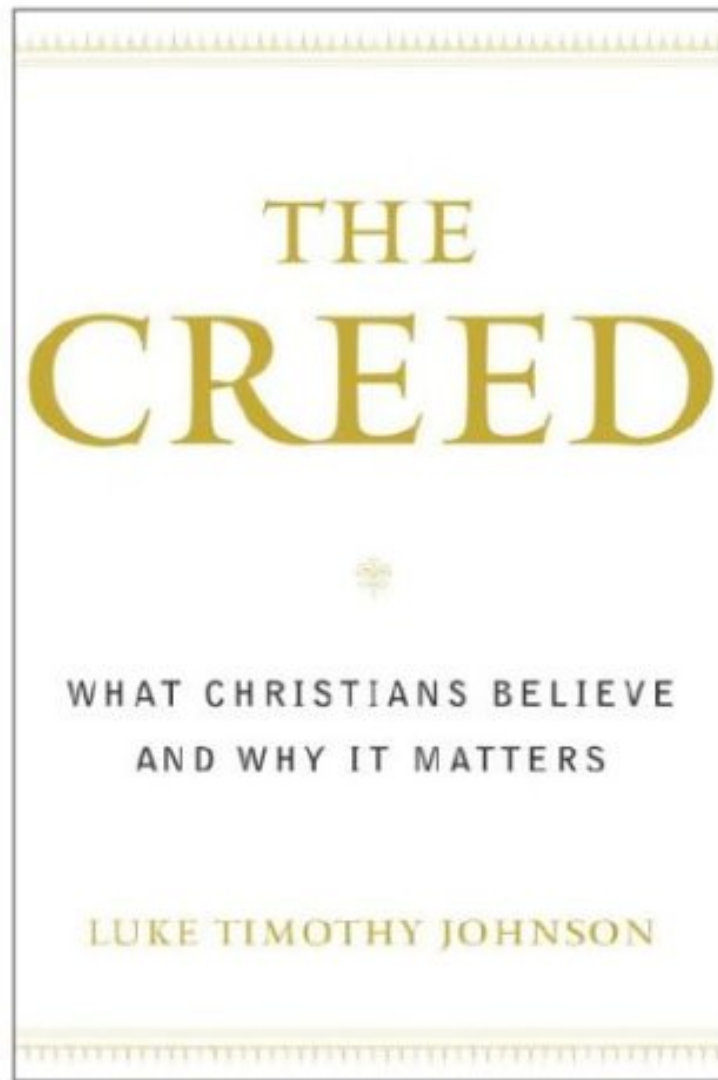


[DOWNLOAD] The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why it Matters

The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why it Matters

Von Luke Timothy Johnson

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Von Luke Timothy Johnson : The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why it Matters before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why it Matters:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The reason to believeVon Dr. Bojan TunguzOver the pat couple of years I have increasingly become aware of the controversy that Christian Creed, and Creedal Christianity, invoke. The more fundamentalist Christians tend to think of creeds as a later development, and by extension a corruption, of the original pristine New Testament Christianity.

On the other hand, theological liberals of all stripes perceive creeds as a straitjacket and a tool of control and exclusion of the heterodox views that were suppressed by the Orthodox "faction". Furthermore, secularists and atheists equate any and allegiances to creeds as a credulity, an infantile instinct that needs to be eradicated if we are to move ahead as a society. Luke Timothy Johnson in this wonderful little book goes a long way in defending The Creed against all these major detractors, and he does it with a great deal of skill, scholarship and finesse. The early chapters of this book explore how did particular statements in The Creed come about, what were the historical and theological disputes that lead to their inclusion. However, this is not the main focus of the book, and some other works on this topic may be more relevant. The major part of the book is dedicated to taking each one of the statements in The creed (and The Creed in question is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed), elaborating on its meaning, providing the relevant biblical proof-texts that support it, and providing the significance of it in our daily lives and in the world at large. It is here that Luke Timothy Johnson is at his best, and this book brought new freshness to the old statements of faith that I've been reciting in Church for many years. This is a wonderful modern book that I highly recommend to anyone who is interested in the Christian beliefs.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Credo... Von FrKurt Messick Truth in advertising compels me to confess that Luke Timothy Johnson was a professor of mine during my undergraduate years - I took several classes from him in the Religious Studies field while an undergraduate at Indiana University; I have used his books consistently both as a student and as an instructor, and they have been of a consistently high quality in scholarship and readability. Many of Johnson's text deal with the New Testament directly, or with issues deriving from it (explorations of Jesus, early church studies, etc.). This book, 'The Creed', combines a lot of this kind of scholarship into an overall discussion of the creeds the modern church espouses. Johnson, a life-long Roman Catholic, has had the recitation of the creed as part of his regular worship experiences all his life - first in Latin, then later in English. Many Christians Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant share this kind of experience. Often faithfulness is a response to God, but Johnson has in this text developed more along the lines of faith as belief, as giving a common sense of purpose and identity. In the preface, Johnson states his belief, his faith that the creed may be a most important element in helping the church to recover its sense of itself. Johnson identifies the pervasive character of modern philosophical thinking from the Enlightenment through to Modernity as rather inimical to the kind of faith the creed called for when first formulated by the early church. The world is now set up in many ways in duality between belief and inquiry, and rarely to the two intersect happily. Not only is creedal Christianity a subject of criticism from outside Christian culture, but is also a controversial topic within - how are the creeds to be interpreted and applied? How vital are they? It is not simply the type of Jesus Seminar scholarship that makes belief problematic, according to Johnson; committed Christians such as Anabaptists and Free Church traditions distrust the politics behind the creedal constructions. However, Johnson's specific audience is more toward another - those persons who still take the creed seriously, but find it difficult to accept all of the assertions, all of the statements or all of the language of the ancient statement of faith. Johnson draws some comparisons and contrasts with other religions - Judaism and Islam have less formal structures of belief despite highly developed systems of law and practice; Buddhism and Hinduism similarly have less focus on particular intellectual belief structures. Johnson traces the origins of the creed in different strands of practice and belief surrounding the early church, even prior to the gospels being committed to paper, and certainly prior to the canon of scripture being codified in final forms as it exists today. In the second and third centuries, more pronounced developments in liturgy and theology led to further codification, and ironically further ambiguity and controversy, necessitating various ecumenical councils that eventually led to the formulation of the creed most commonly recited today, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, usually referred to simply as the Nicene Creed (which is an historical inaccuracy, given that there was an earlier Nicene Creed, from which this later one developed). This is the creed of the title of this text. Johnson explores the ways in which the creed acts for the church as a profession of faith, a rule of faith, a definition of faith, and a symbol of faith. The creed also serves as a narrative recitation of the Christian idea, an interpretative lens for scripture, and a guide to practice and worship. These roles for the creed are important individually and collectively, showing much more depth to the creed than the average person reciting it in the liturgy might realise. Johnson then explores the creed section by section, developing the different lines. From the start, there is a point of ambiguity - does one state 'I believe', or 'we believe'? Johnson argues for the plural, 'we believe', as being a means by which individuals can be part of a communal belief and experience, to an historical community 'that believes more and better than any one of them [the individuals] does'. These are statements of faith that cannot be proven - one of the problems of scholarship such as the Jesus Seminar is it seeks a type of assured knowledge the creed was never intended to supply. The statements of faith are affirmative statements about what the reciting Christian believes; they of course imply what the Christian does not believe. There are areas of disagreement and some freedom of interpretation even from the creedal statements, but Johnson argues for a fairly tradition and careful rendering, even as the modern situation is acknowledged as having validity in certain areas, too. One might be surprised to reach the final chapter, some three hundred pages into the text, to find Johnson say that all up to that point has simply been introduction. The real argument and heart of the text is here, with Johnson arguing for the creed as a defining and boundary-marking set of statements, not designed to exclude, but rather to identify. Again, Johnson's mistrust of historical Jesus enterprises is raised here; Johnson calls this the 'longest-running of all Christological

heresies', which seems to have arisen with little reaction from the church (in fact, I believe this to be an underestimation; it is true that there have been no grand councils called to address the issue, but it is also true that the controversy is worked out in different ways in many churches throughout Christendom). This is not a book simply for Roman Catholics or Anglicans or Orthodoxes - any Christian will find wisdom of value here. Johnson mentions a parish (St. Charles Borromeo, in Bloomington) where I have attended many times as being a place that helped him formulate this text. The text has been used in several churches of my acquaintance to good effect.

Kurzbeschreibung This thoughtful, fully accessible exploration of the creed, the list of beliefs central to the Christian faith, delves into its origins and illuminates the contemporary significance of why it still matters. During services in Christian communities, the members of the congregation stand together to recite the creed, professing in unison the beliefs they share. For most Christians, the creed functions as a sort of ABC of what it means to be a Christian and to be part of a worldwide movement. Few people, however, know the source of this litany of beliefs, a topic that is further confused by the fact that there are two different versions: the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed. In *The Creed*, Luke Timothy Johnson, a New Testament scholar and Catholic theologian, clarifies the history of the creed, discussing its evolution from the first decades of the Christian Church to the present day. By connecting the deep theological conflicts of the early Church with the conflicts and questions facing Christians today, Johnson shows that faith is a dynamic process, not based on a static set of rules. Written in a clear, graceful style and appropriate for Christians of all denominations, *The Creed* is destined to become a classic of modern writings on spirituality. From Publishers Weekly Catholic theologian Johnson knows that the creed, although it is recited by millions of worshippers every Sunday, is far from being well understood. He also knows, clearly from personal experience, that much of what the creed affirms—from a personal Creator to a final resurrection—is the butt of jokes at fashionable dinner parties. This book is his careful attempt to explain to perplexed Christians, with attention to their dinner-party friends, why an ancient confession of faith still makes sense in the modern world. Exploring the Nicene creed line by line, Johnson introduces readers to the history behind each phrase, both in Christian Scripture and in church tradition, and he defends its relevance to faith today. While this approach is similar to that of Catholic apologists like Scott Hahn and Patrick Madrid, Johnson diverges from them in his willingness to sharply criticize both the secular modern world and his own tradition when he sees either one denying the powerful, liberating truths that the creed expresses. Both fundamentalists and progressive Christians (liberation theologians, feminists and devotees of the "historical Jesus") get equal-time rebuttals as well. Johnson's studied vagueness on some controversial questions (such as the historical nature of the resurrection and the uniqueness of Christianity) will put off some readers, but many others will find this a compelling introduction to the essence of Christian faith. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. **Pressestimmen** Praise for *The Real Jesus* More than simply being a critique of the historical Jesus enterprise, Johnson's book provides a positive statement about what it means to have a genuine, contemporary faith in the living Jesus. *Philadelphia Inquirer* The best of the recent flow of books [on Jesus]. *Newsweek* One of the most exhilarating religious books published in this decade. *Christianity Today* Passionately argued . . . Highly recommended. *Library Journal* Praise for *Living Jesus* Johnson demonstrates that the living Jesus of the biblical traditions is immensely more fascinating and significant than any of the dead Jesus that the quests for the historical Jesus keep producing. Miroslav Volf, Yale University Divinity School A stirring book *Informative and challenging* *The Bible Today*