

**Abstracts of the papers presented at the NIFCON Conference
held at Lambeth Palace in December 2011**

THE PRESENCE OF FAITH

Abstracts of papers

Gary D Bouma: *Australian Anglican approaches to the fact of diversity: exclusivist theologies versus coming to accept and value God's gift of diversity*

Religious Diversity both within and between religious groups has long challenged Anglicans. The demographics of religious diversity shape interreligious relations. Societies where one group dominates numerically and adds to this cultural domination and state support are very different from societies where no one group dominates. In Australia, Anglicans have been one group among others, sharing state support in the early 19th century and civic recognition today. Australian sectarian rivalries of the 19th and early 20th centuries occasioned both alliances among Protestant groups anticipating and advancing ecumenism and bitter anti-Catholic division. Meanwhile internal religious diversity among Anglicans seemed to exceed the differences between them and others. The logic and behaviours of ecumenism were extended by some to Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and others, while exclusivist theologies prevailed in other quarters. The demographics of religious diversity are now felt in nearly every city in the world and particularly in Australia which is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world. This religious plurality not only enables everyday encounters between people of many faiths, but calls for the completion of the theological work begun by Bishop Kenneth Cragg and others; theological work that moves through mutual respect and recognition of irreducible difference to accepting religious diversity as part of the orders of creation and discerning Jesus' respect for religious diversity in the Gospels. This paper provides data on the Australian experience, recounts the development interreligious relations and does some biblical and theological work toward valuing God's gift of religious diversity.

John Chesworth: *Anglicans and Islam in East Africa: The Diocese of Zanzibar and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (1923-1963)*

The work of the Anglican Church amongst Muslims in the islands and coastal regions of what is now Tanzania has not so far been studied in any detail. The paper seeks to examine the approaches used by the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Zanzibar from 1923-1964. During this period most of the senior clergy were missionaries serving with the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). How was work amongst the Muslim majority planned by the diocese? Did UMCA have an overall strategy, or was the strategy developed locally, by the diocese?

The paper examines the legacy of Godfrey Dale, who in 1923 published a Qur'ān in Swahili, with the intention of letting people 'know what the Qur'ān does say'. It then examines proposals for work amongst Muslims from lay and ordained members of the diocese which were submitted to the 1944 Diocesan Conference for consideration, as the Diocese prepared for the situation after World War II. Finally, it examines the role of the Diocese with particular reference to Christian-Muslim relations as Tanganyika and Zanzibar prepared for Independence.

Kenneth Cracknell: *Alan Coates Bouquet(1884-1976) and the legacy of F.D. Maurice and B.F. Westcott: laying foundations for the development of Anglican theology of religion in the second half of the twentieth century*

In 1981 the General Synod of the Church of England endorsed both the WCC and the BCC *Guidelines* for dialogue with people of other faiths. In commending both these documents, it also called for further reflection on the theological issues of religious pluralism and the results of this study, entitled *Towards a Theology for Inter-faith Dialogue*, was not only well received by the Synod in 1984, but in an enlarged form became a study document for the Anglican Consultative Council in Singapore, 1987. Why were Anglicans in the early nineteen-eighties so open to affirming the presence of God with people of other faiths? To be sure there were many varied influences for this positive appraisal and this paper will briefly note many of them. This paper examines the important but unrecognized part played by Alan Coates Bouquet (1884-1976) in shaping the attitudes of the parish clergy and Anglican laity over many previous decades. His frequently reprinted Pelican books, *Comparative Religion* (1941 onwards) and *Sacred Books of the World* (1954 onwards) were the most accessible sources of information about the world religious traditions in the twentieth century. Less widely known is a series of books and pamphlets on what we would now call the theology of religion: *Is Christianity the Final Religion?* (1921) *Religious Experience: Its Nature, Types and Validity* (1932); *The Christian Faith and Non-Christian Religions* (1959); *Should Christianity be Exclusive?* (1960). In these writings Bouquet not only set out his own position ("measured tolerance and faithful exclusiveness") but also, and more significantly mediated themes in the theologies of F. D. Maurice and B. F. Westcott to a wider audience. Without their influence the one Anglican Synodical statement on the theology of religion in the twentieth century would not have been written. (full disclosure: I was a member of the group that produced *Towards a Theology for Inter-faith dialogue* in 1984)

Michael Fitzgerald: *Anglicans appreciated. Reflections in a Catholic journal*

Anglican endeavours in Christian-Muslim relations are examined in this paper through the mirror of a Catholic publication, *Islamochristiana*. Attention is given first to some prominent personalities, followed by some references to the activities of successive Archbishops of Canterbury. Note is taken of articles by Anglicans published in the journal, as also of reviews of books by Anglicans. The reports of some formal dialogues are analysed, and an account

is given of Anglican involvement in Catholic reflection groups on Christian-Muslim relations. The conclusion drawn from the investigation is that there is little doctrinal difference between Anglicans and Catholics in their outreach to Muslims, but that Anglicans are often more courageous and generally more ecumenically open.

Guli Francis-Dehqani: *Dialogue under persecution: The presence of Anglicanism in Iran*

This paper offers some reflections on Anglican presence in Iran over the past century and explores the church's experience of interfaith encounter. During this period the church community has struggled to discover its identity as both Christian and Persian whilst undergoing varying degrees of hardship and persecution. A consideration of the Church's two indigenous Bishops in particular (Hassan Dehqani-Tafti and Iraj Mottahedeh), demonstrates the influence of Kenneth Cragg upon this small community, and shows how Anglicans in Iran have responded to these challenges and sought to participate in positive interfaith dialogue even in the face of severe opposition. The paper ends by exploring briefly themes which arise out of the situation of Iran but may also be pertinent for the practice of interfaith dialogue more generally.

Robin Gill: *Religious virtues in the public forum*

This paper will explore way in which religious virtues are currently being used constructively in ethical discussion in the public forum with a particular focus upon the global AIDS crisis. Recent reports of the influential Nuffield Council on Bioethics have found that the virtues of stewardship, solidarity and common good – all used widely in religious social ethics – can make important contributions to public discussion. Religious and secular people may not be able to agree on how these virtues are derived – within Jewish, Christian and Islamic discourse they depend ultimately upon our relationship to God the Creator – but they can still use them together to good effect. Stewardship was used to good effect in the report *Public Health: ethical issues* (2007): good public health does require careful stewardship. Solidarity with the vulnerable was used in the report *Dementia: ethical issues* (2009): solidarity gives us a powerful motive for caring for people with dementia. Common good was used in the report *Biofuels: ethical issues* (2011), along with stewardship and solidarity: common good proved to be an important way of justifying inter-generational justice. The paper will argue that overlapping virtues can be found in the sacred texts of many different religious traditions and that they can contribute significantly to an issue such as AIDS. Examples of religious virtues will be taken particularly from Jewish *Hebrew Bible*, the Christian *Old and New Testaments*, the Muslim *Qur'an*, the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita* and the Buddhist *Nikayas*. The status of the sacred texts and the way that virtues are defended within them vary very considerably from one religious

tradition to another. In addition, viewed from within some of these religious traditions, moral law may appear more central than virtues. However, viewed from the perspective of wider society today, the paper will argue that virtues are more relevant than moral laws to ethical discussion in the public forum. The paper will argue that religious virtues from ancient sacred texts can still offer significant guidance in modern, pluralistic societies even on an issue such as AIDS.

Hugh Goddard: *Anglican engagement with Islam in the 20th century*

This paper will outline some of the different ways in which Anglican Christians have engaged with Islam in the twentieth century, in both Muslim-majority and Christian-majority contexts, against the background of earlier Anglican encounters with Islam. It will include discussion of significant missionary thinkers in different parts of the world, including the Middle East (e.g. Temple Gairdner) and South Asia; of scholars and interpreters of Islam such as Kenneth Cragg; of church leaders who have reflected on the obligations of hospitality in historically Christian contexts (e.g. David Brown); and of efforts to make connections between these different strands (e.g. the 'Building Bridges' seminar programme).

Yvonne Haddad: *Christian Muslim Relations in the Middle East post 1958*

This paper will outline some of the different ways in which Anglican Christians have engaged with Islam in the twentieth century, in both Muslim-majority and Christian-majority contexts, against the background of earlier Anglican encounters with Islam. It will include discussion of significant missionary thinkers in different parts of the world, including the Middle East (e.g. Temple Gairdner) and South Asia; of scholars and interpreters of Islam such as Kenneth Cragg; of church leaders who have reflected on the obligations of hospitality in historically Christian contexts (e.g. David Brown); and of efforts to make connections between these different strands (e.g. the 'Building Bridges' seminar programme).

Toby Howarth: *Presence and Engagement: a contemporary Anglican response to mission and ministry in multi-faith England*

Pushing the limits slightly of the three set themes for the conference, this paper will explore the most recent structural and strategic initiative from the Church of England in responding to the nation's increasing religious and cultural diversity. I hope to explore the thinking and theology behind the Presence and Engagement initiative which began with a consultation process and an analysis of the 2001 census, and which was given a mandate from General Synod in 2005. Through discussion of the reports and other documents, and interviews with interviewing some of the key people involved, I hope to present a critical evaluation of the process as it moves into a new phase with a second mandate from General Synod hopefully in 2011. It will be important also to look at the context in which the P&E process is set,

including the wider inter faith relations environment, relations with government and ecumenical bodies.

Josiah Idowu-Fearon: *A century of engagements: the Nigerian perspective*

The history of Christian and Muslim relations in Nigeria began formally with the arrival in Badagry on 17th January 1845 of a CMS missionary team which included a Nigerian by the name Samuel Adjai Crowther. He never actually worked in the northern parts but his approach to Islam and Muslims in Yoruba land represents, till date a 'type' in Christian and Muslim relations in the Anglican Church in Nigeria. In the northern parts of the country, the team of the CMS that began the Anglican approach to Christian and Muslim relations (1899) was led by Dr. Walter Miller (the Apostle to the Hausas) who first came to Kano and eventually settled in Zaria. Later, other missionaries gifted and enthusiastic arrived between 1926 and 1929 to the north eager to expand the work begun by Miller. They sought a new and bigger land and that led to the establishment of the first model Christian village in the north of Nigeria.

The new arrivals included Guy Bullen and M.A.C Warren. With their new approach to relating to the Muslims, the method of Dr. Miller as indicated in the name of the then magazine "From Crusaders of Nigeria" was changed to "Northern Nigeria". In changing the name they wrote: "The word 'crusade' is associated with a militant Christianity which focused its attention on the material, and fought with carnal weapons for the conquest of Islam. Raymond Lull, the great 13th century missionary to Moslems, saw that this method was not only hopeless, but also un-Christian. He saw that there was another way - "by love, by prayer, by tears, and the offering up of our lives"- in a word, "the way of the cross", the way of the ministering servant. It was then concluded that the magazine from henceforth was going to be known as "Northern Nigeria"(Northern Nigeria No.12, August 1927. P.3). This new approach heavily influenced by M.A.C Warren became the northern Anglican way of relating to their Muslim neighbours. That was the beginning of an approach that has continued to characterize Christian and Muslim relations within the Anglican Communion in the Northern parts of Nigeria.

Michael Ipgrave: *Remembering the covenant: Judaism in an Anglican theology of interfaith relations*

The paper will describe some of the varied ways in which Anglicans have sought to give a theological account of Judaism and Jewish people, and will ask how this relates to the formulation of a theology for inter faith relations. How far are Christian-Jewish relations unique within the wider religious plurality, and how far are they paradigmatic? The paper will examine Walter Kasper's description of Judaism as a 'sacrament of otherness', asking how far this can be received within the various Anglican accounts of covenant and in the light of the history of Anglican involvement with Judaism.

Catriona Laing: *Islamic prayer, Catholic devotion and Evangelical spirituality: Constance Padwick's model for Christian presence amidst Islam*

This paper will examine the work of Constance Padwick (1886-1968), CMS Missionary in Egypt from 1916-1939. My paper will argue that inspired by Islamic spirituality, Padwick developed a theology of Christian presence, which is pertinent to questions of Christian Muslim encounter in Muslim majority countries today.

In the first part the paper will offer an analysis of Padwick's intention to study Muslim devotional prayers as a mean to establishing points of kinship between Christianity and Islam. The second and third parts will move to the unintended consequences of Padwick's engagement with Islamic spirituality and will discuss the way in which this informed her own Christian devotion and her vision for Christianity in the Muslim world. First, I shall argue that Padwick's experience of Muslim prayer led her to a greater appreciation of the worship and liturgies of the Eastern churches. This convinced her of the importance of collaboration between Western missionary organisations and Egypt's indigenous churches. Second, I shall show how Islamic spirituality inspired Padwick's study of Roman Catholic devotion, which prompted her to develop a theology of 'presence'. By way of conclusion I shall suggest that Padwick's careful study of Muslim prayer caused her to call for stronger, more confident indigenous churches supported by contemplative prayerful presence.

Alexander John Malik: *Christians in Pakistan and interfaith engagement*

This paper explains the Christians arrival in the Indo Sub Continent along with their interaction and engagement with Muslims. It focuses explicitly on the context in which Christians in Pakistan are engaged in interfaith relations with Muslims. The popular narrative among majority Muslims that Pakistan is created in the name of Islam has strengthened the Islamic identity that jeopardizes solidarity between Muslims and Christian and creates otherness for groups believing in other religions than Islam. This further challenge the equal citizenship of non Muslims as Islam is increasingly becoming an identity marker that led to exclusion and discrimination towards non Muslims. The dualistic world view of Islam, which see world through religious lens and divide in two spheres such as Islamic and unIslamic, is deeply embedded and mirrored in the perception of general community of Muslims.

Christians, who are approximately 2.5 of the total 180 million population, are the initiator on interfaith dialogue which could be reasoned to their minority situation. Majority of Christians belongs to the lower rung of economic ladder and are subjected to discrimination, be it due to blasphemy laws in Pakistan or socio discrimination on the basis of their non Muslim identity. Furthermore, Christians are equated with west and anti western views translates into anti Christian perceptions among general masses. For many

Muslims, past grievances and hate related with the memories of crusades are still made basis for legitimizing violence against West. This scenario leads nowhere except it further sows the seeds of discords and stand as impediments to interfaith engagement. In spite of this, Christians are engaged in diagonal services in the field of philanthropy such to address the health and educational needs that made them quite visible in the social stream of the society. Christians have also opened study centers to study Islam and promote interfaith dialogue.

Tracing the historical interfaith engagements, it had been witnessed that debates are often held between people of different religions with the sole focus to prove other wrong and resorting to religious conversion. Both apologetical and polemical literatures were produced by scholars of both Christians and Muslims that resulted into conflict and confrontation. Some literature derogatory to Islam is banned however the hate material against Christians and misinterpretation of their belief are still published and aired in vernacular press, TV channels and school text books. The 20 century saw the holding of poetry recital gatherings and adherents of different religions praised their religion and traditions? It took some time for interfaith interaction to have journeyed from debates to dialogues. Debate and confrontations were offensive whereas poetry followed a softer path. Poetry encompassed theological dimensions. Among Christian schools of thoughts, there are some who think that dialogue with Islam is equivalent to betraying their mission. On the other hand, these days it appeared quite often that during interfaith dialogues people preach about their religions and traditions in front of other religion without touching upon the areas that erupt misunderstanding, confusions and conflicts.

Lucinda Allen Mosher: Toward our mutual flourishing: the Episcopal Church, interreligious relations, and theologies of religious manyness

In 2009, the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church adopted a *Theological Statement on Interreligious Relations*, a lengthy and substantive document meant to clarify the theological and historical rationale for The Episcopal Church's engagement with other religious traditions. Thus it sought to provide a foundation upon which it would continue in interreligious dialogue at a time when "all of God's human creation is challenged to find common ground for our mutual flourishing." This paper will analyze this landmark document with regard to The Episcopal Church's progress in interreligious relations during the 20th century, and in relation to other key documents which have informed or conveyed The Episcopal Church's teaching on religious manyness – among them *Interfaith Relations and the Churches* (1999), *On Waging Reconciliation* (2001), and *Renewing Our Pledge* (2008). Thus an effort will be made to explain the development of the current theological stance of The Episcopal Church – itself a multinational member of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Douglas Pratt: *From Edinburgh to Georgetown: Anglican theological bridge-building*

In 1910 Anglicans participated in the Edinburgh Missionary conference at which the issue of the relation of Christianity to other faiths was raised in a new and serious way. Arguably this was a critical moment in the launching of new directions in Christian thinking and action which would contribute to the rise of the ecumenical movement on the one hand, and the emergence of Christian engagement in inter-faith relations and interreligious dialogue on the other. A century later, in 2010, the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, co-hosted along with the President of Georgetown University in Washington, DC the ninth of the Christian-Muslim 'Building Bridges' seminar series, begun in 2002 by the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey.

In between Edinburgh and Washington there lies a century of Anglican engagement in inter-faith activities of varying sorts, an engagement which began rather slowly, has often occurred in ecumenical contexts, takes place at both local and global levels, and which has gathered forceful momentum and produced some distinctive Anglican perspectives and contributions. This paper will seek to highlight key elements in the overall process, with special reference to more recent developments such as the Building Bridges series and Anglican theological contributions to arise, for example, from the work of NIFCON. The underlying aim will be the attempt to discern and articulate the Anglican voice within the wider context of ecumenical Christian interfaith engagement, especially in regard to theological dimensions and concerns pertaining to the issue of Christian relations to other faiths.

Peniel Rufus Rajkumar: *Re-cast(e)ing conversion, re-visiting dialogue: Indian attempts towards an interfaith theology of wholeness*

The first regional consultation of the Network of Inter Faith Concerns in the Anglican Communion (NIFCON), held at the United Theological College, Bangalore between the 30th of August to the 4th of September 2003, rightly recognised that in the caste-ridden Indian context, '(T)here can be tensions between a commitment to interreligious dialogue and a commitment to the liberation and empowerment of dalit and adivasi (tribal) people'. This paper, which would fall under the ambit of the theme 'Relations between Anglicans and others in the provinces of the Communion', will focus on the contentious issue of conversions of the dalit (the 'out-castes') and adivasi (tribals) communities to Christianity in which this tension - *between the Christian commitment to interreligious dialogue and a commitment to liberation and empowerment of the marginalised* - is best reflected. Focussing on the caste dimensions of these conversions, the paper will highlight how these conversions have posed a threat to resurgent Hindu nationalism in India. It will focus on how these conversions have called into question certain salient modes of inter-religious dialogue in the twentieth century and, by bringing in the question of justice, have pushed the discourses on dialogue more robustly

towards the notion of just dialogue thus reshaping the theology of interfaith relationships. Reading these dalit and adivasi conversions in critical interaction with the theological framework of inter-faith relationships articulated in the Anglican document *Generous Love: the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue* the paper will explore how these conversions can help redefine and re-draw the boundaries of an Anglican theology of interfaith relations in critical and creative fidelity to Jesus's promise of life in all its fullness.

Yazeed Said: *Edward Said, Islam and religion*

Edward Said (1935-2003) was an American Palestinian activist and critic. Though baptised an Anglican, he is self-described as a secular critic and thinker whose work reiterated Marx's claim that 'the premise of all criticism is the criticism of religion'. Yet, William Hart noted that 'Said's hostile critique of religion stands in sharp contrast to his defence of Islam'. The discussion on Edward Said and Islam has generally revolved around the question of *Orientalism*: how the West expands its monopoly of the world – notably Islam and Muslims – through textual analysis. However, his critique of Western scholarship and politics together with his defence of Islam cannot be fully understood without a proper analysis of what he understood or misunderstood 'Religion' to be. On the one hand, some of his misgivings about religion are shared by contemporary Anglican theologians of today, as they have to do a little with how religious ideas can engage what Archbishop Rowan Williams calls 'honest discourse'. On the other hand, Said's unwillingness to accept theological arguments as a method of interpretation makes him flirtatious with the same attitude he is trying to critique.

In this paper, I will examine first William Hart's study, *Edward Said and the Religious Effects of Culture*, emphasizing our disagreement with Said about the features that constitute secular society and the defining characteristics of religion in his *Covering of Islam*. Focusing on the need to heed Rowan Williams' positing of the moral dimension of historical reading, we identify a relationship between religion and society in Islam different from what either Western scholarship on the Islamic society took for granted or Said's liberal-Enlightenment view of the same.

Richard Sudworth: *Hospitality and embassy: the persistent influence of Kenneth Cragg on Anglican theologies of interfaith relations*

This paper assesses the legacy of Kenneth Cragg on the development of Anglican theologies of interfaith relations. Locating Cragg's missionary inheritance under the influence of Temple Gairdner, the paper calls attention to the sacramental influences of the *Lux Mundi* school on his early evangelicalism. It highlights a resultant spirituality in tune with Anglican comprehensiveness: Christologically centred, Trinitarian, yet open to the work of God in the religious other. The paper traces the influences of Cragg's theologies of interfaith relations on the Lambeth Conferences of 1988, 1998, and 2008, arguing that there has been a growing, formal integration of his

twin themes of “hospitality” and “embassy”. It is with the 2008 Anglican Communion document, *Generous Love*, that it can be said that Kenneth Cragg is the “Louis Massignon of Anglicanism”.

Andrew Wingate: *Sweden, Norway and Britain - living with Muslims in the Porvoo Communion of Churches*

The Porvoo agreement between the Anglican Churches of the British Isles, and the majority of the Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia, the Baltic and Iceland, was signed in 1989. Denmark became a significant additional full member in 2010. It focused upon mutual recognition of ministries, and commonality of ethos and theology. There have been many successful Diocesan partnerships and a number of agreements on specific questions, of which Inter Faith Relations has been amongst the most significant. Twelve Guidelines were drawn up in a ground breaking conference in Oslo in 2003. These were reaffirmed and strengthened in Gothenburg, Sweden, in a much changed north European context, in March 2011. This conference was rooted in a specific Porvoo working partnership between the St Philip’s Centre in Leicester and the Diocese of Gothenburg, facilitated by the co-working by Marika Palmdahl, Inter Faith Officer for the Diocese of Gothenburg, and myself. I spent a year in several Swedish Dioceses and in Norway, while based in Gothenburg, from April 2010, a connection I continue from Leicester.

Sweden, Norway and Britain share a long history of having national churches. Patterns of immigration have been very different, and in recent years, the proportion of Muslims in Sweden and Norway has grown rapidly, as has the urgency of addressing the issues involved. This was emphasised by the tragic events in the Oslo region in what has rapidly become known as 22/7 (the Brevik massacres). The cities of Norway and Sweden have responded to these changes at different speeds, as have the Dioceses. The first major purpose built mosque in Gothenburg was only completed in 2011, which sharpened the issues in this very open city. The churches have also been ready to learn from our much longer British experience, and this is a fruit of Porvoo. All three countries continue to face challenges, as updated in the Gothenburg Porvoo document, where they are grouped into four areas- International, national and European issues; responding to diverse and changing patterns of living; building long term trust; and sharing our faith, as well as on specific theological reflection. It is recognised that education is vital at all levels, including parishes. Hence the recent commendation of a study guide, to accompany the full document coming out of Gothenburg, and agreed by the Porvoo Primates in October. This paper will reflect on experiences in Sweden and Norway, and on the Porvoo documents.

Rowan Williams: *Anglicanism and other faiths in the future* See the paper on the website www.archbishopofcanterbury.org

