**The Self-Identification of God**

Based on [John 3:1-17](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Jn3.1-17)

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The Holy Trinity

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Who is the true God? Every christian ought to be able to answer thusly, the True God is the Triune God…Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three Persons, One God. Each of these persons is God, but not “a” god. It is suitable to the virtue of humility that we know God to be a mystery. We cannot know him fully, but only by what he says of himself.

June has recently been deemed pride month. I accepted a dispatch to substitute teach in a school the other day. And when I arrived, I was overwhelmed by the rainbow flags hung all over the school, and teachers with rainbow pride t-shirt. There was a pride picnic for teachers and students to attend after school. Now, I used to think it would be difficult to navigate such floodworthy waters. What is a christian to do…Hate the sin love the sinner? Conscientiously object? Remind everyone that the rainbow belongs to the promise of Noah’s ark, not to the wickedness of man which earned the flood in the first place...

Then again it isn’t that different from anything else in the world. We are strangers in a strange land after all. And it is not our calling to contend against every sinful slogan or misguided cause we see. You don’t have to show your disgust at rainbow flags or preach what you believe about it at every turn. You can and must largely ignore it, and that is not unfaithfulness…it is simply living in a world that doesn’t know God as he truly is, but invents new gods and expects obedience.

Same as Nebuchadnezzar and the golden image…”that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.” The rainbow pride flag is just another trigon or harp signalling the new worship. But Daniel just ignored it and prayed to the True God anyway. He didn’t have to preach against the image at every sounding, he knows and we know that “an idol has no real existence,” and that “there is no God but one. God is not mocked. Jesus has suffered greater ignominity than this…and you do not have to justify the Lord, he justifies you in the midst of such evil.

But you can’t always ignore it. One problem that I haven’t had to contend with yet is the controversy over gender pronouns. I haven’t had to confront this in my admittedly sheltered life, but am told that in this new culture you are obligated to use the gender pronoun that the person wants you to use, and if you fail to do so you are a bigot.

Now, there is nothing new under the sun, but the particular flavour of the decadence of our society is apparent in the deification of each person. I mean that the logic underpinning the modern secular dogma is that each individual gets to be treated like they are their own god. The dignity of man is not that he was made in the image of God, but that he ought to be treated as the master of his (or her) own reality…including the self-declaration of gender. And this pronoun matter is just another example of that logic playing out. The logic assumes it is offensive to call someone “he” who wants to be called “she”. “Why?”, because each person is to be respected as the creator and judge of their own reality, or else they are being discriminated.

This is ironic. Each giant leap for mankind comes from one seemingly small step away from God. And that proverbially comes from attempting to steal sacred fire…and as historically comes from the Tower of Babel. The idea that a person ought to be called by the pronoun they want comes after decades of the same-minded people taking that very same right away from God…stealing His thunder. What I mean is that–no matter what you think about God–He clearly wants to be called “He”.

Yes, we know God is spirit, and there are virtues associated with womanhood that are perfectly found in God. But even before the “Father” sent the son…both “He’s”...the God of the Bible has been referred to as “He” since the days of Abraham. Before that he used the plural “Us”. Let us make man in our image. Let us go down and see this tower they have built.” And to no surprise, there are also some trangender people wanting to be called not “he” or “she” but “they” and “we” and “us”.

I’m not saying the movement sat down and planned it out…but somehow, they knew. Instinctively they know that the logic that is built into us about how to treat a holy God…is still there. And that logic has been repurposed so that we would treat each human being that we interact with to be a god as well. Self-identifying as this or that…that is the prerogative of God and has never been considered the right of men until very very recently.

Wars have been fought over who is the rightful king of this or that people. Nations claim this or that land, fighting over it. But they always gave reasons for their claim. What is unique about today’s self-identity movement is that nobody has to give a reason why they want to be called this or that, other than that’s how they feel. They aren’t bound to an external reality. In fact, having to have a reason is the problem…a god doesn’t need to explain himself, and subjects have a duty to obey. You either submit to what he,s he or they has declared, or you are worthy of condemnation.

Friends, what I am saying is the pronoun war is a worthy fight. Not in its present instance of rainbow pride…but in the sense that pronouns do matter, and confess a reality about what you believe a particular person to be and on what grounds you believe them to be so. A male is a male because he was born with the potential to father a child; a female with a womb to bear one…this is regardless of what they say about themselves…they don’t have the ability to change reality by insisting you call them something else.

But God does have the ability so speak something into existence, and to define reality by the words he chooses. And the Athanasian Creed says plainly “Whoever does not confess God according to the pronouns and labels that he he has chosen for himself, will without doubt perish eternally.” And these are the labels God has chosen, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance. For the **Father** is one person, the **Son** is another, and the **Holy Spirit** is another. But the Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

If there’s a silver lining in the Trangender movement today, maybe it is this. It is clearly an offence to refuse to call someone by their chosen handle and labels. Right or wrong, we know it is some form of sacrilege against a god. So dear friends in Christ, know this, if failing to address someone according to their preferred pronouns is understood as blasphemy against a little god; how much more blasphemous is it to fail to address the true God according to his preferred pronouns.

The true God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit…He wants to be called He, and he is three in one. And the Son is a biological he, who…was circumcised on the eight day after his birth to cut off any debate on the matter…pun intended.

And we have the privilege of gathering together every Lord’s day, but especially this day to speak together the name and the pronouns and the titles that God–in the inscrutable mystery of his being–has chosen for us to use in addressing him. He is not three God’s but one God. He is not one person but three persons. He identifies as a male with the appropriate pronouns and this is a mystery not to be fully understood, but confessed and adored.

In the proper time, **he** gave his eternally begotten son to be conceived and born of the flesh of Mary, ***circumcized*** on the eighth day, on his behalf was given to god two pigeons or doves as was required by the Law of Moses of all firstborn ***sons*** to open the womb. He grew up to fill the role of the ***Son*** of David, and the ***Son*** of God, and the ***Son*** of Man, who shed his blood for our sins and ascended to the throne of God on high, and He will come again to judge the living and the dead. And those who believe this and confess it faithfully and firmly will be saved.

These are mysteries, heavenly things that we confess by virtue of our Baptism into the one Triune Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has confessed the earthly matter of our baptism for us to believe and have our identity as heirs of eternal life. And because Jesus **has told us this earthly thing,** that we must be and have been born from above, so too we can believe and confidently confess these **heavenly things**…the mystery of the catholic faith.