

Winter 2022 Theology Exam

Section I: Reformed Confessional Heritage

You are pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church. During a fellowship supper, everyone at your table begins to talk about prayer:

Bailey: Is it bad that on some days I forget to pray at all?

Simi: Maybe you pray more than you think. There are all kinds of ways to pray. Sometimes we pray without even knowing we're doing it.

Frances: I'm not sure it counts as prayer unless you do it purposefully.

Pam: Obviously, Jesus taught us how to do it right—just pray the Lord's Prayer. We don't need anything else.

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the practice of personal prayer**. In the essay, identify and discuss at least one (1) citation (e.g., 0.000) from each of three (3) different documents in the *Book of Confessions*.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond theologically to each person.

Section II: Constructive Statement of Christian Doctrine

You are pastor of Jordan Presbyterian Church and are leading a confirmation class of 7th and 8th graders. You are talking about the sacrament of baptism, and the following conversation ensues:

Anna: I have a friend who goes to a different church, and she says that her parents won't let her be baptized until she understands what it means. They say baptism without accepting Jesus means nothing to God.

Thomas: I was baptized when I was a baby, but I don't remember it. In worship we "remember our baptism," but does that mean baptism wears off if I can't remember? Does God care if I can't remember?

Jorge: My grandmother told me that God won't let unbaptized babies into heaven. That sounds really mean of God. But I was baptized, so I'm OK.

REQUIRED RESPONSES: *(Total responses in this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.)*

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **baptism and the character of God**. In the essay, use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology, contemporary theology.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, respond to Anna, Thomas, and Jorge.

Section III: Application to Ministry

You are the pastor of Grace Presbyterian Church. A group in the congregation has asked the session and pastor to stop using patriotic hymns in worship. Members of the session discuss it at the next meeting:

Frank:	Those hymns are the heart of my faith! How can we teach people to be good Christians if we don't encourage them to be patriotic?
Stanley:	Being Christian and being patriotic are not the same thing! In fact, the nation's priorities are often the opposite of what Christ commands of us! We are called to be Christians, wary of divided loyalties!
Peggy:	That's not very Christian or patriotic of you, Stanley! The Bible tells us to be loyal to our country. Doesn't it say somewhere that government is instituted by God?

REQUIRED RESPONSES: (*Total responses for this Section not to exceed 1,200 words.*)

1. Write an essay discussing a Reformed understanding of **the relationship between patriotism and Christian identity**. In the essay, use at least two (2) of the following resources: the Scriptures, classical theology, contemporary theology.
2. Building on the essay in Required Response 1, write an article for the church newsletter explaining the theological reasons why you will or will not choose patriotic hymns in the future. Do not sign any name to the newsletter article.