

Suggested Revisions to Lift High the Cross

Troublesome Aspects:

The traditional lyrics present Christian faith militaristically and triumphalistically. The Church is described in terms of “hosts of God” and “conquering ranks” that will persevere “till all the world adore [Christ’s] sacred name,” i.e. becomes Christian. This crusading image is unhelpful in a world beset by interreligious conflict. Additionally, the traditional lyrics see the cross as primarily a sign of victory. Its symbolic value in terms of humility, self-sacrifice, or love is muted. The revised lyrics present the perspective of Philippians 2:5-11 – Christ emptied himself and so was raised to Lordship.

Suggested Revision:

Refrain:

Life high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim;
Around the world we glorify his name.

1. God’s sacred Word from all eternity became like us in our mortality.
2. He emptied himself, dying on a tree; let us carry our cross with his humility.
3. Other lives mattered more than his own; therefore God raised him to the heav’nly throne.
4. And so this sign of torment and strife became the sign of God’s eternal life.