

If there is a distinction to be made between *assertions*, on the one hand, and *formulations* (of assertions), on the other, shouldn't one also make the following distinctions:

(1) between *assertions*, on the one hand, and their necessary *presuppositions* and *implications*, on the other; and, paralleling this distinction, another

(2) between *formulations* (of assertions), on the one hand, and their *assumptions* and *consequences*, on the other?

The new insight here is that, just as assertions have necessary presuppositions and implications, so formulations (of assertions) necessarily make assumptions and entail consequences. Thus, for example, the formulation of the constitutive christological assertion in terms of Jesus' being Son of God not only makes certain assumptions about God, and so on, but also entails certain consequences, such as being able to ask, and perhaps feeling a need to ask, when, exactly, Jesus became God's Son. This question, in turn, allows for just such alternative answers as we actually find in the New Testament—beginning, presumably, with the answer that Jesus became Son of God at his resurrection (Rom 1:4), and proceeding to answers identifying the time as his baptism (Mk 1:9-11) or his conception and birth (Mt 1:18-25; and especially, Lk 1:35). In the same way, once the christological assertion is formulated in terms of a virgin birth christology, one has to reckon with such further consequences as have been drawn in mariological doctrine right down to the Marian dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

The crucial point, of course, is to be able to distinguish the necessary *implications* of the christological assertion itself, in the form of genuine *credenda* and *agenda*, from what are merely the *consequences* for either belief or action of one or another of its formulations.

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