Glimpses into the Music and Worship Life of a Victorian Colonial Cathedral: The Anglican Cathedral of St Michael and St George in 1900 (Grahamstown, South Africa)

Andrew-John Bethke
University of South Africa

Follow this and additional works at: http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/yjmr
Part of the History of Christianity Commons, Liturgy and Worship Commons, and the Musicology Commons

Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.17132/2377-231X.1076

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by EliScholar – A Digital Platform for Scholarly Publishing at Yale. It has been accepted for inclusion in Yale Journal of Music & Religion by an authorized editor of EliScholar – A Digital Platform for Scholarly Publishing at Yale. For more information, please contact elischolar@yale.edu.
Glimpses into the Music and Worship Life of a Victorian Colonial Cathedral

The Anglican Cathedral Church of St. Michael and St. George in 1900 (Grahamstown, South Africa)

Andrew-John Bethke

This article documents one year (1900) in the musical life of the Anglican cathedral in Grahamstown, Cape Colony, South Africa, during the British colonial period as advertised in the Saturday editions of two local newspapers: *Grocott’s Penny Mail*¹ and the *Grahamstown Journal*.² For about six years (1899–1905), these papers routinely published news of six Grahamstown churches,³ including service times, congregational hymns, choral canticle settings, and anthems, providing a valuable record of Victorian colonial worship trends. I have singled out the year 1900 for two reasons. First, by the turn of the century the burgeoning Anglican colonial enterprise had settled into several autonomous churches that were asserting their unique identities. This had ramifications for the ethos of the church in South Africa and will be discussed below. More locally, 1900 was the career midpoint of the incumbent cathedral organist, William Deane,⁴ and the end of the tenure of the cathedral’s precentor, Joseph Loether Hodgson.⁵ Besides analyzing the musical trends of the cathedral, along with the choir that was

¹ *Grocott’s Penny Mail* was established in 1872 in Grahamstown by Thomas Henry Grocott. It continues to be published in Grahamstown on a biweekly basis. In 1900, the paper was distributed to a mainly English readership “throughout the Cape Colony, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal Republic and to missionary subscribers in Kuruman, Bamangwato and on the Zambezi” (http://www.grocotts.co.za/content/history-grocotts-mail [accessed March 27, 2017]).

² The *Grahamstown Journal* was established in 1831 and ran as an independent newspaper until it was incorporated into *Grocott’s Penny Mail* in 1920.

³ The six churches were: the Cathedral of St. Michael and St. George, Christ Church (Anglican peculiar—that is, an independent congregation that was only affiliated to an Anglican diocese), St. Bartholomew’s (Anglican), Commemoration Methodist, Trinity Presbyterian, and the Baptist Church. The notices for Commemoration, Trinity, and the Baptist Church do not contain consistent weekly musical information, whereas the Anglican churches usually provide full details. (No reason for the inclusion of these details in the papers was ever given.) Two points of interest place the newspapers in context: First, none of the black congregations in Grahamstown is named or given space within the papers. Second, the service times and music for the Roman Catholic congregation and the small Jewish, Islamic, and Hindu communities (in 1904 numbering 780, 62, and 43, respectively [Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope 1904: General Report with Annexures (Cape Town: Government Printers, 1905), 143]) are absent from the newspapers. Together, these points suggest that black locals, Roman Catholics, and non-Christians were considered peripheral in terms of the general status quo or of power relationships in Grahamstown.

⁴ William Deane was appointed organist and choirmaster of the cathedral in 1894. Although it has been impossible to ascertain when he retired or resigned, by 1914 another organist, Douglas Taylor, was incumbent. In a pamphlet dated 1905, Deane is still listed as the organist (see *A Guide to the Cathedral Church of St. Michael and St. George, Grahamstown* [Grahamstown: African Book Company, 1905]). So he must have left sometime between 1905 and 1914. Deane was a fellow of the Royal College of Organists in London.

⁵ Joseph Loether Hodgson was precentor at the cathedral and headmaster of the Cathedral Grammar School from 1892 (see *A Codified Edition of the Acts and Resolutions (with Appendix) of the Synod of the Diocese of Grahamstown* [Grahamstown: Herbert Guest, 1895], 103) to 1900 (newspaper advertisement for a new school headmaster, *Grocott’s Penny Mail*, March 6, 1900).
available to Deane, this article will explore the content of the cathedral’s musical repertoire as it relates to the choir’s size and competence; the preference for certain composers and what this might imply about local musical taste; the precentor’s hymn choices and how they might reflect the ecclesiastical ethos of the cathedral; and any special services that took place and how they relate to the wider South African context and the fierce Anglican debates both for and against Anglo-Catholicism. Through these analyses, I will demonstrate that the cathedral reflected attributes of a typical moderate English Victorian parish church, slightly influenced by the Anglo-Catholic movement, but not overwhelmed by it.

The Cathedral Choir and the Worship Routine
It is possible to determine from weekly newspaper advertisements that the normal Sunday worship routine at the Cathedral Church of St. Michael and St. George in 1900 was: 8 A.M. Holy Communion; 11 A.M. choral Mattins, 3 P.M. children’s service; and 7 P.M. choral Evensong. There were 12 choral Communions throughout the year, some at 8 A.M., the others at 11 A.M. with Mattins (Litany at 10:15 A.M., immediately beforehand). During specific seasons throughout the year extra services were added to the normal round. During the season of Lent, 8 P.M. Wednesday gatherings with a sermon were advertised. On Saturdays during Eastertide, choral Evensongs were sung. On Wednesdays during Advent, Bible studies were advertised for 5 P.M., while on Fridays there were special services at 7:30 P.M. The music lists for these services were never published.

The most substantial deviation from the norm was during Holy Week. The details, according to Grocott’s Penny Mail, were as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday: 8 P.M. (type of service not listed)
Good Friday: 7 A.M. Mattins, Meditation, and Litany; 11 A.M. Ante-Communion and sermon; 12 P.M. three-hour service; 4:30 P.M. children’s service and address; 7 P.M. Evensong

---

6 Anglo-Catholicism, also known as Tractarianism, Puseyism, or the Oxford Movement, began in the 1830s both as a reaction against Erastianism and as a theological movement that tried to revive the Catholic roots of English Anglicanism. Some scholars have argued that Anglo-Catholicism may be part of the general current of historicism prevalent throughout nineteenth-century Britain.

7 Mattins is the Anglican service of Morning Prayer. It contains psalms, canticles, readings from Scripture, and prayers.

8 According to a pamphlet dated 1893, the routine was the same as in 1900 with one notable exception: a service of Holy Communion was held on the first and third Sundays of the month, alternating with Mattins (see A Short Guide to the Cathedral Church of S. Michael and S. George Grahamstown [Grahamstown: N.p., 1893]). Thus, by 1900 the fortnightly celebration of Communion at the principal 11 A.M. service had disappeared completely, replaced by occasional Eucharistic services. Frederick Henry Williams, dean of the cathedral between 1865 and 1885, was heavily influenced by the Anglo-Catholic movement, and the fortnightly Communions may have been a vestige of his tenure. By the late 1890s the earlier Anglo-Catholic ethos of the cathedral seems to have been waning. Besides the falling away of regular Communion services at 11 A.M., certain other small details like the use of the more common “St. Michael and St. George” replaced the earlier Catholic designation “S. Michael and S. George” on official communications from the cathedral.

9 Ante-Communion is the first part of the Communion service up to the Offertory, also called the Pro-Anaphora.
Saturday: 7:30 A.M. Communion; 10 A.M. Mattins; 5:30 P.M. service of intercession; 6 P.M. choral Evensong
Easter Day: 6 A.M., 7 A.M., and 8 A.M. Communion services; 10:15 A.M. Mattins and Litany; 11 A.M. Eucharist and sermon

What do these details suggest about the cathedral’s overall ethos and the choir’s role within it? First, it is immediately evident that this was not a cathedral with a choral foundation that sustained weekday choral services on a regular basis (with a few exceptions noted above). In comparison, English cathedrals over their long history maintained a tradition of weekday services performed by the canons\textsuperscript{10} in quire.\textsuperscript{11} Over the centuries, given the long absences of canons for various reasons, a tradition emerged of delegating the daily Offices to lay clerks\textsuperscript{12} and boy choristers—a tradition that continues today.\textsuperscript{13} Grahamstown Cathedral, while it was established with a core staff similar in nature to an English cathedral (including such positions as dean, canon precentor, and so forth), did not delegate the chanting of the daily Offices to a professional choir. Thus, there was no need to simulate the English pattern in South Africa because the English weekday choral Offices stemmed from historical precedent rather than ecclesiastical necessity: that is, the choristers were not vicars choral (substitutes for absent canons). Practically however, there was probably not enough financial capital in the new diocese to support such an endeavor.\textsuperscript{14}

A Cathedral Grammar School for boarding boys was established soon after the first bishop of Grahamstown arrived in 1854. Was this school founded as a choir school to provide choristers for the newly promoted cathedral? No direct evidence can be found to answer this question. There is a more compelling indication of a strong tradition in the Cape Colony, promoted by Bishop Robert Gray,\textsuperscript{15} of schools being established alongside or in the local church simply to uplift the population (rather than to provide choristers). Often clergy were commissioned as both pastors and school teachers.\textsuperscript{16} This seems to have been the case at the cathedral in Grahamstown.

\textsuperscript{10} Canons are ordained clergy who form the executive of a cathedral. Together they are known as a cathedral chapter.
\textsuperscript{11} The quire, or choir, is the section of a cathedral where the choir and the canons are seated, usually facing each other.
\textsuperscript{12} Lay clerks, or vicars choral, are singers who are appointed to sing the Offices of a cathedral, usually in place of a canon.
\textsuperscript{13} See Allan Mould, \textit{The English Chorister: A History} (London: Continuum, 2007), chap. 3.
\textsuperscript{14} The Anglican Church of Southern Africa at the time was completely autonomous as an ecclesiastical body. It was not an established church in the normal sense, although it is clear that from a political perspective it did hold considerable sway in the country. Thus, financially it could not rely on its established status for consistent government funding. Money was collected through weekly offerings in parishes, donations and grants from overseas organizations, such as the Colonial Bishoprics Fund or the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
\textsuperscript{15} Robert Gray (1809–1872) was the first bishop of Cape Town. He was consecrated bishop in 1847 and presided in his diocese until his death.
\textsuperscript{16} See, for example, Bishop Gray’s diary, where on Sept. 7, 1855, he wrote, “We left Riversdale at eight o’clock, after an early breakfast, for Mossel Bay, where I have recently stationed a Deacon-schoolmaster, and a house and School-chapel are in the course of erection” (Robert Gray, \textit{Three Months Visitation by the Bishop of Capetown 1855} [London: Bell and Daldy, 1856], 29). In the \textit{Guardian} newspaper (an Anglican periodical, not to be confused with the popular British newspaper), one correspondent noted: “The average parson today is expected to be a scholar and to preach a good sermon. He is required to be musical, to sing the service on a faultless note, and, perhaps, to train the choir. He is expected to teach the school children as well as, or better than, the trained schoolmaster” (\textit{Guardian} 55 [1900]: 747).
Evidence confirms that by 1900 the role of cleric/teacher was taken on by the precentor, who was also the headmaster of the Grammar School. Both Joseph Loethe Hodgson and A. W. Brereton filled these joint positions between 1893 and 1901. Records show that the school experienced regular financial difficulties, and that it had been closed sometime between 1860 and 1870 because of lack of funds.\textsuperscript{17} It was reopened in the 1880s and seems to have limped along fairly stably until mid-1901, when it closed again.\textsuperscript{18} With the precentor as head, it is likely that boys for the choir were recruited from the school, but it is equally possible that boys from other local schools such as St. Andrew’s College (another Anglican school) were also choristers. Wherever they came from, a photograph of the choir from the turn of the twentieth century shows only seven boys and five gentlemen (see Fig. 1). The three clergy in the picture may have sung with the choir too. A choir of men and boys was not particularly striking at the time; numerous Anglican choirs both in South Africa and in England comprised only males. In Cape Town, a large and “fine, if not splendid”\textsuperscript{19} choir of men and boys sang choral services weekly at St. George’s Cathedral, and other parish churches had flourishing all-male choral traditions.\textsuperscript{20} Elsewhere in the British Empire, cathedral choral traditions supported large all-male choirs. St. Paul’s Cathedral in Melbourne, Australia, for example, had a choir with 20 to 24 men and 32 boys at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{21} Such a male-dominated clerical hierarchy fed into the general ethos of imperial Victorian patriarchy.

\textsuperscript{17} See Cathedral Grammar School records, Cory Library Archives, MS 16780.
\textsuperscript{18} In 1902 the school building was leased to the Cape Colony Government as a laboratory. See leases in the Cathedral Grammar School records in Cory Library Archives, MS 16780.
Fig. 1: The Grahamstown Cathedral Choir, sometime between 1899 and 1915. Photographer unknown. By permission of the Cory Library (Pic 3294/1).

A small choir like this may suggest several possibilities. The first is that the photograph, which is undated but must have been taken sometime between 1899 and 1915 (the bishop is Charles Cornish, who held office during that period), was taken after the Cathedral Grammar School closed and represented a drop in chorister intake. Evidence to support this possibility appears in the 1901 music lists published in the local newspapers: Anglican chants replaced full choral services, and anthems were repeated several Sundays in a row. A second option is that the choir was always small. In the early nineteenth century, English cathedral choirs often supported only eight boy choristers.\(^2^2\) It was only toward the end of the century that choral foundations began to grow substantially,\(^2^3\) as the numbers at Melbourne discussed above show. More than eight choristers might have been too ambitious in a town that had numerous churches and a population of between 10,000 and 14,000.\(^2^4\) A third option is that boys were absent on the day the photograph was taken. Suffice it to say that the choral music discussed below could well have been sung by a group as small as this.

The round of services for Holy Week requires some discussion. It seems clear that on Maundy Thursday there was no evening celebration of Holy Communion to commemorate the institution of the Eucharist. While it is true that the practice of the Easter \textit{triduum}\(^2^5\) in

\(^{22}\) Mould, \textit{The English Chorister}, 190–91.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.

\(^{24}\) The government census for Grahamstown put the population at 10,498 in 1891 and 13,887 in 1904 (\textit{Census of the Colony}, 9). The same census puts the number of Anglicans at 4,221 in 1904 (\textit{Census of the Colony}, 143).

\(^{25}\) The Easter \textit{triduum} is a three-day service that starts on Maundy Thursday evening with a Communion service to commemorate Jesus’s institution of the Eucharist, followed by a service of intense prayer and devotion on Good Friday, and finally a Vigil Eucharist either on Saturday evening or early on Sunday morning.
Anglicanism only became widespread in the later twentieth century, Anglo-Catholic parishes in Britain, like St. Saviour’s in Leeds, had already begun experimenting in 1848 with an evening celebration of Communion on Maundy Thursday to commemorate the institution of the Last Supper. 26 The Anglican Church of Southern Africa was influenced by the Anglo-Catholic movement, 27 and instances of ritualism abound throughout existing archival and historical records; yet, at least at the cathedral, the concept of an evening Communion service had not emerged, and in fact would only surface in the 1950s. 28 Good Friday, on the other hand, does reveal something of the ritualist/liturgical revival. Notice that there is no Communion service (even though the Book of Common Prayer 1662 provides for one), 29 but there is a three-hour devotion from 12 to 3 P.M. In the 1880s the introduction of the three-hour service had been considered a markedly Anglo-Catholic badge of honor in the diocese of Grahamstown. 30 Yet by the turn of the century it seemed an almost expected practice—not necessarily a reflection of particular ideals of extreme churchmanship associated with Anglo-Catholicism. A similar shift had occurred in Britain during the last 20 years of the nineteenth century, when moderate parish churches had absorbed aspects of ritualism, using the broader context of historicism, 31 which was gathering momentum at the time, as a defense for such developments. 32 Thus, Grahamstown Cathedral in 1900 presents an interesting front. While it seems to have retained broader elements of Anglo-Catholic practice by introducing a three-hour service on Good Friday, it rejected a celebration of Communion on Maundy Thursday. This, along with evidence presented below, forms part of the argument for a tradition on the fringes of the burgeoning Anglo-Catholic ethos of wider South African Anglicanism at the time. Alternatively, it may suggest that the ubiquity of Anglo-Catholicism, so often assumed by later South African Anglican historians, was not as widespread or popular as was previously thought.


29 There was a strong high-church precedent for celebrating Communion of Good Friday within the Church of England (Nigel Yates, Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 1830–1910 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 282).

30 In the 1870s, a three-hour devotion on Good Friday was counted a ritualist practice (Yates, Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 282). In South Africa, a three-hour devotion service was already taking place in some churches by at least 1884 (Church Chronicle: A Record of Church News for the Diocese of Grahamstown and the Province of South Africa 5 [1884]: 160–61).

31 Yates argues that ritualism was a natural outgrowth of antiquarianism and Romanticism as it developed from the Neo-Gothic revival. He includes, alongside antiquarianism, the rejection of the English Reformation; the magnification of the church’s ministry and sacraments by Tractarians in opposition to traditional high churchmen; the ecclesiological movement and its emphasis on beauty and symbolism; the rise of the Roman Catholic Church in England at the time; and the colorful ceremony and theology of the Catholic Apostolic Church (Yates, Anglican Ritualism in Victorian Britain, 68–69).

Choral Canticles, Settings of the Communion Service, and Anthems

What can be deduced for certain is that in 1900 an SATB choir sang choral services twice on normal Sundays—usually choral Mattins at 11 A.M. (or occasionally a choral Holy Communion) and Evensong at 7 P.M.

From the music lists that appeared in Grocott’s Penny Mail and the Grahamstown Journal, it is easy to determine the usual routine for the distribution of music between the services. The canticles at Mattins were normally sung to Anglican chant. There was no anthem in the morning. The music for Evensong was more substantial, usually including a fully composed setting of the canticles, and always an anthem. It may be that 11 A.M. Mattins was considered a congregational service where everybody’s participation was expected, especially in terms of the hymns, and possibly the canticles too. If there was any residue from Anglo-Catholicism in the cathedral’s brand of Anglicanism, it may have been an insistence on the congregational nature of worship—an ideal that prompted the rapid development of the Anglican hymn in the second half of the nineteenth century. For extreme Anglo-Catholics, congregational hymn singing had been a diet of plainsong, often translations of Latin hymns. There are examples of such extremism in Port Elizabeth in the 1880s, but not in Grahamstown. Indeed, the singing of metrical psalmody and hymns seems to have been well entrenched in the cathedral congregation since its earliest days. Even before a cathedral had been established, one of the Anglican colonial chaplains in Grahamstown had assembled a collection of psalms and hymns, largely reflecting the Evangelical tradition of British Anglicanism. With this background, a service with a congregational emphasis seems entirely feasible and even desirable, given the excitement and energy with which Anglicans had taken up hymn singing as the social biases against it began to fade. If this was the case, the choir would simply have led the congregation. The founding father of Anglicanism, Thomas Cranmer, would probably have been satisfied with such a position, since he had implied as much in his writing about music. Yet it is equally possible that the choir sang the canticles alone, as a performance, and that the congregation simply sang the hymns. At St. George’s Cathedral in Cape Town at about the same time, Mattins was normally

33 See the account of Christmas Day services at St. Peter’s in Port Elizabeth in 1880 (Church Chronicle 2 [1881]: 58).
35 The Anglo-Catholic enthusiasm for hymnody, along with competition from the early Methodists, created an ideal space for Anglicans to accept hymnody (Catholic, Orthodox, and Nonconformist) alongside metrical psalmody. That hymnody eventually triumphed is testament to the popularity of hymns and their tunes and such publications as Hymns Ancient and Modern. The only hurdle, which was deeply contested at the time, was the legality of hymnody within the liturgy of the Church of England. The Book of Common Prayer 1662 makes no rubrical allowance for hymns (or metrical psalms, for that matter). Yet Elizabeth I had wisely provided for the singing of a hymn or psalm before and after a service. Hymns within the service were another matter. McCart fleshes out the battle toward the acceptance of hymnody within the established church (see Thomas K. McCart, The Matter and Manner of Praise: The Controversial Evolution of Hymnody in the Church of England, 1760–1820 [Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1998]). While such battles inevitably took place in England, their repercussions were certainly felt in South Africa, and there is no reason to doubt that the popularity of hymns, especially through Hymns Ancient and Modern, was welcomed there.
sung to a full setting like Calkin in B-flat along with an anthem.\(^{37}\) No mention is made of hymns, although presumably they were sung by the congregation.

About once a month the choir sang at a Communion service, at either 8 or 11 A.M. Such monthly choral Communion services seem to have been a standard feature of Anglican churchmanship at the turn of the century in South Africa.\(^{38}\) At these choral services, a round of four Communion settings was sung: Woodward in B-flat, Hayne in G, Elvey in E, and Merbecke. While the first three settings are standard Victorian fare and were common at other colonial cathedrals like St. George’s in Cape Town,\(^{39}\) the fourth emerged from the Anglo-Catholic choral revival. Merbecke’s plainsonglike setting was written for the 1549 version of the Book of Common Prayer and was published as a companion to it: the Prayer Book Noted. Merbecke carefully adapted existing plainsong and wrote some new chants to accompany all of the texts that would usually have been sung in the Latin Mass, but now were translated into English.\(^{40}\) There is no evidence that the setting was widely used at the time, but when Anglo-Catholic scholars found and published it, it quickly became popular throughout the Anglican world, being sung in Cape Town all the way into the twentieth century.\(^{41}\) Is this evidence that the cathedral was adopting an Anglo-Catholic pattern at its Communion services? It seems unlikely given the preponderance of composers who were not associated with the Anglo-Catholic movement. What is a possibility is that the Kyrie, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei, which were not part of the Book of Common Prayer canon but were included in Merbecke, may have been sung when this setting was used.\(^{42}\) While singing such additional texts was initially a particularly Anglo-Catholic passion, it may, like the Good Friday three-hour service, have become widely practiced in moderate churches across the spectrum of Anglican theologies.

Evensong seems to have been a completely different affair. Here the choir appears to have taken center stage, singing substantial settings of canticles, the likes of Smart in G and Arnold in A. These settings required fairly demanding vocal dexterity, flexibility, and breadth, although perhaps not on the scale of settings like the Great Service by Byrd. They also required an organ accompanist with a fairly competent command of the instrument. Throughout the year the choir sang nine different sets of canticles, usually alternating them over a seven- or eight-week rota (with the plainsong set reserved for Advent and Lent). The settings were Adlam in F, Arnold in A, Burnett in A, Driffield in B-flat, Garrett in F, Goss in A, Maunder in C, Smart in G, and a plainsong set. In 1900 the choir sang 35 anthems.\(^{43}\) The selection of anthem composers represents a fairly urbane Victorian taste—perhaps more accurately, a conservative taste. Which British or colonial cathedral or cathedral-imitation parish would not have included the likes of


\(^{38}\) St. George’s in Cape Town, for example, also had fairly regular choral Communions. See ibid.

\(^{39}\) The services of preference at St. George’s in Cape Town seem to have been Stainer in A and D, although, admittedly, the evidence is much slimmer than that of Grahamstown. See ibid.


\(^{43}\) The Appendix below lists all the anthems, canticles, and Communion settings the cathedral choir sang.
Barnby, Elvey, Goss, Gounod, Hopkins, Ouseley, Smart, Stainer, and Sullivan? St. George’s in Cape Town certainly did. Yet, remarkably, the likes of Stanford and Bairstow, the rising stars in English church music from the 1890s, do not feature at all in the music lists of Grahamstown Cathedral.

**Hymnody**

As suggested above, Mattins may have been a service with simpler canticles in order to promote congregational participation. But the congregation’s realm was almost certainly hymnody. Three hymns were usually chosen for Mattins, and it is possible that they followed this order: one after the third collect, another after the end of Morning Prayer (before the Litany and Ante-Communion), and one before the sermon. When there was a choral Communion, four hymns were usually listed, which, given their content, were probably chosen to function as an Introit, Offertory, Communion, and recessional. At this point in liturgical history, seeing as there was no provision for an Old Testament lesson or psalm, it is highly unlikely that one of the hymns would have been a gradual. From a textual point of view, the hymns from the cathedral selections do not appear to function as an interlude before the Gospel. There were routinely two hymns for Evensong, except on feast days, when an additional processional hymn was included. The two hymns were probably sung after the third collect and before the sermon. The additional processional hymn, included for feast days, would suggest that such Evensongs were “solemn,” that is, they included a full procession around the cathedral toward the end of the service with crucifer, acolytes, and thurifer, and probably festal vestments. The inclusion of a processional hymn may give a clue as to the ceremonial practice of the cathedral, for it certainly displays an Anglo-Catholic bias. Unfortunately, it is difficult to tell if the processions actually did include any of the above-mentioned accoutrements.

The hymn selections themselves do not necessarily point toward an Anglo-Catholic theological or musical ethos. Martin Clarke clarifies the understanding behind hymnody in Victorian thought:

> Although the beliefs, practices, attitudes and emphases of Evangelical and high-church Anglicans differed significantly in the nineteenth century, congregational hymnody in the context of public worship was a common feature, as it was in so many other Christian traditions in nineteenth-century Britain. The proliferation of hymnals reflects a keen awareness among church leaders of the popularity of this practice and attempts to shape it into a distinctive expression of their own religious tradition but important theological commonalities underlie these as they try to explain the purpose and benefits of congregational hymnody. That they pay such attention to these matters reflects the fledgling nature of hymnody within the Church of England and their attempts to embed it as a standard part of the church’s liturgical practice. [There are three important] theological foundations: firstly, that hymnody, both textually

---

46 In 1839 the metrical psalms and hymns at St. George’s (the cathedral’s predecessor) were placed as follows: at Morning Prayer, the first after the third collect, the second between Morning Prayer and the (Ante)-Communion, and the third before the sermon; at Evensong, after the third collect and before the sermon (Heavyside, *Manual of Psalmody*, xi–xvi).
47 In a formal procession, a crucifer carries a processional cross, usually accompanied on either side by two acolytes who carry candles. The thurifer leads the procession swinging a thurible (a receptacle for burning incense).
and in the act of singing, embodies theological and spiritual truths; secondly, that congregational singing promotes unity among the participants by affirming theological identity; and thirdly, that it affirms the participants’ place within the universal church, by providing a means of unity across different eras and traditions.\footnote{Martin V. Clarke, “‘Meet and Right It Is to Sing’: Nineteenth-Century Hymnals and the Reasons for Singing,” in \textit{Music and Theology in Nineteenth Century Britain}, ed. Martin V. Clarke (New York: Ashgate, 2012), 32–33.}

The cathedral hymn book must have been \textit{Hymns Ancient and Modern} (1862, with supplement), because all the hymn numbers correspond to particular services or seasonal occasions as they appear in this hymnal. For example, Hymn 19 is routinely chosen for Evensong; 19 in \textit{Hymns Ancient and Modern} 1862 is \textit{The radiant morn has passed away} (an evening hymn). \textit{Hymns Ancient and Modern} was particularly popular throughout England and the colonies because it included the best of hymnody from a wide range of theological traditions, even though it was initially compiled by high churchmen.\footnote{Temperley, \textit{The Music of the English Parish Church}, 1: 298.} It is not known whether the organist or precentor chose the hymns, but the music lists published in the newspapers of 1900 always carried the name of the precentor alone, and it is likely that the choices were his. Simply analyzing the theological content of the hymns chosen over a year will not necessarily reveal a church’s theological bias. Such an analysis is more likely to reflect the churchmanship of the person selecting the hymns. Yet, given that the precentor was vitally involved in the cathedral’s worship life, it is likely that his churchmanship, tempered by that of the incumbent dean, would flavor the broader theological trends and preferences within the community.

What can be discerned from the hymn choices at Grahamstown Cathedral in 1900 is that the precentor was careful to use appropriate hymnody for particular seasons. So, for example, in Lent at least one hymn per service is a Lenten hymn. All the major seasons follow the same pattern. Likewise, morning and evening hymns often feature in the Offices at appropriate times. For major saint celebrations, all the hymns in some way relate to the particular person, such as Mary or John the Baptist. What is also very clear, when all the hymns for the year are tabled, is that the congregation sang a huge variety of hymns: well over 300! The number of repeated hymns throughout the year is minimal, which means either that the congregation had incredible memories for hymn tunes; or that a small number of tunes was used for particular hymn meters; or that the congregation did not really participate in the hymn singing much, leaving the singing to the choir. I have posited above that Mattins may have been intended as a congregational service, given the simplicity of the service music. Yet, if the hymn tunes were as varied as the texts, it may have been incredibly difficult for the congregation to participate. It is entirely possible that a small number of tunes was recycled by the organist. It is also possible that over the years the congregation had learned numerous tunes and were quite comfortable with variety. Unfortunately, while the hymn numbers were published in the newspaper, no reference to tunes was ever made, so this will remain a mystery unless other documentary evidence emerges to clarify the situation.

None of the hymns that were chosen three or more times throughout 1900 is overtly Anglo-Catholic: \textit{And now, O Father, mindful of thy love} (sung six times); \textit{Holy, holy, holy, Lord God
Almighty, All people that on earth do dwell, Jesus, gentlest Saviour; and Now thank we all our God (each sung four times); Saviour, again to thy dear name we raise, Light’s glittering morn bedecks the sky, O thou who at thy Eucharist did pray, Jesus whe’er thy people meet, O thou who makest souls to shine, Through all the changing scenes of life, The King of Love my shepherd is, and Three in one and one in three (each sung three times).

In fact, metrical psalms tend to appear fairly frequently, as do translations of continental chorales from Germany. Perhaps this says a great deal about the wide scope of Hymns Ancient and Modern rather than a particular theological tradition. It may also imply that hymnody is not particularly bound to the rigors of theological strictures. Whatever the case, the hymnody at the cathedral does not lean in any one particular direction theologically; rather, it offered the congregation a rich diet of both contemporary Victorian material and translations of ancient and Reformation hymns. It is thus tempting to argue that the cathedral represented, as I have intimated tentatively above, a moderate stance.

Only one phenomenon challenges this idea: the number of saints’ hymns that were used throughout the year. In all, there are 14 saints’ hymns, rather a large number for a church that otherwise seems to project a fence-sitting theological attitude. Does this possibly swing the cathedral more toward Anglo-Catholicism? A closer examination of the hymns may answer that question. First, it is important to note that the above-mentioned hymns all fall on four particular Sundays: March 25 (Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary); June 25 (celebrating John the Baptist, whose feast day is actually June 24); September 30 (celebrating St. Michael and All Angels, which actually falls on September 24); and November 4 (commemorating All Saints’, which falls on November 1). What is notable is that only one of the feast days is actually celebrated on the right date, the others being transferred to the following Sunday. Second, none of these commemorations is particularly Anglo-Catholic in that they all fall within the ambit of red-letter days that Cranmer authorized in his pruning of the sanctoral cycle in the late 1540s and early 1550s. Third, many of the saints’ hymns that were sung were either written or translated by Anglo-Catholics or their sympathizers.

What can be deduced from this? If the cathedral was tending to the side of ritualism, it is likely that saintly commemorations would have been celebrated more often throughout the year. It is equally likely that other Marian feasts would have been highlighted if an Anglo-Catholic stance was intended, not simply the Annunciation—the cult of Mary was a particular marker of some Anglo-Catholic ritualists. Another consideration is the burgeoning sanctoral cycle that Anglo-Catholics were beginning to celebrate. The absence of other saintly feasts is curious if the...

---

50 According to this analysis, the theological position of the cathedral at this point seems to have been fairly moderate; that is, while it accepted aspects of Anglo-Catholic ritualism, it was not a leader in ritualist technique. On the opposite spectrum, since only particular saints’ days were celebrated (those within the bounds of the Book of Common Prayer), the cathedral seemed to acknowledge that aspects of inherited Reformed liturgy and practice were respectable and worth retaining. Thus, in essence, the cathedral maintained a middle-ground position, enjoying some of the advances of the ritualist camp, while retaining aspects of the Reformed past.

51 The sanctoral cycle is the yearly calendar of specific saintly commemorations. It runs concurrently with the ecclesiastical seasonal cycle, but is usually not affected by seasonal norms. For example, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary (March 25) usually falls in Lent. As this is a major feast, some of the austerities of Lent are relaxed in order to celebrate.
cathedral was Anglo-Catholic in its worship. Also curious is the constant transferring of feasts to the following Sunday, a practice that may have irritated militant Anglo-Catholics. Thus, while there is a concentration of Anglo-Catholic hymnody related to saints, these hymns were probably used within a broader understanding of the sanctoral cycle, respectful of the Protestant clearing of the calendar. Perhaps an equally plausible situation is that the precentor and dean were gradually introducing Anglo-Catholicism through regular saint day celebrations. However, this reading does not seem to be consistent with music lists of subsequent years.

The full picture of hymnody at the cathedral during 1900 is particularly striking, as existing music lists for churches in the rest of South Africa at this time only include anthems, services, and psalm chants. The richness of the hymnody at the cathedral, then, points to a community that was keen to explore the variety that had become available through *Hymns Ancient and Modern*; but it also suggests, perhaps, that they were keen to identify with the empire-wide excitement that surrounded the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* phenomenon. Elsewhere in the Cape Colony, owning a copy of this hymn book was considered normal, and the singing of hymns a standard feature of formal and informal devotion.52

**Special Services**

Two special services that took place during 1900 give us a unique glimpse into the life of worship and mission of the cathedral. The first is a “solemn Te Deum for the success of British forces” on March 4. Three questions arise: What is a solemn Te Deum, which British success were they commemorating, and why was the Te Deum chosen?

A solemn Te Deum is a short service of special celebration that takes place directly after a Communion service. Thus, at the end of the Communion, the priest is vested in celebratory white vestments. Incense is used in the service, not as a symbol of rising prayers of offering, but rather of rejoicing. Thus, the incense is not blessed and the altar is not censed. Sometimes such a service may include two thurifers who face east on either side of the altar. While the choir chants or sings a setting of the Te Deum, the thurifers swing their thuribles in synchronization. After the Te Deum has been sung, the altar party and the choir process out of the church.53 This is quite definitely a ritualist service of the highest order, which would not normally be found in moderate Anglican churches. Does this mean that the cathedral actually was Anglo-Catholic? Such a service certainly does cast some doubt on conclusions drawn above regarding the worship ethos of the cathedral. Did the cathedral tend, ceremonially, toward Anglo-Catholicism after all?

Two points need to be considered. First, this was an unusual service because it commemorated a military victory (as discussed below). There is no sign of a solemn Te Deum at any other time in the years either immediately preceding or after 1900. Thus, it appears to have been a one-off liturgical event. Second, if it was an unusual occasion, it may have presented an opportunity to offer a more overtly ritualistic service in the midst of a basically broad-church congregation. One-off occasions such as this are a subtle way of introducing something new and

---

52 See Bethke, “The Roots of Anglican Music in South Africa.”
then gauging how a congregation reacts. Given that the service commemorated military victory, it is likely that it was well received. Thus, it was possibly a very carefully chosen opportunity to incorporate something different into the usual routine.

The second question yields some interesting conclusions about the cathedral and the community in which it was situated. Throughout 1900 the South African War (also known as the Second Anglo-Boer War, or simply the Boer War) raged to the north in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. According to the Anglo-Catholic–oriented Anglican provincial newspaper the Southern Cross, military action against the Boers was styled as a holy war to ensure justice for the natives! The irony, of course, is that when the Union of South Africa was created in 1910, while the union between Britisher and Afrikaaner was magnified, the rights of black, Indian, and coloured South Africans began to fade from imperial interest. There were two major British victories in February 1900: the relief of Kimberley (February 15) and the relief of Ladysmith (February 28). Both towns had been under siege by the Boers for months, and the victories brought much joy to the British.

Did the cathedral community understand the British victories as signs that God was on their side? Their display of ritual fervor might suggest that they did. But were there members of the congregation who were critical of the ever-increasing instances of human rights violations perpetrated by the British army? This is a difficult question to answer. From articles in Grocott’s Penny Mail and the Grahamstown Journal, it would seem that war propaganda in favor of the British was in full swing from the end of 1899 and into 1900, and there is no direct evidence of any moral indignation in the churches at the plight of those in the concentration camps.

---

54 See, for example, the editorials of the January and February 1900 editions of the Southern Cross (vol. 11, nos. 1 and 2). Davenport concurs, suggesting, “Most Anglican opinion in both South Africa and Britain was uncritically in support of the war [against the Boers]” (Rodney Davenport, “Settlement, Conquest, and Theological Controversy: The Churches of Nineteenth-century European Immigrants,” in Christianity in South Africa: A Political, Social and Cultural History, ed. Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport [Cape Town: David Philip, 1997], 63).


56 Between 1899 and 1902, Grocott’s Penny Mail published a weekly Boer War summary compiled from 18 correspondents scattered throughout the country; see http://www.grocotts.co.za/content/history-grocotts-mail (accessed Oct. 13, 2016). These summaries were in demand across the British Empire. Although the Mail was an independent newspaper, because the war correspondents were pro-British (speaking of the British soldiers as “our men”), the summaries were heavily in favor of the war against the Boers.

57 Like Grocott’s Penny Mail, the Grahamstown Journal ran war news stories favoring the British. Furthermore, its title page advertised that it was the authorized medium for all government notices. This strongly suggests that it was biased toward British colonial interests.

58 The South African Conciliation Committee had long been a minority pro-Boer voice in England (Arthur Davey, The British Pro-Boers, 1877–1902 [Cape Town: Tafelberg, 1978], 146–48). Certainly, the majority of Anglican clergy both in Britain and in South Africa were adamant that war was necessary and even righteous (Margaret Blunden, “The Anglican Church During the War,” in The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902, ed. Peter Warwick [Harlow: Longman, 1980], 279–91). This is corroborated by letters and articles in the local ecclesiastical press, such as the Southern Cross. Emily Hobhouse, perhaps the most famous antiwar campaigner, only began major resistance to concentration camps through the press in late 1900, the tail end of this study’s ambit (see Jennifer Hobhouse Balme, To Love One’s Enemies: The Word and Life of Emily Hobhouse [Cobble Hill: Hobhouse Trust, 1994]).
The third question presents interesting answers. The singing of the Te Deum in celebration of military victory, in particular the victories of the South African War, has precedent elsewhere in the British Empire. Perhaps the congregation was simply following imperial norms. Interestingly, the *Southern Cross* carries a report of the Anglican Church in Kimberley during its siege. At the end of the article, the author says, “On the Sunday after relief, thanksgiving was made in all the churches, and Te Deum sung.”59 Grahamstown Cathedral may simply have been conducting a solemn Te Deum in sympathy with their brothers and sisters in Kimberley. But would they have had this report by March 4, when the service was conducted in Grahamstown? Probably not, because the *Southern Cross* was only published on the fifteenth of each month. Yet, the singing of a Te Deum after a victory may not simply have been a local custom, unless Kimberley was setting a new precedent. On May 26, 1900, Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900) was commissioned to write a Te Deum for a Grand Peace Service that St. Paul’s Cathedral in London envisaged occurring at the end of the war.60 As it turned out, this was to be Sullivan’s last work, and one that gained the nickname “The Boer War Te Deum.” It was completed before his death, but only performed in 1902. Thus, celebrating victory by singing a Te Deum was not something particularly innovative. A solemn Te Deum may simply have been the South African Anglo-Catholic–inspired option.

Another special service in 1900 was held on August 19. This was the bicentenary celebration of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG). In 1824 the SPG had provided funds for the building of St. George’s Church in Grahamstown, the same building that later became the local cathedral (although it was rebuilt between 1893 and 1950). In the late nineteenth century the SPG began to assume an Anglo-Catholic ethos, although it was never radically ritualist. As Steven Maughan notes, “Because other High Churchmen disapproved of the more radical ritualism of such enthusiasts, the SPG became a haven for moderate and nonpartisan varieties of High Churchmanship.”61 Usually, serious Anglo-Catholics supported the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa.62 Certainly, when the SPG funded the building of St. George’s it had had no particular party leanings—the Anglo-Catholic movement had not even been established at that point. But what did a specific celebration of the SPG in 1900 imply? Was this an affirmation of Anglo-Catholicism? If anything, support of the SPG and its moderate high-church leanings favor my conclusions throughout this paper—that the cathedral was basically a moderate congregation with some influences from the ritualist movement within its worship patterns.

From the evidence presented above, it is clear that while Grahamstown Cathedral reflected some trends of an English cathedral, its musical program did not, or could not, aim for the regular routine of daily choral worship. Rather, weekly Sunday choral services formed the core of the

---

59 *Southern Cross* 11/3 (March 1900): 23.
62 Ibid.
cathedral’s worship diet. Thus, the cathedral mirrored a typical large Victorian English parish church with a cathedral-style choir. William Gatens has described such a situation as follows:

It is a remarkable development of the Victorian period that cathedral music came to be regarded as the normal music of the Anglican Church as a whole, not just the preserve of choral foundations. The ecclesiological ideal, while essentially parochial, was destined not to gain wide acceptance. It was too closely tied to a much misunderstood and widely unpopular strain of churchmanship, and too firmly bound to a musical repertory of the remote past. . . . Elements of the cathedral ideal found their way into the typical parish churches of the land to produce that varying mixture of congregational and choral worship that had become the norm by the end of the Victorian era, and that may only now [in 2009] be showing serious signs of disintegration.63

What is also clear is that the choices of music replicate slightly conservative or dated Victorian tastes. In many respects the music sung at Grahamstown Cathedral in 1900 was not dissimilar to what had been sung in English cathedrals in the mid-nineteenth century.64 This would suggest a time lag between the metropolis and the periphery, where the colonies maintained more conservative, traditional worship patterns.65 There is no inkling of more modern church music at all. Perhaps this was due to the financial situation in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, which had always been somewhat tenuous because of its independence from the state,66 and the expense of buying new music regularly may have been excessive. In terms of Grahamstown Cathedral, which was far from the front lines of the South African War, the vast number of soldiers who came from England and may have carried newer music along with them had little or no impact.

Concerning worship, it appears that the cathedral favored a moderate high-church position. It is possible that the 11A.M. Mattins service was considered a congregational service with ample opportunity for the people to sing. Indeed, the selection of hymnody for the congregation was wide and included a variety of theological underpinnings. Yet, to balance this, Evensong was the domain of the choir and included a fairly wide repertory of canticles and anthems. Concerning ritual, apart from the occasional processions at Evensong on high festivals and the solemn Te Deum, it is difficult to determine weekly patterns, except to suggest that the moderate high churchmanship of English parishes of the late nineteenth century may be an adequate model. Thus, Grahamstown Cathedral in the Cape Colony was very much a reflection of an urban English parish church at the turn of the century, with a vibrant choral tradition (which did not include daily choral services), a moderate ritualist stance, a hymn-singing (as opposed to metrical psalmody) tradition, and a fairly conservative repertoire that represented mid-nineteenth-century ideals.

---

65 Although it should be noted that in terms of ritual advances, some parish churches were at the forefront of experimentation.
66 The Anglican Church of South Africa became a voluntary association when it declared its financial and juridical independence in 1870 (Davenport, “Settlement, Conquest, and Theological Controversy,” 59).
Appendix: Choral Repertoire of Grahamstown Cathedral in 1900

Anthems

*A new heaven and a new earth* (Gaul)
*Arise, shine* (Elvey)
*Christ our passover* (Goss)
*Come unto me* (Smith)
*Enter not into judgment* (Attwood)
*From the rising of the sun* (Ouseley)
*Give peace* (Callcott)
*Holiest, breathe an evening blessing* (?)
*How lovely are the messengers* (Stainer)
*I am the Alpha and the Omega* (Stainer)
*I was glad* (Elvey)
*I will always give thanks* (Calkin)
*I will magnify thee* (Goss)
*Incline thine ear* (Himme')
*Leave us not* (Stainer)
*Let us go even unto Bethlehem* (Hopkins)
*Lord, we pray thee* (Roberts)
*My God, why hast thou forsaken me* (Reynolds)
*Now we are ambassadors* (?)
*O give thanks* (Elvey)
*O Lord, how manifold* (Barnby)
*O love the Lord* (Sullivan)
*O praise God* (Welldon)
*O taste and see* (Sullivan)
*O that I knew where I might find him* (Bennett)
*Open me the gates of righteousness* (Stainer)
*Praise be the Lord daily* (Ebdon)
*Praised be the name of the Lord* (Ebdon)
*Sing praises to the Lord* (Gounod)
*Sweet is thy mercy* (Barnby)
*The foe behind, the deep before* (Barnby)
*The Lord is my strength* (Smart)
*The radiant morn* (Woodward)
*They have taken away my Lord* (Stainer)
*Turn thy face from my sins* (Sullivan)
Evening Canticles
Adlam in F
Arnold in A
Burnett in A
Driffield in B-flat
Garrett in F
Goss in A
Maunder in C
Plainsong
Smart in G

Communion Services
Elvey in E
Hayne in G
Merbecke
Woodward in B-flat