

# What is a Reformed Baptist Church?

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If we were to be asked, “What kind of a church are you? We would not hesitate to reply, “We are a Baptist church!” We hold to those truths which have sometimes been referred to as “Baptist Distinctives.” We would also reply that we are a “Reformed Church,” inasmuch as we hold to the great doctrines of the Reformation in the areas concerning the salvation of men. In this sense, we are pleased to be referred to as a “Reformed Baptist” church. What, then, are some of the distinctives of a Reformed Baptist church?

## The Scriptures

First of all, a Reformed Baptist Church is a local church which acknowledges the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. In all matters of faith, that is in the things we believe, and of practice, that is the things which we do, our sole authority is the Word of God. If something, whether of faith or of practice, is contrary to the Bible then no matter who pleads for it, no matter what clever arguments are produced in favor of it, we cannot endorse it. When the Word of God does not warrant something, we are not going to be brought under bondage to it; but where the Scriptures clearly call for something, no consideration ought to make us do without it. We desire to have our conscience bound to the Word of God, for there we believe is true freedom. We desire in our church life to be patterned after and conformed to the Word of God. We should always seek for God to deepen our understanding of His Word, and we should always be ready to reform any of our practices if it becomes apparent that we are out of line with the Scriptures.

## Preaching

Reformed Baptists believe in the pre-eminence of the preaching of the Word of God. We believe that the preaching of the Bible must have the central place in our services. We believe that nothing can or should take the place of the preaching of the Word! Our conviction is that the church of Christ has suffered because she has downgraded the preaching of the Word. We believe that God’s people everywhere ought to be encouraged to pray that God would endow men with gifts of preaching, and that he would give to His churches great preachers.

## The Doctrines of Grace

Reformed Baptists unashamedly declare their belief in those doctrines which are sometimes called the doctrines of grace. By this expression we mean in particular the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, definite atonement, effectual calling, and the perseverance of the saints. We rejoice in these glorious truths which uphold the sovereignty of God in the salvation of men, and which so gloriously affirm the great central reality that salvation is all of grace, and that salvation is of the Lord! We rejoice that the doctrines of grace are clearly set forth in the *Second London Confession of Faith of 1689*, and in many other historic Protestant creeds. It is not just because these doctrines are found in the historic creeds, though we rejoice that that is the case, but it is because the doctrines are so clearly presented in the Holy Scriptures that we believe them.

## **Evangelism**

We would like to affirm that Reformed Baptists believe in the necessity and responsibility of evangelism. We do not believe that there is an inconsistency between God's sovereignty in the salvation of His chosen people and His command to us to preach the gospel to every creature. Now it is true that we do not believe in much that today goes under the name of evangelism. We believe that much that is called evangelism is little more than psychology and salesmanship. We are appalled by the pressures, gimmicks and schemes all calculated to produce "decisions" and impressive statistics but which work such havoc in the souls of men. No! Because we believe in evangelism does not mean that we are going to cooperate with every scheme which bears that name. We believe that in evangelism as in everything else, as we said earlier, we must be governed by the Word of God. The message of evangelism must be according to the Scriptures, and the method of evangelism must be governed by the Word of God! Nevertheless, we repeat that we do believe in evangelism, and our prayer is that God would ever keep us mindful of the need to evangelize.

## **Worship**

A Reformed Baptist Church is a local church with a serious approach to worship. The God we worship is a God of majesty, glory and holiness. We believe that when we come together to worship this great and glorious God of the Bible we ought to do so with reverence and with godly fear. We believe that there ought to be a sense of AWE in our hearts when we gather to worship this God! You say, "But surely our worship must be exciting." Yes indeed, we agree, but equally surely it must be an excitement stemming from the realization that we are obeying God by worshipping Him according to his commands, not an excitement arising from unbiblical worship practices cleverly designed to entertain us and appeal to our fleshly desires. We believe that there is a world of difference between a "dead" service and a serious, spiritual service. The first is not desired; the second is. Frivolity and childishness seem to us to be out of place and incongruous with the worship of God. Oh that when we worship we might feel the awe of God in our souls. Oh that we might see something of the glory seen by Isaiah and by the servants of God of old! This, then, is the kind of church we are seeking to build. Other things could be said, but we have sought to touch on some of the basic points. May God raise up many such churches all over the land and all over the world which desire the same things and strive towards them. May God be pleased to visit His people again with showers of blessing that God might be glorified in and through His church!