

Presbyterian Creeds A Brief Outline

Ancient Creeds

The Nicene Creed (4th Century) - incarnation
The Apostles' Creed (2nd – 5th Century)¹ – trinity
Gloria Patri reflects

Reformed Confessions

The Scots Confession (Scotland, 1560) – written for the Scottish parliament; Trinitarian and adds nature of church plus discipline
The Heidelberg Catechism (Germany, 1563)
The Second Helvetic Confession (1566)
The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (England, 1647)
The Shorter Catechism
The Larger Catechism

Modern Confessions

The Theological Declaration of Barmen (Germany, 1934)
The Confession of 1967
A Brief Statement of Faith – Presbyterian Church (USA) – Mo Ranch, et al 1989

Why have creeds and confessions?

- “No creed but the Bible”
 - some denominations have no creeds
- They define who we are and what we believe
 - *confessio* – profession of faith
 - *credo* – I believe
- Affirm the tenants of the reformation (October 31, 1517 ff)
 - The mystery of the Trinity
 - Incarnation of the eternal Word of God in Jesus Christ
 - justification by grace through faith
 - scripture alone
 - the church reformed, always reforming by the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit

¹ Note that some scholars date the finalization of the creed to the 9th century in France

- God's choosing (election) of people for salvation and service
 - The covenant life of the church, ordering the Church according to the Word of God
 - faithful stewardship of God's creation and gifts
 - sin of idolatry
 - necessity of obedience to the word of God – directs us to work for the transformation of society
- Most creeds adopted during a time of crisis except A Brief Statement of Faith
 - They are our bench marks and boundaries