

Discovery Hour
July 19, 2009
Nicene Creed II
Dave Timmerman

Last week we looked at the historical context that gave rise to the Council of Nicea (325) and the Nicene Creed. We noted how the Creed served to define the central beliefs and doctrine of Christianity and how it was also employed to mark those who were considered in the church as well as those considered outside of it.

This week our focus is on how the Creed may be used today and in fact how it is used by many Christians. As we noted, this is the only creed that has broad, ecumenical acceptance from Roman Catholics, to Eastern Orthodox, to Anglicanism, to most Protestant Denominations including our own. Most churches who do not affirm it do so not on the basis of its content but rather because they do not affirm any creed, per se, other than the Bible itself.

Given that the Creed was formed in response to a particular teaching deemed unorthodox – the teaching that Jesus was not fully divine but rather a creation of God the Father who alone is fully divine, it is not surprising that the Creed has a Trinitarian focus. But it is also interesting in the way it is worded; it is clearly intended to be stated and that in stating, a Christian affirms their belief in these doctrines.

On a weekly basis the manner in which most Christians experience the Nicene Creed is in the context of a worship service where they are called on to read or recite it together, most typically after the sermon and before communion. It is, in a way, a response to the word which they have received both through the reading of the word and the preaching of the word. One of our questions for our discussion is to consider how the reciting of this Creed impacts a person? Can it be seen to confirm a person's belief? To help generate it? Does it reactivate these beliefs or can it? And what about the phenomenon that anything stated over and over can become rote and lose significance?

Roman Catholic Order of Service

Entrance/ Procession	Intercessory Prayer
Greeting	Presentations of Gifts
Rite of Blessing (Holy Water)	Eucharistic Prayer
Penitential Rite	Lord's Prayer
Kyrie (Lord have mercy/ Christ/ Lord)	Sign of Peace
Gloria	Breaking of the Bread
Opening Prayer	Communion
First Reading	Silence
Responsive Psalm	Prayer after communion
Second Reading	Blessing
Alleluia	Dismissal
Gospel Reading	
Homily	
Profession of Faith (Nicene Creed)	

