so, for they were not the ones who enslaved and discriminated. Since white Americans do not embrace their racial identity, they do not see why they should draw a direct line from the deeds of white people in Mississippi in 1860 or 1960 to their own lives. What happened, happened. Black affirmation of national identity shows that the tribulations of the past don't define who we are, nor do they determine our future.

The embrace of our national identity works against the coercive racialism and divisiveness of Black Lives Matter and the deceptions of the 1619 Project. It frustrates the fractionalized limitations of identity politics. It diminishes the feelings of victimization, anger, and manipulation that fuel calls for reparations.

Pride in who we are as Americans can produce a life less consumed with racial paranoia, anger, bitterness, and self-doubt. By affirming our national identity above our racial identity, blacks will send a clear message that we see and believe ourselves to be equally American. As equals, blacks will demand to be treated and judged by the standards that apply to all Americans. We will establish our equality on the basis of our self-determination—and achievement—rather than on the fabricated parity granted us by the benevolent chauvinism of our purported patrons. Courage, determination, and national pride should be the foundations upon which we establish who we are: Americans. ∎

Saving Mankind

by Hans Boersma

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE IS exclusive; exclusive language is inclusive. That's the oxymoronic truth I will argue here. So as not to cause confusion, let me briefly explain. By claiming that inclusive language is exclusive, I mean that so-called gender-inclusive language (such as using *they* instead of *he* or *people* instead of *men*) theologically excludes individuals, both men and women, from salvation. Conversely, so-called exclusive language (such as *man* or *mankind*) is actually inclusive, not just because it linguistically includes both men and women but, more importantly, because it is in the man Jesus Christ that we are included.

Linguistic changes are not self-justifying. Recent changes involving gender require particular scrutiny. True, language does change. And one might argue that we are better off with words such as *humankind* or *humanity* than with *mankind* or *man.* Many believe that using *he or she,* alternating *he* and *she,* and mixing singular nouns and verbs with plural pronouns (as in "everyone was minding their own business") all constitute improvements.

These and similar changes in gendered language are unique in that they have occurred rapidly and are politically motivated. I remember distinctly the first time I heard someone use the word *she* inclusively in an everyday conversation. As one might suspect, my interlocutor was an academic—ordinary people tend not to be at the forefront of political correctness. My colleague had changed his use of pronouns for social justice reasons. He would soon be followed by many others.

The loss of the inclusive use of masculine words such as *man* and *he* has been abrupt, effected with the purpose of redressing the traditional power imbalance between the sexes.

The speed and intentionality of the changes plead against the argument that linguistic change "just happens," and that if we want to make ourselves understood, we must adapt. We cannot justify these changes in gendered language simply by pointing out that linguistic flux is a fact of life.

THE AVOIDANCE OF *man* and *he* as inclusive words has become so commonplace that, when a reader sees them used in print, they strike him as odd and antiquated—even if perhaps he laments their loss. Existential dread descends upon many an author contemplating the use of such unfashionable discourse, for the *faux pas* relegates one to the dregs of society.

Initially, perhaps, we thought the use of *humankind* would be innocuous. Tossing in the odd *he or she* would at least allow us to communicate without offense. But changes in

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linguistic mores relating to gender have taken on a life of their own. Soon, feminists insisted that Bible translations had to change *sons* to *children* and *fathers* to *ancestors*. The demands are endless.

When compliant Christians changed Paul's *brothers* to *brothers and sisters*, they failed to see that they were still caught within the iron cage of gender binaries. Announcements over intercoms in European railways have replaced *ladies and gentlemen* with *dear travelers*. Increasingly, we hear of *chestfeeding* rather than *breastfeeding*, and of *menstruating persons* rather than *women*. These more recent changes all reflect transgender concerns.

"We never step into the same river twice," Heraclitus observed. The flow is inexorable, it seems. Feminist demands to outlaw *mankind* naturally lead to transgender demands to prohibit *breastfeeding*. Admittedly, many feminists and trans activists do not see eye to eye, since one must believe in the stability of gender if he is to advocate feminism. But what unites them is their desire to upend reality. Every one of the linguistic gender changes tinkers with reality—though the most recent ones do it most obviously. Indeed, the various iterations of our linguistic surgery have made radical physical surgery possible. What we do with words affects what we do with men.

T**HE PROHIBITION OF** *man* and *he* as inclusive terms was an assault on reality. Biblical words such as the Hebrew *ish* and the Greek *anthrōpos* are inclusive. Like our traditional word *man*, they include women. This is not to say that these words have only an inclusive usage. *Ish* (man) can be distinguished from *ishah* (woman), and *anthrōpos* can have a distinctly male reference, as in Saint Paul's insistence that "it is well for a man (*anthrōpos*) not to touch a woman" (1 Cor. 7:1). The words *ish* and *anthrōpos* do not

function in exactly the same way as our inclusive *man*, but all three languages use these words in both inclusive and gender-specific ways.

In contemporary society, we wince at such terms because of their gendered character. We imagine we can do without them, because we think the species and genera we observe are manmade (or, rather, humanly constructed). The classification of horses as equine seems to us the projection of a mental category onto a group of individual animals that happen to look alike. Likewise, we think of human beings as atomized individuals who happen to have similar characteristics. We consider the names *equine* and *man* subjective impositions on prior sets of atomized objects.

Christians should resist this outlook, known philosophically as nominalism. When God creates things, he is not surprised by the result; nor does he think things up on the spot. Rather, he knows—from all eternity—what is a horse and what is a man. The stability of created things is grounded in the Father's generation of the Word. When we name objects around us, we are called to faithfulness: Our naming should be in line with God's own, eternal naming, as expressed in the generation of his eternal Word. Christian Platonism, therefore, maintains that we assign names because the objects *are* what we name them. Their identity is grounded in the Father-Son relationship. Created things are included in or participate in the life of God, and our job is to name things faithfully, as we ponder the reality of this inclusive or participatory relationship.

L**ET'S DIG A** little deeper into the Christological grounding of inclusive (generic) language. What is at stake in the inclusive language of *man* and *mankind*? Nothing less than the salvation of mankind. Salvation depends on our being included in the Word.

The apostle claims that just as sin and death came through one man (*anthrōpos*), so resurrection and the grace of God come through one man (*anthrōpos*) (Rom. 5:12, 15; 1 Cor. 15:21). The first man is Adam, the second Christ. Christ's recapitulation of Adamic existence includes every human being—male or female—who ever lived.

Adam and Christ are not just individual persons. Our death is the result of our inclusion in the *anthrōpos* Adam, and our salvation hinges on our inclusion in the *anthrōpos* Christ. When we restrict the Pauline idiom to individual persons, it is no longer possible for these persons to include others. The language of *man* broadens our horizons from the individual to the universal so as to include all of mankind—male and female. If our language is to reflect reality—the truth that all men (male and female) are included in Christ—then we must not relinquish the inclusive use of masculine nouns and pronouns.

Christological inclusivity affects even our reading of the Old Testament. Take Psalm 1, which begins, "Blessed is the man (*ish*) that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly." Saint Augustine begins his exposition by stating, "The blessing applies to our Lord Jesus Christ, *homo dominicus*, the Man of the Lord." Personally, I find Augustine's exegesis fitting and true (though not all Church Fathers adopted his Christological interpretation). Had Augustine consulted the New Revised Standard Version, however—"Happy are those"—he would have been hard-pressed to offer a Christological reading.

In the atomized world of modernity, where all we have is individuals—male, female, perhaps nonbinary—salvation is a self-help project. The nominalist refusal to acknowledge the inclusion of all men in one mankind is a form of rebellion. It refuses to acknowledge that all men really are one

in the one man, Jesus Christ. Our manipulation of inclusive gender terms is much more than a natural linguistic evolution: It is linguistic rebellion against the creation and redemption of all mankind in Christ. It is the insistence that everyone is left to his (or rather *their*) own devices. "Inclusive" language is linguistic Pelagianism.

CAN WE RETAIN Paul's notion of union with Christ without his offensive use of *anthrōpos*? We try, of course, by rendering it with gender-neutral terms such as *humankind* and *humanity*. I can see nothing wrong with these terms per se. But the obstinate fact is that the apostle Paul uses masculine terms for a patriarchal reality: It is a man who includes all, both men and women. The biblical understanding is personal and specific: God became man, not woman. When languages function naturally, they are patterned on this incarnational logic. Linguistically, it is common for masculine terms to take on inclusive characteristics. We may not like it and may rebel against it. But in so doing, we rebel against reality.

Years ago, as I discussed the realist-nominalist debates from the Late Middle Ages in my History of Doctrine class, a student came up to me and asked, "Are you teaching this because you're opposed to women's ordination?" I think my jaw dropped: I never discussed women's ordination in class, and I was surprised to have been found out. I muttered something about having bigger fish to fry than women's ordination. Which was true. But, of course, the student's question was perceptive, for both our linguistic gender mutilations and our insistence on ordaining women arise from our rebellion against the inclusive reality of Jesus Christ as the Son of Man.

God became man so that man might become God. This patristic dictum is grounded in Saint Paul's contrast between the two *anthrōpoi*, Adam and Christ. God took on Adamic existence (of both men and women) so that Adamic existence (of both men and women) might be taken up into the life of God. Divinization (or salvation) depends on the ontological reality of the unity of mankind.

We must reclaim the truly inclusive language of mankind, for it alone does justice to the reality of God's salvation of mankind in Jesus Christ.