

Jesus did not tolerate the misuse of His Father's house and drove out those who robbed His people in the name of worship. Neither do we tolerate the misuse of His Word, but drive out every teaching and practice that would rob Christ's people of His means of salvation.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF CONCORD
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY
THE EPITOME OF THE FORMULA OF CONCORD
THE SUMMARY CONTENT, RULE AND NORM

2. Right after the time of the apostles, and even while they were still living, false teachers and heretics arose (Titus 3:9-10). Therefore, *symbols*, (i.e., brief, concise confessions) were written against the heretics in the early Church. These symbols were regarded as the unanimous, universal Christian faith and confession of the orthodox and true Church. They are *the Apostles' Creed*, *the Nicene Creed*, and *the Athanasian Creed*. We pledge ourselves to these symbols, and in this way we reject all heresies and teachings that have been introduced into God's Church against them.

3. However, schisms in matters of faith have also happened in our time. Therefore, we regard as the unanimous consensus and declaration of our Christian faith and confession--especially against the papacy and its false worship, idolatry, superstition, and against other sects--the first, *unaltered Augsburg Confession*. It is the symbol of our time, and it was delivered to the Emperor, Charles V, at Augsburg in the year 1530 in the great Diet. We hold to this confession along with its *Apology*, and the *Articles* composed at *Smalcald* in the year 1537, which the chief theologians signed at that time.

5. Such matters also concern the laity and the salvation of their souls. Therefore, we also confess Dr. Luther's *Small* and *Large Catechisms* as they are included in Luther's works. They are "the layman's Bible" because everything necessary for a Christian to know for salvation is included in them, which is handled more extensively in the Holy Scriptures.

6. As announced above, all teachings are to be conformed in this way. What is, contrary to these confessions is to be rejected and condemned, as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith.

7. In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament and all other writings is preserved. The Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and norm. According to them--as the only touchstone--all teachings shall and must be discerned and judged to see whether they are good or evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22), right or wrong.

8. The other symbols and writings mentioned above are not judges, like the Holy Scriptures. They are only a testimony and declaration of the faith. They show how the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in regard to controversial articles in God's Church by those living at that time. Also, they show how the opposite teaching was rejected and condemned.

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Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple
Oil on panel by Pieter Breugel the Elder, ca. 1570
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