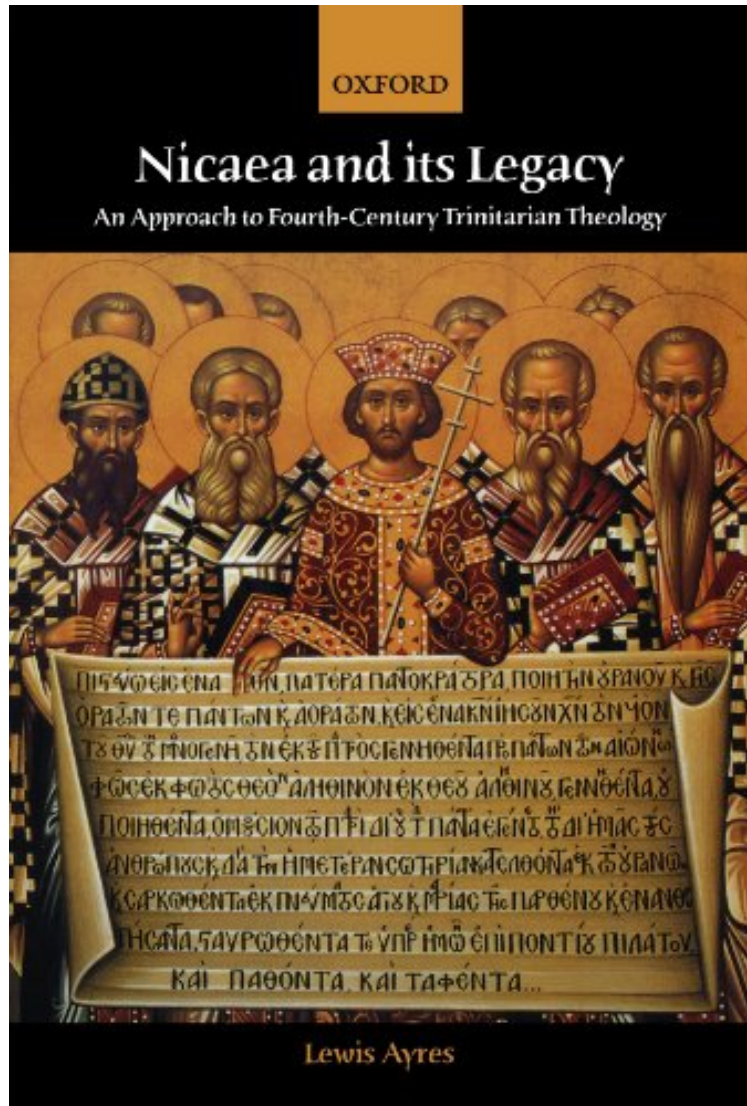


# Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology

Lewis Ayres

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Lewis Ayres : Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. DelightfulBy MelekaliIf you are interested in the development of

doctrine as it occurred at Nicea in the fourth century, this is an excellent book showing not only the development of doctrine but that modern scholars can fully comprehend the issues and nuances of the issue. I truly enjoyed it and learned much. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By James Peckham A9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Great Book but Hard Read! By Jeff H McCrory I just finished reading Lewis Ayres' weighty book on Nicaea. While I thoroughly enjoyed the book and learned a great deal, it is a hard book to read. The arguments are dense and involved, citing Greek and Latin terms as well as technical academic vocabulary. I had to look up a number of terms over and over again to follow Ayres's thinking. I say this as an academic myself, albeit a biblical scholar, specifically an Old Testament scholar with over 30 years teaching experience, two masters degrees and a PhD. The book is very good, but beware it is a hard read. Here is my take-aways after many hours of working through the text.

1. One cannot easily divide into Eastern and Western views of the Trinity during this period. There is too much shared material and ideas. The older paradigm of East vs West does not hold.
2. The development of Nicene or Pro-Nicene doctrines was a long political struggle. I don't know how many persons were exiled and then returned, then exiled, then returned before the controversy ended, if ever it did.
3. It seems the best summaries of Pro-Nicene doctrine can be found in the two Gregories and in Augustine. If one wants to start there and then work backwards, one would find the best pathway.
4. Ayres is very critical of current Trinitarian writing and research, particularly German authors and their legacy, stemming from Hegel. I found this fascinating. The two thrusts of Hegel he sights are: A. Conflating life of the Trinity with world process or the development of the Spirit/Geist (Hegel). After reading his argument, I found a lot of truth to what he says. But I also see involvement of YHWH in the OT and Jesus's actions in the NT as God interacting with the world. So, some caution here, but I think Ayres is on target. Too many modern Trinitarian works easily map the life of the Trinity onto world process. B. Linking the relationships of the Trinity to psychological categories. I find this line of thinking to be very on-target. Read for example Richard Rohr in the area of spiritual practice and see how he virtually maps the Trinity onto human psychology.
5. Ayres draws attention to the pathway that Pro-Nicenes pursue in reading Scripture, from reading the plain sense of Scripture, to thinking and pondering, to finally union with the mystery of the Trinity itself. I like this, as I am both a biblical scholar and as well a trained Spiritual Director. I find absent from my academic teaching setting any emphasis that the people both reading and writing Trinitarian doctrine during the 4th century were actually attempting to get in touch with God, not just analyze a text. This is refreshing. People didn't study the Trinity to write academic paper. They did so to meet God. I gave this book 4 stars not because of its content and argument, but because it is just darn hard to read, even for an academic like me.

Lewis Ayres offers a new account of the most important century in the development of Christian belief after Christ. He shows how the doctrine of the Trinity was developed, and in particular argues that a conception of God's mysteriousness and spiritual progress towards understanding is central to that doctrine. He also proposes that modern theologies of the Trinity fail to appreciate the depth and power of Nicene trinitarianism.

"Bold and erudite... This ambitious work justly shows how crucial the study of the fourth century is for understanding traditional or mainstream trinitarian theology, and it has succeeded already in fostering greater conversation toward this end." --Journal of Religion

About the Author Lewis Ayres is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at the Candler School of Theology and the Graduate Division of Religion, Emory University.