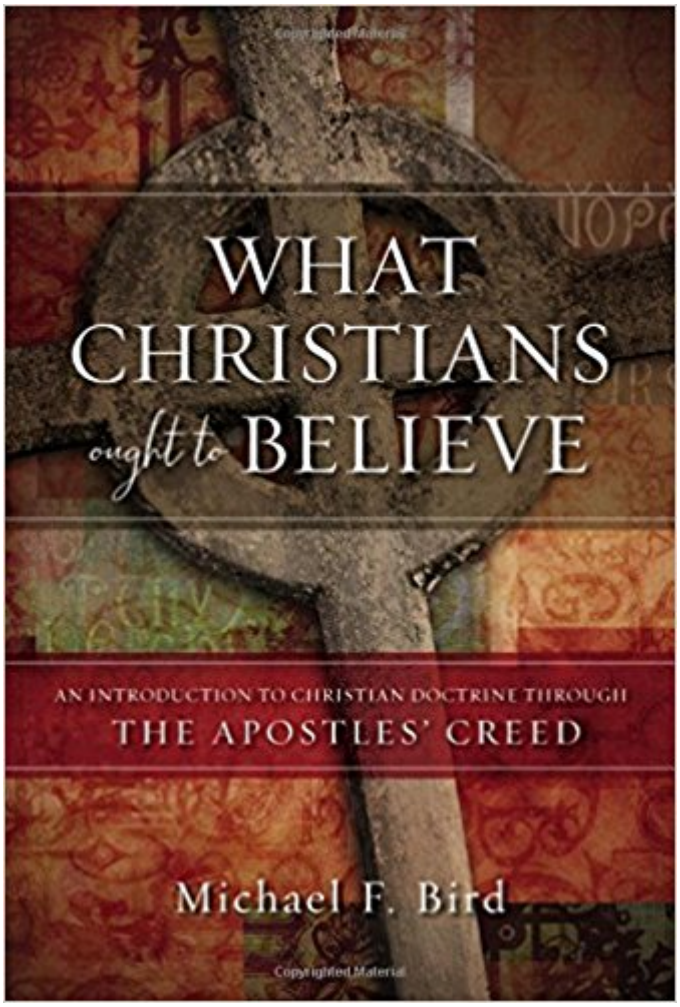
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What Christians Ought To Believe: An Introduction To Christian Doctrine Through The ApostlesÃ¢â‚¬â„¢ Creed



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Synopsis

Modern Christians have often hesitated to embrace the ancient creeds because of our Ã¢â ¬Å“nothing but the BibleÃ¢â ¬Â• tradition. In What Christians Ought to Believe Michael Bird opens our eyes to the possibilities of the ApostleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Creed as a way to explore and understand the basic teachings of the Christian faith. Bringing together theological commentary, tips for application, and memorable illustrations, What Christians Ought to Believe summarizes the basic tenets of the Christian faith using the ApostleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Creed as its entryway. After first emphasizing the importance of creeds for the formation of the Christian faith, each chapter, following the CreedÃ¢â ¬â„¢s outline, introduces the Father, the Son, and the Spirit and the Church. An appendix includes the ApostlesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Creed in the original Latin and Greek. What Christians Ought to Believe is ideally suited for both the classroom and the church setting to teach beginning students and laypersons the basics of what Christians ought to affirm if they are to be called Christians.

Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Zondervan (July 5, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0310520924

ISBN-13: 978-0310520924

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 0.8 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 41 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #22,978 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 inÃ Â Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Worship & Devotion > Catechisms #10 inÃ Â Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Systematic #15 inÃ Â Books > Christian Books & Bibles > History > Historical Theology

Customer Reviews

The ApostlesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Creed is chiseled in stone in the chapel of Beeson Divinity School, and every candidate for admission is asked to write an essay on it. Thank you, Michael Bird, for a fresh exposition of this classic expression of our Christian faith. Thank you for reminding us of what too many Protestants, evangelicals no less than liberals, have forgotten: Creeds matter! -- Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University and general editor of the

Reformation Commentary on ScriptureYou know what I love about Michael? He writes in a colorful, accessible, and engaging way even though he is a scholar of epic proportions; he writes to regular people like me. IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m going to take the Staff of Transformation Church through What Christians Ought To Believe and I will use it introduce new Christians to the faith. -- Derwin L. Gray, Lead Pastor Transformation Church, author of The High Definition LeaderWe all have a tradition through which we read Scripture, and Michael Bird argues that the ApostleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Creed ought to be that tradition. Far from competing with the Bible, this ancient summary of the faith is an aid in rightly understanding the Bible. Bird approaches the creed as a syllabus for teaching basic Christian belief, and like the experienced professor that he is, guides his readers through the creed by highlighting the contours of the narrative and the convictions of the faith. MikeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s books have been a constant source of encouragement for me, and in this one, the Bird soars high in showing the sweeping narrative of Scripture and the core beliefs that emerge from it. IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m grateful that because of this book many will be able to say with more conviction and clarity: 'I believe.' -- Jeremy Treat, Pastor at Reality LA; professor at Biola University; author of The Crucified KingThe genius of this book is the way in which it makes profound truth a pleasure to read. The general reader will be both engaged and richly encouraged by BirdÃ¢â ¬â„¢s winsome exploration of the ApostleÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Creed. His direct and even chatty style makes you feel as if you are visiting an ancient Cathedral in the company of a friendly and yet knowledgeable tour guide. I would commend What Christians Ought to Believe to study groups and to individual Christians looking to deepen not just their knowledge of the Christian faith but their knowledge of the Triune God. -- Rev Dr. Michael P Jensen, St MarkÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Anglican Church, SydneyMichael Bird has done a huge favor for those whose traditions need to be reacquainted with the ApostlesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Creed as more than a pedantic statement. He uses the creed as it was intended to be used Ã¢â ¬â œ to teach and form Christians in the living way of Jesus! Well-researched and engagingly written, BirdÃ¢â ¬â„¢s volume will prove valuable in both church and academy, for those considering Christian faith as well as seasoned saints. His wit, clarity, and scholarship reflect the inherent winsomeness of the theological task and of a creed-contoured faith. IÃ¢â ¬â„¢m already looking for ways to use it. -- Don J. Payne, Associate Professor of Theology and Christian Formation, Denver SeminaryWhat Christians Ought to Believe is more than a clear, concise exposition of the essential tenets of faith informed by the very best of biblical and theological scholarship. With deep-rooted evangelical conviction and his trademark wit, Professor Bird also makes a compelling case that even committed biblicists can appreciate the beauty, instructional value, and fidelity to Scripture found in the ancient creed. -- Rhyne R. Putman, Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture, New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary

Michael F. Bird (PhD, University of Queensland) is lecturer in theology at Ridley Melbourne College of Mission and Ministry in Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission; The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification, and the New Perspective; Evangelical Theology; Bourgeois Babes, Bossy Wives, and Bobby Haircuts: A moderate Case for Gender Equality in Ministry and editor of The Apostle Paul: Four Views.Ã Â Ã Â He is also a co-blogger of the New Testament blog "Euangelion."

What Christians Ought to Believe is a first-rate introduction to Christian doctrine. Bird uses the familiar (perhaps too familiar to many) Apostles' Creed as an entry point to expound on Christian doctrine. This strategy results in a book that flows well and breaks doctrine up into manageable chunks that build on each other in a sensible way. After introducing the creeds and their importance (chs. 1-2), each chapter (chs. 3-14) unpacks the theological freight behind a phrase or two of the Apostles' Creed (in sequential order), and concludes with a summary section title "The Story Thus Far," or something along those lines, that adds what one has learned in the current chapter to the composite learning of all previous chapters. These summaries are concise and easy to recall and retell.Bird's writing style is also very engaging and easy to read. His anecdotes and illustrations are apt, relevant, and diverse. The books subheadings are also well done and make it easy to navigate and revisit sections with ease.With regard to content, Bird does a good job of focusing on the essentials, the nonnegotiable "big rocks" of the Christian faith. He does well in avoiding delving into persuasion level issues pertaining to the ordo salutis, millennial views, church governance, etc., choosing to focus instead on what this early creed universally affirms about faith, Jesus, the cross, the Spirit, the church, the last things, etc. Highlights include: the clarity with which Bird explains the mystery of the Trinity (ch. 4), his argument as to why Jesus' descent to the realm of the dead is important, and his explanation of this descent (ch. 10), his treatment on the significance of Jesus' ascension (ch. 11), and his explanation of salvation, the Christian hope, and the last things (ch. 14). The latter three highlights are sure to challenge the preconceptions of many Christians on these matters. Ultimately, this book can be utilized across denominational lines.Overall, I would highly recommend What Christians Out to Believe to someone who is interested in gaining a basic understanding of Christian doctrine due to its simple organization, readability, and concise depth of content.

Excellent resource for those beginning in the faith or those continuing. Lot's of insights and keen comments that prompt readers to explore further. The comprehensive nature of topics covered will aid readers to obtain a broad grasp of all the essentials of Christianity while showing the value of the Apostles' Creed. I highly recommend to you Bird's newest and encourage it to be read and discussed in small groups, Sunday School class, or used as a foundation for a sermon series.

I am pleased with the book and the seller's service.

Great book on the Apostles Creed!

good

What Christians Ought to Believe: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Through the ApostlesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ Creed by Michael F. BirdThe ApostlesÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ Creed in its early reception was designed to teach people the essential truths of the Christian faith so that they might worship and live out the faith fully. Michael F. Bird, lecturer and author has written a splendid exposition of the creed here in his new book entitled What Christians Ought to Believe. With an insistence on including the historical development of Christianity and the way the creed represents a firm tradition set forth in the Bible, this book is a good aid in discovering the rich truths of the creed.In the opening chapter Michael counters the concept of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“no creed but the BibleÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• by looking at how the pages of Scripture are filled with creedal affirmations. The shema in Deuteronomy 6, the Christ hymn in Philippians 2 and the various passages in the NT regarding the resurrection all point to a creedal foundation in the biblical texts. These creedal statements were for the purpose, at least in the NT, of outlining ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“JesusÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ career from incarnation to exaltation (20).ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• These concise descriptions of the elements of JesusÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ career carried with them great encouragement for the follower of Christ, who could easily remember and hold onto these statements in suffering and in joy.The nuances and distinctions that Michael makes in this book are extremely important. In the chapter on God the Father Almighty, Michael mentions that many have a hard time with this teaching, deeming it patriarchal and against women. Yet, he elaborates that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“all theological language is analogical,ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• and that ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“a sizeable number of places where God is described in maternal language (63).ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• One, God isnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t a Father in his essence but God as Father is an approximate way that

likens him to a role. And yet, fatherhood ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Å“can be associated with notions of love, closeness, and protection (64).ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â• The lack of a good father or the absence or death of a father doesnÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t necessarily mean that we canÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢t understand God as our Heavenly Father. In fact, the creed points to God as our Father Almighty, who cares deeply for his children.Later in the book Michael discusses the various theories of the atonement with a view toward incorporating the truths of each one of them. Yet, he looks to the victory theme as the most transparent theme in the NT as both evidencing GodÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s rescue plan against the evil powers and including motifs such as recapitulation, representation, ransom, sacrifice and triumph (133).With wisdom, a robust biblical and theological vision, and including practical elements, What Christians Ought to Believe is not to be missed.Thanks to BookLookBloggers and Zondervan for the copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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