

Brian Wren - Biographical Information

Born - 3 June 1936, Romford, Essex, England.

Education

Royal Liberty Grammar School, Romford, Essex, England	1947-55
Military Service, British Army	1955-57
New College, Oxford	1957-60
Mansfield College, Oxford	1960-65
State Scholarship (Government Scholarship for Undergraduate Work)	
State Studentship (Government Scholarship for Doctoral Research)	
Final Honours (BA) Oxon Modern Languages Class II	1960
Final Honours (BA) Oxon Theology Class II	1962
Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil = Ph.D) Oxon	1968
Master of Arts (MA: Academic Status - not an earned degree)	1968

Employment

1965-70	Minister, Hockley & Hawkwell Congregational Church, Essex, England. Ordained 1965. In 1972 the Congregational Church united with Presbyterian and Disciples' traditions to form the United Reformed Church.
1970-75	Consultant for Adult Education, Churches' Committee on World Development – A Joint Committee of the British Council of Churches and Roman Catholic Church, promoting education and reflection on international peace and justice.
1976-83	Coordinator, Third World First – A Not-for-Profit campaign on world poverty and development issues with UK college students. Now known as People and Planet. From 1977-82 I was a member of the Executive Board of the UK Aid Charity, War on Want, and Chair of the Board from 1980-82.
1983-2000	Freelance Ministry, focusing on worship enrichment and congregational song.
2000-now.	Conant Professor of Worship, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA, USA.

Visiting Professor and Lecturer

Lectureships, courses and workshops including (in North America):

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, IN	McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago
Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, MA	Memphis Theological Seminary
Austin Presbyterian Seminary, Austin, TX	New Orleans Baptist Seminary
Bangor Theological Seminary, ME	Pacific Lutheran School of Theology, CA
Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond VA	Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, CA
Bethany Theological Seminary, IN	Princeton Theological Seminary
Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX	Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, PA
Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI	St. John's University, Collegeville, MN
Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, GA	Saint Paul School of Theology, KS
Christian Theological Seminary, IN	San Francisco Theological Seminary
Chicago Theological Seminary	Southern Baptist T.S., Louisville, KY
College of Preachers, Washington DC	Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH
Drew University School of Theology, NJ	Union Theological Seminary, NY
Eden Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO	Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA
Episcopal Seminary of the S.W., Austin, TX	United T.S. of the Twin Cities, MN
Garrett-Evangelical T.S., Evanston, IL	University of Dubuque Theological Seminary
Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO	Vancouver School of Theology, BC, Canada
Lancaster Theological Seminary, PA	Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington DC
Lexington Theological Seminary, KY	Westminster Choir College, Princeton NJ
Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN	Yale Divinity School

Workshops, Preaching, Worship Design, & Lecturing

Working with congregations and regional church bodies including American Baptist, Christian Church (Disciples), Christian Reformed Church, Church of the Brethren, Episcopalian, Free Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, Mennonite, Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Church in Canada, Reformed Church in America, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Southern Baptist, United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist. Visits also to Australia, Japan, and New Zealand.

Personal

I was baptized on confession of faith at Upminster Congregational Church Essex, England, in June 1955, and ordained in 1965. I have two children from my first marriage, Hilary and Nicholas Wren (b. 1966 and 1968), who live and work in London (England). My stepson, Nathan Heafield-Parker (b. 1978) is at the University of Southern Maine, in Portland ME. My first marriage ended in 1989.

On August 31st 1991 I united in marriage with Susan Heafield, an ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. Susan comes from Eastern Montana, and has professional training in theology and music education. She has taught voice, keyboard, and guitar. As partners-in-marriage, we keep our given names, write songs together, and co-lead events when our other commitments permit.

Publications: Books

- **Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship** (Contributor), Edited by Caryyl Micklem (London: SCM Press and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1967
- **Education for Justice** (London: SCM Press and New York: Orbis), 1977
- **What Language Shall I Borrow? - God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology** (New York: Crossroad, and London: SCM Press) 1989.
- **Piece Together Praise - A Theological Journey: Poems & Collected Hymns Thematically Arranged** (1996: Stainer & Bell, London-UK, & Hope Publishing Co., Illinois-USA). Words only, with complete indexes.
- **Praying Twice: The Music and Words of Congregational Song** (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000).

Worship Songs for Congregations (with Susan Heafield, composer):

- **We Can Be Messengers – Worship Songs: Christmas, Before, and After (2001)**
- **Tell the Good News! – Worship Songs: Easter, Before, and After (2002)**

Each collection is published in both book and CD format. Praise Partners Publications. Sole distributor: Hope Publishing Company (address below). Also available through Cokesbury.

Hymn Collections from Hope Publishing Company (Words and Music)

- **Faith Looking Forward** - 1983
- **Praising a Mystery** - 30 New Hymns (1986)
- **Bring Many Names** - 35 New Hymns and 3 Doxologies (1989)
- **New Beginnings** - 30 New Hymns for the 90s (1993).
- **Faith Renewed** (rewrites from 1983 collection, Faith Looking Forward)
- **Visions and Revisions** - 33 New Hymns and Seven Reissues (1997)

Entries in Selected Denominational Hymnals

United Kingdom

Hymns Ancient & Modern New Standard (Anglican, 1982)	8
Hymns and Psalms (Methodist, 1983)	10
Rejoice and Sing (United Reformed Ch., 1991)	13
Baptist Praise and Worship (1991)	6

United States and Canada

The Baptist Hymnal (Southern Baptist, 1991)	5
Hymnal 1982 (Episcopalian, 1985)	6
Hymnal - A Worship Book (Mennonite & Brethren, 1992)	15
With One Voice (Lutheran, 1995)	5
Presbyterian Church Hymnal (1990)	11
Psalter Hymnal (Christian Reformed, 1987)	4

Seventh Day Adventist Hymnal (1986)	10
United Methodist Hymnal (1989)	14
Worship III (GIA, Roman Catholic, 1986)	9
New Century Hymnal (United Church of Christ, 1995)	15
Chalice Hymnal (Disciples of Christ, 1995)	21
Voices United (United Church of Canada, 1996)	18
Book of Praise (Presb. Ch. in Canada, 1996)	22

Japan/Australia/Rest of World

Hymnal 21 (United Ch. of Christ in Japan, 1997)	6
Together in Song – Australian Hymn Book II, 1999	24

Publishers of Hymns/Hymn Copyrights: North America, Australia and New Zealand

Hope Publishing Company
Carol Stream IL 60188 USA
(630-665-3200 / 1-800-323-1049
Fax: 630-665-2552
Email: scotts@hopepublishing.com

UK and Rest of World

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London N3 1DZ, UK
(44-(0)-181-343-3303
Email: cwakefield@stainer.co.uk

Bookings and Information
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<http://www.wifl.at.org/praise/index.htm>

Personalized Biography Brian Arthur Wren

My early memories include air raid sirens, the drone of bombers, anti-aircraft fire, and bombs whining and exploding all around. I grew up in wartime, and my father spent seven years of my early life in the army, away from home.

I was brought up in and near London, England. My early and teenage years were spent in Upminster, Essex, twenty miles away from the late Dudley Moore (star of “Arthur”, “Arthur 2”, and “10”).

At age fourteen I began attending church, wanting to understand more of life’s meaning. I went looking for Upminster Methodist Church, and ended up by accident at the Congregational, where I found myself welcomed and at home. I joined the Bible Class, and later on the flourishing Youth Club, then the Church Choir, where I sang Bass and Tenor. I was baptized on confession of faith at age 19, and shortly afterwards experienced a call to full time Christian service. This led eventually to ordination in the Congregational Church of England and Wales, and five years valued experience as minister (pastor) of Hockley and Hawkwell Congregational Church, a 110-member congregation in suburban Essex.

Prior to this I did two years compulsory military service (army) and spent a total of eight years at Oxford University, attending New College for my honours degree in Modern Languages, then moving to Mansfield College for my Theology degree, Ordination Course, and work on my doctorate in Old Testament (completed in 1968).

Though I had written a couple of hymns at Mansfield College, my serious hymnwriting began at Hockley, as a service to my congregation. New windows were opening on faith, human life, and life together on this planet, and old words fell short of new experience.

I then spent five years with the British Council of Churches, learning adult education, and communicating the tragedy and causes of world poverty, and God’s call for planetary justice. For seven years more, I followed the same path, with Third World First, a not-for-profit campaign in British colleges and universities, now known as People and Planet. I learned how to work cooperatively, write everything from articles to advertising copy, and be caringly businesslike.

By 1983 I was looking for new direction. My hymns were becoming known, and their North American publisher, Hope Publishing Company, invited me Stateside for a summer tour. The positive response persuaded me to risk freelance ministry, relying on workshop engagements and writing work instead of a salary.

In the spring of 2000 I was called to be the first holder of the John and Miriam Conant Chair of Worship at Columbia Theological Seminary. I am delighted to be in such a good environment for learning, teaching, and preparation for ministry.

I live in marriage-partnership with Revd Susan Heafield (“Hayfield”). Susan comes from Eastern Montana. We first met in 1986, at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. We met occasionally thereafter as colleagues, and gradually became friends. It could have remained one friendship among many, but in 1991 the relationship became wonderfully more, and we were united in marriage at the end of August that year. In what is for both us our second marriage, we have shared our stories, pains and hopes, and are grateful for the marriage covenant, and for each other.

From our understanding of marriage, and our desire for an equal partnership, we keep our own names, and wish to be known as “Susan Heafield and Brian Wren, partners in marriage and ministry.” We co-lead workshops and other events when we can, write songs together, and enjoy life together.

My daughter Hilary Wren and son Nicholas Wren live in London, England. Hilary is a Speech and Language Therapist and in her spare time acts and directs drama. She is married to

Joe Walinets, who is a Psychiatric Nurse. Nicholas is Compliance Officer at Mitsubishi Trust International, where he also uses his fluent knowledge of Japanese. He is married to Tomomi Wren (nee Noda) from Nabari, Japan. . My stepson Nathan, Susan's son is finishing his undergraduate work in Media Criticism at the University of Southern Maine, in Portland, Maine.

It is good to know Susan's mother, Norma, and her brother, sister-in-law , cousins and other family in eastern Montana and North Dakota,

I am an ordained minister of the United Reformed Church in Great Britain (a union joining Congregational, Presbyterian and Disciples' traditions).