



Berkeley School of Theology Statement on Inclusive Language

The Berkeley School of Theology affirms the policy on inclusive language adopted by the American Academy of Religion as appropriate to all scholarly and written work and oral communication within our common programs, including institutional publications and marketing materials. The AAR statement and policy is as follows:

"For the purposes of this policy, *exclusive language* is defined as a consistent pattern of English usage where the male is taken to be the normative human person, i.e., the "man" connotes both the male and the human being as such. The term "woman" and female pronouns are never used as generic references for human beings, but are exclusive to females. This definition is adopted from *The New Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, J.G. Daves, SCM Press, 1986.

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It shall be the editorial policy of the publications of the American Academy of Religion [and BST] to avoid the use of the term "man" (including also "men," "mankind," "family of man," "brotherhood," and the compounds "chairman," "clergyman," etc. as a *generic* term, and to use *inclusive* terms (e.g., "human being," "human," "humanity," "humankind," "people," "minister," etc.) to designate both individuals and groups.

Consistent with this policy, the pronoun he is not regarded as generic. Editorial policy is to use appropriate pronouns when the antecedent is known, and to use the gender neutral third person plural (e.g., they, them) when the antecedent of the pronoun is not known. The use of duplicate pronouns or alternated pronouns (e.g., he/she, him/her, s/he consistently or she in one sentence, alternating with he in the next) is permissible, but not preferred. Recommended as a guide to good inclusive style for both editor and author is: Casey Miller and Kate Swift, *The Handbook of Nonsexist Writing*, (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1980)."

There is also the issue of exclusive language in reference to God, in translations of scripture, or in formal liturgy and other spoken and written materials. BST -- as an ecumenically diverse Christian community and as a founding member of the Graduate Theological Union, a multi-faith institution -- respects the fact that different communities have taken different stands on these issues; it intends to enforce no orthodoxy on any religious community. However, in scholarly and other writing and speaking about the theology, scriptures, and liturgies of the communities, it is at least appropriate to be aware of and note the dimensions of the controversy. Whether inclusive language should be adopted in reference to deity, scripture, or liturgical language depends upon the topic under discussion and the tradition out of which the person is writing or speaking. If there are viable reasons why inclusive language is not appropriate, it is well to note them in a non-disruptive way in a footnote or aside.