

Hospitality and Embassy: The Persistent Influence of Kenneth Cragg on Anglican Theologies of Interfaith Relations

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Kenneth Cragg has been compared to the Catholic Orientalist Louis Massignon (1883–1962) as a source for Anglicans in their engagement with Islam much as Massignon seemed to be so influential in Catholic relations with Islam at Vatican II. This article seeks to assess the impact of Cragg’s work on Anglican reflections on other faiths produced at the three Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008. It is argued that in each of these Lambeth Conferences there is evidence of resources that derive their influence directly from Cragg’s work. The three motifs that will be particularly identified for reflecting theologically on the task of interfaith relations that are indebted to Cragg are presence, embassy, and hospitality. The 2008 Lambeth Conference’s document Generous Love will be seen to embody a culmination of Cragg’s legacy in the significance of the theme of hospitality. Cragg’s legacy and especially its re-articulation within some of the theologies of Generous Love in 2008 resonate with the formative trajectory of Vatican II and present specifically Anglican resources for engaging with other faiths that are consonant within a wider Catholic tradition.

Born in 1913, and publishing books even into 2011, Kenneth Cragg bestrode a century of immense change within the Anglican

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Communion.¹ The epitome of the “missionary-scholar,” Cragg anticipated the shift in the center of world Christianity from the north to the south. He had a crucial role in ensuring the Arabicization of the Jerusalem Archbishopric in 1973. In his thwarted and much-lamented tenure as Warden of St. Augustine’s College, Canterbury between 1961 and 1967, Cragg displayed his commitment to the learning of Anglican leaders throughout the Communion such that there would be “Herberts, or Gores, or Temples, of their own culture.”² Cragg’s vision was for a vital Christian witness shaped in the idioms of local cultures yet responsibly interdependent. It is the encounter with other faiths, and supremely with Islam, that was formative for Cragg’s sense of global Anglicanism: a self-understanding of his own priesthood that was, indeed, “schooled in the east.”³ This encounter with the religious other has prompted, for Cragg, a sustained attentiveness to God’s manifold wisdom in the interdependency of our common humanity. In the words of Wilfred Cantwell Smith, “all inner faith is inter-faith.”⁴ Similarly for Cragg, any serious exploration of what it means to be a Christian, or to be an Anglican Christian, depends upon that responsiveness to the transcendent in the religious other, what he calls “the human meaning in divine question.”⁵

From the seminal *The Call of the Minaret*⁶ in 1956 onwards, Cragg has provided a legacy of just such interfaith concerns attune to an Anglicanism that is bent on “fulfilling an honest will to learn

¹ For a theological assessment of Kenneth Cragg’s ministry, see Christopher Lamb, *The Call to Retrieval: Kenneth Cragg’s Christian Vocation to Islam* (London: Grey Seal, 1997). Kenneth Cragg, *Faith and Life Negotiate: A Christian Story-Study* (Norwich: The Canterbury Press, 1994) is a “partly-autobiographical” account of his life and influences. Nicholas J. Wood, *Faiths and Faithfulness: Pluralism, Dialogue and Mission in the Work of Kenneth Cragg and Lesslie Newbigin* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009) and Bård Maeland, *Rewarding Encounters: Islam and the Comparative Theologies of Kenneth Cragg and Wilfred Cantwell Smith* (London: Melisende, 2003) provide two comparative studies of Kenneth Cragg’s theology of interfaith relations.

² Cragg, *Faith and Life Negotiate*, 132.

³ Kenneth Cragg, *The Order of the Wounded Hands: Schooled in the East* (London: Melisende, 2006).

⁴ Used as a subtitle to a chapter on Wilfred Cantwell Smith in Kenneth Cragg, *Troubled by Truth: Life Studies in Inter-Faith Concern* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, 1992), 242–261.

⁵ Kenneth Cragg, *Am I Not Your Lord? Human Meaning in Divine Question* (London: Melisende, 2002).

⁶ Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 1964 edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956). See Hugh Goddard, “The Significance of *The Call of the Minaret* for

its own sincerity through venture in the open world, lest it be only a 'fugitive faith'.⁷ This legacy has earned him the epithets "the Louis Massignon of Anglicanism"⁸ and "the Massignon of the Anglo-Saxon world,"⁹ echoing the towering influence of the French Orientalist on the interfaith relations of the Catholic Church.¹⁰ While Cragg has drawn comparison with Massignon, there has hitherto been no attempt to assess the influence of Cragg on formal documents for the interfaith relations of the Anglican Communion. It is my intention in this paper to identify the legacy of Kenneth Cragg in the important triumvirate of Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008 to the development of theologies of interfaith relations in the Anglican Communion. I will argue that Cragg is a persistent and ever-influential interlocutor to the interfaith challenge for Anglicans. For each of the three Lambeth Conferences, I will identify a key component of the theology of interfaith relations described that owes a debt to his thinking. Furthermore, I will point to themes in Cragg's theological contribution that resonate with some of the formative Catholic influences on interfaith relations that suggest a confluence of significant Christian tradition. These themes provide a mine of theological resources for the ongoing encounter of Christians, of whatever tradition, with those of other faiths.

Lambeth Conference 1988: Christian Presence

While the 1968 and 1978 Lambeth Conferences acknowledged the context of Anglican witness to be one that included the encounter with other religions, it was not until 1988 that there seemed to

Christian Thinking about Islam," in *A Faithful Presence: Essays for Kenneth Cragg*, ed. David Thomas and Clare Amos (London: Melisende, 2003), 78–94.

⁷ Cragg, *The Order of the Wounded Hands*, 52.

⁸ Christopher Brown, "Kenneth Cragg on Shi'a Islam and Iran: An Anglican Theological Response to Political Islam," *ARAM* 20 (2008): 375–391, at 378.

⁹ E. Pisani, "Bulletin d'Islamologie (IV)," *Revue Thomiste* 109, no. 3 (January–March 2009): 467–496, at 492.

¹⁰ See David E. Burrell, "Mind and Heart at the Service of Muslim–Christian Understanding: Louis Massignon as Trail Blazer," *The Muslim World* 88, no. 3–4 (July–October 1998): 268–278; Sidney H. Griffith, "Sharing the Faith of Abraham: The 'Credo' of Louis Massignon," *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations* 8, no. 2 (1997): 193–210; and Anthony O'Mahony, "The Influence of the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon on the Catholic Church's Relations with Islam," *The Downside Review* 126, no. 444 (July 2008): 169–192.

be an appetite to assess that context theologically.¹¹ Endorsing the “Four Principles of Dialogue” of the British Council of Churches in Resolution 20, the 1988 Lambeth Conference formally acknowledged interfaith dialogue “as part of Christian discipleship and mission.”¹² Coupled with this commitment to interfaith dialogue, a specific resource for the progress of dialogue with Jews and Muslims was offered in the form of the resolution, *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue*.¹³

As Lucinda Mosher’s unpublished analysis of the background to discussions of *The Way of Dialogue* demonstrates, political expedience broadened out the original scope of the 1988 Lambeth Conference’s concerns.¹⁴ A similar pressure had been exerted by Middle Eastern Catholic bishops during the process of publishing *Nostra Aetate*.¹⁵ It seems that an account of Judaism could not be made without addressing the inextricable relations with Muslims in their midst. Where *Nostra Aetate* developed a concentric schema of religions from Judaism, outwards to Islam and then other religions, *The Way of Dialogue* chooses to settle for an account of “the special relationship between Christianity, Judaism and Islam.” In many ways, the opening preamble to *The Way of Dialogue* is more suggestive of the Abrahamic framework of religions argued for by Louis Massignon.

Ironically, for the parallels that are drawn between Cragg and Massignon, the Anglican document goes further toward the Abrahamic

¹¹ Michael Ipgrave, “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing: *Nostra Aetate* and an Anglican Approach to Inter-Faith Relations,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 1–16, at 2–3.

¹² *The Truth Shall Make You Free: The Lambeth Conference 1988, The Reports, Resolutions and Pastoral Letters from the Bishops* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 1988), 218.

¹³ *Jews, Christians and Muslims: The Way of Dialogue*, Appendix 6 in *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, 299–308.

¹⁴ 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 Statements on Interfaith Relations of the Anglican Communion prepared by the Dogmatic & Pastoral Concerns Section, Lambeth Conference 1988*.

¹⁵ Andrew Unsworth, “The Vatican, Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations,” in *Christian Responses to Islam: Muslim–Christian Relations in the Modern World*, ed. Anthony O’Mahony and Emma Loosley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008): 54–65; Anthony O’Mahony, “Modern Catholic Thought on Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations,” *One in Christ* 44, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 111–135.

theologoumenon than Vatican II does, while Cragg himself seems to shun this schema. *The Way of Dialogue* states that “all three of these religions see themselves in a common relationship to Abraham, the father of the faithful.”¹⁶ Throughout his writings, Cragg avoids the use of the phrase “Abrahamic religion” while recognizing 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 faithful,” yet he underlines “significant differences of emphasis in the role of Abraham among the three systems.”¹⁷ 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”¹⁸ and then to find the interpenetration of the dominant themes of the Semitic faiths. It is in the *method*, rather, that I believe we find the real source of 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 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.’”¹⁹ This could easily be said of Cragg himself, who sought to discover resonances and convergences between faiths without occluding difference. It is just such a method that *The Way of Dialogue* proceeds to expand upon by advocating dialogue as a way of “understanding,” “affirmation,” and “sharing.” The principle of “understanding” is rightly described by Ipgrave as an “affective entry into the world of the other” that can be attributed to the “Christian Presence” school of the Church Missionary Society.²⁰

The Christian Presence school of Anglican missionary scholars that included Max Warren and John V. Taylor was indebted to Cragg’s

¹⁶ *The Way of Dialogue*, §1.

¹⁷ Kenneth Cragg, *The Privilege of Man: A Theme in Judaism, Islam and Christianity* (London: The Athlone Press, 1968), 51.

¹⁸ Cragg, *The Privilege of Man*, 54.

¹⁹ Kenneth Cragg, “Constance E. Padwick 1886–1968,” *The Muslim World* 59, no. 1 (October 1969): 29–39, at 37.

²⁰ Ipgrave, “Understanding, Affirmation, Sharing,” 7.

creative “interpenetrations.” It displayed something beyond the merely scholastic in situating the Christian in a real relationship of empathy with the religious other.²¹ In Max Warren’s famous introduction to the *Christian Presence* series of books, the principle of “understanding” advocated by *The Way of Dialogue* is vividly recounted: “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.”²² This identification with the religious other before God is just such an endeavour that Cragg proposed in *The Call of the Minaret* in 1956 and is self-evident in the title of Cragg’s own contribution to the series, *Sandals at the Mosque: Christian Presence Amid Islam*. The Christian is challenged to imagine the call to prayer as a call by God into faithful relating with Muslims. Thus, “The call of the minaret to Muslim prayer becomes a call for the Christian to exacting tasks. He must first learn and then attain, by God’s grace, an authentically Christian relation to the mosque and its world.”²³

Indeed, one chapter is even entitled “The Call to Understanding,” drawing a clear parallel with *The Way of Dialogue*’s understanding as “more than intellectual apprehension.”²⁴ For Cragg, “the Christian needs and must bring a wide and warm understanding. . . . But to enter on such an exacting mission without first entering into the soul of those to be served is worse than futile.”²⁵ It is just such an *incarnational* model that forms the basis for the principles of “affirmation” and “sharing” which then follow in *The Way of Dialogue*: the affirmation of what is common between faiths, and the sharing of what is distinctive by way of the demands of the gospel on a foundation of relationship before God.

²¹ Graham Kings, “Mission and the Meeting of Faiths: The Theologies of Max Warren and John V. Taylor,” in *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799–1999*, ed. Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 285–318.

²² M. A. C. Warren, “General Introduction,” in Kenneth Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque: Christian Presence Amid Islam*, Christian Presence Series (London: SCM Press, 1959), 9–10. See also M. A. C. Warren, “General Introduction,” in John V. Taylor, *The Primal Vision: Christian Presence Amid African Religion*, Christian Presence Series (London: SCM Press, 1963), 10.

²³ Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, ix.

²⁴ *The Way of Dialogue*, §2.

²⁵ Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 194–195.

Cragg's espousal of a costly identification with the religious other which is such a significant part of *The Way of Dialogue* finds its corollary among many of the significant pioneers of Catholic interreligious dialogue that paved the way for Vatican II. Jules Monchanin, Catholic missionary and friend of Henri de Lubac whose theology contributed so much to the climate of Vatican II, spoke of his "Indian vocation." This was a personal exploration of Indian spirituality from within the practice of the eucharist as the mystery of Christ's presence. Jacques Prévotat describes Monchanin and de Lubac as having "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."²⁶

Where some would seek to harden the borders between the church and other religions, de Lubac and Monchanin, with Cragg, are alert to the presence of Christ in the religious other. This affective dimension is also true for Charles de Foucauld, a direct influence on Louis Massignon. De Foucauld became, to his Muslim neighbors, a *marabout*, a holy man, mediating the sacrament of Christ's mystical body "to offer a Christian presence in their midst."²⁷ Implicit in the missionary endeavour, then, is the presumption that Christ will be *discovered* in the self-emptying of the interreligious encounter. Anthony O'Mahony traces the genealogy of this principle of Vatican II as an "explicit recasting of western missionary effort" after the Second World War by Cardinal Jean Daniélou. This builds on the work of Louis Massignon such that the missionary effort was "as one finding Christ even more than preaching him."²⁸ For Daniélou, Christian Presence requires in the Christian a "far-reaching dispossession" necessitating the church continuing in its own life the incarnation of

²⁶ Jacques Prévotat, "Henri de Lubac and Jules Monchanin," in *Jules Monchanin (1895–1957): As Seen from East and West, Volume 1: Lyon-Fleurie*, Acts of the Colloquium held in Lyon-Fleurie, France and in Shantivanam-Tannirpalli, India, April–July 1995, (Delhi: Saccidananda Ashram and ISPCK, 2001): 58–71, 62–63.

²⁷ Robert Ellsberg, "Introduction," in *Charles de Foucauld: Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1999), 21.

²⁸ Anthony O'Mahony, "Our Common Fidelity to Abraham is What Divides': Christianity and Islam in the Life and Thought of Louis Massignon," in *Catholics in Interreligious Dialogue: Studies in Monasticism, Theology and Spirituality*, ed. Anthony O'Mahony and Peter Bowe (Leominster: Gracewing, 2006), 152.

Christ.²⁹ 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 do this without genuine sympathy.”³⁰

The Way of Dialogue for Lambeth 1988 offered as a founding principle the “way of understanding” which drew directly from the Christian Presence school that had been so shaped by Kenneth Cragg. This affective identification with the religious other has its echoes in some of the formative influences to Vatican II, embodying as it does the priority of incarnational witness indicative of de Foucauld, Monchanin, Daniélou, and de Lubac.

Lambeth 1998: Christian Embassy

The Way of Dialogue created controversies and stirred reactions especially among many African and Asian bishops who did not recognize the openness to dialogue in the religious other that seemed to be suggested by the Lambeth resolution.³¹ To some extent, this had been anticipated by responses to the preparatory reading, *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, which had been disseminated at the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) in Nigeria in 1984.³² The 1984 ACC was especially conscious of the disjunction between the experiences of Christians living in Muslim-majority contexts and the sentiments promulgated in this document in its advocacy of peaceful dialogue. Additionally, the ACC felt that insufficient attention had been given to the “doctrine of redemption” as a context for dialogue between religions.³³

In the spirit of redressing the need to listen to the realities of Christian coexistence with Muslims, the 1998 Lambeth Conference devoted significant time to hearing the stories of witness, dialogue,

²⁹ Jean Daniélou, *The Salvation of the Nations* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), 59.

³⁰ Daniélou, *The Salvation of the Nations*, 48–49.

³¹ See Mosher, “Christ and People of Other Faiths.”

³² *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue* (London: Church House Publishing, 1986). The first edition was published in 1984 and circulated for discussion at the Anglican Consultative Council of 1984 in Nigeria. The 1986 edition includes an essay by Michael Nazir-Ali, then Bishop of Raiwind in Pakistan, and extracts from “Bonds of Affection,” the formal record of the ACC meeting, which both act as correctives to *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*.

³³ *Towards a Theology for Inter-Faith Dialogue*, 39 and 50.

and persecution across a range of Anglican provinces. There was an evident reticence to returning to overarching theological schema for dialogue and, instead, one essay by Michael Nazir-Ali, Bishop of Rochester and formerly General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society after being Bishop of Raiwind in Pakistan, provided the sole source of theological reflection on other faiths for 1998. It was entitled *Embassy, Hospitality and Dialogue: Christians and People of Other Faiths*, and borrowed the twin concepts of embassy and hospitality from Kenneth Cragg to offer a vision of both proclamation and dialogue. For “embassy,” Nazir-Ali understands that representative capacity of Christians: “Embassy has to do with going out to them and sharing the Gospel with them.”³⁴ It is interesting that this corrective was felt necessary, as *The Way of Dialogue* reserves within dialogue the impulse to “share our own deep convictions, even when these appear irreconcilably opposed to our partner’s faith and practice.”³⁵ What seems to be problematic for Nazir-Ali, though, is the priority given to dialogue and the seeming relegation of proclamation in 1988.

Cragg’s dual principles of “embassy” and “hospitality” provide a much more fluid approach than Nazir-Ali’s essay may suggest, though. As Christopher Lamb remarks, “The Christian in that country is in a representative capacity, and must learn to speak the local language so as to be understood.”³⁶ In Cragg’s understanding of these terms, the Christian is not offered two parallel paths, the one evangelistic and self-confident, the other eirenic and diffident. *Both* proclamation and dialogue demand the *kenosis*: the incarnational, embodied witness that was intrinsic to Christian Presence. Underlying Cragg’s understanding of embassy and hospitality is an essential Christology whereby *every* encounter with the other becomes a search for the crucified Christ. Thus, Cragg can say in *The Call of the Minaret* that “Christian mission that renounces the making of Christians has forsaken its genius and its duty.”³⁷ But the task of embassy is one that the Christian cannot embark upon as one remote from censure because the subject of presentation is ultimately Christ crucified: “The final urge to the Christian mission is what Christ is and what, because of

³⁴ Michael Nazir-Ali, *Embassy, Hospitality and Dialogue: Christians and People of Other Faiths*, 7; <http://www.lambethconference.org/1998/documents/report-3.pdf>.

³⁵ *The Way of Dialogue*, §31.

³⁶ Lamb, *The Call to Retrieval*, 103.

³⁷ Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 355.

Him, we know God to be. We must represent the Gospel of Christ in the spirit and fellowship of Him from Whom it derives.”³⁸ What Cragg describes as a theology of “cross-reference” has no room for witness that is strident, self-contained, and power-assured. Again, speaking of Constance Padwick, Cragg’s intertwined concepts of embassy and hospitality are evidenced in his statement that “there is something about the sincerest evangelism which perforce must warm to the mystery of the ‘other’ religion and respond to the ‘wind blowing where it lists’. And there is the discovery, too, of the lurking self-interest within ‘victorious’ persuasion.”³⁹ Where *The Way of Dialogue* espoused Christian Presence as a basis for dialogue and preliminary to witness, it arguably failed to achieve confidence across a spectrum of the Anglican Communion by neglecting the concomitant principle that witness itself, rightly understood, could be a preliminary to dialogue. The reciprocal notions of embassy and hospitality offer, for Cragg, a truly christological underpinning that Nazir-Ali begins to point to, though incompletely, during Lambeth 1998.

The fundamental missionary task, then, is what Cragg terms the “call to retrieval” in *The Call of the Minaret*. For Islam, it is “the restoration to Muslims of the Christ Whom they have missed. All that the minaret both says and fails to say is included in this call to retrieval as the listening Christian hears it.”⁴⁰ The principle of incarnation, of Christian Presence, of attentiveness to the other and the discovery of Christ within and among the beliefs and practices of the religion are of a piece with the christological direction of mission.

There are deep resonances with the architects of Vatican II in this sense of *preparatio evangelica*. Cragg seeks to build upon the resonances he finds within Islam that signal Christ much as Jean Daniélou can argue that “rather than destroy Islam, might it then not be better to expand it? . . . If a Moslem followed his soul’s promptings to the end, he would come to Christ.”⁴¹ As another giant of Vatican II, Hans Urs von Balthasar, stated, all other religions and worldviews are “christologies on the search.”⁴² The missionary impulse for both Daniélou and Cragg does not come by way of any supposed impreg-

³⁸ Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 356.

³⁹ Cragg, “Constance E. Padwick,” in *The Muslim World*, 36.

⁴⁰ Cragg, *The Call of the Minaret*, 246.

⁴¹ Daniélou, *The Salvation of the Nations*, 30–31.

⁴² Hans Urs von Balthasar, *New Elucidations* (San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius Press, 1986), 76.

nability and perfection in the church but because of the universal relevance of Christ. For Daniélou, “Missionary spirituality is Christian spirituality,” and “Christianity is catholic by definition, that is, it embraces the world.”⁴³ So for Cragg, “If Christianity be as it is claimed, the tests that time and change impose on any faith will pre-dispose it Christwards.”⁴⁴

The Way of Dialogue sought to prioritize and give grounds for constructive relations between Christians, Muslims, and Jews using the motif of Christian Presence. Lambeth 1998 provided an opportunity to express a whole variety of interfaith encounters and to remind the church of the missionary context of diversity. Thus, embassy and hospitality, twin concepts articulated by Kenneth Cragg, were suggested by Nazir-Ali with special attention given to the proclamatory dimension of embassy. Underlying Cragg’s understanding of embassy and hospitality is a conviction that Christ is the fulfillment of any human search, a commitment integral to the developments on interfaith relations in Vatican II.

*Lambeth 2008: Christian Hospitality*⁴⁵

Where Lambeth 1988 attempted to establish a theological basis for dialogue with Jews and Muslims, and Lambeth 1998 concentrated on the practicalities of Christian co-existence with Muslims, Lambeth 2008 offered an “Anglican theology of inter faith relations.” In the document prepared for the Conference, *Generous Love: The Truth of the Gospel and the Call to Dialogue*, theologies of religion and definitive pronouncements on specific faiths were avoided. Rather, there

⁴³ Daniélou, *The Salvation of the Nations*, 1.

⁴⁴ Quoted from Cragg’s PhD thesis, “Islam in the Twentieth Century: The Relevance of Christian Theology and the Relation of the Christian Mission to its Problems” (1950), in Christopher Lamb, “Kenneth Cragg’s Understanding of Mission to Islam,” in Thomas and Amos, *A Faithful Presence*, 121–154, at 128.

⁴⁵ It is important to note that there was a suspicious reaction to the notion of “hospitality” from several Middle Eastern Christians at the presentation of this paper during “The Presence of Faith” conference. The notion that Middle Eastern Christians may be regarded as “guests” in a region where the Christian witness can be traced back to a continuous presence that precedes Islam undermines their struggle to be perceived as “co-citizens.” Despite the theological richness of hospitality around the eucharist for interreligious encounter, it may be that other analogies are appropriate to express the shape of politico-theological relations. For the purposes of this paper, the significance of hospitality as described by Cragg and the *Generous Love* document is that we are *all* guests of a hospitable Father God.

was an altogether more modest attention to the internal, doctrinal components that supported the practice of relations with other faiths. As Clare Amos states, “It was intended to act as a theology of interfaith relations—rather than, say, a theology of religions.”⁴⁶ Focusing on the Christian narrative that provided the impulse for interfaith relations meant that *Generous Love* had the potential to garner a level of support that earlier documents may have failed to establish.

The theme of Christian Presence is retrieved in section 5, “Celebrating the Presence of Christ’s Body.” In the spirit of Cragg and the Christian Presence school, this both points to the sacramental inhabitation of the church among neighbors of other faiths and the discovery of Christ among the poor and the vulnerable.⁴⁷ Perhaps conscious of the criticisms of *The Way of Dialogue*, this “presence” encompasses a diversity of encounters such as dialogue, evangelism, collaborative action for social justice, and the realities of persecution.

Having noted the use of Cragg’s themes of embassy and hospitality in 1998, *Generous Love*, in section 7, revisits them under the heading “Practising the Embassy and Hospitality of God.”⁴⁸ For Lambeth 1998, I chose to concentrate on the theme of “embassy,” as the issue of proclamation seemed to be the emphasis of Nazir-Ali, following the earlier focus on dialogue. In *Generous Love*, I would argue that there is a more accurate rendering of Cragg’s concepts of embassy and hospitality that provides a template for the specifically *Christian* understanding of hospitality. Hospitality in *Generous Love* is not configured so that the church is necessarily cast in the role of the host, welcoming from a position of power, arguably the role that it fulfilled in *The Way of Dialogue*. It is important to note that this embassy and hospitality is first and foremost seen as a participation in the sending and abiding of the Godhead. The trinitarian hue of *Generous Love*, marked throughout the document, is the driving impulse for a Christian vision of interfaith relations. As Cragg states in *Sandals at the Mosque*: “The peace of God initiates peace-making and goes out in sovereignty against all defiance of its authority. . . . The good news of

⁴⁶ Clare Amos, “For the Common Good: The Church of England, Christian-Muslim Relations and *A Common Word*,” *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 20, no. 2 (April 2009): 183–196, at 183.

⁴⁷ Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns, *Generous Love: The Truth of the Gospel and the Call to Dialogue—An Anglican Theology of Inter Faith Relations* (London: Anglican Consultative Council, 2008), 9–10.

⁴⁸ *Generous Love*, 13–14.

peace is that God is not remote, aloof, negligent, but alive, cognizant, active and able.”⁴⁹

Where Islam may see the Trinity as somehow betraying the majesty of God, Cragg views the divine self-giving as *enlarging* the glory of God. So, *Generous Love* builds embassy and hospitality upon the God who “pours out his life into the world and remains undiminished in the heart of the Trinity.”⁵⁰ What *Generous Love* notes as “the two poles of embassy and hospitality” are described as “indivisible and mutually complementary.” This is consistent with Cragg’s use of these terms. Christian hospitality is the context for embassy where we are called upon to be *both* host and guest. Embassy, in turn, is a ministry of reconciliation which prompts the giving and receiving of hospitality. Thus, Cragg can say of the invitation of the gospel that it is “not the favour of an élite but the debt of the forgiven; not the condescension of the superior but the hospitality of the love of God.”⁵¹ For Cragg, and for *Generous Love*, there is no neat separation of proclamation and dialogue. Christian hospitality, following the pattern of the Godhead, sends and abides, welcomes and inhabits, in a pattern of loving service.

The theme of hospitality, then, as understood through the lens of the hospitality of the Godhead, is, I would argue, an overarching theme to *Generous Love* consonant with the thrust of Cragg’s theology of interfaith relations. As he himself said, hospitality is “surely the closest of all analogies to the meaning of the Gospel.”⁵² Christian hospitality speaks of the incarnation of Christ in vulnerable self-emptying; God as guest in the world. It also speaks of God’s generous invitation to humanity to share in the feast of the eucharist. It is thus natural that *Generous Love* should signal the significance of the eucharist as the locus of Christian hospitality for the church, where we are welcomed by the “divine host.”⁵³

For Cragg, the eucharist is the culmination of the sacramental in creation. Only a sacramental theology can do justice to the God who risks himself in the delegated sovereignty of humanity: “The

⁴⁹ Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, 127.

⁵⁰ *Generous Love*, 13.

⁵¹ Cragg, *Sandals at the Mosque*, 142.

⁵² Kenneth Cragg, *Christianity in World Perspective* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1968), 71.

⁵³ *Generous Love*, 14.

Sacraments we rightly capitalize tell of the sacramental everywhere.”⁵⁴ The bread and the wine as vehicles for the grace of God embody the hallowing of earth and humanity, the transaction of the eternal with the temporal. Thus, nature is to be seen as a “sacramental realm”⁵⁵; the eucharist summons “to a living conformity with its translation into the life-situation of the Cross—a situation which has within it all the elements of man’s crisis and his restoration.”⁵⁶

The sacramentality of creation means that the hospitality of the church is relevant to every situation and so *Generous Love* affirms the Anglican presence among other faiths even where this presence is “beleaguered and vulnerable.”⁵⁷ There is a universality within the particularity of the worshipping Christian community that is commended by the Anglican Communion and is intrinsic to the capacious hospitality of the gospel. This hospitality is what drives the missionary task of finding sympathy between faiths. So, Cragg can speak of Padwick’s project as exhibiting the truths that “there can be no monopolies on penitence, no cornering of prayer, no isolating of revelations, no annexations of God and, therefore, no final self-sufficiencies of faiths.”⁵⁸ Following this theological reticence, Cragg, to the frustration of many of his readers, avoids any definitive statement about Islam, the status of the Qur’an, or the prophethood of Muhammad. There is a withholding of certainty about the religious other that is proper to the task of Christian mission. It is at one with the thrust of *Generous Love* and the legacy of Kenneth Cragg that, paradoxically, manages to say more by saying less.

Jane Smith, in a perceptive essay in *A Faithful Presence*, has identified in Cragg the “persistence of his theme of perplexity.”⁵⁹ 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

⁵⁴ Cragg, *Faith and Life Negotiate*, 276.

⁵⁵ Cragg, *The Privilege of Man*, 33.

⁵⁶ Cragg, *The Privilege of Man*, 159.

⁵⁷ *Generous Love*, 3.

⁵⁸ Kenneth Cragg, “Constance E. Padwick,” in Cragg, *Troubled by Truth*, 52–73, at 71.

⁵⁹ Jane I. Smith, “Balancing Divergence and Convergence, or ‘Is God the Author of Confusion?’ An Essay on Kenneth Cragg,” in Thomas and Amos, *A Faithful Presence*, 29–41, at 40.

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.

Christian hospitality gives a direction for interfaith practice that enables it to be a relational dynamic where the outcomes of encounters are far from clear, cannot be foreclosed, and can encompass the diverse realities of collaborative action, witness, persecution, and dialogue. The diffidence about any definitive theological scheme of religions in *Generous Love* and in the work of Cragg signals an appropriate eschatological dimension to ecclesiology. Thus, the eucharist in *Generous Love* becomes the place where “we wait for the day when all humanity together will meet the one divine host, the Father who invites all his children to share the joy of the banquet he has prepared.”⁶⁰ With Cragg, there is a christological impulse that demands both confidence and humility.

I would like to suggest that Christian hospitality as understood in *Generous Love*, confirming the contributions of Kenneth Cragg on this theme, is wholly consonant with the retrieval of patristic ecclesiology that was so vital to the Catholic renewal of Vatican II.⁶¹ So, the conciliar documents can talk of the liturgy of the eucharist as “the summit to which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows.”⁶² Exemplified in the theology of Henri de Lubac, the eucharist is the patterning for an engagement with the world that is already profoundly dependent upon and anticipatory to Christ. De Lubac, drawing from the church fathers, juxtaposes the “gifted freedom” of the eucharistic community with a metaphysics of self-sufficiency.⁶³ The vision of the church in its encounter with the other draws the whole of humanity into a unity that is at once christological, yet all-embracing. There is therefore no “private” domain for Christian faith; no border that marks off

⁶⁰ *Generous Love*, 14.

⁶¹ That *Generous Love* should quote from an ecumenical document on relations with the Orthodox tradition reaffirms the patristic hue of the Anglican ecclesiology that is proposed: “Father, Son and Spirit abide in one another in a life which is a dynamic, eternal and unending movement of self-giving” (*Generous Love*, 15).

⁶² *Sacrosanctum Concilium* §10, *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966), 142.

⁶³ “Gifted freedom” is a phrase of Gisbert Greshake used by John O’Donnell to describe the eucharistic vision of Vatican II that was so dependent upon de Lubac and von Balthasar. See John O’Donnell, *Hans Urs von Balthasar* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992), 121.

the possibility of God's redemptive purpose and action. Remembering Cragg's persistent "perplexity" we might note de Lubac's theology that associates "unity and truth" as "very exclusive and very broad, very strict and remarkably all-embracing."⁶⁴ There is thus a properly *ecumenist* dimension to the encounter with the religious other that is necessarily dynamic and inimical to the self-sufficiency that is redolent of theologies of religion.⁶⁵

Though differing so much in their understanding and practice of the Christian tradition, I believe there is an essential link between the metaphysics of de Lubac and Cragg that refuses the absolute discontinuity between the church and the world, between grace and nature. This metaphysic is embodied in the theme of Christian hospitality that is so vital to *Generous Love*.

Conclusion

Analyzing key themes in the interfaith relations documented in the Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008, the explicit and implicit influence of Kenneth Cragg is indisputable. In the motif of Christian Presence, the incarnational shape of his missionary theology provides a basis for dialogue with Jews and Muslims in 1988's *The Way of Dialogue*. In an apparent redressing of balance for Lambeth 1998, Christian embassy—the representative, proclamatory task of the church—was reaffirmed by Nazir-Ali in *Embassy, Hospitality and Dialogue*, in which we see Cragg's twin concepts of embassy and hospitality. In the Lambeth Conference of 2008, *Generous Love* situated the church's impulse to relations with the religious other within a trinitarian economy that was grounded in Christian hospitality. This was expounded to provide a dynamic, christological pattern of relating where the church could be both host and guest, shaped and embraced within the hospitality of the Godhead.

With this overarching understanding of Christian hospitality, I would argue that Kenneth Cragg's vision becomes more fully articulated in the formal documents of the Anglican Communion. The

⁶⁴ Henri de Lubac, *The Church: Paradox and Mystery* (Shannon: Ecclesia Press, 1969), 74.

⁶⁵ "We have no business comparing religious situations statically; nor should we institute comparisons between different religious systems with a view to either condemning them or admitting that this one or that may constitute a true 'economy of salvation'" (de Lubac, *The Church*, 75–76).

paradox of conviction and openness that is indicative of the generosity described in Lambeth 2008 echoes what we have come to know in the work of Cragg. As he says, “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.”⁶⁶ This economy finds resonances, I believe, with some of the formative influences to Vatican II and the contemporary Catholic Church’s theology of interfaith relations. Cragg himself seems to have an ambiguous relationship with ecclesial authority and specifically with the Catholic Church, and may indeed be surprised to find himself compared to the likes of Henri de Lubac. In pointing to the legacy of Cragg on Anglican interfaith relations, though, I would argue that he stands within a wider, mutually affirming tradition that suggests that his work should continue to be a resource for the church in years to come.

⁶⁶ Kenneth Cragg, “Islam and Incarnation,” in *Truth and Dialogue: The Relationship Between World Religions*, ed. John Hick (London: Sheldon Press, 1974), 126–139, at 134.

