

THE JOURNAL

of the ASSOCIATION OF ANGLICAN MUSICIANS



AAM: SERVING THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

REPRINTED FROM VOLUME 29, NUMBER 4 (APRIL 2020) BY PERMISSION.

Lambeth Conference Worship and Music: The Movement Toward Global Hymnody (Part II)

MARTY WHEELER BURNETT, D.MIN.

During the conference, I was privileged to spend an hour with Geoff Weaver, Lambeth Conference Music Director, discussing various aspects of his work. We reviewed the selection process for music director and his job description. He commented on the changes that took place in reaction to the 1988 Lambeth Conference, where more Africans were present and there was a perceived need to include more world music and global hymnody. In 1988, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* was the hymnal for the conference, and copies were presented to the bishops. However, it was felt that a new hymnal was in order for 1998.

In preparation for the 1998 Lambeth Conference, the worship design team allowed two years of lead time for their work. In working on the 2008 conference, fewer meetings were required. It was decided that, although various provinces would be involved in daily worship, the conference would avoid a “show and tell” model. Local color would be provided by the music, prayers, and languages used. The choice of gathering and closing hymns would be given to the provinces. It was also decided that the form of the liturgy would remain constant. Since the chaplain was some distance from England, individuals were appointed in England to help with preparations.

Weaver mentioned some of the challenges associated with *Lambeth Praise 2008*. There was limited time for proofreading, so this task was left to contributors, resulting in a number of errors. Weaver hoped that these would be corrected in a second edition, but, apparently, this was never accomplished. Organizing the book thematically was a strategic decision to encourage its broader use as a hymnal supplement.

I asked Weaver about the changes he noticed from 1998 to 2008. He mentioned several, the first being the increased use of technology. Another change was the creation of the new 2008 edition of *Lambeth Praise*. Weaver stated that there was “no book which did what we wanted to do,” so *Lambeth Praise* was created. He commented that worship had become “tighter”—services began and ended on time and sermons were shorter (and were submitted and approved in advance). Although there were conflicting viewpoints regarding

control versus freedom of expression, Weaver agreed with this approach of reviewing sermons.

We discussed the importance of the music team. Weaver sought to maintain consistency by utilizing the same team members throughout the conference. The professional vocal quartet was a new addition in 2008, and that provided greater flexibility; these singers could “sing anything.” They were also a congenial group, having worked together in various church and concert settings over the years.

What were Weaver’s criteria in choosing music? He sought a balance in “responding to where people are and expanding their horizons.” Factoring into the decision making process were the lectionary, the theme of each service, mission, stylistic diversity, and a balance of “performance” and congregational singing.

I asked Weaver if there were any logistical challenges. He mentioned that the “Big Top” tent worked well, and there was plenty of technical support for sound and video. Having easy access to water was a practical issue for singers. There were “porta-loos” near the tent; however, getting a bottle or cup of water meant leaving the secure area around the “Big Top,” walking some distance, and then returning through a security checkpoint. The digital piano worked well and Weaver noted that the piano provided a percussive effect that facilitated leadership of hymns in this setting.

We discussed the attitudes toward “blended worship.” Weaver felt that “the English tend to worship in the head instead of the body and heart”—that they worship from the “neck upwards.” He expressed that “blended worship” was still a new concept for the United Kingdom. Weaver viewed the creation of such liturgies at the Lambeth Conference as an opportunity to model best practices to his country, showing that blended worship can be crafted carefully, presented with sensitivity, and, above all, done well and with integrity.

I asked Weaver “what impact would you like music and worship to make on the delegates to this Lambeth Conference?” He answered that his music team had been referred to by one bishop as “a fifth instrument of unity” for the conference and the Communion. He expressed that music could provide the bedrock of unity for the conference. Weaver

believed and hoped that *Lambeth Praise* could serve as a useful resource for bishops. He stated that “if the worship works, the conference works.” Most importantly, Weaver believed that music could be an avenue toward healing and a contribution to the holistic shape of the conference. According to Weaver, singing in harmony—especially a cappella singing—provides a model for harmony in the church.

We discussed *Lambeth Praise 2008* at some length. The hymnal’s thematic design was chosen to encourage liturgical use beyond the Lambeth Conference. In a hymnal of limited size, Weaver saw no point in including traditional hymns that could be projected on a screen. Instead, he viewed *Lambeth Praise* as a hymnal supplement representing the last forty years. He purposely chose to include different genres. Stuart Tonan, a well-known musician in the United Kingdom, assisted in selecting materials. The final decisions, however, were Weaver’s personal choice, incorporating recommendations from one or two trusted advisors.

The hymnal contains music from Taizé, the Iona Community, “worship songs” (what we might call “praise and worship”), and world music. Weaver made a point of including what he referred to as “radical” contemporary hymnody, such as texts by Shirley Erena Murray. “By the term radical, I mean a hymn writer who addresses the issues of the day in their hymns, e.g. justice, human rights, the environment, etc. In other words, a hymn that looks at the whole of God’s creation rather than the individual or the church community.”

In 2008, one of Weaver’s most recent projects was *Church Hymnary 4*, a Scottish Presbyterian hymnal. It is organized according to the liturgical year, as well as topically. The hymnal specifically includes hymns with themes of justice and the environment. It is published for general use under the title *Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*.

Today, Weaver’s expertise in the area of global hymnody remains well known, and his work has fundamentally changed the approach to music and worship at Lambeth conferences. During the past two decades, we have also seen greater acceptance and use of global hymnody in many Episcopal churches, especially as these materials have become more readily available.

As bishops and spouses reflected on the 2008 Lambeth Conference, there was much discussion about direction for the future. Some bishops suggested alternative models, including a conference to be held every five years for a shorter period of time. It was suggested that the conference could be held somewhere other than Canterbury—perhaps in Africa. This would present interesting challenges to the established model of music and worship developed over the past two Lambeth conferences. The Archbishop of Canterbury traditionally appoints the music director. Who would he appoint in this case—someone from England, or a musician from the host province?

After a period of uncertainty about the future of the Lambeth Conference, it was announced that the next meeting would be held July 23 through August 2, 2020 at the University of Kent in Canterbury. In 2019, Felix Yeung was appointed as Music Director of the 2020 Lambeth Conference. Yeung is the Director of Music at St. John’s Cathedral, Hong Kong, and Music Director of Die Konzertisten, an acclaimed chamber choir.



Photo: Yatbo Tsang

Felix Yeung, Music Director of the 2020 Lambeth Conference

In an email interview with Yeung in November 2019, I inquired about the selection process for the Lambeth Conference music director position. Yeung responded that he was approached by a member of the chaplaincy team in late 2017. Soon afterwards, he met with the CEO of the Lambeth Conference, who was visiting Hong Kong in preparation for the upcoming Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) meeting. Finally, Yeung interviewed with the Lambeth Conference Chaplain, the Rt.

Rev’d Nigel Stock, while in London on a performance trip. In 2019, ACC-17 members had the opportunity to experience Yeung’s musical leadership when St. John’s Cathedral hosted that meeting’s opening and closing worship.

I asked Yeung about the specific strengths, gifts, or experiences he brings to this role. He responded:

St. John’s Cathedral is a community where many cultures meet. The main exchanges of Western and Chinese cultures are enriched by our big Filipino community here, as well as our recent connection with the Diocese of Toungoo in Myanmar. I think my experience of incorporating elements of different cultures in our worship will be a very helpful one as we try to express the diversity and variety of the richness of the Anglican musical treasure.

In terms of musical resources, Yeung plans to create a team of no more than eight singers plus instrumentalists, but no specific arrangements had been made at the time of our interview. He confirmed that a hymnal will not be produced for the 2020 Lambeth Conference, but he was unable to comment on plans for distribution of worship materials through printed or electronic means.

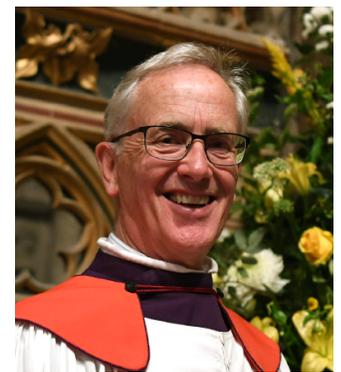


Photo: Adrian Smith/Canterbury Cathedral

Dr. David Flood, Director of Music, Canterbury Cathedral

In a February 2020 interview, David Flood, Director of Music at Canterbury Cathedral, indicated that he is looking forward to this year’s Lambeth Conference, noting:

It will be my third, although I first arrived here in 1978 just after a Conference and then returned, after my short time as Organist of Lincoln Cathedral, in 1988 also just after a Conference. My tenure here spans the period of five Lambeths! I thought that the end of this one would be a suitable time to retire.

Regarding music during the conference, he stated:

The Cathedral choir will be in residence from July 23, singing every day as we usually do and taking a

full part in the Opening and Closing ceremonies. For the regular Cathedral services, we will maintain a significant and eclectic repertoire to show what we customarily do, so that delegates from around the world have an opportunity to sample it.

Flood recalled that they have incorporated music from other areas of the Communion at some previous conferences, but he had not received any specific information about plans for the 2020 conference. “The main thing for us this year is the introduction of our rebuilt and enormously enhanced Cathedral organ, now increased to eighty-nine stops and taking a much more effective role in the liturgy,” Flood added.



The use of global hymnody is now an assumption, not an innovation. As a result of the work of Geoff Weaver and others over recent decades, it is unlikely that the church would ever revert to a model of using strictly English music for worship at global gatherings. Music and worship for the Lambeth Conference needs to reflect the diversity of the Anglican Communion. However, tensions still exist regarding musical style, formality versus spontaneity, the role of choirs, and the importance and relevance of Anglican choral tradition. There is growing discontent over the structure of worship stemming from conflicting cultural views. Some provinces clearly prefer free-flowing models of worship over tightly organized and carefully crafted liturgies. As African provinces gain prominence and increase in size, it will be interesting to see how their voices are reflected and incorporated in the design of conference worship.

One outcome of the 2008 Lambeth Conference was that bishops and spouses, having been immersed in an international gathering for three full weeks, gained an increased familiarity with global hymnody. As the conference ended, many bishops from the Episcopal Church expressed a desire to introduce new hymns to their dioceses. We continue to observe an increased openness to world music throughout the Episcopal Church, and we can expect to see the inclusion of more global hymnody in future hymnals and hymnal supplements.

To view appendices to this article, including service leaflets and complete music lists from the 2008 Lambeth Conference, please go to <https://anglicanmusicians.org/burnett-appendices/>.

Between the time of submission and publication, the Lambeth Conference has been postponed until 2021.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “The Ashanti Drummers (photograph and caption).” *The Church Times*, August 11, 1978, 1.
- Brown, Douglas. “Lambeth is Launched.” *The Church Times*, July 28, 1978, 9.
- Brown, Douglas. “Lambeth is Launched.” *The Church Times*, July 22, 1988, 9.
- “Feast of music for openers.” *The Lambeth Daily*, July 18, 1998, 4.
- Fisher, Rosamond. “The Bishops Will Note Many Changes at Lambeth Palace.” *The Church Times*, June 27, 1958.
- Flood, David. “Re: contact.” Email to the author. February 18, 2020.
- Griswold, Phoebe W., ed. *Paths of Love and Faithfulness: Reflections on Lambeth and the Anglican Communion*. Minneapolis: Forward Movement Publications, 1999.
- Hassett, Miranda K. *Anglican Communion in Crisis: How Episcopal Dissidents and Their African Allies Are Reshaping Anglicanism*. New York: Princeton UP, 2007.
- “Hiroshima Day Ceremony.” *The Church Times*, August 12, 1988, 11.
- Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise – Full Music*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008.
- Krumm, John M. *Letters from Lambeth*. Cincinnati, OH: Forward Movement, 1988.
- “The Lambeth Closing Service.” *The Church Times*, August 13, 1948, 1.
- The Lambeth Conference 1998*, Prod. CTVC Video, The Anglican Consultative Council, and Trinity Parish, Wall Street, The Episcopal Media Center, 1998.
- “Lambeth gathers.” *The Lambeth Daily*, July 20, 1998: 1-2.
- Lambeth Praise*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2008.
- Lambeth Praise Songbook*. London: Burns & Oates, 1998.
- Lewis, Harold T. *A Church for the Future: South Africa and the Future of Anglicanism*. Grand Rapids: Church, Incorporated, 2007.
- Marshall, Michael. *Church at the Crossroads: Lambeth 1988*. New York: HarperCollins, 1988.
- Morgan, Dewi. *Lambeth Speaks*. London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., 1958.
- “Musical welcome for the Lambeth bishops.” *The Church Times*, July 21, 1978: 1.
- “O For a thousand tongues...” *The Lambeth Daily*, July 20, 1998: 1-2.
- Official Programme and Event Guide*. The Lambeth Conference, 2008.
- Peacock, David. *World Praise: Combined Music Edition*. New York: Marshall Pickering, 1995.
- Reath, Mary. *Rome and Canterbury: The Elusive Search for Unity*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, Incorporated, 2007.
- Samuel, Vinay, and Christopher Sugden. *Lambeth: A View from the Two Thirds World*. Grand Rapids: Morehouse, 1989.
- Shadwick, Alan. “15,000 at White City Service.” *The Church Times*, August 23, 1968: 13.
- Simpson, James B., and Edward M. Story. *The Long Shadows of Lambeth X*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1969.

- Stephenson, Alan M G. *The First Lambeth Conference 1867*. London: SPCK, 1967.
- Weaver, Geoff. "Geoff Weaver." Accessed Summer 2008. <http://www.geoffweavermusic.com>.
- Weaver, Geoff. "Music and Worship at Lambeth." Personal interview. July 25, 2008.
- Weaver, Geoff. "Re: doctoral research on Lambeth Conference music." E-mail to the author. July 7, 2008.
- Weaver, Geoff. "Re: doctoral research on Lambeth Conference music." E-mail to the author. July 23, 2008.
- Weaver, Geoff. "Re: music list." E-mail to the author. August 9, 2008.
- Witnesses to the Spirit: The Lambeth Conference 1988*. Prod. for the Anglican Consultative Council, distributed by Episcopal Radio-TV Foundation. 1988.
- Worship and Indaba Group Resources*. The Lambeth Conference, 2008.
- Yeung, Felix. "Re: Music for Lambeth 2020." Email to the author. November 9, 2019.
-

Marty Wheeler Burnett is Canon Precentor at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Omaha, Nebraska, where she leads a growing music program with singers and instrumentalists of all ages. Burnett holds Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in organ performance from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and a Doctor of Ministry degree from the University of the South. She was Dean of the Omaha AGO Chapter from 2007-2009. A member of AAM since 1992, she has served as a Regional Coordinator and regularly attends annual conferences. Burnett currently serves as AAM President. She has worked as a parish musician in Texas, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

