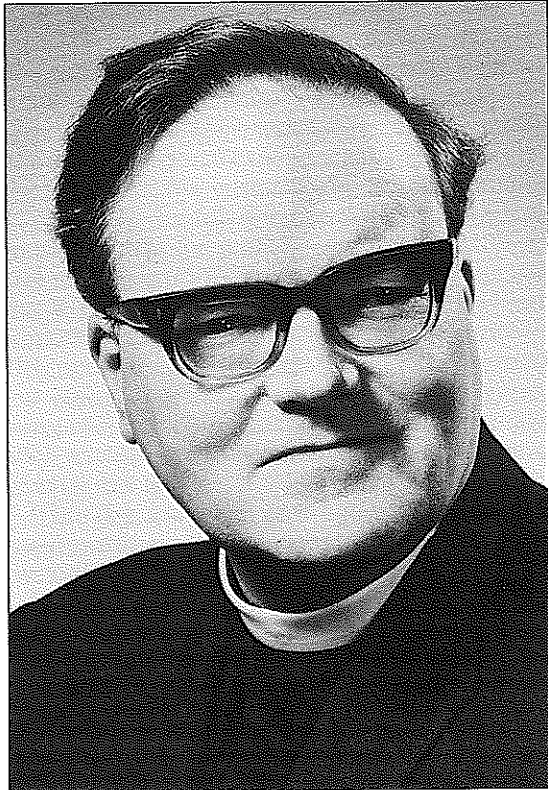


The Views of Erik Routley on Inclusive Language in Hymnody

Glenn Phillip Eernisse



¹ Erik Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1959), p. 299.

² Erik Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 18.

³ Erik Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed: When In Our Music God Is Glorified* (Princeton: Prestige Publications, 1982), p. 107.

⁴ Erik Routley, *An English Speaking Hymnal Guide* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1979), p. xii.

⁵ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 72.

⁶ Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁸ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 18.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁰ Erik Routley, *The Music of Christian Hymnody* (London: Independent Press, 1957), p. 109.

¹¹ Erik Routley, *Twentieth Century Church Music* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1964), p. 211.

¹² Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 163.

Glenn Eernisse is Professor of Instrumental Activities at Brewton-Parker College, Mt. Vernon, Georgia. Prior to this he served as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Cedartown, Georgia. His M.C.M. and D.M.M. degrees are from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

The issue of decision-making regarding the language of hymns seems to become increasingly complex the more it is studied. Since hymns are a means of both expressing and learning belief for a large number of people in a corporate setting, the language used must be especially accurate. This is more important and difficult than ever in a rapidly changing world. Erik Routley was an extremely intelligent man with keen interest in a variety of subjects. Perhaps one of the most valuable areas in which he contributed through writing and lecturing is hymnology. The purpose of this article is to examine the views of Erik Routley on the subject of inclusive language in hymnody, noting changes in his ideas, if any, that seemed to occur during his career. Routley's notion of the importance of hymn texts will be considered, followed by the need for inclusive language, hymn texts inclusive of modern expression, culturally-inclusive language, gender-inclusive language, and examples of Routley's criteria for editing hymn texts.

Routley was convinced of the importance of hymns and was quite unhappy when he observed any abuse of them. His idea of a good hymn was one which had been "well written, well chosen, and well sung."¹ With the focus of this paper, the subject of most interest is the writing of the hymn, or more specifically, the hymn text. Routley was consistent throughout his life in his position on the importance of the texts of hymns, both in the positive and the negative sense. He felt that hymns could have a major positive impact, since a hymn "uses words to help a congregation speak its mind corporately."² During a service of worship, hymns can beckon the congregation to its best and allow each worshiper to feel or say what he or she wants to say.³ Hymns can enshrine history and close the gap between past and present.⁴ Routley believed that hymns "teach people to see life illuminated by their ideas."⁵ In his book *Hymns and Human Life* he wrote, "in its hymns the church comes nearer to the man of the world than in any other part of its ministry."⁶ Later in the same book he wrote, "the glory of our hymnody is in its power for converting unbelief, strengthening faith, and binding together the Christian community in the disciplined charity of which singing together is a symbol."⁷ In *Hymns Today and Tomorrow* he wrote that a hymn is "an opportunity for a congregation to declare its experience and to rejoice in Christian doctrine corporately,"⁸ and later, "it induces thoughts about the church which its author held with conviction, and it impresses those thoughts on the singer's mind through the adroit use of imaginative language."⁹

Routley also saw great danger in the power of hymns. He wrote that while hymns can provide the comfort and familiarity of one's own home,¹⁰ this very comfort can result in withdrawal from the world. He was intolerant of this attitude, writing that

Examination of the principles that made church music churchy—and made it especially churchy where the church was most firmly entrenched in bourgeois exclusiveness—has led to a discovery that half of them did not exist, and the other half were patient of much modification.¹¹

In *Hymns Today and Tomorrow* he wrote,

What makes so much hymn writing useless and demoralizing is its complete divorce from the real stuff of common life. There is something so desperately safe about it that it cannot bear any resemblance to life as the Christian knows it must be lived.¹²

Hymns and Human Life contains this quotation: "The shame of our hymnody is in unreality, complacency, and spiritual slovenliness."¹³ He also wrote, "Hymns...can encourage the slothful to remain slothful, the ignorant to stay ignorant, the malicious to take pride in being malicious."¹⁴

Routley admired the mind and work of C. S. Lewis and frequently referred to ideas that he suggested. He was not afraid to point out areas in which they disagreed, and one of these concerned the use of hymns. According to Routley, Lewis hated hymns "because he heard them as the church's gang-songs."¹⁵ Lewis felt that hymns served for the insecure person as the temptation to get into a ring and respond with joy to an invitation to join it, which is the same way many criminals are made.¹⁶ Routley saw validity in this criticism, noting that hymn singing "can induce a boisterous insensitiveness, a contempt for the non-conforming and the solitary, an exaltation of the group over the individual..."¹⁷

Sometimes Routley included both the negative and the positive side of hymns in the same statement. The first sentence of the first chapter of *Christian Hymns Observed* is "hymns are delightful and dangerous things."¹⁸ In his introduction to *Hymns Today and Tomorrow* he wrote of "the pleasures that the words of hymns can bring" and "the traps that the words of some hymns lay for the unwary."¹⁹ In an article called, "What Makes a Good Hymn?" he wrote, "It is possible for hymns that distract from our duty to exist alongside hymns that help."²⁰ Elsewhere Routley warned, "Hymn singing at present is a degenerate and even damaging activity" which "can be replaced by creativeness and profit, if we allow ourselves to be critical and to enjoy our use of hymns."²¹ In *Music Sacred and Profane* he wrote,

... thus, I think, hymns adorn piety. Idolized, they stifle it, irresponsibly written, chosen or sung they frustrate it; too unresisting to the corrosion of secular values in letters and music, they dilute it. But, we submit, at their best they go deep and lift high.²²

Toward the end of *Christian Hymns Observed* Routley wrote, "The passing of the years has not dimmed my love for hymns nor altered or diminished my sense that they are dangerous things."²³

There can be little doubt that Routley was convinced of the importance of hymn texts. Given this importance, it becomes even more critical that the language used be inclusive. If worship is a spiritual matter, then the language used must be representative of all who participate. This means that choices in the use of language become a spiritual matter. Scripture shows that God has chosen to communicate with all persons regardless of our own divisions. Genesis 1:27 reminds us that God created both male and female in God's own image. In verse 28, God communicates our mission as the human race: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it..."²⁴ In Jesus Christ God took human form. Born of a woman, he experienced life as we do, and was crucified, buried, resurrected, and returned to the Godhead. God has gone to a great deal of trouble to show love for all persons, totally and without reserva-

tion.²⁵ The classic statement from Paul in Galatians 3:28-29 is:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

[Routley's] idea of a good hymn was one which had been "well written, well chosen, and well sung."

In the book *Inclusive Language in the Church*, Nancy Hardesty writes,

To speak accurately of God and lovingly to our neighbor requires the use of inclusive language. Anything else is a rejection of God's revelation of God's selfhood and a withholding of God's gift to the needy, food for the hungry, and cure for the sick.²⁶

By contrast, she indicates that non-inclusive language "offers a distorted gospel to Christians and those wanting to become Christians."²⁷ In *Excellent Words: Inclusive Language in Liturgy and Scripture*, Mark Scherer writes,

Christians cannot afford to ignore and exclude each other. If we truly believe the teachings of the faith, we know that the root of the Christian experience is God's love for us, in our creation, redemption, and salvation. Each of us is a unique individual created and loved by God.²⁸

In writing of the use of a hymn in his book, *Hymns and Human Life*, Erik Routley stated,

A hymn is designed to be a congregational act of praise. ... If it distracts the congregation from the act of worship by obscurity, by irrelevance, or by seductive language or music, it fails, and if it offends a particular congregation by making it say what, on that day and at that time, it could not possibly be wanting to say or required to say, it fails.²⁹

Having established the need for inclusive language in hymns, the first area to be considered is hymn texts inclusive of modern expression. There is no doubt that many people enjoy the beauty of "King James" English, but many times the use of archaic language in hymns can be a hindrance to understanding.³⁰ This is demonstrated by the use of words such as "worm" and "bowels," which are no longer used in the sense that the author intended. Another problem is poetic devices or styles that were popular in a certain age but have

¹³ Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, p. 307.

¹⁴ Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, p. 107.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, p. 106.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 17.

²⁰ Erik Routley, "What Makes a Good Hymn?" *The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland Bulletin* 3 (1953), p. 92.

²¹ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 17.

²² Erik Routley, *Music, Sacred and Profane* (London: Independent Press, 1960), p. 130.

²³ Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, p. 106.

²⁴ Nancy A. Hardesty, *Inclusive Language in the Church* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), p. 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

²⁸ Nancy Allison, et. al., *Excellent Words: Inclusive Language in Liturgy and Scripture* (Cambridge: The Lutheran and Episcopal Ministry of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1988), p. 65.

²⁹ Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, pp. 297-298.

³⁰ Malcolm M. King, "Evidences of the Influence of Erik Routley on *Rejoice in the Lord*," master's thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1986, p. 73.

lost their meaning. In an article called, "What Remains for the Modern Hymn Writer to Do?" Routley pointed out that if a hymn of enduring greatness is to be written, "you will have to rely on the thought of Scripture rather than on the shifting and unreliable ground of...words."³¹ An example he used is the fondness of eighteenth-century hymn writers for metaphors from trade, such as "transaction" or "interest." Routley noted that such practices can "provide an impediment to popular understanding."³² In a later article

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based on an interview, Routley indicated his concern with outdated expressions such as speaking of heaven as "the sky," this world as a vale of tears, or humanity as an utterly corrupt species.³³ However, Routley pleaded for caution, sensitivity, and a resistance to writing "what sounds modern but what also offends the decencies of grammar and syntax."³⁴ He also warned of the use of "a casual, insensitive and imprecise approach,"³⁵ and lamented the indiscriminate translation of the old language into the new, using as an example changing "O thou who givest" to "O you who gives."³⁶ In *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, Routley showed his concern for a balance between updating language and staying true to the original author. His discussion involves replacing the idea of "up" for heaven, as in the Ascension, with "away," since the ancient view of the perfect world being above this one no longer applies.³⁷ As an example he uses "Hail the day that sees him rise" by Charles Wesley. One of the stanzas of this hymn was written by Wesley as follows:

Grant, though parted from our sight
High above yon azure height,
Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Following thee beyond the skies.

This has been altered to the following version (for the 1940 Episcopal hymnal):

Lord beyond our mortal sight,
Raise our hearts to reach thy height,
There thy face unclouded see,
Find our heav'n of heav'ns in thee.

Routley's criticism of the alteration is that English syntax is violated and that "up" is a well-known symbol for eternity. Therefore, Routley states that "it would have been better to print the lines as Wesley originally wrote them, because they are better literature than what the editors

have made of him."³⁸ He seemed determined to weigh the need for modern language against the integrity of the original text. Judging by the disparity in the dates of these examples from his writing, Routley's views in this area seem fairly consistent, and there does not seem to be any significant change during his career.

The issue of culturally-inclusive language in hymnody will be considered from the perspective of inclusiveness by Western culture (mainly England and the United States) of other cultures. This is most evident in "missionary" hymns that speak in some way of taking the gospel to people in other countries. Persons in these "far-off lands" have been viewed in somewhat of a paternalistic sense from the lofty vantage point of the perceived moral and intellectual superiority of Western society. During this century, views of other cultures have begun to change, and this condescension is now considered offensive. This is especially true when one considers the fact that these other cultures are no longer "far off" in other parts of the world, but mixed into Western society as it becomes increasingly pluralistic. Routley's views in this regard show development as his awareness of the issue began to grow. His book *Hymns and Human Life* was first published in 1952 and contains references to and quotations from many different hymns. One of these is Percy Dearmer's "Remember all the people," a missionary hymn that Routley called "one of his happiest hymns."³⁹ Below is a portion of that hymn:

Remember all the people
Who live in far-off lands,
In strange and lovely cities,
Or roam the desert sands,
Or farm the mountain pastures,
Or till the endless plains,
Where children wade through rice-fields
and watch the camel trains.

Routley quotes the following stanza in his book, remarking that it will help "bring to the child's mind a picture of the people he is praying for."⁴⁰

Some work in sultry forests
Where apes swing to and fro,
Some fish in mighty rivers,
Some hunt across the snow.

At this time Routley gave no indication of awareness that texts such as this might be considered culturally demeaning. *Hymns and the Faith* was published in 1955. In this book, Routley discussed the military image of the church, focusing on the hymn "Onward, Christian soldiers." While he was sympathetic to the positive image of the soldier which is intended in the hymn, he did admit to the problems that such a reference may cause. The idea of one culture engaged in violent conquest of another is quite removed from "the days of military glamour," as Routley put it.⁴¹ *Ecumenical Hymnody* was published in 1959,

³¹ Erik Routley, "What Remains for the Modern Hymn Writer to Do?" *The Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland Bulletin* (1954), p.150.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Carl Schalk, "An Interview With Erik Routley," *Church Music* 66 (1966), p. 36.

³⁴ Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, p. 100.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

³⁷ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 52.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

³⁹ Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, p. 259.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Erik Routley, *Hymns and the Faith* (London: John Murray, 1955), p. 249.

and was based on the contents of an address which Routley gave to the Council of British Missionary Societies in 1956 on the subject of ecumenical and missionary hymnody. It provides some valuable insights, as Routley was forced to deal directly with the issue of church music and different cultures. In this book he indicated his support of using Western music on the mission field, although he bemoaned the use of “deplorably trivial” examples.⁴² His concept of the ideal was a balanced policy which involved “a sharing of the best of European hymnody and the liveliest of indigenous hymnody.” This, he felt, would provide an ecumenical mix that would be useful in bridging barriers of language and culture by creating a common musical language.⁴³ He also took occasion to critique the texts of some missionary hymns. In discussing the idea of “the progressive conquest of the world by European (or American) missionaries,” Routley wrote, “certain nineteenth century hymns present the romance of adventure and exploration as the full content of missionary work, and we are bound to say that they begin now to ring rather hollow.”⁴⁴ The example he used in this context is “Hills of the North, rejoice,” quoting these stanzas:

Lands of the East, awake!
 Soon shall your sons be free
 The sleep of ages break,
 And rise to liberty.

Shores of the utmost West
 Ye that have waited long,
 Unvisited, unblest
 Break forth to swelling song.

Routley’s critical evaluation begins to show here in full force. He noted that while these sentiments may have seemed appropriate a century ago, the pictures of other cultures that they portray “have gone out of drawing.”⁴⁵ Other examples of what he felt are inappropriate include these lines from the hymn “From Greenland’s icy mountains”:

Can we whose souls are lighted
 With wisdom from on high,
 Can we to men benighted
 The lamp of life deny?

He also included this stanza by Sir Henry Baker which he notes “is still unhappily in wide use.”⁴⁶

There are who never yet have heard
 The tidings of thy sacred Word,
 But still in heathen darkness dwell
 Without one thought of heaven or hell.

In 1964, *Twentieth Century Church Music* was published. Toward the end of this book Routley mentioned a letter from a missionary concerning the impact of Western culture on indigenous African folksong. Commenting on the letter, Routley again urged the exposure of the nationals to the best of Western art, “helping in the creation

of a new indigenous culture which will be the result of conversation, not imitation.”⁴⁷ In *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, also published in 1964, Routley made a rather strong statement concerning the need for hymns to deal with reality: “People still write missionary hymns as if they did not know that Ghana sends students to Western universities who get doctorates and return to be nationalists.”⁴⁸ Here Routley demonstrated his awareness of the plurality of Western society discussed earlier. By the time the editor of *THE HYMN*

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published his “Interview With Erik Routley” in 1982, Routley had this to say:

What I believe will be a huge problem for us is to discover what Third World hymnody really is. In the old days it was a Chinese tune...that had been through immigration formalities, that had citizenship and was harmonized in four parts...but now we are saying, these people ought to be let in talking their language...we must not too much westernize music of other countries.⁴⁹

Obviously, there is a definite progression in Routley’s ideas concerning culturally-inclusive language. Beginning with little awareness of the issue, his writings show increasing concern, ending with a high level of cultural consciousness in hymnody near the end of his life.

In his thesis “Evidences of the Influences of Erik Routley on *Rejoice in the Lord*,” Malcolm King defines sexually non-inclusive language as “language that, through either overt or subtle means, shows preference to one sex or another.”⁵⁰ In the area of hymnody, he notes that this is most frequently associated “with the use of male pronouns when referring to the entire body of the population.”⁵¹ Another area is the use of male pronouns to address or refer to God. This is a subject that has drawn much debate in recent years. In her introduction to the book *Inclusive Language in the Church*, Nancy Hardesty writes of the time when the issue of inclusive language first came to the fore, referring to several incidents in the 1970s. A common reaction, according to Hardesty, was to “avoid it, trivialize and neutralize it with ridicule.”⁵² There is no evidence to suggest that Routley responded in these ways even before his views began to change on the issue.

In 1952, the year *Hymns and Human Life* was

⁴² Erik Routley, *Ecumenical Hymnody* (London: Independent Press, 1959), p. 6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Routley, *Twentieth Century Church Music*, p. 209.

⁴⁸ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 165.

⁴⁹ Harry Eskew, “An Interview With Erik Routley,” *THE HYMN* 32 (1981), p. 206.

⁵⁰ King, *Evidences*, p. 70.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Hardesty, *Inclusive*, p. 2.

published, the norm was to consider "he" as inclusive, following a rule established in England by an Act of Parliament. This rule declared that "he" is generic and legally includes "she."⁵³ Therefore it was perfectly normal for the period for Routley to refer to "Rise up, O men of God" in positive terms, pointing out its "note of courage and pride."⁵⁴ Nevertheless, in the same book Routley quoted the following lines from a horatory hymn for children:

O boys, be strong in Jesus; to toil for him is
gain,
And Jesus wrought with Joseph with chisel,
saw, and plane;
O maidens, live for Jesus, who was a
maiden's Son;
Be patient, pure, and gentle, and perfect
grace begun.

He stated that this implies "that courage and humour and faithfulness are not feminine virtues... may it not be urged that the characteristic demerits of the generation of maidens immediately succeeding that for which this was written were a combination of impatience, impurity, and discourtesy?"⁵⁵ Even at this early point, Routley showed some sensitivity to gender.

Hymns Today and Tomorrow was published in 1964, and Routley included a discussion of images for God taken from Scripture. Under the image of Father, he considered the use of the term as relationship with humans and with Jesus Christ, as an intimate but not sentimental term, and considered the possibility that one's earthly father might be brutal or unfaithful. He then

with non-sexist language. In these examples "humanity" is used for "mankind" and "self" for either "him" or "her."⁵⁸ Three years later Routley's article "Sexist Language: A View From a Distance" was published in *Worship*, and again the following year in *THE HYMN*. In this article Routley agreed with the need for correction of hymns using "expressions such as man, brother, son (with a small 's'), all meaning humanity."⁵⁹ He related,

I never noticed this before; it never occurred to me before 1975 that anyone could object to it. But now I can't stand it and, so far as at my time of life one can, always try to adjust my own style so as to avoid it.⁶⁰

On the other hand, he firmly opposed the idea of replacing reference to the first person of the Trinity with male appositions and avoiding the use of feminine pronouns for the Church.⁶¹ While his arguments on this point are quite interesting, a discussion of them is outside the purpose of this paper.

Christian Hymns Observed was published in 1982, and Routley used this book to reiterate his position on sexist language. He acknowledged that using "man" for humanity should be avoided, but "the elimination of any reference to God in the male gender is a theological reconstruction with which I simply doubt whether the proposers are competent to deal."⁶² Also in 1982, an article by Routley called "The Gender of God: A Contribution to the Conversation" was published. In this article he reminded his readers that he was "in sympathy with the view which denies that, at the present time, it is wise to use the word 'man' meaning 'humanity'; but also that he did not "express sympathy with more radical reconstructions of language in reference to God."⁶³ Suffice it to say that Routley makes a case here for caution in the revision of older hymn texts, maintaining that "the modified version must be something which the original author could have written."⁶⁴ As the editor of *Rejoice in the Lord*, published in 1985, Routley was true to his convictions. In his "Editor's Introduction," he noted the compelling need today for "sensitivity for 'inclusive language' in hymns and liturgical speech."⁶⁵ As such, "man" and "brother" used to mean "humanity" are changed when it is possible without damaging the original too much. However, Routley wrote,

we have not attempted...to rephrase in the plural hymns written in the singular; and we have not often embarked on the extremely hazardous and difficult task of adjusting all language so that it gives no offence to those who regard it wrong to use the male pronoun for God the Father or God the Holy Spirit."⁶⁶

Thus Routley practiced what he believed, having reached a carefully-considered position on the issue of gender-inclusive language. This can be illustrated in two ways: his positive opinion of

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pointed out the parallel of the tendency "to run to father, or to mother, for protection and solace, made the more acute by the fear that father may not be there, and in its acuteness transferred to a father-figure, or, without much difficulty, to a mother-figure."⁵⁶ The idea of neutral or even feminine images and pronouns for God is common in modern times.⁵⁷ While Routley did not address this issue here, he did include both father and mother in his comparison of God and human parent.

By 1976, the issue of sexist language had "come to the fore" in no uncertain terms. In an article published in *THE HYMN* during that year, Gilbert Taverner notes that he had become "conscious of the justifiable protests about unnecessary language," and points to some examples of hymns

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁵⁴ Routley, *Hymns and Human Life*, p. 229.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

⁵⁶ Routley, *Hymns Today and Tomorrow*, p. 27.

⁵⁷ Allison, et. al., *Excellent*, p. 21.

⁵⁸ Gilbert Taverner, "Why New Words to Old Hymn Tunes?" *THE HYMN* 27 (1976) p. 5.

⁵⁹ Erik Routley, "Sexist Language: a View From a Distance," *THE HYMN* 3, (1980), p. 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

the hymn "Rise up, O men of God" mentioned earlier contrasts with what he wrote late in his life: "Nothing would please me more than to be delivered from singing 'Rise up, O men of God,'"⁶⁷ and "I think 'Rise up, O men of God' is as dead as worms and bowels."⁶⁸ Secondly, through most of his life, it was Routley's habit in his writing to use a male pronoun in the inclusive sense. The following is a quotation from a source written late in his life, taken from the last page of *Christian Hymns Observed*: "But where a hymn in a service of worship beckons to the worshiper at *his or her* best and causes that worshiper to say, 'that is what I wanted to say...,' then it has done its work" (emphasis added).⁶⁹

Erik Routley's role as editor for *Rejoice in the Lord* provides a fascinating opportunity to see how he "fleshed out" his convictions concerning the language of hymns. His goal in the area of hymn texts inclusive of modern expression was to "as gently as possible [attempt] to release the author's true meaning."⁷⁰ In *Rejoice in the Lord* he stated, "we have done our best to stay close to each author's original text, and the occasional archaism has not deterred us from doing that."⁷¹ Alterations were made in those cases "in which a fine poem would be placed beyond the reach of ordinary singers because its author uses a word in a sense it does not now carry."⁷² Examples of Routley's work in this regard include a change from "if thou but suffer God to guide thee" to "if thou but trust in God to guide thee" (No. 151). Significantly, the use of "thee," "thy," and "thou" is retained. Another example is "To God be the glory, great things he hath done" (No. 355), in which Routley changed the "lifegate" to "heav'n's gateway" and "transport" to "beauty." A third example is "Beneath the cross of Jesus" (No. 311), which not only shows changes that occur to correct misunderstood words, but reflect Routley's theological views, as well. "From my smitten heart with tears" becomes "from my humbled heart with shame"; "worthlessness" is changed to "lovelessness"; "his glorious love" is rewritten as "redeeming love"; "my sinful self my only shame" is changed to "my only shame a sinful heart"; and "content to let the world go by" becomes "content unto the world to die."

In his article "Sexist Language: A View From a Distance," Routley wrote, "in a hymnal either the language ought to be revised or the whole hymn dropped if...it offends."⁷³ He applied the same principle to the area of culturally-inclusive language. In some hymns Routley revised the language; in some stanzas were omitted; still other hymns were left out of *Rejoice in the Lord* completely. Those conspicuous by their absence include "From Greenland's icy mountains," "Remember all the people," and "Onward, Christian soldiers." Others not included are patriotic songs of any kind. Routley referred to these as "tribal songs," and for a hymnal intended to be used in different countries and cultures, inclusion of these

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songs could be offensive.⁷⁴ An example of an altered text is "Jesus shall reign" (No. 233). The line, "his kingdom spread from shore to shore," carrying the image of conquest is changed to "his kingdom stretch from shore to shore." The following stanza is omitted:

From north to south the princes meet
To pay their homage at his feet,
While western empires own their Lord,
And savage tribes attend his word.

In the hymn, "O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling" (No. 421), this stanza is omitted:

Behold how many thousands still are
lying,
Bound in the darksome prisonhouse of
sin,
With none to tell them of the Saviour's
dying,
Or of the life he died for them to win.

Regarding the area of gender-inclusive language, Routley altered some hymns, dropped offending stanzas in others, and left still others out of *Rejoice in the Lord*, applying his ideas discussed earlier. King summarizes Routley's guideline this way:

Modification of sexually non-inclusive language has been made wherever the language crossed a finely drawn barrier. Male imagery used to relate to persons is not acceptable. However, male imagery relating to God is acceptable, due to the overwhelming, though not exclusive, use of male imagery in scripture in this context.⁷⁵

Obviously, "Rise up, O men of God" is not found in *Rejoice in the Lord*. Also excluded are "Faith of our fathers," "Brethren we have met to worship," "brother man," and "God of our fathers." Examples of alteration within a hymn include "All my hope on God is founded" (No. 156), in which Routley changed "still from man to God eternal" to "still from earth to God eternal"; "Christ is the world's true light" (No. 181), in which "where'er men own his sway" is modified to "where nations own his sway" and "men shall forsake their fear" to "earth shall forsake its fear"; "Christ the Lord is risen today" (No. 325), in which Routley changed "sons of men and angels say" to "all creation joins to say"; and "God of grace and God of glory" (No. 416), which finds "in the fight to set men free" changed

⁶² Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, p. 101.

⁶³ Erik Routley, "The Gender of God: A Contribution to the Conversation," *Worship* 56, pp. 231-239.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁶⁵ Erik Routley, *Rejoice in the Lord* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985), p. 9.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Routley, "Sexist Language," p. 28.

⁶⁸ Routley, "The Gender of God," p. 239.

⁶⁹ Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, p. 107

⁷⁰ Routley, ed., *Rejoice in the Lord*, p. 9.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Routley, "Sexist Language," p. 28

⁷⁴ King, *Influences*, p. 18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

to "pledged to set all captives free." In the hymn "In Christ there is no East nor West" (No. 410), Routley took this stanza:

Join hands, then, brothers of the faith,
whate'er your race may be;
Who serves my Father as a son
is surely kin to me.

and altered it to this:

Join hands, then, all who hold the faith,
whate'er your race may be;
Who serves my Father cheerfully
is surely friend to me.

In his struggle to find a balance between using hymns that are inclusive in their language while at the same time not wanting to lose the original intent of the author, Routley occasionally found himself in a predicament. In his introduction to *Rejoice in the Lord* he wrote, "in just a few cases...an amendment has proved impossible, and still we thought the hymn should be included...we have occasionally used the 'dagger' to alert sensitive singers that a verse contains an undesirable expression."⁷⁶ In this way Routley found it possible to keep from "damaging the original" while remaining sensitive to the issue of gender-inclusive language. An example of this is "Sometimes a light surprises" (No. 159), in which a dagger was placed next to the first stanza. The first line of this stanza uses the male pronoun to refer to all Christians: "Sometimes a light surprises the Christian when he sings..." Another example is the fourth stanza of "At even, when the sun was set" (No. 252), which includes this line: "O Savior Christ, thou too art man." A third example is "God rest you merry, gentlemen" (No. 209), which includes a dagger with the first stanza and a note from Routley indicating that the traditional language has not been altered, and those wishing to avoid singing "gentlemen" in the opening line may substitute "Christians all."

Throughout this article the views of Erik Routley on the subject of inclusive language in hymnody have been considered. Beginning with ideas on the importance of hymn texts, followed by a discussion of the need for inclusive language, the areas of modern expression, culturally-inclusive language, and gender-inclusive language were considered, concluding with a look at examples of Routley's criteria for editing hymn texts. It was shown that his opinions concerning the editing of archaic language seemed to remain fairly consistent throughout his career, while in the areas of culturally- and gender-inclusive language he showed a definite progression and development in his awareness of these issues. In each case he was open to rethinking his beliefs, but having considered all sides of the issue, he was willing to strongly and articulately defend his position. Erik Routley's combination of openmindedness and strong convictions would serve as a worthy model as present and future issues are addressed. ■



⁷⁶ Routley, *Rejoice in the Lord*, p. 9.