



Commentary on the Common Confession

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CC1) The Lord Jesus Christ

We are people who believe and confess our faith in the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We trust and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.

We posit this first declaration of the Common Confession *first* precisely because all other exclamations of faith and faithful living flow from this core revelation: God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, three Persons; and the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, reigns as our Savior and Lord.

In recent years the masculine pronoun for God has come under attack that it renders God sexual and diminishes the worth of females. But excising the masculine, biblical pronoun proves disastrous to orthodox, confessional faith. First, using only “God” or worse, “Godself,” to name the Trinity undermines the scriptural template that God is a Person, thus eliminating the revelation of God’s Personhood and personal relationship with us. Second, the Bible tells us that we know the Father only through the Son—and together they send God the Holy Spirit. So we don’t know anything about any god but the God who has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Moreover, “Father,” “Son,” and, “Holy Spirit,” are not simply metaphorical expressions but literal names—proper nouns—of the Deity who is the Triune. We cannot thus remove the inherent masculine gender of God without being left with a god quite different from the divine reality of Jesus Christ.

This does not mean, however, that God is male. The masculine pronoun does not emphasize sexual identity but relational reality and revelation. Lapsing into descriptive nouns for God—usually rendered “Creator,” “Redeemer,” and, “Sanctifier”—is to fall into the ancient heresy of Modalism.

Faithfully following God’s biblical revelation of Himself also corrects distorted understandings of fatherhood and sonship. Men who abuse women have perverted such understandings. Eliminating then the Trinitarian language deprives the Church of its primary models for correcting such distortion.

In terms of confessing, “Jesus is Lord,” such expression represents the highest point of faith in the New Testament (John 20:28) and the most basic of creedal statements (Romans 10:9). Rather than being militaristic or hierarchical, holding to Jesus as our Savior and Lord simply acknowledges how Jesus has won the right to be addressed. By His life, death, resurrection, ascension, and promise to come again, He has proven His Lordship and has opened the way of salvation to all who confess Him Lord, that is, the One in whom they place their whole lives. The blood of the martyrs covers this profession of Jesus’ saving Lordship, and any church body that seeks to dismiss or shun such profession in effect isolates itself from the historic Church catholic.

Finally, confessing Jesus our Savior and Lord honors Jesus’ explicit and exclusive claim to be the only “way, truth, and life” to the Father and hence to eternal life (John 14:6). All other proposed ways to salvation are therefore exposed as false.

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