Confessionalization and the Creedal Tradition

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To explain, or even to study, the Reformation is an undertaking of immense scope. It occurred over several centuries, and several more must be taken into account to understand its origins and consequences. It affected the entire continent of Europe, and North and South America too. It affected every aspect of life—religion, politics, society, education, philosophy, economics, art, sex, and family life, to mention just some of the topics covered in one history of the Reformation.[1] The topic is so broad that some scholars even doubt that one can use the term *Reformation*, some preferring the term *reformations*.[2] Nevertheless, historians have often utilized various historiographic perspectives and methodologies in their quest to understand the Reformation as a whole. One such "big idea" is confessionalization.

Anticipated in the work of Ernst Walter Zeeden, confessionalization is primarily the idea of two German historians, Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard.[3] Both scholars sought to explain how modern Europe developed from the conflicts of the sixteenth century. They began by observing that Reformation Europe produced an astonishing number of creeds, confessions, and catechisms. Schilling argued that Protestant states used these confessional texts to enlarge their authority. They used their power to benefit the reformed religion by requiring their subjects to take confessional oaths, disciplining anyone who strayed from confessional conformity, and educating their subjects with catechisms. In exchange, reformed religion gave the state a distinct identity, and churches used their power to discipline and command loyalty in service to the state. Adapting Schilling's theory, Reinhard argued much the same for Catholic confessions.[4]

According to Schilling and Reinhard, this process of confessionalization or *Konfessionalisierung* (the creation of separate Christian communities in the West) also produced modernity. Schilling wrote that confessionalization was a "fundamental social transformation," affecting religion, culture, society, and politics, and that it "largely coincided with . . . the formation of the early modern State and the shaping of its modern, disciplined society of subjects."[5] This modernity was characterized by, among other things, state discipline, rationality in argumentation, bureaucracy of churches and governments, state support for religion, and religious support for the state.[6]

Schilling and Reinhard's theory has created something of a cottage industry for historians, who have tested the theory for regions other than Germany and for eras beyond the sixteenth century. For example, Philip Benedict has accepted a pared-down version of the confessionalization thesis for Montpellier in France. Graeme Murdock, however, has concluded that confessionalization does not fit the history of Eastern Europe, where many confessional groups coexisted peacefully. Etienne François argues not only that confessionalization works for Germany, but also that the process extends into the eighteenth century.[7]

For all the attention historians have paid confessionalization both as a macro- and microhistorical approach, they have paid surprisingly little attention to the confessional documents themselves. Of course, scholars of confessionalization mention the confessions and assign them to various polities, but they have not analyzed the genre and doctrine of the confessions. This decision not to read confessions closely is an intentional part of the confessionalization theory. Confessionalization asserts that religion is characterized by "social forms and consequences rather than by its theological assertions." And because the advocates of confessionalization seeks to demonstrate that different faith communities (e.g., Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglicanism, and Reformed Christianity) developed their dogma and institutions in parallel, they intentionally ignore *propria*, their term for the textual details of confessional texts that distinguish one confessional group from another.[8]

The root of this disregard for doctrine is found in the two meanings of the word *confession*. The German *Konfession*, like the English *confession*, can mean either a document that confesses Christian doctrine or a group of believers who confess that doctrine. Advocates of confessionalization note the close identification between a religious sect and its doctrinal statements, and choose to study only the sect.[9] Nevertheless, the two meanings are distinct. One historian of doctrine specifically warns against confusing the meanings, and to conflate the terms would be to commit the fallacy of equivocation.[10] If advocates of confessionalization argue that confessional statements produced confessional groups, thereby fracturing Europe and introducing modernity, then they must demonstrate how the dogma of the confessions could produce that result, or at the very least they must be able to demonstrate that the dogma as a whole does not contradict that result. Therefore, the confessional documents must themselves be examined.

A close reading of these confessional documents, however, demonstrates that they do not fit the confessionalization theory as it pertains to modernity. Not only does confessionalization leave unexamined the varying *propria* of theological doctrine by neglecting the content of confessional texts, but it also misses the fundamental

and shared characteristic of these texts, namely, their continuity with the Christian creedal tradition. Reading the Reformation confessional texts demonstrates that they are more closely related to the ancient creedal tradition than they are to the supposed modernity of mutually antagonistic confessional groups that they allegedly produced. This brief study will address the second failing.

By the creedal tradition, I mean that body of creeds and confessions created by Christians, beginning with the ecumenical creeds of late antiquity and extending through the Middle Ages. In many ways the Reformation confessions were indebted to the creeds that came before them. The Reformation confessions occupied the same genre as the ancient creeds, and they cited the ancient creeds as authorities. And as part of that creedal tradition, the Reformation confessions performed the same functions as any creed—to define and establish uniform doctrine, and to unite Christians around that doctrine.[11] Therefore the confessions—that is, the confessional documents—were actually attempts at establishing universal and unified Christian doctrine. Although it is indisputable that the Reformation broke Europe into diverse confessional groups, the participation of sixteenth-century confessional texts in the intentionally irenic creedal tradition was neither the cause nor the means of that fracturing.

As just mentioned, the Reformation confessions often explicitly connected themselves to the creedal tradition by quoting the ancient creeds. This holds true for every group save those of the radical Reformation, such as the Anabaptists and Mennonites. The confessions tended to refer especially to the same three texts: the *Nicene Creed*,[12] the *Apostles' Creed*,[13] and the *Athanasian Creed*.[14] Those references were present in the sections of confessions that dealt with the doctrines of Christ or the Trinity, or sometimes in sections about church tradition. The absence of the ancient creeds from other sections merely indicated that the creeds never touched on the subject matter of the latter.

Among Reformation confessions generally and certainly among the Lutheran confessions, the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) was undoubtedly preeminent. Pelikan and Hotchkiss argue that "*[t]he Augsburg Confession . . .* helped to define . . . what a 'confession of faith' means."[15] In its first article, the *Augsburg Confession* cited the Council of Nicaea on the unity of God's essence, and it imitated the Nicene formula about the Trinity. In the section on the doctrine of Christ, the *Augsburg Confession* roughly followed the *Apostles' Creed* and cited that creed to cover anything left unsaid: "The same Lord Christ will return openly to judge the living and the dead, etc., as stated in the Apostle's Creed."[16]

The *Marburg Articles* (1529) cited the *Nicene Creed* as ancient, universal doctrine, defining the Trinity "as it was decreed in the Council of Nicaea, and is sung

and read in the *Nicene Creed* by the entire Christian church throughout the world."[17] The *Smalcald Articles* (1537), written by Martin Luther to define Lutheran doctrine that could not be compromised, situated itself in the creedal tradition by rehearsing Nicene doctrine about Christ, quoting from the *Apostles' Creed*, and citing the *Athanasian Creed*.[18]

Lutheran creeds written after Luther's death likewise quoted from the creedal tradition. Nearly as important as the *Augsburg Confession* was the *Formula of Concord* (1577), which was intended to resolve the dispute between antagonistic Lutheran groups (the so-called Philippists and Gnesio-Lutherans). In defining the doctrine of church authority, the *Formula* stated that

> the ancient church formulated symbols (that is, brief and explicit confessions) which were accepted as unanimous, catholic, Christian faith and confessions of the orthodox and true church, namely, *The Apostle's Creed*, *The Nicene Creed*, and *The Athanasian Creed*. We pledge ourselves to these, and we hereby reject all heresies and teachings which have been introduced into the church of God contrary to them.

The *Formula* further condemned anti-Trinitarian errors on the basis of a creedal tradition, that is, "according to the word of God, the three creeds, *The Augsburg Confession*, *The Apology*, *The Smalcald Articles*, and *The Catechisms* of Luther." Though the *Formula* confessed to believe only what can be taught from the Scriptures, it accepted the descent of Christ into hell solely on the authority of the *Apostles' Creed*, without citing any Scripture. When the *Formula* was printed in the *Book of Concord* (1580), it was bound together with the *Augsburg Confession*, the *Smalcald Articles*, Luther's *Catechisms*, the *Apostle's Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *Athanasian Creed*, and thus constituted a one-volume library of the creedal tradition.[19]

Another Lutheran confessional text, not even important enough to make it into Pelikan and Hotchkiss's collection, was the *Corpus Doctrinae* of Braunschweig (1567). Written by Joachim Mörlin and Martin Chemnitz to deal with doctrinal problems in Lower Saxony, the document described itself as a *repetitio* of the creedal tradition, that is, "a repetition of the chief ideas and content of the true universal Christian church's teaching as it is comprehended in the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and Smalcald Articles." The *Corpus Doctrinae* relied on the *Apostles' Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, the *Athanasian Creed*, and the so-called creedal statements of Ambrose and Augustine to resolve difficult passages in the Scripture, to define orthodoxy against alleged recent Catholic deviations, and to explain the true meaning of the *Augsburg*

Confession against the allegedly incorrect interpretation of the Lutheran theologian Andreas Osiander. In short, the *Corpus Doctrinae* claimed to be the continuation of a long tradition extending from the ecumenical creeds through the teachings of the Fathers and through the *Augsburg Confession*, and it considered that creedal tradition to be the arbiter of doctrine and the "rule of faith" for interpreting Scripture.[20]

The Reformed confessions of every region showed similar dependence on the creedal tradition. Ulrich Zwingli's *Reckoning of the Faith* (1530) cited "the Creed, the Nicene as well as the Athanasian," concerning the doctrine of God.[21] The *First Confession of Basel*, drafted in 1534 by Oswald Myconius, quoted the *Apostles' Creed* and referred to it in a marginal note as "the universal faith." The *First Confession* also had twelve articles, in imitation of the *Apostles' Creed*.[22] The *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) concluded the doctrine regarding Christ by stating that the Scripture's teaching was "summed up in the creeds and decrees of the first four most excellent synods convened at Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon—together with the creed of blessed Athanasius, and all similar symbols." And in dealing with the Trinity, the *Second Helvetic Confession* noted that "we receive the Apostles' Creed because it delivers to us the true faith."[23] The *French Confession*, presented to Francis II in 1560 and to Charles IX in 1561, stated "[w]e confess the three creeds, to wit: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian."[24] The *Belgic Confession* (1561) "willingly accept[ed] the three ecumenical creeds—the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian—as well as what the ancient fathers decided in agreement with them."[25]

Anglican and Irish Protestant confessions were likewise situated in the creedal tradition. The *Ten Articles* of 1536 obligated Englishmen to believe "the three creeds or symbols"—the *Apostles'*, the *Nicene*, and the *Athanasian Creeds*. It further required that doctrine be expressed in the "very same form and manner of speaking" as the creeds, and it damned anyone who denied them.[26] The *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1571) confessed the same three creeds, as did the later *Irish Articles* (1615).[27]

The Catholic confessions that derived from the Council of Trent also claimed the creedal tradition. The very first decree of the council, promulgated in 1546, accepted the *Nicene Creed* as a "shield against all heresies," and provided an authoritative text of the creed.[28] Because the council required all the clergy to affirm everything decided at Trent, Pope Pius IV authorized the *Tridentine Profession of Faith* in 1564. That statement required the recitation of "the symbol of faith," the *Nicene Creed*. Indeed, the full text of the *Nicene Creed* took up nearly half of the *Tridentine Profession*.[29]

The *Apostles' Creed* was quoted, albeit without citation, in the Anabaptists' *Dordrecht Confession* (1632).[30] And even the anti-Trinitarian Laelius Socinus, in a profession of faith (1555) defending himself against detractors, mentioned the *Apostles' Creed*

and the *Nicene Creed*, which he "acknowledged to be the most ancient, accepted at all times in the church."[31] Of course, only an outright denial of the two creeds could have been less supportive than Socinus's tepid acknowledgement of them; he must have mentioned them largely in recognition of the respect his contemporaries had for the creedal tradition.

Catechisms, a subgenre of confessional texts, likewise depended on the creedal tradition. They primarily used the *Apostles' Creed* as a pedagogical tool for teaching basic doctrine. Lutherans learned the creed in Luther's *Small Catechism* (1529) both at church and in morning and evening prayers with the head of the family.[32] The Reformed (or Calvinists) learned it in Calvin's *Geneva Catechism* (1541), which called it "the confession of faith used by all Christians" and "a summary of the true faith which has always been held in Christianity, and was also derived from the pure doctrine of the apostles." That catechism dedicated some fifteen large pages to expounding this creed.[33] Calvinists also learned about "our universally acknowledged confession of faith" in the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), which extended teaching of the *Apostles' Creed* over seventeen weeks—a full third of a year. Anglicans learned the same creed in their catechisms, and it was bound into various editions of their *Book of Common Prayer* from 1549 onward.[34] Even the Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier of Moravia used this creed in his *Christian Catechism* (1526).[35] Indeed, the only catechism of major importance not to integrate the *Apostles' Creed* was the Calvinist *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1648), which—as Pelikan and Hotchkiss note—nevertheless included it as an appendix.[36]

Why did the confessional texts make these connections to the ancient creeds? The ones submitted to monarchs, such as the *Augsburg Confession* and the *French Confession*, were attempting to prove their orthodoxy. The confessions also used the creeds as shorthand, as a way of affirming belief in commonly accepted doctrines. But the affirmation of the creedal tradition was too prevalent and too strongly worded to be explained just by those reasons.[37] Rather, the Protestant confessions positioned themselves as the custodians of the true doctrine of the church, whether against alleged Catholic man-made traditions on the one hand, or against alleged Protestant deviations from orthodox tradition on the other. In Christianity it is the conservator of orthodoxy who can claim to unify the church, not the innovator. Doctrine is considered never to have changed, only to have exposed ever-changing heresies. The confessional texts thus claimed to be universally authoritative. In short, they claimed to be ecumenical and orthodox, not divisive.

The confessionalization theory observes, however, that these texts were local. They were, after all, characterized as French, Helvetic, of Basel, of Dordrecht, and the like. The local nature of confessional texts would seem to have belied their ecumeni-

cal claims. If the ecumenical creeds (or at least the *Nicene Creed*) were the product of ecumenical councils, how then could confessions produced by local councils or even by individuals have claimed to be ecumenical? This objection could be answered by noting that the authors could hardly have conceived that the doctrine they held could have been optional for others. The idea that a belief can be personal rather than normative had little to no currency in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. If the confessional documents were local, they were so only because Europe fractured into separate religious and political groups before or while the confessions were drafted.

But more importantly, the confessionalization thesis is wrong in concluding that confessions bearing local titles were intended to be local in their effect. Even confessions written for local confessional groups were often widely known and even adopted in other regions. Confessions crossed geographic, political, and sometimes even sectarian barriers.[38]

The *Augsburg Confession* was a primary example. The confession either influenced or was formally accepted by Calvin, the Anglican *Thirty-Nine Articles*, the Reformed churches of Germany and Switzerland, and, of course, by the Lutheran churches in Germany, in the rest of northern Europe, and eventually in North America. It was so widely influential that Pelikan and Hotchkiss point out that even Catholic theologian Avery Cardinal Dulles accepted it and that in 1970 it was considered for acceptance as an ecumenical creed by the Roman Catholic Church![39]

A few other examples will suffice. The *First Helvetic Confession* was accepted by Basel, Bern, Biel, Constance, Mühlhausen, St. Gall, Schaffhausen, Strasbourg, and Zurich.[40] The *Second Helvetic Confession* was adopted or recognized in Geneva, Bern, Chur, Biel, Mühlhausen, Scotland, Austria, Hungary, and Poland, and it was influential in France, England, and the Netherlands.[41] The *Dordrecht Confession*, an Anabaptist document, was also adopted by groups in Alsace, Switzerland, Germany, and Pennsylvania.[42] The *Westminster Confession* and *Shorter Catechism* were adopted widely throughout the Reformed world. The same relationships could be traced for many other confessions.

In creating this web of confessional interdependence, the confessional texts were a part of the creedal tradition that strove for ecclesiastical and doctrinal unity. These ancient creeds are called, after all, the ecumenical creeds. That label can be attributed not only to the origin of the *Nicene Creed* at two ecumenical councils. The *Apostles' Creed*, *Nicene Creed*, and *Athanasian Creed* were ultimately considered ecumenical because they were accepted by most Christians.[43] Like their creedal antecedents, the Reformation confessions were widely known. That they fell well short of ecumenical acceptance is more a reflection and symptom of Europe's division, not its cause.

Besides the doctrine that they shared with the ancient creeds and the wide influence that many of them enjoyed, the Reformation confessions had another characteristic that continued the creedal tradition: many tried to reconcile different sects rather than to divide them. The confessional genre anathematizes heresy, to be sure, but it also finds shared doctrine between different groups. The Reformation confessions, like their ancient predecessors, were intended to heal schisms between confessional groups.[44]

The *Augsburg Confession*'s primary purpose was to justify Lutheran doctrine to the emperor, but it also aimed to restore unity within the German churches. Its Latin preface stated that

> to this end it was proposed to employ all diligence amicably and charitably to hear, understand, and weigh the judgments, opinion, and beliefs of the several parties among us to unite the same in agreement on one Christian truth, to put aside whatever may not have been rightly interpreted or treated by either side, to have all of us embrace and adhere to a single, true religion and live together in unity and in one fellowship and church, even as we are all enlisted under one Christ.[45]

The *Marburg Confession* was another example of a reconciliatory confession. Though historians rightly emphasize the failure of the Marburg Colloquy to find agreement between Luther and Zwingli on the presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the theologians present there did find much other doctrine in common. For example, the *Marburg Confession* agreed on the Trinity "as it was decreed in the Council of Nicaea, and is sung and read in the Nicene Creed by the entire Christian church throughout the world." That confession was signed by Luther, Melanchthon, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, and Bucer.[46] Other examples of reconciliatory confessions included the Lutheran *Formula of Concord*, intended to resolve the disputes between the Gnesio-Lutherans and the Philippists,[47] the *First Helvetic Confession*, intended to balance Lutheran and Reformed ideas about the Eucharist,[48] and the mission of John Dury, an English preacher and diplomat who attempted to find common confessional ground between Anglicans and the Swiss Reformed churches.[49] Even the Council of Trent and the confessional documents it produced were intended to unite Catholic Christendom, which was broader by far than any political entity or entities. To be sure, the reconciliatory confessional texts often failed in their attempts to promote unity, and none of them was a resounding success. But the point is still that the confessions were not tools intended to hasten the political and ecclesiastical division of Europe, but attempts to restore its religious unity.

To sum up, I have tried to question some of the assumptions and arguments of the confessionalization theory. Can the *propria* or actual statements of the confessions be ignored, or must they be examined? Were the Reformation confessional texts a new phenomenon, or did they draw on an existing tradition? Were they local, or did they cross political and confessional boundaries? Can the confessional texts be said to have fostered or exacerbated the division of Christendom, or did they attempt to restore its unity? Was it the form or the content of the ideas in the confessions that divided Christians? My answers contradict those of the confessionalization theory. In order that the identification of confessional groups with confessional documents not rest upon mere equivocation, the confessional texts must be examined closely and their *propria* identified, characterized, and compared. These texts were not new phenomena, but instead continued a tradition that was older than a millennium. Though bearing local titles, they were widely known and influential. Rather than foster division, many of the confessional statements sought to unite confessional groups. Though some of the ideas in the confessions were new, they were couched in old, familiar forms—new wine in old wineskins, as it were. Confessionalization alone, then, can hardly explain how the medieval Europe unified in faith became the modern and divided Europe. It was not the confessional documents as a genre that divided Europe, for in the midst of the terrible sixteenth-century rending of Europe, Protestants and Catholics alike tried to rehabilitate the ancient ideal of the unity of Christianity. In other words, the confessions were in large measure an attempt to put Europe back together.

NOTES

1. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

2. For example, John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 91; Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 12–16.

3. The best historiographical overviews are Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2007), 136–57; Thomas A. Brady, "Confessionalization—The Career of a Concept," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700*, ed., John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 1–20; and Joel F. Harrington and Helmut Walser Smith, "Confessionalization, Community, and State Building in Germany, 1555–1870," *The Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 77–101.

4. Lotz-Heumann, 140-41; Markus Riedt, "'Founding a New Church . . .': The Early Ecclesiology of Martin Luther in the Light of the Debate about Confessionalization," in *Confessionalization in*

Europe, 1555-1700, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 57–59.

5. Brady, 4, quoting Heinz Schilling, "Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft—Profil, Leistung, Defizite und Perspektiven eines geschichtswissenschaftlichen Paradigmas," in *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung. Akten eines von Corpus Catholicorum und Verein für Reformationsgeschichte veranstalteten Symposions, Augsburg, 1993*, edited by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus and Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), 11–49.

6. Riedt, 59–60.

7. Philip Benedict, "Confessionalization in France? Critical Reflections and New Evidence," in *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World*, 44–61; Graeme Murdock, "'Freely Elected in Fear': Princely Elections and Political Power in Early Modern Transylvania*," Journal of Early Modern History* 7, no. 3/4 (2003): 213–44. Jörg Deventer, "Confessionalisation: A Useful Theoretical Concept for the Study of Religion, Politics, and Society in Early Modern East-Central Europe?," *European Review of History* 11, no. 3 (2004): 403-25.

8. The quotation is from Brady, 5; see also Lotz-Heumann, 137, 144–45. Schilling wrote: "Research on confessionalization, therefore, is not only concerned with the formation of the modern confessional churches as institutions or with the confessions as religious cultural systems, clearly distinct in doctrine, spirituality, ritual, and popular culture. Rather, at issue is a process of change and formation, directed by religious and ecclesiastical forces, which embraced all areas of public and private life and which fundamentally molded the profile of modern Europe." See Heinz Schilling, "Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives on a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 29; see also Heinz Schilling, "Confessional Europe," in *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600: Late Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Reformation*, ed. Thomas A. Brady, Heiko A. Oberman, and James D. Tracy, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996), 2:641–81.

9. Riedt, 57; Brady, 3.

10. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 62.

11. Pelikan, *Credo* is the best source for a definition of creeds and confessions (35–64), for an explanation of their purpose (186–215, 278–305), and for a history of confessions during the Reformation (457–85). *Credo* is the companion volume to Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, ed., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 4 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), the best collection of confessional documents. Pelikan's work on the creeds replaces Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, rev. David S. Schaff, 6th ed., 3 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1931; reprint, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), which is still valuable.

12. Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, 1:160–63, 670–72. The creed that is commonly called the *Nicene Creed* actually exists in three versions: the original Greek version promulgated by the Council of Nicaea in 325; an expanded Greek version promulgated by the First Council of Constantinople in 381; and a Latin version subsequently accepted by the Western church that includes the *filioque* clause. To avoid confusion, Pelikan uses the labels *Creed of Nicaea*, *Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*, and *Western Recension of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed*. The Reformation confessions universally use the *Western Recension*. Because the distinction is not necessary to my purposes, I have retained the title *Nicene Creed*.

13. Ibid., 1:667–69. The origin of the *Apostles' Creed* is uncertain, but its earliest elements probably date to the second century. Though the Middle Ages assigned authorship to the twelve apostles, both Protestant and Catholic scholars of the Reformation-era accepted the *Apostles' Creed* without accepting that attribution.

14. Ibid., 1:673–77. The *Athanasian Creed*, also known as *Quicunque vult*, is actually of uncertain origin in the fifth or sixth century, but sixteenth-century Christians often ascribed it to St. Athanasius.

15. Ibid., 2:27.

16. Ibid., 2:58–60, quotation at 2:60.

17. Ibid., 2:793.

18. Ibid., 2:125. Luther wrote the *Smalcald Articles* in preparation for the council that the pope had called to meet at Mantua, which was actually held several years later at the Council of Trent. The confession was signed by theologians and ecclesiastical leaders, but not by the political leaders of the Smalcald League.

19. Ibid., 2:168 for quotation; see also 2:166, 195, 200–201.

20. Robert Kolb, "The Braunschweig Resolution: The *Corpus Doctrinae Prutenicum* of Joachim Mörlin and Martin Chemnitz as an Interpretation of Wittenberg Theology," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700*, ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 67–90.

21. Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, 2:252.

22. Ibid., 2:272-79, marginalia at 2:274.

23. Ibid., 2:479, 464.

24. Ibid., 2:376.

25. Ibid., 2:410.

26. Ibid., 2:299–300.

27. Ibid., 2:530–31, 554.

28. Ibid., 2:821–22.

29. Ibid., 2:873.

30. Ibid., 2:776.

31. Ibid., 2:706.

32. Ibid., 2:31–32, 36–37.

33. Ibid., 2:325–35.

34. Ibid., 2:432-40, quotation at 433; 2:364-71.

35. Ibid., 2:679.

36. Ibid., 2:650.

37. Furthermore, some confessions were promulgated from a position of strength, not supplication, for example, the *Ten Articles* and the *Thirty-Nine Articles*. Only a few confessions used the creeds as a summary of doctrine.

38. Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions*, 2:458, regarding the *Second Helvetic Confession.*

39. Ibid., 2:51–52. This of course reveals more about the ecumenical tendencies of a later age than it does the *Augsburg Confession,* but it still demonstrates that the confession was initially intended to be ecumenical.

40. Ibid., 2:280–81.

41. Ibid., 2:458–59.

42. Ibid., 2:768.

43. The Orthodox churches recognize neither the *Athanasian Creed* nor the *Western Recension of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed* as ecumenical, because both include the *filioque* clause. But the division between the Western and Eastern churches antedates the Reformation and so has no bearing on this discussion.

44. Pelikan, *Credo,* 186. Pelikan and Hotchkiss's *Creeds and Confessions* has a section of "Confessions of Attempts at Reconciliation and Alliance" (2:789–816), and his *Credo* has chapter titled "Formulas of Concord— And of Discord" (186–215).

45. Pelikan and Hotchkiss, *Creeds and Confessions,* 2:53–54.

46. Ibid., 2:793-95, quotation at 793.

47. Ibid., 2:166–67.

48. Ibid., 2:280.

49. Bruce Gordon, "'The Second Bucer': John Dury's Mission to the Swiss Reformed Churches in 1654–55 and the Search for Confessional Unity," in *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555–1700,* ed. John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, and Anthony J. Papalas (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 207–26.