

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the left and right sides of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The central area is a clean white space where the text is positioned.

Essential Tenets Overview

Welcome

- ▶ This is the second in a series of 3 Grace Presbyterian Church Foundation classes. At the end you can become members of Grace
- ▶ Please sign in
- ▶ Since we are a 21st century church, we will avoid killing trees and spending money by having folks use their electronic gadgets for materials when possible.
- ▶ If you do not have a copy of the Essential Tenets, download one now:

▶ www.eco-pres.org

What are Tenets?

- ▶ What is meant by “Essential Tenets”?
- ▶ Why is important to have Essential Tenets?

What is contained in the Essential Tenets of ECO?

The essentials of the Christian Faith

The essentials of the Reformed Faith

The 10 Commandments - living our lives in conformity with the desires of God

How are the Essential Tenets applied to officers?

- ▶ Ordaining bodies must ensure that all officers **adhere** to the Essential Tenets of ECO
- ▶ Ordination vow states: “Will you receive, adopt and be bound by the Essential Tenets of ECO as a reliable exposition of what Scripture teaches us to do and to believe, and will you be guided by them in your ministry?”

How are the Essential Tenets and Confessions related?

- ▶ Paragraph 2 of the Essentials says: “Essential Tenets are tied to the teaching of the confessions as reliable exposition of Scripture.”
- ▶ Ordination vow states: “Relying on the Holy Spirit, do you humbly submit to God’s call on your life, committing yourself to God’s mission, and fulfilling your ministry in **obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture and guided by the confessions?**”

Let's Look At The Essentials

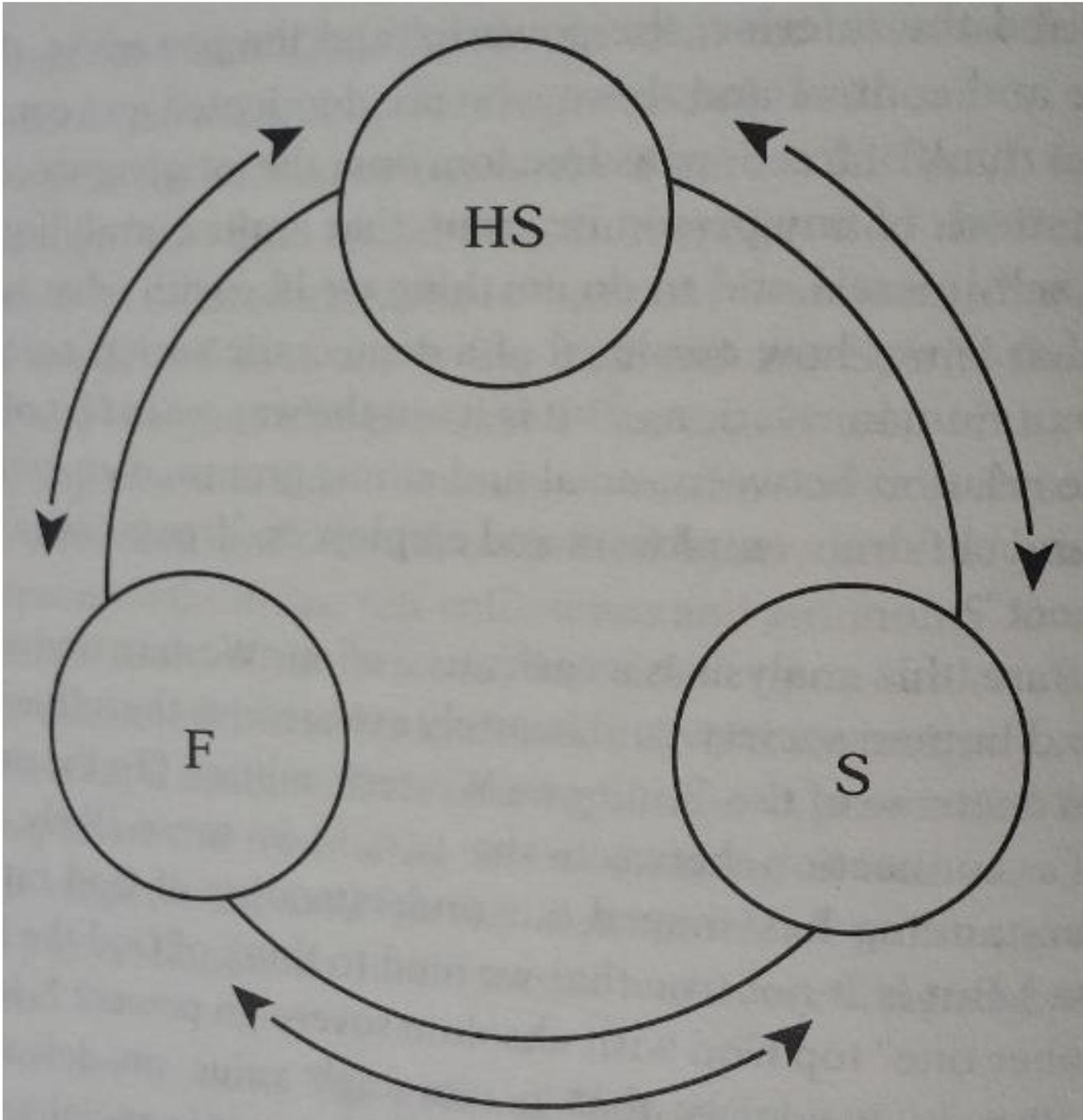
I. God's Word: The Authority for Our Confession

- ▶ The clearest declaration of God's glory is found in His Word, both incarnate and written.
- ▶ We glorify God by recognizing and receiving His authoritative **self revelation**, both in the **infallible** Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and also in the **incarnation of God the Son**.

II. Trinity and Incarnation: The Two Central Christian Mysteries

TRINITY

- ▶ With Christians everywhere, we worship the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - who is both **one essence** and **three persons**.
- ▶ God is the source of all goodness, all truth and all beauty, of all love and all life, **omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent**. The three persons are consubstantial with one another, being both coeternal, and coequal, such that there are not three gods, nor are there three parts of God, but rather three persons within the one Godhead. The Son is eternally begotten from the Father, and the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son. All three persons are worthy of worship and praise.
- ▶ The ongoing act of creation is further manifested in God's gracious sovereignty and providence, **maintaining** the existence of the world and all living creatures for the sake of His own glory.



Incarnation

- ▶ Jesus Christ is both truly God and truly human.
- ▶ He is like us in every way but sin, of one substance with us, like us in having **both a human soul and a human body**.
- ▶ He is born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Jesus, who was sent from the Father, has now ascended to the Father in His **resurrected body** and remains truly human.
- ▶ We are able to confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God only through the work of the Holy Spirit.

III. Essentials of the Reformed Tradition

- ▶ The present disordered state of the world, in which we and all things are subject to misery and to evil, is not God's doing, but is rather a result of humanity's free, sinful rebellion against God's will.
- ▶ No part of human life is untouched by sin. **Our desires are no longer trustworthy guides to goodness**, and what seems natural to us no longer corresponds to God's design. We are not merely wounded in our sin; we are dead, unable to save ourselves. **Apart from God's initiative, salvation is not possible for us**. Our only hope is God's grace.
- ▶ We are declared justified, **not because of any good that we have done**, but only because of God's **grace** extended to us in Jesus Christ.
- ▶ **Jesus Christ is the only Way to this adoption**, the sole path by which sinners become children of God

Election for salvation and service

- ▶ Having lost true freedom of will in the fall, we are **incapable** of turning toward God of our own volition. God chooses us for Himself in grace before the foundation of the world, not because of any merit on our part, but only because of His love and mercy.
- ▶ Through His regenerating and sanctifying work, the Holy Spirit **grants us faith** and enables holiness, so that we may be witnesses of God's gracious presence to those who are lost.

Covenant life in the church

- ▶ Our new identity is as brothers and sisters of one another, since we now share one Father.
- ▶ Within the covenant community of the church, God's grace is extended through the preaching of the **Word**, the administration of the **Sacraments**, and the faithful practice of **mutual discipline**.

Faithful stewardship of all of life

- ▶ 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. 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.
- ▶ We recognize and honor the image of God in every human being from **conception** to **natural** death.

Living in obedience to the Word of God

- ▶ **Progress in holiness** is an expected response of gratitude to the grace of God, which is initiated, sustained, and fulfilled by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ As we practice the discipline of regular self examination and confession, we are especially guided by the Ten Commandments.

Ten Commandments

- ▶ 1. worship God alone, living all of life to His glory, renouncing all idolatry and all inordinate loves that might lead us to trust in any other help;
- ▶ 2. worship God in humility, being reticent in either describing or picturing God, **recognizing that right worship is best supported not by our own innovative practices but through the living preaching of the Word and the faithful administration of the Sacraments;**
- ▶ 3. eliminate from both speech and thought any blasphemy, irreverence, or impurity;
- ▶ 4. observe the Sabbath as a day of worship and rest, being faithful in gathering with the people of God;
- ▶ 5. give honor toward those set in authority over us and practice mutual submission within the community of the church;
- ▶ 6. eradicate a spirit of anger, resentment, callousness, violence, or bitterness, and instead cultivate a spirit of gentleness, kindness, peace, and love; **recognize and honor the image of God in every human being from conception to natural death.**
- ▶ 7. **maintain chastity in thought and deed, being faithful within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman as established by God at the creation or embracing a celibate life as established by Jesus in the new covenant;**
- ▶ 8. practice right stewardship of the goods we have been given, showing charity to those in need and offering generous support of the Church and its ministries;
- ▶ 9. **pursue truth, even when such pursuit is costly, and defend truth when it is challenged, recognizing that truth is in order to goodness and that its preservation matters;**
- ▶ 10. resist the pull of envy, greed, and acquisition, and instead cultivate a spirit of contentment with the gifts God has given us.

Watch Video

Start at 8:30

The Confessions

The appropriate confessional standards for ECO are the creeds, confessions, and catechisms in the *Book of Confessions* -

- ▶ Nicene Creed
- ▶ Apostles' Creed
- ▶ Scots Confession
- ▶ Heidelberg Catechism
- ▶ Second Helvetic Confession
- ▶ Westminster Confession
- ▶ Westminster Shorter Catechism
- ▶ Westminster Larger Catechism
- ▶ Theological Declaration of Barmen
- ▶ Confession of 1967
- ▶ A Brief Statement of Faith

Q&A