

“God Entrusts”—*Faithful Stewardship of All of Life*
ECO Essential Tenets Study for BYF - August 23, 2026
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1. Announcements and Prayer

2. Quick review of August 16 lesson, Essential Tenets: III. Essentials of the Reformed Tradition, C., Covenant Life in the Church

3. Today’s lesson now moves to a fourth distinctive area for Presbyterians: III.D., “Faithful Stewardship of All of Life”, in the ECO Essential Tenets

The ministries of the church reflect the three-fold office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king – reflected in the church’s ordered ministries of teaching elders, deacons, and ruling elders. 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. Every Christian is called to a prophetic life, proclaiming the good news to the world and enacting that good news. Every Christian is called to extend the lordship of Christ to every corner of the world. And every Christian is called to participate in Christ’s priestly, mediatorial work, sharing in the suffering of the world in ways that extend God’s blessing and offering intercession to God on behalf of the world. We are equipped to share in these offices by the Holy Spirit, who conforms us to the pattern of Christ’s life.

Jesus teaches us that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. There is no part of human life that is off limits to the sanctifying claims of God. We reject the claim that love of any sort is self-justifying; we affirm that all our affections and desires must be brought under God’s authority. We reject the claim that human souls are unaffected by the fall and remain naturally inclined to God; we affirm that soul and body alike must be cleansed and purified in order to love God properly. We reject the claim that the life of the mind is independent from faith; we affirm that unless we believe we cannot properly understand either God or the world around us. Historically, the Presbyterian tradition has been especially called to explore what it is to love God with all our minds, being committed to the ongoing project of Christian education and study at all levels of Christian life.

4. When we hear “stewardship,” what do our thoughts immediately turn toward?

- At least in the church, we think of money, offerings, and church campaigns
- But stewardship is a much broader term: “steward” means “manager,” someone entrusted by owner with significant responsibility, manages resources for owner, and is accountable to owner; includes financial resources, but much more (time, abilities, etc.)
- We are stewards—managers—of all God gives, supplies, and provides for us; it all belongs to Him, and He allows us to use it in keeping with his stated goals, purposes, and strategies

5. The larger goal, purpose, and strategy of stewardship: We are called to reflect and to follow the three-fold office of Jesus Christ as prophet, priest, and king...

- As God’s stewards and Christ’s followers, we seek to live out the three-fold office of Jesus:

- “Every Christian is called to a prophetic life, proclaiming the good news to the world and enacting that good news”; *Proclaimers, tellers and teachers of the Gospel Story, like pastors*
- “Every Christian is called to extend the lordship of Christ to every corner of the world”; *Leaders and shepherds, loving justice and doing mercy in Christ’s name, like elders*
- “Every Christian is called to participate in Christ’s priestly, mediatorial work, sharing in the suffering of the world in ways that extend God’s blessing and offering intercession to God on behalf of the world”; *Caring people, compassionate, giving and prayerful, like deacons*

6. As we work this strategy, we note men and women alike are called to all the ministries of the church.

- Just a short sentence that will probably be elaborated upon in subsequent revisions of the Essential Tenets
- “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.”
- Texts: ET III.4; Matthew 28:1-10; John 4:1-42; Galatians 3:23-29; Romans 16:1-7
- “Egalitarian” and “Complementarian” are terms in this debate
 - Egalitarian: openness to men and women as pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, other leaders
 - Complementarian: men and women have complementary but dissimilar roles, with men as pastors, elders, deacons, teachers, other leaders
 - How you see role of culture and context 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 women pastors, elders, and deacons
 - Not saying this is heresy-level issue, but important value to us and our ministry

7. Furthermore, as we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we recognize that there is no part of human life that is “off limits” for God’s redeeming and sanctifying power.

- Easy to arrange our lives into different spheres: church, family, religion, work, politics, etc.
- Yet Jesus is Lord of them all, and nothing outside His Lordship (despite sometimes our best efforts!)
- Head and heart, body and soul, intellect and emotion are all within Christ’s Lordship

8. Closing Prayer with Next Time: “God Forms,” III. Essentials of the Reformed Tradition; E. “Living in Obedience to the Word of God”

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *Stewardship Sunday at many churches is dreaded. But MDPC’s annual Covenant Sunday has had many transformational moments for people. What has happened with you? Or with people you know?*
- *How is stewardship much more than what you do with your money? Describe an expanded view of stewardship. What does it cover? How do we serve Christ as His steward or manager of His resources?*
- *The overall strategy is drawn from the three-fold office of Christ as prophet, priest, and King. How do we reflect this three-fold office in what we do and expand it for those not pastors, elders, or deacons?*
- *It is faithful stewardship to use all one’s resources most effectively. How does this truth help us get a handle on the egalitarian openness we have for both male and female leadership?*