

Essential Tenets of Presbyterian Reformed Faith

I. Presbyterians as Christians (Shared beliefs with other Christians)

- A. The mystery of a triune God: *We share with Protestants, Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. One God who Scripture shows is creator, reconciler, and sustainer.*
- B. The incarnation of the eternal Word of God in Jesus Christ: *That we are not alone. Emmanuel, God with us.*

II. Presbyterians as Protestant (Shared beliefs with other Protestants)

- A. Justification by Grace through Faith: *We have not fulfilled God's law of loving God with all our heart, mind, and soul, and neighbor as ourselves. So we are not justified in and of ourselves to approach God. We are not righteous. But God's love in Jesus Christ saves us and draws us back to God.*
- B. Authority of Scripture: *Lies at the center of Christian faith. The lens through which we know God, who we are and how we must live. Points to the truth.*

III. Presbyterians as Reformed (Beliefs emphasized for Reformed Presbyterians)

- A. God's sovereignty: *God and God alone is the source and power of all that exists.*
- B. Election of God's People for Service and Salvation: *One important characteristic of our heritage is that the law comes after our grace, which is a way we show our gratitude for the grace given to us, whereas, by contrast, Lutherans would see the law as pointing to our sin and coming before our grace.*
- C. God's Covenant with Chosen People: *God called ordinary people and entrusted them to follow God's guidance in spreading God's love and living holy lives. "I will be your God, you will be my people." And, "I will be with you till the end of the age." We are all chosen.*
- D. Faithful Stewardship of Creation: *Responsibility on us to care for each other as well as creation.*
- E. Recognizing Human Tendency Toward Idolatry and Tyranny, Which is Sin: *We do not believe in atheism because we believe that everyone believes in something, it just may be wrong.*
- F. That God's People Work Toward the Transformation of Society by Seeking Justice and Living in Obedience to the Word of God: *Our task is not to be successful in bringing in the Kingdom of God, but to be obedient in trying.*

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- These Tenets all come from Chapter Two of the Book of Order
 - Confessions are the authoritative and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do. The Confessions lead us back to the Scriptures.
 - The Second Helvetic Confession contains a great deal of pastoral material.