

## An Introduction to the Reformed Faith

### **Nov. 5. Introduction**

Nov. 12. History and variations

Nov. 19. Heidelberg Catechism

Nov. 26. Westminster Standards

Dec. 3. Salvation, Election, Predestination, Providence

Dec. 10. Covenant; Christ as Prophet, Priest, & King

Dec. 17. Culture and Society

The “**core values**” of the Center for Public Justice provide a contemporary summary of Reformed Christian emphases: We are Christ-centered. The redemptive and wise teachings of Jesus Christ continually shape us and God’s common grace makes justice possible. We affirm God’s sovereignty. Christ’s Lordship extends over family, church, civil society, and government, which are all given different responsibilities necessary for upholding public justice and contributing to the common good of society. We uphold the dignity of all people. Through marred by sin, every person is created in the image of God and endowed with the ability and responsibility to actively contribute to the renewal of public life.

**Defined:** The non-Lutheran, non-Anabaptist/Mennonite, and especially non-Catholic strand of the Protestant Reformation leading to churches called “Presbyterian” or “Reformed.”

**Esse or bene esse?**

**Is “Calvinist” the same as “Reformed”? Where do the Puritans fit in?**

**Geography:** First Switzerland, Scotland, the Netherlands.

Then also in South Germany, Hungary, France, England with traces in Italy, Spain, Austria, Poland

Later: North American colonies, U.S., Canada, Dutch colonies

More recently: Korea, Brazil, Mexico, S. Africa, Kenya, Congo, China

**Social affinities historically:** Pastors, scholars, merchants, lesser magistrates, self-sufficient farmers; first adherents mostly in cities, universities, principalities with relatively weak rulers (Heidelberg), colonies

**Political tendencies:** anti-monarchy (or anti-strong monarchy), leery of democracy but leaning in that direction, confident in tiered layers of authority (sessions, presbyteries, general assemblies)

**Theology:** Augustinian (like Luther, but more effort in figuring things out)

Scripture: moving toward exclusive authority (vs. primary authority)

Covenant: organizing principle in Scripture, then church, family, society

Church: usually Presbyterian (graduated “courts” with leaders elected but then serving with unusual authority)

Sacraments: “spiritual real presence” (Calvin) but tending toward memorialism

The world: strong view of creation, usually efforts to promote godliness in all worldly structures and activities

**Significant Leaders:** Ulrich Zwingli (Zurich), John Calvin (Geneva), John Knox (Scotland), Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus (Heidelberg), Westminster “divines” (England), Jonathan Edwards (Mass.), John Witherspoon (N.J.), Abraham Kuyper (Netherlands), Karl Barth (Switz.), “young Calvinists”