

ECO – EPC Presentation

**Westminster Presbyterian Church
Spartanburg, SC**

Assuming a basic level of understanding for both the EPC and ECO (Fellowship Presentations, web sites, etc)... let's get down to "brass tacks."

What are the possible benefits and weaknesses of both options? (6 each)

Great Things About the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

1. 30 years of experience building a denomination offering stability and a “safer” option
2. Two/one elder-to-pastor ratio at presbytery/GA
3. One-page, tight essentials and one confession of faith (Westminster) makes understanding what they believe and training officers easier.
Consequence = high level of trust
4. No Confession of 1967 & its statement Scripture
5. Amendments to constitution require $\frac{3}{4}$ of presbyteries. Makes changing its harder.

Great Things About the Evangelical Presbyterian Church

6. Position papers generally very strong (Abortion, Divorce & Remarraige, Holy Spirit, Homosexuality, Suffering Death & Dying)

Possible Matters of Concern with Evangelical Presbyterian Church

1. Would one be trading one “local option” which we say we are against (ordination of practicing gays) and trading it for another “local option” (ordination of women)? Is this hypocritical?
2. Position paper on women in ministry short and indecisive. Not all EPC settled on this issue
3. One confession alone leaves out the breadth of the Reformed tradition (i.e. Scots Confession, Heidelberg, 2nd Helvetic, Barmen Confession)
4. Westminster Confession of Faith teaches only “double” predestination. How will modern listeners hear this?

Possible Matters of Concern with Evangelical Presbyterian Church

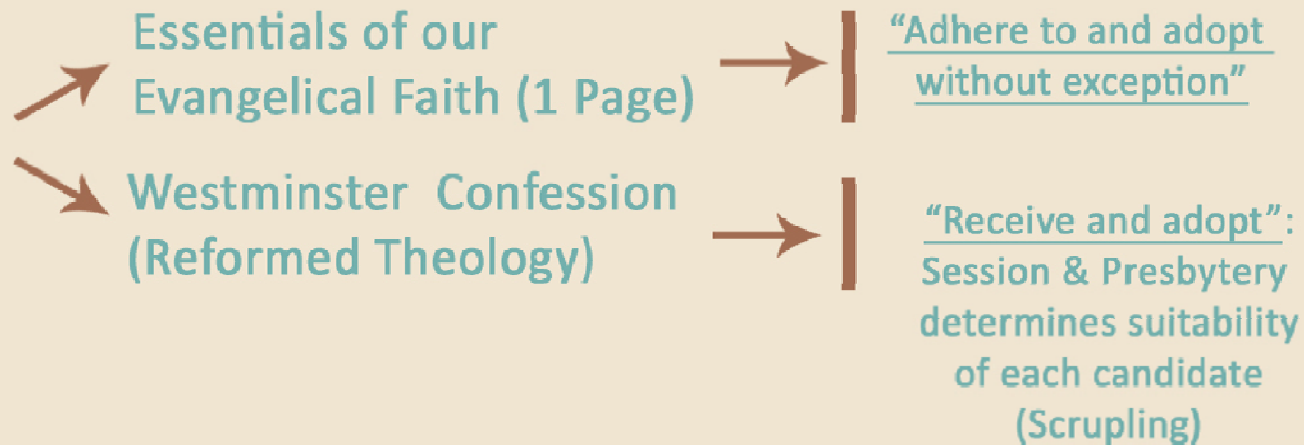
5. Has not really grown except for transfers from the PCUSA over the last 10 years. Will this growth dramatically slow down as the ECO becomes an option on the table?
6. Reformed doctrinal standard (Westminster) can be “scrupled”

Sources of Authority:

Relationship between Scripture, Confession(s), & Essentials

EPC

SCRIPTURE



ECO

SCRIPTURE



Great Things About the Evangelical Covenant of Presbyterians

1. Comprehensive Essentials (four-page) that are both evangelical AND Reformed and readable. No mechanism for scrupling these – either accept in total or not all. Consequence=high level of trust
2. An opportunity for a fresh start in a post-modern, post-denominational age
3. Learning from founding of EPC/PCA – don't start out: 1) angry; and 2) united only by what you're against – its will set you back for years

Great Things About the Evangelical Covenant of Presbyterians

4. Question of women in leadership settled – not an issue/celebrated not tolerated
5. Only pastors with a validated call to a congregation may vote at presbytery and national synod
6. A new/old vision of “missional” presbyteries where pastors, elders, and congregations are related to one another at a higher level of mutual accountability, support and encouragement. Have we really tried over the last 50 years to be truly Presbyterian?

Possible Matters of Concern with Evangelical Covenant of Presbyterians

1. No long, established track record to look back upon.
2. Will there be a great money & time cost related to the start-up of the ECO?
3. The “Essentials” are not 100% nailed down. The first national synod meeting (Jan 2013) will do that. Is there a possibility of substantial change?
4. The Confession of 1967 remains (at least for the moment).

Possible Matters of Concern with Evangelical Covenant of Presbyterians

5. Amendments to the constitution are more difficult than in the PCUSA but not as difficult as in the EPC.
6. No position papers have been produced.