

What It Means to Be Reformed

THIS IS AN ADAPTATION OF DR. BYRON CURTIS' DEFINITION OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE REFORMED. ACCESS HIS DEFINITION AT [HTTP://WWW.FIVESOLAS.COM/REF_DEFN.HTM](http://www.fivesolas.com/ref_defn.htm)

1 TO CONFESS WITH THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES THE CONSENSUS OF THE FIRST FIVE CENTURIES OF CHRISTIANITY, INCLUDING:

- Classic theism: One omnipotent, benevolent God, distinct from creation.
- Nicene & Chalcedonian Trinitarianism: one God in three eternally existent persons, equal in power and glory.
- Jesus Christ: the God-Man, the one mediator between God & the human race, incarnate, crucified, resurrected, ascended, & coming again.
- Humanity created in the image of God, yet tragically fallen & profoundly in need of restoration to God through Christ.
- The Visible Church: the community of the redeemed, indwelt by the Holy Spirit; the mystical body of Christ on earth.
- The one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.
- The Sacraments: visible signs and seals of the grace of God, ministering Christ's love to us in our deep need.
- The Christian life: characterized by the prime theological virtues of faith, hope, & love.

2 TO CONFESS WITH THE REFORMATION CHURCHES THE FOUR GREAT "SOLAS":

- The source of authority: Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone).
- The basis of salvation: Sola Gratia (Grace Alone).
- The means of salvation: Sola Fide (Faith Alone).
- The merit of salvation: Solus Christus (Christ Alone).

3 TO CONFESS WITH THE REFORMED CHURCHES THE DISTINCTIVES OF THE REFORMED FAITH:

- In salvation: monergism not synergism. God alone saves. Such monergism implies T.U.L.I.P., the "Five Points of Calvinism" from the Synod of Dordt:

- T = Total Depravity
- U = Unconditional Election
- L = Limited Atonement/Particular Redemption)
- I = Irresistible Grace
- P = Perseverance & Preservation of the Saints

- In worship: the Regulative Principle of Worship - "Whatever is not commanded in public worship is forbidden." God alone directs how he is to be worshiped in the assembly of the visible church.
- In the Visible Church: Covenant Theology & Covenant Community. The Church is the New Israel, incorporating believers among Jews and Gentiles alike. Infant Baptism ordinarily follows from this understanding. Sacraments are not merely human observances, but acts of Jesus Christ, marking out the visible church.
- In life: Christians have neither jobs nor careers; they have vocations (callings). Every calling is "full time Christian service," because every Christian is a full-time Christian.

4 TO CONFESS WITH THE REFORMED CHURCHES THE REFORMED CONFESSIONS:

- The Continental Reformed: The Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dordt).
- The Presbyterian Reformed: The Westminster Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Westminster Larger Catechism, the Westminster Shorter Catechism).

5 FINALLY, IN EVERYTHING, AS CHRISTIANS EVERYWHERE JOYFULLY AFFIRM: SOLI DEO GLORIA. 'TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY!'

THE BEST WAY TO LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO BE REFORMED IS TO READ THE THREE FORMS OF UNITY & THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS. THEY WILL TUTOR YOU IN THE BELOVED REFORMED FAITH.