

# Reflection on The Trinity

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One of the distinctive doctrines of the Anglican Tradition is the Trinity. Trinity Sunday is the only major Feast Day (with white hangings!) that is named after a Doctrine of the Church. Consequently, the Trinity is a central doctrinal truth of Anglicanism.

The Historic Creed that focuses on the Trinity is the Athanasian Creed, dating from the 6th C. For centuries it was proclaimed in Anglican Parishes almost monthly. The first half of this Creed unpacks the Trinity, delineating Jesus' relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The second portion of this very long statement of Faith details the Incarnation, affirming Jesus' divinity and humanity.



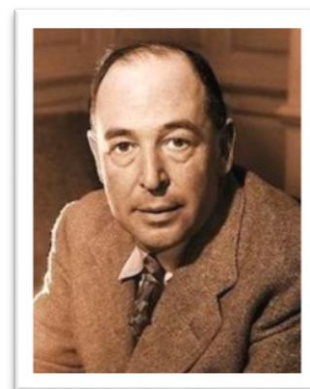
Why is this important today? Many of the Early Church heresies are evident today, even expressed through some mainline traditions. For example, I received an Episcopal Church (TEC) national award in journalism juxtaposing the traditional Faith of the Church relative to neo-Gnosticism evident in some "progressive" circles in TEC.



How does this manifest in our parishes? Some deny Jesus' divinity or humanity. In my first parish I had a long discussion with a prominent longstanding parishioner who insisted that "Jesus was not God but the Son of God!" Somehow this person saw Jesus as somewhat 'less' than the Father!

Jesus' relationship to the other persons of the Trinity is significant. As the agent of our salvation, His humanity AND divinity are crucial beliefs. In His dual nature, He is the bridge to the Father – I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by Me. (John 14: 6) To undermine Jesus' divinity OR humanity scuttles His capacity to restore the gap between God and humankind!

Some would assert that Jesus is "A Way..." among others which is a departure from the Historic Teaching of the Church. Former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord George Carey calls this the "scandal of particularity." This does not give us license to be triumphalistic among the myriad of alternative spiritualities out there but as DT Niles, an Indian leader stated, "We are beggars telling others where to find the Bread."



I close with the words of Anglicanism's greatest 20th C. apologist –

*A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.*

- C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (1952; Harper Collins: 2001) Pp.51-52.