

Edward Bellis Answers to Ordination/Installation Vows

Q 2. Do you accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be, by the Holy Spirit, the unique and authoritative witness to Jesus Christ in the Church universal, and God's Word to you? **I do!**

The Word and Spirit work together showing me the love of God towards God's people. While Scripture gives me the knowledge of salvation, the Spirit works inside me persuading and assuring me of God's good work for me. The Holy Spirit guides, energizes, corrects, and challenges me as I study God's Word.

I believe Scripture reveal God's work and plan for this world and by my putting on the spectacles of Scripture I can see God's desire of me (and the world). Yes, I can see God at work in the world, but if I rely on it I often get it wrong. By seeing the world through the lens of Scripture, I see God's work of providence and grace in a broken world, especially through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Scripture reveals how far God will go in God's love for me (and the world) by sending Jesus, His only Son, and Jesus reveals how to live a life under God's authority. Out of thanksgiving for what Jesus' done for me, I want to be more like him and treat others as children of God. Only Scripture reveals to me this picture of God's love for me (and the world) ALWAYS.

I am thankful for the gift of Scripture as it leads, corrects, and guides me in this chaotic, unstable world where life can turn on a dime. Scripture is God's love letter to me and for the world. In Scripture I see a faithful, strong and steadfast love for me that does not change or waver. While I may stray, do things wrong or for the wrong reason, God does not and continues seeking a relationship with me (and others). I am both the prodigal son and the older one who stayed home with the Father. The father loved both. I am so thankful for God who is my Rock in the midst of the storms of life.

Q 3. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God? **I do and will!**

I do not find a conflict of my understanding of essential tenets with Scripture. The essential tenets enable me to deepen my understanding of God and God's call for me and the communities I am serving.

I understand the essential tenets as explained by Dr. Jack Rogers and as outlined in Chapter 2 of our former Book of Order. The essential tenets are broken down into 3 sections – catholic (shared by the whole church), Protestant (shared with the other Protestant traditions), and Reformed (generally identified with Reformed Theology).

With the whole church, I adopt the mystery of the Trinity and the Doctrine of Incarnation.

With our Protestant brothers and sisters, I adopt Justification (grace alone, faith alone) by grace through faith. I do not deserve salvation and only receive it by God's gracious gift to me. God determines to make our relationship right with God, not because of anything I do to deserve it, but because that is who God is. Scripture is the final authority for salvation and the life of faith.

As a Reformed Teaching Elder, I understand God to be Sovereign, which means God is free to do anything God wants and only limits Godself, God's providence governs all, and only God creates out of nothingness. God Elects God's people for salvation and service. The Covenant life of the church which is marked by disciplined concern for order according to the Word of God. All life belongs to God and we are called to faithful Stewardship of God's creation. Our chief sin is the sin of Idolatry. The last one is living a life seeking justice and living in Obedience to the Word of God.

What is listed above is what I understand as our Essential Tenets.