Mangling the Word of God

When I was compiling and editing the congregational readings for the *SING TO THE LORD* hymnal, I felt strongly that one phrase in "The Apostles' Creed" needed editing. I saw no reason to perpetuate the inevitable confusion over the phrase, "the holy catholic church". Some argued that the creeds shouldn't be touched, no matter what. I responded that if the Word of God has to submit to the indignities of translation, the creeds are not above it.

But in changing it to "the holy church universal," somehow I left out the word "holy". And to make matters worse, the omission wasn't caught until one of our leading denominational theologians pointed it out in the first printing of the hymnal. That oversight still haunts me.

But "The Apostles' Creed" has survived, as have the wonderful truths it expresses. In fact, the Word of God constantly endures worse indignities from us Christian communicators. Psalm 12:6 says,

> *The words of the Lord are pure words;*
> *As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times*. (NASB)

But our treatment of the Word of God is not nearly so pure, however conscientious and well-intentioned we are. Our inherent ignorance, our blind spots, our prejudices inevitably twist our handling of God's perfect Word. Consistently, down through the millennia, our words, our competing theologies, and our daily lives have failed to do it justice.

But still, God humbly submits His Word to our deeply-flawed treatments of it. And somehow, it not only survives, but thrives. His truth is written into the very fabric of creation; indeed, into all reality. And it is eternally, perfectly personified in the God-man, Jesus Christ. His glories shine through undimmed and untarnished, despite our mangled translations of Him.

Thank You, Father, for Your patience with us.
Help us to be patient with each other, even when we disagree on important matters.
Help us to stay focused on the magnificence of
> Your holy Son,
> Jesus Christ.

Hymn: [The Word of God](#)