



*...counting to
five.*

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Get to
know the
Reformed
Episcopal
Church
by...

The Reformed Episcopal Church

ONE BIBLE

1 In an age of unbelief, it is particularly important to make clear the Church's dependence on the Holy Scriptures as the rule of faith and life. The Reformed Episcopal Church confesses the continuity of the Scriptures around the themes of God grace and the redemption of mankind by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. We reject the "dumbing down" of the Bible, either through skeptical liberalism that would remove any sense of the supernatural, or from those who see the Bible as nothing but a collection of proof-texts.

The Bible is the story of God's covenant with mankind, worked out by the death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Because Holy Scripture is the "breath of God" (II Tim. 3:16) we set it above both tradition and reason, without rejecting either. The ultimate tradition is that of the Apostles and Prophets. The Bible is the interpreter of tradition and practice.

TWO TESTAMENTS

2 Because there are those who set the Old Testament aside as either no longer applicable, or as too harsh in our "enlightened" society, it is also important for our Church to make clear the need for both testaments if we are to understand what God has done, and what he would have us do. The structure of the Bible is (a) the prophecy of God's redemption in Christ, (b) the fact of Christ's incarnation, life, death, and resurrection, and (c) the

interpretation of the fact by the chosen spokesmen of the Church, the Apostles.

We show our need of the Old Testament by rehearsing the Ten Commandments each time we celebrate the Lord's Supper. The Bible speaks of the Church built upon "the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone." We cannot understand why Christ was born, or even appreciate what worship is without a clear appreciation of the Old Testament. We also reference the whole of the New Testament, and not simply the teachings of our Saviour. Christ authorized his Apostles to reveal him to the world as his official spokesmen. We need the whole Bible, both testaments.

But, what of the Apocrypha? The Articles of Religion make clear the place of the Apocrypha as subservient Holy Scripture, and not a third testament (Article VI). It cannot be used for the establishment of doctrine, but has benefitted the Church at large and ought to be read. The Old and New Testaments offer the Church all that is needed for life and godliness.

THREE CREEDS

3 The three Creeds of the Church, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed, have served the Church through the centuries as a simple, articulate, and time-tested summary of the belief of the Church. We believe that our creation makes us creedal. We *must* confess faith. Christians must confess the truth "as it is in Jesus." These ancient Creeds afford us that opportunity.

FOUR COUNCILS

4 The first four ecumenical Councils of the Church, Nicaea, A.D. 325; Constantinople, A.D. 381; Ephesus, A.D. 431; Chalcedon, A.D. 451, stand as those which were truly representative of the whole Church, and which have always found recognition within Anglicanism. These Councils settled some of the most fundamental questions of doctrine on the nature of the Trinity and the person and work of Jesus Christ. Other Councils are seen by other branches of Christ's Church as authoritative, but our attention and appreciation rests with these first four.

FIVE CENTURIES

5 By this we mean the first five centuries A.D, the life of the Church from the Apostles to Gregory the Great. In that time we go from Jesus and the Apostles to the settling of theological disputes, and the heretics scattered. We see the pattern for worship and polity established, and a prodigious missionary effort throughout all of the crumbling Roman empire, and beyond.

As we move into the Sixth Century, we see the beginnings of the medieval abuses that brought about the Reformation response in the 1500's. While not compelled to follow all aspects of life and thinking from those five centuries, we nevertheless see it as the forming ground for the way the Church would work and live in our world.

In addition to these things, we have the Book of Common Prayer, and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. The former telling you something about the way we pray and worship; the latter giving expression to matters of doctrine in the settling of disagreements.
