

What It Means to Be Reformed

POINT

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Our Reformed/Presbyterian faith has “habits of the heart”: **God’s initiative in all things.**

- ♦ **Creation.** “In the beginning when God created,” says Genesis 1. God initiates creation. God brings it all into existence. God is the one who sets things in motion to create all things in heaven and earth. Without God making the first move, we would be nothing!
- ♦ **The Word of God in Scripture.** God makes the first move in revealing God’s self to those whose writings we have today as our Scriptures. God’s revelation was to humans who conveyed God’s word to us. Without God’s initiative, we would never, ever know who God is or what God has done. Scripture is God’s message conveyed by humans.
- ♦ **Incarnation.** This means God has become human in Jesus Christ. God initiates salvation, redeeming us from sinful lives by sending the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. God could have let us “stew in our own juice,” as sinners. But God “so loved the world” that God gave Jesus Christ to die to save us (John 3:16).
- ♦ **Salvation.** The Reformed faith stresses the glory of God and God’s initiative in salvation. We are saved by God’s loving action for us in Jesus Christ. We call this election (or predestination). God picks us up in our sin and does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. God gives us salvation—a restored relationship with God. We are saved by grace, or by God’s gracious election.
- ♦ **Church.** The church is God’s covenant people, the “elect,” as we say. We are part of the church today because of God’s work by the Holy Spirit in giving us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ. Again, God—by the Spirit—draws us into the covenant community.