



Formula of Concord Session One: Intro & Summary Content, Rule, and Norm

- **What is the foundational document of the United States? Does everyone interpret its teachings the same way?**
- **How about for the church - what is the foundational document? Does everyone interpret its teachings the same way?**

Introduction (Solid Declaration)

- ***Review: very brief historical introduction to Formula of Concord***

We regard [the Augsburg Confession of 1530] as a pure Christian symbol... Yet it cannot be denied that some theologians have departed from some great and important articles of this Confession... Serious and harmful divisions have arisen in the pure evangelical churches from this...

The controversies that have happened are not (as some would regard them) mere misunderstandings or disputes about words, with one side failing to grasp the meaning of the other... The controversial subjects are important and great. They are of such a nature that the opinion of the party in error cannot be tolerated in God's Church, much less be excused or defended. (SD, 1-9, pp.505-506)

Summary Content, Rule, and Norm

- **What are modern examples of a shared agreement of expectations and commitments?**
- **Is this more or less important in modern circumstances?**
- **Read and discuss:**
 - 2 Timothy 3:15-17
 - Psalm 119:105
 - Galatians 1:8
 - Titus 3:9-10
 - I Thessalonians 5:21-22

We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and norm according to which all teachings, together with all teachers, should be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testament alone... Other writings should not be received in any other way or as anything more than witnesses that show how this pure doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved after the time of the apostles, and at what places.

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 judge, rule, and norm. According to them – as the



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only touchstone – all teachings shall and must be discerned and judged to see whether they are good or evil, right or wrong.

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 (Ep, 1-8, pp.473-474)

For thorough, permanent unity in the Church, it is necessary, above all things, that we have a comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form of teaching. The common doctrine must be brought together from God's Word and reduced to a small circle of teaching, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion must confess. (SD 1-2, p. 506)

- **Couldn't we just say, "I believe the Bible," and leave it at that? Why or why not?**