

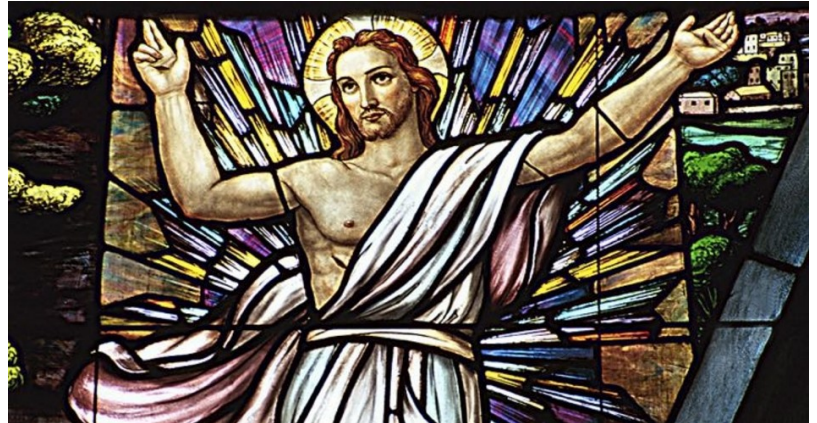


Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 3, 2018

Swedish Church Uses Gender-neutral Pronoun for Jesus

Less than a month after the Church of Sweden [revised its service book](#) to be gender-neutral when referring to the Deity, a local Swedish church has gone even further, using a gender-neutral pronoun to refer to Jesus.

In an advertisement for its Christmas service, a church in the city of Vasteras used the pronoun *hen* in reference to the Christ child. *Hen* “is used to refer to non-binary people or in cases where a person’s gender is not known or not relevant,” explained the website [thelocal.se](#). In other words, the church employed an ambiguous pronoun even though the sex of its antecedent, Jesus, is well-established.



Not surprisingly, this move generated some controversy, forcing local church officials to defend the ad. Church dean Susann Senter issued a statement arguing that the use of *hen* was intended “to give a new perspective” on Jesus. While acknowledging that Jesus was male, she maintained, “The religious Christ is greater [than the historical person] and needs to be described and talked about in each era, with new words and new songs. The desire behind the use of new words is to find a language of our time which opens up to the holy.”

Senter apologized for any offense that the ad had caused, saying that was not the church’s intention. She added that anyone who wished to continue to refer to Jesus with male pronouns is welcome to do so.

Mikael Mogren, the bishop of Vasteras, also stuck up for the ad’s use of *hen*, saying that while Jesus was clearly a man, “Jesus shares the life of every human being, not just men.”

Furthermore, wrote [thelocal.se](#):

He added that some of the critical comments aimed at the church had included insults towards trans people, and said: “Trans people are created by God, your bodies belong to the beautiful and extraordinary creation of God.”

Mogren went on to say that while debate over Jesus’ gender might seem trivial, he found it significant because of the existence of patriarchal structures and the ways in which some rulers used Christian faith to justify oppression of women or to deny personal gender identities beyond male and female.

In short, church officials have bought into the entire “progressive” agenda and are trying to use their positions of authority to advance it.

Not everyone is buying it, though.

“Despite attempts to calm the public, the church’s statements triggered heated discussion among social media users,” reported [RT.com](#). “One person (Maria Svanerud) commented on the church’s Facebook



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post that the ‘*hen*’ reference is a mockery, while another (Christian Himmelstrand) was ‘upset’ at ‘messing with the most elementary fundamentals of faith.’”

Graham Nicholls, director of the U.K. Evangelical organization Affinity, told [Premier.org](#) that while he agrees that God is “beyond our gender definitions,” the Swedish church’s “move is unlikely to stem from the sudden discovery of a long-neglected theological truth.”

“Rather,” he continued, “I would suspect that it flows from a very anti-theological desire to accommodate the church to a culture of blurring gender distinctions and antagonism towards any form of male headship.”

In fact, he noted that although God is neither male nor female in the human sense of those terms, “God is never given a feminine name, or referred to using feminine pronouns.” Instead, “the Bible reveals God to us in male terms, and in the case of the first Person of the Trinity, as Father.” (The Church of Sweden’s handbook changes urge ministers to replace “the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost” with “God and the Holy Trinity.”)

Chances are the Church of Sweden’s race to the left will have a minimal impact. According to a 2015 [study](#), Swedes are already the least religious people in the West, with nearly 80 percent of them identifying as either “not religious” or “convinced atheists”; only five percent attend church regularly. Is it possible that the church’s capitulation to every liberal demand is as much a cause as an effect of these trends?

Image of Jesus: [Clipart.com](#)



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