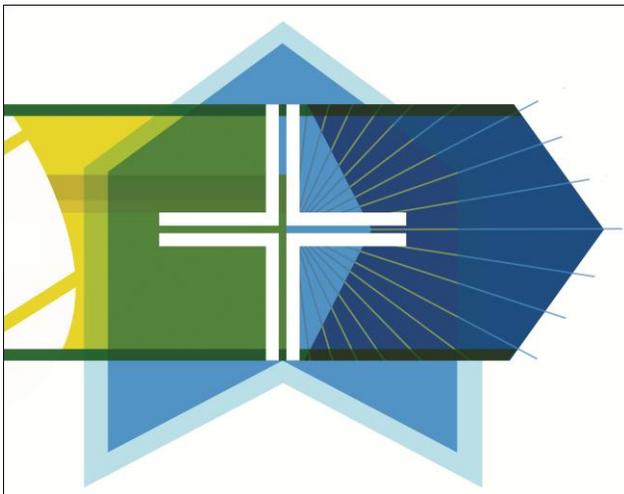


# Doorways

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STUDY GUIDE *for*  
THE ESSENTIAL TENETS



## LEADER'S GUIDE

*by Stephen Eyre and Mary Holder Naegeli*

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Materials to supplement the *Leader's Guide* are available online at the website of The Fellowship of Presbyterians, <http://www.fellowship-pres.org/>

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# Forward

I had guessed that the taxi driver was a Christian as soon as I got into the cab. The evidence certainly seemed strong: there was a small wooden cross hanging from his rearview mirror, and when I leaned forward to tell him what hotel I wanted to go to, I saw an open Bible on the front passenger seat. But all doubt was removed when, driving through the city, we passed a church with a large neon sign proclaiming “Jesus Saves.” The driver leaned back, pointing: “See that sign? That’s all you need to know!”

His remark caught me off guard, so I merely grunted a quick approving sound. But when he dropped me off a few minutes later, I told him that I appreciated his Christian witness. Needless to say, though, if we had been given time for a longer conversation I would have discussed the two-word message with him at a great length.

That message is a profound one. I’m pleased when I see it on public display. But it is shorthand for a lot of important topics, ones that deal with highly significant questions. Here are some of them. Who is the Jesus who saves? What does he save us from? How did he do it? What does he expect us to do about it? What does his saving mission tell us about how human history is going to end up?

People can agree on the simple formula, “Jesus Saves,” and still have strong disagreements about how to answer those questions. As a Presbyterian who subscribes to the basic teachings associated with the Reformed faith, I believe that my tradition provides a profound framework for answering those important questions. And when I say “subscribe” I am putting it mildly. I am passionate about the Reformed way of understanding the basic claims of the gospel.

We Presbyterians are committed to a system of thought that centers on our profound trust in a sovereign God who has done for us in Jesus Christ what we could never have accomplished for ourselves. We are sinners who desperately need God’s mercy and grace. And the freely offered salvation that comes to us through Jesus is life-giving. It incorporates us into a community of people who are in the process of becoming more like Jesus. And we want to be like Jesus because that means being all that God intended us to be when he created us. When Jesus saves us he empowers us to flourish as human beings who are doing the work of his Kingdom.

I find all of that very exciting stuff. And because of that I also find this study of the Essential Tenets of the Reformed faith to be very exciting. The authors have given us a gift, by selecting teachings set forth in our *Book of Confessions* that can serve as doorways into the message of the Scriptures. And they have taken great care to design their “content-heavy” presentations in a manner that encourages interaction with what they have provided. These materials will not shut down serious discussions. They are meant to stimulate honest questions; the lessons and exercises are nicely designed to promote lively discussions among groups of Christians who care deeply about

matters that are of eternal importance. Even more important, this study guide also has a very practical goal: the kind of spiritual nurture that can equip us to serve the Lord in our own everyday lives

We Presbyterians have a wonderful heritage: not just the sort of thing that gets put in museums, but a vital basis for people who want to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.” Our *Book of Confessions* contains documents written at various historical moments—typically those moments demanded utter clarity about what it means to be faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are faced with one of those moments in our own day.

We need Christians today who have thought carefully about the foundations of the faith, and who are drawing on the wisdom of the past to serve the Lord in these challenging but exciting times. I hope this study guide will be widely used. Study these important matters. You may even find that these materials come in handy when you have the opportunity to discuss theology with a taxi driver!

RICHARD MOUW, President, Fuller Theological Seminary