

“Our DNA: Reformed, Evangelical, Egalitarian”
ECO Essential Tenets Study for BYF - June 14, 2026
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1. Announcements and Prayer

2. Introduction to Series

- Text: introductory paragraphs to Essential Tenets (ET)
- Key quote: “The great purpose toward which each human life is drawn is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” (Any Westminster fans around?)
- Begin with three key descriptors ECO uses to say who we are: Reformed, Evangelical, Egalitarian

3. We Are Reformed...

- Texts: ET III.1-3,5; John 6:35-46; Mark 12:28-34; Ephesians 1:3-14; Romans 8:28-30
- Historic theology aligned with John Calvin and Protestant Reformation, with roots in Augustine
- A central focus on God’s sovereignty, which includes:
 - His majesty, holiness, and providence
 - His creating, sustaining, ruling, and redeeming the world
 - His freedom of sovereign righteousness and love
- Related to this central focus are four other great themes:
 - Election of God's people revealing a call for service as well as for salvation
 - Covenant community life together highlighting a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God
 - Faithful stewardship shunning ostentation and seeking proper use of the gifts of God's creation
 - Recognition of human tendency towards idolatry and tyranny, leading us to pray and work for the transformation of individuals and societies
- A handy way to express this: “GRACE”
 - G = All about **God**...
 - R = Inherently **rebels** against God...
 - A = God’s initiative to **adopt** us into his family by the work and love of his Son Jesus...
 - C = Our **calling** to serve God, whether you are a pastor, a plumber, an accountant, an administrative assistant, a student, young or old, rich or poor or in-between...
 - E = Love and grace of God is **everlasting**—once you’re in his family, you’re in to stay...
- Question: Discuss how the Scriptural texts above emphasize aspects of Reformed faith and practice. What stands out to you?
- Question: “Reformed” sets us apart from other Christian bodies in some ways. How so?

4. We Are Evangelical...

- Texts: ET I and II; John 3:16-17; Luke 9:21-27; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-19
- Care deeply about the “evangel,” from Greek *euangelion*, meaning “good news” or “good tidings”
- Christian gospel: good news of salvation known only through Jesus Christ

- Not meant to be confused with socio-political ways the word often used today
- Three key ways we're evangelical:
 - The role of Scripture
 - Source for what comes next in the Essential Tenets
 - Authoritative, infallible guide for all that's necessary for Christian faith and practice
 - With "catholic" Christianity: mystery of the Trinity ("catholic" = universal)
 - Response to evidence presented in Scripture and experiences with Jesus and early church
 - God is both One and Three at the same time (but not in the same relationship, or that would violate the Law of Non-contradiction)
 - With "catholic" Christianity: mystery of the Incarnation ("catholic" = universal)
 - Whole package, not just birth (pre-existence as God, birth, life, ministry, teaching, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, rule/reign/return)
 - Jesus: totally 100% God and 100% human at the same time
 - This God we know only through Jesus saves and redeems us and calls us to follow Him
- Question: Discuss how the Scriptural texts above emphasize the good news of the gospel in Jesus Christ. What stands out to you?
- Question: "Evangelical" links us to other Christians via Scripture, the Trinity, and the Incarnation. How should this linkage express itself with fellow Christians? How do we handle disagreements?

5. We Are Egalitarian...

- Texts: ET III.4; Matthew 28:1-10; John 4:1-42; Galatians 3:23-29; Romans 16:1-7
- Key quote: "We affirm that men and women alike are called to all the ministries of the Church, and that every member is called to share in all of Christ's offices within the world beyond the church."
- "Egalitarian" is term to describe openness to male and female as pastors, elders, deacons, as well as teachers and other leaders in the church; "Complementarian" is term for those on opposite side of issue: men and women have complementary but dissimilar roles, with men as pastors, elders, and deacons
 - How you see role of culture and context in relevant texts in 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, 1 Timothy, Titus leads to different interpretations (Example: Corinth as center of Aphrodite worship)
 - How you account for other relevant texts that seem to embrace egalitarian ministry (Example: leadership of Priscilla in Acts 17)
- Point of departure from other Christian groups with whom we otherwise have much in common
 - Some who visit MDPC surprised by our affirmation of women pastors, elders, and deacons
 - Not saying this is heresy-level issue, but important to us and our ministry
- Question: Discuss how the Scriptural texts above reveal both male and female ministry and leadership in the church. What stands out to you?
- Question: "Egalitarian" is a point of contention for some. How might you talk it through with a friend who visits MDPC when a female pastor or staff member preaches, and your friend wants to know why?

6. Next Week: June 21, "God Speaks" — God's Word: The Authority for Our Confession