-26. “It was Islam, however, that presented a major challenge. At first considered a type of Christian heresy, it had to be accepted as a separate religion.” p. 22
largely absent from a Latin Church that launched the project of the Crusades against an enemy it often chose to know through legend and hearsay rather than from the encounters of shared citizenship in its midst or elsewhere in Christendom.

We will assess formal Anglican pronouncements on Islam later in this study but it would seem important to note here the wealth of the theological resources offered in the earliest Christian encounters with Islam. In the tragedy of the isolation of the Eastern Churches in this period is a challenge to the ecumenical commitment of the Church of England: the possibility that the familial spiritual ties of the worldwide Church can overcome barriers of culture, state and tradition in reciprocal theological resourcing. Islam’s own self-identity as umma, superseding all other human loyalties, suggests a particular need for Christians to be especially cognisant of learning from other places and traditions, supporting and encouraging fellow Christians struggling as communities under Islamic rule. This knowledge may equally highlight the freedoms and protection afforded by Muslim rulers to Christians as it could the negative experiences of disempowerment or persecution under Islam.

Reflecting on the theological trajectory towards religious uniformity in Islam that Friedmann notes, one wonders whether Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali’s contemporary concerns about Muslim dominated inner-city areas becoming “no-go areas”\(^\text{150}\) are prescient. As Islamic communities grow in confidence, supported by settled institutions that affirm Islamic ideals (mosques, halal butchers, madrasas) is there an inevitable and inexorable process that pushes Muslims away from reliance on and mixing with non-Muslims? As Khaled Abou El Fadl notes, “Because of the historical experience of the Prophet in Medina, a degree of territorial insularity became an integral part of Islamic ideology.”\(^\text{151}\) That question will not be answered by this study though it remains a vital arena of research for Islamic political science generating


creative discussion. The challenge of this research is to draw on resources that inform an appropriate political theology for the organisation of relations with Muslims by the Church of England. Before the hardening into respective animosities of both dhimmitude and religious imperialism, the earliest Christian encounters with Islam suggest possibilities for a rich vein of interrelating. These formative encounters, neighbourly, scholarly and political, demonstrate a keen appreciation of the respective differences between the faiths alongside a determination to adapt culture and language to explain and defend the Christian faith. It is a sympathetic encounter of unity in difference located in the primary Christian distinctive of the Church’s participation in the life of the trinity that will be seen to be indicative of the ecclesial turn of contemporary Anglican Christian-Muslim relations. This ecclesial turn both confirms and is resourced by the retrieval of these formative Christian-Muslim encounters which widens the canon of Anglican theologies of inter-religious encounter.

2.3 The Catholic Church and Islam: Inheriting the Western Christian Tradition

2.3.1 Pre-Vatican II

With the hardening of Christian-Muslim encounters symbolised by dhimmitude and religious imperialism there is a very modern tendency to summarise the Catholic Church’s formative tradition of encounter with Islam as alternately caricatured by acquisitive, Crusader violence or spiritual, Franciscan peace-making. When the


actual complexity of Christian Crusader relations with Muslims is recognised, the
genuine spirituality often at the heart of the Crusader enterprise is apparent. As
Jonathan Riley-Smith argues so persuasively, the aggressive violence of conquest
occasioned by the Crusades was dependent upon a political theology of holy war: of
seeking the Kingdom of God as opposed to a definitive hatred of Muslims.154 Without
glossing a period that has overshadowed so much subsequent Christian-Muslim
suspicion in the last two centuries,155 there is evidently a need to recognise the
Crusader worldview, with all its Christian motivation, in order to both acknowledge
the wrongs and understand the good. By doing this, we are perhaps better able to set
the contribution of Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) in a more realistic perspective.

Francis offered peace-making and a priority for the poor, a tradition that Scott M.
Thomas believes is integral to Vatican II and the Catholic Church’s engagement with
the issues of the world today.156 Though St Francis may be a palatable model for
modern sensibilities, the mythology must not be allowed to obscure what Thomas
sees as his belief that shared citizenship is based on a “genuine encounter of ‘thick’,
not ‘thin’, religious practices and traditions.”157 Catholic movements of mission that
rejected violence and coercion but nevertheless strove to provide an apologetic for the
Christian faith and engaged with the challenges of Islam were providing an alternative
to the enmity of territorial conquest. One such influential missionary movement
focussed on the religious community of Cluny. Pope Gregory VII (1030-1085) had

Francis... If history is a mirror, it reflects above all a darkened and distorted image of our own worries
and aspirations.” p. 126

154 “The actions of many crusaders were individual expressions of a piety that may be alien to us but
was very real to them”, Riley-Smith, J. The Crusades: A Short History, New edn (London: The

155 exemplified by Norman Daniel’s argument that the “closing victory” of the Crusades was in fact
General Allenby’s entry into Jerusalem in 1917, Daniel, N. Islam and the West: The Making of an

156 Thomas, Scott. M. “The Way of St Francis? Catholic Approaches to Christian-Muslim Relations

157 Thomas, Scott. M. “The Way of St Francis?”, p. 160. When talking of “thick” and “thin” practices,
Thomas is mobilising the language of Alasdair Macintyre in After Virtue: a study in moral theory,
been a monk at Cluny and expressed his concern for the “conversion of the Moors.”

This evangelistic objective managed to find expression within a papacy “synonymous with medieval triumphalist, imperialist, and juridical ecclesiology.” Yet even with this triumphalism and evident evangelistic zeal, he was moved to write to the Muslim King of Mauritania “we believe and confess one God” and “He is our peace who has made us both one.”

Anastasius of Cluny (d. 1085) responded to a missionary vocation to Muslims by developing a practice of polemics, highlighting the love and freedom of the Christian faith over and against the compulsion and violence of Islam. Hugh of Cluny (1049-1119) wrote of Islam as having satanic inspiration and that it had “deceived the children of Ishmael.”

There was, then, the recognition of similarity and even familial resemblance but the clear sense of error in Islam that required Christian proclamation and correction.

Peter the Venerable (1092-1156) oversaw the first Latin translation of the Qur’an which enabled, despite its inaccuracies and omissions, a fuller acquaintance by Western Christians with the realities of Muslim belief. Parallel to the trajectories of hostility, then, there existed an impetus towards inquiry and curiosity about Islam. Peter the Venerable, with clear evangelistic intent, advocated for discussions and debate with Muslims rather than coercion.

Peter Abelard (1079-1142) was remarkable for engaging in rational apologetics with Muslims on the subjects of the

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158 Sweetman, J. H. Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 69
160 quoted in Evans, G. R. & Wright, J. Robert (eds.) The Anglican Tradition: A Handbook of Sources, (London: SPCK, 1991), p. 96. Interestingly, Pope Gregory VII concludes his letter by saying, “And we pray in our hearts and with our lips that God may lead you to the abode of happiness, to the bosom of the holy patriarch Abraham, after long years of life here on earth.” The Abrahamic connection will become an increasingly significant motif for the establishment of peaceful relations between Christians and Muslims in later years
161 Sweetman, Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 69
164 Sweetman, Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 80
incarnation and the trinity, “disdaining to a great extent the appeal to authority to establish his argument.” Avoiding authority as a trump card in debate, Abelard countered the resort to power that characterised much of Christians-Muslim relations during the Crusades but, like Raymond Lull, (born 1235), who used similar methods, he met with little success.

There was thus a stream of evangelistic, irenic Latin Christian encounters with Islam that included theological apologetics, rational disputation and polemics. Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) is a noteworthy example in this tradition. Nicholas was conscious of the failures of many of the Christian evangelists to Muslims and rather sought to build good relations by concentrating on the commonalities between the faiths. The Protestant pluralist John Hick is fond of quoting Nicholas of Cusa’s dictum that “there is only one religion in the variety of rites.” His De cribratione alchorani, commissioned by Pope Pius II, asserted that the essential fissure between Christianity and Islam was a result of Muhammad’s mistaken acceptance of a heretical Eastern Christology. This is a charge that the famed polemicist Ricoldo of Montecroce, missionary to the Tartars of Baghdad in the late 1200’s, early 1300’s, similarly makes. This suggests that Nicholas of Cusa was far from being a proto-pluralist, as Hick would like to see him, but rather just genuinely concerned for peaceful shared citizenship in the manner of St Francis. Justin Martyr (c.100-c.165), though, might be considered to frame a more pluralist conception of Islam through his Platonic understanding of the logos: “Christ is the logos of whom the whole human race partakes, and those who live according to reason are Christians even though they were considered to be atheists.”

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165 Sweetman, Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 71
166 Ipgrave, Trinity and Interfaith Dialogue, p. 191
168 Sweetman, Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 161
169 Sweetman, Part Two, Vol. 1, p. 161. This point is emphasised by Sweetman’s reminder that Nicholas of Cusa had been a missionary in Constantinople and was writing his De cribratione alchorani at the time of the fall of Constantinople to the Turks; an event of shuddering import to Christendom
170 quoted in Sweetman, Part One, Vol. 1, p. 71
The towering influence of Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) on Catholic theology and identity is especially notable for the purposes of this study for his pronouncements on Islam. Thomas’ Aristotelian scholasticism affirms the rights of unbelievers within God’s providence such that the common good is available to all within the “law of grace.” For Michael Fitzgerald and John Borelli, there is accordingly the suggestion that Aquinas regarded Islam as a “natural religion”: a primitive response to the general revelation of God in the world. However, in his *Summa Contra Gentiles* (I,6,4), Aquinas states that “Muhammad forced others to become his followers by the violence of his arms” and “no wise man, men trained in things divine and human, believed in [Muhammad] from the beginning. Those who believed in him were brutal men and desert wanderers.” It is worth highlighting, then, that a coherent political theology that is able to accommodate religious diversity is by no means dependent on a sympathetic understanding of Islam. The moderately Hildebrandine assertion of civil subjection to ecclesial rule that Aquinas suggests is another aspect of his political theology that would be far more contentious for contemporary plurality. What we have at the heart of Aquinas’ theology, though, is the liberty afforded by the search for truth, such that “truth was where one found it”. Thus, Aquinas could fashion a coherent theology of ethics having interacted with the Aristotelian thoughts of Muslim and Jewish philosophers. This enables David Burrell to observe that “the received doctrine of God in the West was already an intercultural, interfaith achievement” even if Aquinas’ defence against challenges posed by Islam eschews a more recognisably contemporary, interfaith treatment of Islamic religion *per se*.

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171 Summa Theologica 2a2ae.10.10; 12.2. This argument is also used by the important Dominican scholar Francisco de Vitoria (ca. 1483-1546) in his influential work, *The American Indians*. See O’Donovan, O. & Lockwood O’Donovan, J. *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, pp. 609-30
173 quoted in Mohammed, S.J., O. *Muslim-Christian Relations: Past, Present, Future*, p. 46. It is worth noting that Aquinas’ views here are very reminiscent of the sentiments of Emperor Manuel II Paleologus, from a dialogue of 1391, controversially quoted in Pope Benedict XVI’s Regensburg Lecture
The Council of Florence in 1442 affirmed formally the doctrine of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (“outside the church there is no salvation”)\(^ {176} \) that had held sway since the fifth century, consolidating the supremacy of the church in spiritual terms, even whilst those outside the church may share temporal rights. Even with a church-centred perspective on Muslims, there was a growing discipline of inquiry into Islamic belief.\(^ {177} \) In the midst of the polemics of Crusade encounters, reasoned Christian discourse on the interaction with Islam was being developed. Though the Christian faith was still seen as superior, Muslims were being respected as deserving of rational and cogent apologetics.\(^ {178} \) There are mere suggestions of Catholic perspectives with a pluralist hue in Nicholas of Cusa and Justin Martyr, but the dominant tradition is exclusivist and evangelistic after the Crusades. Muslims still often fulfil a role as archetypes of violence and sensuality, a role played out mutually and with good grounds by both Muslims and Christians,\(^ {179} \) but there is a burgeoning corpus of Christian literature engaging with the realities of Muslim belief. In the Christian literature on Islam, it is Muhammad who frequently becomes the object of scorn.

It must be noted that the intellectual traffic between the faiths, supremely exhibited by Thomas Aquinas in this period, has made a huge contribution to the civilisation of Western Europe.\(^ {180} \) The Thomist political theology of the Catholic Church lays the

\(^{176}\) Dupuis, J. *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, (Maryknoll/London: Orbis Books & Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), pp. 3 & 59

\(^{177}\) *The Council of Vienne* in 1312 had called for the establishment of schools of Arabic at given European universities, Fitzgerald, M. L. & Borelli, J., *Interfaith Dialogue: A Catholic View*, p. 15. Peter the Venerable’s translation of the Qur’an was supplemented by the more accurate translation by Ludovico Marracci in 1698 and a summary of Islamic belief, *De Religione Mohammedica*, by Hadrian Reland of Utrecht published in 1705. This was treated with suspicion by church authorities as being overly sympathetic to Islam. Mohammed S.J., Ovey. *Muslim-Christian Relations: Past, Present, Future*, p. 46


\(^{179}\) Wheatcroft, A. *Infidels: The Conflict between Christendom and Islam 638-2002*, p. 73

\(^{180}\) with St. Augustine, Oliver O’Donovan and Joan Lockwood-O’Donovan can say of Aquinas that “Together they ensured the classical cast of the Western political inheritance, its continuing conversations with Greek and Roman sources into the present.” O’Donovan, Oliver & O’Donovan,
foundations for unity in diversity, a principle that we have already seen as paramount in Hooker’s Anglican ecclesiology, whilst being a reminder that such political theologies are not dependent on doctrinal sympathies with Islam. Indeed, the principles of Thomism that welcomed the grace in nature from within non-Christian religions have suggested to Jan Van Wiele that the Vatican II affirmation of an inclusivist theology of religions owes its origins to Aquinas.\footnote{Van Wiele, Jan. “Neo-Thomism and the Theology of Religions: A Case Study on Belgian and U.S. Textbooks (1870-1950)”, \textit{Theological Studies}, 68 (2007): 780-807} This is perhaps a reminder of the danger of superimposing contemporary debates and schema on historic issues. The Council of Florence sought to unite the fragmented parts of the global church, and thus the doctrine of \textit{extra ecclesiam nulla salus} acts as a powerful incentive to catholicity. It may be argued, then, that it is not, nor was it intended to be, a definitive statement about the salvific worth of other religions. Thus, Aquinas’ significance in offering a constructive theology of God’s grace provides a foundational theological resource through the Council of Florence in continuity with Vatican II.

\textbf{2.3.2 Post-Vatican II}

Thus far, the Catholic Church’s appraisal of Islam has been largely drawn from a period where the West was identified with the Christian faith. The dominance of the church in European civilization was in contrast to the experience of Catholic missionaries in Asia from which theologies of religion began to draw inspiration. Jules Monchanin (1895-1957), Henri Le Saux (1910-1973) and Bede Griffiths (1906-1993) were three Catholic missionaries to India who had indirect influence on the seminal Vatican II ecclesial documents.\footnote{Trapnell, J. B., “Catholic Engagement with India and Its Theological Implications: Jules Monchanin, Henri Le Saux, and Bede Griffiths.” In, \textit{World Christianity: Politics, Theology, Dialogues}, edited by Anthony O’Mahony and Michael Kirwan, (London: Melisende, 2004): 257-284, p. 259 and Lévy OP, A., “Between Charybdis and Scylla: Catholic Theology and Interreligious Dialogue”, \textit{New Blackfriars}, Volume 89, No 1020 (March 2008): 231-250, p. 234} Following the pattern of the Jesuit missionary to India, Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656), they immersed themselves in the
local cultures and sought a thorough grounding in the religious traditions they encountered. Influenced in turn by the Catholic theologian Henri De Lubac and Catholic Orientalist scholar and then Melkite priest Louis Massignon, their engagement with other religions was characterised by an appreciation of the mystical aspect of faith: the encounter with God that was available to all in the freedom of the Holy Spirit. This did not detract from their missionary vocation or sense of orthodoxy, though De Lubac’s advice to Monchanin included the encouragement to risk the disapproval of church authorities in the process of making home for the gospel in an alien culture.

The theology of these three Catholic missionaries reveals a subtle but significant shift towards an approach that “involved finding Christ even more than preaching him” and was to be characteristic of the sensibility of Vatican II. This was evident in the theology of Jean Daniélou who elucidated a “fulfilment theory” of religions, such that in the manifestations of other traditions, there were “seeds of the Word”, or semina Verbi, for which Christ was the full realisation. The appropriate posture of Christian engagement with Islam, then, would be searching for those “seeds of grace or truth” in honest and sympathetic inquiry, ready to express and proclaim that which required the completion of gospel revelation. Henri de Lubac’s Christian mysticism reaffirmed this trajectory making a vital distinction between God’s natural revelation in the religions and the salvific revelation in the church.

Within this outlook, Islam is cast as a human response to the divine, allowing for some spiritual and doctrinal convergence but only incompletely and not effectual in salvation. This resonates with Jacques Jomier’s vision of Islam as a “natural religion”.

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183 Trapnell, J. B., “Catholic Engagement with India and Its Theological Implications,” p. 264: “Christian mysticism is Trinitarian or it is nothing,” quoting Monchanin

184 Trapnell, J. B., “Catholic Engagement with India and Its Theological Implications,” p. 261


187 Dupuis, J., Christianity and the Religions, p. 51
For Jomier, Islam is “an attempt at reforming Judaism and Christianity”\(^{188}\) in the face of human accretions to the fully complete revelation in Christ.

The fulfilment theory of religions and doctrine of “seeds of the Word” are explicitly and implicitly adopted by Vatican II. In *Ad gentes* (1965) 9, there is the affirmation that:

> “Whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as a sort of secret presence of God, this activity frees from all taint of evil and restores to Christ its maker, who overthrows the devil’s domain and wards off manifold malice of vice. And so, whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost. More than that, it is healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God, the shame of the demon, and the bliss of men. Thus, missionary activity tends towards the fulfilment which will come at the end of time.”\(^{189}\)

The “secret presence of God”\(^{190}\) that may be apparent within another faith breaks with the condemnation of other religions that was evident in so many earlier judgments. This development is mirrored in *Nostra aetate* (1965), in the assertion that “other religions to be found everywhere strive variously to answer the restless searchings of the human heart.”\(^{191}\) Remarkably, “The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions.”\(^{192}\) Jacques Dupuis recognises elements of continuity in Vatican II pronouncements on other religions with the earlier doctrine of “baptism of desire” in *The Council of Trent* of 1547.\(^{193}\) This hinted at the possibility of salvation for individuals outside the Church that Vatican II demonstrably, and radically, affirmed for the first time. As Gavin D’Costa states, “There is widespread consensus

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\(^{190}\) a phrase borrowed from Karl Rahner, Dupuis, J., *Christianity and the Religions*, p. 64

\(^{191}\) Abbott S.J., Walter M. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 662

\(^{192}\) Abbott S.J., Walter M. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 662

\(^{193}\) Dupuis, J. *Christianity and the Religions*, pp. 59-60
that Vatican II was silent about the theological status of these religions, neither denying nor affirming that they can be viewed as ‘salvific means’.”

In *Lumen gentium* (1964) 16, the discontinuity with earlier negative verdicts on Islam is explicit:

“*But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these there are the Moslems, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind.*”

Whilst acknowledging Vatican II as a “paradigm shift” in Catholic assessments of other religions, Andrew Unsworth also perceives there to be some continuity with the pre-Vatican II position; a view supported in the earlier Thomist tradition by Van Wiele, as we have noted already. In Pius XII’s *Fidei donum* (1957), for example, there is a reference to Muslims as those who “profess” the worship of “the one true God”. The paradigm shift was actually the formalisation of a responsibility towards Muslims that made inter-religious dialogue an indispensable practice of the Catholic Church. Vatican II made consequent allowance for dialogue in the establishment of the Secretariat for Non-Christians in 1964 and the encyclical on dialogue, *Ecclesiam suam*, in the same year.

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195 Abbott S.J., Walter M. (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 35


197 this was renamed *The Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue* in 1989, and then merged with the *Pontifical Council for Culture* in 2006
As Robert Caspar states, “We [Catholics] cannot ever say again that we do not adore the same God, even if we call Him by different names”.\(^{198}\) The inclusive cast of Vatican II theology seems to be incontrovertible, though there is sufficient ambiguity in the encyclicals and decrees to hold a range of interpretations of that inclusivism. Jacques Dupuis has sought to defend a theology of religions through the Conciliar documents that does not merely permit salvation for the non-Christian but allows for other religions being purposive of God in their own right. This blurs the distinction between the specific revelation given to the church and the general revelation apparent in other religions that a traditional fulfilment theory affords.\(^{199}\) Dupuis strains to reaffirm the unique role of Christ and the specific role of the church but permits a measure of “participated mediations”\(^{200}\) of Christ in the prophets and scriptures of other religions.\(^{201}\) The contrary position notes the unequivocal coupling of dialogue with mission in Vatican II\(^{202}\) and the admission that Vatican II “has yet to be fully ‘received’ by Catholics.”\(^{203}\) For theologians like Jacques Dupuis, a number of subsequent pronouncements suggest some “unravelling” of the progress, as he sees it, towards a full sympathy with other religions.\(^{204}\)


\(^{200}\) Dupuis, J., Christianity and the Religions, p. 45


\(^{202}\) thus, for example, Lumen Gentium 16, quoted earlier as opening up salvation to Muslims “in the first place” concludes by seeing “goodness and truth” in other faiths as a “preparation for the gospel” necessitating that the “Church painstakingly fosters her missionary work.” (Abbott S.J., Walter M. (ed.), The Documents of Vatican II, p. 35).


\(^{204}\) He notes, in particular, Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975, which reaffirms classic fulfilment theory contrasting the “arms outstretched to heaven” of other religions with “God’s bending over towards humanity” of the Church in a document that talks of proclamation without mentioning inter-religious dialogue, Dupuis, J., Christianity and the Religions, p. 68
An appreciation of the paramount significance of ecclesial self-consciousness in a world of plurality seems vital to an understanding of Vatican II. It would seem then, that Dupuis is overinvesting the fulfilment theory with a weight beyond that which Vatican II can appropriately bear. The church, as an outflow of the Holy Spirit, is the gift of God and is the sacramental presence of the divine for the whole world, as Lumen gentium describes it. Fulfilment theory in Vatican II arises out of the prior grace of God to which Israel and subsequently the church testifies not through the initiatory human act of “arms outstretched to heaven”. It would seem to be utterly consonant with Vatican II, then, that evangelism is explored doctrinally without having to articulate a theology of dialogue. It would be much more difficult, rather, to justify a theology of dialogue without reference to the church’s mandate to present Christ to the world. A hermeneutical perspective on Vatican II that properly orders the priority of the ‘Dogmatic Constitutions’ (Lumen gentium, and Dei verbum on the nature of revelation) over the Pastoral Constitutions (such as Nostra aetate) is affirmed by Gavin D’Costa and a reminder that isolated Vatican II statements should not be assumed to present definitively clear pronouncements without at least considering the relative conciliar context.

The ambiguity surrounding a qualitative assessment of Islam is largely due to the pastoral nature of the respective encyclicals and decrees. Doctrinal statements on other faiths were not the primary intention of the documents; rather, a renewed engagement by Catholics with members of other traditions. It is important to note that Vatican II “spoke about Muslims but not about Islam”. Additionally, the original motivation for speaking specifically about another faith in Vatican II was to correct the historical breach between the Catholic Church and Jews that, post-Holocaust, demanded humble conciliation from the Church. Church leaders in the Middle East

205 Lumen gentium acting arguably as the foundational encyclical to which the ensuing ecumenical (Decree on Ecumenism) and missional (Ad gentes and Nostra aetate) responsibilities flowed
were anxious that any positive assessment of Jews would be problematic in a region traumatised by the establishment of the state of Israel and troubled by the Arab-Israeli conflict. They therefore advocated a parallel assessment of Muslims.\textsuperscript{208} This is a reminder that Christian theology is never a timeless abstraction but rooted in the encounters and experiences of history.

The resultant inclusion of Muslims and Jews within a schema of monotheistic faiths owes much to the influence of Louis Massignon: “In speaking of Moslems and of Jews, the Council stresses our common father in faith, Abraham. This is where Louis Massignon, one of the great pioneers in Moslem dialogue, told us to begin,”\textsuperscript{209} Youakim Moubarac had posited the idea that Abraham was the “father of all believers” as progenitor, through his faith, of natural religion and, through his seed, of Jews and Muslims.\textsuperscript{210} Vatican II stops short of this verdict remaining silent on the genetic link between Muslims and Ishmael.\textsuperscript{211} Indeed, for the Christian, “physical descent is unimportant; it is faith that counts.”\textsuperscript{212} Louis Massignon had himself recommended an earlier wording of \textit{Nostra aetate} which was not accepted: “The sons of Ishmael, who recognise Abraham as their father and believe in the God of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[210] O’Mahony, A., “The Influence of the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon on the Catholic Church’s Relations with Islam”, p. 181. See also, Burrell, David. “Mind and Heart at the Service of Muslim-Christian Understanding: Louis Massignon as Trail Blazer”, \textit{The Muslim World}, Volume LXXXVIII, No. 3-4 (July-October 1998): 268-278, “when we recall the prescient words of the Vatican II document, \textit{Nostra Aetate}, on Islam, we can begin to see the fruits of the scholarship and especially of the person of Louis Massignon.”, p. 275
\end{footnotes}
Abraham, are not unconnected with the Revelation made to the Patriarchs.”213 Instead, there is a more qualified association between Christians and Muslims in the shared example of Abraham:

“The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all-powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting. Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.”214

Erik Borgman notes that this section of Nostra aetate is structured according to Q 3: 64-65, in reverse order, providing an Islamized Christian theology affirming certain commonalities and differences between Muslims and Christians under an overarching Abrahamic motif.215 One is reminded by this contextual presentation of Christian orthodoxy in relation to Islam of some of the Eastern Church’s formative apologetics. No doctrinal judgment in Nostra aetate is made beyond the assertion of the identity of the God worshipped by both faiths. Thus, the contentious status of the Qur’an and the

prophethood of Muhammad are neatly sidestepped.\textsuperscript{216} The diplomatic evasion of any salvific evaluation of Islam and Muhammad in particular suggests that Daniel Madigan’s belief that the conversation between Christians and Muslims still circles around the themes evident in the eighth-century dialogue between Patriarch Timothy I and the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mahdi is an accurate assessment.\textsuperscript{217} Madigan, in affirming \textit{Nostra aetate}, points out that the parallels with this dialogue from the historic Eastern Christian milieu underpins the reality that “Timothy goes probably as far as a Christian can go…in the estimation of Muhammad.”\textsuperscript{218}

Whilst \textit{Nostra aetate} asserts the shared object of worship for both Christians and Muslims as the God of Abraham, there still remain questions about the nature of the God who is worshipped. For François Jourdan, his Catholic tradition does not require a literal slavishness to a synthesis of Christian and Muslim conceptions of God: “C’est lui ET ce n’est pas lui”.\textsuperscript{219} As David Burrell observes, the statement that “God is one” is effectively “shorthand” suggestive of deeper understandings from within the respective traditions that do not always converge.\textsuperscript{220}

Louis Massignon came to his appreciation of the shared roots of the Christian and Muslim faiths through his personal experiences originally in the Ottoman Empire and then in a sustained commitment and presence in the Arab world.\textsuperscript{221} It was in the

\textsuperscript{216} O’Mahony regards the latter as “the most sensitive point for the Muslims”. To affirm Muhammad’s prophethood would complete the Islamic creed, the \textit{shahada}; to clearly reject Muhammad’s prophethood would be an offence to Muslims, O’Mahony, A., “Catholic Theological Perspectives on Islam at the Second Vatican Council”, p. 398.

\textsuperscript{217} Madigan, Daniel. “\textit{Nostra Aetate} and the questions it chose to leave open”, \textit{Gregorianum} 87, 4 (2006): 781-796, p. 789

\textsuperscript{218} Madigan, Daniel. “\textit{Nostra Aetate} and the questions it chose to leave open”, p. 795


\textsuperscript{220} Burrell, D. \textit{Knowing the Unknowable God}, p. 111

\textsuperscript{221} for an outline of Massignon’s life and ministry, see O’Mahony, A., “Our Common Fidelity to Abraham is What Divides: Christianity and Islam in the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon.” In, \textit{Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue: Studies in Monasticism, Theology and Spirituality}, edited by
idioms and cultures of Islamic lands that Massignon regained his Christian faith and
grew to develop a spirituality that converged with the mysticism of local prayer cells,
(“badaliyya”)
around common points of pilgrimage. With the radical departure
that Vatican II presupposes from the influence of Louis Massignon, it is interesting to
note Massignon’s own respect for church authority and his repeated submission of
proposals and ideas to theologians as an accountable scholar subject to a tradition
higher than himself.

Nevertheless, the Abrahamic faith “theologoumenon” remains a motif not without
controversy and demands further analysis. Sydney Griffith sources the concept in Q
4:125 as the “true religion of Abraham the faithful Gentile.” Unsworth sees Vatican
II as establishing the orthodoxy of this theologoumenon and it certainly seems
justifiable to recognise the Council’s “assertion that Christians and Muslims
worship/adore the same God” as at least founding a significant bond between
Christians and Muslims. It is another thing, however, to see the Council as having
affirmed the Abrahamic theologoumenon as proposed by Massignon. Within this
concept is a recognition that Islam is in some senses an awakened natural religion in
the pattern of Abraham; what O’Mahony calls “a resurgence from the time of the
Patriarchs; an ‘almost’ Abrahamic schism preceding the Decalogue and Pentecost.”
Karl-Josef Kuschel has argued for the development of the Abrahamic faiths motif in

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Anthony O’Mahony and Peter Bowe, OSB, (Leominster: Gracewing, 2006):151-190, and “Louis
222 O’Mahony, A., “The Influence of the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon on the Catholic
Church’s Relations with Islam”, p. 177

223 see O’Mahony, “Louis Massignon, the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus and the Christian-Muslim
Pilgrimage at Vieux-Marché, Brittany.” In Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage, edited

224 O’Mahony, “The Influence of the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon on the Catholic Church’s
Relations with Islam”, p. 175. See also, Krokus, Christian S. “Louis Massignon’s influence on the
teaching of Vatican II on Muslims and Islam”, Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Volume 23, No.
3 (July, 2012): 329-345

225 Griffith, The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque, pp. 162-4

226 Unsworth, “The Vatican, Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations”, p.61

227 O’Mahony, “The Influence of the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon on the Catholic Church’s
Relations with Islam”, p. 177
his proposal for an “Abrahamic ecumene.”\textsuperscript{228} Kuschel sees in Massignon’s characterisation of Judaism as “rooted in hope”, Christianity “dedicated to love” and Islam “centred on faith” a complementary and converging witness to the world in peaceful dialogue.\textsuperscript{229}

Such an analysis is not without its problems, though. For Islam, there remain questions about the status of Muhammad and the Qur’an that for a Muslim are definitive to their faith but for a Christian or a Jew undermine what they profess. Massignon sought to address this conundrum by advocating for the “conditional authority” of the Qur’an and “partial recognition” of Muhammad as prophet.\textsuperscript{230} For a Jew, Abraham is not the progenitor of a natural religion but the friend of God who was bound in covenant with a promise of a land to his descendants through Isaac. For Gentile Christians, Abraham is the father of faith through the decisive death of Jesus on the cross. Both these understandings are rejected by Islam. To see Abraham as the shared hub of the respective faiths is to overlook the distinctives of each. As Roger Arnaldez says:

“The there is no way of reducing it to a common core so long as we situate ourselves within one of the three religious families. One must be Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, adhering to a faith that excludes the other two.…To put it most forcefully, we would have to neglect the particularities of their messages, ignore the characteristics of each, and repress the very notion of a Messenger.”\textsuperscript{231}

The Israeli scholar Alon Goshen-Gottstein has commented on the tendency of the Abrahamic faiths motif to work most effectively for Christians and Muslims, “while

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{228} Kuschel, p. 231
\item \textsuperscript{229} Kuschel, p. 219
\item \textsuperscript{230} O’Mahony, A., “Our Common Fidelity to Abraham is What Divides: Christianity and Islam in the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon”, p. 158
\item \textsuperscript{231} Arnaldez, R., \textit{Three Messengers for One God}, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 3
\end{itemize}
the Jews tend to watch from the margins.”\textsuperscript{232} Abraham as the “man of faith” is a tenable concept in Pauline theology but it works to negate the fullness of covenant obligation in Judaism. Michael Knowles points to the necessarily high Christology needed for grounding any understanding of Abraham’s faith beyond the covenant with the Jewish people. For Knowles, the “Abrahamic religions” concept negates the Christology of the Pauline account of Abraham’s faith making it captive to an Islamic vision.\textsuperscript{233} In the later analysis of the Church of England’s assessment of Islam we shall see how the Abrahamic motif has the potential to work counter to the broader vocation of the Church of England’s interfaith relations.

A thoroughgoing analysis of the Abrahamic texts suggests a story that contains considerable ambiguity for the respective faiths. An airing of the misogyny of Abraham or the exclusion of Hagar could act as sobering counters to any self-sufficient introversion in the Abrahamic faiths.\textsuperscript{234} As Mary Mills notes, the only truly free actor in the story is the God who speaks,\textsuperscript{235} arguably positing the Abrahamic ecumene in a mystical as opposed to theological frame. The transcendent encounter with God was the source of Massignon’s theologoumenon and we ought to bear in mind Robert Caspar’s warning not to build a theology out of the work of an Orientalist.\textsuperscript{236} This is not to denigrate the significance of the commonalities between


\textsuperscript{235} Mills, “The Story of Abraham and Models of Human Identity”, p. 299

Christianity and Islam represented by Abraham, or to diminish Massignon’s significant influence on Vatican II, but to guard against investing too much in a static framework of Abrahamic faiths.

Additionally, Christianity and Judaism are built on layers of consecutive, historical revelation that keeps the respective integrities of scripture and covenant. Islam, however, distorts the integrities of Christian and Jewish revelations in invoking the completeness and sufficiency of the Qur’an, revealing what David Burrell calls its “chronological asymmetry.” A full concession to Islam of the Abrahamic faith ideal thus threatens the theological significance of the Christ-event for Christians, and the Abrahamic covenant for Jews as well as the integrities of their mutual interrelating. As Neal Robinson asserts, “neither Lumen Gentium nor Nostra Aetate explicitly brackets Islam with Judaism as an Abrahamic religion different from other non-Christian religions. The most one can argue is that they do not close the door to future explorations which might show that it is on.”

In opening up the possibility of Islam being a natural religion after Abraham, the extent to which Islam itself can properly respond with a fuller recognition of the status of Christ and the authority of the biblical canon should follow. The issue of reciprocity, then, which has become a recurrent theme in the post-Vatican II scene, addresses the extent to which a Christian extension of friendship and partnership is followed by a similar Muslim response. As Jacques Waardenburg says, “What seems to be needed for Muslim-Christian relations nowadays is reciprocity, action and reaction, speech and response. Reciprocity may be the key term in these relations, as well as in the study of them.” Reciprocity was a significant theme of John Paul II’s papacy, his ground-breaking visit to Casablanca in 1985 being an occasion to speak out specifically about the needs for religious freedom in Muslim countries. Building on the foundations of the Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis humanae

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1965, in Vatican II John Paul II stated that: “respect and dialogue require reciprocity in all spheres, especially in that which concerns basic freedoms, more particularly religious freedom.”240 Robert Spencer has suggested that John Paul II was too irenic towards Islam but the forthrightness of the Casablanca speech was not an isolated episode and was at one with his intention of extending grace whilst being prepared to offer challenge to Muslims.241 The symbolic gestures towards Christian-Muslim dialogue characterised by Pope John Paul II demonstrated a post-Vatican II temper towards empathy and good relations. However, these good relations were not achieved at the expense of asserting the on-going mission of the church to proclamation or by neglecting the advocacy for the religious freedoms of Christian minorities in Muslim countries.

2.3.3 The Catholic Church and Islam: Summary

Vatican II marked a clear and explicit intent on behalf of the Catholic Church to work for peaceful relations and dialogue with Muslims. The historical similarities between Christianity, Islam and Judaism have been significant in affirming the resources for collaboration, notably in the admission that Christians and Muslims have a common responsibility to the one God, albeit in highlighting key differences. Reciprocity has been a strong theme in Catholic pronouncements on Islam in recent years, helped by

240 quoted in Unsworth, A., “The Vatican, Islam and Muslim-Christian Relations”, p. 59
the conciliatory effects of John Paul II’s many visits to Muslim countries and willingness to enter in mosques in symbolic statements of interdependence.242

There remain, though, a variety of Catholic interpretations of Vatican II pronouncements on Islam. Hans Küng, for example, has notably caused controversy by advocating for the recognition of the prophethood of Muhammad by the Catholic Church. Küng proposes that the “three Semitic religions of revelation” “have the same basis”.243 Significantly, he consequently qualifies and reinterprets the doctrine of the trinity in order to accommodate the “common core” of the three faiths. Küng’s ideas do not reflect Catholic doctrine on the trinity but they do highlight the ambiguities that persist with regard to the conciliar documents. Benedict XVI’s robust aversion to any dilution of Chalcedonian Christology underlines the unorthodox status of Küng’s propositions.245

Daniel Madigan prefers to see behind the insistence of Muhammad’s prophethood the concern of Muslims to be treated seriously and to present in turn a vulnerable Christian presence that is able to learn about and from the other without needing to...

242 “John Paul II personalized inter-faith dialogue. His unprecedented travel schedule, meticulously chronicled by the media, sends a message of openness and determination about the importance of dialogue that no document has done or will ever be able to do in the same way. Putting flesh and blood into his commitment is a symbolic act that speaks as no official statement on paper is able to do,” Donnelly, D., “On Relationship as a Key to Interreligious Dialogue.” In, In Many and Diverse Ways; In Honor of Jacques Dupuis, edited by Daniel Kendall & Gerald O’Collins, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2003): 133-145, p. 136
244 Küng, H., Christianity and the World Religions,  p. 127
agree on matters of belief. The purpose of Christian-Muslim dialogue, then, for Madigan, is not the goal of a “common denominator.”

The seminal status of Vatican II for Christian-Muslim relations lies in its pastoral assertion of the worship of the one God that is common to both faiths and the clear intention to disavow earlier polemical discourses. The documents of Vatican II can be located in continuity with a historic trajectory of Catholic engagement that is able to hold together the parallel tracks of dialogue and proclamation, supremely exemplified in St. Francis and Thomas Aquinas. Throughout the history of Catholic relations with Islam, there is recognition of the doctrine of the trinity as an orthodox creed that is a crucial point of irreconcilable difference. Thus, Vatican II’s empathetic cast does not extend to asserting the prophethood of Muhammad or the revelatory status of the Qur’an. A silent verdict on both these questions protects the continuity of the church’s self-understood ecclesiology as God’s sacramental community in the world.

The account of religions in Vatican II, built upon a theology of semina Verbi and fulfilment, reflects the influence of the missionary theologies of the likes of Jules Monchain, Henri Le Saux and Bede Griffiths. These theologies, consonant with a Thomistic economy of graced nature, underlined the prevenient presence of Christ such that the interfaith encounter could be as much about finding Christ as proclaiming him.

The ecclesial global consciousness ventured by Vatican II has been increasingly demonstrated by the symbolic potential of the papacy as a focus for consolidating positive Christian-Muslim relations. This role has also embodied an advocacy for the status of persecuted Christians under Islam, acknowledging the interdependence of global Catholicism.

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247 “Dialogue is possible because God’s saving grace is not confined to the church alone. It is significant that at the Second Vatican Council the traditional dictum ‘outside the church there is no salvation’ was never used”, Bevans, Stephen P. & Schroeder, Roger B. *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), p. 379
In Chapter 3, we will be exploring Anglican relations with Islam. It will become apparent that there are a number of resonances from the Catholic tradition that offer resources to the Church of England. The need for the Church of England to sustain both evangelism and dialogue and to be attentive to a global ecclesial identity will be evidenced in the development of Anglican documents on other faiths. Indeed, the doctrine of the trinity and the self-identity of the 

The Catholic Church’s antecedent relation to the Church of England means that its engagement with Islam is necessarily instructive for a church that remains “catholic” in identity. However, the break with Rome that presaged the birth of Anglicanism was also part of a wider fragmentation across Christian Europe that realised the nation-state as the locus of ecclesial authority for reformed churches. The Church of England therefore also finds itself paralleling Christian traditions that reject the unitary authority of the pope and responsible to territorial districts demarcated by temporal government. To what extent do such traditions speak of Islam and the church’s consequent engagement and how might they inform the Church of England’s own vocation to the nation as it seeks space for Islam in its midst?

The significance of Martin Luther for the Christian history of Europe is given extra freight for the contemporary context by his explicit pronouncements on Islam. In the charged setting of Ottoman imperial expansion to the borders of European Christendom, the role of the “Turk” in the ferment of churches seeking to return to their sources and roots, a distinctive feature of Protestant thought, became a
significant theme for Luther. Luther had access to an early Latin translation of the Qur’an in 1542 and concluded that it was “evil” and that access to the essentials of the Muslim faith would confirm in Christians its error as a religion. Fellow reformer Theodor Bibliander published his translation of the Qur’an in 1543 and Luther wrote a foreword that revealed much of his attitude to Islam. The agenda of the Reformers to reaffirm a gospel of grace, not works, is evident in Martin Luther’s juxtaposition of what he saw as the futile efforts to please God in the religion of the “Turks”, with the free forgiveness emanating from God in a true Christian faith. Luther regards Islamic beliefs as “pernicious” equating the rites of Islam with the papal errors he is exercised to oppose:

“For the gospel teaches that the Christian religion is by far something other and more sublime than showy ceremonies, tonsures, hoods, pale countenances, fasts, feasts, canonical hours, and that entire show of the Roman church throughout the world.”

Luther accuses the Catholic Church of only highlighting the evils of Islam, and thus distinguishing falsely what is similarly deviant from the gospel within the church itself. Thus, for Luther, “The Turks were for Europe what the Babylonians were for Israel – a ‘schoolmaster’ to discipline and to teach fear of God and prayer”. Luther’s vision of the human origins of Islam did not stop him from recognising the

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248 Diarmaid MacCulloch skilfully evokes the momentum of Reformation thought that was an Ad fontes cry, “back to the sources”, in Reformation: Europe’s House Divided, 1490-1700 (London: Penguin Books, 2004), pp. 76-87. MacCulloch notes the shifting boundaries of Europe in pp. 53-57 and how “The fear which this Islamic aggression engendered in Europe was an essential background to the Reformation”, p. 57


250 quoting from the Preface to Bibliander’s translation of the Qur’an, Henrich, Sarah. & Boyce, James L. “Martin Luther - Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam: Prefaces to the Libellus de ritue et moribus Turcorum (1530), and Preface to Bibliander’s Edition of the Qur’an (1543)”, Word & World, Volume XVI, Number 2 (Spring 1996): 250-266, p. 263

251 Henrich, & Boyce, “Martin Luther - Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam”, p. 259

252 Henrich & Boyce, “Martin Luther - Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam”, p. 255. Note, too, the anticipation of Massignon’s ideas about Islam being a “foil” to the Christian faith
good within Islam; the faithfulness and dedication he observed in “the Turks are by far superior” to the Christians. While essentially human in origin, false and dangerous, Islam needed to be seen in its completeness, which necessitated an appreciation of the good. This process demanded a consequent dependence on the original truth of the gospel, without extraneous rite and human effort. Bibliander was in accord with Luther in stressing the need for a thorough knowledge of Islam, a knowledge that was to be supplemented by anti-Islamic polemical literature given its dangerous error.  

Heinrich Bullinger followed this pattern of paralleling the works-driven faith of the Catholic Church with the beliefs of Islam, regarding it as a Christian heresy much as the earlier Medieval Church had done. For Bullinger, Bibliander, Luther, and also Zwingli, the growing strength of the Ottoman Empire was to be seen in the light of God’s providential judgment on a corrupt and heretical Catholic Church. The role of Islam as a tool of God’s judgment was often overlain with the apocalyptic gloss that Muhammad was the “anti-Christ” or the “devil incarnate”.  

At the level of doctrine, we might observe in Luther and his fellow European Reformers a clear dialectic that condemns Islam as a human construct in contrast to the Christian gospel. Islam needs to be understood and engaged with critically as a means of bolstering the true Christian faith in the minds of the faithful. The implications for wider Christian-Muslim relations are that the Church is compelled to demonstrate curiosity and inquiry into the faith of Islam as a means of both successful proclamation and self-purification. This inquiry would be motivated by two energies, then: the external goal of evangelism, and the internal goal of Christian discipleship.

253 Henrich, & Boyce, “Martin Luther - Translations of Two Prefaces on Islam”, p. 259  
255 Ibid., pp. 238-40  
256 Ibid., pp. 236-44  
Much has been written about Martin Luther’s political theology in general terms and it seems useful to attempt to bridge these thoughts with his perspectives on Islam for the purposes of this current study. The “two kingdoms” that he emphasised echoes the dialectic that Luther applied to his analysis of Islam. The “kingdom of God” is in total distinction from the “kingdom of the world”. These zwei regimente both serve the kingdom of Christ but there is a strict separateness between the jurisdictions. The strict separation meant that Christians were obligated to virtually complete obedience to civil rule, as much as civil rulers were barred from interference in spiritual matters. This has led to the accusation that Luther’s political theology advocates a Christian “quietism” that exacerbates individual piety at the expense of corporate justice. For Christians to interfere in the realm of politics, and vice versa, is redolent of the work of the devil who “never ceases cooking and brewing up the two kingdoms together.” This reminds us of the task of delineating truth and error that was important for Luther in the encounter with Islamic belief.

In the contemporary setting of a settled European Islamic presence, it seems appropriate to suggest that a “Lutheran” sensibility might judge the decline of “Christian” Europe on the failures of a decadent Church. Islam may be seen to have a providential role in returning the Church to its true vocation and tradition. Today’s context of European multiculturalism is very different to the issues that would have encouraged a political “quietism” in Luther in the sixteenth century, though. Indeed, the challenges of totalitarianism in the 1930’s famously produced in Dietrich Bonhoeffer a Lutheran political theology that argued for the “visibility” of the Church.

258 see, for example, O’Donovan & Lockwood O’Donovan, From Irenaeus to Grotius, pp. 581-584, Cargill Thompson, W. D. J. The Political Thought of Martin Luther, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984), Cranz, F. E. An Essay on the Development of Luther’s Thoughts on Justification, Law, and Society, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959)

259 this strict separateness marks the key difference between Luther and Augustine’s conception of the “two cities”. See O’Donovan & Lockwood O’Donovan, From Irenaeus to Grotius, p. 582

260 This was in marked contrast to Zwingli, who sought civil support for religious reforms, O’Donovan & Lockwood O’Donovan, From Irenaeus to Grotius, p. 582


262 Ibid., p. 65
over and against the state.\textsuperscript{263} The symbolisms of territory, religion and culture that Luther reflected upon, bearing in mind the controversy occasioned by Pope Benedict XVI’s \textit{Regensburg Address}, illustrate the resilience of this consistent thread of Christian response to Islam, though. How the Church of England sees its national vocation in the light of this trajectory is a significant question for the subject of this thesis that will be returned to.

In 1990, The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany published an evaluation of Islam that affirmed the need for dialogue with Muslims in parallel with proclamation. No statement was made about the constitutive nature of Islam with respect to salvation but the document “leaves no doubt that Jews and Christians stand in ‘the same tradition of faith’ and have much in common,”\textsuperscript{264} an affinity that Muslims are implicitly and noticeably excluded from. The Porvoo Communion of churches, which includes a significant number of European Lutheran and Reformed churches in an ecumenical venture with European Anglican churches published “guidelines for inter faith encounter” in 2003.\textsuperscript{265} There is a clear trinitarian foundation to the statement that acknowledges the plurality of much of Europe and calls for discernment in interpreting “God’s purposes in our religiously plural societies”\textsuperscript{266} in contrast to the ideal of a “Christian Europe”. Admitting the diverse theologies and traditions of the Communion, there is, yet, a sustained commitment to dialogue that allows for proclamation and conversion; freedom to change one’s religion being asserted as a mutual gift. Interestingly, the guidelines “emphasise the importance of maintaining a vigorous and engaged Christian presence at a local level in multi-faith areas” while recognising the “need to be aware of the ethnic and religious discrimination in our societies”.\textsuperscript{267} The churches, here, seem to be conceding to the diversity of their respective nations while reserving the freedom to present the

\textsuperscript{264} Kuschel, Karl-Josef. \textit{Abraham: A Symbol of Hope for Jews, Christians and Muslims}, p. 187
\textsuperscript{265} see the report, \textit{Guidelines for Inter Faith Encounter in the Churches of the Porvoo Communion}, Porvoo Communion Consultation on Inter Faith Relations, Oslo, 30\textsuperscript{th} November to 3\textsuperscript{rd} December 2003, \url{http://nifcon.anglicancommunion.org/resources/documents/index.cfm} downloaded 1st October 2008
\textsuperscript{266} Ibid., p. 2
\textsuperscript{267} Ibid., p. 3
Christian tradition to other faiths in a manner that is just and respectful. The status of other faiths is again circumnavigated, but the centrality of Christ as the fullness of God affirmed.

As with the Catholic Church, there seems to be a contemporary reluctance to avoid pronouncements that are clearly exclusivist in tone, yet there is a commitment to dialogue and collaboration that does not detract from the vocation of proclamation. As regards the implications for political theology, the Porvoo guidelines assume a robust engagement with society at the level of inter-faith relations but fall short of advocating for a vocation to guard the Christian heritage of Europe as a unitary, binding value-system.

The dialecticism evident in Martin Luther’s theology became a defining characteristic of the twentieth century’s towering Lutheran theologian, Karl Barth. Jacques Dupuis summarises Barth’s understanding of other religions as “nothing but idolatrous attempts at self-justication”; akin to what John Bunyan described as “only a think-so”. In the light of recent equations between Islam and fascism, Barth, in the 1930’s, was paralleling the ideology of Nazism with Islam. Where Nazism meets with opposition, it resorts to “the might and right that belongs to Divinity”: “Islam of old as we know proceeded in this way.” For Barth, then, Hitler was “Allah’s Prophet” of his day. Where Nazism absolutizes the state, arrogating to itself “religious” claims to ultimacy, Islam absolutizes the oneness of God in a false objectivity that inherently violates all other claims and betrays the mystery of God’s ineffability in the process. An alternative interpretation of Barth by Glenn Chestnutt would suggest

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268 Dupuis, Jacques. Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue, p. 46
270 See Chapter 2.5 “Issues Affecting the Contemporary Context of Christian-Muslim Relations”, including the literature on “Islamo-fascism”
271 Barth, K. The Church and the Political Problem of Our Day, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1939), p. 43
that there is some potential to view Islam under a covenant of grace, much as he viewed Judaism as retaining a covenant, by virtue of Muslims’ identity in Ishmael: “the God of Israel is also the God of Ishmael.” Chestnutt would then see Barth offering an ontological link between the Church and Islam; Muslims akin to “paganised Jews”, however much he elsewhere argues for the distinction between the Christian God and the God of Islam and Judaism.273

George Lindbeck builds on this assumption of exclusivist revelation, drawing on Barth’s conception of the “all-inclusive or all-absorbing character of the ‘Strange New World of the Bible’”.274 Other traditions are thus inherently “untranslatable” to the Christian faith.275 For Barth, though, the dialectic was not between the Church and other faiths, nor Christian tradition and other faiths, but between God and humanity. It is in the very revelation from God, embodied in Jesus, that “true religion” is manifest. Thus, he could say that “Religion is never true in itself and as such” and “No religion is true. It can only become true”.276

One of the political implications of this theology is that “the task of the Church was not to shore up Christendom.”277 The organic nature of true faith means that the revelation of Jesus Christ needs to be known and presented anew for each context. The guarding and protecting of historic influence is in utter contradiction to the Christian vocation because “We do not speak about God by speaking about humanity in a loud voice”.278 The exclusivist dialectics of Barth thus produce a more nuanced political theology that is arguably more liberal in its impact on the role of the Church in plural societies than approaches that seek to return to the roots of Christian Europe.

275 incidentally, Lindbeck sees Islam as “doubly” untranslatable because of the necessary Arabic idiom of the Qur’an, Ibid., p. 231
278 Ibid.
emanating from an inclusivist theology of religions. Thus, the Lutheran tradition that had identified itself with the respective territorial jurisdictions post-Westphalia grounds a vital critique of all political regimes. Even while separating ecclesial and state jurisdiction, the Church has a responsibility to identify the provisional nature of human authority. An interpretation of Barth that founds a sympathetic theology of religions is supported by Tom Greggs who recognises that a rejection of “religion” per se “means that the Christian religion stands in solidarity with other religions.” The surprising resourcefulness of Barth to constructive inter-religious relations is confirmed by Glenn Chestnutt along similar lines. The specific polemics aimed at Islam and Muhammad by Barth is less than convincingly circumnavigated by these two authors in the admittedly positive opportunities for encounter with other religions they see in Barth in general.

By questioning the foundational presumptions of prevailing cultures, Barth’s project, as Paul Brazier notes, can be seen to find more resonance within Roman Catholicism. Even allowing for Barth’s challenges to the Catholic Church, there is a shared determination to frame the discussion of Church, culture and religions from an understanding of God and salvation history: “the focus is, therefore, as we see in Barth’s mature work, on the Word of God (the Deus dixit) as an event and person beyond ecclesial structure and authority, but to which all ecclesial structures should (for Barth – müssen, must!) bear witness.” What Barth was rejecting was a public theology that was subservient to history and anthropology, not a theology that could account for God’s providence beyond the church.

Furthermore, Barth’s dialectical approach to other religions opens up space for the mystical and ethical work of God in the world. A theology emphasising the freedom of God and the futility of human grasping at revelation must in turn acknowledge the


280 Chestnutt, Glenn A. *Challenging the Stereotype: The Theology of Karl Barth as a Resource for Inter-religious Encounter in a European Context* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010)

possibility of God’s providence in another religion and not be constrained to evaluate other religions on the basis of a salvation question specific to the Christian faith. This approach has led the American Dominican theologian J. A. DiNoia to avoid the straitjacket of the threefold typology in assessing other religions and to foster a theology of religions that is inherently dialogical. It is in the process of dialogue and encounter that the discernment of God’s freedom can be made. In similar terms, Jürgen Moltmann has stated that we should not be assessing the paths of salvation in other religions or identifying “anonymous Christians” but “looking for life in other religions.” The search for “life” in other religions has echoes of Aquinas’ embrace of “truth” wherever it is encountered. An engagement with Islam that moves beyond the traditional exclusivist-pluralist spectrum, that retains the subjective truths of the Christian faith whilst treating the other with integrity, not superimposing Christian patterns onto Islam, thus seems possible.

In 1948, the World Council of Churches (WCC) became the main international ecumenical forum for Protestant churches. In 1971, the WCC initiated the “Program for Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies” but it was only in 1979 that sufficient consensus on the tensions between dialogue and mission was reached so as to publish “Guidelines on Dialogue”. These guidelines focus on the ethical practice of dialogue rather than offering a theological evaluation of other faiths.


285 Mohammed, Ovey. Muslim-Christian Relations, pp. 74-5
The WCC aims to serve a broad spectrum of theological tradition and thus the more pluralist positions advocated by the likes of Wesley Ariarajah and Stanley Samartha have attained a legitimacy within the WCC ecumenical discourse.\textsuperscript{286} Interestingly, despite such theological diversity in the World Council of Churches, their 1992 document \textit{Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations}, robustly recognised points of contention for many churches as they engaged with Islam. Amongst the issues noted were political governance and the search for the common good as opposed to sectarian interests, Shari’a law, freedom of worship and equal citizenship for Christians in Muslim contexts and mutual practices of evangelism or \textit{da‘wah}.\textsuperscript{287} The ecumenical and global reach of the World Council of Churches seems to have permitted an honest appraisal of concerns from a determination to develop dialogue with Muslims. The concluding section, entitled “Living and working together”\textsuperscript{288} underlines again the significance of political theology and the common good in Christian-Muslim relations.

Douglas Pratt’s summary analysis of WCC’s reflections on dialogue with Muslims confirms the consistent breadth of theologies and engagements, reaffirming the need for cooperation and collaboration between Christians and Muslims in the midst of their respective universal trajectories. A growing concern for the WCC, highlighted originally at the fractious conference on Christian and Muslim mission at Chambésy, Switzerland in 1976, and manifest in a series of regional consultations, is that of religious freedom.\textsuperscript{289} A conference held in May 2006, including Muslims, concluded that meaningful inter-religious dialogue “should not exclude any topic, however controversial or sensitive, if that topic is a matter of concern”. It acknowledged differences, disagreements, and even the lack of an agreed understanding of “conversion”.\textsuperscript{290} For all the efforts of pluralist theologies within the World Council of Churches to establish a \textit{rapprochement} between the two faiths, the prevailing

\textsuperscript{286} Mohammed, Ovey. \textit{Muslim-Christian Relations}, p. 75

\textsuperscript{287} \textit{Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations} (Geneva: WCC, 1992), pp. 9-14

\textsuperscript{288} \textit{Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations}, pp. 14-5


\textsuperscript{290} Ibid., p. 38
concerns are to establish codes of conduct and efforts towards society-building in recognition of the vital differences between Islam and Christianity.

The determination of The WCC to found dialogue and good relations on a robust appreciation of mutual integrities and differences is confirmed by the 2011 document “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct”, produced in conjunction with the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the World Evangelical Alliance. The document addresses issues of ethics and treatment of converts presuming that evangelism is a normative practice of churches. Collaboration between faiths and a responsible public presence is not attained by eliding the distinctive vocation of churches to proclamation: “Mission belongs to the very being of the church. Proclaiming the word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian. At the same time, it is necessary to do so according to gospel principles, with full respect and love for all human beings.” The breadth of signatories of this document suggests that a genuinely ecumenical perspective on relations with other faiths cannot afford to neglect the issues of evangelism and conversion, albeit within appropriately ethical frameworks.

John Hick is perhaps the most celebrated of the pluralist theologians and it was in the seminal The Myth of Christian Uniqueness that he argued for a Copernican revolution in the theology of religions. Instead of an ecclesiocentric theology of religions (exclusivist), and a christocentric theology (inclusivist), a theocentric theology is more appropriate to contemporary diversity. A theocentric theology recognised all faiths as circling the more properly termed “Real”; who is only known in part in the diversity of the manifestations of faith. For Hick, then, the doctrine of the trinity, as classically understood, is an unnecessary obstacle to good relations with Muslims: “we should not insist that Jesus was literally God incarnate, but should see him as a

292 Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World, p. 3
human being who was so startlingly open and responsive to God’s presence that God was working through him for the salvation of many.”

We have noted already that Nicholas of Cusa is called upon by Hick to justify pluralism as a more longstanding theology in the Christian tradition. One might also see in the writings of Clement of Alexandria the traces of a pluralist theology in the way that he abstracts God from the specific revelations within religions. Meister Eckhart’s writings are explicitly referred to by Hick; Eckhart’s distinction between God and the godhead “opens the door to the distinction between the Real and the plurality of its manifestations.”

Despite questions that may be brought about how representative these thinkers are of mainstream Christian tradition, or the interpretation that Hick applies to them, there are other persuasive contemporary voices that seek to conceive of a more pluralist theology of religions. The noted Christian Islamicist and Canadian Presbyterian Wilfred Cantwell Smith has suggested a world theology of religions that seeks to unify the religious impulse in every faith. In blurring the distinction between the religious and the religion, Cantwell Smith reduces the significance of the Christ-event, the elevation of which he calls “the big-bang theory of Christian origins.”

One of Cantwell Smith’s most important contributions was his critique of theologies of religion that assess the nature and practice of religions from an outside vantage point in contradiction to the perspective of the adherents. He famously said that “Islam is (will be) what Muslims say it is.” This helpfully guards against a sterile,

296 Sweetman, Part One, Volume 2, p. 39
297 quoted in Dupuis, Jacques. Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue, p. 377
299 Ibid., p. 155
300 quoted in Cragg, Kenneth, “Responsible to Faith: Responsible for Faith”, p. 38
forensic approach to religions but is a hostage to fortune when the central tenet of Christ’s incarnation is disparaged as a “big-bang theory,” thus denying for Christianity a freedom conceded to Islam. Kenneth Cragg notes the inner contradictions of the worldwide theology of religions that Cantwell Smith proposed in so far as it relates to his conception of Islam. Cantwell Smith’s efforts to qualify objective truths and revelation as they appear in Islam, for Cragg, are unpalatable to most Muslims: “‘The truth that transcends’ has been Islamically defined and with it the response it requires from the humanity it unifies”.\(^{301}\) In Cragg’s inimitable logic, there is the essential quandary of the pluralist project: how can irreconcilable beliefs be brought into one schema?\(^{302}\) If a unitary theological schema across the faiths is properly elusive, then the theological rationale for a unitary political schema that affirms peaceable relations in diversity becomes ever more pressing. It seems that the task facing the Church is not one of diluting the claims of the Christian and Muslim faiths. Rather, it is so rooting the Christian encounter with Islam firmly within its tradition that the trinitarian stream of self-giving love and unity in diversity is exemplified.

There are considerable problems for a pluralist theology conceptually and in terms of integrity in the Christian tradition. Our earlier study of the formative encounters with Islam established the centrality of the trinity and incarnation of Christ as distinguishing theologies.\(^{303}\) Indeed, we might agree with George Lindbeck that the trinity is the “grammar of Christian discourse.”\(^ {304}\) This trajectory is eloquently articulated by David Burrell in his preface to Roger Arnaldez’s *Three Messengers for One God*: “Rather than reach for commonality, we are invited to expand our horizons


\(^{303}\) see, for example, Ipgrave, *Trinity and Interfaith Dialogue*

in the face of diversity. The goal is not an expanded scheme, but an enriched inquirer: discovery of one’s own faith in encountering the faith of another”. 305

Protestant churches, then, exhibit a wide range of responses to Islam that span a spectrum from the polemical condemnation of Islam as a totalising religion of violence through to pluralistic theologies of religion. Even though the WCC has generated theological perspectives that include the pluralist position, in formal accounts of Islam, an orthodox trinitarian position has been upheld that has embraced both dialogue and evangelism. When the WCC has considered the lived reality of Christian-Muslim relations at a global level, the challenges of persecution, conversion and Shari’a law seem to have produced theologies that are akin to those expressed in Vatican II by the Catholic Church. The ability of churches to found good relations with Muslims that are able to affirm difference rather than to bypass difference seems to be reflective of the mainstream of Protestant inter-religious considerations. As with the work of Thomas Aquinas, even robust judgments on Islam such as those documented by Barth have the potential to resource a theology that is conducive to confirmation of the prevenient grace of God in the faith other.

It remains to be seen, as we explore more fully the political theologies at the disposal of the Church of England, how a high view of the Church might be able to provide theological space for Islam in its midst. For the Church of England to reject an overall schema of theologies of religion in favour of a tradition-centred theology that is given trinitarian shape, would accord with the trajectory of Anglican ecclesiology outlined in Chapter 1. The challenge would seem to be then to develop a corresponding political theology that can reckon with evangelism and dialogue among Muslims and resource the pursuit of the common good.

2.4.2 Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam

We have already noted Anglican indebtedness to Eastern Orthodox sensibilities and the influence of the Russian Orthodox émigré movement on Anglican theology and

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ecclesiology. There has been a longstanding fascination of Anglicans with the Eastern Church of the Middle East, too, often due to the shared rejection of papal authority, episcopal hierarchies, and common theologies of priesthood and eucharistic sacrament, as well as their historic commitment to territory. The territorial commitment of Orthodoxy, therefore, may offer resources for the encounter of the Church of England with Islam in its vocation to the nation.

In recent years the “Caesaro-Papism”\(^\text{\textsuperscript{307}}\) of the Russian Orthodox Church which suffered persecution and suppression during the Communist era, has been reawakened and harnessed to foster a new religiosity as a rejection of the previous secularism. The identification of Russian Orthodoxy with a “canonical territory”, \(^\text{\textsuperscript{309}}\) which Basil Cousins sees as akin to the Islamic umma, \(^\text{\textsuperscript{310}}\) has led to a shoring up of exclusive Orthodox Christian presence in Russia. Other Christian traditions have been rejected and the ecumenical project stalled within Russia. A significant Islamic presence within Russia itself suggests the possibilities for inter-ecclesial lessons to Christian-Muslim relations for the Church of England.\(^\text{\textsuperscript{311}}\) The outlying former Soviet states have been neglected by the Russian Orthodox Church, with the result that Islam has grown


\(^{308}\) Ibid., p. 319

\(^{309}\) see Garuti, Adriano. Libertà Religiosa Ed Ecumenismo: La Questione Del “Territorio Canonico” in Russia, (Siena: Cantagalli, 2005) for an analysis of the Orthodox Church’s concept of canonical territory and the impact of this on relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church following the latter’s establishment of four Catholic dioceses in Russia in 2002

\(^{310}\) Cousins, Basil. “Russian Orthodoxy: Contemporary Challenges in Society, Interreligious Encounters and Mission”, p. 328

\(^{311}\) According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, there were approximately sixteen million Muslims in Russia in 2009, , almost 12% of the population, making it the country with the greatest number of Muslims in Europe: “Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Muslim Population, October 2009”, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, pp. 7, 21-22
unabated in the region.\textsuperscript{312} The continuing concept of canonical territory seems, therefore, to inhibit a political theology that supports ecumenical relations and religious plurality. Instead, it seems to hasten the fragmentation that is in danger of being rewarded with the religious extremism that it would otherwise seek to avoid.\textsuperscript{313} Jacques Waardenburg observes that when Europeans see the need to exert power in their association with Islam “as power”, then “their discourse about Islam has to do with power rather than with faith or religion.”\textsuperscript{314} The contemporary Russian context suggests that this observation may also be true for the Church in its understanding of its fellow Christian traditions and underlines the ecumenical implications of the Christian encounter with Islam.

In many countries around the world, one of the most pressing concerns is the freedom and level of citizenship given to Christian communities in Islamic regimes. The Russian Orthodox Church’s advocacy of canonical territory such that Christian “states” develop in parallel with Muslim “states” is a model that ill serves Christians in other countries. Thus, in Egypt, Coptic Christians have had to adapt to the constraints of political and cultural structures that are prejudicial to the full expression of their faith and civic freedoms and responsibilities.\textsuperscript{315} The Coptic Orthodox Church has been at pains to be seen as a loyal community in Egypt and been co-opted into previous governments’ programmes for national unity. The realities of Egyptian citizenship for ordinary Coptic Christians seems to be some way removed from the rhetoric of national unity, Christian-Muslim relations still largely charged by

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\textsuperscript{312} “Russian Orthodoxy still expends much effort in fighting off Catholicism when it should be tackling the advance of Islam”, Cousins, Basil. “Russian Orthodoxy: Contemporary Challenges in Society, Interreligious Encounters and Mission.”, p. 323
\end{flushright}
“ignorance and suspicion” and loyalty to the state has “not brought tangible rewards” for most.316

Adriano Garuti’s study of canonical territory in Russia highlights the ecclesial sensibility of the Orthodox tradition around geography in contrast to the Catholic Church’s emphasis on the personal dimension of the papacy.317 This disjunction of identities has created much of the controversy between the two churches when the Catholic Church has sought to extend its presence into Orthodox canonical territories. Essential to Garuti’s analysis is an understanding of the Catholic Church’s mission as universal and a rejection of any conceptualising of the pope as the “Patriarch of the West”. Anthony O’Mahony’s reflections on the Eastern Christian presence in the Italian Peninsula reveals that there is a complex reality that precedes the hardening of nation-state jurisdictions offering the potential for greater conviviality between the two traditions. Here, the Catholic Church and Orthodox Church can draw on a historical pattern of ecumenism that is not beholden to unitary ecclesial, geographical authorities.318 Indeed, the trinitarian emphasis of Orthodoxy demands a vision extending beyond the individual and the local to “that great human family whose vocation is to discover its Trinitarian identity by means of the Church.”319

Adrian Hastings uses the case study of the break-up of the former Yugoslavia to warn against the dangers of too close an identification with canonical territory. Here, Serbian Orthodox mythologies about Muslims were mobilised in the service of a “narrowly ethno-religious construction” and “huge territorial ambition” to perpetrate

317 Garuti, A. Libertà Religiosa ed Ecumenismo: La Questione Del “Territorio Canonico” in Russia, (Siena: Cantagalli, 2005)
atrocities on minority Muslim communities in the 1990’s. Hastings contrasts the Caesaro-Papism of the Serbian Orthodox Church by admitting the dualism inherent in the Western Christian tradition. Reformed churches, and supremely the Church of England, hold together a conflicting agenda of both nation-forming and universalism. Canonical territory is ultimately an alien concept to the Church of England, because while rooted in and defined by the political roots of the United Kingdom, it retains the universal scope of its own Catholic roots. The introductory study of Anglican ecclesial identity in Chapter 1 confirms the ability of the universalising Church of England to take root in different forms, both confluent with and divergent to nation states across the Anglican Communion. This would provide additional support to the approach of this thesis that would assess the Church of England’s Christian-Muslim relations, and its political theology in response to Islam, in the context of the global Anglican Communion.

The contemporary reality of Eastern Orthodoxy is that there exist similar tensions between territoriality and globality to those within the Anglican Communion. The perceived threat of globalization has provided momentum to a “re-territorialized” religiosity (an aspect of the modern synthesis of Orthodoxy with the nation state) against the grain of the globalist Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. The dilemma facing the Ecumenical Patriarchate provides some resonance with the Church of England:

“working within the context of a Turkish Republic locked in a struggle between Islamic revivalism and secular political values; but a church ever

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seeking to find ecclesial jurisdiction based upon authority for a global Orthodox Church.”

This assessment has more than a little in common with the Church of England’s own engagement with the parallel challenges of Islam and secularism in the public square. All this takes place in the context of a global communion looking to the Archbishop of Canterbury to steer it through potential fragmentation. How the Ecumenical Patriarchate conceives of its relations with Islam, then, offers a productive line of inquiry for the Church of England.

Andrew Sharp has studied recent formal dialogues between Orthodoxy and Islam, to which the Ecumenical Patriarchate have contributed, as evidence of what he believes to be a clear “position” on Christian-Muslim relations. Sharp concludes that there is a tradition-centred encouragement to good relations with Muslims. Sharp considers that a trinitarian economy, setting a high Christology with the Holy Spirit active beyond the confines of the church, is the basis for a contemporary Orthodox “position” on Islam. Importantly, the renewed formal efforts towards dialogue between Orthodox and Muslims are being set in a historical context. Though the doctrine of the trinity has often been problematic for Muslims, the earliest fruitful encounters with Islam of the Eastern Church are being echoed in the trinity’s significance to recognition of God’s grace in the faith other. The theological resources most called upon by Orthodox participants in formal dialogue with Muslims are the Russian émigré theologians of the twentieth century “neo-patristic synthesis”, already mentioned as influential to Anglican self-identity. Sharp’s thesis is confirmed by Metropolitan Georges Khodr of the Church of Antioch, who, drawing from Vladimir Lossky, talks of the “economy of the Spirit” that displays the life of the Creator in non-Christian

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323 Miller, Charles and O’Mahony, Anthony. “Guest Editorial: The Orthodox Church in contemporary contexts”, International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church, Volume 10, Nos. 2-3, (May-August 2010): 82-89, p. 86

324 Sharp, Andrew M. “Eastern Orthodox Theological and Ecclesiological Thought on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations in the Contemporary World (1975-2008)”, unpublished PhD, Department of Theology and Religion, The University of Birmingham, February 2010 and published as Orthodox Christians and Islam in the Postmodern Age (History of Christian-Muslim Relations), (Leiden: Brill, 2012)
religions. The “seeds of the Word”, according to Khodr, compel the Church to “awaken the Christ who is sleeping in the night of religions.”

This trinitarian theology of religions is already very apparent in the understanding of the Eastern Orthodox Church whose doctrine of the perichoresis of the godhead suggest that mission is not primarily about “the propagation of transmission of intellectual convictions, doctrines, moral commands” “but rather about the inclusion of all creation in God’s overflowing, superabundant life of communion.” In this economy, God is a God of mission and dialogue, revealing a deep accord between Vatican II and the Orthodox tradition.

2.4.3 Post-Reformation Churches, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Islam: Summary

The wider post-Reformation traditions reveal a broad range of responses to Islam yet there remains a persistent need to ground relations between the two faiths from within Christian orthodoxy, despite repeated calls for a revised schema of religions. Evangelism and the issues of conversion across the Christian and Muslim faiths hold a significant place in inter-religious dialogue, in common with the Catholic Church. That the post-Westphalian scene has led to the increasing territorialisation of ecclesial responsibilities has merely sharpened the challenge that Christian orthodoxy should be equipped to respond constructively to Islamic shared citizenship. The tensions inherent in the ecclesial task of nation-forming and universalism arguably explain the diversity within the Western Christian tradition towards Islam as churches negotiate the wider context of plurality. In Europe, the parallel traits of nation-forming and universalism, as Jørgen Nielsen notes, exist within Catholic and Protestant denominations and have been subject to repeated re-negotiations. Nielson’s contention is that just such renewed negotiations are necessary for a continent recently

forgetful of its religiously informed political heritage of freedom. As Nielsen elsewhere states, the presence of Muslims in Europe has resulted in a “reopening of the issue of national identity”. For the Church of England as the formally established church of the nation, Anglicanism’s contemporary relationship to national culture, the state, and law is thus a vital arena of study for the shaping of a political theology responsive to Islam.

An overview of the post-Reformation tradition would suggest the possibilities for an inclusivist understanding of God’s sovereignty within Islam that is yet attentive to totalising elements and the vulnerability of Christians in minority situations.

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Egyptian Coptic Church illustrate the persistence of concepts of territorial responsibility in ecclesial identities yet highlight the need for these to be understood in more ecumenical and universal terms. It is evident that, across these traditions, a hard conception of canonical territory is an ambiguous gift to the church in its prophetic witness to the state.

The Orthodox Church has sought to recover the neo-patristic synthesis of the Russian émigré movement in its engagement with Islam such that a participatory, trinitarian vision can give space for the discovery of Christ in the religious other. The recent steps forward in international dialogue between Orthodox Christians and Muslims thus stands in the tradition of Vatican II, recalling as it does the Church Fathers and a eucharistic ecclesiology.

### 2.5 Issues Affecting the Contemporary Context of Christian-Muslim Relations

#### 2.5.1 Religious freedom

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In recent years, the subject of religious freedom has become so visible that it has become a priority foreign affairs issue for many governments; dominating news media and generating official legislation. The implication of resurgent faith communities to international foreign-policy makers is underlined by Scott Thomas for whom the particular fault-lines of Christian-Muslim interaction raise the spectre of religious persecution.

The concept of religious freedom challenges the capability of both faiths to embrace plurality with integrity. J. Leon Hooper, assessing the seminal work of John Courtney Murray in the elaboration of a Catholic rationale for religious freedom, acknowledges that “the church’s endorsement of religious freedom was an act of humility on the part of the church, since the church had done little to develop the institution”. For John Courtney Murray, then, it was of vital importance that a rigorous apologia for religious freedom was rooted in the Catholic tradition. Though Murray was instrumental in such advances, Hooper notes his dissatisfaction with the theology supporting Dignitatis humanae. Murray grounds his advocacy of religious freedom on a rights theory of the law of nature, or reason, manifest to humanity, binding on all governments and not dependent upon assertion the assent of the Catholic Church, though fully rooted in that tradition. We shall return to the political theologies available to a cogent Christian embrace of plurality later in the thesis but suffice to note the necessity of a theological underpinning for religious freedom. However, Murray’s search for a religious rights theory that was authentically “Catholic” poses questions in turn to Muslims engaged in their own theological explorations of identity in the midst of plurality: to what extent are revised ideas of Islamic minority status, 

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333 defined as a “twofold immunity: a man may not be coercively constrained to act against his conscience, nor may a man be coercively restrained or impeded from acting according to his conscience”, Murray, J. C., “The Problem of Religious Freedom”. In, *Religious Liberty: Catholic Struggles with Pluralism*, 127-197, p. 142
equal rights and freedom to convert from Islam genuinely rooted in the faith tradition? As a recent study on religious persecution has highlighted, “more than seven in ten Muslim-majority countries harass Muslims compared with Muslims being harassed in only three in ten Christian-majority countries”, a fact exacerbated by the renewed cogency of Shari’a law in Islamic contexts.  

An inescapable backdrop to Christian-Muslim relations, then, is the reality of the oppression of Christians in many Muslim countries.

One of the consequences of this lack of religious freedom is that questions are being asked by contemporary commentators who accuse Islam of being inherently totalitarian.  

The neologism “Islamo-fascism” has been coined to suggest the totalising tendencies of Islam. Atheist commentators, political scientists and novelists, such as Christopher Hitchens, Francis Fukuyama, Martin Amis and Ian McEwan, all voicing their disquiet about a perceived repressive drive in Islam.  

As Scott Thomas reminds us, such a reading of Islam draws from earlier analyses that suggest that totalising political ideologies are themselves religious in character. There is thus a thread being drawn between these religio-political ideologies and fundamentalist religions. For Thomas, “there is a connection between the ‘religious nature of fascism and what is ‘fascist’ or ‘totalitarian’ about certain forms of religion.”

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337 exemplified by Gentile, E. “The Sacralization of Politics: Definitions, Interpretations and Reflections on the Question of Secular Religion and Totalitarianism,” *Totalitarian Movements and
Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk admits the challenge facing Muslims in responding to these charges of totalitarianism and calls for a campaign, “first and foremost, among Muslims themselves” and then to the West in general to convince people of the peaceful roots of Islam: that “Islam has no “fault lines of war” with other civilizations”. It is interesting to note that the historian Arnold Toynbee, writing in the 1940’s, expressed something akin to Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilisations” thesis in this vein. Referring to the “discordant panmixia set up by the Western conquest of the world”, he wonders that:

“A panmixia may end in a synthesis, but it may equally well end in an explosion; and in that disaster, Islam might have quite a different part to play as the active ingredient in some violent reaction of the cosmopolitan underworld against its Western masters.”

Toynbee’s assessment is explained elsewhere in his view of Muhammad’s “counter-transfiguration” at the heart of the *hijra*: the collapse into the temptation of political power and the use of force as definitive to the faith. In the divine pathos of the crucifixion, for Toynbee, lies the “higher religion” that permits human freedom as a foundation to civilization.

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343 Toynbee, A. *Civilisation on Trial*, p. 237
Olivier Roy recognises totalising tendencies in Islamist strains of the religion but cannot equate these with “fascist” ideologies. Islamism, for Roy, prohibits any social space, any conviviality, outside of the unit of the family. If the family unit, via men, the mosque and the state are the three units for Islamization, there exists no other legitimate social structure. In purely pragmatic and historical terms, this is a denial of any notion of Muslim civilization and leads to an inevitable “social conformity” and “schizophrenia”.\(^{344}\) With this logic, human sociability has and always will undermine the attainment of a properly Islamist society. Additionally, it must be noted that the manifestation of Islamist extremism that has arguably engendered the fear of “islamo-fascism”, 9/11, is generally regarded as resulting from a peculiarly westernised, privatised, re-framing of Islam. In, Kippenberg and Seidensticker’s analysis of the religious rationale for the 9/11 atrocities, the 9/11 Handbook, the authors identify a conflation of Islamic motifs with contemporary, radical liberalism. The ideology of the 9/11 Handbook owes as much to the personalised religiosity of the West as it does to traditional Islam.\(^{345}\) If Islamism is intellectually self-defeating, as Roy suggests, then it should be no surprise that the very ideologies and tools of modernity are employed in its cause. It may then be that the idea of a “pure” Islam in political terms is as elusive as the “pure” peaceable Islam that Abushouk seeks to reclaim. Perhaps the most fruitful path for Christian interrelating with Islam, then, is an engagement that is equal to what is rather than what purports to be, whether inherently irenic or totalising.

It is against the backdrop of concerns about the perceived oppressiveness of Islam and the fragility of the heritage of European Christian civilisation that has suggested to some that the Catholic Church is embarking on a “new realism about Islam”\(^{346}\) culminating in Pope Benedict XVI’s Regensburg Address in 2006. Combined with his repositioning of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue as a freestanding agency of the Holy See, and the transfer of the experienced Archbishop Michael

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Fitzgerald from the PCID in 2006, it may seem that Benedict’s papacy took a fresh trajectory with regard to other faiths. Though the controversial element of Benedict’s *Regensburg Address* was the quotation from the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Paleologus that asserted the violence of the prophet Muhammad, the political theology exhibited by the substance of the speech is arguably more contentious expressing as it does his personal perspective on a properly Christian Europe. Pope Benedict’s assessment of the “convergence” of Biblical faith and Greek philosophical inquiry as the “decisive character in Europe” and what “remains the foundation of what can rightly be called Europe” superimposes the role of host onto the church; Muslims being guests or strangers to the wider culture. This is a recurrent theme for Pope Benedict, his earlier work, *Truth and Tolerance* arguing that Christianity was the “synthesis of faith and reason” and thus at home in the culture of Christian Europe. Pope Benedict XVI seems to be conscious of a creeping relativism and secularism that is undermining the civilisation of Europe and in danger of leading to despotism and sectarian violence. This is characterised for him by what he sees as a “peculiar Western self-hatred” that seeks to sever the roots of European

347 Wood and Unsworth refute this accusation, affirming the on-going priority of interreligious dialogue for Pope Benedict XVI and stressing the strategic significance of Michael Fitzgerald’s new appointment in the pursuit of reciprocity in the Middle East, Ibid., p. 67. Hugh Goddard rather sees the Regensburg Address as an “own goal” for Christian-Muslim relations resulting from the loss of key interfaith theological and public relations advisers from the papal staff, Goddard, H. “Recent Developments in Christian-Muslim Relations.” In, *World Christianity in Muslim Encounter: Essays in Memory of David A. Kerr*, edited by Stephen R. Goodwin, (London/New York: Continuum, 2009): 96-114, p. 102

348 “Show me just what Muhammad brought that was new, and there you will only find things that are evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith that he preached”, quoted in Pope Benedict XVI., “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections”, 12th September 2006, downloaded from:  

349 Ibid., p. 4


civilisation in the progressive self-forgetting of Christian institutions. This is not a significant departure from Pope John Paul II’s description of European relativism as a “culture of death”\(^{352}\) and suggests a continuous papal concern for the guarding of Christian culture in Europe.\(^{353}\)

Anthony O’Mahony observes a longstanding papal burden for Europe in the very origins of the continent’s identity. For O’Mahony, the “idea of Europe” is an extension and achievement of the ecumenical goal of Christianity.\(^{354}\) As this “idea” extends eastwards, the ecclesial diversity becomes apparent and a necessary ecumenical horizon encompassing Western and Eastern churches becomes visible.\(^{355}\) That Islam should be a significant presence in the newly configured Europe underlines a papal determination that the cultural inheritance of Christianity should not become victim to a collective amnesia. For Michael Kirwan, talk of a return to the Christian roots of Europe is more redolent of political “mythology” than theology, rightly conceived, though he concedes grounds for the fear of fragmentation and totalitarianism that has exercised Pope John Paul II.\(^{356}\)

How the Church should negotiate its public proclamation across this shifting and diverse collective we call Europe without seeming to revert to a mythic conception of Christianity’s cultural legacy strikes at the heart of the political theology question. This will be explored more fully in the chapter on Anglican political theology but it is

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\(^{352}\) Kirwan, “Current Theological Themes in World Christianity”, p. 46


\(^{355}\) O’Mahony, A. “The Vatican and Europe”, p. 190

worth noting that this European debate is just a larger equivalent of the question faced by the Church of England: how does the church contribute to a British (or English) civilisation of evident religious diversity from an increasingly marginal position? As the established Church in England the notion of a “Christian nation” might serve to exclude the cultural presence of Islam if that presence is deemed to undermine presumed liberties. How can the church itself be regarded as conducive to liberty in this account, then? If the Church of England’s political theology is to underwrite a more plurastic conception of the public square, how does the church articulate its rejection of oppressive strains of Islamic politics?

The double jeopardy for Middle Eastern Christians of being a marginal branch of an already marginalised region provides another context to the challenge of religious freedom. This “double jeopardy” is given a “hermeneutical key” by George Sabra’s alternate designation of “Arab Christian” or “Eastern Christian”. For the former, the primary identity is seen in ethnic terms, such that Western ecclesial and political overtures are viewed with suspicion and in imperialistic terms. For the latter “Eastern Christians”, their marginal status as minorities under increasingly oppressive Islamic regimes generates a search for liberation from the resources of the West. 357 Both lenses have been undermined by political events in recent years, and both hold elements of truth that need to be taken seriously by the Church in the West.

Illustrative of these “two ways of being a Christian” in the Muslim Middle East is the western interventions in Iraq. The influence of broader political tensions and the conflation of “West” with “Christian” have had a disastrous effect on the fortunes of the Christian communities in Iraq following the two Gulf Wars. 358 This has had far-reaching implications for the predominantly Chaldean Christian Church community which, despite the post-Saddam Hussein regime, has found its freedoms increasingly

circumscribed and their numbers decimated by emigration. This creates an ambiguity for the world Church: pursuing advocacy for suffering Christians in marginal situations whilst trying to avoid the repetition of perceived colonising interference that may exacerbate the insecurity of Iraqi Christians.359

In Nigeria, it seems that religion has been “mobilised” in the pursuit of social and economic advantage.360 Interestingly, Stanislaw Grodz believes that a reawakened shared sense of Africanness is a fruitful discourse for West African Christians and Muslims.361 In the common experiences of a historic African culture that has often been suppressed by each faith, there are perhaps resources for a shared citizenship that can overcome religious difference. By enculturating the respective religious experiences in the African milieu, the charged “clash of civilisations” script is avoided and an appeal to the civic needs of everyone made possible. Peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims, it is suggested, cannot be a mere matter of heightened religiosity but has to draw on each community’s conception of social and political structures. Thus, with regard to the controversial implementation of Shari’a law in northern Nigeria, a response that argues for the privatisation of religion is wholly inadequate to the context. What is required is a shared understanding of citizenship and a full responsibility in the public realm that provides a forum for the negotiation of the genuinely different and sometimes conflicting religious belief systems.362 Rabiatu Ammah similarly calls for a sense of shared citizenship amongst Nigerian Christians and Muslims, recognising the increasingly radicalised traditions...

359 an ambiguity observed by Fiona McCallum within the Coptic Church in Egypt, “Muslim-Christian relations in Egypt”, p. 79
361 Ibid., p. 218
362 “‘If I am welcome only if I leave my religion at home, I cannot go, because that is who I am’. Value ‘systems’ with ideals for life and their norms for what we should and should not do are needed in the public domain, even though they can, and will, collide. Compromises cannot be discovered by the political system alone, because in the end political decisions depend on power relations whereas compromises on values need mutual understanding.” Vroom, Hendrik. “Law, Muslim majority and the Implementation of Sharia in Northern Nigeria”, International Journal of Public Theology, 2 (2008): 484-500, p. 499
that are holding sway. Josiah Idowu-Fearon reiterates the need for a Christian civic engagement with Muslims specifically for the Anglican Church in Nigeria but stresses the importance of support for this within the broader Anglican Communion. The reframing of the respective exclusivist beliefs is not likely to be as successful in averting conflict as developing public theologies for Christians and Muslims that affirm the common good. Indeed, the very collaboration of missionary Muslims and Christians for the good of African society is already being articulated in local theologies and offering the potential for a model for Christian-Muslim relations globally.

In the only Asian country that has a majority Christian population, the Philippines, there has been the sense of a “special vocation” to “bear witness to the Gospel in the heart of Asia” that underscores the vulnerability felt by Muslims towards Christians. For Rocco Viviano, the primary challenge facing the Catholic Church in

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365 Matthews A. Ojo has noted the growth in Pentecostal Christians in Nigeria and their renewed public and political discourse in counter to political Islam. The discourse is largely charged with very negative stereotyping of Muslims underscoring competition for public space. This highlights the need for a political theology that can embrace genuine plurality out of recognisably missionary claims. Ojo, Matthews A. “Pentecostal Movements, Islam and the Contest for Public Space in Northern Nigeria”, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Volume 18, No. 2*, (April 2007): 175-188


the Philippines is the appropriate handling of the tension between dialogue and proclamation: “how to maintain the cosmic dimension of the church’s mission while allowing that religions may have a purpose in God’s plan; how to integrate faithfulness to the missionary mandate (‘go, proclaim, baptise’), while learning from other religions (i.e. how can ‘Tradition’ be enriched by ‘traditions’?).”368 Once again, the mutual enrichment of traditions is played out in the “socio-political dimension” with a problematic overarching narrative of colonialism, Islamic extremism and the quest for autonomy by specific ethnic groupings in the Philippines.369

In Malaysia, the Christian minority carries the weight of following a faith that is perceived as “foreign”,370 another example of the broader socio-political history prejudicing mutual, shared citizenship. For Peter Riddell, this is expressed in the aspiration of a “liberal and tolerant society based on a common vision which is both articulated and owned by all faith communities”.371 In India, too, the colonial and missionary past informs a profound suspicion of the Christian minorities from Hindu and Muslim neighbours.372 The legacy of the “two-nations theory” that resulted in the foundation of Pakistan as a Muslim state informs Muslim attitudes to plurality in India such that it has been argued that the core question facing Muslims is “the idea of citizenship”.373 Can Muslims engage fully in the plural realities of modern-day India

Anthony O’Mahony and Michael Kirwan, (London: Melisende, 2004): 372-415. This “vocation” was expressed by Pope John Paul II in his visit of 1996, pp. 387-8


369 Viviano SX, Rocco. “Christian-Muslim relations in the Philippines.” pp. 121-7


373 Ibid., p. 217
for the good of all? To many Christians in Britain, the negative portrayal of the experiences of the Christian minority in Pakistan by campaigning groups such as The Barnabas Fund suggests the inability of Muslim-majority regimes to robustly entertain plurality.\textsuperscript{374} Even at the level of academic dialogical exchanges, Islamic majority status has been noted as creating inertia in relations. One Muslim scholar is quoted as saying of the openness of Christian-Muslim dialogue in Britain in contrast to his home country of Pakistan: “we need you there, we do not need you here”.\textsuperscript{375} For all the evidence of need for explorations of citizenship, of efforts for the common good among Christians and Muslims, churches have to reckon with the realities of persecution in many Muslim-majority contexts.

The significance of local statements and symbolic actions impacting Christian-Muslim relations on a global scale was evidenced by the violence inflicted upon Christians in some Muslim cities consequent upon the Regensburg Address. Similarly, the publication of cartoons of the prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper in 2005 had repercussions for Christian-Muslim relations elsewhere.\textsuperscript{376} The articulation of a political theology for the Church of England in relation to Islam, then, must reckon with the realities of Christian-Muslim relations worldwide which include the negative experience of Islamised religious persecution.

\subsection{2.5.2 Islam, Judaism, the state of Israel and Christian-Muslim relations}

One of the concerning manifestations of totalising elements within Islam has been in attitudes to Jews. This has led a number of scholars to reflect on whether the primary and original other that is totalised in Islam is the Jew. As Camilla Adang notes, “Islamic polemics against Judaism and its adherents is a phenomenon as old as Islam

\textsuperscript{374} Sookhdeo, P. \textit{The Challenge of Islam to the Church and its Mission}, (McLean, VA: Isaac Publishing, 2009), pp. 111-2. Sookhdeo here asserts the need for justice for Christians in Pakistan, mentioning also Egypt and the stand made there by the Anglican Bishop in Egypt


itself, and the Qur’an is its very first source.”\footnote{Adang, C. “Medieval Muslim Polemics against the Jewish Scriptures”. In, \textit{Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey}, edited by Jacques Waardenburg, (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 143-159, p. 143} The medieval Islamic polemics towards Judaism that Camilla Adang observes express an aversion to the particularity of Judaism: there is no universal aspiration that emboldens it beyond its ethnic confines. Judaism “wielded no power, and worldly power and military victories are among the signs of God’s grace.”\footnote{Adang, C. “Medieval Muslim Polemics against the Jewish Scriptures”, p. 145} This seems to support the reserve found by Arnold Toynbee about a civilization that seems unable to concede ground to the other; in Islam, the formative other being Jewish.  

Gudrun Kramer recognises the existence of anti-Semitism in Islamic history and amongst contemporary commentators. However, for her, the primary sources do not eventuate in Islamic totalising of Jews. The Qur’an also offers a sympathetic portrayal of Jews, and Jews are merely part of a wider canvas of non-Muslims that, post Medina are then seen more polemically.\footnote{Kramer, G. “Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World, A Critical Review”, \textit{Die Welt des Islams}, Volume 46, No. 3, (2006): 143-276, pp. 267-70} Kramer’s assessment posits the charge of Islam’s inherent anti-Semitism as an element of the trade in mutual polemics and invective: a “grey zone”\footnote{Kramer, G. “Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World”, p. 267} that is by no means inevitable within the respective religions and communities. The critique of Islamo-fascism is just one more contemporary expression of that same dynamic of mutual polemics, for Kramer, that is directed at Islam.\footnote{Kramer, G. “Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World”, p. 273}  

However, the ambivalence of Islamic relations with Judaism is given added freight by the scholarly investigations of Gerald Hawting into the Qur’anic context of monotheism. His controversial thesis would suggest that the traditional interpretation of the Qur’an’s call away from idol worship is not supported by the realities of seventh century Arabian monotheism. Indeed, that the Qur’an is rather advocating a “pure monotheism” around food and purity regulations. The traditional interpretation then is driven by the need to establish the veracity of the Abrahamic connection (the
formative history in Jewish revelation) rather than by a substantive correction of idol-worshippers (mushrikūn).\(^{382}\) It is beyond the scope of this study to take this line of argument further but what it raises are some of the genuine questions that exist around assumptions of Islam’s Abrahamic roots. Hawting’s analysis would posit Islam as responding to and adapting Judaism\(^ {383}\) and Christianity rather than reverting to a natural religion prophetically exercised by Arabian idol worship, further undermining the Abrahamic faiths motif.

By contrast, Fred Donner’s thesis would observe the unifying tendencies of Muhammad’s prophetic vocation that is rather characterised as a “monotheistic reform movement” that embraced both Christians and Jews in the Medinan milieu.\(^ {384}\) It was only later, after Muhammad’s death, that relations between Muslims, Christians, and, in particular, Jews, solidified into sharp distinctions. For Donner, Muhammad’s Islamic mission was to constitute a community of monotheistic “believers” that included Jews albeit reformed according to the Qur’anic revelation.

Timothy Winter supports the traditional Islamic abrogationist view that Islam corrects the waywardness of later Judaism and Christianity but reconfigures this sympathetically in suggesting a relative intercessory role within each of the Abrahamic faiths by their respective prophets. Thus Moses will intercede for Jews, Jesus for Christians, to God who has revealed his purposes to Muhammad, the primary intercessor. Winter is thus able to assert the particularity of Islam in its universal aspiration whilst allowing for concession to revelation in Judaism and


\(^{383}\) it is the Jewish influence that seems especially pertinent and powerful in rooting Islamic identity: “The source of this great similarity between the two cultures is the direct influence of Judaism on nascent Islam in the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century, and on the crystallization of its legal system in Babylon in the eighth century. Moreover, both religions drew from the civilizations that preceded them, while attempting to Judaize or Islamize this inheritance.” Lazarus-Yafeh, H. “Some Differences Between Judaism and Islam as Two Religions of Law”, Religion, Volume 14, No. 2, (1984): 175-191, p. 177

Christianity, though no explicit Islamic tradition or text is used to support such a reading. Muhammad is the vehicle of this “mercy” to Christians and Jews. But there remains the nagging sense that the integrities of those faiths have been manipulated and distorted to ground a purported Islamic inclusivity. In his agreement with Samuel Goetein’s phrase that in Islam there is a “creative symbiosis” with Judaism, it is difficult to see how Winter’s analysis avoids contradicting his advocacy elsewhere that Abrahamic religions “be about allowing them to bear witness to themselves”. There is no mention of what Islam offers Judaism in this bilateral relationship beyond its correction. Winter’s inclusive Islam still sees Judaism as believed and practiced as errant, and Christianity as founded on the false premise of Christ’s crucifixion. There remains a challenge to Islam to present an understanding of itself that can give an account of Judaism that allows Judaism to exist with full integrity.

For Douglas Pratt, whatever the theological bases for destructive perspectives, the pursuit of positive Islamic paradigms of interrelationships with Judaism is an urgent task in the contemporary context. Jacques Waardenburg similarly notes the persistence of entrenched accounts of mutual animosity between Christians, Jews and Muslims and recommends an attention to the diversity of all three faiths that is belied often by static pronouncements from religious leaders and inadequate frameworks that perpetuate religious rivalries. Once more, an emphasis on the lived reality of faiths in all their diversity seems to be a priority for relations between the religions.

In the context of global geopolitics, Israel remains a focus for much tension in Christian-Muslim relations. In Israel, the very viability of a sustainable Christian

386 Winter, T. “The last Trump Card: Islam and the Supercession of Other Faiths”, p. 141
presence in the Holy Land is in doubt. With respect to Palestinian Christians, there is the double jeopardy of being a marginal presence within an already disenfranchised Arab community in Israel. Their plight is often subsumed under a wider political conflict that takes a more complex hue than the simplistic shorthand of “the West and Islam”. That the power blocks are not as clearly delineated as might appear does not deny the “apocalyptic” potential of the situation. The particularly visceral nature of religious struggle in the Holy Land, a tension that is also manifest within Christian communities as well as between the faiths of Judaism, Islam and Christianity, points to the ineluctable connections between the traditions. We may wish to hold some reserve about the helpfulness of the Abrahamic faiths motif yet there remains a sense in which Abraham both affirms commonality and becomes the “focal point for claims of exclusivity”. There is little doubt that the fact that place and prophethood are so deeply intertwined for Christians, Jews and Muslims in Israel, and supremely in Jerusalem, raises the temperature of relations between and within these three faiths in the Middle East. Anthony O’Mahony summarises this judgment for Christian-Muslim relations with his observation that:


392 John Watson suggests there is a looming “new apocalypse” for the Orthodox Christians in the Middle East, Watson, John H. “Christianity in the Middle East”, pp. 224-5

393 Jerome Murphy O’Connor describes the struggles between Christian traditions over holy places as a “cacophony of warring chants”, quoted in Watson, John H. “Christianity in the Middle East”, p. 216

“There is an intimacy to the Christian-Muslim encounter, which offers a familiarity, but allows for little theological commonality due to difference. Thus throughout the centuries since the rise of Islam, Muslim-Christian relations have revolved around this double axis of familiar, biblical appeal and strenuous, religious critique”. 395

The sharpness of the respective religious histories that are displayed so acutely in the Middle East is one of the reasons why the Catholic Church has put such a priority on the support and continuance of a Christian presence in the Holy Land. Only by returning to an essential belief in the one God worshipped by Jews, Christians and Muslims in neighbourly inter-religious dialogue and peace-making, it is argued, can catastrophe be averted. 396

The significance of the Holy Land to Pope Benedict XVI for Christian-Muslim relations globally was confirmed by his invitation in February 2009 to a special Synod of the Middle East taking place in October 2010. This Synod’s “crucial issue” was seen to be “the presence of Christian communities in regions of strong Islamic supremacy”. 397 Though the self-preservation of the Christian witness is clearly in mind, 398 for the Holy See there is a far-reaching potency in the on-going vitality of the Church in the Middle East: “the presence of Christians in the Middle East represents a

398 Miller, Charles H. “Jerusalem, the Holy City in selected documents of the Holy See and in writings of Michel Sabba, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.” In, Christianity and Jerusalem: Studies in Modern Theology and Politics in the Holy Land, edited by Anthony O’Mahony (Leominster, Gracewing, 2010): 216-244, p. 226: the 2009 invitation to the Synod of the Middle East accords with the formative pattern of papal concern for the “Mother Church” of Christendom and its holy places manifest in documents of the Holy See
true richness for the whole society and a significant guarantee of social, cultural and religious development”. 399 In Anthony O’Mahony’s words, “Christianity in the Middle East has a witness beyond itself”. 400

For Robert M. Johnson, the Church has a role as a “mediator between the two antagonists” of Judaism and Islam in the Holy Land, akin to that advocated by Louis Massignon. 401 That the Church could be a broker within the charged rivalries over holy sites is largely, for Johnson, to do with the incidental nature of place within the Christian narrative in contrast to Judaism and Islam for which land is, respectively, gift and vindication from God. It is in a negotiation of a “theology of land” with Muslims and Jews that honours the significance of place yet prioritises the exigencies of cooperative citizenship that the Church’s gift rests.

The on-going presence of a Christian community in the Holy Land likewise acts as a guarantor of the ability of Islam to take plurality seriously. This is implicit in the “Memorandum of their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and the Heads of the Christian communities in Jerusalem o the significance of Jerusalem for Christians”:

“Jerusalem is a holy city for the people of the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Its unique nature of sanctity endows it with a special vocation: calling for reconciliation and harmony among people, whether citizens, pilgrims or visitors. And because of its symbolic and emotive value, Jerusalem has been a rallying cry for different revived nationalistic and fundamentalist stirrings in the region and elsewhere.” 402

This ecumenical commitment to the religious diversity of Jerusalem and the consequent inclusivist political theology is reiterated in the writings of the Anglican

399 “Pope: Christians an Asset to Muslim Countries”
402 Miller, Charles H. “Jerusalem, the Holy City in selected documents of the Holy See”, Appendix, p. 238
Islamicist Kenneth Cragg. Cragg argues that Jerusalem “by irreducible historical factors – has to have a plural, that is a triple, ‘ownership’ of love and may not properly be unilaterally annexed”.\textsuperscript{403} The argument for an inclusive cast to the site of the Holy Land for the three faiths is yet envisioned with a full appreciation of the tragedy of Zionism to the Arab peoples. For Cragg, the establishment of the modern state of Israel through a militant movement under the British Mandate, paradoxically realised the “Palestinian politics of statehood.” Zionism’s apotheosis was Arabism’s nadir: “From that consummation of fulfilment and of frustration proceeds the incompatible defence of the one and redress of the other.”\textsuperscript{404} Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali likewise affirms “an open and inclusive city” as reflected in the Lambeth Conference of 1998 and notes the ecumenical and international responsibilities to protect religious and civic freedoms within the state.\textsuperscript{405}

Such statements of Anglican goodwill cannot but be tarnished by British implication in the political roots that furnished the “competitively loved”\textsuperscript{406} land, though. The iniquities, in Cragg’s view, of the 1917 \textit{Balfour Declaration}’s wilful neglect of the vast majority of Palestinian presence in the Holy Land and the political opportunism of the British government’s betrayal of earlier commitments to the Arab peoples, undermined the integrity of the Anglican presence in the Middle East. This earlier injustice paralysed the subsequent Mandate such that Jewish yearnings for a homeland under the shadow of the Holocaust were then subject to similar prevarications. This has given an “Anglican unease in Zion”\textsuperscript{407} according to Cragg


\textsuperscript{404} Cragg, Kenneth. \textit{This Year in Jerusalem: Israel in Experience}, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1982), pp. 125-6


\textsuperscript{406} Cragg, Kenneth. \textit{This Year in Jerusalem}, p. 50

that “can mean hope as well as reproach”. Bearing the humbling associations with the British government’s role in the contemporary political nexus that is Israel, the Anglican Church has the potential to articulate a future that is not “power-ensured”. This repeated characterisation by Cragg of the will-to-power that inhibits true faith is best challenged by a self-giving presence that undermines the idolatries at the heart of the monism inherent in both Zionism and Islamism, as idealised in the Hijra. This is a difficult tension for the Church to hold: to robustly engage in the public life of the Holy Land in a manner that does not grasp power or hide from its own past mistakes and associations. Yet this is a temper that seems relevant to our primary research for the Church of England, too.

It is the Anglican “unease” in Jerusalem that brought urgency to Kenneth Cragg’s project as assistant Bishop in Jerusalem from 1970 to Arabicise the bishopric and create a truly local ecclesial, Anglican presence. This gave public reality to a community that had itself suffered under the establishment of the state of Israel and thus could more authentically witness to shared citizenship amongst the three monotheisms. It is in the spirit of a rejection of all that is “power-ensured” that the Anglican episcopate is known as the bishop in Jerusalem rather than of Jerusalem, simultaneously deferring to the primacy of the Greek Orthodox patriarch, and it would seem, knowingly conscious of “Anglican” colonial pretensions. It has, according to Michael Marten, enabled the Anglican Church to punch above its weight by acting as a broker across the ecumenical divide. Considering the Church of England’s own challenge of diversity, it is worth comparing John Sentamu, as Archbishop of York, and his preference in his previous role to be called the Bishop

408 Cragg, Kenneth. *Faith and Life Negotiate*, p. 177
411 Marten, Michael. “Indigenization and contextualization”, p. 129
for Birmingham as opposed to the Bishop of Birmingham.\textsuperscript{412} One wonders if there is something patterned for the Church of England in the fact of the Arabic Anglican Church in Jerusalem and a Ugandan Archbishop of York modelling a political theology that gives away to become a more potent public presence. The wilful loss of the possessive provides a means for the Anglican Church to retain a public presence, albeit in a similarly plural and minority situation, and points forward to the likely shape of a political theology for the Church of England in relation to Islam.

Recalling the impetus for the inclusion in Vatican II of statements on Islam, there seems to be an unavoidable link between Christian and Muslim relations and international political relations especially as regards Western foreign policy. If, as Douglas Pratt asserts, “the founding of the State of Israel is to some degree the legacy of the relationship of Judaism to Christianity”\textsuperscript{413} then contemporary Christian-Muslim relations cannot be considered without reference to the Church’s engagement with Judaism and the concrete reality of the state of Israel. So, while ecclesial histories have to be reckoned with, the Church’s theological understanding of Judaism and “the land” also comes under the inevitable scrutiny of the other monotheisms.

The movement of Christian Zionism complicates the scene for Palestinian Christians suffering the double jeopardy of marginalisation. A movement that gives Christian justification to the establishment of the state of Israel as an outworking of biblical prophecy and views Middle Eastern politics through the lens of pre-millenial eschatology inevitably isolates Palestinian Christians. If God holds a preference for the entitlement to the land of Jews over Palestinians and the culmination of the flowering of Israel is to be the conversion of all Jews, then aspirations to shared citizenship and inclusivity are illusory. Indeed, within this worldview, it is not clear what it can mean, in any real sense, to be a Palestinian Christian.\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{412} “Profile: Archbishop John Sentamu”, BBC News, \url{http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4102960.stm} downloaded 25th October, 2010

\textsuperscript{413} Pratt, Douglas. “Muslim-Jewish relations: some Islamic paradigms”, p. 11

Once again, the Anglican Church has associations with Zionism that date back to the work of the Anglican missionary society, the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews.\textsuperscript{415} This society had seen the Anglican Church presence in the Holy Land purely as a focus for work with Jews and resisted the Arabicisation of the bishopric. Part of the contemporary Anglican presence in Jerusalem is a Christian-Zionist congregation in the former cathedral church at Christ Church in the old city.\textsuperscript{416} We have already noted the formal commitment of the Christian communities in Jerusalem, including the Anglican Church, to a vision of shared citizenship.\textsuperscript{417} Signed in 1994, this document affirms that no one can appropriate Jerusalem “in exclusivist ways”, yet formal and informal links with Christian Zionism cannot but underline the “unease” of the Anglican presence. While asserting the religious freedoms of the Christian community, the formal ecumenical commitment also holds open the possibility for the inclusive citizenship that Kenneth Cragg called for and rebuffs trajectories amongst Jews and Palestinians that would seek to monopolise power in the Holy Land. This is an important statement in the context of global Christian-Muslim relations because of the high profile that Israel has in Islamic communities.

The impact of perceived injustice against Palestinians on the attitudes of British Muslims to their sense of citizenship and loyalty in Britain and the potential for this alienation to take religious form is well documented.\textsuperscript{418} The dangers of a conflation of Zionism is particularly prevalent in evangelical circles and it is from within evangelicalism that these two authors write their critiques

\textsuperscript{415} This is now known as the Church’s Ministry Among Jewish People, “CMJ”

\textsuperscript{416} Marten, Michael. “Indigenization and contextualization”, pp. 118-9

\textsuperscript{417} Miller, Charles H. “Jerusalem, the Holy City in selected documents of the Holy See”, Appendix, pp. 238-244

“West” with “Christian” are all too evident around the competing animosities of the Holy Land when churches are seen to underwrite Zionism. Muzaffar Iqbal’s commentary on Islam’s relations with and in the West is a particularly revealing example of how Christianity can so easily be held responsible for a culture and a politics it would otherwise disdain. Iqbal presents a continuity from the Crusades with a contemporary stand-off between Islam “and the West” over the sovereignty of Jerusalem. This immediately Christianises the Zionism that he would oppose while invoking the violence and persecution of the Crusades as present realities. All that is colonial, secular and militaristic is then perceived as a legacy of the Church. Thus, Iqbal concludes: “it is a contradiction of the modern West that while apparently it maintains an irreligious posture, it remains deeply rooted in the rituals of a Christianity which has hardly anything to do with the noble Messenger of God”. It would be disingenuous for the Church to deny any responsibility for the actions of western governments. However, a lazy conflation of Western political institutions and Christianity needs to be challenged if only because of its ignorance of the significant Middle Eastern Christian communities that the Latin Church, ecumenically, is committed to support.

In order to assert the specific, cultural identity of Palestinian Christians, there has been a growing self-consciousness around liberation theologies that support a just solution to the Palestine question. As Laura Robson notes, this movement works in two directions: to communicate to western Christians the plight of the Palestinian church, and to alert Middle Eastern Muslims to a Christian rationale for Palestinian liberation. The 1987 Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Singapore

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420 Iqbal, Muzaffar. “Islam and the West in the Emerging World Order.”, p. 271

421 See the collection of essays in *British Foreign Policy and the Anglican Church: Christian Engagement with the Contemporary World*, edited by Timothy Blewitt, Adrian Hyde-Price & Wyn Rees, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008) for an analysis of the ways Christian values may be informing British foreign policy

acknowledged the existence of the state of Israel but rejected “the interpretation of holy scripture which affirms a special place for the present state of Israel and in the light of biblical prophecy, finds it detrimental to peace and justice, and damaging to Jews, Christians and Muslims.”

Here the Anglican Communion seems to be rejecting Christian Zionism and appreciating how this doctrine can impact negatively on relations across the three monotheisms. However, there is an apparent risk from too much identification with the Palestinian cause on relations with Jews. The sensitivity of this issue is noted by two longstanding Anglican exponents of Christian-Jewish relations, Marcus Braybrooke and Bishop Richard Harries. Can Anglican Christians advocate justice for Palestinians in the Holy Land without alienating Jews? And what might an acknowledgement of the inheritance and legacy of Judaism to the Christian faith mean for relations with Muslims?

Answers to these two questions are beyond the scope of this study but it is important to recognise the interdependence of the theological and political issues that converge at the meeting points of the three monotheisms. The issue of conversion of Jews is indicative of a theological dilemma that cannot but bring to the fore the histories of anti-Semitism as well as probing questions about covenant, Christology and salvation. While the “relationship between Christianity and the Jewish other remains fragile” the Anglican Church has made a priority of the “Anglican Jewish Commission of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel” such that, since 2006, there are now annual meetings between the respective religious leaders alternately in Lambeth and Jerusalem.


The Anglican Jewish Commission meeting in Israel in July 2008 witnessed a statement that acknowledged the diversity of Anglican perspectives on covenant, salvation and the Holy Land but reaffirmed the position of the 2001 publication *Sharing One Hope*? that replacement theology was utterly repudiated by the Church of England. Sharing One Hope? supports the continuing validity of God’s election of the Jews as a vital area of Christian consensus. To regard the Church has having fully superseded all of God’s plans for the Jewish people is believed to lead to the “teaching of contempt” indicative of the anti-Semitism that the church is seeking to reject. Yet at the same time, the document still opens the possibility for mission amongst Jews, expressing a range of approaches within the church. The Church of England’s position seems agonisingly delicate. It is, perhaps appropriately, Rowan Williams who summaries the inner contradictions in a way that provides some clarity about what the church is not saying:

“The important thing is to recognise that Judaism and Christianity are now separate religions, both claiming legitimate descent from the religion of biblical Israel. This at least saves us from the implicit or explicit claim that Judaism has no post-biblical history, from the ignorant assimilation of contemporary Judaism to the polemical targets of the New Testament rhetoric,

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428 *Sharing One Hope?*, p. 20

429 Two contrasting Anglican positions are evident in the work of Richard Harries and Kenneth Cragg. Richard Harries argues for a dual covenant that would negate the need for evangelism of the Jews, Harries, Richard. *After the Evil*. Kenneth Cragg seeks to establish a “Christian Judaica” that is responsive and responsible to its Jewish heritage yet faithful to “the mind of their own Scripture and the ground of their own genesis in Christ” in bringing a Gospel challenge to Judaism, Cragg, Kenneth. *Faith and Life Negotiate*, pp. 179-203, p. 184
and from the unbroken reading of Jewish experience in exhaustively alien categories determined by Christian needs and interests.\footnote{Williams, Rowan. \textit{Sergei Bulgakov: Towards a Russian Political Theology}, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1999), p. 300}

Williams’ statement allows for the assertion of difference such that the debts to Judaism do not become totalised and subsumed in an occlusion of the other. What is particularly striking about this more agonised approach to Judaism is the implication for Christian-Muslim relations. If the church is to be self-conscious of the dangers of supercessionism with respect to Jews then there is arguably a similar challenge to Muslims to give space to the integrities of Christianity and Judaism in their post-biblical reading of revelation. It obligates the church to bring an appropriate space for a living Judaism into the mutual understandings of Christians and Muslims and implicitly demands Islam respect the integrities of the New Testament that Christians present. This is no easy and tidy resolution to the historical antipathies of the three monotheisms but confirmation of a theological “unease” that would risk the distinctives of the faith in a unity of difference.

Conscious of the fragility of Christian-Jewish relations, any reflection by the Church of England on Islam has at least to be aware of the implications for consequent relations with Jews within the inextricable histories of these three monotheisms. Such reflections would, it is argued, be capable of bridging rather than submerging differences between the respective faiths.

\textbf{2.5.3 Issues affecting the contemporary context of Christian-Muslim relations: summary}

The contemporary context of Christian-Muslim relations underlines the global consciousness that any statements and actions of the Church of England are situated in. Growing awareness of the difficulties facing many Christian communities in Muslim countries demands that any political theology in response to Islam be able to undergird religious liberties for other faiths and be able to challenge religious persecution. The Church of England’s own responsibilities as part of a global
Anglican Communion suggest the need for the church to advocate for and be especially cognisant of the full diversity of Anglican experiences of Christian-Muslim relations.

Relations with Judaism and the problematic status of Israel for contemporary Christian-Muslim relations remind the church of the failures of both religious communities towards Jews and the inextricable connections between the three faiths. That political agendas in the Middle East and beyond can have such significant effects on Christian-Muslim relations elsewhere highlights the need for the Church of England to develop its theologies in global and political cross-reference.

These reflections will be seen to be confirmed in the development of recent theologies of inter-religious relations in the Church of England and Anglican Communion, and provide a foundation for the much-needed political theologies suggested by the delicate interaction of the local and the global for Christians and Muslims.

2.6 Conclusion

The shift in global church numbers from the “north” to the “south,”431 is likely to exacerbate the urgency of constructive Christian-Muslim relations. The greatest growth has been in churches that are “far more traditional, morally conservative, evangelical, and apocalyptic than their northern counterparts.”432 It is to be expected that the examples of Christian relations with Muslims in countries such as Nigeria will become increasingly important on the global stage. The airing of theologies of inter-religious encounter that can accommodate the missionary impulses within Islam

432 McGrath, Alister. “The Future Configuration of a Global and Local Tradition.” In, World Christianity: Politics, Theology, Dialogues, edited by Anthony O’Mahony and Michael Kirwan, (London: Melisende, 2004): 163-177, p. 163. It is important to acknowledge too, though, that Christian traditions from the “south” that may be perceived to have a conservative approach to other religions can also be the source of creative and inclusive theologies. The Malaysian, Pentecostal theologian Amos Yong’s Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003) is a fine example of this
and Christianity is thus to be welcomed as being reflective of the realities of so much of the respective traditions.\textsuperscript{433} As David Marshall says, “it makes little sense to attempt to construct a formula for Christian-Muslim relations which includes the demand that Christians give up all idea of proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to Muslims (or, indeed, vice versa).”\textsuperscript{434} The pragmatic realities, at least, suggest the fallacy of expecting the universalising trajectories of both faiths to be denied.

It is apparent that in many situations around the world, Christian-Muslim relations have a decisive effect on the peace and wellbeing of the wider community. Those relations are frequently charged by socio-political factors, though the religious roots of the respective traditions are integral to the encounters. For Christians, issues of religious freedom amongst Muslims and fair treatment as minorities are very present challenges to Islam. In many contexts, the prevailing Islamic trajectory seems to mitigate plurality. For Muslims, the association of Christians with the “West” remains problematic and challenges churches to a more authentically contextual presence and a willingness to resist a discourse of power in response to Islam. However, the importance of ecumenical and international support for and in contexts of Christian vulnerability cannot be overestimated.

In many of the encounters between Christians and Muslims around the world, the issue of territory is significant. The historic, political and doctrinal mutual histories of Islam and Christianity infuse the inter-religious encounter with the potential for deep conflict around issues of territorial dominance and sacred space. Such conflicts underline, again, the frequent primacy of political theologies of co-existence and shared citizenship for shaping Christian-Muslim relations. There exists, though, the

\textsuperscript{433} the work of the Gambian theologian Lamin Sanneh, himself a Christian convert from Islam, is perhaps notable in this regard. See The Crown and the Turban: Muslims and West African Pluralism, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997) for a confident analysis of Christian-Muslim relations in West Africa encouraging a shared engagement in the public sphere, in partnership and dialogue, that accommodates the missionary demands of both faiths


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potential for local, territory-specific encounters to inform those relations for good, highlighted by the effectiveness of Pope John Paul II’s visits to Muslim countries.

The Abrahamic narratives within Christianity and Islam point to the consonance of truths and stories but also longstanding conflicts. Framing the inter-religious encounter within the Abrahamic fold continues to be a useful tool for many but arguably does not do enough justice to either tradition to be a defining motif. Furthermore, the Christian-Muslim relationship cannot be taken in isolation from other groups in society and thus a cementing between Christians, Muslims and Jews in the Abrahamic covenant is in danger of undermining the Christian responsibility to the whole of society. So, whilst there continue to be reminders in the Abrahamic motif of so much shared story between Christians and Muslims, and there continue to be pluralist conceptions of religions, the prevailing Christian tradition would point to the essential “otherness” of Islam.

A trinitarian understanding of God is a common theological distinctive in the engagement with Islam, shaped around the revelation of the Christ-event, and energised by the life of the Holy Spirit in the world, affirming an encounter of both dialogue and proclamation. The trinitarian aspect to this theology affirms the possibility of God at work within Islam; a more inclusive evaluation of other religions predominating. The influence of a corresponding eucharistic ecclesiology and a participatory ontology of the godhead redolent of the Church Fathers and the earliest encounters with Islam provides resources for Orthodoxy’s encounter with Islam and, indeed, for the seminal documents of Vatican II for the Catholic Church. Chapter 3 will confirm this development within Anglican inter-religious documents.

Anglican reflections on Islam will need to be attentive to the interactions of the local with the global, noting the new vista opened by A Common Word to the possibilities of responses from representative Muslim leaders. Additionally, the inextricable role

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of Judaism for Christian-Muslim relations cannot be avoided, the priority of the
politico-theological question underlined by the controversies over the state of Israel.

A range of theologies of territorial responsibility seems to flow from the doctrinal
position on Islam. It is by no means the case that an inclusive or pluralist position
determines a more liberal understanding of societal relations. Conversely, exclusivist
theologies have the potential to produce more liberal, tolerant political theologies.
Conclusions of political theology cannot, it seems, be predetermined by the prior
doctrinal determination of Islam. The task of inter-religious dialogue, though, seems
to be grounded in recognition of the truths that do exist within Islam.

A transparent and authentic presentation of the respective traditions and belief
systems that does not evade difference seems to offer the most encouraging modes of
encounter. Such encounters are most possible when there is a shared vision of the
common good; of equally responsible citizenship. There remains, though, a keen
awareness of centuries of mutual animosity and stereotyping as well as examples of
hope and progress. In essence, then, the pursuit of a political theology for the
Christian engagement with Islam is arguably the most pressing task for the church in
its relations with Islam and Muslims today. If, as seems apparent, the Church of
England is to be increasingly conscious of both difference and similarity with Islam,
then the foremost challenge may be towards, as Kenneth Cragg puts it, “Living
mutually and yet belonging sincerely”. 436

unprecedented letter proposed a shared basis for dialogue and cooperation between Muslims and
Christians. That is, a theological rationale was proposed that could be foundational for the goodwill and
collaboration between the two faiths: love of God and love of neighbour

CHAPTER 3
The Church of England, Anglicanism and Islam.
Retrieving from History, Expanding the Canon

Christian-Muslim Relations Part 2

3.1 The Church of England and Islam: A History of Relations

Anglican assessments of Islam can be traced back to the origins of the English Reformation. *The Church of England Prayer Books* of 1549, 1552 and 1662 all contain, in the rite for Good Friday, the prayer: “Have mercy on all Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics”. In the context of the broader Reformation across Europe, the “Turks” were a peculiar class of infidel representing a goad to Christendom to avert God’s judgment poised against a corrupt and errant Catholic Church. The reality for Muslims in Reformation England was that they had no status as citizens under the Crown, their description alternately “Turk” if Ottoman or “Moor” if North African and essentially alien by virtue of their religion. As G. K. Hunter points out, for the Elizabethan imagination there “seem, in fact, to be Moors everywhere, but only everywhere in that outer circuit of non-Christian lands.”

Probably the earliest British mention of Islam, though, is by that most English of ecclesial commentators, the Venerable Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* in 735CE:

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“At that season, the most grievous pest, the Saracens, wasted and destroyed the realm of Gaul with grievous and miserable carnage; but they soon after received and suffered the due punishment of their perfidy.”

For Bede, the relative success or failure of a civilisation rested with the truth and potency of the faith it held. This association of the merits of cultures as they reflected religion was to be a persistent view of many Anglican Christians. Indeed, to this day, the debate around the Christian nation exhibits traces of this perception and will be returned to more fully in Chapter 4.

It was during the reign of Elizabeth I that English Christians began to have first-hand experience of encounters with Muslims due to her policy of encouraging trade with North Africans and Ottomans. Alongside the sometimes mythic image of marauding Muslims to Christendom, enhanced by the uncomfortable proximity of North African pirates off the south coast of England, there were the more prosaic relations of the marketplace and diplomacy.

What is noteworthy for contemporary reflection is that some of the Elizabethan experiences of Christian-Muslim interaction reveal ways in which the respective religions do not seem to problematize relations unduly. Indeed, there is evidence that Elizabethan merchants were becoming aware that Christians attained greater freedoms under Islam than Muslims in Christian countries. It was noted in a number of accounts that Muslims did not force conversion and that there was a vibrant Eastern Christian community that had adapted to the realities of Islamic civic and religious rule in the Middle East. Even where the encounters involved imprisonment, slavery and release of Muslim pirates, contemporary accounts suggest that Muslims were treated fairly by their British captors and without any additional hostility occasioned by the issue of faith. Thus, Matar can state that, in this period before British colonialism and


441 Matar, N. I. “Muslims in Seventeenth-Century England”

Orientalism, “the interaction between Britons and Turks was cordial, open and devoid of ‘domination’ and construction.”

Matar’s studies on the earliest Anglican Christian-Muslim encounters highlight the surprise that Elizabethans experienced when Muslims, hearing about the Christian faith, did not convert. Moreover, the numerous examples of Christian conversions to Islam, whether under societal pressure or not, undermined the self-assured tenor of Christendom. As Matar notes, “So common was conversion to Islam that by the end of the seventeenth century, Englishmen had to admit that it was as widespread as conversion to Christianity from Islam was rare.” The extent of conversions to Islam necessitated Archbishop Laud in presenting a bill before Parliament in 1637 entitled *A Form of Penance and Reconciliation of a Renegado or Apostate from the Christian Religion to Turcism*. The penitential rite was used extensively and establishes the clear theological disjuncture for seventeenth century Anglicans between Christianity and Islam. What the description *renegado* does is to reveal the sense of national betrayal in an English citizen becoming Muslim. An English Muslim was effectively a renegade, a “fifth column”. This role would continue to be the defining position for British Muslims as settled citizenship from emigration within the British Empire began in the nineteenth century: the “infidel within”.

The contribution of John Locke (1632-1704) to liberal political science provides an illustration of the beginnings of attempts to make space for Islam in the Anglican polity. This was done in the context of the advocacy of religious freedoms for Jews, Dissenters, and pagan native-Americans in England. Ostensibly, Locke was arguing for the freedom of worship for Dissenters and used the case of Muslims, who at this stage were still not permanently resident in England, to do this. Reflecting on the status of Christians in Muslim countries, Locke was to highlight the inconsistency of

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443 Matar, N. I. “Muslims in Seventeenth-Century England”, p. 82
445 Matar, N. I. *Islam in Britain 1558-1685*, pp. 50-72
prohibiting the practice of Calvinist and Arminian Christians in England when these would be acceptable in Muslim Constantinople.\textsuperscript{448} Interestingly, Locke’s argument was not theological; he regarded Islam as a false and deficient religion. Yet in advocating for Muslim religious freedom, he does “demonstrate his willingness to treat Muslims and Christians as sincere seekers of God.”\textsuperscript{449} It was not the business of the state to enforce “right religion”. In Chapter 4, we shall be exploring more fully the Anglican political theologies that give an appropriately full space to Islam in the contemporary context. What is important to note here, though, is the importance of the wider discourse of religious plurality to Christian-Muslim relations; both internationally and ecumenically. In this instance, the political role of Islam is instrumentalised to justify freedom of religion to Dissenters. Matar’s studies on Anglican Restorationist theologies\textsuperscript{450} show how support for the return of Jews to Israel could be instrumentalised by Anglican Christians fearful of Islamic and Catholic empires.\textsuperscript{451} How contemporary political theologies may be able to avoid the instrumentalisation of the other in a plural context will be vital to the assessments of Chapter 4.

Alongside the indictments on and clear discontinuity with Islam expressed in the \textit{Book of Common Prayer}, there is another more sympathetic approach that is evocative of fascination and curiosity. Within Anglicanism, there is evidence of a persistent stream of inquiry into Islam and the Orient, including Christian Arabs and the Eastern Church, typified in the early initiatives by Archbishop William Laud to establish a chair in Arabic Studies at Oxford University. Through Laud’s personal commitment

\textsuperscript{448} Matar, N. I. “John Locke and the ‘Turbanned Nations’”, p. 72
\textsuperscript{449} Matar, N. I. “John Locke and the ‘Turbanned Nations’”, p. 74
\textsuperscript{450} the belief that the Second Coming of Jesus would be heralded by the return of Jews to the homeland of Israel and the mass conversion of Jews to Christianity
to knowledge of Islam and the Islamic world, Edward Pococke (1604-1691), chaplain at Aleppo, was appointed the founding lecturer in Arabic at Oxford University, translated the *Book of Common Prayer* into Arabic (1672) and wrote a history of the Arab world, *Specimen Historiae Arabum* (1650), which remained the authoritative text for a hundred and fifty years or more.\(^{452}\) It will become apparent that the sympathetic stream of inquiry and engagement of early Anglicanism may be seen to be given continuity within the more contemporary accounts of Kenneth Cragg and Rowan Williams in their reflections on Christianity in the Middle East.

Shereen Khairallah observes three stages in the growth of Arabic studies in England which are important indicators of the political and cultural contexts of those epochs.\(^{453}\) The first stage is the “apologetic and polemic era” that we see in the meeting of the two civilizations in the earliest encounters and through into the Crusader era. This would be characterised by missionary zeal and evident in the writings of John of Damascus and Peter the Venerable. Into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the “biblical epoch” emphasises attention to respective texts; the expansion of Arabic studies as a tool for better exegesis of biblical Hebrew. In this era, Muhammad remained a “pseudo-prophet, and Islam a heresy”\(^{454}\). Alexander Ross (1580-1660), who produced an English translation of the French *du Ryer Qur’an* for King Charles 1, concluded typically that “there was no harm in reading the Qur’an as long as the reader bore in mind that he was first and foremost a Christian; he would not perjure his soul, but on the contrary, would learn what real heresy was.”\(^{455}\) The crucial break in this period was that Arabic culture and Islamic religion were receiving attention in their own right rather than as a vehicle for other knowledge whether within the natural sciences or biblical languages.\(^{456}\) Thirdly, there is the “modern era” which is symbolically marked by Napoleon’s campaign in Egypt (1798-
1801) and consequent arrival of French scientists to make objective observations of Islamic society. This epitomises the beginnings of the encounter of the enlightenment west with Islam.\textsuperscript{457} This forensic encounter with Islam, exemplified by British Orientalists such as E. W. Lane (1801-1876), Sir Richard Burton (1821-1890) and Sir William Muir (1819-1905) tied Anglican encounters with Islam to the colonial project.

These respective eras indicate trends that continue to flow through formative Anglican reflections on Islam rather than being self-contained, evolutionary stages. Thus, the “apologetic and polemic era” continues into the seventeenth century in Humphrey Prideaux, Dean of Norwich, and his publication which amounts to a “violent attack on Islam and the person of the prophet”.\textsuperscript{458} Indeed, the colonial character of the Enlightenment era’s scientific appraisal of Islam and Arabic culture is evident in an earlier era in the instrumental role of the Levant Company’s appropriation of Arabic documents at the original request of Archbishop Ussher in 1624, and his successor William Laud.\textsuperscript{459} Each approach to Islam and Arabic culture contains elements that are both sympathetic to and condemnatory of Islam. In Kenneth Cragg’s view, the seventeenth and eighteenth century Anglican orientalists are “erudite and their observations tireless, even when their impressions are somewhat naïve. They are the eighteenth-century form of the fascination of the Bible, territorial, enthusiastic, but not yet missionary.”\textsuperscript{460} For many commentators, the western Christian assessment of Islam, typified by British Anglican Arabicists up to the turn


\textsuperscript{458} Quoted from The True Nature of Imposture Fully Displayed in the Life of Mahomet. With a discourse annexed for the vindication of Christianity from this charge. Offered to the consideration of the Deists of the present age (1697) in Bosworth, C. E. “The Study of Islam in British Scholarship”, p. 54


of the nineteenth century, was “a blend of patronizing disdain and romanticization of the Orient and the Levant.”

The Anglican clergyman Charles Forster (1787-1871) continued in the vein of an open inquiry into the nature of Islam, offering a more irenic counterpoint to Muir’s characterization of Islam as inherently destructive to civilisation. His *Mahometanism Unveiled* (1829) caused considerable controversy by questioning the widely held presumption of Islam’s violence, recognising that “Islam is a spiritual religion” and “distortion and prejudice obscured facts in common understanding of Islam.”

W.R.W. Stephens, Prebendary of Chichester Cathedral in the 1870’s, wrote a commentary on the Qur’an during this era of colonial fascination with the Orient. Critical of Bosworth Smith’s account that had referred to Islam as a “form of Christianity” he advocates friendship and respect but is clear that the church should not “dilute Christian doctrine”. Whether the responses to Islam were positive or sympathetic, it was clear that Anglican Christians were fascinated by the Arab World and its religion, and determined to study it.

As the Church of England embarked on a more substantive encounter with Islam into the missionary era of the nineteenth century, the role of the Turk as “enemy” was recast into the drama of British imperialism. Thus, the Anglican apologist and colonial civil servant William Muir could write in his bestselling account of the faith of Islam, *The Life of Mahomet* (1858-61): “the sword of Mahomet, and the Coran are the most fatal enemies of Civilization, Liberty and the Truth which the world has yet known.”

For Muir, who was a prominent supporter of Anglican missionary endeavours in the Muslim world and whose writings following the Indian Mutiny of 1857 had a huge influence on British perceptions of Islam: “Islam was a false religion which kept Muslims ‘in a backward and in some respects barbarous state’.”

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461 Khalaf, S. “Protestant Images of Islam”, p. 211
464 quoted in Ansari, H. “The Infidel Within”, p. 61
465 Ansari, H. “The Infidel Within”, p. 61
existence of thousands of Muslim lascars living and working in several British port cities during the Victorian era allowed the foreign missionary endeavour to become a domestic objective for Anglican Christians. The “backward” nature of Islam meant that this evangelism was ostensibly a beneficent act of condescension which combined with a vocation to “civilise” what were seen as depraved “Muhammadans”. 466

Islam was essentially still “over there” in terms of the perception of the Church of England until the second half of the twentieth century. However, the example of several notable Anglican missionaries in the Middle East and North Africa are worth mentioning at this stage in terms of their impact on domestic responses to Islam. Henry Martyn (1781-1812) was an Anglican priest and missionary to India; “the first of the modern missionaries to the Islamic world.”467 What Martyn lacked in the achievement of converts he gained in the raising of the profile of Islam among British Anglicans as a vast body of humanity requiring the attentions of evangelicals in prayer and missionary support.

As part of the consequent wave of nineteenth century mission to Islam, Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865), a German missionary to Egypt with the Anglican Church Missionary Society, is notable for his emphasis on polemics in public debating with Muslim leaders as an evangelistic tool. He offers a significant counter-point to his partner in Anglican missionary work in Egypt, Temple Gairdner (1873-1928). 468 Gairdner’s approach was very different to Pfander’s. As Michael Shelley’s study of Gairdner notes, he had a very fluid attitude to Islam, changing his perception of and becoming sympathetic to the genuine spirituality at the heart of the faith, while never losing his evangelical passion. Importantly, too, Gairdner advocated for a response to Islam that united all strands of Christendom and was a vital ecumenical endeavour. 469

466 Ansari, H. “The Infidel Within”, p. 61
468 See Powell, Avril Ann. Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India (Richmond: Curzon, 1993)
These features can equally be described of Constance Padwick, another Anglican missionary to Muslims in Egypt and collaborator and biographer of Gairdner. Padwick’s *Muslim Devotions* remains an unprecedented labour of evangelical devotion to the compilation of an anthology of Islamic spiritual writings that displays a remarkable sympathy with the Islamic spirit.\(^{470}\)

It is important to recognise the existence of the two strains of the polemical and the irenic, symbolised by Pfander and Gairdner, in the Anglican missionary movement. We shall see how Gairdner and Padwick, in particular, shaped the work of Bishop Kenneth Cragg, and influenced in turn the formal documents of the Anglican Communion and Church of England on Islam as the lived reality of a substantive, contemporary British Islam came into being.

### 3.2 Lambeth Conferences and Islam

#### 3.2.1 Pre-1988 Lambeth Conferences

In exploring the Church of England’s understanding of Islam I am seeking a theology of inter-religious relations that seems to be authoritative for the context of Christian-Muslim relations in England whilst drawing from the Anglican tradition as a whole. In doing so, there is recognition of the inclusive nature of Anglican theology. This inclusivity is part of an Anglican process that can hold a range of positions outside the core beliefs of the creed: the *adiaphora* characteristic of the roots of Anglican self-identity supremely articulated by Richard Hooker in the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Joan Lockwood-O’Donovan summarises Hooker’s contribution, the “theological architect of the Church of England”, as “a masterly account of the interaction of such judgments of divinely revealed truths and commands, rational principles of right, justice and equity, the universal and local traditions of the church, and particular

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exigencies of time and place. Thus, scripture, reason, and tradition need to be brought to bear in expressing the Church of England’s understanding of Islam; an understanding that will be especially attentive to context whilst sensitive to the global identities of a Communion of Anglicanism that is itself in encounter with a faith of universal aspiration. As Michael Ipgrave points out in his description of Anglican approaches to inter-faith relations, Lambeth Conferences are significant expressions of church thinking for the Anglican Communion globally whilst lacking the definitive status of, say, Roman Catholic conciliar decrees. For my purposes, then, I will be analysing a number of Lambeth Conference resolutions alongside statements and initiatives local to the Church of England to suggest an overall trajectory in Anglican theologies of relations with Islam.

The Lambeth Conference of 1897 published an Encyclical Letter that sought to settle a policy for inter-faith relations and provides an early positing of the priority of the triumvirate of Christian-Jewish-Muslim relations:

“In preaching His Gospel to the world we have to deal with one great religious body, which holds the truth in part not in its fullness, the Jews; with another which holds fragments of the truth embedded in a mass of falsehood, the Mohammedans;”


472 it is beyond the scope of this study to assess the legitimacy of the Anglican triad of scripture, reason, and tradition though worth noting Lesslie Newbigin’s Barthian critique of the distinct nature of these sources in Newbigin, L. The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, (London: SPCK, 1999), pp. 52-65. For Newbigin, there has been a split between faith and reason, dating back to Aquinas and responsible for modernity’s “classical distinction between theory and practice” which operates to the detriment of embodied, local witness, Le Roy Stults, D. Grasping Truth and Reality: Lesslie Newbigin’s Theology of Mission to the Western World, (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2009), p.131

and with various races which hold inherited beliefs ranging down to the merest fetichism.**474

In this short statement one sees the framing of inter-religious relations in the context of mission (“His Gospel”) and an evident tension in seeking out that which is truthful in other religious traditions whilst holding fast to the Gospel “lest that good, such as it is” become a “substitute for the Gospel”. At a time when the bulk of Anglican encounters with Muslims would be in the context of parishes and bishoprics established from missionary stations, the prior motive of evangelism seems to be paramount, tempered by the commitment to truth in the affirmation of what is consonant in other traditions. Within this schema, Islam offers something more than “merest fetichism”, but is seen as embodying elements of truth, obscured by lies: Judaism as incomplete truths.

It is over seventy years before Islam is addressed again during a Lambeth Conference. In that intervening period, two world wars and the steady dismantling of the British Empire witness a growing attention to ecumenical endeavours. The first World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, 1910, marked what David Bosch sees as the “all-time highwater mark in Western missionary enthusiasm, the zenith of the optimistic and pragmatist approach to missions.”**475 Bosch notes the harnessing of Enlightenment progress thinking in the resources available to world evangelization, as described in Edinburgh, that provided a symbiosis between Christian missionary endeavours and the colonial project.**476 The carnage of two World Wars and, for the British, a steady dismantling of empire, began to undermine the optimism in the fruits of “secular science” that was so evident at Edinburgh 1910.**477 Importantly for the


**476 Bosch, D. J., Transforming Mission, p. 336

**477 Bosch, D. J., Transforming Mission, pp. 334-341. Bosch identifies Edinburgh 1910 as the source of the re-birthed ecumenical movement. The challenges to Enlightenment optimism of two world wars have accelerated the cause of unity that has been embodied in the dichotomy of unity and mission at the inception of the World Council of Churches in 1948, pp. 457-461

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Church of England, though, Temple Gairdner, Church Missionary Society missionary and Arabicist, was entrusted with presenting to Edinburgh 1910 on the nature of Islam and reporting back to the church on the proceedings.\textsuperscript{478} For all the naïve optimism and combative overtones that are replete in the language of Edinburgh 1910, there are some remarkable statements that anticipate the work of Kenneth Cragg and inform so much of subsequent Anglican thinking. Islam was deemed a “living faith” and “it was this living faith, intense, more intimate and more comprehensive than sight”.\textsuperscript{479} As Vinoth Ramachandra points out, “The Report dares to ask: ‘Have we in our modern theology and religion sufficiently recognised what Islam stands for – the unity and the sovereignty of God?’”\textsuperscript{480} From the heart of the missionary enterprise, and exemplified by Temple Gairdner, then, is an assessment of Islam that strives to see beyond the polemical, to encounter Islam in its genuine otherness, but with sympathy and affection.

The burgeoning concern for ecumenical unity, particularly within Protestantism and between the Church of England and Eastern Orthodoxy, is evident in the Encyclical Letters of the Lambeth Conference of 1930 which talk of “that great human family of which God is the Father”.\textsuperscript{481} The parallel tracks of mission and unity that become embodied in the World Council of Churches are evident, too, in the call for ecumenical relations on the basis that “Every extension of this circle of visible fellowship would increase the power of the Church to witness to its Lord by its unity.”\textsuperscript{482} Already apparent, then, is that trajectory that became epitomised by Vatican II: the church’s encounter with the world becoming fuel for a reflection of the church’s self-understanding; mission demanding a deeper ecclesiology.

\textsuperscript{478} Padwick, C. E., \textit{Temple Gairdner of Cairo}, p. 198
\textsuperscript{482} “Encyclical Letter, \textit{Lambeth Conference, 1930}”, p. 391
It is in the Lambeth Conference of 1968 that the language and imperative of dialogue becomes first apparent. In a decade exercised by the applied ecclesiology modelled in Vatican II, inter-religious dialogue is seen not in the context of a theology of religions but in the reality of plural life, which includes atheism and Marxism. Thus, Resolution 11 encourages “positive relationship to the different religions of men (sic)” as will “call Christians not only to study other faiths in their own seriousness, but also to study unbelief in its real quality”. Resolution 12 further recommends “a renewed and vigorous implementation of the task of inter-religious dialogue already set in hand” and “commends similar assistance for dialogue with Marxists and those who profess no religious faith”. Michael Ipgrave assesses this shift to situate the religions within a wider diversity of belief systems as expressing the priority of dialogue with diversity rather than with an attention to a theological assessment of the realities of that diversity.

In the Lambeth Conference of 1978, Resolution 37, there is a return to the framing of inter-religious relations within the “Gospel” but this is opened out to include “the

485 Ipgrave, M. “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing”, p. 2. Michael Ipgrave was the Secretary to the Churches’ Commission on Inter Faith Relations and Inter Faith Relations Adviser for the Archbishop’s Council [Church of England] from 1999-2004. This post, employed by the General Synod of the Church of England, was initiated in 1992. Christopher Lamb was the first such adviser, from 1992-1999. The post was reconfigured when Guy Wilkinson took up his position in 2005. Guy Wilkinson was appointed the National Inter Faith Relations Adviser and Secretary for Inter Faith Relations to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The significance of this shift is that the role is now positioned within Lambeth Palace, accountable and responsive to the Archbishop of Canterbury in his pivotal role within the Anglican Communion. This arguably reflects a growing recognition of the global sensitivities of the inter-religious questions. Guy Wilkinson resigned from his post in 2010. His successor, Toby Howarth, was appointed in May 2011. As a former employee of the celebrated evangelical scholar John Stott, Howarth is likely to maintain moves to keep evangelism and dialogue as combined responsibilities in the inter-religious encounter
obligation to open exchange of thought and experience with people of other faiths”. There is no mention of atheistic ideologies this time, suggesting perhaps the previous 1968 Conference’s own preoccupations with the ferment of the Cold War, student protests and the burgeoning social liberalism of that era. There is recognition of the “vocation” by churches in, again, a broader mission of “theological interpretation, community involvement, social responsibility, and evangelization” where specific other religions predominate (Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Islam). No theological assessment of these faiths is attempted. However, there is a very specific mention of the need to “seek opportunities for dialogue with Judaism”, hinting at the especial obligation to remedy of Christian-Jewish relations post-Holocaust that had so charged the climate of Vatican II.

3.2.2 Lambeth Conference 1988: The Way of Dialogue

It is with the Lambeth Conference of 1988 that a more systematic attempt was made to order Anglican inter-religious relations and to provide a theological rationale for the encounter with Judaism and Islam, in particular. The key text in this regard proposed to the Conference in Resolution 21 is Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue. The significant starting point for The Way of Dialogue is in the statement that “we recognise a special relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam”.486 For The Way of Dialogue, “All three of these religions see themselves in a common relationship to Abraham, the father of the faithful, the friend of God.”487 Michael Ipgrave analyses the particular indebtedness of this document to Vatican II’s Nostra aetate, the seminal account of the Roman Catholic Church’s inter-religious relations.488 As Adrian Hastings observes, “in speaking of Moslems and Jews, the Council stresses our common father in faith, Abraham.”489 As with Vatican II, the political realities of churches in majority-Muslim contexts beyond Europe influenced

488 Ipgrave, M. “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing”
the conception of *The Way of Dialogue* as a document that was instigated to explicate Christian-Jewish relations but necessarily evolved into an articulation of relations between the three faiths.\(^{490}\)

While faiths outside of any perceived Abrahamic heritage, in contrast to *Nostra aetate*, are excluded from *The Way of Dialogue*, the Lambeth Conference seems to continue the pattern of privileging the understanding and consonance of revelations in Judaism and Islam. *Nostra aetate* famously shuns an assessment of the status of the Qur’an or Muhammad.\(^{491}\) Similarly, *The Way of Dialogue* prefers to hold up the Abrahamic schema as an apologia for the significance of good relations and dialogue between Christians and Muslims without making a judgment on the prophethood of Muhammad, for example. There are ways in which the Anglican proposal goes somewhat further than Vatican II, though. In *Nostra aetate*, Muslims are described as those who “submit wholeheartedly…just as did Abraham, with whom the Islamic faith is pleased to associate itself.”\(^{492}\) *Lumen gentium* admits “the plan of salvation” which “includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place among these there are the Moslems, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God”.\(^{493}\) Where *The Way of Dialogue* accedes to a “common relationship to Abraham”, Vatican II merely notes that Muslims *profess* to hold the faith of Abraham and are pleased to *associate* their faith with the submission modelled by Abraham. There is thus a further theological step that the Anglican account of Islam is prepared to make, beyond *Nostra aetate*. Whilst clearly being inspired by and indebted to Vatican II, *The Way of Dialogue* seems to misunderstand the nuanced intent of the conciliar document.

\(^{490}\) Ipgrave. M. “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing”, p. 6
\(^{493}\) “Lumen Gentium 16”, *The Documents of Vatican II*, p. 35
Following Vatican II, the theological rationale underlying the concept of the Abrahamic faiths has been the subject of extensive discussion that suggests that the premise of the Lambeth Conference document of 1988 may be anachronistic. It seems clear that both Vatican II\textsuperscript{494} and \textit{The Way of Dialogue} admit that Muslims and Christians worship the same God. It is rather less clear whether Vatican II goes as far as accepting the Abrahamic theologoumenon as proposed by Massignon, who had such an influence on the conciliar documents. The “father of the faithful” as described in \textit{The Way of Dialogue}, need not be merely the literal progenitor of Jews and Muslims, even though there are serious scholarly objections to the assumption of Islamic lineage traced back to Ishmael.\textsuperscript{495} Taking a Pauline understanding for Christians of Abraham as the model of faith in the one God, Muslims might be seen to relate as heirs of Abraham “by faith”. Thus, Paul, in Romans 9, includes Gentiles in the promises of Yahweh despite their lack of genetic lineage to Abraham. Their qualification is merely that of “faith”; the very qualification of the first Jew, Abraham the patriarch, who was compelled to leave the land of Ur in simple obedience. In a parallel fashion, it could be argued that Muslims “by faith” inherit from God, explicitly drawing, as they do, from the originating monotheism of Abraham.\textsuperscript{496} As noted in Chapter 2, though, a high Christology, which is lacking in Islam, is required to ground an Abrahamic vision of faith by grace in the book of Galatians.\textsuperscript{497}

We have already seen how the Abrahamic motif can side-line Jews in the practice of inter-religious dialogue. For the English context, and the Church of England’s self-understood vocation to \textit{all} people, this is a particularly pertinent observation noting the dangers of an exclusive Christian-Muslim dialogue forum that seems to work at the expense of other religious groups.\textsuperscript{498} This was highlighted in 2007 with the

\textsuperscript{494} Unsworth, A. “The Vatican, Islam and Muslim-Chr


\textsuperscript{496} Galatians 3:7 in this vein, refers to those “who believe” as “children of Abraham”


\textsuperscript{498} “In Britain, Christian-Muslim relations cannot be isolated from a context of religious diversity, which encompasses both the oldest religious minority – the Jews – and Sikh and Hindu communities
publication of a document by the Hindu Council UK that criticised the privilege given to Abrahamic faiths within inter-religious discussions. A more accommodating outlook was argued for by the author, Anil Bhanot, that was genuinely “respectful of the other” according to the Hindu principles of Dharma.\textsuperscript{499} The potential for the Abrahamic fold to be an interfaith clique is evident in Anil Bhanot’s submission but his line of reasoning betrays the essential problematic of finding an all-embracing religious theme that has integrity beyond the source community. Dharma has no more weight as an understanding of right religion to a Christian than Abraham does to a Hindu. It is worth noting from this particular debate that there are implications that go beyond Christian-Muslim relations for this theological rationale that undermine the potential of the Church of England to fulfil its self-understood vocation to the whole nation.

*The Way of Dialogue* thus follows the lead of Vatican II in stressing the particular confluences between the Abrahamic faiths but is suggestive of a rather more controversial and questionable synchronicity that is avoided in the conciliar documents.\textsuperscript{500} It is noteworthy that the considerable controversy generated by *The Way of Dialogue*\textsuperscript{501}, especially amongst bishops from Asia and Africa, is focussed

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{501} for an annotated commentary of *The Way of Dialogue* informed by contemporaneous notes of discussions and the records of the principal drafter, Bert Breiner, I am indebted to Lucinda Mosher’s unpublished historical-critical analysis of 1997 for the General Theological Seminary, New York: “Christ and People of Other Faiths” and “Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue,” the
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more on the interpretation of historical precedence, Islamic theology and the practical application to inter-religious relations rather than to the underlying theological schema itself.

Taking this Abrahamic foundation, three theological principles are then used to inform the content of The Way of Dialogue: understanding, affirmation, and sharing. Michael Ipgrave identifies the influence of Max Warren, a former general secretary of the Anglican Church Mission Society (“CMS”), and his concept of “Christian Presence” in the outworking of interfaith understanding as “affective entry into the world of the other”.502 Max Warren and John V. Taylor, another advocate of “Christian Presence” and former general secretary of CMS, and Bishop of Winchester respectively, brought a missionary sensibility to this incarnational approach to inter-religious encounter. Graham Kings identifies Temple Gairdner of Cairo503 and Kenneth Cragg as two key influences on Max Warren and John V. Taylor504 and the idea of Christian Presence. Both these towering figures of Anglican engagement with Islam have clearly continued a legacy that has informed the encounter with Islam and a general theology of religions back in the British context.

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502 Ipgrave, M. “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing”, p. 7. This “affective” identification with the faith of the author, as Ipgrave points out, was famously described in Max Warren’s introduction to Bishop Kenneth Cragg’s Sandals at the Mosque, (London: SCM, 1959) a part of Warren’s “Christian Presence” series: “Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place where we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men’s dreams.”, p. 9


Relations with Islam are set in a historical perspective, noting the historic enmity evinced in the Crusades but also in the positive cultural contributions from Islamic to Christian civilisations.\textsuperscript{505} The principle of understanding is embodied by offering correctives to stereotypes of Islam such that the burden is on redressing negative Christian patterns towards Muslims and challenging stereotypes of, for example, Shari‘a law treatment of women\textsuperscript{506}, jihad\textsuperscript{507} and traditional Islamic understandings of the crucifixion.\textsuperscript{508} Lucinda Mosher’s analysis of the Conference discussions notes Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali’s particular dissatisfaction with the emphasis of these correctives.\textsuperscript{509}

Allied to the perceived “glossing” of Islamic theology, concerns were also voiced at the insufficient treatment of the evangelistic mandate of the Church.\textsuperscript{510} Evangelism, or proclamation in the language of Vatican II and subsequent Roman Catholic encyclicals, is only mentioned incidentally to \textit{The Way of Dialogue}: “if we are truly to share our faith we must not only affirm what we can but share our own deep convictions, even when these appear irreconcilably opposed to our partner’s faith and practice. In the case of Islam particularly, Christians must first understand Islam if this witness is to be effective.”\textsuperscript{511} The conditional “if” posits evangelism as an optional practice subservient to the wider thrust of dialogue, even if the respective integrities of traditions are affirmed robustly within \textit{The Way of Dialogue}. It is

\textsuperscript{505} \textit{The Way of Dialogue} §8, pp. 300-1

\textsuperscript{506} \textit{The Way of Dialogue} §9, p. 301

\textsuperscript{507} \textit{The Way of Dialogue} §11, p. 302

\textsuperscript{508} \textit{The Way of Dialogue} §19, p. 303-4

\textsuperscript{509} Mosher, L. \textit{Christ and People of Other Faiths}, p. 14. Michael Nazir-Ali (b. 1947) was born in Pakistan, son of a father who had converted from Islam, and became Bishop of Raiwind in 1984. Following threats to his life, Archbishop Robert Runcie invited him to Lambeth to assist him in his work, taking a significant role in the planning for the 1988 Lambeth Conference before becoming General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society. In 1994 he became the Bishop of Rochester until his resignation in September 2009

\textsuperscript{510} Mosher, L. \textit{Christ and People of Other Faiths}, p. 15

\textsuperscript{511} \textit{The Way of Dialogue} §33 & §28 , pp. 305-6
notable, though, that issues of human rights in Muslim societies, the doctrine of apostasy as it affects minority Christian communities and the challenge to Muslims to correct distorted images of Christians and Jews provide elements of reciprocal obligation in *The Way of Dialogue*.

The feeling, especially amongst evangelicals, that too much was being given away and presumed positively of Islam can be traced back in some of the preparatory documents to Lambeth 1988. *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*[^512] was published in 1984 as a report to the General Synod of the Church of England by the Inter-Faith Consultative Group of the Board for Mission and Unity. This report was circulated as advance reading for Lambeth 1988 and introduces the contemporary experience of British plurality as an opportunity to explore a renewed understanding of the theology of religions, seen through the prism of the “threefold typology” of religions[^513]. Within *TTID*, pluralism is regarded as a developing, innovative response to the challenge of religious diversity. It is presented on a par, in terms of theological legitimacy, with inclusivism, while exclusivism is viewed as an inhibition to the affirmation of spiritual truths in other faiths[^514]. Additionally, the *Filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed is offered as a potential limitation on fruitful resources for a theology of religions. An Eastern Orthodox understanding of the Spirit speaking and acting “in other religious cultures”[^515] flowing from the Father-Creator is tentatively noted as providing a doctrinal foundation that can embrace trinitarianism, a corresponding high Christology, and the grace of God beyond the Church.[^516] It will become apparent that

[^512]: *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, (Leominster: Orphans Press, 1984), hereafter designated “TTID”

[^513]: exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism. This typology originates with Alan Race in *Christians and Religious Pluralism* (London: SCM, 1983)

[^514]: *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, pp. 7-10. It is perhaps noticeable that Alan Race, an exponent of pluralist theologies of religion, was a member of the working group that produced *TTID*, as was the Methodist pluralist, Kenneth Cracknell

[^515]: *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, pp. 20-21

this initially tentative retrieval of Orthodox trinitarianism as a potential resource becomes a major grounding for later Anglican reflections on relations with other faiths. The subsequent development of Anglican resources would suggest that this early mention of Eastern Orthodoxy is a landmark of what will come to be regarded as a more substantive resource than the theologies of pluralism.


The emphasis on the church’s need to rethink its attitudes, actions and theology in *TTID* informs Christopher Wright’s robust critique in an Anvil journal edition of 1984. There is an important distinction to be made between the challenge to the individual Christian obtained in the encounter with truth within another tradition and a challenge to Christian revelation itself. For Wright, this distinction is blurred in the text of *TTID* as well as an unbiblical qualifying of the Great Commission in the service of interfaith dialogue. It is interesting to note Christopher Lamb, one of the authors of *TTID*, responding to Wright’s critique by expressing his admission that

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518 Nazir-Ali, M. “That Which is not to be Found but which Finds us”, in *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, p. 47


520 Nazir-Ali, M. “That Which is not to be Found but which Finds us”, p. 48


522 Wright, C. J. H. “Interfaith Dialogue”, p. 257
“Though we wanted to see people moving in a certain direction we had no illusions that we were producing a definitive report”. The impression is given of a discussion document that is deliberately tipped toward dialogue as a provisional redress of balance for a Church of England insufficiently open to inter-religious encounter.

This impression is supported by the feedback given to TTID by the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Nigeria in 1984 and published in their report Bonds of Affection. In their view, “the book needed a greater emphasis on the doctrine of redemption, and we questioned some of its biblical exegesis, as well as the selectivity of biblical texts. People from non-Western societies especially found the approach too academic and cerebral, and thus it was classified as largely irrelevant to them.”

There are efforts at practical application in TTID but they all, revealingly, denote the responsibility of Christians as the holders of power and privilege to change and adapt to the new economy of diversity. Thus,

“It is no longer with someone out there, at a distance, that we engage in conversation, but with those with whom we share in a way quite other than any previous generation. Nevertheless, we ought not to minimize the fact that numerically those of other faiths are few compared with the number of practising Christians in Britain. The relative size of communities has a profound effect on our self-understanding, and conditions the way we relate to others. Adherents of different faiths seldom meet as equals, and isolation and cultural dominance are hard to overcome.”

523 Lamb, C. “Interfaith Dialogue”, Anvil, Volume 1, No. 3, (1984): 259-60, p. 259. Christopher Lamb was the first Secretary to the Churches’ Commission on Inter Faith Relations and Inter Faith Relations Adviser for the Archbishop’s Council [Church of England] from 1992-1999. Lamb served with the Anglican Church Missionary Society in Lahore, Pakistan for six years and his The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg’s Christian Vocation to Islam (London: Grey Seal, 1997) is probably the most authoritative account of Cragg’s engagement with Islam


525 Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue, 2nd Edition., pp. 5-6
Perhaps the “irrelevance” observed by Anglicans outside of Europe is in the language of cultural dominance assigned to the Christian faith and reflected upon from experiences of longstanding diversity or even Islamic cultural dominance. The presumption of both The Way of Dialogue and TTID is that the church is in a prior position of host to those of other faiths. For TTID, and subsequently The Way of Dialogue, there is recognition of the importance of dialogue, especially with Muslims, but, for many, in incomprehension of the language of host to guest and a discomfort at the relegation of evangelism.

Roger Hooker and Christopher Lamb combined to publish a significant resource for Church of England parishes in 1986, Love the Stranger: Ministry in Multi-Faith Areas. Love the Stranger sought to encourage an irenic encounter with other faiths, providing stories and anecdotes and highlighting some of the theological challenges of dialogue and evangelism. It is redolent of the mood of The Way of Dialogue and TTID in its provisional tone. There is a reluctance to define and assess evangelism or dialogue at a time of such rapid cultural and religious diversity: “Are such incidents to be described as dialogue, witness, service, evangelism or what? The answer is that we do not yet know”. A picture of transition is conveyed that posits the primary obligation on the Christian “hosts” who “bear the burden of our collective past. We bear the burden of present misunderstanding.” The shadow of colonialism looms over the book’s emphasis on the church’s need to reach out to the “stranger”, even allowing for the gospel imperative to service. Indeed, it is telling that a Church of England priest who may be regarded as a specialist in inter-religious matters is likely to have “served in India, Pakistan or Bangladesh, and has some knowledge of the background, religion, culture and language of a particular Asian group.” It seems that for the Church of England in the 1980’s, Islam may well have been “over here”, but “here” was still Anglican and “they” were still from elsewhere. What is particularly noticeable about the concluding chapter of Love the Stranger, though, is the beginnings of a discussion about an anticipated challenge from Islam to political

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527 Hooker, R. & Lamb, C. Love the Stranger, p. 47
528 Hooker, R. & Lamb, C. Love the Stranger, p. 12
529 Hooker, R. & Lamb, C. Love the Stranger, p. 35
theology, the nature of nationhood, politics and the common good.\textsuperscript{530} It would seem, then, that \textit{Love the Stranger} exemplifies some of the Anglican interfaith motifs of the time whilst also prefiguring more contemporary debates.

### 3.2.3 Lambeth Conference 1998: Embassy, Hospitality and Dialogue

The depth of the controversy occasioned by Lambeth 1988 was perhaps behind the extensive sharing of stories from around the Communion of encounters with Islam for the Lambeth Conference of 1998, as opposed to the pursuit of any theological investigation.\textsuperscript{531} Gambia, Northern Nigeria, the Middle East, Pakistan and Bradford were all contexts providing stories of constructive Anglican-Muslim engagements, all notably Muslim-majority in complexion. The “major issues” identified included dialogue, conversion, basic freedoms, working ecumenically and monitoring.\textsuperscript{532} Pointedly, in “Monitoring”, the Network for Inter-Faith Concerns is sanctioned with resources in “monitoring Christian-Muslim relations as they affect the different provinces of the Anglican Communion”, recognising “both the opportunities for inter-faith encounter and the difficulties”.\textsuperscript{533}

Of additional note for the 1998 Lambeth Conference is the address by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali specifically on inter-faith relations, providing perhaps his preferred approach where \textit{TTID} and \textit{The Way of Dialogue} may have failed, in his view. Nazir-Ali provides a number of practical illustrations that flesh out the objections expressed to \textit{TTID} and the apparent concerns over \textit{The Way of Dialogue}. He does this by way of affirming Kenneth Cragg’s espousal of the missionary values of “embassy” and “hospitality”.\textsuperscript{534} Hospitality may be demonstrated by Christians in the West opening

\textsuperscript{530} “What is the controlling image of that which is great, and good and desirable, for men and for women and for nations? There is no avoiding religious language and religious issues here” Hooker, R. & Lamb, C. \textit{Love the Stranger}, p. 117

\textsuperscript{531} Ipgrave, M. “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing”, p. 4


\textsuperscript{533} \textit{The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998}, p. 273

\textsuperscript{534} Christopher Lamb quotes Cragg stating that “Hospitality” is “surely the closest of all analogies to the meaning of the Gospel” as the key to understanding Kenneth Cragg’s Christian vocation to Islam,
up their homes to people of other faiths who have recently arrive in the country or making church halls available for social functions. However,

“The use of church buildings is a classic situation where Western Christians can learn from the history of Christianity elsewhere. In the early days of the expansion of Islam into the Christian countries of the Middle East, for example, the new rulers sometimes took over a part of a church for their worship, leaving the rest to the Christian community. In many cases, however, the whole building was eventually taken over.”

This illustration is elicited as an example of ill-considered and naïve hospitality that pays insufficient attention to that dimension of mission, embassy: “going out to them and sharing the Gospel with them”. In Nazir-Ali’s view, it is the very history of privilege and dominance of the western Church that has stymied the full expression of mission as embassy but now “The situation is changing”. A more equitable balance of power between the faiths, and especially with Muslims, is being highlighted, one that needs to be cognisant of the breadth of encounters in history and across the Communion. It is noteworthy that in 1996, the Church of England produced a document on the use of its premises and other faiths, Communities and Buildings. A brief description is given of Islamic understandings of the mosque but no account of the potential symbolism of competitive power that Nazir-Ali alludes to as within Islamic tradition. The issue for churches according to Communities and Buildings is largely a procedural one with respect to consecrated properties that calls upon local church leadership “with a gift and a vocation for adventurous friendships” that may

Lamb, C., The Call to Retrieval, p. 102. Kenneth Cragg saw the Christian mission to Islam as “conceived in terms of residence, hospitality, embassy and retrieval”, p. 114


539 Communities and Buildings, p. 54
admit expansive hosting of other faith communities. Chad Emmett’s study of the siting of churches and mosques would seem to suggest that there is indeed a complex of mutual power-relations indicated by signs of location, conversion and prohibition that can reveal degrees of tolerance and perspectives on success and dominance that cannot be dismissed.  

*The Way of Dialogue* remains the most recent authoritative statement on the theology of inter-religious concerns in relation to Islam for the Anglican Communion.  

There is an evident indebtedness to Vatican II and in particular to *Nostra aetate* in the situating of relations with Islam in the context of the Abrahamic faiths. *The Way of Dialogue* goes somewhat further than Vatican II in how the relationship between the Abrahamic faiths is framed, though, and one wonders how this may be appropriately applied to the Church of England’s inter-religious relations beyond Christianity and Judaism. Noting Gavin D’Costa’s analysis of applying an appropriate hermeneutic to the documents of Vatican II, *The Way of Dialogue* arguably misinterprets the intent of *Nostra aetate* by over-emphasising the import of the Abrahamic motif.

One feature of the controversies over Anglican publications on other faiths in the 1980’s is the apparent lack of coherence with other doctrinal publications and creedal statements. Where the Roman Catholic Church sought to present a comprehensive range of conciliar documents in the light of the church’s engagement with the world during the Vatican II process, there is the suggestion of piecemeal and often self-contradictory progress from the Church of England and through the Anglican Communion. Thus, pluralist theologies could be presented as legitimate options for a theology of religions in *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, and an

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541 Ipgrave, M. “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing”, pp. 4-5


encouragement to “recognise and respond to all manifestations of the Logos” whilst still affirming the “decisive revelation of God in Jesus”. 544 The Way of Dialogue roots the community of the church within an Abrahamic schema without attending to the implications for this for theologies of salvation or Christology, overlooking the challenge of any purported “natural religion” to the universal significance of the Christ-event. Yet in 1995, the Church of England’s Doctrine Commission could produce The Mystery of Salvation explicitly endorsing the creedal statements of the Church and the historic formularies by emphasising the particularity of Christ as the second person of the trinity and the focus on Christ as judge and hope of the world. 545

Martin Davie’s 2009 report for the Church of England entitled A Church of England Approach to the Unique Significance of Jesus Christ would seem to endorse the clarity of The Mystery of Salvation. It was able to reflect upon the trinity as a doctrine that demanded an inclusive sense of God’s work within other religions yet could uphold a high Christology that did not compromise on the particular claims of Jesus as Lord. 546

A lesson for the Church of England would seem to be that any thoroughgoing analysis of inter-religious theologies cannot afford to ignore the implications for soteriology, ecclesiology and Christology. The context to the 2010 Church of England report Sharing the Gospel of Salvation is indicative of this need for a coherent ecclesial self-understanding. This report was prompted by a Private Member’s Motion at General Synod to declare the gospel imperative of evangelism to those of other faiths as an outflow of the unique revelation of God in Jesus Christ. There was evidently a perceived danger that the theologies that drove dialogue could be prised apart from those that impelled proclamation. As the Foreword to the report noted:

544 Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue, 2nd Edition., p. 19
“The stronger sense of difference and diversity – including religious diversity – in Britain today has challenged us to become a more generous culture. Sadly, it has also made many nervous of publicly espousing a vision of the common good for all people. Yet, if the Good News of God in Christ is good for us, how can we refrain from commending it as good for others too?”  

If the Holy Spirit’s work beyond the church cannot be considered without reference to the church’s sacramental presence as Christ’s body on earth, then, conversely, the unique claims of Christ as a basis for evangelism cannot be declared without acknowledging the breadth of God’s mission in the sovereign grace of the trinity. Commending Martin Davie’s report on the unique significance of Christ, the report admits that “the only adequate response is to present the whole gamut of the Church’s work in mission and evangelism”. Rowan Williams’ introductory remark that “Christ’s saving work is not a commodity to be sold but a gift to be shared” underlines this tension. The church does not possess truth in exclusivist terms but participates in a life that has implications for relations with other faiths. The apparent shift from The Way of Dialogue and its attempts to provide a schema for the theology of religions to a more ecclesiually conscious position such as Sharing the Gospel of Salvation represents will become especially evident when we consider the important 2008 Anglican Communion report, Generous Love: the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue.

For critics of The Way of Dialogue, the document is weak in not presenting the full particularity of the Gospel and paying insufficient attention to the vocation of evangelism. It is perhaps ironic that the evident use of resources from a missionary tradition that includes Temple Gairdner, Kenneth Cragg, John V. Taylor and Max Warren in the articulation of its theology is seen in this light. It must be noted that the thrust of the document was dialogue and the overarching tone was one that sought to open up the Anglican Communion to constructive relations with Jewish and Muslim neighbours in dialogue and partnership. This emphasis on dialogue can be seen to be

547 Sharing the Gospel of Salvation (London: Church House Publishing, 2010), Foreword
548 Sharing the Gospel of Salvation, p. 1
549 From the Foreword to Sharing the Gospel of Salvation
part of a continuity with the preparatory document Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue where the church is seen as host and Muslims, and those of other faiths, as guests. For many evangelicals and Anglicans beyond Europe, both documents display an unrecognisably positive portrayal of the realities of Christian-Muslim coexistence and an exaggeration of the power of the Christian community.

Moving to Lambeth 1998, a clear effort to hear the stories of Christian-Muslim coexistence from beyond Europe was made and an appreciation of the diverse realities of inter-religious engagement. This commitment to the lived reality of the interface between Christianity and Islam was institutionalised for the Communion in 1998 through the responsibilities given to the Network for Inter Faith Concerns (“NIFCON”), established in 1993, to disseminate such information and resources. Additionally, the recurring motifs of Christian Presence, hospitality and embassy, that run through The Way of Dialogue and originate in the missionary theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Max Warren among others, were presented anew to embrace both dialogue and evangelism.

3.2.4 Lambeth Conference 2008: Generous Love

The latest formal Anglican Communion document for inter-religious relations is the 2008 report, Generous Love: the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue, issued by the Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON), discussed at the Lambeth Conference 2008 and brought to and commended by the Church of England General Synod in January, 2009. Whilst the document comes out of the Lambeth Communion, it was particularly attentive to the local stories of the Presence and Engagement report of the Church of England in 2005 and thus is an important account of Church of England theology in its Anglican global context.

Archbishop Rowan Williams comments in his Foreword on the strategic context of Vatican II for Generous Love, while noting that “the situation has moved on, both in

theology and in practical relations between communities”. This makes the document an important indicator of Anglican theologies behind some of the changes we have observed since TTID and The Way of Dialogue. For Michael Ipgrave, the principal author of Generous Love, the optimism apparent in Nostra aetate has been replaced by a markedly less sanguine approach to interfaith relations. The religiously motivated violence supremely exemplified by 9-11 has influenced an approach that is decidedly pastoral in facing the diverse realities of Christian-Muslim experience in a more sober context. In terms of a theological shift, Catholic documents since Vatican II have certainly given a greater attention to the subject of proclamation while the 1990 collection of essays in Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of a Pluralistic Theology of Religions is emblematic of a broad front countering novel schema of theologies of religions. Within the Foreword and in the subtitle to Generous Love, there is already an express commitment to both “the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue”; “that double conviction that we must regard dialogue as an imperative from Our Lord, yet must also witness consistently to the unique gift we have been given in Christ.”

551 Generous Love, from the foreword by Rowan Williams, p. v
552 In assessing the immediate context to Generous Love I am indebted to Michael Ipgrave who has kindly conveyed the influences (textual, theological and political), informing the drafting of the document in a conversation dated 29 March 2010. It is worth noting, in the light of subsequent analysis, that Ipgrave’s doctoral research reflected upon the significance of the doctrine of the trinity to the earliest Christian-Muslim encounters. See, Ipgrave, Michael. Trinity and Inter Faith Dialogue: Plenitude and Plurality (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003)
553 Jacques Dupuis expresses his “disillusionment and dissatisfaction” with a perceived hardening of position towards other religions within conciliar documents in the forty years since Vatican II, hoping that some of the ambiguities of Nostra aetate would have led to a more pluralistic assessment of God’s revelation: Dupuis, Jacques. Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue, (Maryknoll/London: Orbis Books & Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), p. 66
555 Generous Love, from the foreword by Rowan Williams, p. v
The document is explicitly theological rather than practical, seeking to present a Christian basis for relations with other faiths but not striving to formulate a scheme of theology of religions in the way that TTID sought to do in 1984. What is immediately apparent, though, is the trinitarian language of the theology. It “begins with God” and the “mystery of his being” that “through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth the One God has made known his triune reality as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” In echoes of the perichoresis theology of the Church Fathers and of Eastern Christianity, the work of God in the world and across cultures and religions is set in the “boundless life and perfect love which abide forever in the heart of the Trinity” and “are sent out into the world in a mission of renewal and restoration in which we are called to share.” The “beginning with God” uses phraseology from the Guidelines for Interfaith Encounter in the Churches of the Porvoo Communion with the Anglican Communion of 2003. Ipgrave was keen to build on the pattern of the Porvoo guidelines in articulating theology out of a prior understanding of the nature of God rather than the customary Anglican pattern of a beginning in context. Interestingly, an important drive behind Generous Love was to present a document to the Conference of 2008 that affirmed the mission of the church and that could command widespread assent, in contrast to the internal disagreements over sexuality. As such, the significance of Generous Love is arguably deepened by the sense that it is not an attempt to break new ground but is a genuine consolidation of Anglican principles for inter-religious relations. Where TTID was accused of using the Holy Spirit as an unbiblical, freewheeling motif for discerning truth in other religious traditions, Generous Love articulates a pneumatology that repeatedly references back to the Father God and the revelation of that fatherhood in Jesus, the Son of God.

556 Generous Love, p. 1
557 Generous Love, p. 1
559 For Michael Ipgrave, this is about “setting interfaith within the language and context of mission: mission understood in an inclusive sense.” Quoting from a conversation with Michael Ipgrave dated 29th March, 2010
It is revealing that Lucinda Mosher’s analysis of the 1988 Lambeth Conference includes observations on reports written by Rowan Williams in parallel to but separate to the interfaith reports: “Communion with God and the Life of the Christ” and “Christ and Culture” together with an introduction to the concept of the report of the Communion as a whole. Mosher observes that his reports are “replete” with “Eastern Orthodox theological flavour” in talk of us being caught up into a “great pattern of relation” in the trinitarian revelation. 560 This language finds resonance in section 8 of Generous Love, on “sending and abiding” where it is affirmed that “our relationships with people of different faiths must be grounded theologically in our understanding of the reality of the God who is Trinity. Father, Son and Spirit abide in one another in a life which is ‘a dynamic, eternal and unending movement of self-giving.’”561 This latter reference is extracted from The Church of the Triune God – The Cyprus Agreed Statement of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue (ACC, 2006), II.5.562 It seems more than coincidental that the “characteristic idioms”563 of Williams’ patristic and Orthodox infused trinitarianism observed at the Lambeth Conference of 1988 are apparent in this strategic statement of Anglican inter-religious relations while he is Archbishop of Canterbury. We noted in the Introduction how Williams’ Orthodox-infused Anglicanism was particularly influenced by the Russian émigré school. It is worth highlighting, here, that Generous Love borrows language from a dialogue with the Greek Orthodox tradition, and a document that Rowan Williams and Greek Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas564 had a major part in drafting.

Where the concept of the trinity is not even mentioned in The Way of Dialogue and is a potential source for explaining the activities of God within other religious traditions

560 Mosher, L. “Christ and People of Other Faiths”, p. 6
561 Generous Love, p. 15
563 Mosher, L. “Christ and People of Other Faiths”, p. 6
564 Zizioulas, John. Being as Communion (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1985) provides an influential counterpoint to Russian Orthodox eucharistic ecclesiology from within the Greek Orthodox tradition
in *TTID*, the trinity provides the whole shape for Christian relationship with the other and infuses all aspects of *Generous Love*. It seems characteristic of some of the weaknesses of Anglican ecclesiology noted in the Introduction that the doctrinal reports on Christology written by Williams for the Lambeth Conference of 1988 seem wholly divorced from and irrelevant to the inter-religious documents pertaining to that same conference. In *Generous Love*, there seems, rather, to be an effort to root relations with other faiths in the very identity of the Church as a sacrament within its understanding of the trinitarian godhead: an *ecclesial turn* in interfaith relations.

*Generous Love* offers a brief perspective on what is distinctively Anglican for a trinitarian theology of religions; recognising the plurality in unity characteristic of the roots of Anglicanism underpinning the affirmation of God’s work in the world but also a Christian unity that avoids sectarianism. 565 This makes for a commitment to local context and an attention to the particularities of time in the light of God’s unfolding providence. 566

The significance of scripture is reaffirmed as crucial to Anglican method, the practice of “scriptural reasoning” particularly noted as an example in this regard567 and the “Building Bridges” programme of Christian-Muslim scriptural reflection implicitly endorsed as a necessary endeavour. 568 Though *Generous Love* articulates a theology of inter-religious relations and makes no attempt to evaluate specific religious traditions, the specificity of Christian-Jewish relations is underlined, and *The Way of Dialogue*’s reminder that we must “reject any view of Judaism which sees it as a living fossil, simply superseded by Christianity”. 569

565 *Generous Love*, pp. 3-4
566 a creative analogy is made here between the theology of the Church of England and English common law “with its appeal to precedents at the same time as its openness to new applications in new cases”, *Generous Love*, footnote 10., p. 17
569 *Generous Love*, quoted on p. 5
The variety of Anglican experiences especially with Islam is mentioned, from the stories of Lambeth 1998 to NIFCON consultations on “mission and dialogue” in Bangalore, India (2003) and on faith and citizenship in Kaduna, Nigeria (2007). There is no attempt to foreclose the nature of the Christian encounter with other faiths, and specifically with Islam, nor to give particular emphasis on one practice at the expense of the other, save to encourage a dynamic “presence and engagement”. The “two poles” of this presence and engagement utilise two of the most persistent themes for Anglican encounters with other faiths originating in the theology of the great missionary scholar of Islam, Bishop Kenneth Cragg: embassy and hospitality, and reaffirmed as we have seen by Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali. The combined “going out” and “welcoming in” are seen from within the trinitarian dynamic around which the eucharist is both symbol and source of that self-giving love. There seems to be a very clear break from the casting of the church as host that is apparent in earlier documents and the hospitality metaphor recast so that the church actually has a responsibility as both host and guest. Thus, “the giving and receiving of hospitality is a most powerful sign that those who were strangers are reconciled to one another as friends.”

For Generous Love, the church also has to learn to be a guest, understanding that the real host of our shared space is Christ the Lord. There are echoes here of the theology of religions articulated by the Jesuit scholar Michael Barnes, who espouses a dialogical theology, or comparative theology, that reflects from within tradition in the experience of the encounter with the other. Thus, Michael Barnes can say, in the spirit of Generous Love, “The mediation which Christians practise is motivated by the Spirit of love, in imitation of God’s own action of welcome and hospitality towards all people… To put it another way, God is himself both host and guest”. For Barnes, as with Generous Love, relations with the other are posited within the church’s understanding of God’s relationality and not abstracted to an objective schema of religions.

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570 Generous Love, pp. 13-14
571 Generous Love, p. 13
Clare Amos hints at this dual track of Christian hospitality in her reflections on *Generous Love, A Common Word* and Rowan Williams’ Shari’a law speech. For her, the on-going establishment of the Church of England presupposes at least some identification with the role of “host”, akin to Rabbi Jonathan Sacks’ picture of the “country-house” model of religious diversity. There are also times when the Church of England is called upon to act generously and give away privilege: the advocacy by Anglican bishops for seats in the House of Lords for other faith leaders, for example. Arguably this analysis still gives insufficient attention to the Church as a genuine “guest”; where the power and privilege may well be located elsewhere. In some very real senses, the church, too, is residing in a country-house and beholden to an “other”. What *Generous Love* suggests is a Christian understanding of inter-religious relations where the church is simultaneously both host and guest. Within this dynamic, God is the only host, as Barnes notes, and Kenneth Cragg’s vision of Christian hospitality recalled: a vision that encompasses the embassy of Christ, to “decide by the Gospel as the people of the Gospel must.”

In what must be a reference to some of the Christian experiences of Islamic majority, reciprocity in interfaith relations globally is asserted but generous love patterned in love for enemies that does not seek retaliation. A clear statement of identification with

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573 Clare Amos was, from 2001-2011, the Director of Theological Studies for the Anglican Communion, and Coordinator for the Network for Inter-faith Concerns for the Anglican Communion (“NIFCON”) as well as part of the working party that produced *Generous Love*

574 Sacks, J. *The Home We Build Together* (London: Continuum, 2007). Sacks offers three models for religious diversity. The “hotel” would be the picture best suited to multiculturalism, where groups are present in one place but do not interact and have little attachment to the common place of residence. The “country-house” assumes one dominant culture that welcomes and includes the “guests” or strangers. For Sacks, the “home we build together” presents the third, best and most suitable aspiration for Britain’s contemporary situation


the suffering church is offered too in the imperative to solidarity and support of “Christians who have to witness to their faith in difficult circumstances”.\textsuperscript{577} Alongside the theological retrieval of Eastern Christianity is a tangible affirmation of the interdependence of the Christian experience in contexts such as the Middle East.

\textit{Generous Love} is a remarkable document that provides a trinitarian impulse in support of an on-going shift in formal Anglican approaches to other faiths and to Islam, in particular. There is an attempt to cast that in an Anglican distinctive that embraces diversity in unity, is contextual, and rooted in scripture. This diversity models an approach to other faiths based on embassy and hospitality, affirming the breadth of mission in dialogue and evangelism. The church is both to be host and guest in this economy: receiving, learning and being challenged, as well as reaching out, proclaiming and challenging in turn. Where earlier Anglican documents suggested that the challenge of other faiths might provoke a new schema of theologies of religions, an “external discourse” shaping the church’s vision, \textit{Generous Love} begins with God and the consequent nature of the Church within the life of God. What this ecclesial turn demonstrates, then, is not a new innovation in theology but a recovery of inherited traditions: a genuine \textit{ressourcement}.

The ecclesial turn is evidenced by the appeal to the Eastern Orthodox tradition evoked in \textit{Generous Love}, and the inheritance of the Church Fathers and in that Anglican Church Father, Richard Hooker, in their emphasis on the Church’s participation in the godhead. The attentiveness to the lived reality of Christian-Muslim relations in all their complexity around the Anglican Communion contributed to this ecclesially conscious theology that has had to command credibility across Anglican diversity and be able to embrace a diversity of inter-religious experience. \textit{Generous Love} emphasises the context of the worshipping community but defers to the self-identity of the patristic milieu that we identified as intrinsic to Anglican ecclesiology in the Introduction. \textit{Generous Love}, then, arguably offers itself as an authoritative and authentic resource for Anglican Christians relating to Muslims.

\textsuperscript{577} \textit{Generous Love}, p. 10
3.3 Initiatives of the Church of England

For many years, the Church of England was content to focus national initiatives on relations with Islam through ecumenical groupings, and in particular through the World Council of Churches.\(^{578}\) At diocesan and city level, though, in many cases the Church of England had taken a lead in initiatives such as community relations, interfaith chaplaincies and local bi-lateral dialogue groups from the early 1970’s.\(^{579}\) It must be noted too that the Church of England’s parish system, legal obligations to non-adherents of the Christian faith and involvement in church schools provide longstanding forums for encounter with Muslims.\(^{580}\)

The 1976 publication *A New Threshold: Guidelines for the Churches in their relations with Muslim communities*\(^{581}\) deserves mention as one such ecumenical initiative focussed on Muslim-Christian relations. Written by Bishop David Brown of Guildford, incidentally another former CMS missionary, it embodied the work of the British Council of Churches and the Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. Until *The Way of Dialogue*, this would have been the only formal, institutional resource available to Anglicans in Britain in their understanding of the interface between Christianity and Islam.

Published in the same year as the Festival of Islam in London, *A New Threshold* seems to reflect something of the effort to reconcile Christians to the perceived new vista of religious pluralism in Britain. It is indicative that in the Preface to the

\(^{578}\) Lewis, P. “Christian-Muslim Relations in Britain”, p. 189


document, the Community and Race Relations Unit of the Church of the Church of England are especially noted as having prior involvement in the document in addressing questions of religious and cultural identity now posed to “our society which have grown out of our Christian heritage”. At this juncture, race is regarded as equivalent to or even consonant with religion. Already, the sensibility of host/guest relations is evoked and the spectre of racism suggested as a backdrop to the need for the guidelines produced.

_A New Threshold_ provides brief descriptions of Islam, its diversity and core theology and something of the history of Muslim-Christian relations. In the section, “Theological Issues”, David Brown declines to present a “theology of religions” and admits something of the provisional nature of the document, suggesting that the theological implications of religious diversity in Britain have yet to be worked out: “It will take some years for the theologians and governing bodies of our Churches to adjust to the realities and perspectives of the pluralist society which Britain, in common with the rest of the world, is rapidly becoming.” Whilst admitting the tradition of religious plurality across the globe, no attempt is made to retrieve this in informing practice in Britain; an omission that we have seen could be argued is characteristic of the era culminating in _The Way of Dialogue._

David Brown does not explicitly name Abraham but his rationale for what he terms “spiritual kinship” clearly points to an obligation to “share in mutual understanding with people who worship God” draws from the pattern of Jewish revelation and our common “spiritual heritage”. This seems to anticipate _The Way of Dialogue_’s establishment of Old Testament roots shaping the nature of Christian-Muslim-Jewish faiths through the Abrahamic motif. After affirming commonalities, David Brown then identifies “factors which divide”. First and foremost here are the “social factors” which sometimes lead to racism and exclusion of Muslims, perhaps

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582 Brown, D. _A New Threshold_, Preface by T. Carlisle Patterson and Harry O. Morton, p. v
583 Brown, D. _A New Threshold_, p. 8
584 Brown, D. _A New Threshold_, p. 11
585 Brown, D. _A New Threshold_, pp. 13-17
suggestive of one of the primary concerns behind the document being to foster sensitivity and welcome greater religious and cultural diversity amongst Christians.

Brown recognises the incarnation (and consequently the trinity), sin (and the fact and necessity of the crucifixion), and Christian sectarianism and hierarchy as the three main points of Islamic theological contention with Christianity.\textsuperscript{586} Interestingly, again, the emphasis here is on Islamic issues with Christian theology. Thus, no mention is made of Christian issues with regard to traditional Islamic notions of apostasy, religious governance of public affairs or the belief that the Bible is a corrupted text, for example.

The “threshold” referred to in the title is what David Brown refers to as the “modern Antioch” of Christian encounter with other faiths in contemporary Britain, revitalizing and reframing theology.\textsuperscript{587} The “purifying and enriching” process of interaction with Islam suggests three new insights for Brown: “a new awareness of the universality of the divine love”, “a more modest assessment of the authority of ecclesiastical institutions”, and “a clearer grasp of what is unique in the Christian faith”.\textsuperscript{588} Establishing some commonalities and differences, the tone of the document is decidedly provisional, qualifying “present interim theologies”\textsuperscript{589} in the light of the challenge and opportunity of interaction with Muslims.

Chapter II’s postscript of “Problems of Relationships”\textsuperscript{590} does little to alter the perception that \textit{A New Threshold} is speaking into an understanding of the church’s privilege and dominance, suggestive of the host/guest paradigm we have noted elsewhere. Thus, problems entitled “Human Rights and Community Relations” are actually about the human rights of Muslims culturally and economically. “The Sharing and Use of Buildings” and “Recognition of Islamic Occasions by the Churches” all place an onus on the church in its vocation of hospitality, and prefigure

\textsuperscript{586} Brown, D. \textit{A New Threshold}, pp. 15-17
\textsuperscript{587} Brown, D. \textit{A New Threshold}, pp. 22-5
\textsuperscript{588} Brown, D. \textit{A New Threshold}, pp. 23-5
\textsuperscript{589} Brown, D. \textit{A New Threshold}, p. 25
\textsuperscript{590} Brown, D. \textit{A New Threshold}, pp. 26-29
some of the later accounts that inspired the objections of Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali. “Evangelism” is recognised as integral to both faiths but beyond the mention of this having “political overtones” “in the past” within Islam, it is merely noted that “principal missionary societies are making a reappraisal of mission” in the light of mutual sensitivities.

In 1980, the Inter-Faith Consultative Group (IFCG) was established to help the Church of England coordinate and resource the encounter with other faiths and was behind the publication of *TTID*. In parallel with this, the Network for Inter-Faith Concerns (NIFCON) was set up in 1993 tasked with a similar role across the Anglican Communion. Following the mandate we have noted in the Lambeth Conference of 1998, it is NIFCON that is charged with the sharing of stories and monitoring of Muslim-Christian relations for the Communion.

Archbishop George Carey instigated two projects of especial note that are both part of the wider picture of Anglican engagement with Islam. An agreement was established between the Archbishop of Canterbury, as representative of the Anglican Communion, and al-Azhar al-Sharif, Cairo, “a leading locus of spiritual authority in the world of Sunni Islam”591. This agreement fosters dialogue and bi-lateral exchanges, making possible a connection between the Church of England and a major source of Islamic teaching and practice globally. It is worth noting, in anticipation of our political theology question, that this bi-lateral agreement is suggestive of a state-to-state role for the Church of England: acting as a national church with a focus for national Islamic authority in Egypt. To what extent is this “public” role connected to the Church of England’s self-understanding of its mission nationally and internationally? George Carey also initiated the “Building Bridges” series of seminars facilitating studied reflections on the Bible and the Qur’an by international scholars around specified themes. The first of these seminars was chaired by Carey in 2002; subsequent annual seminars have been chaired by his successor Rowan Williams up until 2012. The published outcomes of these scholarly exchanges provide a now

substantial theological resource for the Church of England in its relationship to Islam.  

In 2005, the report *Presence and Engagement: the churches’ task in a multi Faith society* was issued by the Mission and Public Affairs Council of the Church of England. The Presence and Engagement Task Group, supported by the Church of England’s national Adviser on Inter Faith Relations has superseded IFCG as the focus for resourcing of the Church of England’s interfaith encounter and this report is thus a significant indicator of the direction of more contemporary reflections. It is surely no coincidence that the motif of Christian Presence, so significant in the missionary theologies of Kenneth Cragg, John V. Taylor and Max Warren is used in the title of this report, and understood in incarnational terms through the coupling with engagement; relevant to context and local realities. The report is especially focussed on the actual contexts of parishes facing a significant proportion of other faiths, reflecting on their understanding of that “presence and engagement”. Utilising 2001 census statistics, the first British census to ask questions about religion and thus to be able to properly assess the nature of contemporary religious diversity, an important picture is drawn of the opportunities and challenges of Church of England parish life in a post 9-11 world. A crucial observation from the report is that “the presence of significant other Faith communities is now one of the major contexts in the ministry of the Church. At the time of the 2001 census, some 900 parishes out of a

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total of 13,000 had more than 10% of their population as people of other Faiths than Christian and this figure is now higher and growing.\footnote{Presence and Engagement, p. 27} These 900 parishes represent 23% of the total population of all English parishes and 32% of these parishes have over 25% of their population as people of other faiths. What is clearly discernible is a shift from the perceived novelty of religious diversity in the 1970’s and 1980’s to the settled reality of differing faiths in English parishes, of which the Christian faith is frequently now in the minority.

The report draws attention to the fragility of many of these parishes with a significant faith other, reflected in often weak financial sustainability but also in the diversity and vigour of “presence and engagement”. The range of encounters and approaches is interrogated and the sensitivity of “conversion” particularly noted in relations with Muslims: a word that “captures the worst fears and the highest hopes of many people whether of Faith and secular. But it is not a word that can be banished, nor is the concept behind it one that can be removed from the place it occupies at the heart of Christianity and Islam”.\footnote{Presence and Engagement, p. 50}

The guiding principles of the report process, “identity”, “confidence” and “sustainability”, seem to have freed respondents in providing a snapshot of genuine complexity in the Church of England’s local encounters with other faiths. The stories of celebration are there alongside the vulnerability and fear, and there is a huge spectrum of approach offered (dialogue, evangelism, community action) in a spirit of catholicity. The diversity of encounters with Islam across the Lambeth Communion that was asserted in response to \textit{The Way of Dialogue} seems to be a feature \textit{within} the Church of England and not just a matter of Anglican experience globally. That identity, confidence and sustainability should constitute the guiding principles of \textit{Presence and Engagement} also redresses something of the perceived imbalance of earlier approaches to inter-religious relations which set the onus on the church’s need to change in the encounter with the faith other.
The Presence and Engagement project continues with the support of local initiatives in resourcing and modelling interfaith encounters, notably at the St. Philip’s Centre, Leicester and the Bradford Churches for Diversity and Dialogue (BCDD). An ongoing Presence and Engagement Task Group signposts materials for parishes and hosts web discussion boards, all part of an effort to network and support the Church of England’s mission in a multi-faith context.

Up until 2006, there was no formal network forging bi-lateral relations between Christians and Muslims in Britain, akin to The Council for Christians and Jews (“CCJ”). However, following over two years of “listening” to Muslim leaders and representatives with a number of church leaders across denominations, initiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, the “Christian-Muslim Forum” was established with Carey’s successor, Rowan Williams, as Founding Patron. The Forum works towards collaborative projects and open discussions between Christian and Muslim leaders through a “web of open, honest and committed personal relationships”.

It is noticeable that, though rooted in an initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the representation of the Christian communities on the Forum is ecumenical and includes a representative of a black-majority Pentecostal tradition. This points to the changing realities of the British Christian scene and a welcome by the Church of England of the interdependencies of ecumenism for Christian-Muslim relations. Towards the end of 2006, a statement was issued by the Forum, jointly by the Christian and Muslim representatives about the status of religious festivals. This ground-breaking public statement was made: “As Christians and Muslims we are wholeheartedly committed to the specific religious recognition for Christian festivals. Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and we wish this significant part of the Christian heritage of this country to remain an acknowledged part of national life.”

596 see the Forum website: http://www.christianmuslimforum.org for details of the aims and objectives, events and statements

This statement is remarkable for enjoining Christians and Muslims in a shared conviction about the place of religion in wider British society. That the church is seen to be the vulnerable party in a need for advocacy over the status of a festival such as Christmas underlines the significance of secular liberalism as another factor in the outworking of contemporary religious diversity. Notorious efforts to reconfigure Christmas as a non-religious festival in the interests of diversity are clearly in the sights of the Forum. The subversive nature of the statement rests on the bi-lateral nature of the appeal. The statement thus avoids pandering to the reactionary, folk nostalgia of some of the lurid headlines about the erosion of the Christian heritage while properly stating the religious antecedents of the festival and demonstrating how different faith traditions can mutually support respective distinctives. Muslim representatives evidently believe that support for the cause of the church, in this instance, best serves an appreciation of faith in public life. On 22nd June 2009, the Forum published a further statement this time focussing on combined ethical guidelines for mission. This seems to represent a genuine grasping of the nettle of evangelism and conversion, apostasy and conversion. Issues that are contentious for Christians and Muslims are openly addressed with efforts at an agreed ethic that essentially allows for the missionary impulses of the respective faiths. So, coercion, financial inducements, ridicule and manipulation are among practices in the cause of mission that are rejected. Sensitivity to children, young people and vulnerable adults is called for and a fundamental respect for the decisions of individuals to make their own choice in responding to a call to conversion. The underlying tenor of the document is one that recognises the differences of Islam and Christianity and how they might prompt mutual evangelistic appeal (or da’wah). The document acknowledges that it is not a theological treatise as such, and thus implicitly not

598 the lurid headlines of the following two articles are typical of some of the fears expressed by a constituency seeking to shore up the Christian heritage of the nation: Hitchens, P. “A Merry Christmas before its abolished”, Mail on Sunday, 22nd December 2008 downloaded from: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/columnists/article-152406/A-Merry-Christmas-abolished.html on 22nd July 2009 and Henry, J. and Miller, V. “School Nativity Plays Under Threat”, Telegraph.co.uk, 2nd December 2007, downloaded from: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1571187/School-nativity-plays-under-threat.html on 22nd July 2009

assuming a unitary foundation for mission and ethics. But this is done with tangible sympathy and with an evident ability to prove the pursuit of the common good between the faiths.

It remains to be seen what future initiatives emanate from the Forum but its initial activities are further supportive of a more mutual approach between the Church of England and Islam, as well as an embrace of the diversity of engagements through the ecumenism of its membership. That the Christian-Muslim Forum should be demonstrably supportive of collaborative statements and ventures that can hold together difference and commonality confirms the ecclesial move of the Lambeth documents. The trajectory of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion in its relations with Islam, it is suggested, is more about ensuring good relations *through an appreciation of difference* rather than in the pursuit of a common schema of theologies of religion.

### 3.4 The Legacy of Bishop Kenneth Cragg

In the analysis of Anglican responses to Islam, the name of Kenneth Cragg has figured prominently. The influence of his writings on formal documents of the Church of England suggests that Cragg’s work deserves particular attention. Born in 1913, Kenneth Cragg was raised in an evangelical Anglican household and after serving a curacy in Merseyside, left Britain to be Chaplain and adjunct professor of philosophy at the American University of Beirut. On his return to Britain, he completed doctoral studies on comparative religions at Oxford University prior to holding a professorship in Arabic and Islamic Studies at Hartford Seminary, Connecticut. Over many years, Kenneth Cragg exchanged periods teaching in Britain with substantive

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roles for the Anglican Communion in the Middle East. In 1970, he was made Assistant Bishop in the Jerusalem Archdiocese, based in Cairo; instrumental in ensuring an Arab appointment to the Jerusalem Archbishopric.

The seminal work, *The Call of the Minaret*, has already been mentioned, and with *Sandals at the Mosque*, these two publications, over forty years on, continue to dominate the landscape of Anglican Christian-Muslim relations. Cragg has been called the “Louis Massignon of Anglicanism” and “the Massignon of the Anglo-Saxon world” echoing the towering influence of the French Orientalist on the inter-religious relations of the Catholic Church. Kenneth Cragg’s own explicit retrieval of tradition is significant in helping to situate his thought in a line of Anglican missionary endeavour. Christopher Lamb has noted Cragg’s indebtedness to the formative influences of Temple Gairdner and Constance Padwick, missionary scholars that have prompted sympathetic and eloquent tributes from Cragg himself.

For Christopher Lamb, this missionary inheritance has given Cragg an abiding understanding of Christian *hospitality* towards Islam.

This concept of “hospitality” will be elucidated in more detail subsequently, but the precedence of Temple Gairdner helps to explain something of Cragg’s own vocation. We have noted already that Temple Gairdner could speak of the “living faith” that is...

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604 Lamb, C. *The Call to Retrieval*, p. 173


Islam at the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference of 1910. This living faith, according to Gairdner, needs to be recovered by the church that its witness may authenticate the “finger of God”. In Gairdner, we see the germ of Kenneth Cragg’s recovery, in his language, “retrieval”, of what is of God in Islam that needs to be discovered and manifested in the Christian community. This hospitality to the faith in Islam also brings the realisation of disjunction between Christianity and Islam. For Gairdner, the “reproach of Islam” “calls us back to explore His forgotten secrets…to a closer association with Christ Himself.”

The Christological disjunction between Islam and Christianity rebukes, in turn, an Islam that sees its realisation in temporal power and the subordination of love to might. Thus, Gairdner can describe Islam and Christianity as “incompatible”, the tawhid, or oneness of God, indicative of that which “Islam simplifies with a vengeance!”

Gairdner provides a chilling cameo by way of illustration:

“Back to that Church-mosque at Damascus whence we took our start! See where a Cross once stood, and where there stands a Crescent to-day! That sight stands for, and typifies, what every Moslem sees inwardly, and believes he has the right to see actually, when he looks at the Cross on every continental Cathedral spire, every English Minster rising from the sweet silent Close, every village church, from whose belfry-tower the chimes come like a benediction over the hamlet nestling at its feet, and the meadow-lands smiling in the sunlight beyond…”

In Gairdner, we find what may seem to be a deep contradiction: a spiritual sympathy with Islam and a rejection of the political means of Islam.

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608 Ibid., pp. 148-9
609 notice, too, the similarities to Louis Massignon’s belief of Islam as “foil” to the church
611 Ibid., p. 315
612 Ibid., pp. 313-4
In Kenneth Cragg’s own ministry, there is a similar conflicted train of thought yet a determination to “retrieve” within Islam that which is otherwise rejected: the kenosis of God in the cross and thus the rejection of power as the means to faithfulness. Thus the Medinan turn in Islam is a decisive “parting of the ways” when understood in the light of the centrality of the cross for Christians.\(^6\) It is not sufficient, though, for Cragg to stand aloof from Islam and condemn its will-to-power. The “sympathy” with which Gairdner and he notice the central claim of Islam about “letting God be God”\(^6\) compels a Christian embassy within the texts and culture of Muslims. This embassy (the representative capacity of the Christian amongst Muslims speaking of Christ in the local language\(^6\)), leads Cragg to advocate for the Meccan settlement from within the Qur’an, and Islamic tradition. In this otherwise abrogated settlement of faithfulness to God in political weakness, the divine pathos might be seen and the Christ-prophet that suffers discovered in all his fullness.

The particular nature of Cragg’s political theology will be presented in Chapter 4 but it is important to note the significance of a theology of kenosis to his response to Islam, and thence to the nature of the political. Cragg admits his indebtedness to the Lux Mundi (1889) essays edited by Charles Gore and instrumental in an Anglican reawakening to engagement with modern scholarship.\(^6\) Coincidentally, Cragg’s doctoral research was written while living at the Longworth vicarage which hosted the original Lux Mundi contributors. The Lux Mundi appraisal of contemporary scholarship was grounded in a theology of the incarnation; what became for Cragg a priority to see “the role of the human in God’s work of creation, revelation, and redemption.”\(^6\) The focus on divine self-limitation foundational to the Lux Mundi school and Gore’s essay, in particular, simultaneously allowed for Cragg a sympathy

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\(^6\) Lamb, C. The Call to Retrieval, pp. 103-5


with Muslim hearers that would struggle with the idea of the deity of Jesus, alongside the radical departure of the incarnation within the godhead that he would commend to Muslims.  

Recovering the tradition of the Church Fathers and widening the canon of Anglican theological resources to include Eastern Orthodoxy, the incarnation was not to be seen as a one-off event in the life of Jesus but indicative of the nature of God. Thus, Cragg can say, consistent with the project of the *Lux Mundi* school that:

> “every instance of human charisma in divine employ, every coinciding of historical event with heavenly intent, contains in its own measure, this mystery of the eternal and the temporal at rendezvous. To believe in the incarnation is not to exclusify that mystery. For it is relatively present everywhere in creation and without it this could not be the sort of world in which *the* incarnation could happen.”

This incarnational theology accords with the Eastern Orthodox tradition that we have already noted as vital to an understanding of Anglicanism. The Christian encounter with the other is not primarily a doctrinal one but a sacramental relationship in a sacramental world. Reflecting on Cragg’s Christmas poems, sent to friends in greetings cards during the Christmas season, Richard Jones notices a particularly Anglican sensibility reflective of this *kenotic* tradition: “As sermons in Anglican worship often do, a number of the poems mention the imminent sacrament of the Bread and Wine offered to renew in more than words-in our bodies-that same mystery inaugurated by Incarnation, the union of the human with the divine.” Again, the eucharistic locus of Cragg’s generative theology is revealed as consistent with the ecclesial turn of more recent Anglican perspectives on the church and Islam.

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618 Lamb, C. *The Call to Retrieval*, p. 15
620 Jones, Richard J. “Singing of God’s Incarnation”, pp. 107-8
It is perhaps surprising that Cragg’s formative evangelicalism could embrace the liberal catholicism of the Lux Mundi school with its associated indebtedness to the patristic inheritance. Setting Cragg in the context of the “Christian Presence” tradition of Anglican missionary endeavour serves to underline the theological resonances with a Catholic spirituality which is itself within a heritage of the Eastern Church. It must be noted that for Cragg, as with John V. Taylor and Max Warren, that wider ecclesial self-consciousness may not be explicit but the parallels are evident. We have already noted that the Vatican II sensibility was “as one finding Christ even more than preaching him.”  

The idea of “Christian Presence” had its equivalent in the theology of Jean Daniélou, so influential to the pronouncements of Vatican II. He was a member of the nouvelle théologie school that was energised and complemented by the recovery of the Church Fathers to ecclesial self-understanding in the modern Eastern Orthodox tradition itself. For Daniélou, Christian Presence requires in the Christian a “far-reaching dispossession” necessitating the Church continuing in its own life the incarnation of Christ. What Daniélou calls a “spirituality of incarnation” is alive to “all that is good in these worlds” and “must understand these lands, espouse their cultures, and we cannot afford to do this without genuine sympathy.”

Daniélou was in turn influenced by Charles de Foucauld who modelled a Christian Presence of eucharistic witness in Algeria. We have already noted Ipgrave’s role in contributing to the drafting of Generous Love and in highlighting the indebtedness of Anglican inter-religious theology to Vatican II. Ipgrave’s more Catholic Anglican sensibility leads him to draw from the example of the Christian Presence school of Catholicism. So, in two articles about the “provocation” of Christian-Muslim relations

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624 Daniélou, Jean. The Salvation of the Nations, pp. 48-9
to holiness, de Foucauld and Massignon are cited as exemplars of a monastic tradition that help the wider Church to encounter God in new ways from within a sacramental understanding of the world.\textsuperscript{625} It seems, then, that Cragg, and the Anglican Christian Presence school, permit a widening of the canon of Anglican responses to Islam.

The “Call to Understanding” advocated by \textit{The Way of Dialogue} is intrinsic to the Christian Presence school of Anglicans and Catholics alike. In Cragg’s own \textit{The Call of the Minaret}, Cragg encourages “entering into the soul of those to be served”, an incarnational model congruent with the “affirmation” and “sharing” of \textit{The Way of Dialogue}.\textsuperscript{626} In Max Warren’s famous Introduction to the Christian Presence series of books, the nature of this incarnational understanding is dilated:

“Our first task in approaching another people, another culture, another religion, is to take off our shoes, for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on men’s dreams. More serious still, we may forget that God was here before our arrival.”\textsuperscript{627}

The costly identification with the religious other leads to the very discovery of God in the inter-religious encounter. This echoes in turn the “Indian vocation” of Catholic missionary Jules Monchanin, and friend of Henri de Lubac whose theology contributed so much to the climate of Vatican II. His was a personal exploration of Indian spirituality from within the practise of the eucharist as the mystery of Christ’s presence. Jacques Prévotat describes both Monchanin and de Lubac as having:


\textsuperscript{626} Cragg, \textit{The Call of the Minaret}, p. ix

“a universal outlook, a shared desire to see Christianity enriched by other cultures. This inspiration rejoins the great tradition of the Church, expands it to worldwide dimensions, is favourable to a deepening of thought on doctrine, and paralyses the temptation of those who would like to harden it.”\textsuperscript{628}

Where some would seek to harden the borders between the Church and other religions, de Lubac and Monchanin, with Cragg and the Christian Presence school, are alert to the presence of Christ in the religious other. This is also true for Charles de Foucauld, a direct influence on Louis Massignon. De Foucauld became, to his Muslim neighbours, a \textit{marabout}, a holy man, mediating the sacrament of Christ’s mystical body “to offer a Christian presence in their midst”.\textsuperscript{629}

A further illustration of the resonances across ecclesial traditions of Cragg and the Christian Presence school is in Paul Knitter’s categorisation of Cragg, Warren, Taylor and Roger Hooker as representative of a “Catholic Model” of engagement with other faiths in contrast to his “Conservative Evangelical” or “Mainline Protestant” categories. Described in a section of his book \textit{No Other Name?} as “A Mainline Christian Model”, this is a striking observation of the sacramentalism common to Cragg and Vatican II Catholicism.\textsuperscript{630} As Graham Kings points out, “this positioning is both ironic (in that they come from the evangelical Anglican tradition), but also perceptive in that they would not fit particularly easily into the Mainline Protestant model (where Knitter placed Lesslie Newbigin and Stephen Neill).”\textsuperscript{631}


\textsuperscript{630} Knitter, Paul F. \textit{No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985)

The sense that Cragg represents a sacramental theology that resonates ecumenically is confirmed by the high esteem accorded him by the French lay Russian Orthodox theologian, Olivier Clément. In Clément’s published dialogue with Mohamed Talbi, he speaks positively of Cragg’s pioneering work and of the “presence à-demi secrète de Jésus” he sees in Islam alongside the Catholic pioneer, Massignon.  Clément’s sacramentalism finds an echo in Cragg’s insistence on the “traces” of Christ within Islam, similarly represented by the work of the Orthodox theologian George Khodr. What this seems to confirm is that the attention afforded to Cragg’s theological account of Islam in the ecclesial turn I have identified is supported by the retrieval of Eastern Christianity that underpins the ecclesial turn.

Despite the lack of an explicit retrieval of Eastern Orthodox theology in Cragg’s writings, there is a notable respect for the Lebanese academic, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and contributor to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Charles Malik (1906-1987). Cragg and Malik worked as colleagues and friends at the American University of Beirut. As a Chalcedonian Orthodox Christian of the Middle East, Cragg identified in Malik an important voice from within a context familiar with Islam that needed to be heeded by the West: Malik “gave utterance to an Arab Christianity which had stayed too long unidentified in the conversation with Bishop Graham Kings for pointing out this categorisation of Cragg, Hooker and Taylor by Paul Knitter


633 Clément, Olivier. Un respect têtu, p. 276
For Cragg, Malik represented a “reminder” of the significance of freedom in a Lebanon that had been able to model “a state at once both Christian and composite, mediating between a nearer and a farther East.” The retrieval identified by this thesis that seeks to draw from the resources of Eastern Christians is seen to be emblematic of Malik. Though Cragg’s evangelical heritage seems to inhibit his own self-conscious appropriation of tradition, there is an almost instinctive appreciation of a figure like Malik who can bridge the divide of East and West. Malik’s “reminder”, reminiscent of Massignon’s “foil” is the challenge of atheism to the religious impulse to freedom, and a goad to the Church to be more fully itself, and also a provocation to Islam about the vulnerability of God in the incarnation. This is why Christopher Lamb can say of Cragg’s appreciation of Malik’s political and Eastern Orthodox sensibility that: “We have seen the influence of a ‘kenotic’ and incarnational theology on Cragg, and it is easy to see how Malik’s thinking would have fitted into this growing pattern.” It is intriguing to note an important and influential essay to Cragg written by Malik on “The Orthodox Church” in the Middle East. While Cragg writes very little about ecclesial traditions, in contrast to Rowan Williams, it seems that Malik is the one who identifies the important heritages of Eastern Orthodoxy in the Middle East, its mysticism as a resource for engaging with Islam, and the particular place of Russian Orthodoxy in any retrieval of the East for the encounter with Islam on his behalf:

“With respect to this dimension of transcendence Orthodoxy is at one with Islam, although of course it tempers it with God’s humanity which Islam does not…But for the Russian Orthodox Church, Orthodoxy in the Middle East would have been an orphan. The Churches of the West come to it as something alien: they want to change and convert it. Russian Orthodoxy comes to it as bone of its bones and flesh of its flesh.”

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635 Cragg, Kenneth. “Charles Malik and the Meaning of Lebanon”, p. 257
636 Lamb, Christopher. The Call to Retrieval, p. 21
As Malik embodies a confluence of traditions, East and West, that engage sympathetically yet critically with Islam, so Cragg’s temper of hospitality towards the Arab world provides a parallel point of confluence for Anglicanism. Kenneth Cragg’s hospitality towards Islam, the missionary impulse to identification, is a restraint: a disciplined listening that indeed hears Islam on its own terms. The “space” carved out by this restraint does not engender a “non-Christian” response, nor a new synthesis of the two faiths. Rather, it is the place of meeting where a Christian presence is materially affected in relationship.

Jane Smith describes “the persistence of his theme of perplexity”. The perplexity, for Smith, is in the repeated effort to reconcile the two faiths around the cross of Christ; the cross that stands as ultimate departure from all that humanity wills. Throughout his writings, Cragg avoids the use of the phrase “Abrahamic religion” while recognising that there is a rich vein of insight to be gleaned from how the three faiths draw from Abraham in shared and contrasting ways. In an important chapter on Abraham in *The Privilege of Man*, Cragg notes the “whole consensus of Semitic faiths…[are] alike in esteeming Abraham as the first of the faith” yet he underlines “significant differences of emphasis in the role of Abraham among the three systems”. Interestingly, there is no reference to Massignon in this chapter, written as it was in the wake of Vatican II. There is a striking honesty about the questionable historical veracity of some of the respective claims on Abraham.

Cragg’s method is, rather, to admit that “Abraham is what Abraham’s ‘family’ say he is”. It is in the method, rather, that I believe we find the real continuity between Massignon and Cragg. Writing of Constance Padwick in 1969, Cragg esteems her project of compiling Muslim prayers in *Muslim Devotions*. He compares her vision to

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640 Cragg, Kenneth. *The Privilege of Man*, p. 54
that of Massignon whose sympathy and imagination would enable him to “recognize
an…

‘…observation of affinities
In objects where no brotherhood exists
To passive minds.” 641

This could easily be said of Cragg himself who sought to discover resonances and
convergences between faiths without occluding difference. Thus, Cragg’s efforts to
find Christian resonances within Muhammad have suggested to some that he is even
arguing for acceptance of Muhammad’s prophethood. 642 Aware that he will be
criticised by both Christians and Muslims, I would suggest that it is an incorrect
reading of Cragg to interpret an affirmative verdict on Muhammad’s prophethood:

“In the command to ‘let God be God’ we can hardly fail to recognize each
other. But it is just this significant ‘agreement’ and not some bent for
insensitive hostility which requires a Christian’s reservation about
Muhammad…The Gospel represents what we must call a divine ‘indicative’,
an initiative of self-disclosure on God’s part by which His relation to our
human situation is not only in law and education, but in grace and
suffering.” 643

As Nick Wood concludes, “Cragg represents the broadly inclusive stream of continuity, but recognises the disjunction of the cross at the heart of the Gospel.”

Throughout Kenneth Cragg’s writings there is repeated referencing of scriptures; what he calls the “ultimate court of appeal”. Often convoluted, always eloquent, and sometimes pedantic, Cragg provides a missionary theology of encounter with Islam that is respectful of founding texts and rooted in the Anglican tradition. He “comes to his theological task as an Anglican bishop, with a clear view of authority” yet willing to risk the challenge to his own inheritance. When Cragg says, in reference to the *hijrah*, “Muhammad was his own Constantine” this is at once both a rebuke of the will-to-power in Islam, and a rebuke of the fusion of state and church interests in Christendom. The Christological imperative that runs through Cragg’s theology prises open Anglicanism to discover the story of the Church worldwide. In opposition to the “strongly domestic accent” of much of contemporary Christianity, “embassy” involves also “representing Christ but in full residential capacity, with credentials that, for all their authority, are subject to local presentation.”

Considering the evolution of formal Anglican documents across the three Lambeth Conferences to 2008 and the pattern of developments within the Church of England, and across many other denominations, it seems that the work of Kenneth Cragg is in tune with the contemporary context of Christian-Muslim relations and rooted firmly in the Anglican tradition. As a sacramental theology of encounter, emphasising the incarnation as a primary doctrine for understanding the work of God in the world, Cragg echoes a longstanding Anglican tradition reaffirmed by the *Lux Mundi* school and with antecedents to Richard Hooker. This tradition itself is reflective of an ecclesial turn, recovering a patristic ecclesiology consonant with the major developments of Vatican II in the Catholic Church.

644 Wood, N. J. *Faiths and Faithfulness*, p. 204
645 Cragg, K. *A Certain Sympathy of Scriptures*, p. vii
646 Brown, C. “Kenneth Cragg on Shi’a Islam and Iran”, p. 381
647 quoted in Wood, N. J. *Faiths and Faithfulness*, p. 72
648 Cragg, K. *Christianity in World Perspective*, p. 198
The refusal to delineate or define Islam on the one hand and yet his ability to be hospitable to the religious impulse towards God that he displays is indicative of the more recent rejection by the Church of England of a search for a “common core” to the two faiths. Cragg’s hospitality embraces the potential for the work of God in Islam whilst always presenting the challenge of the cross; the “embassy” of the missionary vocation. The recognition of the religious impulse posits the true ground of sharing in our common humanity: a humanity that must always be suspicious of “systems” and of the trappings of power. The Church of England, established as the national church but looking to an increasingly marginal vista, stands in the tension evidenced in Cragg’s critique of Medinan religion: power is not needed to serve God, but the service of God makes a difference to every power. How Cragg articulates a political theology in response to Islam will thus be a concluding analysis of the thesis in Chapter 4, drawing together the influences and trajectories for contemporary Church of England Christian-Muslim relations.

3.5 Archbishop Rowan Williams and Islam: Trinitarian Monotheism

The role of Rowan Williams in channelling a confluence of Eastern Orthodox and patristic influences has been noted in the Introduction’s overview of the Church of England’s ecclesiology. Benjamin Myers has stated how Williams’ early academic career was a “decade-long immersion in the world of Russian Orthodoxy”. For Williams, it is the émigré school of Russian Orthodox theologians combined with his attentiveness to the Church Fathers that shapes his indebtedness to Eastern Christianity. In demonstrating the ecclesial turn of Anglican Christian-Muslim relations that builds upon the self-identity of the church reflected upon in the Introduction, Williams’ leadership has been strikingly present in the resonances of Orthodox trinitarianism within Generous Love. Williams’ rejection of an overriding schema of theology of religions in favour of theologies of relations that encourage unity in difference are a further imprint upon the direction of the Church of England

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650 See Williams, Rowan. Arius: Heresy and Tradition [1987] (2nd ed.; London: SCM, 2001) for an important account of the earliest debates on the nature of the godhead
accounts that we have examined. How Williams has specifically spoken on Christian-Muslim relations is thus an important element of confirming the ecclesial turn as presented.

In this section, we will not be analysing Williams’ Shari‘a law speech as that will be explored more fully in Chapter 4 on political theology. Rather, in two momentous lectures given to Muslims in vital centres of Islamic learning, I will highlight his consistent recourse to the Church Fathers in an explicit recasting of “trinitarian monotheism”. How the themes of the trinity and the nature of the godhead, themes so intrinsic to Eastern Christianity, have shaped the corresponding Anglican ecclesial turn will become apparent in these two lectures.

In September 2004, Williams addressed an audience at al-Azhar al-Sharif, Cairo, one of the most important centres for Sunni Islamic learning in the world. The symbolic significance of this event is given added freight by the fact that it was the third anniversary of the 9-11 atrocities. The first thing to note, and indicative of the trajectory of the Anglican Christian-Muslim relations we have outlined, is what Williams does not do. There is no appeal to an underlying synchronicity between the two faiths. There is no reference to “Abrahamic religions” as the common language of Christianity and Islam. At the third anniversary of 9-11 in the heart of Sunni Islamic learning, Archbishop Rowan Williams talks about the trinity of the Christian faith. Neglecting any possible overarching scheme, Williams’ avowed intent is that “Christians and Muslims understand one another better.”

To ground what becomes an articulation of the trinity, Williams begins with an assertion that both Christians and Muslims agree on: the unity or tawhīd of God. This is one of those points of agreement that can become a foundation that enables him to then express disagreement. Belief in the one God, as articulated by Vatican II, provides a deep affinity from which to talk about what it means to be accountable to

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652 Williams, Rowan. “Archbishop’s address at al-Azhar al-Sharif”, p. 1
God. As Michael Ipgrave states in his commentary on the al-Azhar address: “Already this assumes the propriety, even the necessity, of cross-referencing between the divine as understood in Christianity and Islam.” Clearing away the common Islamic misconception that Christians believe God literally had a son, Williams points out to his audience that in the history of the Church, there were many Christians who had the same reaction as Muslims to the erroneous idea of God’s limitation in physical processes. This assertion becomes the opportunity for Williams to remind his audience that these Christian debates were at their richest among the Eastern Christians of Egypt. This pointed aside roots him in the patristic milieu as well as situating himself in sympathy with the continuing and preceding Christian presence in North Africa.

Williams’ approach is to make a defence of the trinity to Muslims by avoiding ambiguous language that an Islamic audience may be especially sensitive to. He is not expecting that the trinity will suddenly become palatable to Muslims (“There is, as you will have seen, a great difference between what I as a Christian must say and what the Muslim will say”). Rather, his task is, as Ipgrave says, “to illuminate, not to obliterate, the real differences which distinguish Christian belief from that of other ways of understanding the divine unity.” Williams asserts the self-sufficiency or self-subsistence of God in common with Islam to then expand on the trinity as an account of this self-sufficiency in human experience. Thus, Williams shuns the use of the word “persons”, the traditional grammar of trinity for the Church, and prefers to talk of God as a “source” to which Jesus is the expression of that life, and the Holy Spirit the sharing of that life. The role of the Holy Spirit in enabling the participation of the Church in the life of God resonates with the patristic sensibility already noted as intrinsic to Williams’ theology and characteristic of the Anglican temper. Talking of God as the source of life echoes something of the work of the

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654 Williams, Rowan. “Archbishop’s address at al-Azhar al-Sharif”, p 2
655 Williams, Rowan. “Archbishop’s address at al-Azhar al-Sharif”, p. 3
656 Ipgrave, Michael. “God who is Trinity”, p. 6
657 Williams, Rowan. “Archbishop’s address at al-Azhar al-Sharif”, p. 2
Church Father, Palamas, recovered by émigré Russian Orthodox theologian, John Meyendorff (1926-1992). Palamas wrestled with attempts to explain the self-subsistence of God through the prism of trinitarian sociality where God was “source”.  

Ipgrave sees a continuity in Williams’ references to the trinity in “Augustine’s ‘psychological’ analogies through to Barth’s ‘circle of self-revelation’”. What is evident, then, is that Williams is standing in a long tradition of trinitarian apologetic where the Church has had to make intelligible its most distinctive doctrine to the world. That God is the “source of life”, a shared commitment of Christians and Muslims, renews the possibilities for dialogue. The philosophical complexity of trinitarianism is no mere exercise in dogmatics but primarily an account that explains how Christians see themselves as responsible to Muslims, mutually, in God’s created order. It is for this reason that Ipgrave, restating his own academic research on the earliest Christian-Muslim encounters and thus positioning Williams in the patristic inheritance, describes Williams’ trinitarian model as one of “divine plenitude”. The radical disjunction of the trinity from Islam’s understanding of God is paradoxically rich with potential for dialogue, empathy and indeed the discovery of God in the life of the other.

In a lecture at the “Presence of Faith Conference”, celebrating one hundred years of Anglican interfaith relations, Williams explains his trinitarian impulse to interreligious dialogue to an audience of Christian scholars of other religions. This time content to use the word “person” of the trinity, Williams is yet keen to avoid any sense of the atomisation of the godhead, whether that be by severing the humanity of Jesus from the source of life that is God the Father, or unmooring an understanding of

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659 Ipgrave, Michael. “God who is Trinity”, p. 4

the Holy Spirit from the expression of that source in Jesus. Williams locates this theology in Richard Hooker, again referencing the patristic antecedents of this rationale.\textsuperscript{661} What he describes as a “sapiential theology”: 

> “assumes that wherever we find ourselves in the universe the same pattern of immeasurable gift, mutual and harmonious interaction and an energy moving towards fulfilment is going to be at work: the Trinity is everywhere, active in a wholly consistent way, since there is no other ultimate agency and all finite occurrence happens because infinite energy has given the capacity for it.”\textsuperscript{662}

One again, the language of “energy” and “source” reflect Williams’ Orthodox idioms that reassert God’s unity while giving expression to the knowledge of God in the form of Christ; in Hooker’s terms “by way of conjunction” and “by co-operation with Deity”.\textsuperscript{663} In retrieving patristic and Eastern Christian sources, Williams is also retrieving that tradition of Anglicanism that was especially indebted to the Church Fathers and representing a re-incorporation of Hooker’s legacy. The essential otherness of God is experienced in the self-revelation of the trinity making the human project a shared exercise in the discovery of the source of life in a shape that is always recognisably “Christ-like”. As von Balthasar says, another giant of Vatican II and the neo-patristic synthesis, all other religions and worldviews are “christologies on the search”.\textsuperscript{664} Rather than Christology and the trinity becoming an awkward impediment to relations with the religious other, they are the shape and impulse to such relations.

Rowan Williams’ enthusiastic embrace of the historic, creedal significance of the trinity is evidenced in his lecture to the Islamic University in Islamabad in 2005. Again, addressing a Muslim audience, Williams is conscious of the need to explain and correct misperceptions about the nature of God’s unity in Christianity.

\textsuperscript{661} Williams, Rowan. “Christology and Inter Religious Dialogue”, Presence of Faith Conference, Lambeth Palace, December 8\textsuperscript{th} 2011, author’s transcript, pp. 1-2

\textsuperscript{662} Williams, Rowan. “Christology and Inter Religious Dialogue”, p. 2

\textsuperscript{663} Hooker, Richard. The Works of that Learned and Judicious Divine Mr Richard Hooker in Two Volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1841 Edn.), Volume I, Book V. LV. 7-8

\textsuperscript{664} von Balthasar, Hans Urs. New Elucidations (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 76
Importantly for the purposes of this thesis, Williams’ account of the Christian faith for Muslims, “What is Christianity?”, is situated in the context of the worshipping community of the Church. Williams invites the audience to imagine a stranger visiting Christians as they gather to sing hymns, read scripture, declare creeds and, supremely, to break bread and drink wine.⁶⁶⁵ A very Anglican sensibility of doctrine in practice is being modelled as the apologetic for Muslim students. Explaining how Christians talk of God, Williams again adopts the language of Eastern Christianity: “We say rather that the one God is first the source of everything, the life from which everything flows out.”⁶⁶⁶

The Christian continuity with Judaism is noted with respect to the reading of the Old Testament and in the practice of the eucharist as a “Christian version of the Passover”. The eucharistic ecclesiology of Anglicanism is unashamedly expressed in his statement that “Just as Jesus’ human flesh and blood is the place where God’s power and Spirit are at work, so in this bread and wine, blessed in his memory, the same power and Spirit are active.”⁶⁶⁷ The Church at the eucharist thus becomes a special locus for participation in the life of the godhead, repeating the themes of his al-Azhar address and Generous Love.

Williams concludes his lecture with a nod to the Desert Fathers and the mystical tradition of Orthodoxy, again evoking continuity with the Eastern Christian witness. In the “darkness” of the apophatic experience, “not because he does not want to communicate but because our minds and hearts are too small for him to enter fully”, the goal of the beatific vision is commended to his Muslim audience.⁶⁶⁸ The sophiology of Maximus the Confessor, as recapitulated by Sergei Bulgakov (1871-1944) is evident in this description of the Church’s “plenitude” within the trinity by

⁶⁶⁵ Williams, Rowan. “What is Christianity?” A lecture on basic Christian beliefs and behaviour given by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Islamic University, Islamabad, 23rd November 2005, downloaded from: http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/136370/Churches_Together_in/Working_Together/Inter_faith/Christian_Muslim_Relations/C_M_Archive/_What_is.aspx on 23rd February 2012

⁶⁶⁶ Williams, Rowan. “What is Christianity?”, p. 2

⁶⁶⁷ Williams, Rowan. “What is Christianity?”, p. 8

⁶⁶⁸ Williams, Rowan. “What is Christianity?”, p. 10
way of the darkness of unknowing. Humanity is to be taken up into the life of the Creator, the Church the vanguard of this act of creation, incarnation and re-creation. This sophiology was “a way of explaining how the Church can both be characterized by fullness and yet at the same time be a pilgrim people. The Church can be both if she in some sense embodies not only the eternal divine Wisdom but also the creaturely wisdom that is still in process of becoming.”669 Williams’ confident commendation of Christian doctrines is yet a means of generating a shared process of dialogue as humans responsible to a graced order of creation.

It is worth mentioning a final note about Williams’ epistemology of unity in difference. Williams is philosophically sympathetic to the Wittgensteinian turn that cultures are constructs of language and thus the “other” can never be wholly known. Because languages are functions of our sociality, histories and communal practices, with all their heavily-laden symbolism, human life bears the mark of repeated alienations.670 The admission of such alienations is:

“neither a flight from relation, nor the quest for an impossible transparency or immediacy in relation…but that which equips us for knowing and being known humanly, taking time with the human world and not aiming to have done with knowing (and desiring).”671


This sentiment is all of a piece with Rowan Williams’ approach to Islam. Williams would not negate the “self” in the effort to know the other, as continental philosophy might, but presents “self” in a pain-staking exercise of dialogue with the other that refuses closure. Much as Kenneth Cragg refuses the definition of Islam or the assessment of Muhammad’s prophethood, so Williams resists the categorisation of other religions. Instead, he prefers to reflect upon those impulses in his own “language of tradition” that he may be intelligible to the other by way of fostering and re-energising continued dialogue and discovery. Those very impulses are *kenotic* and thus propel the Christian into a place of self-emptying, the place which is, in the grammar of Gillian Rose, a “broken middle”. The necessary “mystery” of inter-faith is, I believe, a vital connection between Rowan Williams’ apophaticism and Kenneth Cragg’s model of hospitality. Both are at turns restrained by and dilated by a high Christology. In an interview with Williams in pursuance of this research, Williams was asked to comment on what he had learned from Cragg. The reply is a telling confirmation of the *kenotic* instincts of both Cragg and Williams:

“His constant attempt to refresh or reconstruct theological idiom in the language of another religion. ‘How might a Muslim say this?’ which is always invariably searching or enlarging.”

Then Williams applauds Cragg’s “refusal of any ‘mega-theory’” of Islam; “he continues to ‘do the work’ on the frontier.” Williams sees in Cragg a formative

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672 Gillian Rose (1947-1995) was a Jewish philosopher and friend of Rowan Williams who made a deathbed conversion to the Church of England. Rowan Williams’ own interest in her work is evidenced in his essay “Between politics and metaphysics: reflections in the wake of Gillian Rose” and a testimony to their friendship in his poem “Winterreisse: for Gillian Rose, 9 December 1995” in *The Poems of Rowan Williams* (Oxford: The Perpetua Press, 2002)

673 See, for example, Williams, Rowan. “The finality of Christ in a plural world”, 2nd March 2010, available at: [http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/585/the-finality-of-christ-in-a-pluralist-world](http://rowanwilliams.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/585/the-finality-of-christ-in-a-pluralist-world) downloaded on 6th June 2012. This lecture rejects a narrow construal of Jesus’ finality in terms of the damnation of adherents of other religions in favour of Christology as a means of speaking about “hope for the entire human family” such that it impels a “generous desire to share” and a “humble desire to learn”

674 Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams by Richard Sudworth & Stefanie Hugh-Donovan, Lambeth Palace 6th September 2012, See Appendix
resource for the Anglican response to Islam precisely because he declines to abstract from the specific inter-religious encounter into theories of religion that put oneself outside the traditioned community of the Church. Cragg’s impulse is to re-present Christian truth in the language of Islam.

Jane Smith, in a perceptive essay in A Faithful Presence, has identified in Cragg the “persistence of his theme of perplexity” 676 While always locating his theology within a Christological orbit, there is a refusal to close down the nature of the encounter with the religious other. Essentially, any closure runs the danger that God, in the stranger, will be missed. The imperative to hospitality thus rests on a belief that the Church needs to risk itself in encounter after the pattern of Christ; the hopeful invitation we extend to the other always having the potential to become the place of invitation from God to us. Correspondingly, Williams can say that too often “‘Incarnation’ has become the ground of final validation for the rights and authority of the new community; rather than serving as itself a sign of the dangers of religious self-enclosure and claims to control.”677

How Rowan Williams and Kenneth Cragg build on their respective understandings of Christian-Muslim relations from their trinitarian positions to propose a consequent political theology will be explored in Chapter 4.

3.6 Conclusion

The Lambeth Conference 1988 endorsement of The Way of Dialogue still provides the most formal Anglican pronouncement on the nature of Islam to the Christian faith. Following the lead of Vatican II, the Abrahamic roots of Christianity, Judaism and Islam are integral to a proper understanding of relations between the three faiths.

675 Ibid.
However, the accompanying theological resource of The Way of Dialogue seems to push the Anglican position further than Vatican II went in its emphasis on the shared possibilities with Islam and the relegation of proclamation. It must be noted that Nostra aetate was also accompanied in Vatican II by Lumen gentium, a statement about the unique status of the Church in the world, Gaudium et Spes, on the relationship of the Church to the world, and Ad gentes, on the mission of the Church to the world. Bearing in mind the strategic impact of Vatican II on inter-religious dialogue globally, the controversy created by The Way of Dialogue suggests the uniting potential for doctrinal unity on inter-religious issues when theological considerations of dialogue and proclamation are not splintered apart.678

A telling element of the processes and discussions of TTID, The Way of Dialogue and subsequent Lambeth discussions of interfaith concern has been the contribution of the diversity of Anglican experience globally. This experience is informed by the stories of persecution of Christians in contexts of Islamic political dominance, and the Anglican Communion is not alone in ceasing to baulk at addressing this challenge to Muslim leaders. The Church of England has been obliged to listen to the realities of Christian-Muslim encounter elsewhere in addressing its consequent theology and been encouraged to reflect on contexts of more longstanding precedent. It is perhaps beside the point whether the earlier emphasis on the need for dialogue and assumption of Christian majority in the British context ever reflected the reality or not. However, the Presence and Engagement report underlines the breadth of Anglican encounters with Islam within England now and their fragility and vulnerability in many instances. This is not to say that the efforts towards dialogue are to be relaxed or that the spectre of racism has disappeared. Rather, the nature of the encounter between Christians and Muslims seems to be recognisably more as equals; the “great other”, to both faiths, secular liberalism that would reduce the potency of religious discourse in public life.

678 subsequent developments within the Roman Catholic Church confirm the conviction that both dialogue and proclamation are to be addressed. See the 1991 Vatican document, Dialogue and Proclamation, discussed with reference to Christian-Muslim relations by Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald in “Dialogue and Proclamation”: A Reading in the Perspective of Christian-Muslim Relations”. In, In Many and Diverse Ways, In Honor of Jacques Dupuis, edited by Kendall, D. & O’Collins, G. (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2003): 181-193
The developments of the Christian-Muslim Forum and many of the activities of the Presence and Engagement project also suggest that the Church of England’s growing sensitivity to global Anglican concerns are increasingly being informed by those from other Christian traditions, too, in the fashioning of reflections on the Christian-Muslim encounter.

*Generous Love* seems to be a landmark in inter-religious theology for the Church of England, recognising the mutualities of relationship between faiths. It is unapologetically “Christian” in its trinitarianism and does not endeavour to provide the new schema for interfaith relations that were hinted at in the provisionality of *TTID* and *The Way of Dialogue*. I would argue that *Generous Love* marks a key milestone in an ecclesial turn to Anglican inter-religious relations arguably prompted by the particular challenges faced in the encounter with Islam. This ecclesial turn evokes the rich inheritance of the Eastern Christian tradition and the Church Fathers that are likewise evident in the retrieval exhibited at Vatican II and confirm the ecclesiological self-identity suggested in the Introduction. The influence of Archbishop Rowan Williams, “Orthodox in Anglican form”, is palpable in the trinitarian, participatory ontology permeating *Generous Love* and associated programmes for engagement with Islam. Under the leadership of Williams, the presentation of “trinitarian monotheism” has been indicative of efforts to make Christian doctrine intelligible to Muslims without the urge to seek an underlying synthesis of the two faiths.

In returning to the original question of what an understanding of Islam may be to the Church of England, arguably the most unequivocal answer would be one of holy reticence. Rather, there are consistent efforts to see dialogue with Islam based upon an appreciation of unity in difference. There continue to be initiatives in both Christian and Muslim traditions that work towards a theological rapprochement that can reconfigure the respective faiths to a common core.679 The originating stories of

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Abraham within the Bible and the Qur’an evidently provide an on-going resource and obligation in relationship between Christians and Muslims. Whether the Church of England can say more than this without excluding the convictions of many Anglicans and presenting impediments to relations with other faiths is unclear. Certainly, though, any utilisation of the Abrahamic motif cannot be made without reference to the vital relationship of the Christian faith to the Jewish faith, as underlined by Archbishop Rowan Williams in his response to *A Common Word*.680 Furthermore, as Williams says, attention to scripture, as Anglicans, will be a significant part of the process of theological reflection in the encounter with Islam for “we are speaking *enough* of a common language”681.

For the Church of England, the process of negotiating the plurality of British life in the last thirty years seems to have begun to bring fresh realisations of what is essentially *distinctive* about the Christian faith moving from an earlier emphasis on the obligation to what is *shared* with the faith of Islam. Thus the motifs of hospitality and embassy, with the evocation of both dialogue and proclamation, have been reasserted in continuity with a distinguished tradition of scholarly Anglican missionary encounter with Islam, particularly of Bishop Kenneth Cragg. This theology is located in a sacramental tradition of incarnation consistent with Anglican self-understanding going back to Hooker and the Church Fathers. Cragg’s theology posits the church as both host and guest in a truly relational dialectic with Muslims. The hospitality advocated by Kenneth Cragg is framed by a high Christology; God understood in his *kenosis* on the cross. This at turns compels an open identification

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680 Williams, R. “A Common Word for the Common Good”, 14th July 2008, available at: [http://www.acommonword.com/lib/downloads/Common-Good-Canterbury-FINAL-as-sent-14-7-08-1.pdf](http://www.acommonword.com/lib/downloads/Common-Good-Canterbury-FINAL-as-sent-14-7-08-1.pdf) downloaded 8th March 2012. It is instructive that Rowan Williams mentions Judaism where the original *A Common Word* document omitted it: “And for Christians and Muslims together addressing our scriptures in this way, it is essential also to take account of the place of the Jewish people and of the Hebrew scriptures in our encounter, since we both look to our origins in that history of divine revelation and action.”, p. 16

681 Williams, R. *A Common Word for the Common Good*, p. 2. My italics
with Islam and Muslims while challenging the will-to-power inherent in the Medinan economy.

Where earlier Anglican approaches included the trinity as but one element of controversy in the encounter with Islam, the ecclesial turn that I have outlined would suggest that the trinity provides the formative pattern for understanding relations with Islam. Nicholas Lossky reflected on how Anglicanism modelled the “inseparable character of the Word of God and participation in the Sacrament of the Eucharist” in the *Thirty Nine Articles*. His comments seem pertinent to the ecclesial turn epitomised by *Generous Love*:

“The Holy Trinity should never be regarded as something like a mathematical formula that is reserved for academic, dogmatic, or even worse, ‘systematic’ theologians. The Holy Trinity concerns every aspect of every Christian’s life. It is, or should be, the prototype of our relations within our community, our congregation, the gathering of the People of God.”

Where Lambeth 1988 revealed theologies of God in silos separated from the exposition of relations with other faiths, the Church of England now seems to be reflecting on relations with Islam with a greater degree of ecclesial and doctrinal cross-referencing.

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683 Lossky, Nicholas. “Orthodoxy and the Western European Reformation tradition”, p. 95
When we consider the global and ecumenical context of the Church of England, an ecumenism which is rooted first and foremost in the Lambeth Communion, an attention to the diversity of encounters with Islam, seems particularly significant. Across a wide range of traditions, the primary theological drive seems to be less about finding novel theological schemes that conflate Christianity and Islam and more about using the essential characteristics of the Christian faith to forge shared notions of citizenship, indeed, of political theology. Throughout the history of Christian-Muslim relations and in the global context of today, the Church has had to reckon with the consequences of will-to-power; of persecution and isolationism. Both communities share a history of blame in this regard. The task then remains, if the Church of England is keen to assert difference as well as commonality with Islam, to develop a political theology whereby Christians and Muslims can overcome their differences in pursuit of the common good. How a trinitarian, participatory ontology might shape a corresponding political theology in response to Islam will be the subject of Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4
The Church of England and Islam
Negotiating Political Theologies in the Ecclesial Turn

Political Theology

4.1 Introduction

At the outset of this thesis, I defined “political theology” according to the definition presented by Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh in their Introduction to The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology as an “analysis and criticism of political arrangements...from the perspective of differing interpretations of God’s way with the world.” Scott and Cavanaugh suggest that there are three broad trends within political theology as “God’s way with the world” as follows:

1. On the basis that politics and theology were two distinct activities, “the task of political theology might be to relate religious belief to larger societal issues while not confusing the proper autonomy of each”
2. Theology is a “superstructure” to the material realities of socio-economic arrangements and thus theology acts as a means of critique of the justice of these arrangements
3. Both theology and politics have metaphysical properties that shape how life is to be lived and there are implicit conclusions for the embodiment of the political in Christian theology. So “the task then might become one of exposing the false theologies underlying supposedly ‘secular’ politics and promoting the true politics implicit in a true theology”

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684 Scott, Peter. & Cavanaugh, William T. “Introduction.”, p. 2

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The thesis has sought to build upon the primary “theology” of “God’s way with the world” an articulation of what Islam, or Muslims are, believed to be in relation to the Church of England. This analysis has revealed an ecclesial turn in the Church of England as it relates to other faiths, and to Islam in particular. This ecclesial turn has sought to ground relations with Islam in the identity of the Church and to recover a theology for inter-religious relations in the prior understanding of the Church as participant in the life of the trinity. Influenced by contemporary Eastern Orthodox and patristic understandings of the trinity and incarnation, relations with Islam flow from an appreciation of unity in difference such that both dialogue and proclamation are enabled.

It would seem, then, that a political theology appropriate to a response to Islam might follow the ecclesial turn in inter-religious relations. The incompleteness of the Church of England, and its reality as a worshipping community supremely manifest in the eucharist, are marked elements of Anglican ecclesiology noted in Chapter 1. How this ecclesiology may shape a consequent political theology will be the subject of this chapter. If the third stream as described by Scott and Cavanaugh contests any separation of religion and politics and believes that “religious concepts, doctrines and institutions, such as God and Church, have political implications” then this would seem to be the area from which to pursue a consequent political theology. We have already noted how the doctrine of the trinity seems to be shaping a renewed ecclesial consciousness for Anglican inter-religious relations; what might the political theology look like that follows such an ecclesial turn?

Luke Bretherton has identified the ecclesial turn in political theology, (Scott and Cavanaugh’s third stream), and noted how it expresses a drive that the Church “should not be policed or determined by some external discourse.” This is redolent of the language we found in the contemporary suspicion of overarching schema for theologies of religion and some of the resistance to an “Abrahamic” formula for

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relations with Islam within Anglicanism and the broader Christian tradition. We have seen that Archbishop Rowan Williams and Bishop Kenneth Cragg are two key contributors to the ecclesial turn in Anglican relations with Islam. I will analyse more specifically their consequent “political theologies” assessing how they fit within the broader ecclesial turn and the wider debate in political theology. Before doing that, a number of key milestones in specifically Anglican political theology will be analysed in the light of their potential fruitfulness for the ecclesial turn epitomised by Williams and Cragg.

4.2 The Church of England’s Political Theologies in Historical Context

4.2.1 A reformed national church

The foundational significance of the Church of England’s subjection to civil rule anticipates the controversies around the place of Shari’a law in contemporary British society. If the Church of England is to be subject to the state, what is the church’s account of Shari’a law’s relationship to the state? Rowan Williams’ Shari’a law speech will be analysed subsequently as a very practical question of political theology in this regard. A vision of society that sees the church as both prophetic and pastoral, informing and shaping, but accountable to the state is made much more ambiguous by the presence of contrary claims to revealed public truth. Is the reality of political Islam in Britain to be equated with the Catholic Church of the Tudor era in its perceived fusion of law and righteousness?

The settlement of the Church of England’s peculiar meld of Catholicism and Protestantism into a church established by law inevitably begins a process of exclusion of others from the privilege of Anglican orthodoxy. To the Church of England, Catholics, Jews and Muslims were among those who were not just religiously deviant but politically were enemies of civilisation; such was the unity of church and state. It was not until the interregnum of Oliver Cromwell that Jews were officially allowed back into England after a formal expulsion dating back to 1290. This was not out of any gracious welcome but to attain the conversion of the Jews.
spoken of as the “Last Days”. In the seeds of establishment, then, is the inner contradiction of the church claiming to speak for the nation in the reality of its religious diversity. The Book of Common Prayer’s Good Friday collect’s talk of ignorance and hardness of heart and the implication of estrangement of Jews, Muslims and Catholics were indicative of a growing confusion of church and state aspirations that would grow apace under the reign of Elizabeth I.

N. I. Matar has commented on the “triangle of peoples” that the Church of England in the Early Reformation was engaging as strange and threatening “others”: Jews, Turks and Catholics. Jews were seen in the most favourable light because they had the least power and theologically, their “otherness” could be accommodated into the self-serving theology of the restoration of the Holy Land. To this end, Jews could be inveigled as pawns for the greater objective of an End Times victory for the church over the anti-Christ of the Sultan and the Pope.

The development of a national church worked to both separate the roles of temporal and religious rule and to weave together the aspirations of church and state. The two ecclesial trajectories of pastoral and prophetic presence are apparent in this formative era that will be seen to be continuing elements of Anglican consciousness. The growing identification between the Church of England and the prospects of national life and the reigning sovereign suggest deep concerns with security that prefigures anxieties about Islamic inspired terrorism. In the analyses of Williams and Cragg, their rebuttal of any language of national consciousness will be highlighted in their political theologies and a desire to avoid responses to Islam dictated by fear. Where Williams and Cragg seem to draw from the formative establishment of the Church of England is in their attention to the Reformed

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truth of humanity’s sinfulness, making them alternately suspicious of the power equation.

4.2.2 Political theologies in the natural law of Richard Hooker

Building on the natural law thinking of Sir John Fortescue (1395-1477), it came to Richard Hooker to consolidate the Church of England’s identity from the fluctuations of Reformist and Catholic sympathies. A lawyer by profession, Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* remains the single most significant treatise on Anglican establishment to this day. Hooker’s dual intention was to “deprive the on-going Puritan struggle for church reform of its theoretical justification and to provide the established church with a coherent theoretical self-accounting”.

The *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (the first four books of which were published in 1593) gave an Anglican outlet for Thomist and Aristotelian philosophies that recognised humanity’s inherent sociality and, famously, the exercise of reason in pursuit of the common good. Hooker, then, sealed the structures of an English Reformation church from within the Catholic tradition, yet affirming Augustinian principles of civil government and the supremacy of scripture. Ultimately, Hooker’s theology was driven more by the expedience of explaining and justifying the existing structures than by a vision of what the church was called to be. As Peter Lake has argued, the fusion of Calvinism and Catholicism that is apparent in the *Laws* derailed the agendas of Catholics, moderate Puritans and avant-garde Reformists seeking change. It wasn’t “business as usual” but rather that a fresh apologia had been provided for the establishment. In articulating scripture, reason and tradition as the distinctives of Anglicanism, Hooker was able to circulate Philip Melanchthon’s concept of *adiaphora* (things indifferent) into the theological mainstream of the

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692 O’Donovan, Oliver. & O’Donovan, Joan Lockwood. (eds.), *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, p. 744

Scripture did not address all areas of life and, especially in the organisation of church structures, there were many matters inessential to faith to which good reason ought to be applied.

The recovery of the patristic inheritance by Anglicans in relations with Islam might suggest an important avenue of inquiry for the pursuit of an appropriate political theology. The principles of unity in diversity and “Christian Presence”, resting on an account of creation that supports natural law, have been seen to be aspects of the Anglican ecclesial turn. Unity in diversity and natural law are two principles vital to understanding Hooker. However, the immediate prospect that Hooker’s legacy could support a corresponding political theology that gives space to Islam seems unpromising.

Shirley’s 1949 analysis of his political theory has stressed that the unity of national identity was the primary motor for Hooker’s grounding in natural law. Thus, “There was no place for divided allegiance in the Tudor State, and…in the name of national unity, against those who demanded independence for the Church; and unwittingly they were foreshadowing the modern Sovereign State.” As F. D. Maurice said of Hooker and Elizabeth I, “Both were alternately intolerant, and the best and most effective champions of toleration against those who would have made the existence of it impossible.”

The comprehensiveness of Anglicanism in the Elizabethan settlement sought to embrace the diversity of all Christian traditions so long as those traditions found their home in a Church of England that was subservient to the monarch. Hooker’s treatise presupposed the virtue of “undivided allegiance”, a virtue that would tie Anglicanism to notions of British culture and character and foster the concept of the Christian Nation. As both Shirley and Alexander D’Entrèves have remarked, the central notion of a binding unity to the state paves the way for the

694 Thomas Starkey, the Henrician humanist, had previously utilised this concept in explaining the Church’s political unity, Lockwood O’Donovan, “The Church of England and the Anglican Communion: a timely engagement with the national church tradition?”, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 57 (2004): 313-337, p.324
696 Quoted in Shirley, F. J. *Richard Hooker and Contemporary Political Ideas*, p. 231
omnicompetent state of Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*.697 Ironically, the contemporary ecclesial turn in political theology is seeking to reject the claims of the over-arching unitary state.698 Within the order of the omnicompetent state, the state itself achieves a “religious” aspect, providing a horizon of transcendence that actually serves to sever the political from the theological and thus privatizing religion. It seems difficult to espouse a political theology within Scott and Cavanaugh’s third stream that would otherwise seek to challenge the “false theologies” of an omnicompetent state from Hooker’s legacy.

The logic of Hooker’s appeal to national loyalty is that, as D’Entrèves notes, “a defence of the Church of England” becomes, equally, a defence of “the English way of life”. 699 This would give energy to the notion of the Christian Nation for later Anglicans and is a contested area for contemporary relations with Islam. What presence can Islam expect within such a nation? Noting the legacies of colonial abuses summarised in Chapters 2 and 3, to which many Muslims are sensitive to, it might be incumbent upon the Church of England to seek to disentangle some of the political and religious interdependencies that this language connotes. Kenneth Cragg and Rowan Williams’ rejection of the Christian Nation ideal will become apparent. However, it is important to note at this stage the theological weight given to this concept in the works of Richard Hooker.

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698 See, for example, O’Donovan, Oliver. *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the roots of political theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 271-84. For O’Donovan, the strong state of *Leviathan* assumes a contractual unity that presages the atomic individualism of secular modernity. Hauerwas, Stanley. *After Christendom: How the Church is to behave if freedom, justice, and a Christian nation are bad ideas* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), pp. 23-44
Alongside what we may regard as a more “intolerant” interpretation of Hooker, there exists the potential to read his treatise more flexibly. The very principle of *adiaphora* and Hooker’s defence of the Elizabethan Settlement presume that human legislation “is by its nature subject to change and capable of progressive transformation.”

Hooker’s political worldview is not a static and frozen model to be superimposed on every age. Shirley’s observation that Hooker anticipated Hobbes’ omnicompetent state is qualified by his recognition that Hooker would have been horrified to see the idolatry of contemporary politics. In a contemporary situation where a plurality of religions is palpably manifest, Hooker’s political theology may require re-imagining so that his Christian politics is rather invoked to critique the pretensions of the state in the “prophetic” stream.

It is interesting to note the fluctuating popularity of Richard Hooker and how his thinking has been appropriated to defend the inherent Anglicanism of disparate wings within the Church of England. For Anglo-Catholics, and supremely within the Oxford Movement, Hooker rooted the Church of England in the apostolic tradition and decidedly as a continuation of the Catholic Church for the English. Evangelicals, too, have invoked Hooker as archetype of rational, scriptural reasoning. Yet despite the queasiness that many moderns may feel about Hooker’s conflation of church and state interests, Hooker is increasingly called upon in assertions of Anglican identity.

More recently, Rowan Williams, paradoxically, identifies a foundational theology of plurality in the argumentation of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*: “Hooker was the ally of a regime which, in modern eyes, was seeking to destroy religious liberty; yet the mode of his defence was potentially a ground for making sense of certain aspects of religious diversity”. In countering the narrow Biblicism of the Puritans, Hooker

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700 D’Entrèves, A. P. *The Medieval Contribution to Political Thought*, p. 125
701 Shirley, F. J. *Richard Hooker and Contemporary Political Ideas*, pp. 256-7
is arguing for an ecclesiology that cannot assume that the good is known beforehand but demands argumentation and engagement. For Williams, there is a useful perspective on Hooker that asserts that “our basic position is one of potential agents in a negotiation through which we discover our welfare, discover something we do not know at the start.”705 Williams’ analysis of Hooker’s adiaphora prefers to see God’s providence in the diversity of creation brought into meaningful community rather than as, primarily, a lever to displace the contrary ecclesiologies of the Puritans.

That Hooker could be called upon to be both the architect of the unified national Church and state, and progenitor of the Church of England’s constructive engagement with plurality suggests that Michael Bryden’s analysis may be nearer the mark. For him, the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity reflect the exigencies of the time and reveal a telling ability to respond deftly to the cultural context and to appeal to a broad span of ecclesial sensibilities through the evasions that were integral to the task at hand. 706 What this perhaps reveals is the difficulty of freezing any particular Anglican political theology. Hooker’s sensibility was pragmatic and contextual, however rooted in patristic orthodoxy.

For Cragg, a more decisive verdict on Hooker is given:

“Something ideally valid yet essentially flawed – namely the comforting unison of a Hooker-style world – has been properly forfeited but nostalgia has never been appropriately Christian. Nor was the complacence that thought society and believing could ever be coterminous.”707

Hooker’s legacy, to Cragg, almost becomes a cipher for citizen as communicant. Hooker’s desire to embrace the religious monism of the state is marred by his naivety


705 Williams, Rowan. “The Richard Hooker Lecture”

706 Bryden, Michael. The Evolving Reputation of Richard Hooker

about the will-to-power in religion. In outlining a shared space with Islam in Anglican polity, Cragg sees no resources in Hooker’s Thomism.

The variety of contrasting political theologies that can be derived from Hooker rather underline the inherent incompleteness of Anglican identity and the need to be cognisant of the span of traditions as the church seeks to respond to Islam. For T. M. Parker, “The Ecclesiastical Polity is the swan song of a great ideal.” Writing in 1955, Parker is prescient in noting that this “great ideal” of the unity of a confessional state is remarkably persistent. The “truth” that keeps the ideal alive is that “men [sic] cling closest to that which is perishing-sometimes to the shadow of that which has already perished.” For both Cragg and Williams’ political theologies, it will be apparent that there seems to be very little romanticism about the Church of England’s history and a reluctance to keep an anxious grip on the privileges of the church.

The papal bull that excommunicated Elizabeth I in 1570 (Regnans in excelsis) effectively sanctioned the rebellion of English Roman Catholics thus furthering the fissure between perceived English identity and Roman Catholicism. In a climate of fear from an advancing Spanish Armada flying the flag of the papal servant, the King of Spain, loyalty to the monarch was equivalent to loyalty to the Church of England. Betrayal of the established Church of England was, conversely, treason. Under Elizabeth, the first of a series of penal statutes that were to evolve as the “Test Acts” under subsequent monarchs, demanded Anglican observance from English subjects and inhibited the practice of Roman Catholicism, and Nonconformity, disallowing public office to all but Anglican communicants. In the providential defeat of the seemingly all-powerful Spanish Armada, the sense that the English were the elect nation and her church the faithful congregation of that nation could only increase.

Any consideration by the Church of England of the finality of Islam, its

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709 Parker, T. M. Christianity and the State, p. 172
710 Lockwood O’Donovan, Joan. Theology of Law and Authority in the English Reformation, pp. 130-1
supercessionism and apparent aspiration to political dominance\textsuperscript{711} must reckon with Anglicanism’s own story of collusion and coercion with the state from this period.

Elizabeth’s Archbishop Whitgift (1530-1603) was instrumental in delivering full conformity to the established church at this heady time of potential rebellion and invasion.\textsuperscript{712} While the Roman Catholic threat was being clothed in the guise of a “foreign” threat, Whitgift was increasingly embroiled in asserting conformity against English Puritans, such as Thomas Cartwright (1535-1605). Many of the core disputes between Episcopal and Presbyterian political theologies are manifest in their respective arguments. For Cartwright, ecclesiastical structures were not a matter of “things indifferent” and the realm of civil order was beneath the concern of spiritual leadership. This idealist stream of ecclesiology was tantamount to a shadow of Hildebrandine Roman Catholicism, subjugating the state, on religious matters, to the voluntarism of churches. Unsurprisingly, Whitgift capitalised on the potential of these ideas to suggest that Puritans were intent on subversion and disloyal to the state.\textsuperscript{713}

A recurrent theme in the Erastian move of the Church of England, then, is that those outside the church are both religiously and politically errant. It will be apparent that Williams and Cragg resist any confusion of state and religious loyalties. They both reveal a suspicion of religiously sanctioned power manifest in the Reformation rejection of the papacy based on a keen awareness of personal and structural sin.

\textsuperscript{711} see, for instance, the view of Sookhdeo: “Islam, which developed in a historical context of political and military dominance, has not evolved a theology of how Muslims should live as a minority ie in a society which is not ruled according to Islamic law.”, Sookhdeo, Patrick. \textit{Faith, Power and Territory: A Handbook of British Islam}, (McLean: Isaac Publishing, 2008), p.2 and from within Islam, Nasr: “The movement of reform throughout Islamic history has been to seek to recreate and reshape human attitudes and social institutions so as to make them harmonious with the Shari’ah”, Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. \textit{Ideals and Realities of Islam}, (London: George Allen & Unwin, Second Impression, 1971), p. 96. For Nasr, Islam requires no adaptation, rather society needs to be moulded, in all aspects, into Islam.


\textsuperscript{713} Lockwood O’Donovan, Joan. \textit{Theology of Law and Authority in the English Reformation}, pp. 126-7
4.2.3 Political theologies in the natural law of the Caroline Divines

The highpoint of Anglican Erastianism came during the seventeenth century among the work of the Caroline Divines. Importantly for the purposes of this thesis, Lancelot Andrewes is among the most influential of these theologians. As we have already noted in Chapter 1, this era of Anglican theology was characterised by its attentiveness to the patristic milieu. Typically trinitarian and eucharistic in ecclesiology, they were advocates of a participatory ontology of natural law. These are among the ideas indicative of their appeal to contemporary thinkers in the wider oikumene such as Nicholas Lossky and Thomas Merton. Having reflected on the ecclesial turn of Anglican Christian-Muslim relations, the potential contribution of the seventeenth century Anglican divines to the current politico-theological question seems pertinent.

As Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645) asserted, the period of the Church Fathers was “when the church was at the best”. 714 Recovering the contemplative tradition of the Church Fathers, though, for the Carolines, actually gave greater definition to corresponding political structures. Ian MacKenzie’s study of the political theology of the Laudian Divines demonstrates how the concept of “Order” founded consequent notions of “Church, the Sacraments, Worship, Natural Law, the Authority of Kings and Governors, the Ordering of Society and the Individual’s Place, as these were biblically and patristically understood.” 715 “Order” was grounded in the doctrine of God which flowed into the doctrines of creation and re-creation, determining the subsequent ideas of church and sacraments, and so on.

The resonances with the ecclesial turn in Christian-Muslim relations that we outlined in Chapter 3 are striking. There we saw a determination within Anglicanism to ground relations in the nature of the Church as understood in the doctrine of the trinity. The idea of “Christian Presence” and the discovery of God at work in the other provided the basis for dialogue out of the doctrines of creation and natural law. The incarnation,

715 MacKenzie, Iain M. God’s Order and Natural Law, p. 9
so important to Cragg’s theology and a major element of *Generous Love*, is, in this era, “the prime economy” to which “all things have their meaning and place and function”.\(^{716}\) For the Caroline Divines, then, going further than Hooker, God’s order dictated and prefigured particular political arrangements. The Elizabethan Settlement is thus a “microcosm” of the Divine Order of the cosmos. The monarch in his or her place as sovereign is ordained by God as a concomitant principle of natural law and the truly Christian ordering of politics.

Where Hooker hints at the providential personality of the nation as “Christian” the seventeenth century divines confirm that identity as *necessary* to the functioning of societal order. Thus the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings reaches its apotheosis in the apologetic of Archbishop Laud and his subsequent execution in the turmoil of Parliamentary objections to the perceived absolute power of Charles I. Building on Hooker’s appeal to the unitary nature of the state, any fragmentation of the hierarchical orders of creation was believed to lead to chaos and idolatry. The rightly ordered society is a Christian Nation with a firm Christological foundation because “All order is Christocentric. What God is eternally in Himself, He is towards us in Christ.”\(^{717}\) In language that we will see is reminiscent of Cragg’s political theology, MacKenzie can say of the Carolines that “Only in Christ can man properly be God’s vice-regent on earth”.\(^{718}\) Cragg would ground a Christian political theology for the common good with Islam on the shared “vice-gerency” of humanity as understood biblically and Qur’antically. However, for the Caroline Divines, the explicit Christological foundation of this secular realm prohibits any possibility of this being opened up to Muslims. In contemporary Britain, the seventeenth century pattern of theology that otherwise resources spirituality and Christian-Muslim relations seems prohibitive of a corresponding *political* theology that gives space to Islam.

Furthermore, the problems associated with the Divine Right of Kings ideology for a plural society have been well documented by J. Neville Figgis (1866-1919).\(^{719}\)

\(^{716}\) MacKenzie, Iain M. *God’s Order and Natural Law*, p. 9

\(^{717}\) MacKenzie, Iain M. *God’s Order and Natural Law*, p. 60

\(^{718}\) MacKenzie, Iain M. *God’s Order and Natural Law*, p. 58

persistence of the idea of the need for a unitary Christian sovereign in the establishment of good order stems, for Figgis, from an outmoded medievalism more redolent of the Crusades than the plurality even of post-Reformation Britain. Within the logic of divine right is the assertion that “the dominion of no infidel can ever be really just, and hence war with the Turks is always permissible.”\textsuperscript{720} As will become apparent in the analysis of the Shari’a law speech, Rowan Williams’ political theology is indebted to Figgis’ account of the plurality of society and his rejection of the unitary personality of the state. So, whilst echoing the participatory ontologies of Andrewes, Williams seems to reject their conclusions about the order of a Christian Nation. Cragg’s emphasis on \textit{kenosis} will similarly push him into a very different approach to secular power to the likes of Laud.

Similarly to Hooker, an effort to contextualise the theologies of the Caroline Divines may offer resources that provide greater potential for space for Islam. As MacKenzie has argued, the threefold cord of Hooker’s scripture, reason and tradition were given a more dynamic and interdependent hue by Lancelot Andrewes.\textsuperscript{721} It might be that a more fluid account of political order is arrived at from the contingent realities of plurality in the interaction of reason with the tradition since the seventeenth century. The fixed ideal of the monarchy arguably obscures the relevance of Laudian political theology to contemporary plurality. As MacKenzie says, “the Divine Right of Monarchs has an inseparable corollary, the Divine Responsibility of Kings.”\textsuperscript{722} We will see that Cragg’s political theology takes just this track of binding Christians and Muslims in the appeal to the Creator God beyond any perceived absolute in secular sovereignty. Rowan Williams, too, constantly evokes an eternal horizon in qualifying the pretensions of political power. What is clear, though, is that the resources of the ecclesial turn in Christian-Muslim relations within the seventeenth century have an ambiguous political legacy. How both Rowan Williams and Kenneth Cragg assert both continuity and discontinuity within the Anglican tradition in their political

\textsuperscript{721} MacKenzie, Iain M. \textit{God’s Order and Natural Law}, pp. 25-35
\textsuperscript{722} MacKenzie, Iain M. \textit{God’s Order and Natural Law}, p. 2
theologies in response to Islam will become even more apparent with the idealism and incarnationalism of nineteenth and twentieth century Anglicanism.

By the end of the Reformation, then, the dominant trend of Anglican political theology was towards a complete identification of the church with the interests of civil government. As part of a range of correctives to the interregnum, the reign of Charles II witnessed perhaps the highpoint of Erastianism with the publication of The Corporation Act of 1661 and The Act of Uniformity of 1662. The former statute required the taking of an oath of supremacy to the king as head of the Church of England to which anyone holding public office was obliged to be a member. The latter statute commanded the use of The Book of Common Prayer as the only legitimate form of eucharist.

It is difficult to see promising resources for a constructive encounter with Islam in this phase of Anglican development, revealing as it does a privilege, domination and exclusiveness to Anglicanism that is as unrealistic as it is unpalatable in a plural democracy. Remembering the Augustinian roots of the Church of England establishment, we might note the fallibility of each and every human government and seek echoes that may allow for transformative good. The momentum that was gathered in the church at a time of national vulnerability evidently fused the interests of church and state such that the church’s prophetic vocation to civil government was hobbled. It may be argued that the unitary church-state realm of the Elizabethan and Caroline order was the Church of England’s own hijra: a fusion of religious and state interests; a synthesis of dutiful worship and loyal citizenship. Yet there remains the challenging icon that is central to Christian doctrine and worship: Christ crucified. The Church that was established through the blood of the martyrs, too, acts as a reminder of an alternative legacy. Such reminders provide the potential for trajectories from within the pragmatic rationalism of Hooker, and the graced nature of Andrewes that we will see articulated by Williams and Cragg.

723 there followed a series of “Test Acts” which successively curtailed the liberties of all “recusants”, and notably Roman Catholics
724 Evans, G. R. & Wright, J. Robert (eds.) The Anglican Tradition, p. 243
4.2.4 The Christian Nation, toleration and plurality

The civil war of the 1640’s and 1650’s led to a growth in the plurality of religious expression in England that necessitated the passing of the *Toleration Act* in 1689. It was conceded that religious unity across Anglican, Catholic and dissenting groups was an impossible goal. The *Toleration Act* gave freedom to registered dissenting ministers to conduct acts of worship, a freedom still formally unavailable to Catholics, Jews and Muslims. All but Anglican communicants were still disqualified from public office.⁷²⁵ Hugh McLeod traces the beginnings of the long decline of Christendom in England to this Act.⁷²⁶ For Christendom to function, coercion and conformity were required, and the seedbeds of full religious tolerance were thus beginning to materialise.

Advances in state and religious education, and the Reformation fruits of Bibles in the vernacular hastened the plurality of the nation during the eighteenth century as individuals began to apply themselves to sacred texts and be equipped to question previously accepted authorities. The Church of England rested on its laurels, “untroubled by notions of social utility” and was “not so much expected to do things as to be things”.⁷²⁷ It seems that the hard-won settlement of establishment had created a climate where the Church of England was content with a great deal of privileges but had no corresponding obligations to the wider populace. Hempton notes the declining use of church courts as secularism took hold and the snobbery and arrogance of Anglicans directed at nonconformist groups such as the Methodists rebounded on the reputation of the establishment.⁷²⁸

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⁷²⁸ Hempton, David. “Established churches and the growth of religious pluralism”, pp. 82-4
Alongside the Church of England’s associations with a propertied mentality, there was not just a socioeconomic disjunction between the church and the nation, but a regional one too. Scotland and Ireland commanded much greater loyalty to Presbyterian and Roman Catholic traditions respectively, without any concession to the full legal freedoms of such groups. The French Revolution of 1789 revitalised the fear of Catholicism as a “foreign” religion that would lead to instability and with the Irish Rebellion that same year, anti-Catholic rhetoric and prejudice continued unabated.\(^{729}\) This offers another reminder about the all-too-easy equation of religious otherness to “enemy of the state”, a readily recognisable danger in the current encounter with Islam. Paradoxically, though, many Catholics fled from France to Britain in the years following the French Revolution and the opportunities for greater toleration grew. The increasing reality of a plural religious environment was opening up a wider discourse asserting freedom of religious belief across a whole range of traditions and creeds.\(^{730}\)

The Church of England’s unquestioned enjoyment of privilege while religious diversity grew was untenable and political exigencies once again altered the landscape but this time to the detriment of Anglicans. The unwillingness of the Crown to put down the Irish rebellion was key to the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829\(^{731}\); Irish Catholic votes a pragmatic, necessary concomitant of genuine British unity. The Test and Corporation Acts had been repealed in 1828 under intense

\(^{729}\) Edmund Burke’s writings on the “Christian system” would seem to typify this tendency. He believed in a natural law system behind society that needed to be upheld. In the Jacobin crisis, the Protestant hegemony needed to be preserved at all costs. In reflecting on India, the pre-existing religious order was to prevail, suggesting a political pragmatism and opportunism rather than a deeply held Christian conviction. Religion, then, was used by Burke as a force to justify and consolidate the status quo against alternative cultural and political threats. See Cowling, Maurice. Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England, Volume III: Accommodations (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 34

\(^{730}\) see, for example, Matar, N. I. “John Locke and the Turbanned Nations”, Journal of Islamic Studies, 2:1 (1991): 67-77, where the earlier advocacy of religious freedom for dissenting groups by the philosopher John Locke was already part of public discourse into the eighteenth century

\(^{731}\) This Act gave almost equal civil rights to Catholics in Britain: the right to vote and to hold most public offices, except, at this stage, that of being a Member of Parliament
pressure from dissenting groups and Whig parliamentarians, suggesting to some that the establishment of the Church of England was beginning to be dismantled.\footnote{Edwards, David L., \textit{Christian England, Volume 3, From the Eighteenth Century to the First World War} (London: Collins, 1984), pp. 105-161}

The concept of the Christian Nation was given a more inclusive hue in the reflections of William Gladstone (1809-1898) on the Church of England and national life. This political statesman had been brought up as an Evangelical but frequently surprised many by his seemingly contradictory radical and establishment impulses. Gladstone’s seminal work \textit{The State in its Relations with the Church} argued for the sacred duty of the state to support the proclamation of the church’s truth as an alternative to the nightmare of “social atheism”.\footnote{Edwards, David L., \textit{Christian England} , p. 221} Whilst being a vigorous defender of Anglican tradition and a firm believer in its unique vocation, Gladstone shocked many by voting for the admission of Jews to the House of Commons in 1848 and argued for Nonconformist admission to Oxford University to maintain the pre-eminence of English intellectual life that he believed was under threat. Conversely, Gladstone believed in the establishment of Anglican churches in colonies where the Christian faith was a minority.\footnote{Cowling, Maurice. \textit{Religion and Public Doctrine in Modern England} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 82} A politician rather than a theologian, Gladstone’s legacy was a commitment to the centrality of the Church of England as repository of values that could chime with modernity and avail to the good of others rather than a coherent rationale for the political theology of the church.

Gladstone, like Coleridge before him, believed in the corporate character of the nation and the Church of England’s unique role in guiding its moral destiny. From another totemic Victorian, Thomas Arnold, came a similarly conceived vision of the ethical character of the state, “the moral theory” of which “was the foundation of political truth.”\footnote{quoted in Grimley, Matthew. \textit{Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England: Liberal Anglican Theories of the State Between the Wars} (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.28 The growing plurality of Christian faith and atheism demanded an apologia for Anglican establishment that the likes of Arnold and Gladstone provided.
The ecclesial turn that we outlined in Chapter 3 would suggest a degree of suspicion of any theologies that sought to outline the vocation of the church divorced from a formative confessional base. As Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe note, though, “Theology is not mere abstract doctrine…Theology is always practical because it is essentially about our words becoming flesh”.⁷³⁶ Within this perspective, a theology of *kenosis* demands some level of concretisation in the language and experience of those outside the church. This is certainly the temper of the Anglican Christian Nation movement: of Coleridge, Arnold and Gladstone. Williams’ Wittgensteinian instincts would suggest he would be resistant to such easy accommodations and translations. However, the performative reality of political theology raises a potent critique of intellectual abstraction. Might Williams’ philosophical ecclesial turn avoid very practical questions that would deny the hospitality he would otherwise espouse?

The nineteenth century accommodations to plurality and dilution of explicitly theological politics produced their own ecclesial turn as reaction. One response to the advance of secularism and cultural complexity was to advocate a return to a churchmanship that was more theologically wedded to a clearer notion of Englishness: Catholic in spirituality and freighted with the gravitas of tradition appropriate to a defence of social order. Such was the project of the Oxford Movement, or “Tractarians”. The conservatism of Newman, Pusey and Keble rooted Anglicanism in the apostolic succession of the Roman Catholic Church rather than in the ideas of the early Reformers.⁷³⁷ For the Tractarians, the solution to the challenges of pluralism lay not in disestablishing Anglicanism in Ireland (1870) or in the liberalisation of Oxford colleges from Anglican strictures but in hardening the authority of ordination and sacrament as the best hope for the spiritual wellbeing of the nation, which was dependent on and secondary to the wellbeing of the church Catholic. The church should not be a hostage to external frames of reference but more stridently prophetic in public life.

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Pusey saw Catholicism as the only hope in stemming the tide of atheism, pointing to France and Germany as examples of the godlessness encroaching into the British enslavement to irreligious education. As Brian Horne highlights, the Tractarian theology was “occasioned by what they saw as a crisis in the life of the nation and the church.”\textsuperscript{738} The Church of England was to be the moral frame for society but not as an Erastian sop to civil government but under the authority of the monarch as head of the church: “the real and chief bulwark against infidelity.”\textsuperscript{739} That industrial, Victorian England in all its diversity and with a Parliament that now included Dissenters, atheists and Jews could ever hope to reassert the conformity of Hooker’s Elizabethan Anglicanism was beside the point. The Christian Nation ideal still retained its appeal in a context where the Church of England was being pushed to the margins but, for the Oxford Movement, in a prophetic rather than pastoral vein. It is worth noting the fact that Anglicanism was already having to adapt to a robust critique of its identification with national culture in the nineteenth century and that the debate about its relevance and “utility” are far from novel.

The Oxford Movement’s debt to a high-Anglican mysticism and an appreciation of Catholicism is undoubtedly a rich heritage that is demonstrative of the diversity of the Church of England. A German scholar’s observation of the Tractarian tendency of the thinking at that time is an instructive caution, though: “too much English theology was written within the sound of church bells”.\textsuperscript{740} That is, the theology was expressed in the interests of the church rather than for and on behalf of the nation to which the Tractarians were expressly committed. Amidst the continuing challenge of secularism today and the complications of Islam in the West, one can foresee that any resort to privilege without responsibility, and a flight to history without any adjustment to contemporary diversity would render the church irrelevant at best.

Cragg has commented on Newman’s desire to ground theological authority in the apostolic succession, a trajectory that would lead him eventually into the Catholic Church. Newman’s project was essentially a Christianizing of all knowledge and politics, and therefore, in Cragg’s view, a totalising of the other. In an apology for Islamic knowledge by Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905), Grand Mufti of Egypt, Cragg notices some striking parallels with Newman’s *The Idea of the University*. ‘Abduh commends reason “in conformity to his sacred law” while Newman regards reason as “rightly exercised” under the tutelage of “the Catholic faith” which “requires no external authority”. For Cragg, Newman’s denial of a free realm of the properly “secular” makes Christianity Islamic in temper. Cragg exhibits a Reformed advocacy of evangelical freedom in coincidence with the liberalising trajectory of the *Lux Mundi* school. His approach would be to liberate inquiry and politics equally from the magisterium and the ulama. In the delegated sovereignty of the temporal, Christian knowledge and politics can be explored together with Muslims. Again, any Anglican ecclesial turn must reckon with a resistance to this repositioning of politics in authoritarian terms.

Newman’s reaction to the thin theological veneer of much of the Victorian Christian Nation discourse was an effort to reassert a comprehensive vision of the Christian life. The Christian vision does have something to say about what may be regarded as “good” education, or a worthwhile political project. Where Newman found himself out of step with the Anglican tradition, and where Cragg rejects him, is in his recourse to ecclesial authority to delineate the bounds of that vision. Exhibiting traces of this Victorian debate, the theology of John Milbank, a major voice in the Radical Orthodoxy movement, will be discussed in dialogue with Rowan Williams’ political theology as a contemporary advocate of a Catholic Anglican ecclesial turn. Milbank’s ecclesial turn seeks to articulate an integrationist Christian metaphysics: as James Smith says, to refuse “the criteria for responsible public discourse” and “secular paradigms”. The indebtedness of exponents of the Radical Orthodoxy movement to Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar and the neo-patristic Catholics of Vatican

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II are especially to be noted here in their advocacy of the ecclesial turn. How Radical Orthodoxy, and in particular John Milbank as an Anglican, shaped by influences seen as instrumental to the thesis of Chapter 3, has articulated a political theology in response to Islam will be apparent when we analyse Rowan Williams’ Shari’a law speech. What is important to note, though, at this stage, is the impulse of Newman to provide a comprehensive Christian metaphysic in reaction to the thin theology he saw in Victorian Anglicanism.

4.2.5 F. D. Maurice and the Anglican synthesis

A growing number of clergy and, increasingly, laypeople, could see the need for a political theology that addressed the needs of those largely absent from the pews: the urban poor. F. D. Maurice (1805-1872) was a leading member of the cooperative movement, a Christian socialist who believed that the Church and the world could not be divorced from each other. What is especially pertinent to this study is the particular attention Maurice, as a very complex Anglican theologian of political convictions, gave to Islam. Maurice seems to demonstrate a remarkable affinity with what is now known as “open evangelicalism”, questioning punitive atonement theology and traditional notions of hell to the detriment of his post at King’s College, London. His churchmanship sat uneasily with both Evangelicals and High Anglicans, and coming from a family that included Unitarians, his vision was decidedly ecumenical. The platform of Maurice’s political theology, and consequently his theology of religions was “God as the very foundation of all unity in the family of man”.

Clinton Bennett notes the realism with which Maurice acknowledged the violence that did exist in aspects of Islam, yet he shunned any notion of its inevitability. Anticipating the ground-breaking work of Bishop Kenneth Cragg, Maurice recognised that Islam was in some senses “preparatory” to the gospel and that “all who did

743 both lines of theological thought in Maurice have become staple accommodations of celebrated “open evangelicals” such as N. T. Wright. See, for example: Wright, N. T. Evil and the Justice of God (London: SPCK, 2006)
Christ’s work were worthy fellow labourers”. Maurice even admitted that Muhammad could be a “witness for God”, hinting at Wyclif’s earlier notion of Islam’s role in reproaching the church and Massignon’s notion of Islam as “template and foil”. The engagement with diversity and supremely with other faiths, was an opportunity for the Church to be more faithful and true to itself: “interfaith relations, then, is properly a universal Christian concern”. Maurice did not have the personal experience of interactions with Muslims that many of the British civil servants and missionaries beginning to write about Islam had. Rather, Maurice seems to be combining his commitment to the Christian theology of God’s universal providence with the intellectual rigour that he embodied in the burgeoning textual criticism of the time. Thus, there would be echoes of God within another religion, like Islam, yet problematic Islamic texts and histories left no room for a romanticised view of the faith.

Of a piece with Maurice’s inclusive and engaged Anglicanism was a vision of English church establishment that included free churches alongside the Church of England as a “clerisy” extending Coleridge’s notion of a Christian ballast to national life with the Anglican establishment to the fore. Coleridge’s “learned of all denominations” could hold the ring for tradition and culture and steer a course for civilisation in the rapidly changing social currents of the time. F. D. Maurice seems to have been inspired by Coleridge’s sense of a national character, an overarching community to which the “church” across denominations gave moral leadership. The Church of England was effectively first among equals not by virtue of simple privilege but because of its very vocation to the nation; not as “another denomination” but as

746 Bennett, Clinton. Victorian Images of Islam, p. 72
748 Bennett, Clinton. Victorian Images of Islam, p. 63
749 Bennett, Clinton. Victorian Images of Islam, p. 48
751 “The glory of the Church of England lay not in its particular synthesis of reformation teachings, but rather its endeavour to unite all within the life of the nation.” Marsden, John. “Frederick Denison
facilitator of communal consciousness under God. Thus, the on-going question of whether the Church of England was Catholic or Protestant was redundant as it ignored the gift of Anglicanism to the nation as repository of the universality of church in its Catholicism and the particularity of its Protestantism.\footnote{Marsden, John. “Frederick Denison Maurice”, p. 140}

For Maurice, the English nation has a character all of its own that the Church of England was most able to maintain and uphold in its Christian comprehensiveness. Marsden sums up Maurice’s vision as based on the assertion that, “National communities are ordained by God and the National Church is called to imbue the life of the nation with spiritual values.”\footnote{Marsden, John. “Frederick Denison Maurice”, p. 141} Thus the celebrated names of Richard Hooker, Elizabeth I, Sir Philip Sidney and Walter Raleigh belong to a roll-call reflective of “the genius of our nation”.\footnote{Maurice, F. D. The Kingdom of Christ: Or Hints to a Quaker Respecting the Principles, Constitution, and Ordinances of the Catholic Church, Vol. II (London: MacMillan and Co., 1891), pp. 390-1} The synthesis of Protestantism and Catholicism that characterised Maurice’s Anglican comprehensiveness was a template for the fusion of opposites indicative of this national character. The efforts of Maurice to arrive at an almost neo-Platonic metaphysics that would harmonise disparate strands of public life reflect his priority of a theology of incarnation.

Chapter 3 highlighted \textit{kenosis} as a feature of contemporary theologies for Anglican relations with Islam. We have noted the influence of Donald Allchin on Rowan Williams, and his retrieval of patristic and Orthodox theologies. Allchin quotes Maurice on his death bed:

"I think I see a connection through the whole of my life…the desire for Unity and the search after Unity both in the nation and the Church has haunted me all my days."\footnote{Quoted in Allchin, A. M. The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge: The Encounter between Orthodoxy & the West (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), p. 167}
For Allchin, Maurice is a “theologian of the incarnation” whose “unifying, esemplastic power…is to be seen profoundly in relation to Eastern Orthodoxy”.\textsuperscript{756} It will be apparent that Cragg’s post-colonial consciousness makes him very suspicious of any appeal to British or English “character” and a likely opponent of Maurice’s comprehensiveness. Perhaps surprisingly, given the formative nature of Eastern Orthodoxy and the personal influence of Allchin on him, Williams is scathing about Maurice’s Platonic political theology. Admitting the impetus of Maurice on “Christian Socialism”, Williams rather sees a thinly veiled adaptation of the Divine Right of Kings with a decidedly reactionary temper. Williams accuses Maurice of regarding the “state as embryonic Church” and of seeing “the incarnation as the crown of God’s purpose rather than a divine response to sin and fallenness”.\textsuperscript{757} Preferring to draw from Neville Figgis’ pluralist public square, Williams chooses to reject the “‘pre-established’ harmonies and hierarchical or paternalist models of authority…retrieving an alternative history and ‘prehistory’ of the Anglican ethos.”\textsuperscript{758} Even with a shared ecclesial consciousness, Williams and Allchin diverge with respect to their political theologies. The retrieval of the Orthodox and patristic inheritance for Williams does not guarantee a similar appreciation of the grounds for societal unity.

In a later series of lectures, Williams expands on the “alternative history” in American lay theologian, William Stringfellow (1925-1985) and in the Bible translator and Reformed theologian William Tyndale (c. 1492-536). That they were both laymen and uncomfortable representatives of Anglicanism reveals something of Williams’ own aversion to closure and his preference for the agnostic identified in Chapter 3.\textsuperscript{759}

\textsuperscript{756} Allchin, A. M. \textit{The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge}, pp. 167-80
\textsuperscript{758} Williams, Rowan. “Liberation Theology and the Anglican Tradition.”, p. 23
\textsuperscript{759} Stringfellow: “A Lawyer by profession, an enthusiast for art, comedy and the circus, a self-proclaimed homosexual, a man whose theological reading was extraordinarily wide, and who met the great Karl Barth when Barth visited the United States”, Williams, Rowan. \textit{Christian Imagination in Poetry and Polity: Some Anglican Voices from Temple to Herbert} (Oxford: SLG Press, 2004), p. 5. Tyndale: “failed to persuade Henry VIII that his theology was accurate, and though he was executed on
Stringfellow and Tyndale embody the stream of Anglican consciousness that would assert that “the church has got to be something a bit more, a bit different from merely the expression of loyal, religious solidarity.” This is indicative of the prophetic rather than pastoral impulse of political theology.

The underlying unities of a Maurice are evident in William Temple (1881-1944), for whom the Church of England’s unobtrusive presence was yet “in the midst of the social order”. For Williams, Temple’s national consciousness as counter to the “alternative history” still retains an important characteristic of Anglican political theology: that politics is always a religious matter. Both streams of Anglican identity are bound in their common attitude of what Williams describes as “contemplative pragmatism”. The *kenosis* theology of a Temple is apparent in Stringfellow and Tyndale. For Stringfellow and Tyndale, though, the self-emptying of God in creation culminates in the *kenosis* of the cross: “You need, as well as Platonism, what has sometimes been thought to be its opposite, a theology of the cross, a theology of God’s grief”. Williams’ own retrieval of a high view of creation and incarnation from Orthodoxy entails the shadow side of the apophatic and the *via negativa* that are arguably insufficiently present in Maurice’s theology.

Williams’ nuanced appropriation of incarnational theology, in contrast to Maurice, is evident in his contribution to the collection of essays commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Lux Mundi*, a “school” with direct antecedents to F. D. Maurice. Resisting the idea that the incarnation is the “basis of dogma”, Williams reflects directly on Moberly’s original essay. He is sensitive to Don Cupitt’s warning that the doctrine of incarnation “may be a device for uniting what needs to be kept in ‘abrupt juxtaposition’ and ‘ironic contrast’.” For Williams, the energy behind the

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760 Williams, Rowan. *Christian Imagination in Poetry and Polity*, Ibid., p. 7
761 Williams, Rowan. *Christian Imagination in Poetry and Polity*, p. 7
762 Williams, Rowan. *Christian Imagination in Poetry and Polity*, p. 17
763 Williams, Rowan. *Christian Imagination in Poetry and Polity*, p. 41

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doctrine of the incarnation is what the theologian should be concerned with. Thus, the need to be attentive to “the impulse that animates such formulae – the need to keep the Church attentive to the judgement it faces, and the mission committed to it” is the prior intelligibility of the incarnation.  

Furthermore, it has to be questioned how well the Lux Mundi school actually incorporated the patristic formularies in their intention to marry these with the progresses of modernism. Charles Gore (1853-1932), the main architect of the Lux Mundi school, was determined that Anglican catholicity “is wider and deeper than Anglicanism itself” and that “It refers back behind itself to the ancient and catholic church.” Yet the trinitarianism that is espoused in Anglican incarnationalism has been accused of tritheism, the logical conclusion to overloading a social analogy of the trinity, and failing to follow a Chalcedon unity of the godhead. This is where Williams seems to be marking a discontinuity from his own Anglican inheritance and deliberately seeking a retrieval of the patristic account of the trinity. His lectures at al-Azhar mosque and the Lambeth Presence of Faith conference examined in Chapter 3 are keen to emphasise the unity of the godhead, especially in the response to Islam. Williams’ trinitarianism does not compromise the eternal “Word” nor does it divorce the realities of the hypostases of the trinity from each other. It seems significant that Michael Ipgrave’s commentary on Williams’ al-Azhar address draws attention to

765 Williams, Rowan. “The Incarnation as the Basis of Dogma”, p. 91
767 Ramsey, Arthur Michael. From Gore to Temple: The development of Anglican theology between Lux mundi and the Second World War, 1889-1939 (The Hale memorial lectures of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary) (Longmans: London, 1960) stands in the tradition of Lux Mundi but engages with and acknowledges the critique of its trinitarian theology, pp. 30-43, 179-187. For a classic account of trinitarianism from within the Anglican incarnationalist tendency, following the social analogy and arguably falling into the trap of tritheism see: Hodgson, Leonard. The Doctrine of the Trinity (London: Nisbet, 1943)
768 Williams, Rowan. “Archbishop’s address at al-Azhar al-Sharif” & “Christology and Inter Religious Dialogue”
this as an important distinction of his Anglican approach.\textsuperscript{769} Ipgrave’s own doctoral research on the trinity in the earliest Christian-Muslim encounters confirms the retrieval in Williams of this formative ecumenical influence.\textsuperscript{770}

By splitting asunder the trinity, creation itself loses its tragic aspect, and the redemptive role of the cross becomes redundant. The cross, ultimately, does not bring harmony but judgement. As David Nicholls caustically puts it in his companion piece to Williams’ 1984 “Liberation Theology and the Anglican Tradition”, “the only persons reconciled as a result of the ministry of Jesus were Herod and Pilate.”\textsuperscript{771} Nicholls offers his own presentation of two streams of Anglican political theology: the “Incarnationalists” and the “Redemptionists”. In order to argue for an incarnational theology within Anglo-Catholicism that takes personal and structural sin seriously, Nicholls appeals, with Williams, to the legacy of Neville Figgis and corresponding traditions within evangelicalism.\textsuperscript{772} The theology of Figgis will be elaborated in the subsequent analysis of Williams’ Shari’a law speech.

In distinguishing his approach from Maurice’s neo-Platonism, Williams is displaying a characteristically Reformed strain in his retrieval of patristic and Orthodox sources. The significance of sin and the cross to the political theologies of Williams and Cragg in response to Islam will be seen to be decisive contributions to the debate. In rebutting Maurice, Williams is rejecting all language of a Christian Nation along with the presumption of the personality of the state.

\textbf{4.2.6 William Temple and Christian civilisation}

\textsuperscript{769} Ipgrave, Michael. “God who is Trinity: speaking with Muslims, reflections on an Anglican contribution by Archbishop Rowan Williams”, downloaded from: http://www.anglicanism.org/admin/docs/ipgrave_trinity.pdf on 23rd February 2012, p. 4

\textsuperscript{770} Ipgrave, Michael. Trinity and Interfaith Dialogue: Plenitude and Plurality, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003)


\textsuperscript{772} See Nicholls, David. The Pluralist State (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1975) for his account of pluralist visions of the public square attentive to structural and personal sin.
The left-leaning sensibilities of F. D. Maurice were echoed by Bishop Brooke Westcott (1825-1901); the two theologians arguably the towering Anglican thinkers of the Victorian era. Westcott did not see science and positivism as enemies of faith but sought to harness rational inquiry into a credible Christian apologetic. For Westcott, the Church of England was still vital as a central core of values and a moral compass for the nation. Maurice and Westcott anticipate a drift towards the social responsibility of Archbishop William Temple (1881-1944) and Bishop Charles Gore, harnessed to a strong theology of the incarnation.⁷⁷³

Temple saw the inherent value of all people through the prism of God’s relationship to humanity, as Maurice had done, and was able to base his social responsibility on this foundation. This premise was what distinguished faith from secular humanism and thus made it the only plausible defence against totalitarianism. Temple was rooted in the Anglican tradition of reason and appreciated the Reformation understanding of the penultimate of the state; the state being an avenue of justice, the church of love.⁷⁷⁴ A firm believer in democracy as the structure that exemplified Christian freedom, the state’s role was to recognise the vocation of the church. Where the church reached the limits of its competence in the gap between principles and programmes, it was to hand over responsibility to Christians acting in their civic capacity as “middle axioms”.

Temple’s political theology has a great deal of realism in recognising the difference between values and outcomes and how human skill will sometimes determine the success of the bridge between the two. In his articulation of the “middle axioms” there are the traces of an elitism that will not trust the “non-Christian” to share and implement the programme of the values as expressed, though. Furthermore, the aspiration of church commitment to public life that Temple believed in is perhaps compromised: the middle axioms becoming a “comfortable accommodation of

Michael Ramsey’s assessment of the incarnationalist Anglican tradition remains an important summary of this lineage from *Lux Mundi* to Temple: Ramsey, Arthur Michael. *From Gore to Temple*
Christianity to the powers that be.” William Temple’s Anglican establishment was an ecumenical vision that could include both Roman Catholics and Nonconformists in the bulwark against the post-Christian decadence of humanism.  

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, a persistent touchstone of political debate for the Church of England was the communal identity of the nation-state and its moral character. The very real threats to historic freedoms posed by Nazism and Communism energised a debate that eventuated into two streams of political theology. The “idealist” stream reframed Arnold, Coleridge and Gladstone not in a justification for establishment that benefited the church but as the church buttressing the cohesiveness of society for the benefit of the nation against threats to disintegration. The “pluralist” stream, as exemplified by Figgis, contested the idea that there was any such thing as a national character and preferred to acknowledge the plurality of communities within a nation. In the latter economy, the church’s role was as one of many groups that acted in civil society as a counter-balance to the hegemony of the state.

Idealist churchmen at the turn of the twentieth century initially “sought to emphasize the unity of society against the disintegrative threat of class-consciousness, and the uncertainties of a widened franchise.” A sense of panic over the confusion in communal values, arguably resonating with similar themes in contemporary Britain, gave impetus to a search for a philosophical basis for moral cohesiveness. Church leaders and scholars like T. H. Green found much to draw from in the philosophies of Bernard Bosanquet whose nuanced articulation of national character distinguished the apparatus of the state from the organism of society. The individual was absorbed into the collective will of society, that collective will embracing diversity but needing a moral focus such that the Church of England gave in Britain. Bosanquet’s idealism made him a persuasive source for the young William Temple, A. D. Lindsey and

775 Suggate, Alan M. “William Temple, p.177
777 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 43
778 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 87
Ernest Barker, themselves influential liberal Anglicans committed to a Church of England with a national voice in a time of crisis.

T. H. Green is noteworthy (1836-1882) as the “philosophical mentor” of the Lux Mundi school that would shape Temple’s outlook. Green was a philosopher and political theorist and “never an orthodox Christian” but his account of ethical theism fed into the idealism and kenosis theology of Lux Mundi. In another point of confluence for this thesis, Kenneth Cragg won a philosophical essay at Oxford University in 1947 on the subject of T. H. Green. While Cragg incorporates the incarnational motifs from Lux Mundi and T. H. Green, the political theory of idealism is not addressed by him in any treatment of political theology and Islam. This perhaps proves Lamb’s remark that Cragg was “in no sense a professional philosopher” and thus a systematic treatment of idealism and pluralism should not be expected of him. Nevertheless, there is a telling archaeology of influences through Maurice, Green, Lux Mundi and Temple that bear on Cragg and his politico-theological response to Islam. As we shall see, though, Cragg, with Williams, chooses to reject notions of the Christian Nation and be pragmatic about the need for a plural public square.

Temple’s themes of middle axioms and Christian principles delineated in his book, Christianity & Social Order of 1942 has made it arguably the defining work of Anglican political theology of the twentieth century, certainly if judged by its sales of over 150,000 copies within the first few years of publication. As Malcolm Brown notes, “this so-called Middle Axiom approach epitomized some of the most enduring efforts by the church to comprehend and influence the shape of the society in which it stood and ministered.” The 1985 Faith in the City report “is often spoken of as the

780 Lamb, Christopher. The Call to Retrieval, p. 15
781 Lamb, Christopher. The Call to Retrieval, p. 22
last great flowering of the Middle Axiom method.” In 1987, the Church of England Board for Social Responsibility published a report on contemporary British plurality and the challenge of moral unity entitled *Changing Britain: Social Diversity and Moral Unity.* This, too, speaks from within the Anglican public theology tradition of Temple and is probably the closest the Church of England has come to formally reflecting on the implications of plurality to political theology. The problems associated with Temple’s vision offer insights into the particular challenge of Islam in British life and the robustness of his political theology in the contemporary scene.

The energising effects of totalitarian threats from Nazism to the idealist cause are not without their own parallels with the spectre of Islamic terrorism to today. In Tom Lawson’s research into the Church of England’s response to the Holocaust, there are important reflections on the weakness of Temple’s vision. Lawson argues that the oft-celebrated role of the Church of England in publicly advocating for Jews in the context of Nazi oppression up to and during the Second World War is rather more ambiguous than may seem. The Jews were mere “bystanders” in the discourse of the time, subsumed in the rhetoric of a battle of civilisations. Thus, Jews were not seen on their own terms but as incidental to a fundamental rivalry between Christian civilisation and totalitarianism:

“The political application of the totalitarian label rested on the provision of Christianity (and liberal democracy) as an alternative, indeed antithetical, mindset to that embodied in European dictatorship. Baldwin and Lang have been described as being as close as any Primate and Prime Minister could be, and on the issue of the totalitarian threat to Christian civilisation, Downing Street and Lambeth Palace were certainly united.”

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In effect, the archetypal incarnationalist political theology that reached its summation in Temple, presumed an approximation between the foundational values of the Church of England and British and indeed European culture. Thus, when that culture came under threat from Nazism, the basis of critique was not a prior belief that Jews, \textit{in their difference}, needed to be protected. Rather, that \textit{Christian civilisation} needed to be protected. Jews were effectively instrumentalised in a clash of cultures. Thus, ambiguous totemic figures such as Martin Niemöller became idealised as defenders of Christian civilisation in their opposition to Nazism, despite their dubious political credentials. Europe was constructed as “a direct replacement for Christendom”, whose democratic system was heralded as “the embodiment of Christian teaching.”\footnote{Lawson, Tom. \textit{The Church of England and the Holocaust}, pp. 160-1}

Elaine Graham and Stephen Lowe admit their inclusion into the tradition of Temple as authors of the follow-up to \textit{Faith in the City: Faithful Cities}. To them, the Temple legacy affirms “an essential convergence between Christian values and those of wider culture.”\footnote{Graham, Elaine. & Lowe, Stephen. \textit{What Makes a Good City?}, p. 3} As with European Jews in the 1930’s and 1940’s, this outlook gives no space for Muslims as a genuine “other”; nor does it recognise the longevity of Islamic presence in shaping and affecting British culture.\footnote{Matar, N. I. \textit{Islam in Britain 1558-1685} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)} The \textit{Changing Britain} report displays these weaknesses by emphasising the role of the church as “guardians and purveyors of Christian values”.\footnote{\textit{Changing Britain}, p. 63} These values, including “Tolerance, neighbourliness, the willingness to comprehend different views” are all reflected in the “majority culture” and “If the majority culture does not work for social cohesion, no-one, in any part of the whole society, can be very much assured about the future.”\footnote{\textit{Changing Britain}, p. 39} The shift from 1942 to 1987 is merely in the admission that there is more than one culture in Britain now. What remains consistent for this incarnationalist political theology is that it is the role of the “majority” Christian culture to shape the direction of cohesion of the whole. Again, these minority cultures have no place other than as incidental to a patrician inheritance of Christian civilisation.
Alasdair MacIntyre’s observation that secularization is not first and foremost about the rise of atheism but that people have “lost any over-all social agreement as to the right ways to live together, and so ceased to be able to make sense of any claims to moral authority”792 contradicts the comfortable equivalence of Christian values and wider society. Anglicans are in danger of trading on a moral authority they no longer possess as guardians of the nation’s values. The disjunction between the Church of England and wider society is not simply that between Christian and non-Christian, either. As Daniel Jenkins notes, “the Church of England does not begin to look like a truly national church but only like one particularly arrogant and domineering Christian denomination, interested only in itself.”793 Thus a contemporary non-Conformist critique of a paternalistic Church of England establishment sees the equation of British values with Anglicanism as so much “cultural imperialism”.794

Furthermore, the effort to contextualise the language of values seems to unhook the incarnation doctrine from any wider systematic theology. Oliver O’Donovan is scathing about a comment of William Temple where he declares that he is “not first myself and then an Englishman…I am, so to speak ‘the Englishman’ expressed and interpreted in a particular way.” For O’Donovan, “he spoke preposterously”, conflating his vocation with his social identity, at the expense of evangelical freedom.795 At root then, the incarnationalist stream of Anglicanism as epitomised by Temple is in danger of omitting the redemptive narrative of the gospel in a too ready optimism about the human condition. When the Lux Mundi inheritance retrieves patristic and contemporary Eastern Orthodox theology, it fails to be sufficiently theological in the application of its politics. Thus, Allchin, representing the Anglican incarnationalist tradition, can acclaim Nikolai Fyodorov as one of the Russian émigré

theologians, noting his statement that “The Holy Trinity is our social programme.”

Yet the document *Changing Britain*, utterly infused with the temper of Temple’s *Christianity and Social Order*, bizarrely, addresses the Church of England on matters of moral unity in a plural nation in a manner “which has tried to avoid the in-language of a Christian group.” There is no mention of the trinity and biblical references are used to substantiate the *a priori* standards of democracy and tolerance. Temple’s legacy drifts very closely to what we might regard as civil religion: a prop for the status quo that pushes “true religion” into the realm of the private arena.

Michael Nazir-Ali, as we saw in Chapter 3, instrumental in bringing to the fore in the Anglican Communion the plight of persecuted Christians in some Muslim contexts, has used the language of Christian civilisation to warn against the perils of Islamic extremism. For him, British public life divorced from its Christian heritage is ill-equipped to maintain the freedoms that Islamism might otherwise threaten:

“Whilst Marxism, as an ideology, is a spent force, there is another ideology which is also comprehensive in scope, purporting to prescribe for every aspect of human life, social, economic and political, on the horizon. Like Marxism, Islamism is not monochrome and has a number of versions of itself but the question is whether Britain, or the West generally, has the spiritual and moral resources to face yet another series of ideological battles.”

Nazir-Ali is no political theorist nor could he be said to belong to the incarnationalist school of Anglican liberalism. However, Nazir-Ali’s contention provides a more nuanced inflection on the issues surrounding purported Christian and Islamic

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796 Allchin, A. M. *The Kingdom of Love & Knowledge*, p. 178
797 *Changing Britain*, p. 65
798 See Stackhouse, Max. “Civil Religion, Political Theology and Public Theology: What’s the Difference?”, *Political Theology*, Volume 5, No. 3 (2004): 275-293. “There is a religion that many people hold, which Rousseau says is ‘truly Christian’ (that is ‘purely spiritual’ and thus ‘private to the soul), but something else must govern the life of the nation”, p. 280. A classic account of civil religion in the North American context is in Bellah, R. N. “Civil Religion in America”, *Daedalus*, (1967): 1-21
civilisations. He admits that the freedoms that represent the Christian heritage have to be argued for; there is no assumption that they are shared by the broader populace. Nazir-Ali accepts that there are a variety of Islamic cultures, too, many of which would endorse the Christian vision of public life he would espouse. What he is arguing for is a “reversing of amnesia” so that liberties reflective of the impact of the Church on the culture of the nation are not blithely disregarded.\footnote{Nazir-Ali, Michael. “Britain Today”, p. 112} For Nazir-Ali, the void left after the withdrawal of Christian elements of British public life would be filled by Islamism.

It is interesting to note that a reminder of the impact of Christian culture on British public life is being made by a Pakistani Anglican. Similarly, from the Ugandan Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, there is a challenge to “rediscover the self-confidence and self-esteem that united and energised the English people those many centuries ago.”\footnote{Sentamu, John. “Anglicanism.” In, Faith in the Nation: Religion, Identity and the Public Realm in Britain Today, edited by Zaki Cooper and Guy Lodge, (London: Institute for Public Policy Research, 2008): 15-25, p. 24} It seems that one element of the contribution of global Anglicanism to the Church of England is a more rounded picture of British, “Christian” civilisation such that the positive achievements are reckoned alongside the abuses of colonialism.

The dangers of Anglican idealism in the face of the challenge of Islam are apparent in Nick Megoran’s assessment of the national service of remembrance held at St. Paul’s Cathedral after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Despite attempts to make the service as “apolitical” as possible, the pastoral exigencies of this symbolic act of solidarity with the United States effectively played into the hands of a North American agenda for the subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. The purported neutrality of the service was belied by the “geopolitics” that reprised “myths of geopolitical alliance” “gesturing at discourses of civilised versus barbarian”.\footnote{Megoran, Nick. “God on Our Side? The Church of England and the Geopolitics of Mourning 9/11”, Geopolitics, Volume 11, (2006): 561-579, p. 576} A regret of planners to the memorial service was that Anglican perspectives from the Middle East had not been drawn into the discussions, allowing for some sense of how Christians would be seen
by Muslims in other contexts. The inextricability of the global for the Church of England’s local practice as regards Christian-Muslim relations is thus underlined. The essential problematic for the Church of England, in this instance, was a self-understanding that bound the church to British and North American geopolitical cultures in uncritical ways.

A similar weakness is displayed in the House of Bishops report Countering Terrorism: Power, Violence and Democracy Post 9/11. As Richard Lock-Pullan argues, the question framing the report is “how can terrorism best be combated?”. It:

“does not ask the broader question of how the UK can live with terrorism, or what terror and the events of 9/11 say about the age in which we live and the church’s role in understanding and acting in it from that particular perspective of religion and violence.”

The House of Bishops have inadvertently defaulted to the government’s agenda that raises a problem about the “enemies” of civilisation without asking deeper questions that may probe the good in that civilisation itself.

Both Cragg and Williams betray a queasiness about the historical legacy of Anglican privilege that are likely to distance themselves from the discourse of Christian culture and Christian civilisation. Williams’ own direct response to 9/11 is in telling contrast to Countering Terrorism; advocating a patient reflection that involves self-questioning. Sharp delineations of culture or civilisations are avoided by engaging in a task of understanding “something” about ourselves in the terrorist atrocities. Anything less means that “there could never be any language at all in which to talk


with some of our fellow human beings.” Cragg also eschews any presumption of Christian immunity from the ills of the West preferring a mutual “Concern over Wrongs” to a “Clash of Civilisations” that “might bring us to know the truth of ourselves and turn the truth to our deliverance by its very telling of the shame.”

4.2.7 John Neville Figgis and Anglican pluralism

It is apparent that at least some degree of political pluralism has been enabled within the self-understanding of establishment by the Church of England. Fetzer and Soper’s study of the comparative role of Muslims in the political regimes of Britain, France and Germany has confirmed that the existence of a church established by law has actually worked to the benefit of Muslims. The modelling of publicly sanctioned religion by the Church of England in various avenues such as education and hospital and prison chaplaincies has actually offered a pattern for a correlative Islamic presence. British and German Christian establishments have paradoxically created fewer tensions for Muslims than the supposedly neutral public square in France.

We shall address the specific question of legal establishment when analysing the political theology of Oliver O’Donovan in relation to Kenneth Cragg. At this stage, though, it is important to underline the potential for the Church of England, in its role as the national Church, to open up space for Islam.

The classic pluralist position, in contrast to that of the idealists epitomised by Temple, preferred to recognise the pragmatic reality that British society was made up of many different communities; the state itself just one of a complex of interrelated associations that constituted society. The First World War provided energy for a pluralist position, typified by Neville Figgis, reacting as it did to the dangers of the nation state overriding the individual in the guise of German nationalism. The multiple associations within society carried their own loyalties that could withstand

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the demands of an overbearing state. Figgis, as exemplar of this position, “ruled out the idea of national religion”. 808

As with Bosanquet’s idealism, Figgis’ pluralism was altogether more nuanced than the labels suggest. Figgis’ famous vision of the nation as a “community of communities” 809 suggested the need for a baseline of collective character; what the Catholic scholar Jacques Maritain terms a “minimal unity”. 810 Figgis’ detractors were troubled at the paucity of shared purpose, culture and morality in his pluralism, though. 811 How could a pluralistic vision for society underpin an Anglican vocation to be the “city on a hill”? A more immediate question might be: how does the Church of England conceive of space for Islam in Britain whilst being able to challenge and delineate the boundaries of ethical and political life such that Islamic extremism does not take root and shared lives around a common good are made possible?

Pluralist political theologies became more unfashionable with the Prayer Book controversy in 1927, a trend that was accentuated by the looming threat of Nazi Germany in the wake of a rallying cry to British character in the 1930’s. The former episode revealed the depths to which church leaders across a spectrum of tradition still believed that the church reflected the national character. A Modern Churchman leader from 1931 summed up the tone of the era thus: “The Church of England is essentially national in its tone and temper. It exists primarily to serve the moral and spiritual interests of the nation…… In close relation to the national life it lives; separated from that national life it dies.” 812 It was in this aspiration of a binding whole

808 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 78
809 see, for example, “A Free Church in a Free State”, a sermon of Neville Figgis in Nicholls, David. Church and State in Britain Since 1820 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1967): 178-183, p. 181: “Of the illimitable authority arrogated by the civil power, we say that it is false to the facts of human life in society; that we are doing a service to politics asserting on the highest plane the doctrine of the inherent, underived, though not uncontrolled, life of societies within the State.”
810 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England , p. 208
811 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 77
812 Quoted in Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 149
for British public life that dampened the initial enthusiasm for Figgis’ pluralism in the likes of Temple, Barker and Lindsay.\footnote{Grimley, Matthew. \textit{Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England}, p. 77}

The desire for a binding whole in British public life in the first half of the twentieth century has a comparative wave in many attempts to deconstruct the multiculturalism project of the 1960’s. The contributors to \textit{Faith and Power} make a cogent critique of Britain’s post-1960’s multiculturalism trajectory arguing that discarding “the fundamental beliefs for the norms which control the life of its members…can only lead to disaster.”\footnote{Newbigin, Lesslie. “The Secular Myth.” In, \textit{Faith and Power: Christianity and Britain in ‘Secular’ Britain}, Lesslie Newbigin, Lamin Sanneh, Jenny Taylor (London: SPCK, 1998):3-24, p. 6} Arguably it is a desire to offer a moral consensus drawing together different cultural and religious sensibilities that is the impetus behind so much of the community cohesion agenda. The \textit{Cantle Report} into riots in northern towns of 2001 talked of the “parallel societies” of Muslim and white communities in a climate of seeming moral fragmentation.\footnote{Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team Chaired by Ted Cantle, downloaded from: \url{http://image.guardian.co.uk/sysfiles/Guardian/documents/2001/12/11/communitycohesionreport.pdf} on 9th January 2007} In his role as Prime Minister, David Cameron called for a return to Christian values and for the moral direction of the Church of England at an anniversary event celebrating four hundred years of the King James Bible in 2011. Cameron raised the spectre of “moral collapse” to invoke an Arnoldian idealist vision even out of the “patchy” radio reception that he has likened his own Christian faith to.\footnote{Butt, Riazat. “Cameron calls for return to Christian values as King James Bible turns 400: Christianity provides a ‘moral code’ to counter riots, expense scandals and Islamist extremism says the prime minister”, \textit{Guardian}, Friday 16\textsuperscript{th} December 2011, available at: \url{http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/16/cameron-king-james-bible-anniversary} downloaded 6th March 2012} In a warm welcome to Cameron’s speech, one of the authors of \textit{Faith and Power} declared that “Secularization is over, all bar the shouting”.\footnote{Taylor, Jenny. “Secularization is over, all bar the shouting”, \textit{Lapido Media}, 23\textsuperscript{rd} January 2012, available for download at: \url{http://www.lapidomedia.com/secularization-over-all-bar-shouting} downloaded on 6th March 2012}
There are very practical realities about the diversity of different belief systems that pluralism seeks to be responsive to, though. Charles Taylor notes the “porousness” of contemporary societies: how members of communities “live the life of diaspora, whose center is elsewhere.” Taylor highlights how a simple accommodation to “this is how we do things here” is insufficient. British Islam is influenced and shaped by the teachings and attitudes of *ulema* in Pakistan as much as it may be by the values of a Church of England school in Bradford. Gary Bunt’s research has made evident the power of the internet to foster religious extremism regardless of geographical borders. The recognition of plural forms of public life and values and the impossibility of a territorial mapping of religion coincident with the state, it is argued, are merely pragmatic realities that need to be acknowledged in order to begin conversations about the common good.

For Paul Hirst, a more recent advocate of Figgis’ pluralism, a minimal state should be concerned to facilitate territorial enclaves that free up disparate value and legal systems, as exemplified by the red light districts of the Netherlands. As regards Islam, this proposal suggests something of the Ottoman *millet* system. Michael Nazir-Ali’s reference to Islamic “no-go areas” is a pointedly contrary discomfort with the idea of compartmentalised, self-governing communities. A naïve rejection of binding Christian values, for Nazir-Ali, gives succour to Islamic extremism and hastens societal fragmentation.

Lamin Sanneh, a Gambian Christian convert from Islam, in similar terms, accuses the West of overplaying a form of colonial guilt. Churches in Britain have subsumed

religion under the prism of race and ethnicity in a drive towards diversity and multiculturalism and thus are blinded by the dangerous potency of Islamic extremism. Attentiveness to global Christianity would make British churches much more cognisant of the need for unitary Christian values: “Yet because the West fails to appreciate the vitality of ethnic life in world Christianity, it misappropriates it for Islam.”

Chapter 3’s analysis of Anglican documents concerning Islam noted that formative reflections on faith came under the rubric of the Church of England’s race relations. The Church of England’s desire to include as hosts a perceived Islamic guest was seen to be problematic for the Anglican Communion as a whole and not reflective of the local realities of diverse Christian-Muslim relations. Where the religious integrities of respective communities have effectively been bracketed out to be replaced by the politics of identity, then it seems inevitable that widely divergent and contradictory value systems could emerge.

Jenny Taylor’s research into the Church of England’s relationship with the Government’s Inner Cities Religious Council in the early 1990’s suggests that the church colluded in identity politics by being overly diffident about its own place in public life. This extended to refusing public funds for the regeneration of communities and to advocating for other religious groups at the expense of its own influence. At the same time, Muslim groups were unembarrassed about claiming for and accessing funds from the government to finance overtly religious activities. Taylor observes a church “utilized to harness other faiths to the Government machine in which it had so privileged, if muted, a place”. In this instance, the government was willing to support the Church of England’s privilege while the church itself made the choice of withdrawing from this sphere of public involvement. The reasons for this withdrawal were based on a self-consciousness about perceived cultural


\[823\] Taylor, Jenny. “There’s Life in Establishment – But Not As We Know It”, Political Theology, 5.3 (2004):329-349, p. 332
domination where identity politics, on an assumption of binary majority and minority roles, were seen to be the primary level of discourse.

This reveals a more complex picture than a simple alternative between idealism and pluralism might present. The Church of England was continuing with the notion that there was a broad convergence between Christian values and the nation’s values, but had no explicit theological rationale for what those values were and how they were to be sustained. As the primary discourse was that of identity politics, the Church of England as guardian of Britain’s broadly Christian values felt the need to step back and open up to the minority “other” for fear of perpetuating a colonial mentality. In Taylor’s opinion, the ultimate consequence of this is the church’s collusion with the failed project of multiculturalism. The tone of engagement with Muslims evidenced in Chapter 3 from the Church of England’s formal documents of the 1980’s and 1990’s is mirrored in the corresponding political theologies. This is why both Malcolm Brown and Jenny Taylor notice the “flirtation” with liberationist theologies in *Faiths in the City*. Theologically weak middle axioms from within Christian civilisation were inexorably sliding into a discourse of inclusion and exclusion, albeit awakening the prophetic stream of Anglican presence.824

It seems that an ill-defined vision of the Christian Nation can readily collapse into a form of pluralism, the unintended consequences of which are the inability of the church to challenge other faiths. When theological language has been taken away from ecclesial discourse and the global church insufficiently attended to then both Christian-Muslim relations and consequent political theologies are in danger of being set on insufficiently robust footings.

Both Kenneth Cragg and Rowan Williams have articulated a Christian engagement with Islam that is able to dialogue and proclaim, and that sets the relationship in explicitly theological terms. The debate between idealism and pluralism suggests that

idealism needs to find a way of giving space to Islam in its otherness, and to do this in the language of the Christian faith. The challenge to Pluralist political theologies would seem to be to be able to articulate the basis for a binding whole. In essence, why _should_ Muslims need to engage their own “other”? Pluralism, for Figgis, did demand a level of unity in values, as we shall see in our discussion of Williams’ Shari’a law speech. Indeed, it has been argued that even Paul Hirst implies a level of “social unity” in his advocacy of pluralism. How the Church of England may be seen to operate out of a theological model of hospitality that allows for mutual challenge and change, as espoused by Williams and Cragg, will be the subject of the final analysis of this thesis.

4.3 Kenneth Cragg and Political Theology: _Khilāfa_ and Dominion

It must be admitted that Cragg never uses the phrase “political theology” yet his engagement with Islam persistently ranges into the nexus of religion and politics. Cragg’s seminal 1956 work _The Call of the Minaret_ was alert to the challenges of the political vision of Islam in relation to Christianity. That Muhammad was “from the outset its Constantine as well as its Prophet” marks out the _hijra_ as the decisive and defining moment for political Islam. The Islamic order is ordained by God “because it stands under God’s law” but this seeming statement of fact obscures the pressing need to be able to interpret and apply this law. An impulse exists for the polity to be Islamic, but the formative struggles over succession and authority continue to this day: “Islam demands the entire allegiance of the believer and the state

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826 See Brown, Christopher. “Kenneth Cragg on Shi’a Islam and Iran: An Anglican Theological Response to Political Islam,” _ARAM_, 20 (2008): 375-391 for an overview of Cragg’s political theology: “Cragg believes that religious faith could and should renounce all power-complex and physical militancy without abandoning political duties.”, p. 390
828 Cragg, K. _The Call of the Minaret_, p. 161
should insure as best as it may that those demands are satisfied… Beyond that there is division.”

That the Medinan moment at the *hijra* seems so decisive a departure for Cragg might be contradicted by Fred Donner’s understanding of an early monotheistic reform movement that encompassed Jews and Christians even in Medina. However, in Cragg’s analysis the Medinan turn is at least a *motif* for the political claims of Islam, with the Meccan origins as emblematic of the call to true worship. When Cragg juxtaposes the Meccan religious vision as foil to Medina, he is effectively articulating Donner’s understanding of the believers movement’s mission. As Donner says, “The social dimensions of the message are undeniable and significant, but they are incidental to the central notions of the Qur’an, which are religious: Belief in the one God and righteous behaviour as proof of obedience to God’s will.”

It is from within this religious minding that Cragg seeks to “retrieve” the Christ lost to Islam. This demands a responsive elucidation of the Christian faith to an Islam that otherwise judges the Church to be “jejune, effete, misguided, and discredited.”

Thus, the incarnation, properly understood as the *sacramentalising* of all physical life, can speak to an Islam concerned about the outward impact of religious faith. It is in the vision of a sacramentalised whole life that the influences of the Anglican *Lux Mundi* movement on Cragg’s political theology can be discerned. In the *kenosis* of God, the twin truths of a graced created order and a necessarily vulnerable creator inform Cragg’s response to political Islam. The radical “called-out” community of believers speaks of the need for a redeemed society and not an internalised, individualistic gospel. However, a realistic assessment of the pervasive power of sin would guard against an idealism that might expect this order to be perfected in external terms. The retrieval of Christ to Muslims resonates with the spiritual

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829 Cragg, K. *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 162
831 Cragg, K. *The Call of the Minaret*, p. 248
challenge characteristic of Muhammad’s Meccan vocation: the reform of religious life from a position of powerlessness.\textsuperscript{832}

In defending the classic Christian inheritance of the doctrine of the two,\textsuperscript{833} Cragg does not describe how church and temporal powers are to negotiate their respective responsibilities and opens himself up to the charge of pietism and naivety. As a Muslim critic of Cragg’s work has observed:

“Christianity wishes to leave unto Caesar what is Caesar’s. In the absence of Christian guidance, a Christian ruler will follow not Christ but Machiavelli, whereas Islamic guidance to a ruler is as imperative as it is to one who prays and fasts.”\textsuperscript{834}

Cragg’s dilemma is to express something of the political implications of the Christian faith at the same time as honouring a Christian suspicion of the power-equation. In Christianity in World Perspective, Cragg draws a clear distinction between the “creative trusteeship” of the Church and the “custodian-mind”\textsuperscript{835} of other religious communities. The Church itself is a body politic turned outwards to a sacramental creation. By contrast, Islam betrays a tendency to a “custodian-mind” which is exclusionary and assertive.\textsuperscript{836}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[832] Cragg, K. The Call of the Minaret, pp. 319-31
\item[833] O’Donovan, O. The Desire of the Nations, pp. 82-119. The “doctrine of the two” describes the high tradition of political theology epitomised by St. Augustine that asserts the presence of two kingdoms of social rule to which God’s people are simultaneously called to account: the kingdom of God’s rule of love and that of the “secular” founded on coercion. These realms are both separate yet overlapping, the challenge of political theology one of discerning the implications of the eschatological fulfilment of God’s rule for the temporal rule of the secular; “Proclaiming the unity of God’s rule in Christ is the task of Christian witness; understanding the duality is the chief assistance rendered by Christian reflection”, p. 82
\item[834] From a critical review of The Call of the Minaret by the Pakistani scholar Hamidullah, quoted in Lamb, C. The Call to Retrieval, p. 86
\item[836] Cragg, K. Christianity in World Perspective, p. 74
\end{footnotes}
Trusteeship becomes an increasingly important motif for Cragg as he seeks to problematize the Medinan tendency (emblematic of the will-to-power) to self-assertion and exclusion. From drawing a sharp boundary between the Church’s creative trusteeship, and other faiths, trusteeship is conceived as a universal vocation to humanity which can encompass Islamic self-understanding. Thus, the qur’anic principle of khilāfa is represented in terms akin to the Christian doctrine of humanity’s dominion. Within the creation ordinance common to both scriptures, God delegates a level of sovereignty to humanity who is made accountable to God for this responsibility. God’s appointment of a viceroy (khalīfa) on the earth in Q 2:30 is, for Cragg, an opportunity for Islam to discover the inclusive vice-gerency of all humanity within the creation ordinance.\footnote{Cragg, K. A Certain Sympathy of Scriptures, p. 8} There is thus an appropriate realm of the “secular” that is implicit in the delegation of authority: the trusteeship of the natural order.

From this shared scriptural foundation, Christians and Muslims can begin to talk together of the mutualities of political responsibility. Cragg believes there to be “in the entire thrust of biblical or qur’anic Scripture” “the option of khilāfah, there in the presentation to our intelligence of an intelligible world we are invited to inhabit and take up in act and will.”\footnote{Cragg, K. The Privilege of Man, p. 40} This is at once a claim on the whole of life and society of the religious, \textit{and} an admission that the “religious” is always also bound to a higher court:

“This, then, is the Quranic caliphate-not some political institution, organized in single rulers to perpetuate Muhammad’s legacy, but the whole, universal, plural dignity of all men, as men, in their empire over things and under God. Man has no sovereignty \textit{over} the world, except in accountability \textit{under} God.”\footnote{This idea is a consistent theme throughout Kenneth Cragg’s writings but is given particular attention in \textit{The Privilege of Man: A Theme in Judaism, Islam and Christianity} (London: The Athlone Press, 1968), see Chapter II “‘God is, and Man is His Caliph’: A Quranic View”, pp. 51-75 and \textit{A Certain Sympathy of Scriptures: Biblical and Quranic} (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2004)}
The human’s responsibility to a creator God must relativize all created orders and strive to hallow all that is created: an “autonomy thus pledged to the divine glory”. By prioritising this understanding of *khilāfa*, the caliphate as the idealised Islamic polity becomes an inhibition to true worship. The logic is that a “reverse abrogation” to a Meccan Islam is called for. With echoes of classic Augustinian theology, Cragg affirms that “God’s realm, being uncoercive, is not power-ensured”. Cragg is, in effect, provoking Islam to prove that there must be a way to worship God without the framework of an Islamic polity. Surely, the call to worship, *Allāhu Akbar*, makes a demand on every person, whatever their status and geography? As Cragg elsewhere says, “every worshipper is an iconoclast”. For Cragg, the very Islamic call to submission has to prioritise the Meccan call to worship over the achievement of power.

That Islam could be conceived as not being “power-ensured” raises questions about the integrity of Cragg’s use of the term *khilāfa* as an inclusive domain of the secular that generates plural responsibilities to God. Within the qur’anic text itself, the supposed creative trusteeship in Q 2 contrasts with the Genesis account. Humanity is not tasked with naming the animals but Adam is *taught* the names by God, (Q 2: 31). *Khilāfa* in Q 22:65 is after the fact of God’s prior “dominion” of the earth and humanity has merely to ensure what has already been realised. In Genesis, humanity is given the task of subduing creation. The qur’anic pattern might be seen to offer a far more absolute notion of governance: Adam as a prophet receiving the law of God as the designated caliph in anticipation of ensuing prophets and ultimately the Muhammad of the Medinan Constitution.

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840 Cragg, K. *A Certain Sympathy of Scriptures*, p. 38
841 Cragg, K. *A Certain Sympathy of Scriptures*, p. 84
842 Cragg, K. *A Certain Sympathy of Scriptures*, p. 59
Alister McGrath acknowledges that there is no equivalent notion of natural law in Islam; revelation only accessible in the eternal word of the Qur’an. Indeed, David Burrell asserts that the arena for experiencing the creative activity of God is in the verses (ayât) of the Qur’an due to the very absence of covenant and creation in Islam. Has Cragg effectively Christianised khilāfa into a doctrine of natural law Islam cannot bear? Anver Emon contradicts the popular assumptions about Islam’s rejection of natural law by tracing its demise to the success of the Asharite school over the Mu’tazalites. For Emon, there is a classic inheritance of natural law to be reclaimed and much of modernist, rationalistic Islamic thinking is rooted in this earlier tradition and ought to be given credence as “orthodoxy”.

Though Cragg’s political theology displays all the characteristics of a natural law reading, he never uses the phrase itself. In many ways, the argument against Cragg’s reading of khilāfa that Islam does not accept natural law is beside the point because what he is doing is taking the reading of the text seriously and critiquing it on its own terms. It is a generous reading because Cragg’s logic of khilāfa and dominion is that the only way humanity can know anything about God in his otherness is by his self-disclosure in kenosis. Taking Alasdair MacIntyre’s approach to dialogue between “incommensurable” traditions, Cragg is exercising a rational enquiry into the problem of utter transcendence in Islam and probing its success in the terms of its foundational text. The only “logic”, for Cragg, is that Islam must countenance divine

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848 MacIntyre, Alisdair. “Intractable Moral Disagreements.” In, Intractable Disputes About the Natural Law, edited by Lawrence S. Cunningham (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2009): 1-52, pp. 32-6, “For insofar as each enquiry is a genuinely rational enquiry, those who participate in it are bound to ask – and we who have imaginatively identified with their standpoint, at least for the moment, are also bound to ask – just how successful by their own standards their tradition has been and is at resolving the various issues that have arisen and do arise for it, issues that are problematic by its own standards and in its own terms”, p. 34. Cragg, I believe, is “imaginatively”
vulnerability from within those texts of delegated sovereignty. The onus is then on Islam to rebut or agree the conclusion of that enquiry. That very discourse becomes an exercise of political theology: of seeking a shared truth about humanity’s encounter with God’s transcendence in a process of dialogue.

Cragg’s reading of the Christological challenge to Medinan Islam has opened him up to the criticism that Christianity withdraws from the political realm. Maryam Jameelah observes that:

“How Christianity has…had nothing but contempt for the religious law as spiritually useless, this means that there is no divine guidance for the Christian in his collective life, therefore politics…are guided by opportunism and expediency”\(^\text{849}\)

To conclude that Cragg is presenting an apolitical Christian faith would be a misreading of his work, though. As he states elsewhere, “New Testament experience of grace does not deny Sinai; rather it retrieves its moral, without its ethnic, intention by other means.”\(^\text{850}\) The key for Cragg is that political power is not an aspiration for the Church, neither is it the decisive means for the fullest Christian witness. Thus, the cross of Christ “does not mean that Caesar’s realm was one of divine indifference, an autonomy absolved of all transcendent reference.”\(^\text{851}\) Indeed, “it is not to say that, therefore, only perpetual minority status and persecution make for sincerity or that faith is only wholesome in catacombs.”\(^\text{852}\) It is simply that there can never be a direct equation between the interests of human government and those of God. There must be a constant demurral of the ability of human government to be entirely trusted to implement the interests of God.

taking the standpoint of a serious reader of the text of the Qur’an and engaging with the issues that have and continue to arise over the utter transcendence of God in Islam

\(^{849}\) quoted in Lamb, C. *The Call to Retrieval*, p. 125
\(^{851}\) Cragg, K. *Muhammad and the Christian*, p. 159
\(^{852}\) Cragg, K. *Muhammad and the Christian*, p. 47
Timothy Winter refutes Cragg’s critique of the Muhammadan decision, accusing him of a needless polarity that ignores the political and social implications of Jesus’ prophethood. But Kenneth Cragg is not exempting “the order of faith from the aegis of politics. Religion is right to equip itself with rulership.” What Cragg would bring to any religio-political project is the truth of the complexity involved in “religion being wholly God’s.” Faith can be its own deception whereby “Allah is great” too easily becomes, “Islam is great” and “Jesus is Lord” becomes “The Church is Lord”; all the more so in the appropriation of power. So, the Medinan economy of dominance has to be qualified by the prior Meccan urge to worship of God regardless of social status.

An arguably more persuasive objection to Kenneth Cragg’s political theology is the consequent conclusion that the Church is never implicated in the sins of public life. When Cragg says that “Christianity belongs to and inheres in people who believe. It is never coterminous with any given society” there is a danger of idealising Christian political presence. Where, for Cragg, Islam idealises the ability of an Islamic political order to implement the will of God, there is a corresponding danger of idealising the Church so that it does not have to bear responsibility for corrupting the will of God in the exercise of its power. Thus, Christopher Lamb can write, “Christianity can in fact be exonerated from all the ills which its confessors may perpetrate, and remain innocent in any judgments delivered by history.” In the end, though, the Christological departure from Islam ensures that the Church embodies in the very manner of its message the judgment of the cross and so can only speak with humility. History may reveal the failure of Christians to meet the demands of the faith they follow but that is an indictment of humanity not of the God-in-Christ. This is no tidy

855 Cragg, K. Christianity in World Perspective, p. 129
856 Cragg, K. The Call of the Minaret, p. 295
857 Lamb, C. The Call to Retrieval, p. 87
resolution to the failures of the Christian political project but of the essence of the eschatological dilemma of the politico-theological question.

In arguing for a Meccan interpretation of Muhammad’s prophethood, Cragg identifies a new hijrah, a “departing” re-imagined without recourse to the establishment of a state. David Marshall points out that a truly qur’anic reading of the hijrah offers the Meccan paradigm as “pragmatic necessity” rather than “ultimate good” and is therefore rejecting the traditional Islamic view that minority status is a provisional stage. Charles Adams has accused Cragg of “Christianising” Islam by interpreting the Islamic attitude to politics in terms sympathetic to New Testament theology, thereby doing violence to the Islamic tradition. There is in this critique a very real challenge to Christian accounts of other faiths, especially when they otherwise espouse a hospitality that seeks to engage a tradition on its own terms. This hospitality, though, as David Marshall explains, “need not require the surrender of one’s own convictions and indeed can lead to a deeper understanding of them.” In fact, an honest appraisal of Islam by a Christian would conclude that the “story we tell cannot be made to fit into Islamic categories.” There is no “view from nowhere”, and no complete identification with Islam that stops short of becoming Muslim. Again, Cragg treads a path tense with the eschatological, “already and not yet”: the realised experience of the grace of God in Jesus and his people, the Church, and the “not yet” of God’s availability to all that call on him. In the cross of Christ, there is the inference that “the ground of hopefulness in Christian mission is one with the ground of hope in men (sic)”. The cross as definitive doctrine and Christian distinctive is the lens with which true humanity is viewed but this lens hobbles any doctrinaire closure about the activity of God within his creation.

Marshall, D. Learning from How Muslims See Christianity, p. 16
Cragg, K. Christianity in World Perspective, p. 217
The accusation that Cragg is Christianising the Qur’an might be hard to reject but for his persistent recognition of the will-to-power within Islam. Yet, there are glimpses of divine self-limiting in the Qur’an that accord with the incarnation and allow Cragg to probe the coherence of a power-ensured faith. The demurral of the angels at the conferment of dominion on Adam in Q 2 hints at a risk taken by God: “that the Divine lordship itself is in some sense staked in the human role”. This is consonant with what Cragg calls “the grand perhaps” of the Qur’an: “Perhaps you may give thanks, perhaps you may come to your senses, perhaps you may ponder and consider”. In this economy, divine vulnerability can anticipate a Saviour that dies at the hands of political power. Arguably, what is most crucial to Cragg’s engagement with Islamic polity is not his discussion of the respective structures of religious and secular power but his Christian convictions about the nature of the divine. A politics that is serious about the religious, for Cragg, demands a God who is not absolutely transcendent but somehow implicated in his creation, and even vulnerable to the sins of a fallen humanity. That there is enough within the Qur’an to suggest the penultimacy of temporal power and the possibility of divine restraint is confirmed by the temper of Shia martyrdom and Sufi mysticism.

The belligerence and self-sufficiency that is evident in the archetype of the Medinan polity is countered in two ways, then: recognition of the pragmatic realities of the failure of religiously ordained politics, and an appeal to Islam’s “surer, saner, larger mind”. What we have in Kenneth Cragg’s political theology is a deep suspicion of the will-to-power. Faith, even, can become a self-deception, and in the recognition of the one God, the “surer, saner, larger mind” offers a constant rejoinder to self-satisfaction and self-legitimation. If the Muslim is “perpetually mobilised to bring

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864 See Lamb, C. *The Call to Retrieval*, 123-149, for a summary of objections to Cragg’s writings, especially from Islamic critics. For Hamidullah, Cragg offers a “sugar-coated pill”, p. 123
865 Cragg, K. *The Privilege of Man*, p. 27-28
866 Cragg, K. *The Privilege of Man*, p. 33
867 Cragg, K. *God’s Wrong is Most of All: Divine Capacity* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2006), pp. 115-6
about the actualisation of the absolute on earth”, as al-Faruqi states, there is the internal paradox that God’s unity would disqualify all absolutes.\textsuperscript{869} Echoing Dag Hammarskjöld’s sense of being “responsible for God”, there is an “inter-liability between God and ourselves” that Cragg would see as intrinsic to true faith.\textsuperscript{870}

In summary, then, Kenneth Cragg would seek to find within Islam reasons for a fully religious citizenship that can settle with minority status and a resistance to the power-equation. The Christian grounds for advocating this stress the shared dominion of humanity and the corrosiveness of power to the religious sensibility. Thus, Christendom is an aberration; the state is always to be desacralized and relativized.

The two main avenues for Cragg’s political theology then are creation and incarnation. Following the influence of the \textit{Lux Mundi} school and consonant with the patristic legacy flowing through Hooker and Andrewes, a theology of natural law grounds an inclusive politics made distinct by its trinitarian impulses. First and foremost, Christians and Muslims are responsible to a creator God and given delegated sovereignty in the temporal realm. On that basis, there is the potential for shared endeavour: a politics of the common good. This common good is not specific; nowhere does Cragg provide content for such Christian-Muslim politics. Rather, he offers shared space for the conversation towards mutual politics that suggest a \textit{heuristic} endeavour. In similar ways to Patrick Riordan’s articulation of the common good as heuristic, Cragg encourages a politics “which is to be discovered in the exploration of what is the human good”.\textsuperscript{871}

The good order of creation of which Christians and Muslims are a part is one infused with the life of God. The participatory ontology of Richard Hooker and Eastern Orthodox understandings of God’s \textit{kenosis} operative in the life of the trinity that energises all people are evident in Cragg’s cosmology. As Eric Mascall, like Donald Allchin, an Anglican scholar deeply influenced by Orthodoxy and the patristic

\textsuperscript{870} Cragg, Kenneth. \textit{The Qur’an and the West}, p. 80
tradition, says, “Nature has, simply as nature, a potentia oboedientialis for the supernatural.”\(^{872}\) The created order is, of necessity, always open to the Creator, and hence the hopeful patience of the “Christian Presence” school of which Cragg was a part. This is why, as we noted in Chapter 3, Cragg’s theology is given affirmation by an Orthodox scholar such as Olivier Clément\(^{873}\) and he is bracketed in the same category of Catholic “mainstream” scholars of religion such as Jean Daniélou of the Christian Presence school within Catholicism.\(^{874}\)

The doctrine of creation affirms that Christians and Muslims are exploring “human good” in the political realm while the doctrine of the incarnation permits this exploration to be practised responsively to God. A Reformed sensitivity to individual and structural sin undermines any sense of complacency in the exercise of political power. Thus, the cross of Christ acts as a constant challenge to Islam even if natural law propels Christians and Muslims to a joint trusteeship of creation. This is where Cragg’s great theme of hospitality is most keenly apparent. For Cragg, hospitality is “surely the closet of all analogies to the meaning of the Gospel.”\(^{875}\) The concept of hospitality that we saw developing in Anglican documents of Christian-Muslim relations, epitomised by Generous Love, allows for the integrity of Christians and Muslims where both parties can become changed in the encounter. A politics of khilāfa and dominion allows Christians and Muslims to be mutually responsive in their exercise of the common good. The persistent “cross-reference” of Cragg retains the trinitarian, redemptive trajectory, while the consciousness of the will-to-power that can so easily supersede true faith guards against the self-validating totalising of the other.

Robert Murray’s The Cosmic Covenant provides an analogous account to Cragg’s khilāfa and dominion of human stewardship based in the creation narratives of the

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\(^{872}\) Mascall, E. L. The Openness of Being (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), p. 146


\(^{875}\) Cragg, K. Christianity in World Perspective, p. 71
Hebrew Bible. Murray’s “cosmic covenant” is a charge from the natural law tradition to a shared responsibility for the earth. In language reminiscent of Cragg, Murray speaks of humanity’s “vice-regal” relationship to God.\textsuperscript{876} As John Milbank points out, though, the emphasis on creation in Murray’s account fails to incorporate the manifest and potential consequences of fallen-ness. Murray’s preference for a strand of Judaic readings of sin as a dualistic constant back to the origins of creation both diminishes the Christian and Augustinian understanding of original sin and qualifies the perfection of the original creation.\textsuperscript{877} Cragg decidedly does not make that mistake.

It is submitted that it is Cragg’s redemptive trajectory, his attention to original sin, which distinguishes his political theology from the incarnationalist Anglican tradition. Where aspects of the \textit{Lux Mundi} school saw the incarnation as the summit of God’s revelation, and consequently the Christian Nation as the archetype of graced politics, Cragg’s engagement with Islam produces a political theology that is always cross-referenced. That Cragg’s political theology reflects the theme of hospitality and has such a Reformed flavour makes his vision comparable to that of the explicitly political theology of Oliver O’Donovan. O’Donovan, too, has exhibited what has been described as a political theology of “hospitality” that follows MacIntyre in allowing the integrities of self and other whilst generating points of “\textit{ad hoc}” commensurability.\textsuperscript{878}

The relationship of the \textit{ekklesia} to society is bound up in an understanding of the mission of God as the trinitarian life and hope of creation. Within this economy, the cross is set as a crucial event in the redemptive purposes of God for that creation. O’Donovan seeks to rehabilitate Christendom as, at least, a legitimate outcome of the

\textsuperscript{876} Murray, Robert. \textit{The Cosmic Covenant: Biblical Themes of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation} (London: Sheed & Ward, 1992), 98
\textsuperscript{877} Milbank, John. \textit{The Word Made Strange: Theology, Language, Culture} (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 263
success of the mission of the Western Church in a way that would make Cragg uncomfortable. Yet they are both keen to stress the need for a transcendent accounting of secular sovereignty. To that extent, Cragg’s ambivalent defence of the Church of England’s established status is more about its role in challenging the omnicompetent state than it is a conviction about its inherent worth.\textsuperscript{879} Similarly, Michael Ipgrave argues for a “hospitable establishment”, after Archbishop George Carey, that is sensitive to the anxieties as to what might fill the vacuum of a post-establishment polity.\textsuperscript{880}

A distinctive element of O’Donovan’s political theology is his assertion that the juridical role of the state requires a moral foundation of specifically Christian character. The Christian faith is best fitted to ground the judgments of law and any purported neutrality is merely a veiled absolutism that leads to atomised individualism.\textsuperscript{881} O’Donovan’s belief in the religious grounding of the juridical echoes something of Carl Schmitt’s political theology.\textsuperscript{882} However, he is not advocating a fixed shape to the political, merely asserting the philosophical logic that the law demands a moral foundation. It is only in that sense that O’Donovan could be said to advocate for the Christian Nation. The practice of hospitality is in the interplay of negotiations around the shared ends of \textit{ad hoc} points of commensurability: in Cragg’s terms, the delegated sovereignty that both Christians and Muslims believe in. How law is grounded will be explored in the analysis of Rowan Wiliams’ Shari’a law speech, but it is important to underline the resonances that Cragg’s \textit{khilāfa} and dominion themes hold within wider Anglican political theologies. Again, in Samuel Wells’ \textit{God’s Companions} there is an emphasis on hospitality as a primary theme for

\textsuperscript{879} Cragg, K. \textit{Defending (the) Faith} (London: New Millennium, 1997), pp. 167-78
\textsuperscript{882} Schmitt, Carl. \textit{The Concept of the Political} (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007)
Anglican social ethics shaped in the practice of the eucharist. For O’Donovan, Wells, and Cragg, the practice of hospitality does not give a programme for Anglican politics, but an impulse to traditioned and open engagement with the other that can both challenge and receive, pastor and prophesy.

4.4 Rowan Williams: Interactive Pluralism and Islam

Archbishop Rowan Williams’ Shari’a law speech of 2008 sits at the intersection of the debate around the role of a church established by law and the recognition of the distinct nature of Islam in public life. In many ways, the speech was merely one of a number of lectures that presented Williams’ vision of faith’s relationship to the state: his argument for “interactive pluralism” following the political theology of Neville Figgis. Williams suggests that English law needed to give proper recognition to other religious communities, citing the case of Shari’a law. His argument has precedent in the accommodation of aspects of Orthodox Jewish law, but mention of

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Shari'a evoked images of Shari'a as violence and repression. Williams was applying the work of Neville Figgis to the contemporary issue of how space could be made for Islam in its fully political “otherness”, within the English legal system.

This “otherness” does not derive from any sense of Islam as an alien intrusion to British or European culture, rebutting the notion of a “clash of civilisations”. Williams admits a “cultural mind-set” deriving from the Christian influence on Europe whereby there is a marked separation of religious and secular governance. Islam’s growing presence is thus a distinctive challenge as to how religion is now negotiated. Islam has brought a particular challenge to the West about the perceived individualism of the Christian faith whereby there is no apparent “Christian law”. The otherness of Islam is instead constituted in Williams’ Eastern Orthodox cosmology: “whenever I face another human being, I face a mystery.” The participative ontology of the neo-patristic synthesis is readily apparent in his statement that “every person is related to God before they are related to anything or anyone else.” Thus, political structures setting up legal and territorial constraints on inter-relationships can only be contingent. As Williams admits, there is a strain of

886 Myers, Benjamin. Christ the Stranger: The theology of Rowan Williams (London/New York: T & T Clark International, 2012), p. 63: “His remarks on Islamic sharia law were greeted with cries of alarm and incredulity: tabloid papers ran hysterical headlines about a ‘victory for terrorists’ or ‘a victory for al Qaeda’, while one Home Office minister complained that Williams wanted ‘to fundamentally change the rule of law’.”

887 “Islam has long been bound up with Europe’s internal identity as a matter of simple historical fact, and it stands on a cultural continuum with Christianity, not in some completely different frame,” Williams, Rowan. Archbishop’s Liverpool Lecture: “Europe, Faith and Culture”, p. 4

888 Williams, Rowan. Islam, Christianity and Pluralism (Richmond: AMSS UK, 2007), pp. 10-1

889 Williams, Rowan. “Christianity: Public Religion and the Common Good”, p. 2

“negative theology” propelling his political theology, again echoing the influence of Vladimir Lossky.  

Williams advocates the primacy of the voluntary corporation. For Figgis this was an argument for the personality of the trade union. The state, then, has a relegated sovereignty and is thus merely an “association of associations”. This assures the “eschatological reserve” of the Augustinian doctrine of the two and gives space for the respective integrities of religious communities. In this economy, the liberalism of a genuine plurality stems from a corresponding ecclesiology of conciliarity; of unity in diversity:

“This relative independence - never absolute independence - of parish, of diocese of province, of local union, this organic and federalist conception of the whole, is at one with the facts of life in society of all kinds. We must remember that society does not cease to be society because it called itself the Church.”

Similarly, Williams emphasises the sociality and diversity of the Church as an anticipation of the fully human: the intrinsic of true politics. Rooting himself in the ecclesial turn of political theology and commending a eucharistic centring of that life, Williams asserts that “the future has arrived in the assembly of believers around Word and Sacrament”. That is alternately a claim about what it means to be fully human and a guard against supposing that that can be realised in the realm of political order. Indeed, when “the Kingdom of God becomes a contender alongside others for the control of debated territory; it becomes less than itself.” Interactive pluralism therefore demands a very Augustinian eschatological reserve over the temporal order of politics. As Williams states in an early essay on Augustine’s *City of God*, “Augustine’s condemnation of ‘public life’ in the classical world is, consistently, that

891 Williams, Rowan. Archbishop’s Liverpool Lecture: “Europe, Faith and Culture”, p. 5
it is not public enough”. The Church is the repository of truly communal human flourishing but that can never be imposed or replicated in the provisional structures of the temporal state. Building on the outlines of Anglican ecclesiology in Chapter 1 as an incomplete church constituted by a diverse authority, politics, likewise, should follow that inherent belief in human sociality from which the ekklesia is the archetype. Thus, Williams can say that “the whole idea of sacralised central authority, a single source of law, might be questionable, in the visible Church as much as in the state.”

Even from the vantage point of early twentieth century Britain, Figgis, the formative influence on Williams’ political vision, had a clear-sighted view that “English Society is ceasing to be Christian” and that “Our hopes will only be realised when we give up, as I have heard it put, ‘playing at being a majority.’” In Rupert Shortt’s biography of Williams, a former colleague talks of previous archbishops wanting to “give a moral and spiritual lead to the nation as a whole on particular issues”; “[Archbishop George] Carey shared that belief, but could not make it a reality. I question whether Rowan even wants to try.” Williams displays a similar diffidence to Cragg about the will-to-power and a rejection of the idea that the church should seek any privileged position of law in society. However, the Shari’a speech itself was notably about the legal system and on behalf of Muslims and by no means assumed a marginal role for the Church of England. A nuanced reading of Williams’ interactive pluralism as it stands today would suggest that spiritual leadership is offered but not presumed, and that that leadership strives to find the common good with other communities of difference. The Church of England’s role is then “not to campaign for

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897 Figgis, John Neville. Religion and English Society, p. vii. See also his Churches in the Modern State (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1913)
political control…but for public visibility”. This is no mere “multiculturalism” that posits an anarchic accumulation of plural cultures and religions in parallel. As Mike Higton says, “What Williams is asking for is a means of bringing this religious community more fully into public conversation.” The best of the Christian inheritance of political theology, for Williams, decentres the legitimacy of communal identities and gives the state the role of brokering the acceptable limits of religious activity in the interactive negotiations across communities of difference. Rather than a supposed neutral state devolving what religious groups can and cannot do, traditions have a presupposed integrity. Deliberations over shared goods arbitrated by the state become the place for the establishment of the boundaries of those religious activities.

There is no appeal to a purported universal realm of the “secular” in Williams’ ideas, such as Cragg invokes, rather an organic pluralism that realises public religion in the dynamic interaction over shared goods. Thus, the distinctive nature of those religions is guarded and difference recognised and embraced within the unity of those shared goods. Figgis can say, then, whilst affirming public space for all “associations”, that “The accent ought to be not on the likeness, but on the difference of Christianity from its rivals, whether philosophic or ethical or religious.” Likewise, Williams states that “I don’t believe that religious dialogue is ever advanced by denying difference.” Williams’ political theology protects the integrities of Islam whilst, in the agonistic interaction over shared goods, it allows for the exploration of the limits of, say, Shari’a law, as they affect the most vulnerable, and recognises the diversity of cultures and religions. It is across the dynamic of the primary units of religious communities, and not via a state apparatus that assumes a religious role, that the due limits of religious laws are realised. This political theology enables Williams to offer

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899 Williams, Rowan. “Christianity: Public Religion and the Common Good”, p. 3
903 Williams, Rowan. Islam, Christianity and Pluralism, p. 2
a critique to Islam as well as opening up deliberations of partnership. By 
acknowledging the essential otherness of Islam, the integrities of religious motivation 
and distinctives are guarded and these can be brought into the discourse of politics 
rather than bracketed out.

The question for this model of interactive pluralism, then, seems to be, what is to be 
done where those shared goods are not apparent or there is an insuperable conflict 
between communities about the ultimate ends of law?

The shortcomings of Figgis’ ideas among the pluralists of the 1930’s identified by Matthew Grimley seem relevant 
to Williams’ contemporary account:

“A society in which the main unit was the interest group would be prone to 
selfishness and conflict. In its way Figgis’ pluralism was as dangerous as 
individualism, because like individualism it presented a fragmented and self- 
interested picture of social relations.”

A traditional criticism of the omnicompetent state was that it portrayed the individual 
in competition with the state, and thus in necessarily self-seeking mode: ‘Man versus 
the State’. Figgis was countering this tendency by advocating for the strength of 
voluntary associations, recognised by the state. According to Grimley, Figgis may 
well have fallen into the trap of another relationship of self-aggrandisement: ‘Groups 
versus the State’. Has Williams merely replaced the old ‘Man versus the State’ 
distinction with ‘Islam versus the State’?

Thus, the public square becomes an arena 
for the competing self-interest of religious groups such as the Church, Islam, and so 
on, with the inevitable problems of identifying which groups or leaders are 
appropriately representative of these constituencies. In this economy, the common 
good is in danger of taking second place to the selfish aspirations of religious

904 See Jackson, Bernard. “‘Transformative Accommodation’ and Religious Law”, Ecclesiastical Law 
Society, Volume II, No. 2 (May, 2009): 131-153 which questions Williams’ lecture from a Jewish 
perspective, arguing that the “transformative accommodation” that Williams proposes, in the case of 
Jewish marriage, results in the conflation of civic and religious institutions

905 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 77

906 Grimley, Matthew. Citizenship, Community, and the Church of England, p. 77
communities. The ability of these respective groups to wield power and influence within a mode of competitive self-interest renders the public square more akin to a marketplace.

John Milbank warms to Williams’ defence of corporatist religious identities but sees that defence as needing to be built upon a single cultural foundation that is at least broadly Christian: “We can only accommodate Islam on our own terms…Something always rules, and this something is always substantive.” To recognise coercive religious law within the English legal system, as legal recognition of Shari’a presumes, would erode the liberties of both Christianity and Enlightenment as Islam is a “rival universality to that of Christianity”. It is only a Christian metaphysics, through its “traditioned character of reason” that can attain the sort of political legitimacy that provides public space for other religions, albeit in a qualified fashion. According to Milbank, the supersessionism of Islam and its absolutist conception of tawhid militate against the absorption of cultural influences and underscore a violent totalising of the other. Milbank sees the European project as an essentially “catholic” project of graced reason that recognises universal humanity in a way that is alien to Islam and politically distinct. Again, the root theology of the respective understanding of divinity is crucial here:

“Allah is impersonal; for the most orthodox Islamic theology he enjoys no beatitude (unlike the Christian God), much less suffers pain. And he certainly does not express himself internally in an image like the Christian Logos. Hence rule here on earth cannot reflect Allah.”

909 Milbank, John. “Multiculturalism in Britain and the Political Identity of Europe”, p. 278
Islam’s traditional non-sacramental nature mitigates against any rational space for the other. According to Milbank, where reason cannot offer any insights to the nature of God, natural law having to coincide with the revelation of the Qur’an, then the religious other becomes totalised into the political agenda of the revealed religion.

Milbank identifies a common ecclesiology with Williams but sees that what is missing in the Shari’a law speech is the confidence to assert the unique ability of the Christian meta-narrative to ground religious plurality. Williams’ admission that the gift of the European Christian inheritance is to qualify the claims of the state should, according to Milbank, alert him to its cultural significance as a hedge against totalitarianism. Rather than following through their shared identification with a eucharistic, integral theology to which the doctrine of the incarnation is vital, Williams has been tempted to “consecrate uncertainty”. In effect, Williams’ use of “liberalism” rather than “Christendom” as a schema for the interactive pluralism he advocates in the Shari’a law lecture is a failure of nerve on his part. For Milbank, “Not to believe in Christendom is not to believe in the Incarnation which (according to Maximus the Confessor) is a continuing dynamic reality.” Milbank accuses Williams of exhibiting the inadequacies of the Anglican incarnationalist tendency in elevating the divine self-giving into a principle that effectively limits the godhead, collapsing into heterodoxy, and thereby “bound to fail”. Williams’ agonistic epistemology that we noted in Chapter 3 is apparent in his advocacy of interactive pluralism: Gillian Rose’s “broken middle” the place where the other can be known. It is ironic that Milbank accuses Williams of succumbing to the glorification of failure; a weakness that Williams himself challenged in his observation of an absence of a redemptive trajectory in the *Lux Mundi* school. The neo-patristic synthesis

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912 Milbank, John. “Shari’a and the True Basis of Group Rights”, p. 155
exemplified by Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs von Balthasar is where Milbank would prefer to see Williams source and carry through his metaphysics.\textsuperscript{915}

Milbank is effectively contending with Williams’ un-intentioned sacralisation of the secular. Because Williams sees the state has holding the ring as broker of interactive pluralism, Milbank believes that, by the back door, his Augustinianism is compromised. That role is based on a vision of what it means to be fully human and if divorced from Christian roots, its “liberalism” attains religious status. Thus, a nation that seeks to give space to the “religious”, for Milbank, “has to be religious in a specific way.”\textsuperscript{916} A truly incarnational theology would instead be able to embody the victory of the incarnation as embodied in Latin Catholicism’s rebuttal of the sacrality of the secular.\textsuperscript{917} Curiously for the Anglican Milbank, the role of the “godly prince” that obtains in Anglican and Eastern Orthodox traditions is rejected in favour of the confident espousal of the primacy of the Christian culture of the Catholic Church exhibited in Pope Benedict XVI’s Regensburg Address.\textsuperscript{918}

This is where a distinction can be drawn between O’Donovan’s rehabilitation of Christendom and Milbank’s metaphysics. O’Donovan’s assertion of evangelical freedom and the doctrine of the godly prince situates him in the Reformation tradition. His advocacy of the Christian roots to a state is a philosophical assertion of the moral basis for law. Milbank, with Benedict, is arguing for Christian culture. Williams, with Cragg, is all too conscious of the flipside of Christian culture and civilisation; the fallen-ness that requires the judgment of a godly prince. Milbank’s metaphysics seems

\textsuperscript{915} The metaphysical, Platonic roots of Radical Orthodoxy and the political derivations of this into “Red Toryism” are described in Coombs, Nathan. “The political theology of red Toryism”, \textit{Journal of Political Ideologies}, Volume 16, No. 1 (February 2011): 79-96

\textsuperscript{916} Milbank, John. “Shari’a and the True Basis of Group Rights”, p. 138

\textsuperscript{917} For a Catholic incarnational political theology which echoes the logic of Milbank’s position see Nichols, Aidan. \textit{Christendom Awake: On Re-energising the Church in Culture} (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999)

overly idealised. Nigel Biggar critiques Milbank on this basis arguing that he conflates Augustine’s dual conception of the “earthly city”: the narrow, eschatological sense of “the proud and selfish, those predestined to be damned” and the “realm of the merely practical”.919 The “practical” or what Biggar also refers to as the very Anglican concern for the “empirical”, blurs the boundaries of what is indicative of “Christ” and what is not. Agreeing with Eric Gregory, he believes that Milbank is too concerned with “isms”: “totalitarianism, paganism, terrorism, materialism” and this is at the expense of stereotyping and caricaturing the other.920 Noting Milbank’s monolithic account of Islam, this critique seems to be well placed.921

From a legal standpoint, the simple polarity suggested by Milbank disguises the pragmatic realities of constitutional pluralism, further supporting the idea that the practical and empirical “earthly city” has been conflated with the eschatological. Russell Sandberg, in his seminal account of religious law, responds to those critics of Williams that argued for the monist cultural roots of the legal system. The actual legal situation presents a far more variegated picture than the rhetoric of a unitary, binding culture would suggest:

“Religious law is already recognised in England and Wales in several different ways…the rules and structures of religious associations are binding on assenting members through the doctrine of ‘consensual compact’. Moreover, religious laws and practices are free to operate where the law of the State is silent.”922

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As Sandberg states elsewhere, “the Archbishop’s nuanced lecture deserves nuanced responses. And part of that nuance is the recognition of the complex ways in which Islam and the law already interact.”

The original debate around the Shari'a law speech occurred within the context of the New Labour appeal to “community cohesion”. Mark Chapman’s warm endorsement of Williams’ interactive pluralism concludes with a summary affirmation of the primacy of the association: “The panacea for the problems of community cohesion lies in trusting the people”. This would seem to suggest a degree of complacency unwarranted by either Williams’ speech or Figgis’ writings. In view of his comment that “Without God, human society becomes barren and decays” one wonders what Figgis would make of challenges to the Church of England today. He is most certainly alive to the dangers of a society or nation without any moral compass. Williams, too, recognises that:

“There has therefore to be some concept of common good that is not prescribed solely in terms of revealed Law, however provisional or imperfect such a situation is thought to be. And this implies in turn that the Muslim, even in a predominantly Muslim state, has something of a dual identity, as citizen and as believer within the community of the faithful.”

For Williams, though, there is a conscious avoidance of a description of what that common good is that might bind Christian and Muslim communities into a cohesive society. Instead, the primary objective seems to be to ensure that religious language

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925 Figgis, John Neville. Hopes for English Religion, p. 132
926 “The higher goods even of human culture will not persist apart from a spiritual ideal”, Figgis, John Neville. Hopes for English Religion, p. 132
927 Williams, Rowan. “Civil and Religious Law in England: A Religious Perspective”
928 For Milbank, it is a “teleological ethics” that is missing from Williams’ account: what is the group goal for the whole society? In Milbank’s account, though, only the catholic spirit can found an
is acceptable in the public sphere, thereby challenging “stateism” and the “persistent
and at the moment rather over anxious, social concern with preserving a kind of
‘neutrality’ in the public sphere.” Thus, like Cragg, he is alive to the need to retain
the transcendent critique of temporal governance. That this flows from his prior
Christian beliefs about what being fully human is incontrovertible; and this is where
Milbank’s critique is surely apposite.

Where Cragg’s “perplexity” stems from a hermeneutic of suspicion around the place
of power in relation to religion, Williams’ agonism seems to flow from his apophatic
sensibility. The interactive pluralism that is described is, at heart, the practice of
“contemplatives”. Williams’ Eastern Orthodox sensibility and indebtedness to the
Desert Fathers demands that “the political calling of the Church” takes the via
negativa. It is instructive that Williams makes his discomfort with the language of
Christian civilisation and culture more explicit in an account of Thomas Merton’s
political theology. Seeing threads joining Olivier Clément and Paul Evdokimov, the
“eastern idiom” that has so shaped Williams, enables him to advocate a
“homelessness” that does not need to be nurtured in the “static ideological
construction” of the Church or the world. Only by fostering detachment such that it is
accepted “that Christendom will not return and there is only a minority future” can the
true polis of the Church be a comprehensive blessing to the world. That is the great
lesson of the contemplative tradition for Williams and vital to his political
theology.

inclusive common good. Milbank, John. “Multiculturalism in Britain and the Political Identity of
Europe”, p. 275

Williams, Rowan. Islam, Christianity and Pluralism, 12

See also, Williams, Rowan. “Monastic Virtue and Ecumenical Hopes: The Archbishop of
Canterbury’s Address at San Gregorio al Celio, 11 March 2012”, One in Christ, Volume 46, No. 2
(Winter, 2012): 306-313

Williams, Rowan. “Relations between the Church and state today: what is the role of the Christian
citizen?”, 1st March 2011, available at:
today-what-is-the-role-of-the-christian-citizen downloaded on 8th March 2012, p. 4

Williams, Rowan. “The Only Real City’: Monasticism and the Social Vision.” In, A Silent Action:
Engagements with Thomas Merton (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2011): 55-68
The influence of the monastic and Eastern Orthodox tradition becomes decisive in Williams’ rejection of the Christian Nation and Christian Civilisation. His apophatic sensibility requires that there be no “territorial anxiety”, no need to see “borders defended or patrolled”. Instead, Williams posits an Anglican hospitality that risks the dynamic of relationship; of challenge and partnership, proclamation and dialogue. Thus, when asked to contribute to a collection of essays on “Being British”, Williams eschews any attempt to provide “an essence of British identity” and emphasises, rather, a “history characterised by unsuccessful victories”. Asked directly about how helpful the concept of the “Christian Nation” is, Williams responds with a simple “not very”, and cautions that “usually when we use Christian Nation it is generally used to bang someone over the head”. Along with Cragg, any recourse to the church’s self-validation through the aegis of power denies the cruciform impulse at the Church’s heart.

4.5 Conclusion

The identification of the Church of England with national identity and national consciousness has been a persistent theme in the political theology of the church. This has resulted in the outsider, the other, often portrayed as a threat to national life, security and civilisation. Islam both historically and in its contemporary presence has filled that role such that national loyalty has often been conflated with ecclesial identity.

935 Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams by Richard Sudworth & Stefanie Hugh-Donovan, Lambeth Palace 6th September 2012, See Appendix
Potential resources for a political theology that makes space for Islam in its otherness have depended upon an understanding of natural law, building upon the creation and incarnation of God. Thus, an appreciation of unity in diversity and the presence of God in revelation beyond the Church have been used to ground plurality. These trinitarian theologies have been explicitly drawn from the patristic milieu as expounded by Hooker and Andrewes, in particular. However, the Elizabethan and Caroline Divines set in place a very fixed identification between state and Church that, in its formative realisation, seems to prohibit space for Islam.

Later adaptations of natural law and the significance of creation and incarnation to political theology began to speak of the “Christian Nation” and “national character”, incorporating the Hegelian concept of the personality of the state. Thus, Coleridge, Gladstone and then Maurice provided a more inclusive vision that still asserted the primacy of the Church of England as the nation at worship. The Lux Mundi school gave fullest theological articulation to Maurice’s vision, explicitly drawing from the Church Fathers in a bid to reassert tradition reflexively with modern criticism. This “incarnationalist” stream of kenotic theology that had so much influence on Kenneth Cragg saw a broad coincidence between the values of the church and those of the nation. In the twentieth century, its decisive role in church life became realised in the Second World War under Archbishop William Temple, and its pervasive influence continues through Faith in the City, to Faithful Cities. This incarnationalist stream elevates the self-emptying of Christ and follows a social analogy of the trinity that sometimes seems to unhook the trinity, falling into tritheism, and thus weakening the redemptive aspect of the Christian gospel. The implications for political theology are that the church ceases to challenge personal and structural sin, colluding in the failures of the state. Additionally, an overly incarnationalist approach seems to deny real otherness to other faiths by assimilating them into the presumptive vocation of propping up the values of wider society. When incarnationalism loses its theological rigour, the Church of England has tended to have a weak public presence and been subsumed under a wider discourse of identity politics, sometimes at the expense of its own vocation, and been unable to challenge other faiths. An alternative, pluralist, redemptive trajectory exists in Anglicanism, which has had less public profile, but
which seeks to allow for a diverse public square and to assert that the discovery of the shared good is realised in the interactive encounters between communities of difference.

Kenneth Cragg speaks less explicitly about political theology, and is less concerned to situate his proposals in a wider tradition of political theory. His articulation of the principles of khilāfa and dominion depend upon a belief in natural law for the pursuit of the shared good between Christians and Muslims. Cragg attempts to use Islamic tradition and text in articulating this political theology, and is thus in danger of Christianising Islam. Drawing from the *Lux Mundi* school, *kenosis* becomes an important motif in discovering God at work in the world and in the other. However, it seems that Cragg’s evangelicalism and missionary sensibility dies hard because his sensitivity to the will-to-power makes him very attune to the need for the cross. The dangers of power on the life of faith ensure that the Christian Nation concept can never be anything other than a pragmatic consequence of history, rather than a programmatic ideal. Ultimately, Cragg builds his political theology out of a keen awareness of the trinity, providing both continuity and discontinuity with the *Lux Mundi* school.

Rowan Williams’ political theology draws from the pluralist stream of Anglicanism epitomised by Neville Figgis. This rejects the unitary personality of the state and any notion of the Christian Nation. For Williams, the church’s political theology allows for the foundational realities of traditioned communities, the state merely being an arbiter in the negotiation of shared goods and the limits of religious life that are prior to the state. This permits space for the integrity of Islam in its otherness. Williams seeks a more nuanced incarnationalism that is truer to the Church Fathers in its understanding of the trinity and thus seems to go back beyond Anglican re-appropriations of that tradition. For Williams, the grammar of the trinity means that any over-arching political scheme seeking to incorporate the other is illusory.

Oliver O’Donovan and John Milbank offer different challenges to Cragg and Williams in their espousal of Christendom. O’Donovan argues that the act of jurisdiction is a moral act and therefore needs to be grounded in a religious vision.
Milbank argues that the Christian metaphysic is the only basis for plurality in unity. Both of their critiques suffer from the weakness of abstracting from the reality of contemporary British life. The English and British legal systems are, *de facto*, based on plural value systems. As the Church of England is not a majority confession in England, it cannot expect to impose its values on the nation, even if that were desirable. Nigel Biggar’s appeal to the “empirical” as an Anglican temper accords with the contextual character of Anglicanism we noted in Chapter 1. Both Cragg and Williams, in their different ways, seem to ground a political theology on a confessional basis while giving space for Islam to be truly other. The Milbank and O’Donovan critiques arguably raise the importance of the proclamatory to the political, where Williams and Cragg are overly diffident and agonistic. If the Church embodies the anticipation of the true humanity, the presumption of the ecclesial turn, then there is an eschatological value to what the Christian vision of the social life is to the whole world. Where Williams and Cragg are able to counter O’Donovan and Milbank is in their attentiveness to the pragmatic realities of the Church’s sin. Underlying all their specific articulations of a political theology in response to Islam, though, is a need to recognise the “sacramental”: at least some degree of natural law. If Islam cannot concede a realm of the sacramental, it would seem that Islam’s own ability to make space for the other is inherently problematized.
CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

5.1 The Ecclesial Turn in Anglican Inter-Religious Encounter: expanding the canon

An analysis of formal Anglican documents on other faiths has demonstrated an ecclesial turn in the inter-religious encounter. From tentative explorations of theologies of religions in the 1980’s and 1990’s, the Anglican Communion has sought to root its engagement with other faiths in the self-understanding of the Church as participant in the trinitarian life of God. While it was anticipated in the 1980’s and 1990’s that novel schema for interfaith relations would need to be discovered in the perceived new vista of religious plurality, a contrary retrieval of ecclesial tradition has governed the Church of England’s theology since the late 1990’s. This retrieval has involved a re-appropriation of the originating trinitarian discourse of the first encounters of the Eastern Christian tradition with Islam and of a patristic sensibility, especially as articulated in the neo-patristic synthesis of the Russian Orthodox émigré movement and modern Eastern Orthodox theology. Additionally, the contemporary experience of Anglicans across the world has been retrieved in the diversity of Christian-Muslim encounters.

A re-centring in the Church’s own identity as a basis for relations, rather than a search for an all-embracing schema of religions has been particularly responsive to the specific challenges of the encounter with Islam. Thus, issues of persecution and the struggles of Christian communities in contexts of Islamic political dominance have come to sharpen the need for an understanding of relations that is more diverse and pragmatic, embracing proclamation and dialogue, partnership and challenge. The experiences of the worldwide Anglican Communion have been instrumental in widening the scope of what informs the Church of England’s own perception of the Christian-Muslim encounter.936

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936 Dan Hardy’s response to the atrocity of 9/11 has been to argue for a traditioned, ecumenical, ecclesial engagement with Islam at local and global levels: Hardy, Daniel H. “The Church after
The trinitarian hue to this theology of inter-religious relations has meant that the motif of hospitality has been particularly paramount: the church, as eucharistic community, acting as both host and guest to Muslims. This dynamic enables a variety of encounters to be realised, and retains the ecclesial focus of relations. Drawing from the Christian Presence school of Kenneth Cragg, along with John V. Taylor and Max Warren, the encounter with Islam is both an opportunity to present the claims of the Christian gospel and to discover God in the religious other. This Christian Presence school resonates with the theological architects of Vatican II, notably Jean Daniélou, Louis Massignon, Jules Monchanin and Henri de Lubac. This theology, essentially a “missionary” theology, sees the fulfilment of the religious impulse in Christ, the role of Muhammad and the Qur’an as pointers to the completion of revelation anticipated in the Church at worship in the eucharist.

Kenneth Cragg has had a direct influence on the theologies of inter-religious encounter of Anglicanism, his themes of “embassy” and “hospitality” persistent motifs that reach their climax in the 2008 document Generous Love. Cragg has been influenced by the Lux Mundi school of incarnationalist theology that sought to combine tradition and modernity around the central understanding of kenosis. While Cragg himself does not seem to explicitly retrieve the patristic tradition, his natural theology and sacramentalism are in sympathy with the theologies espoused by the Lux Mundi school. The evangelical and missionary heritage that Cragg represents is apparent in the consistent challenge of the cross to Islam: the suffering Christ as agent of victory in weakness over the sins that even beset the religious impulse. This posits a trinitarian pattern to the encounter with other faiths and a measure of the contemplative in the possibility that God may be discovered and revealed in that encounter. While Cragg overlooks the contribution of the Eastern Church in the formative encounters with Islam, in contrast to Sidney Griffith, his theology instinctively accords with that trinitarian and contemplative temper.

Rowan Williams, in comparable fashion, has influenced the recent ecclesial turn in Anglican inter-religious relations through his explicit indebtedness to the Eastern Christian tradition in its contemplative aspect through the Desert Fathers, and as received through the influence of the Russian émigré movement in modern Eastern Orthodoxy. A participatory ontology that roots the encounter with the other in the self-understanding of the Church as participant in the trinity is the impulse to both proclaim Christ and to receive Christ in the mystery of Christian Presence. As well as this being a sacramental and ecclesial metaphysic, Williams is also shaped by a philosophical commitment to the essential mystery of the other in relationship. Both Williams and Cragg have this mystical, contemplative sensibility in their responsiveness to Islam, rejecting any closure in the encounter or any desire to dictate the finality and definitiveness of Islam. Generous Love marks a particular indebtedness to both their influences: Cragg in his motifs of embassy and hospitality; Williams in his contemplative, modern Eastern Orthodoxy rooted in radical, trinitarian monotheism. From the Church of England attempting to define other religions, the church has chosen to talk about how it might relate to Islam. By saying less, Cragg and Williams arguably say more about the Christian impulse to relations with Islam.

Ataullah Siddiqui has assessed inter-faith relations in Britain since 1970 and judged that since 9/11, churches are taking a more robust position on other faiths due to internal pressure from “conservative evangelical groupings”. It is interesting that he has noted an evident shift in the priorities of churches. However, the broader account of Christian-Muslim relations in Chapter 2 suggests that this shift cuts across many different traditions, and is not a mere result of pressure from the evangelical wing. The ecclesial turn in Anglicanism makes it arguably closer to the spirit of Vatican II than The Way of Dialogue (1988) was despite its echoes of the conciliar language. This is confirmed in the 2010 document of the Catholic English and Welsh Bishops’ Conference, Meeting God in Friend and Stranger, which affirms “the mystery of our

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common humanity” alongside the conviction “that whatever is true and holy in other religions is not an alternative to the Gospel, but a preparation for it.” The World Council of Churches, too, despite entertaining theologies of religions, has supported robust reflections on the plight of Christian communities in contexts of Islamic political dominance and the need to address the issue of conversion in Christian-Muslim relations in recent reflections. Indeed, Anglicanism’s own ecclesial turn reflects a missionary tradition that is “Catholic” in temper (“Christian Presence”) and shaped by the trinitarianism and sacramentalism of liberal Catholics such as Rowan Williams and Donald Allchin. I would argue that Anglicanism’s ecclesial turn is in fact an opening up of the canon to a more ecumenical enterprise that draws from the experiences of the global church and the historic tradition.

It seems then, that the contemporary developments in the Church of England’s relations with Islam have been shaped by a “school” of theology that reveals an unusual convergence between Catholic and Evangelical streams of Anglican sacramentalism that has explicit and implicit resonances with Eastern Orthodox and patristic sensibilities. A key figure in articulating these two streams has been Michael Ipgrave, himself a scholar of the earliest Eastern Christian-Muslim encounters, and principal drafter of Generous Love. Ipgrave’s own academic publications reveal a deep attention to Nostra aetate and the Catholic Christian Presence school of de Foucauld and Massignon, and suggest he has been a significant bridge-builder in the articulation of an Anglican school that has indeed broadened the canon of tradition.

David Thomas has commented on the historic animosities between Christians and Muslims, arguing that “a respectful, agnostic inquisitiveness” should replace mutual hostilities where the search for a common core to the faiths has failed. While Thomas eschews “neutral plotting of the contents of a faith tradition”, he opens up

939 Meeting God in Friend and Stranger, p. 34
possibilities for “larger perceptions of the Truth”. Whether these “larger perceptions” are possible within Williams and Cragg becomes an issue of how one determines their Christologies. The vocation to Christian discipleship, for Williams, means that the Anglican inter-religious encounter is “worked for in an uncompromisingly Christlike (Jesus-like) fashion”. This marks the ecclesial turn evident in Cragg and Williams: their “cross-referencing”. The paradox of this cross-reference is that “the mode of incarnation and self-emptying, invite responses and movements that neither we nor our partners can easily chart”. The mystery of Christian Presence, of the reality of the trinity and the incarnation, always forestalls closure and self-sufficiency, but the measure of any discovery and challenge will be that of the Word made manifest in Jesus of Nazareth.

5.2 Angican Ecclesiology and the Politico-Theological Question of Islam

Anglicanism is built on a dispersed authority and sees itself primarily as a worshipping community, supremely around the eucharist and an incomplete part of the body of Christ on earth. The Church of England is thus simultaneously a national church and part of a universal church both through its inter-relationship with the Anglican Communion and with the wider oikumene. The nature of its incompleteness both recalls the need for the historic tradition, the formative creedal documents in shaping the life of the Church, and its responsiveness to context. Taking the ecclesial turn in relations with Islam that we observed in Chapter 3, then, resources from the history of the Church of England that could ground a corresponding political theology in response to Islam were therefore explored.

A repeated pattern of Anglican political theology is the close identification with the aspirations and interests of the state. Through Hooker and Andrewes, to Maurice and Temple, the ideal of the Christian Nation has been a persistent theme of Anglican political theology. The thread of patristic and natural law influence in these Anglican

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943 Williams, Rowan. “Christology and Inter Religious Dialogue”, Presence of Faith Conference, Lambeth Palace, December 8th 2011, author’s transcript, p. 4
944 Williams, Rowan. “Christology and Inter Religious Dialogue”, p. 5
political theologies suggest that the theologies used to rehabilitate an ecclesial turn in Christian-Muslim relations might also ground a corresponding political theology. However, the dominating theme of the Christian Nation ideal seems not to have given genuine space to the other. Whether in the identification of the citizen as communicant of Hooker, the Divine Right of Kings in Andrewes, or the Christian Nation or Christian Civilisation in Maurice and Temple, Islam, in those terms, would be subsumed under the agenda of the state to which the church is seemingly tied.

An alternative stream of Anglican political theology is identified by Rowan Williams that sees resources for a plural public square built upon a more contextual appropriation of the natural law principles of Hooker and Andrewes. Indebted to the pluralism of Neville Figgis, the omnicompetent state is qualified by the primacy of communities of tradition; the state’s role to act as broker to the ontologically prior religious communities. This shift recognises the evident plurality of British life and the genuine otherness of different faiths. In this economy, the conversation over shared goods becomes the place to which mutual relationships of partnership, challenge and discovery can be exercised as a heuristic endeavour. Williams’ political theology corrects the accommodations of the Christian Nation ideal by recognising the need for political theologies to retain their distinctiveness and not be “translated” into a third arena of neutral, public discourse. Yet, in the agonistic interaction over shared goods, there can be mutual conversations about common concerns.

Cragg’s espousal of the *khilāfa*/dominion motif draws from a creation theology of natural law indicative of his indebtedness to the *Lux Mundi* school. However, his suspicion of the will-to-power in religion marks out a particularly redemptive, Reformed trajectory to this theology, challenging the Medinan, totalising tendency in Islam. Williams, too, whilst influenced by the Catholic stream of Anglicanism that has a particular Eastern Orthodox flavour, corrects its weak trinitarianism by recalling the redemptive pattern of the Church Fathers as received within modern Eastern Orthodoxy. Where Williams’ “self-emptying” temper is apparent is rather in the influence of Valdimir Lossky and the *via negativa*. For Williams, all political theologies are provisional, and thus any settled economy of ecclesial relations with the other is inimical to the eschatological reserve of classic Augustinianism.
For both Williams and Cragg, then, there can be no settled archetype for the public square. Whether the Church of England is established or not is neither here nor there, though they both voice concerns about the need for the state to be held to higher account. Establishment becomes, then, a pragmatic preference rather than an ideal. This makes Cragg and Williams both decidedly “Anglican” in their contextualisation of tradition. In the context of evident plurality, and with pressures to inhibit public religious discourse, establishment may retain some value, but “Christendom” itself cannot be the recourse of the church.

Both John Milbank and Oliver O’Donovan offer counterpoints to Williams and Cragg with their ecclesial sensibilities. Milbank argues that it is only Christendom that provides an appropriate metaphysic for diversity while O’Donovan argues that a Christian moral judgment about the nature of the nation is the best basis for the exercise of the law. Both Milbank and O’Donovan give a pointed challenge to the diffidence of Cragg and Williams about the task of proclamation. Arguably, the Christian narrative points to the eschatological reality of the Church as the anticipation of the victory of Christ over the powers and therefore the nature of sociality in-between times.

However, an attentiveness to the empiric of relationships and contemporary marginalisation allow Cragg and Williams to provide a more practical basis for the correlation between the church and Islam in the public square. This empirical bent seems to follow a pattern of Anglicanism that fits what Nigel Biggar describes as “Barthian Thomism”. This synthesis signals “that the created order comes logically before its narrative, Christological qualification.” In both Christian-Muslim relations and in the articulation of political theology, Cragg and Williams start with the participation of the Church in a graced, created order, building from natural law, to engage and respond in a manner predicated on Christ as the ultimate reference point for judgment. The consequences of this are that the responses to Islam cannot be foreclosed; that Islam can be engaged with in its absolute otherness. Islam has the

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potential to bear the disclosure of God or to enable an encounter that requires challenge and proclamation from the Church. The articulation of actual programmes and political structures are then avoided but the impulse of encounter is always Christological. It is only in the experience of inter-relationship that the shape of Anglican political theology becomes apparent. This is the “empiricism” that Biggar refers to, and roots the interface of Christian-Muslim encounter at the local; in the primary sacrament of the eucharistic community interacting with the global. Following the pattern of Hooker’s *via media*, Williams and Cragg, in their different ways, offer an Anglican political theology that engages with Islam through the Christian community at worship in the world, not in the fixities of a doctrinal ideal.

5.3 Concluding Reflections

It is apparent from this study of contemporary Anglican reflections on Islam that there are a number of theologians that have acted as conduits to facilitate the widening of the canon that I have proposed. Rowan Williams, as a major figure in this school, embodies the influences of modern Eastern Orthodoxy and patristics on Anglican self-identity, which are then translated into the encounter with other faiths. Louis Massignon provides a formative equivalent in the Catholic Church, seeing within the originating encounters of the Eastern Church’s engagement with Islam the potential for a retrieved basis for dialogue and proclamation. Kenneth Cragg offers a similar sensibility within Anglicanism albeit with a less self-conscious deferral to tradition, that chimes with the motif of Christian Presence exhibited in Jean Daniélou and Thomas Merton in an uncommon synergy. Both Rowan Williams and Kenneth Cragg display continuities with their own heritage. Williams applies the trinitarian monotheism of modern Eastern Orthodoxy and the contemplative tradition to the encounter with Islam. Cragg builds on the natural law and *kenosis* of the *Lux Mundi* school while retaining a missionary impulse to proclamation. At the same time, though, they both display discontinuities with their own heritage, retrieving the tradition in new and sometimes distinctive ways. Williams follows the pluralism of Figgis in his appropriation of political theology and celebrates the agonism of the encounter in an embrace of a Wittgensteinian epistemology. Cragg elevates the
khilāfa of the Qur’an as a basis for the articulation of the common good with Christological implications.

Underlying the ecclesial turn in Christian-Muslim relations that I have observed within Anglicanism is a necessarily ecumenical endeavour that is highly visible in the legacies of Williams and Cragg. For Cragg, his indebtedness to tradition and the wider Church is less explicit; still Reformed in temper. But there is an undeniable spirit of ecumenism in his openness to the other and in the motif of Christian Presence in hospitality. Williams, “Orthodox in Anglican form”, has a particular indebtedness to the Russian émigré tradition and to the contemplative milieu of the Desert Fathers.

Where this thesis has sought to reflect on the particular challenge of Islam to the Church of England’s political theology, the contemporary scene has revealed the conviction that the task involves the experiences of not just the whole Anglican Communion but of the wider tradition and the historic Church. A challenge to this ecclesial turn would be that the language of inter-religious encounter is in danger of becoming too internalised. I would suggest that a metaphysic of natural law would want to guard against the church’s relations with Islam becoming too self-referencing. Arguably the empirical, practical strand that is part of the Anglican temper will always demand that Christian theologies are embodied and “realised” in the world. Thus, Samia Bano’s critique of Williams’ Shari’a law speech raises the very practical question of Muslim women’s attitude to Shari’a. She argues that there is a far more nuanced attitude, and suspicion of, Shari’a than the binary opposition of Muslims versus state law that Williams suggested.946 If the Church of England’s comprehensive vision for politics includes a speaking about and on behalf of Muslims, there is a risk to the church’s credibility if it does not speak accurately on behalf of that community even where that speech is at the level of the abstract and the philosophical. That the conversation is enjoined by Williams, for him, marks that process of interactive pluralism, much as Cragg’s Medinan challenge likewise stirs a response from Muslims. What seems to be key, though, is that the church is re-

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presenting some of the originating narratives of the tradition itself responsively with the conflicting and diverse political theologies of Islam.

It remains to be seen how much the theologies apparent in Generous Love filter down into the consciousness of congregations. The nature of Anglicanism means that there is still likely to be a very wide range of understandings of belief and practice among Anglicans that may contradict this model of Christian hospitality.\textsuperscript{947} It remains apparent, though, that Generous Love signals a clear, formal shift that theologically resources an engagement with Muslims of participative hospitality.

There would seem to be a reciprocal challenge to Islam to conceive of a space for the “Christian” in its midst: the Christian as fellow-citizen. Cragg wrote his The Call of the Minaret with the audacious assumption that the adhān, the call to prayer, invokes a universal invitation and thus, by definition, demands a Christian response. The comprehensive vision of Anglican political theology, epitomised in Hooker’s vision of the secular realm being infused with Christian implication, provides a corresponding challenge to Islam. Where Islam accuses an overly internalised and spiritualised Christianity, Christianity may accuse an overly power-ensured Islam. In a society where both the Church of England and Islam live as communities within a wider diversity of traditions, there would seem to be potential for a fruitful interface of suitably interactive pluralism. Both Williams and Cragg stand in a tradition of paradox that the Church continues “to make the ambitious claim that the universe is oriented to and around the Word who was flesh in Jesus” but must find a way of acting “so that it invites recognition of the gift without sticking a price tag onto this.”\textsuperscript{948}

\textsuperscript{947} “It must also be questioned whether the progress made by official bodies in the churches has been noticed by many churchgoing Christians, or even their priests and ministers.” Thomas, David. “Relations Between Christians and Muslims.” In, The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 9. World Christianities c. 1914-c.2000, edited by Hugh McLeod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 494-502, p. 502

Appendix

Interview with Archbishop Rowan Williams
By Richard Sudworth & Stefanie Hugh-Donovan
Lambeth Palace 6th September 2012

Stefanie Hugh-Donovan: What key insights have emerged from the Orthodox theological world and what are its distinctive characteristics as they have influenced your own theology?

Rowan Williams: The last fifty years the greatest distinctive has been the doctrine of the church and connecting the doctrine of the church with the doctrine of the trinity. Lossky’s carefully developed notion of the person resting on a Trinitarian theology. The person constituted by communion, which comes across to the church. By the time you come to Zizioulas, this becomes a whole method. Even before say 1950, Anglican and RC theologians were picking up some of this: Congar’s early work for example. Not sure this came via the ecumenical movement, though. Florovsky was most involved in the transmission of this influence; the idea that the church is the image of the trinity (an idea taken from Antony Khrapovitsky). Dieu vivant group in Paris, Fellowship of St Sergius, Eric Mascall all part of this broader wave of ecclesiological theology.

SHD: How did your own interest in Eastern Christianity come about?

RW: Probably through seeing Eisenstein’s “Ivan the Terrible” as a teenager! I became fascinated in all things Russian then picking up Timothy Ware’s book on the Orthodox Church (1964), and going to my first Orthodox liturgy around then. And it went on developing in concert with that interest in all things Russian: literature and music. In your draft questions you noted “Why Russian than, say, Greece?” Because of that background I suppose. But the first article I ever published was on a Greek

949 Agreed and corrected by Archbishop Rowan Williams in pdf document: 12 10 16 ABC edited transcript received by email on 17th October 2012
Orthodox theologian: Yannaras.\textsuperscript{950} I think Yannaras points up another theological strand of Orthodoxy and that is the environment. He was one of the first theologians really to tackle this in a headlong way as part of his anti-western polemic against technology and rationalism and capitalism. The search for a theology of creation or the created order, drawing from Maximus the Confessor. I suppose it brings on themes of Orthodoxy, which are there in Yannaras and Dmitri Staniloae who was another person who influenced me a lot at that time. He came to Oxford to lecture and very little of his work was available in English at the time. And Schmemann too. Just to note it wasn’t exclusively Russian. And to point out that being supervised by Donald Allchin; he had very little contact with Russia, much more Greece and Romania. It was he who gave me Yannaras’ doctoral thesis and suggested I write an article: which I think was the first piece written on him in English for a long time.

Richard Sudworth: I want to bring you to Kenneth Cragg. You wrote a Foreword to one of Cragg’s books. How did you begin to read Cragg and what have you learned from him?

RW: I first encountered him when I was asked to review a little anthology of mystical texts published mid to late 70’s for the Community of the Resurrection quarterly. I can’t claim to have a read a huge amount (there is a huge amount to read; he’s incredibly productive!) I think what I do know of him, he has always been important in two ways: 1. His constant attempt to refresh or reconstruct theological idiom in the language of another religion. “How might a Muslim say this?” which is always invariably searching or enlarging. 2. The refusal of any “mega theory” about it. He continues to “do the work” on the frontier. Cragg does it as a Christian who believes what Christians believe and doesn’t want to erect a theory of religion. And I think it has had something of an impact in the way you were hinting as to the way I have increasingly approached these great questions. I have never found it particularly interesting to try and construct mega theories; a meta theory about comparative religion. I have been interested recently in Francis Clooney’s theology of religions

\textsuperscript{950} “The Theology of Personhood: A Study of the Thought of Christos Yannaras”, Sobornost, 6.6 (Winter, 1972): 415-30
enterprise which does shift the paradigm a bit. My most engaged encounters have been precisely that: specific with another tradition.

RS: Following on from that, observing this shift in formal documents, how do you respond to the critique that not searching for a mega theory has just internalised the debate; created an internal conversation?

RW: There are equal and opposite dangers. The danger of a theology of religions approach is that you never really get on all fours with a religion. There is the John Hick approach which by attempting an affinity is thereby excluding the practice and understanding of every religion on the ground as far as I can see. And Hans Küng in much the same way. These approaches tend not to do the hard work. Then of course there is the danger that say Barth or Kraemar tend toward, which kind of cannibalises everything into what you believe. I don’t think we are at that point. My sense of the work we do such as Building Bridges, for example, I do not think falls into either of these two dangers. There is a real and careful exchange of specific beliefs and visions. It models the right kinds of question: how does that echo; does that converge or not converge with our beliefs and traditions? So very often, as with the last Building Bridges on death and the after-life, you find people saying things such as “That is very interesting. I’d never thought of it that way and does that mean so and so?” I just don’t think the theology of religions approach helps us in the real encounters. Is that criticism something you hear from interlocutors?

RS: Yes, I have heard a Muslim academic who knows the Church of England well, and a Christian academic both suggest disappointment in this shift. For the Muslim academic the instinct seemed to be to want to hear something more definitive from the Church about the nature of Islam or Muhammad. And the Christian academic wonder that we are “talking to ourselves now”.

RW: I think any search for a definitive Christian position on Muhammad is probably crying for the moon. The question I’m often asked “Do you or don’t you accept Muhammad as a prophet?” is unanswerable. Because “prophet” means very different things. Do I recognise Muhammad as someone to whom the hand of God is
discerned? Fine. Do I regard him as the seal of the prophets in the Muslim sense? No. I can’t. And that means that we haven’t really got the category that we share in order to take the question forward.

SHD: Have you ever met Olivier Clément and what are your thoughts about him?

RW: I was absolutely thrilled to hear that someone is doing research on OC. He has been vastly important for me. I met him in 1973 I think. I spent a bit of time in Paris when I was researching. I’d read his work on Lossky and Evdokimov. And one or two other things: article “Purification by Atheism”; it appeared in English in 1969/70, *Orthodoxy and the Death of God*, a collection edited by Donald Allchin. I remember reading that the summer I graduated. Donald gave me the obituary articles on Lossky and Evdokimov and at first I thought I’d do a thesis on Evdokimov but he doesn’t really lend himself to thesis writing. I went to Paris and spent a bit of time with the Lossky family and had an afternoon with Clément. I still have my notes somewhere. I must try and search them out; you may be interested in having them. I think they mostly concern us discussing his take on the greatest influences on Lossky. It was a very good and searching conversation. One of my memories was of ringing up to the apartment and this beautiful deep voice coming through “Olivier Clément. Allo….” And I thought “I will be alright! This man speaks the sort of French I can work with. He did speak the most beautiful French; wonderful voice, wonderful presence. Huge brown eyes, intense and quiet. Extraordinarily wonderful man.

SHD: Beautiful

RW: That’s the word. Lovely. I remember just sitting there listening to him. I read a lot of his stuff in the 70’s. His autobiography “L’Autre Soleil”. Beautiful, wonderful. I at one point entertained the idea of translating it. But of course he is very hard to translate. Very French, very impressionistic, very poetic. You remember his book on Solzhenitsyn. It didn’t really make that much impact or not as much as it should have done. Partly because the style is so French. “” etc. theology of history, “Origins of Christian Mysticism” and more recently “Anachroniques”, “The Revolution of the
Spirit” with Fumet and the publication of Contacts, with the network this established is not found in other parts of Orthodoxy.

SHD: Did your reading of OC draw you closer to Orthodoxy?

RW: The great thing about OC, and he himself would say this: this was an Orthodoxy that wasn’t ethnic or quaint. It wasn’t about snow and onion domes and deacons with big bass voices. It was about inhabiting the world within the life of the Holy Trinity. He did set a benchmark for me in understanding what a good theology looked like…and what a good theologian looked like too! And he with immense generosity leant me the handwritten manuscript of Lossky’s wartime journal. A great asset to my research; it’s published now. Astonishing, giving this young research student he’d never actually met before a folder of this original notes. Reading more recently Olga Lossky and her writing on Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, it’s all part of a remarkable world; a network that I have always found profoundly influential. But it is sadly a world where most of the Orthodox Church is not at these days.

SHD: Behr-Sigel thought very highly of OC and was very complimentary about his character.

RW: There are some people that after half an hour with them you know what they are like. Elisabeth too. A remarkable woman.

RS: Reading your recently republished article on OC I was intrigued by your take on his political theology. How helpful do you believe the concept of the Christian Nation is?

RW: Not very, if I’m honest. For a number of reasons. It’s always a bit dangerous to hypostasise a nation; as if it has a personal identity. It’s only if you do that that you can talk about a Christian Nation. There are other categories: a nation shaped by its Christian heritage, for example. But usually when we use Christian Nation it is generally used to bang someone over the head with. When tabloids use the phrase “We are after all a Christian nation”, I grimace. I prefer to talk about a nation that has
resolved to live in some sort of relationship with a moral and religious tradition, whether or not that involves the establishment of the church; which is another question. It is still true that an on-going argument with a particular religious tradition can be helpful. All healthy societies need voices to argue with; an ethical grit in the oyster. If that happens to be Christianity then it is good that that should be recognised and foregrounded in certain ways, with reminders in certain ways. It doesn’t mean you have to sign up to it or impose it.

RS: Are you sympathetic to the idea of a nation having a vocation?

RW: I’d say that it always makes sense to talk about a political community having a vocation. Let’s not talk about nation. God calls communities. Whether they know it or not. … “Cyrus my servant”. Part of the point of maintaining the engagement, the argument, is for the church to say God has a calling for this political community: this unit. Our job is trying to discern that and to keep up to scratch with it. It’s not the same as treating the nation as a covenant community which is what some people come close to suggesting. The church is the only covenantal community. But God calls all human beings, not just those he covenants with. God has a calling for the UK, our job is to discern and keep on track. The reason for my hesitation about Christian Nation is that it is just such a slippery term. Are we talking about nation, ethnicity, political or administrative unit, religious heritage? It does not harm us to deconstruct the idea of nation from time to time to remind ourselves that we are all living with a heritage of 20th century nationalism, which in some ways was profoundly racist. You have this thing, this ethnic identity, that you are going to assert, usually over and against multicultural, multinational entities like the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It’s an examination question: “European Nationalism is all a result of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Discuss” There is really something to it; and the Ottoman Empire for that matter. You are part of a multi-ethnic complex, you feel you are disadvantaged, you push back in the name of the people you share your heritage with, and end up solidifying. I speak as someone who used to be a great sympathiser of the Welsh National Party. There is a problem there. One of the great ideologues of 20th century Welsh nationalism, Saunders Lewis, a very great thinker in some ways, powerful poet
and dramatist, Roman Catholic, and at times as near as dammit to fascism. Keep an eye out for it!

SHD: You translated Pierre Pascal who wrote particularly of national vocations, and the Russian people. Do you think Russia has a religious vocation?

RW: Russia has never quite managed to live without the idea of a national vocation. And it has shifted from extreme to extreme. 19th century Slavophils and their vocation to be simple, Gandhian, agrarian, pietistic, Christian peasants with a benevolent autocrat in the background. And not really bothering very much about international politics. Others, connected with the Slavophils, like Dostoevsky, but with a vocation to make yourself a nuisance to the rest of the Orthodox world, defending against westerners, Turks, Roman Catholics, you name it, Jews, Freemasons. I’m an admirer of Dostoevsky but his political journals are the most profoundly embarrassing aspects of that great man’s legacy. And after the Revolution Russia still believed it had a vocation but this time to be at the vanguard of international revolution. At the moment, unfortunately, it is heading straight back to the worst bits of Dostoevsky. This autocratic, Christian aggressive, anti-liberal, very xenophobic, anti-Semitic ethos which I find profoundly disturbing. In the late 1980’s, early 1990’s, the sort of people who were involved in the religious, philosophical academies of Moscow and St Petersburg were reviving some of the best of Russian thought and almost trying to imagine a modern Christian democracy. Having been through the traumas of revolution, to imagine a vocation like that; to show the world different. And that was part of the interest in the religious and political thinkers of a former age like Bulgakov and Berdiaev. And it didn’t happen. What happened almost as the church came out of the rubble, it dusted itself down and seemed to say “As you were”. The Tsardom was reinvented by another name eg Pussy Riots debacle. The incipient rooted openness of the late 1980’s and 1990’s was lost. A great tragedy. There were people I knew of that period who had come through dissidence of one sort or another and found their way to church so they were theologically eager to learn and politically very astute. Very much aware of the dangers of tyranny of left or right. I’m sorry that that moment has passed.
SHD: Do you think that people like Alexander Men reflect this in common with OC?

RW: Alexander Men, exactly so. Has a lot in common with OC. He wanted Orthodoxy to be more than just religious folklore.

RS: You wrote in your Preface to “Generous Love” of the changed climate of inter-religious encounter. I wonder if I can press you to say what changed climate is and how that may have changed your own response to other faiths?

RW: In a nutshell it’s that it is on the doorstep. When I was growing up other faiths were “over there”. They were generally speaking manifestly foreign and weren’t particularly significant politically. The period we have lived through is that other faiths are right on our doorsteps and it has made understanding and reconciliation something that we don’t just do with a mega theory. It is something we have to do on the ground. That’s the biggest change. Curiously, within that comes some of the impetus for saying that mega theories are not where we want to be. And I know how important for John Hick’s intellectual evolution that he went to Birmingham from Cambridge and discovered that Birmingham was different; there were people on the ground of other faiths. The paradox is that the closer you are to that doorstep reality, the less the theology of religions approach really cuts it. I think that it also reflects a bit a tide in the whole development of British theology in the last quarter of a century. In my twenties, during my research, the high tide, of broadly liberal theology was what you were most aware of. And people interested in other things, like Orthodoxy, it felt like a very minority interest. Look at the writing of that period, look at “The Myth of God Incarnate”. There is barely one non-English theologian referred to in that. There is really no engagement with any other theology than that of the English university tradition at its narrowest and a particular kind of New Testament culture. Barth, Rahner, Balthasar, Pannenburg, Moltmann, never mind Lossky and Staniloae, are off the radar. Now that was beginning to change by the end of the 70’s. I can remember the first time my tutor at Cambridge, John Riches, gave me some Balthasar to read. Donald MacKinnon always encouraged me to read from the context of European writers. Bit by bit that climate shifted. I guess that the book I wrote with Stephen Sykes, Richard Roberts and David Ford on Barth at that time was a straw in
the wind. And the sense that Christian theology is actually quite robust and quite deep-rooted and you don’t have to be some sort of unintelligent fundamentalist or knee-jerk traditionalist to take it all seriously. I think by the 1980’s you are coming out of the trap and then by the late 1980’s you have Radical Orthodoxy and all that. It maybe that the two things go together: a bit of recovery of confidence in Christian theology; a resourcement. And there is also the sense that what you need to engage at grass roots is not necessarily the comparative religions paradigm.

RS: Thinking of Radical Orthodoxy; you’ve rejected mega theories. Where does Radical Orthodoxy fit into this?

RW: Radical Orthodoxy sometimes suggests a mega theory; hence my hesitations about some of what comes under this banner. The polemical thrust of Radical Orthodoxy ie let’s not be pushed around by sociologists; I don’t quarrel with at all. The whole idea that you can properly do a religious metaphysics, I applaud. The grand narrative of Radical Orthodoxy with its very clearly delineated heroes and villains, I think it’s powerful and interesting in the hands of a great mind like John Milbank but a couple of levels down it can become a bit formulaic; a bit of a shortcut.

SHD: What drew you to Pierre Pascal?

RW: Simply an invitation to translate the book by SPCK. The money came in handy for a new research student.

SHD: What attracted you to Merton? Was that a bridge towards Catholicism?

RW: I’d been reading him since my mid-teens and because Donald Allchin had actually known him working with Allchin intensified that interest. “Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander” was one of the most important books I read in my teens. I invested hard earned pocket money in it when it came out! What really struck me in Merton, very much in the OC and Evdokimov style, and he’d read these thinkers, and it came through his contact with Danielou who he knew well, was his recovery of the Church Fathers. But it was not part of an archaeological exercise; it was a re- vivication: a
very robust Christian anthropology. The book that made most impact on me by Merton when I was doing research in my twenties was *The New Man*. I remember reading it at Fairacres in Holy Week in about 1973. I’d been soaking myself in Lossky by that time and felt to me like the same discovery of a really three-dimensional Christian anthropology. Rooted in the doctrine of creation, salvation and the church in the image of God. It felt much, much more liberating and bigger than anything I’d ever read before.

RS: I am aware that there is already a book lined up looking at your legacy as Archbishop. It’s early days I think but what would you have liked to have left behind as a legacy to the Church of England’s relations with other faiths?

RW: Interesting to be invited to draft one’s tombstone! Maybe, “Well, he tried!” Very simply: to have tried to have built trust between communities in pragmatic ways. Christian-Muslim Forum: things like that. Getting onto the table the possibility of real intellectual engagement (Building Bridges). I don’t want to over-egg the pudding but looking back to before the late 1990’s, say, there wasn’t much substantive intellectual exchange between Christians and Muslims. But now there is. Lambeth has been a part of that turn around, and maybe we’ve helped to give permission for that.

SHD: OC was very fond of St Silouan and I wonder if you would like to say anything about what he means to you?

RW: Yes, I have an icon of him on my desk! I read Sophrony’s book about him in the early 70’s. Much later on I examined a thesis (“I love therefore I am”) which became a book on him, by Sakharov. That has been a nourishing interest; and I have an icon of him on my desk.

SHD: I bought an icon of St Silouan at St Sergius recently. And I will be visiting Nicolas Lossky, and Vladimir Lossky’s nephew next week in Paris.

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951 I *Love, Therefore I am: The Theological Legacy of Archimandrite Sophrony* by Nicholas V Sakharov (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Press, 2002)
RW: Will you give Nicolas my regards. I have not seen him for some years. He must be a fair age. I went to Athos a couple of months ago and he is still talked about. I had some very good conversations there. It was an informal visit staying in four or five monasteries there at the invitation of the Ecumenical Patriarch. It was my first visit and I went with Kallistos. It was lovely. You think of future things you would never imagine: when I picked up his book in SPCK in Swansea in 1964 I don’t imagine I could ever suppose I’d be visiting Mount Athos with him fifty years later.

RS: David Marshall forwarded me a copy of a newsletter while you were in Monmouth and reads like it was Christmas 2001, untitled and undated but seemingly responding to 9-11 and talking of Christian-Muslim relations. Does it ring true as Christmas 2001?

RW: It must be. I don’t think I have a copy. And, yes, you can reference the newsletter. It is in the public domain. At that time, as elsewhere, there was a lot of interest in Islam in Wales and around then, I helped to set up an interfaith network at the Welsh Assembly.

RS & SHD: We need to wrap up but thank you so much for your time.

RW: I’m really delighted to meet you and know of your interests.

Richard Sudworth,
transcribed from the recording, 12th September 2012


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