

## SECTION G

### SETTING YOUR LOCAL CHURCH IN ITS HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

#### "Historical Distinctives"

Most Reformed churches are founded by men and women who seek to worship and serve God in purity, according to His revealed Word. That can be called an "historical distinctive": It is something in the past which contributes to today's personality and culture and tomorrow's goals and dreams.

Churches grow spiritually and numerically, they decline and are troubled, partly because of what has happened to them. Four types of historical distinctives work to give a congregation its unique, interesting personality:

1. The distinctive ways individuals and families have joined as a local body of Christ.
2. The unique joys and crises the congregation has shared.
3. The historical distinctives of the denomination or group with which the congregation has affiliated.
4. The personal leadership of all the church's pastors, elders, deacons, and others, and the spiritual gifts brought into the body by its members.

These shadow another distinctive--the way a body has been designed, formed and guided by God. No two persons or congregations are identical in looks, personality, and purpose.

Handling the past touches today's strengths, weaknesses, and needs. The historian sings "Amazing Grace," knowing how amazing it has been. The fully unveiled story of a local congregation demands thanksgiving. It teaches "the praiseworthy deeds of God." It uncovers illness and opportunity. It is just one tool. It has its limits. . .but it is one tool!

One other reason to think through the historical notes on the next pages is to remind us of the fragility of human effort to serve and worship. Movements founded to glorify and proclaim have fallen into self-serving apostasy. No denomination or congregation can guarantee that God will continue to work through them and their children. Seeing our distinctive history, we should see that a church is meaningful only so long as it humbly watches and prays.

Distinctives of The Presbyterian Church in America

1. It is a REFORMED Church.

A. A Reformed Church identifies with two foundation principles of the Protestant Reformation--justification by faith alone and Scripture as the sole authority in faith and life. A Reformed Church recognizes that it continues to be dependent on the Holy Spirit to conform to God's revealed will.

B. A Reformed Church proclaims God as sovereign: **"There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection. . .working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory . . ."** (Westminster Confession of Faith, 2:1).

C. The Reformed Church believes and teaches that God has revealed Himself in His Word as a covenant-making and keeping God. The purpose of the covenants is expressed in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question 1: **"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."** The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit agreed to condescend to fellowship with man. That relationship was first expressed as a Covenant of Works, dependent on man's obedience to his Creator. From the Fall--indeed from before the foundation of the world--God established a Covenant of Grace. Under the covenant those whom God chose He set apart to Himself as forgiven and holy--justified through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

D. The Reformed Church stands committed to a creed and to a confession. This does not add to the Bible's authority. Rather it admits that the Bible teaches propositional truth. God's truth can be known, applied to man's situation and set in opposition to false doctrines. Some Reformed confessions agree with what the PCA confesses that Scripture teaches. Some modern confessions do not. The PCA standards are the Westminster Confession of Faith and its Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

E. The PCA as a Reformed Church recognizes Christ as Lord over its organization and people. No individual or corporate body has a right of membership or ordination to oppose the God-breathed revelations of the Bible. The PCA recommends and practices discipline of members or groups found to be in sin. The denomination has a responsibility at all levels to judge false teaching and to deny affiliation to groups who are in substantial error to God's Word.

F. The PCA as a Reformed Church is committed to Christ's command of Matthew 28:19-20 to make disciples. Reformed Christians have led in world missions and church planting. A major reason for withdrawal from the PCUSA in the 1930s and the southern PCUS in the 1970s was to maintain a pure, vital world evangelism.

2. It is a PRESBYTERIAN Church.

A. The term "Presbyterian" refers to a form of government, not a system of theology, though it developed as a conscious effort by Reformed Christians to radically follow Biblical principles. Government by elders is assumed in the Old Testament Church from the time of Moses. The Apostolic Church was ruled by Elders who had representative responsibilities placed on them by ordination.

B. A Presbyterian church is one which has a representative or federal government. Men are raised from the congregation to be overseers. They are ordained as Teaching Elders (pastor-teachers) or Ruling Elders.

C. In a local church the Elders form the Session, which is responsible for spiritual oversight. The Session also oversees physical welfare of the congregation, with the assistance of the Deacons. Teaching Elders and chosen Ruling Elders from several churches form the Presbytery. In the PCA, Teaching Elders are members of Presbytery, not the local church. A man may not be pastor of a local church without becoming a member of its district Presbytery. Presbytery's responsibility is to advise and guard the churches under its care and the pastors who are its members.

D. The Presbytery is the essential connecting link among churches of Presbyterian government. Usually, though, following the example of Acts 15, Presbyteries join in Synods and national Assemblies. The PCA meets as a national General Assembly. All teaching elders and selected Ruling elders are commissioned to attend an annual General Assembly. This body allows a national identity for the church, sets national policy, allows communication and debate throughout the church and operates evangelism and ministries on a scale a Presbytery could not accomplish.

E. A distinctive of the PCA's government is that churches are in voluntary association with their Presbytery and General Assembly. They may withdraw at any time, and the denomination has no claim to property or assets. Also, to limit bureaucracy, the PCA General Assembly maintains ministries by elected committees with limited terms, instead of agency boards of directors.

F. The sustaining strength for the spiritual life of the local church, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly comes from its Elders. They are to be nominated on the basis of stringent requirements, found in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, trained, and only then allowed to stand for election. After election by the people elders and deacons may be ordained. Though he may not always be an active pastor, or member of a Session or Diaconate, ordination is to a life ministry. A man is an Elder until he dies, asks that his ordination be set aside, or is removed from his ministry by the Presbytery after ecclesiastical trial.

3. It is a CHURCH.

A. It hardly seems distinctive to say that the Reformed Church is a Church, but many institutions call themselves churches. Most Evangelicals agree that some of them are not. The standing of others as true churches is debated. It is a serious charge that an institution has become apostate or has left the faith. Scripture relates, though, that this will occur. In some cases individual Christians and particular churches may cling to life within a system that has little or no Christian focus.

B. Reformed Christians follow the teaching of John Calvin that there are two marks which distinguish a true church: **"Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there, it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists."** --Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 4, Chapter 1, Section 9. Conservative Presbyterians have often been charged with forsaking denominations and splitting churches for no good reason. Historically, though, most separations have followed agonizing attempts to reform the church and on the basis that the original organization no longer met the two qualifications.

C. The Reformed Church is set up according to the understanding that God's Word reveals a covenantal relationship of members which includes their children. At baptism children join the church family just as Jewish infants were part of the community by circumcision. The church community accepts responsibility for its covenant children, helping the parents nurture them with the expectation that one day the child will make a reality of baptism's promise. Only believing, "communicant" members, however, may fully participate in the functioning of the church or may partake of the Lord's Supper.

D. The Reformed Church sees itself as a worshipping community to an extent some other churches do not. Congregational and home life has centered in the preaching of the Word and the worship of God as Sovereign Creator, Author of grace and Finisher of faith. Only practices approved by or inferred from the Bible are appropriate in Reformed worship. Fellowship has a subordinate role. Historically churches have avoided ornamentation or symbolic decor (such as a cross) or pictures of Christ as temptations to violate the Second Commandment. Pictures and symbols as decoration or teaching illustrations now usually are allowed.

### USING THIS TIMELINE

The modern church lives in an age of historical illiteracy. This is a problem if the past has a profound effect on the present. The following pages outline a short course in the American Calvinist tradition. The information doesn't cover the subject, though it may seem too detailed for many.

Use it as an overview and a guide for reference. Its purpose is to present a sweeping picture of some events, men and ideas who have an impact on American Presbyterian history. Other people, events, and strains of thought are left out. Each element included contributes to our historical distinctives.

Read it, but don't try to master details. Try to observe:

1. **Hints of a "golden thread" of Biblical faith God wove through the tapestry of the Church before the Reformation.** Though error grew, and the Bible fell into disuse, the world was never without witnesses who could be called "Reformed" Christians.
2. **How God prepared the soils of Germany, Scotland, and England for the seeds of justification by grace alone and the authority of Scripture alone.**
3. **A few of the Protestant reformers who particularly contributed to the Presbyterian heritage.** Note how soon reform and revival turned to years of decline.
4. **How alike were Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist Calvinists and the impact of these groups on American culture and government.**
5. **How often American church life is sparked by awakenings and then blown apart in schism.** Also notice how the errors of past centuries haunt the 20th-Century Presbyterian churches.
6. **How different groups came together in the PCA and how in some ways this movement has been similar to the 16th-Century Reformation.**

Put your own congregation into this timeline. What was happening . . . as it was begun? . . . when it declined or increased in members and spirituality? . . . when it left another denomination? . . . when it was part of one of the historic Reformed churches?

Think over what other things were going on in the country and world. Did these contribute to what you know your church did and became?

THE ROAD OF REFORMATION

Massive books are written to sum what we know as the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century. The Holy Spirit, however, had already done an extraordinary work of grace in the Church over hundreds of years before Luther and Calvin were born. The final chapter of His continuing work has not yet been written. The notes that follow sample sign posts along the road of reformation.

Beginnings:

There are two threads of the Reformed and Presbyterian movement which intertwine. We are, historically, people who hold a radical view of God's sovereignty and who radically adhere to His Word. From that view of Scripture come principles of church government.

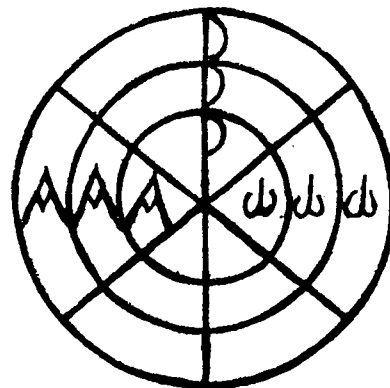
The threads can be followed easily through the early church. After the Apostolic Age they seem to be lost. The Scriptures were little available and less taught. Biblical doctrines and polity become submerged in politics and compromise with culture.

Yet, the struggle to preserve a pure gospel was present. What has been called a "golden thread" of truth was woven in the pattern. There was not a time when truth was totally unaccepted and untaught.

Truth passed through confessions and creeds. Biblical truths were taught by reformers, as they understood them. Movements that might be called Protestant, even Reformed, arose.

church Christians wrote statements about God to recite and teach. The earliest form of the Apostle's Creed was a confession of faith for adult believers at baptism. It was used before A.D. 180: **"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord."**

Confessions were born out of the effort to define Biblical truth in the midst of error: Who do we understand God to be? What is the Trinity? The Person of Jesus? The most important early confessions were written by church councils called by secular government to deal with disagreements. The major creedal defenses of faith we recognize today include:



**This catacomb sign confessed Christ as the sun. It is divided in three parts--the trinity. Intersecting lines form a "Charismon," a symbol for Christ.**

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**THE ROAD OF REFORMATION**

**--2nd Century, France: The Apostle's Creed.**

A baptismal statement confessing faith in the Father as Creator and the Son as Lord. It was expanded to confess doctrines of the work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. The expanded version has been faulted for its use of the words: "He descended into hell." One early heresy taught Christ's literal descent into hell. Some have edited out the sentence or changed "hell" to "grave." The Reformed Church usually does not, following the example of John Calvin. Calvin wrote that it is right to confess that Christ suffered the curse of hell on the cross.

**--A.D. 325, 381, Councils of Nicea, Constantinople:  
The Nicene (Constantinopolitan) Creed.**

The Council of Nicea was called by Emperor Constantine to resolve the controversy over Arianism. Arius taught that Christ was not truly God but a created being. He was of different substance from God, since God cannot change--an intermediate form between spiritual and physical worlds. The Council drew from baptismal statements to refute Arius. They proclaimed that the Father and the Son are of "one substance," and Jesus is "true God of true God." Nicea solved nothing. Arianism nearly destroyed the Christian faith. In 381 the orthodox had triumphed, but Arianism persisted, while other heresies were developing. What is today used as the Nicene Creed is a restated and expanded version prepared by the Council of Constantinople. Arianism remained strong in Eastern Christianity and exists today in Unitarian and modernist thought.

**--A.D. 451, Council of Chalcedon: The Chalcedonian  
Deliverance.**

Several serious errors arose in the church, particularly about how Christ exists at one time as both God and man. Some groups excluded Christ's deity as they chose to emphasize his humanity. Others so protected his deity that he was not considered true man. Still others granted both natures but not at the same time. The Council of Chalcedon set out to state all that could be said Scripturally about Christ as God and man. This was to be a wall beyond which future theology was not to go. The Council held that Christ was "complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man." He had "two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." Incarnate Jesus had two natures but one essence.

Creeds and confessions to which the Reformers looked taught what their framers saw the Bible teaching.

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**THE ROAD OF REFORMATION**

Just as confessions and creeds were used to purify and reform the church, so were men. Those whose lives and teachings preserved the golden thread of Biblical truth included. . .

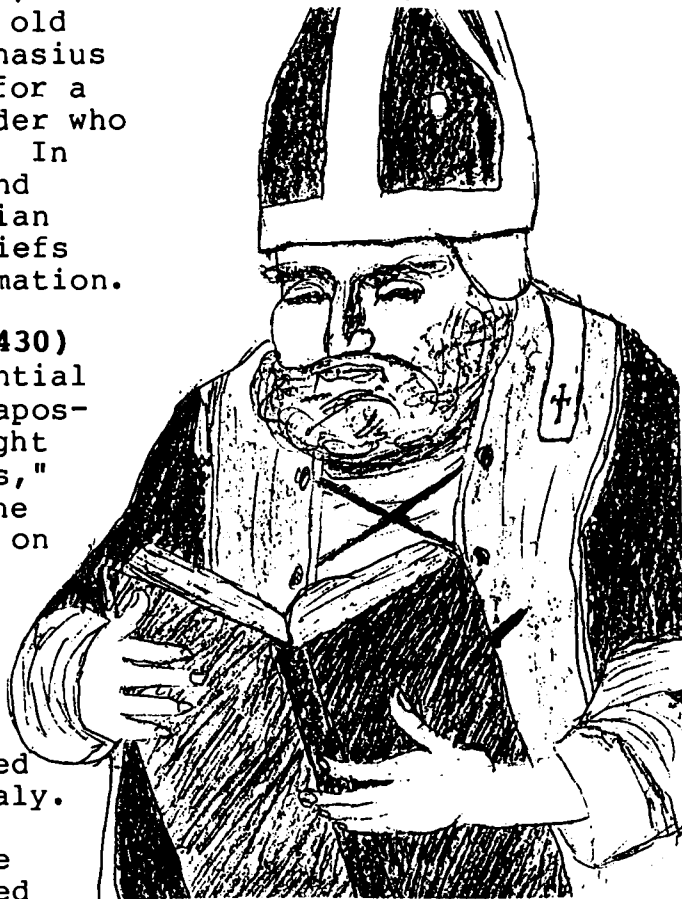
**Athanasius (c.296-373)** stood well under five feet tall and was called derisively "the black dwarf." Yet at great personal cost he stood in the gap as error seemed certain to extinguish the Christian light. A saying developed that in the Arian controversy of the Fourth Century it was "Athanasius against the world."

A black Egyptian, he was under 30 when he served as secretary to Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, at the Council of Nicea in 325. The feverish labors of Alexander and Athanasius won condemnation of Arius, who attacked doctrines of the Trinity, creation, and redemption. Already Athanasius had written a major work, On the Incarnation of the Word of God, which defended the Biblical view of Christ against Arius.

Alexander died three years later, and Athanasius became bishop. He ran head-on into the popular Arian beliefs. Few understood an eternal Son of God, so He must not have been eternal. Arians melted Christianity into old pagan beliefs. Five times Athanasius fled or was banished. He was, for a time, the only major church leader who defended historic Christianity. In 17 years of exile he preached and wrote, so that, when he died Arian paganism was waning. Arian beliefs continued, though, at the Reformation.

**Augustine of Hippo (354-430)** might be called the most influential Christian in history after the apostles. In fact, "Calvinists" might properly be called "Augustinians," so great was the influence of the Bishop of Hippo in north Africa on John Calvin.

Augustine's mother was a devout Christian, his father a Greek pagan. As a young man he drifted through life a skeptic until his unbelief was challenged by Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Italy. He thus understood both of the world views and how incompatible they were. As churchman he faced a series of errors.



**Augustine of Hippo**



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**THE ROAD OF REFORMATION**

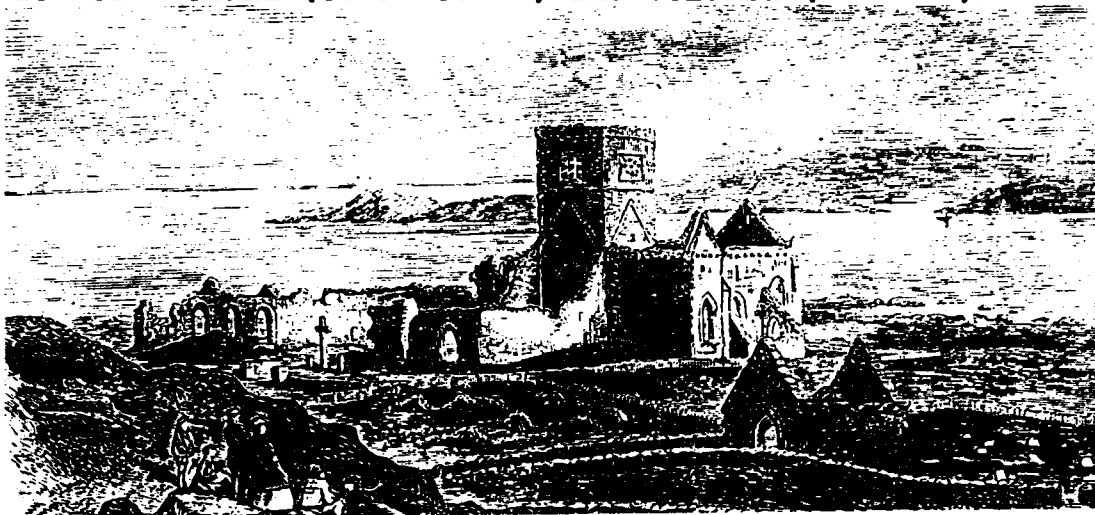
Augustine was known as a preacher and writer. He travelled about north Africa, debating Manichaeans, an Eastern mystical cult, and Donatists, a "modernist" movement to make Christianity relevant to Africans. His worst struggles were against Pelagians, a heresy that still plagues the Church. Pelagianism is ascetic and moralistic: Man did not totally fall. He can live a righteous life in his strength. He has a free will to accept or reject Christ.

Against such views Augustine wrote that man as a race fell totally into depravity. He is utterly helpless to save himself. Only by Christ's atoning work is salvation possible, and that by God's free grace. God is sovereign. His will is absolute. The Church is one city, built in the world but not of it. The world system is another city. The two cities coexist and intermingle, but they are forever separate and cannot truly communicate. They are of a different mind. One loves self. The other loves God.

Augustine's greatest writings are The Confessions, The Trinity, and The City of God. He also founded a monastic community that was a prototype of the seminary. Roman Catholics look to Augustine for his views on the Church. The Reformed community claims him as its first theologian.

Two men who ministered about a century from one another nurtured a church distinct from Rome. The church these men founded was not perfect, but it strived to be Biblical and was governed by some Presbyterian concepts. It lasted many centuries until it was wiped out in intense persecution. Even then dormant seeds may have remained which blossomed into a great Reformation movement.

This was the Celtic or Culdee Church of Ireland and Scotland. It can be traced to Roman times, but its great leaders were **Patrick of Ireland (c.390-c.461)** and **Columba (521-597)**.



**An artist's conception of Iona.**

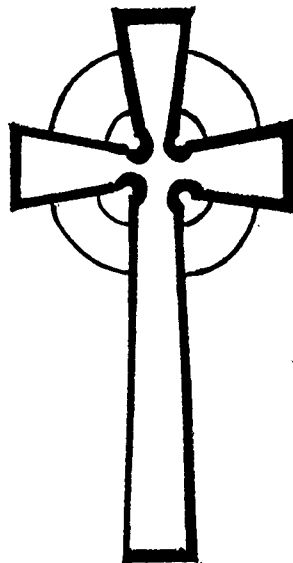
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**THE ROAD OF REFORMATION**

The life of "St. Patrick" is shrouded in legend, but enough is known to assure his place among early evangelical missionaries. He likely was born in England near Scotland. He was captured by Irish raiders at age 16 and made a slave. He was converted during this period, after being filled with a sense of his sinfulness. He escaped and went to Scotland but could not forget the darkness in the hearts of the people he had met in Ireland.

After a vision much like Paul's Macedonian call, Patrick returned to Ireland in about 432. Over the next 30 years he broke the power of the Druid priests and won many chieftains.

Columba was an Irish nobleman who, before his conversion, may have been responsible for a civil war. His past haunted him as, for reasons unclear, he left Ireland in 563 and journeyed to the cold, barren island of Iona off the coast of Scotland. There he founded a seminary or monastery. Students were allowed to marry and raise families. Many were sent out to preach the Gospel through Scotland and Europe.

The Culdee Church, arose in the 900s and it was put down by Romanists in the 14th century. It was centered at St. Andrews in Scotland where a university was founded. The scene of much of the Scottish Reformation less than 200 years later. The Culdees were highly influential. They were definitely evangelical.



**Celtic Cross**

strictly speaking, it lasted until put down in the 14th Century. It was centered at St. Andrews in Scotland where a university was founded. The scene of much of the Scottish Reformation later. The Culdees were highly influential. They were definitely evangelical.

There were other reform movements. Some came from within the Roman Church, especially among monks. These didn't last long. A few groups, however, were active long before Luther. The extent of their roles in the Reformation cannot be fully determined.

Waldensians exist today in Europe, and claim to have begun as a Fourth-Century revolt from error in the Church. Communities of evangelical believers have existed in the Alps for many centuries. They have tended to be more ascetic and charismatic than other Reformed groups. At times their numbers spread over Europe. More often they were hunted down and killed, and only their remote mountains kept them from extermination. Their name is from Peter Waldo, a wealthy 11th-Century French merchant who gave away his money and founded an evangelistic sect, "the Poor Men of Lyons." They affiliated with the other communities.



**John Wycliffe**

Closer to the later Reformation were the Lollards, disciples of the Oxford University scholar **John Wycliffe (c.1329-1384)**. Wycliffe (his name is spelled variously) so stirred reform in the church that his bones were dug up and burned in 1428. He likely would have been executed had he not had as friend Richard of Gaunt, the most powerful man in England. He attacked the Church's moral and spiritual worldliness. He scoffed at the doctrine that in the mass Christ physically changed into the bread and wine. Wycliffe anticipated Martin Luther when he condemned the sale of indulgences (sins forgiven for money) and attacked the Pope's claims to supernatural authority.

Wycliffe's great contribution, which made him "the Morning Star of the Reformation," was his preaching and work to translate the Latin Vulgate Bible into English.

The Lollard movement lasted until the Reformation. Its preachers wandered about with a Bible-based message. Wycliffe and his followers taught the authority of the Bible. Lollards often were hunted as criminals. Those captured often were tortured and burned at the stake; but they made England ripe for change.

Wycliffe's message also caused a reform movement in Bohemia. By 1453 there was an organized church, the Bohemian Brethren, which stopped some Roman Catholic practices. They were called Hussites for Jan Hus, who was burned at the Council of Constance in 1415. Hus called for very modest reforms. At his trial he freely offered to recant if his accusers could prove him wrong from the Bible. His execution was due more to the appeal to the Bible for authority than for anything he actually taught. Churchmen were afraid.

There was reason for fear. The Pope was weakened by war. The Church was divided and popes were ineffective or ruthless cutthroats. The medieval economy that had supported the church was changing. Preachers were only made more influential by martyrdom.

Events were moving to a climax. On the next pages are some events of the Reformation of Western Christianity. The timeline then turns to the American Church that grew from these forces.

MAJOR EVENTS OF THE REFORMATION

15th Century:

- 1453: The Hundred Years War, a costly, devastating period of conflict which has divided the Roman Church, ends. At the same time plagues decimate Europe, reviving spiritual interest.
- 1454: The single-most-important tool of the Reformation, the printing press, is developed by Johannes Gutenberg.

16th Century:

1511-1519: Martin Luther, a monk and professor at the University of Wittenberg, Germany, changes his concept of God through intense personal struggle. He has access to a Bible, and searches it for reason to hope for forgiveness beyond the sacraments. His conviction grows that man can be just before God only through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

c.1514: A Dutch humanist scholar, Erasmus, collects a critical edition of the Greek New Testament. Interest in Bible scholarship is kindled. Erasmus wants to change the church only from the inside and defends the Roman church against Luther. He does make way for renewed, passionate study of the Bible.



Martin Luther

1517: The Roman Church finances its projects by selling "indulgences." Buyers are assured they or their relatives will have less punishment in purgatory. Luther is angered by a particularly mercenary seller near Wittenberg. On Oct. 31 he nails "95 Theses," or arguments against the practice, to the castle church door. Luther doesn't imagine what he has begun.

1520: Attempts to bring Luther into line fail, and his popularity touches a raw nerve in Rome. Luther is ordered to take back his views. He refuses. His break with Rome is complete.

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**MAJOR EVENTS OF THE REFORMATION**

1521: Luther is excommunicated and fills tracts with what he sees wrong in the Church. Summoned to the Diet of Worms, he expects death. Before the emperor he declares: "Here I Stand, I can do no other." Luther leaves before he is condemned as a criminal heretic. Elector Frederick, a political leader

and sympathizer, kidnaps and hides Luther at Wartburg Castle. There Luther translates the New Testament into German.



**Ulrich Zwingli**

1523: Luther's tracts and books go into other countries. Interest grows in Scotland and England. A Swiss parish priest, Ulrich Zwingli, leads a Reformation. His Sixty-Seven Articles, is the first Reformed Confession.

1524-1525: Fueled by ideas of freedom from the Reformation, German peasants stage a bloody revolt and

expect Luther's support. When he instead calls on German princes to crush the rebels he falls into disrepute. Rapid change runs through the Church. Luther furiously works to direct what he has unintentionally begun.

1527: Luther writes the major hymn of the Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress." In England King Henry VIII uses the movement to blackmail Rome into granting a divorce from Catherine, who has not given him a male heir. The pope refuses to offend her royal relatives elsewhere, so Henry begins the English Reformation.

1528: In Scotland a young relative of the royal family is burned at the stake for spreading Lutheran views. The martyrdom of Patrick Hamilton, however, causes his influence to spread. Scotland becomes one of the more bloody battlegrounds.

1529: Followers of Luther are first called Protestants for their "protest" against persecution at the Diet of Speier. Luther meets Zwingli at Marburg Castle to see if a religious and military union is possible to protect the church from armies gathering to destroy it. The two agree, except about how to define the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Luther also fears armed action against the state. The alliance fails, and Geneva's early efforts at Reformation are doomed.

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**MAJOR EVENTS OF THE REFORMATION**

1530: The first major Protestant confession, the Augsburg Confession, is penned, mainly by Philip Melancthon.

1531: Protestant princes unite for protection in the Schmalkaldic League. No such protection is available for the Swiss, and Zwingli is killed in the defeat at the Battle of Kappel.



**John Calvin**

1532-1534: A young French scholar, Jean Calvin, is saved. By 1534 he is deep in studies of the Bible and Augustine's books. The English Reformation moves forward. Henry VIII issues edicts cutting ties between the English church and Rome but reforms leave intact most of Rome's theology.

1535: William Coverdale finishes his English translation of the Bible. He hides from those who fear such translation, but finally is betrayed, imprisoned, and executed.

1536: John Calvin publishes the first edition of his Institutes of the Christian Religion, a commentary on Christianity and defense presented to King Francis I of France. The work is expanded in several editions through 1559. Its power comes from its intense devotion to God and His Word. Calvin draws from Augustine and other Christians, harmonizing their thought with the Bible. He contributes most to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The newly-popular leader is badgered by French reformer Guillaume Farel into taking over the Reformation of Geneva, Switzerland.

1538: Calvin and Farel are expelled from Geneva by citizens irate over their strict ideas of morality. Calvin is asked to return in 1541 and remains until his death in 1564.

1542: The Inquisition is reinstated by Pope Paul III to deal with the Protestant heresy. The Roman Church recovers from its initial impotence and begins a "Counter-Reformation." This movement brings reform to the Roman Church and aggressively promotes persecution of Protestants. One force in this war is the Society of Jesus or Jesuit order, approved in 1540. The Jesuits are a missions-minded and militaristic order of monks who give themselves totally to defending the faith through every means necessary.

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**MAJOR EVENTS OF THE REFORMATION**

1545-1563: The Council of Trent meets to deal with the Protestant threat. An attempt is made to negotiate them back into the church. When that fails the Council, over several years, develops strict stands on orthodoxy. The Roman Church is revitalized. Trent decrees are considered inspired by conservative Catholics until the Second Vatican Council, 1963.

1546: Scottish Reformer George Wishart is tried for heresy and sedition and burned at the stake at St. Andrews, Scotland. His support is so strong that cannon must be trained on the stake to prevent a rescue.

1547: A small army of Scot Protestants occupy St. Andrews castle. John Knox, an associate of Wishart's, is called to minister there. A French squadron of warships forces the castle to surrender, and Knox is among those forced to serve as galley slaves on French ships. He eventually is released and finally goes to Geneva to study with John Calvin. In 1547 a Lutheran army is defeated at the Battle of Muhlberg. After this battle negotiations lead to a tentative peace, the "Leipzig Interim." England's Henry VIII dies, and the crown goes to his son, Edward VI, a Calvinist.



**John Knox**

1550s: Roman Catholic governments begin deadly persecution, but a maturing Protestant Church is in place, stressing education of its pastors in centers such as Calvin's Geneva. The school at Geneva trains many English who have fled England in 1554 after Mary Tudor succeeds Edward to the throne. Mary is a strong Romanist and executes hundreds in her attempt to reinstitute papal control. Many French Calvinists are educated in Geneva and sent to almost certain death in France as missionaries.

1555: The Peace of Augsburg ends the warring in Germany.

1556: The first group of French Calvinist Huguenots migrates to the New World, beginning a settlement in Florida. They are massacred by the Spanish.

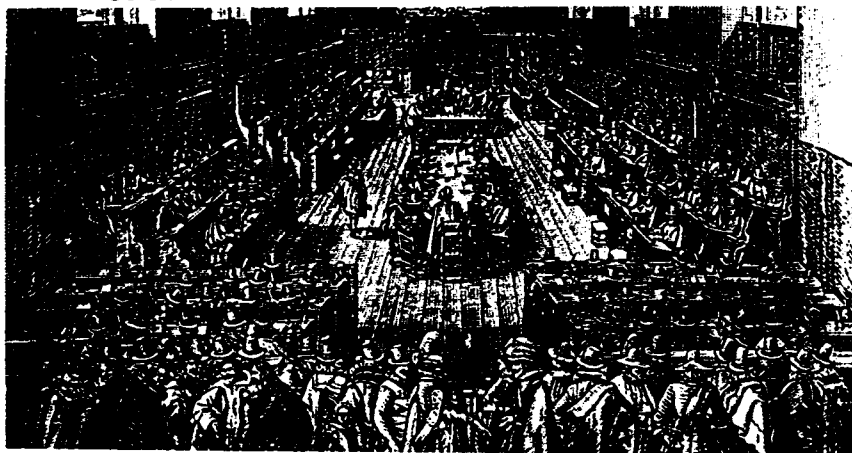
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**MAJOR EVENTS OF THE REFORMATION**

- 1557: Queen Elizabeth rules England. She is less interested in religion than in unity and ends most persecution. A middle-of-the-road Protestantism settles into England under royal supervision, the Anglican church. It is an Episcopal church with a Reformed tone to its theology. Out of the Geneva-trained exiles comes a new English movement--the Puritans. Knox also returns in 1557 to Scotland.
- 1559: Calvinist Confessions are written throughout Scotland and in France. From this point the Protestant Church is more concerned with internal heresy than survival. The Scottish Reformation is only beginning, but its success is assured. With 1560 the initial Reformation era is over, except in Scotland, France, and Holland.
- 1567: Holland and Belgium become a bloody battleground. Civil government and Rome suppress Protestants by inquisition. As many as 18,000 die and thousands flee, but a strong, Calvinist church is born under the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism. It also endured through internal strife before the American colony of New Amsterdam brought the Dutch Reformed faith to America in the 1620s.
- 1567-1638: After the initial Reformation, Scotland immediately enters a struggle with the monarchy over who will control the church. Protestants see Romanism reintroduced by the back door in a system of Episcopal bishops. Rulers believe they will not control the people without controlling the church. English, led by the Puritans, wage a similar battle which finally breaks into civil war in 1643. The fight goes on in Scotland for another century after that, but its high points are 1638 and 1643 when Scottish churchmen sign a National Covenant with God and renew it with England in the Solemn League and Covenant. The "Covenanter" church is born. Many "extremist Presbyterian" Covenanters are banished or taken as slaves to America in the 1680s. More take refuge in Ireland and migrate around 1720.
- 1559-1685: Two of the peoples forming American Calvinism are the Dutch and the Scots. The third is the French Huguenot, whose struggle for acceptance is long and bitter. After Protestants come to some power in 1559, frightened Roman Catholics and Calvinists trade assassinations and executions until the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre (1572), when many thousands of Huguenots are slaughtered within a few days. A civil war does not end until the Edict of Nantes grants rights to Huguenots in 1598. A militant government revokes those rights in 1685, and virtually every Calvinist, most of France's educated people, leave the country.



MAJOR REFORMED CONFESSIONS

- 1556, Scotland: "The Little Catechism," a child's catechism based on Calvin's.
- 1559, Paris, France: The Gallican Confession, secretly written by French Huguenots and confirmed after peace was declared in 1571.
- 1560, Scotland: Scottish Confession of Faith, the founding document of the Scottish Reformation.
- 1561, Antwerp, Belgium: Belgic Confession, a secret Calvinistic confession officially adopted in 1566, along with the Heidelberg Catechism. In 1567 the faith of the Dutch Reformed community is fiercely tried. Fernando of Toledo, Duke of Alva, a Spanish military envoy of Rome, begins an inquisition that leaves 18,000 dead.
- 1563, Germany: Heidelberg Catechism.
- 1566, Switzerland: Second Helvetic Confession, a long statement of Calvinist doctrines which Charles Hodge later called the most authoritative confession of the church.
- 1619, Dordrecht, Holland: Canons of Dordt, original statement of the "five points of Calvinism." Written against Arminianism, it became foundational to the Dutch Reformed churches.
- 1646-1648, London, England: Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the standards for doctrine in the Reformed churches in Scotland, Canada, and the Americas.



The Synod of Dordt, 1618.

MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA

17th Century:

1619: Puritan "Separatists," called Pilgrims, arrive on Cape Cod. Differences among Puritans had to do with church relationship to the state.

1620-1624: The great wave of separatist migration to New World.

1628: Jonas Michaelius, first Dutch Reformed Minister, arrives on Manhattan Island.

1630-1650: Non-separatist Puritans arrive in great numbers.

1636: Harvard College founded to train American pastors.

1638: The National Covenant is signed by Scotland's Presbyterians, proclaiming King Jesus as the only ruler of His Kirk. Monarchists believe they can only rule a nation with an Episcopal church, in which the king has ultimate authority.

1642: Thomas Mayhew begins Reformed missions in the colonies as evangelist to Indians. Puritan leaders begin to speak of decline in godliness. The second generation of American Puritans avoids the rigorous religion of their parents.

1643: The Solemn League and Covenant, signed by parliaments of England and Scotland, guarantees religious freedom to Presbyterians and begins a civil war with the forces of the king. Parliament wins, and Charles I is executed.

1646: John Eliot begins 50-year missions career among whites, Indians, and black slaves in New England. In 1662 he finishes work on the first Indian translation, Mohecan.

1647: The Westminster Confession of Faith is finished in London and adopted by the Scottish General Assembly. Massachusetts mandates universal education of children so that all can read the Bible and not be "deluded" by Satan.

1648: The Cambridge Platform establishes Congregational rule in English colonies with Reformed doctrines. In practice, though, Puritan church government is organized at a under church courts very Presbyterian in nature.



**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-19**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1660-1688: Restoration of the Stuart Monarchy of Charles II begins a bitter war against dissenter Presbyterians in Scotland, known as The "killing time." About 18,000 Covenanters die.
- 1662: The Colonial church, faced with children who seem disinterested in Christian duty, lowers requirements for church membership in "the Half-Way Covenant." Spirituality declines.
- 1664: Dutch New Amsterdam falls to English warships and is renamed New York. Dutch Reformed pastors are allowed to remain.
- 1674: A period of sporadic revival, the "five harvests," begins among Puritans. Church leaders are increasingly distraught over the worldliness and spiritual decline of the people.
- 1675: King Philip's War devastates communities of Christian Indians and ends Indian evangelism.
- 1683: Francis Makemie makes first voyage to colonies, surveying mission opportunities for the Presbytery of Laggan, Ireland.
- 1685: The Edict of Nantes, which had protected French Protestants for about 100 years, is revoked. About 160,000 Huguenots migrate, many to America, devastating French Christianity.
- 1689: The Heads of Agreement, a strong confessional paper, is signed in London by Congregationalists and Presbyterians. It becomes a theological basis for joint American missions.



**Immanuel Kant**

1691: Makemie, a Presbyterian, is chosen agent/missionary to America under the Heads of Agreement.

**18th Century:**

The 18th Century is a "century of reason and renewal." Religious war and persecution mostly end. The emerging threat is a philosophy--Rationalism. Growing out of science's study of creation as God's handiwork, Rationalism sets mind over God.

The beauty of Christianity is no longer its truth but its reasonableness. A new Humanism develops and a new religion, Deism, makes man the measure.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-20**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

Deism arises in England with philosophers David Hume, John Locke, and John Toland. Higher Criticism (demythologizing a man-written Bible), naturalistic theories of origins, Karl Marx's Communistic economics, Unitarianism, and the atheism of the French Revolution. . .all are rooted in Deism. Its man-honoring premises, though, are challenged by Immanuel Kant.

Kant teaches that man cannot reason his way to God. Man cannot know God at all. He can only move toward God through a feeling that something beyond man must exist. Every important theology developed since Kant, from Friedrich Schleiermacher to Karl Barth, has been influenced by his ideas. The modernist church was born in 18th-Century Rationalism and Kant's philosophy.

\* \* \*

- 1700: Puritan leader Solomon Stoddard teaches that taking communion is a means of conversion. The heresy is popular among Puritans worried about their worldly children.
- 1701: Scottish Presbyterians first called "Reformed." Puritan leaders worry about teachings at Harvard, so another college, Yale, is organized.
- 1706: The Presbytery of Philadelphia (or General Presbytery) is organized as the first independent, American church court.
- 1708: The Saybrook Platform is approved by Connecticut Congregational churches. It affirms the Savoy Confession, which adopted The Westminster Confession in every aspect except church government. The Saybrook Platform goes beyond this in setting up presbytery-like "consociations" with oversight power over local churches. Because of this it is often stated that 18th-Century New England Puritanism was a Presbyterian movement in every respect but name.
- 1716: A General Synod erected with four presbyteries, America's first synod, patterned on the Church of Scotland.
- 1720-1745: First wave of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians arrives.
- 1722: The American church begins internal turmoil over how firmly pastors must subscribe to Westminster Confession. This argument eventually leads to New Side-Old Side schism.
- 1727: The Moravian Brethren, fugitives from Moravia, begin a 100-year prayer vigil at Herrnhut, Germany. Their missions effort sends one of every 60 Moravians to a foreign field, many to the Americas. Moravians are the only major German Evangelicals to withstand 19th-Century German liberalism.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-21**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

The Great Awakening begins in the work of Dutch minister Theodore Frelinghuysen and a young pastor, Gilbert Tennent. In 1727 Gilbert and his father, William, build a log cabin in Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, to train ministers. The "Log College" is strongly evangelistic and influences its graduates to become avid revivalists. Philadelphia Synod refuses to ordain "Log College" men, and Gilbert Tennent counters that their detractors are really unconverted. The controversy boils into the Old Side-New Side schism.



**"The Log College," Neshaminy, Pennsylvania.**



**Jonathan Edwards**

1729: Westminster Confession is adopted as the standard for the General Synod. The struggle for consensus ends in a compromise which isn't strong enough to avoid schism. The Old Side passes a stronger statement in 1736.

1735: The "Great Awakening" is underway with a revival led by Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Mass.

1740: High mark of the First Great Awakening with revivals, particularly under a Reformed Anglican, George Whitefield.

1741-1758: American Presbyterians divided in New Side-Old-Side controversy.

1743: Alexander Craighead and American Reformed Scot leaders sign a renewed "National League and Covenant" in Pennsylvania, bringing the concept of a national covenant to America.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-22**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1746: The College of New Jersey, later to become Princeton University, is founded as a reaction to Arminian teachings at other colleges in America.
- 1749: Jonathan Edwards publishes the memoirs of Indian missionary David Brainerd. Fifty years later this book excites the world missions movement in England and America.
- 1756-1763: The religion of rationalistic Deism sweeps into America with English soldiers fighting in the French and Indian War. It infects some Episcopalian and Congregational churches and colleges on the Eastern Seaboard.
- 1775-1783: American-British hostilities break into revolution. Historians argue about the influence of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in the revolutionary movement. The idea of a national covenant between America and its God seems to have played a role. Presbyterians were vitally involved in the struggle. Scottish educator John Witherspoon was a key member in the Continental Congress and was hunted as a conspirator by the English.
- 1780: Robert Raikes opens a school in the slums of Gloucester, England, which develops over the next half century into the Sunday school movement.
- 1781: Immanuel Kant writes Critique of Pure Reason which argues that knowledge of God is impossible. Much of subsequent liberalism is reaction to Kant.
- 1782: Reformed Presbyterians constitute the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, breaking ties with the Scottish Church at the end of the American Revolution. The denomination is a merger of Reformed and Associate Presbyterians. Spiritual descendants of these churchmen later form the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod, and, in 1965, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, today part of the Presbyterian Church in America.
- 1783: The end of American Revolution creates materialist frenzy and an uncertain time for Christians. Spiritual life is at low ebb. Unitarianism introduced as competing religion.
- 1787: Hampden-Sydney College is the scene of intense religious awakening among Congregationalists and Presbyterians.
- 1788: Adopting Synod constitutes a national American Presbyterian Church. Associate Reformed Presbyterians also organize as the Reformed Presbytery, making the ARP church one year older than the PCUSA.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-23**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1789: First General Assembly meets in Philadelphia. Revolution begins in France.
- 1790: Missionaries sent out by General Assembly to the frontier.
- 1793: English Missionary William Carey sails for India. In France the darkest days of the Reign of Terror are underway. Many Americans who had supported the Revolution and its religious freedom are embarrassed. Preachers demand national repentance to escape such judgment. As if to underscore that call, disease rips through eastern cities.



**William Carey**

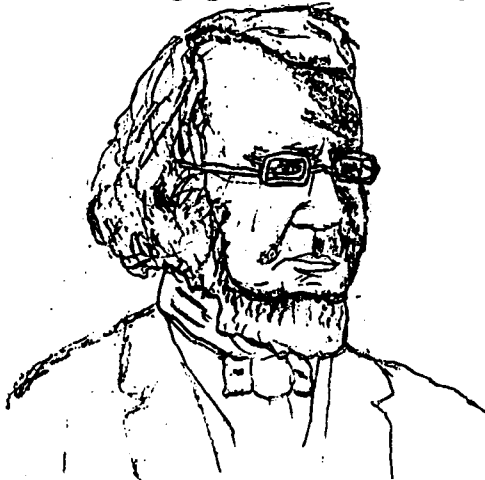
- 1795: Duanesburg, N.Y., congregation of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church formed. It is the oldest still-existing congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian churches.
- 1797: Kentucky revivals begin under Presbyterian preaching as preparatory services for the Lord's Supper.
- 1799-1800: Second Great Awakening underway in Kentucky, New York. Mass camp meetings on the frontier eventually take on an hysterical, anti-Calvinist fervor.

**19th Century:**

- 1801: Congregational and Presbyterian bodies approve a "Plan of Union" for joint missions on the frontier. This leads to more liberal, social activist and non-Presbyterian churches who have voting rights in the Presbyterian General Assembly. The Old School-New School controversy grows from this arrangement.
- 1802: The Synod of Pittsburgh organizes the first major Presbyterian missions program. Fueled by reports of the work of Carey in India, missions becomes more important.
- 1803: PCUSA General Assembly appoints its first missions agency, the Standing Committee on Missions. It is interested in frontier church planting. Some Kentucky Presbyterians leave the church in a dispute over revivals. This "New Light Schism" creates Christian and Church of Christ groups.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-24**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1805-1810: The second revival controversy ends with separation of a group of western Presbyterians who disavow Calvinism. The group forms the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.
- 1806-1808: Williams College Revival stimulates creation of the world missions movement and formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM).
- 1809: The Reformed Presbyterian Church in America, General Synod, (Covenanters) is constituted.
- 1812: The first ABCFM missionaries leave for India. Princeton Seminary is founded in 1811, but Archibald Alexander is named its first professor in 1812. Alexander had fought for establishment of a PCUSA denominational seminary. The "Princeton Theology" was a bulwark of conservative, reformed evangelicalism and world evangelism from 1812 to about 1921, when modern theology was introduced and the Princeton conservative B.B. Warfield died.
- 1815-1818: Revival sweeps the Eastern states. The first Presbyterian evangelist, Asahel Nettleton, has his greatest success. His ministry is cut short in 1821 when he contracts typhus. He is too weak to continue mass preaching.
- 1820s: Founding years for many missions and tract societies which



**Charles Hodge**

downplay theology. Presbyterians are badly split and many are infected by liberal teachings at American seminaries.

1824: Evangelist Charles Finney is ordained to Presbyterian ministry despite his recent conversion, lack of education, and hatred of orthodox doctrines. His emotional preaching soon sweeps the country.

1831-1837: Conservatives led by pastor/evangelist Ashbel Green, Princeton theolo-

gian Charles Hodge, and young southern leaders such as James Henley Thornwell try to reform the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which had fallen prey to a liberal activism and nonPresbyterian government on the frontier through the Plan of Union. Their "Old School" movement eventually succeeds, at great cost. "New School" churches are forced from the PCUSA in 1837.



YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-25  
MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA

- 1833: The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, General Synod, splits in a controversy over the U.S. Constitution as a pagan document which had rejected the National League and Covenant. This became known as the Disruption of 1833. The more moderate, "New Light" wing is ancestor to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod. It declines late in the 1800s as the body abandons Covenanter distinctives.
- 1840: Presbyterian Church in the USA (New School) organizes.
- 1840-1860: While the U.S. moves toward civil war, Old and New School churches are active in missions and revivals.
- 1848: Karl Marx writes A Communist Manifesto.
- 1858-1859: A prayer group of businessmen on Wall Street in New York City explodes into an urban revival movement, the last American movement which developed spontaneously from prayer. The awakening subsides only as war breaks out.
- 1858: Associate Presbyterian synods in the United States, descended from the seceder movement in Scotland in 1733, merge to constitute the United Presbyterian Church. Exactly a century later, in 1958, the United Presbyterian Church merges into the northern Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to create the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.
- 1859: Charles Darwin publishes On the Origin of Species. Darwin is not the first to develop evolutionary theories, but his book, based on voyages made during the 1830s, popularizes the theory and gives it the ring of irrefutable science. Within 20 years major churchmen are trying to reconcile Genesis with the new "truth."
- 1861: The Southern branch of the Old School PCUSA withdraws to Create the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, directed primarily by southern theologian James H. Thornwell. During the war thousands of Confederate soldiers are converted in field meetings. A world missions effort also is begun by the PCCSA.



James H. Thornwell

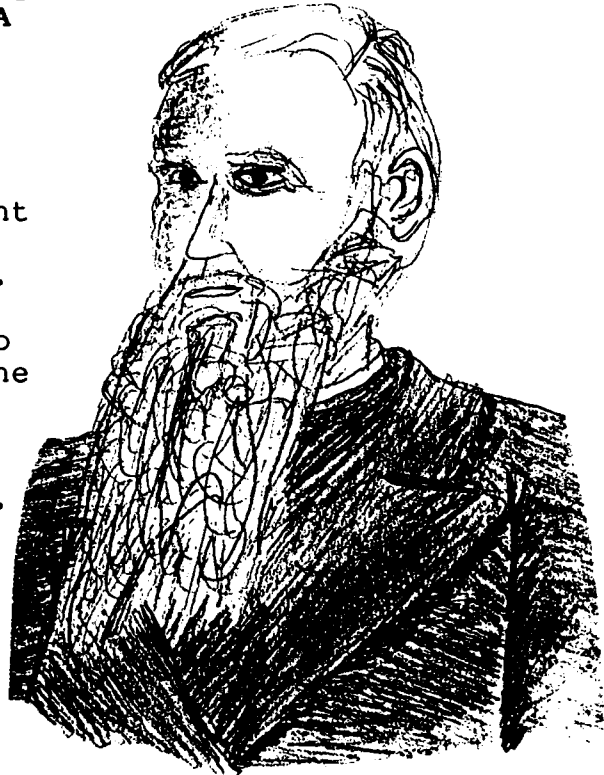
**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-26**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

1864: Old and New School churches reunite in the South. The New School is weak. Most of its ministers have been taught by Old School professors, so both groups are conservative.

1865: The PCCSA changes its name to the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS). An offer by the Northern Church to reunite has such harsh terms it is rejected at once.

1866: The southern PCUS opens its first foreign mission as a denomination, in China under J. Leighton Wilson.

1869: Northern Old School and New School branches rejoin on a basis of compromise. The PCUS avoids involvement.



**PCUS theologian  
Robert Dabney**

1870s: The influence of Darwinian evolution is felt in the PCUSA. Many teach a God-directed version of evolution. Missions and Sunday schools advance. So does an almost pantheistic liberalism which denies inerrancy of the Bible and has a weak view of God and salvation. Conservatives win a series of heresy trials of the 1880s and 1890s, but the PCUSA drifts leftward by 1900. The PCUS is relatively untouched.

1870-1899: Dwight L. Moody influences a wave of mass evangelism in U.S. through his eastern tabernacle revivals.

1880s-1890s: Northern Presbyterians are active in urban evangelism with large city revivals.

1880-1916: Height of influence of "Classic Liberalism."

1892: Meeting in Portland, Oregon, the PCUSA Assembly affirms the inerrancy of Scripture in the "Portland Deliverance." The 1892 and 1893 General Assemblies declare the Scriptures to be without error in the original autographs. Conservatives believe the battle against liberalism won.

1893-1894: A series of heresy trials tests relative strengths of PCUSA liberals and conservatives. Liberals win battles in presbytery, but all cases are eventually decided in favor of the conservative position at the General Assembly level.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-27**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

1895: A Niagara, N.Y., Conference announces what comes to be known as the "Fundamentals" of the Christian faith, by which the church is to discern serious attacks on historic faith. The five points adopted were: The virgin birth of Jesus Christ; his physical resurrection from the dead; the inerrancy of all Scripture; Christ's substitutionary atonement for sin; and his imminent physical return.

\* \* \*

By the dawn of the 20th Century every element of the Fundamentalist-Modernist battle is in place. The modernist movements of the 1900s--Neoorthodoxy, Process Theology, Liberation Theology--are old ideas. "Radical theology," growing out of the "Death of God" theology of the 1960s, is a logical conclusion.

Those basic ideas:

1. **Immanuel Kant:** Man has a moral need to have a god, but he can't know him.
2. **Georg Hegel:** God is everywhere, in everything. God is a universal spirit, and religion an imaginative way of looking at the universe.
3. **Friedrich Schleiermacher:** God is real because man is a dependent creature. The reality of God, the Bible and spiritual experience is in the mind and must be felt, not known. Man decides on what he will depend as god and takes a leap of faith toward that concept.
4. **Albrecht Ritschl:** Christianity is a social consciousness, a subjective feeling and set of value judgments.

These concepts grew from Rationalism and honored scientific reality and man's mind. They were steeped in Romantic idealism, which sought a deeper reality and experience but also worshipped the mind. A strange faith resulted. Its doctrines:

1. God is close (immanent) and cannot be separated from the universe (pantheism).
2. There can be no direct revelation so the Bible is strictly a human document.
3. There is no difference between natural and supernatural, so Christ cannot be divine.
4. Man is essentially good and holds a species responsibility to help others as he evolves towards perfection.
5. Salvation, whatever is meant by that term, is universal. There can be no hell or judgment.
6. Ethics is subjective, situational, changing. There is no basis for a moral absolute.
7. The gospel is a social force for the perceived good of the world. Christ "saves" as we follow his example.

YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-28  
MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA

20th Century:

- 1903: The PCUSA revises the Westminster Confession of Faith. The changes stress universal brotherhood, reject the possibility a child dying in infancy is not elect, and downplay eternal decrees. The compromise changes satisfy neither side. A "Workingman's Department," is founded to aid unionism.
- 1906: Non-Calvinist Cumberland Presbyterians reunite with the PCUSA, a union opposed more by conservative Cumberlanders than in the PCUSA. The Cumberland church splits.
- 1907: Walter Rauschenbusch publishes Christianity and Social Crisis, an eloquent argument for liberal social action.
- 1908: Federal Council of Churches organized in Philadelphia, Pa.
- 1909: The Scotfield Reference Bible is introduced, popularizing the dispensational/premillennial view. Charles Scofield's notes are so widely used by conservative churches that some Presbyterians swing to the Scofield viewpoint.
- 1910: World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland, calls for ecumenical missions with fewer doctrinal distinctions.
- 1910-1915: A series of books, The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth, are widely published. Soon all Conservative Christians are labelled "Fundamentalists."
- 1914: J. Ross Stevenson, an educator who believes all views should be taught, is chosen president of Princeton Seminary.

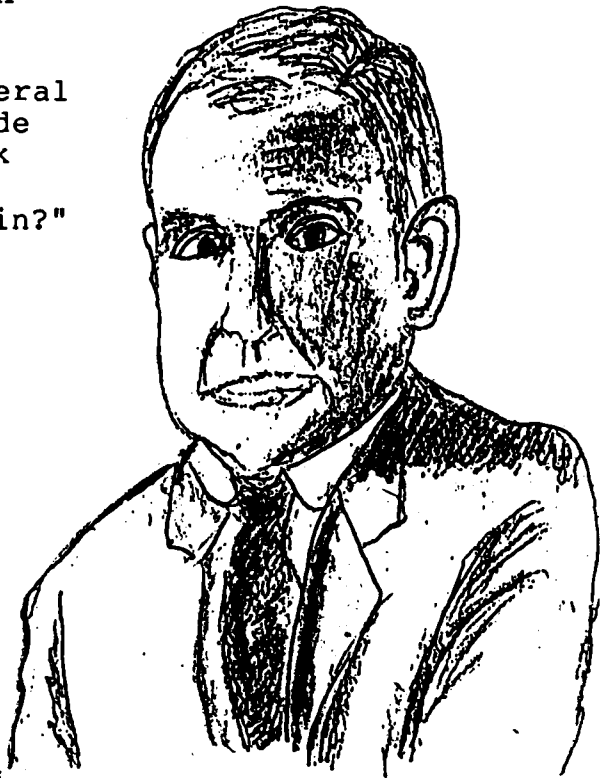


Karl Barth

- 1914-1918: The horror of World War shocks liberals who teach the social evolution of man.
- 1918: Barth writes his commentary on Romans, offering the alternative to liberalism, of "Neoorthodoxy."
- 1920: Lambeth Appeal by the Lambeth Conference in London for a "world church." This becomes a popular theme.
- 1920s-1940s: Nihilism becomes a force. Its philosophy influences German Nazism.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-29**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1922: Harry Emerson Fosdick, a liberal Baptist preaching at Riverside Presbyterian Church, New York City, publishes a sermon, "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" He challenges the church to rise against conservatives.
- 1923: J. Gresham Machen publishes Christianity and Liberalism, a major step for orthodox Christians in declaring Liberal Christianity an entirely different religion, utterly incompatible with historic Christianity. Christ was example to the Liberal; he was Savior to the Christian.
- 1924: Liberals publish the "Auburn Affirmation," signed by 1,274 Presbyterian ministers. It asserts that Presbyterians are at liberty to believe and teach any doctrine within vague bounds of Christianity. The Bible is declared not to be inerrant. Conservatives are accused of going beyond the claims of Scripture and the bonds of Christian charity.
- 1925: New York Presbytery challenges the right of the PCUSA General Assembly to say who a presbytery can ordain.
- 1926: The conservatives' battle for control of the PCUSA is lost. They become a vocal minority at the General Assembly.
- 1929: The PCUSA reorganizes Princeton Seminary. Robert Dick Wilson, O.T. Allis, J. Gresham Machen, and Cornelius Van Til resign and begin Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA. At Harvard, Alfred North Whitehead writes Process and Reality, inaugurating "Process Theology."
- 1930s: The dominant force in American Presbyterian life, especially among pastors coming out of Princeton and Union seminaries, shifts from the old liberal, outright rejection of faith to Neoorthodoxy, which made faith a fuzzy, subjective, inner belief. Social activism replaces evangelism as the outward focus of Presbyterians.
- 1930: The PCUSA permits ordination of a woman ruling elder.



**J. Gresham Machen**

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-30**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1933: Warning of drift in Presbyterian missions, J. Gresham Machen and other leaders organize the Independent Board for Foreign Missions as a sending agency for missionaries.
- 1934: In Germany 140 conservative and Neoorthodox pastors and theologians sign a six-point Barmen Declaration condemning Nazism. The statement, by Karl Barth, becomes a rallying cry for Christians in Europe but has less impact in the U.S. The 146th General Assembly of the PCUSA issues the "Mandate of 1934." This action castigates the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, inferring that PCUSA boards must be supported, whatever their actions. Missionaries are forbidden to go under the Independent Board. Its members must drop affiliation or face disciplinary action. Charges are filed in the presbyteries of Machen, J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., Carl McIntire, H. McAllister Griffiths, Merrill T. MacPherson, Edwin H. Rian, Charles J. Woodbridge, Paul Woolley, and Harold S. Laird. The Rockefeller Layman's Commission, funded by John D. Rockefeller Foundation, issues the report, Rethinking Missions. The study urges foreign missionaries to stop stressing the Gospel and to concentrate on the physical needs of the people with whom they are serving. The report gives new urgency to the men of the Independent Board, along with the rising acceptance and popularity of an agnostic missionary, Pearl S. Buck.



**J. Oliver Buswell, Jr.**

1936: Charges are upheld at General Assembly against men on the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions. The Presbyterian Church of America is formed by 34 teaching and 17 ruling elders, leaving the PCUSA on June 11. In 1938 the name is changed to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In 1936 the Department of Social Education introduces an activist social agenda into the UPCUSA.

1937: Dr. Machen dies. Without his leadership, disagreement over OPC positions on the return of Christ and a demand for total abstinence from alcohol as a condition for membership split the new church. The Bible Presbyterian Synod withdraws. Faith Seminary is formed by Bible Presbyterians at Wilmington, Del.

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-31**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

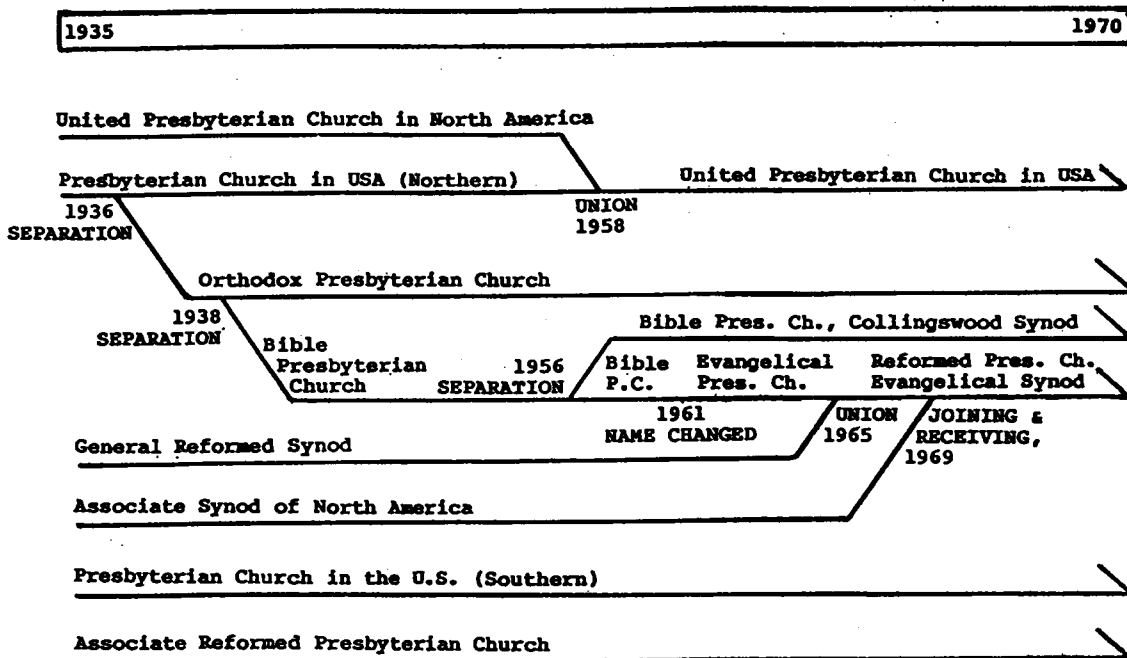
- c. 1940: Sometime during the late 1930s or early 1940s the Fellowship of St. James begins as a study group of Union Seminary alumni. This group grows into an ecumenist power bloc of the southern Presbyterian church. Conservatives believe it instrumental in watering down PCUS theology so union with the PCUSA and other denominations might be achieved.
- 1940s: Talks aim at uniting PCUSA, PCUS, and the United Presbyterian Church in North America (UPCNA). Evangelicals fight the proposal. A "Continuing Church Committee" organizes.
- 1942: In May a new magazine, The Southern Presbyterian Journal, publishes its first issue. This conservative voice, edited by Henry B. Dendy, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Weaverville, NC, is a major reason union between northern and southern churches fails in 1954.
- 1944: The National Association of Evangelicals is organized.
- 1945: The Presbyterian Outlook, edited by Presbyterian historian Ernest Trice Thompson, a member of the Fellowship of St. James, begins a vocal campaign for union.
- 1948: A World Council of Churches founded in Amsterdam. The northern PCUSA is a charter member.
- 1949: The PCUS changes its government to a system of bureaucratic boards. Conservative members meet in Weaverville, NC, for a rally that will grow into the annual "Journal Day." By the 1960s more than 700 assemble in Weaverville annually to discuss the plight of the PCUS.



**William E. Hill, Jr.**

- 1950: A National Council of Churches replaces the old Federal Council of Churches.
- 1950s: A new evangelistic emphasis begins among southern churches. Some move away from modernist theology. This revival movement is a particular vision of the Rev. William E. Hill of Hopewell, VA. His work grows into the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship (PEF), a uniting of PCUS evangelicals.

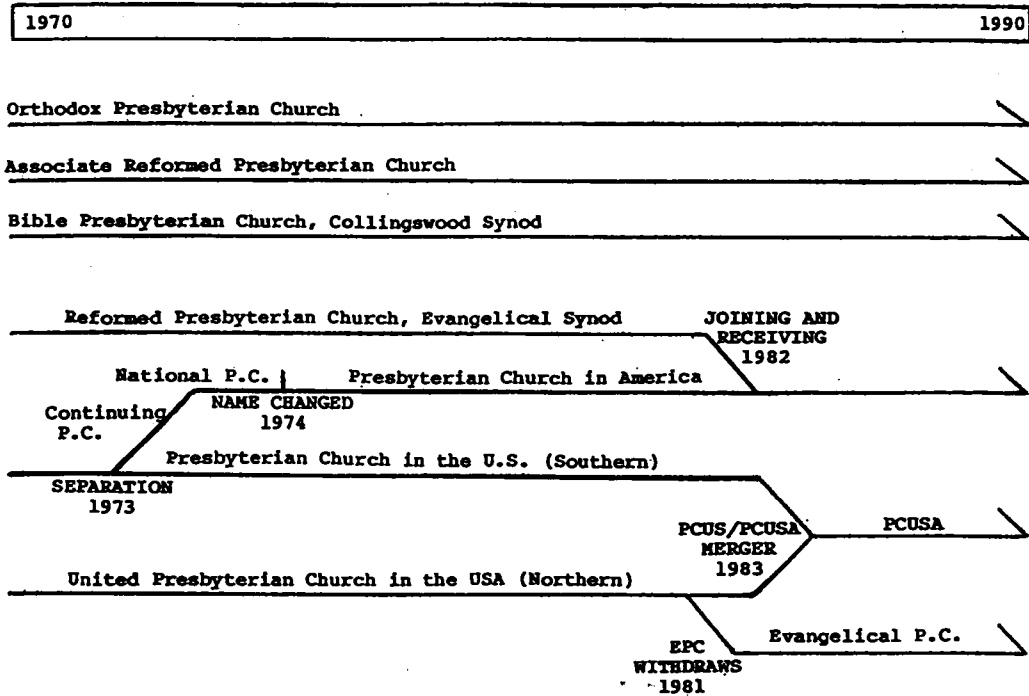
**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-32**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**



- 1953: Senator Joseph McCarthy's hearings and Cold War feelings after the Korean War divide Christians. Among the divided are Bible Presbyterians. Many are troubled by actions of the American Council and International Council of Christian Churches. A majority of Bible Presbyterians disagree with charges made against Christians who have not "separated" from worldly churches in the judgment of ACCC/ICCC leaders. Some statements seem exaggerated or inaccurate. The ACCC and ICC executive committee also tended to by-pass church courts and was regarded as unPresbyterian in its structure.
- 1954: Northern and southern Presbyterians and United Presbyterian Church in North America send their plan of union to presbyteries. The plan is soundly rejected. Conservative PCUS members organize Belhaven College to train future ministers. Brown vs. Board of Education focuses church consciousness on civil rights issues and segregation.
- 1955: Covenant College and Covenant Seminary are founded as denominational institutions at St. Louis, Mo. The Synod establishes its own ministry agencies, avoiding use of those of the American and International councils and the Independent Board. In anger, Dr. McIntire leads a walkout from the St. Louis Synod meeting over this policy.
- 1956: Saying it is unconstitutionally called, McIntire supporters boycott the 1956 BPC synod. They form the Bible Presbyterian Church, Collingswood Synod. The PCUSA allows ordination of women ministers.



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**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**



- 1957: Representatives of the majority Bible Presbyterian Synod and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod, begin informal talks on union.
- 1958: The Presbyterian Church in the USA merges with the United Presbyterian Church in North America to create the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. The success of southern revivals has encouraged the Rev. William E. Hill, Jr., to become a full-time evangelist. He and associates begin the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship (PEF). PEF will add a solidly evangelistic and world missions impulse to the continuing church movement.
- 1959: G. Aiken Taylor assumes the editorship of The Southern Presbyterian Journal from Dr. Dendy. Its name is changed to The Presbyterian Journal to indicate its comprehensive outlook on Presbyterian affairs.
- 1960: From this General Assembly on, conservative Presbyterians consider their voice weak in the PCUS. Virtually all major offices are held by members of the more liberal and activist wing of the southern church.
- 1961: The Bible Presbyterian Synod is renamed the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Reunion with the Collingswood Synod is unlikely, and the existence of two Bible Presbyterian Synods is confusing.

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**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

- 1963: PCUS authorizes ordination of women. PCUSA begins the Commission on Religion and Race as a civil rights organization. Within 10 years the organization is a dominant proponent of Liberation Theology. A modernist Sunday school curriculum, "Covenant Life," is introduced in the southern church. The U.S. Supreme Court issues its school prayer decision.
- 1964: Reformed Theological Institute is chartered in Mississippi. In 1966 it becomes Reformed Theological Seminary, a conservative seminary for the South. The Fellowship of Concern begins in the PCUS as a civil rights/social action league. Among conservative PCUS members, Concerned Presbyterians is formed by board members of The Presbyterian Journal. It begins a bulletin, The Concerned Presbyterian, in 1965.
- Mid-1960s: Radical Theology develops at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. William Hamilton defines a modern theologian as "a man without faith, without hope, with only the present, with only love to guide him."
- 1967: Confession of '67 is adopted by the northern church. Conservative southern churchmen, meeting informally in Asheville, call for prayer groups throughout the South to seek God's guidance for the PCUS.
- 1968: Presbyterian Ministers Fellowship organized at Asheville, NC, though the group has unofficially met for several years. In 1969 its name changes to Presbyterian Churchmen United, a focal point for those seeking to reform the PCUS.
- 1969: A "Declaration of Commitment," drafted by Presbyterian Churchmen United, is signed by more than 500 PCUS ministers. This declaration affirms scriptural inerrancy and Westminster Confession and Catechisms and asks the PCUS to reject Council on Church Union calls for a world church. A rally for Presbyterian Churchmen United meets in Atlanta in December. PCUS allows presbyteries to become joint PCUS/UPCUSA courts as a prelude to merger. Black Theology is introduced as a part of Liberation Theology in a book by James Cone of Union Theological Seminary, Black Theology and Black Power.
- 1970: Contact, a publication of Presbyterian Churchmen United, begins in May, aimed at 600 ministers and 263 churches whose sessions support the Declaration of Commitment.
- 1971: The Executive Committee for Overseas Evangelism (ECOE) is formed by PEF. In 1973 ECOE reorganizes as Mission to the World for the National Presbyterian Church and then the Presbyterian Church in America. A brochure of the PCUS

**YOUR CHURCH'S HISTORICAL CONTEXT, page G-35**  
**MAJOR EVENTS IN PRESBYTERIAN AMERICA**

Board of National Ministries advocates legal therapeutic abortion. Presbyterian Churchmen United plan an offensive at the 1971 PCUS General Assembly. The Assembly narrowly elects Mrs. C. L. Winkler over Mrs. Ruth Bell Graham, the PCU-endorsed candidate, as moderator. Most of the conservative agenda is rejected. ECOE is condemned as a "threat to the peace and unity of the church." On Aug. 11 a steering committee for a "Continuing Presbyterian Church" forms in Asheville, NC, to prepare for withdrawal. By a vote of 25-1, representatives of the four conservative organizations decide to abandon the effort to reform the PCUS.

- 1972: Vanguard Presbytery is organized on Sept. 7 in Savannah, GA, to serve the growing number of Presbyterian churches who have withdrawn from the PCUS. It is an independent body.
- 1973: Vanguard Presbytery and other churches withdrawing from the PCUS organize the National Presbyterian Church on Dec. 4. Preparing for this event, a steering committee of the Continuing Presbyterian Church publishes "Reaffirmations of 1973" in the March issue of Contact. A "Convocation of Sessions" convenes ruling and teaching elders representing 260 churches May 5, 6, in Atlanta, GA. An organizing committee is formed, and an Advisory Convention meets Aug. 7-9, in Asheville, NC. A full docket, including constitution and by-laws and organized committee structure, is ready for action at the First General Assembly. The Supreme Court issues Roe vs. Wade decision, legalizing abortion on demand.
- 1974: The National Presbyterian Church changes its name to the Presbyterian Church in America to avoid legal conflicts with the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C.
- 1982: The Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod joins the PCA.
- 1983: Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (southern) and United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (northern) unite most mainline Presbyterians into one 3-million-member Presbyterian Church in the



PCA logo, approved,  
14th General Assembly,  
Philadelphia, PA, 1976

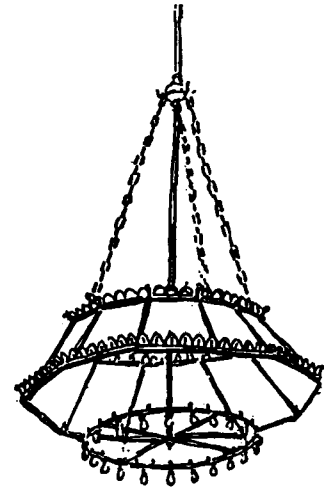


↑ THE FIRST PARSONAGE HOUSE. Church organized in second story of this building Dec. 3, 1784.



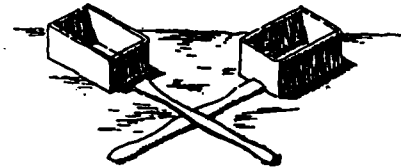
↑ THE MEETING HOUSE as built without the steeple. 1796-1801

Much physical history of First Presbyterian Church, Caldwell, N.J., was lost in a fire. The look of the streets was, of course, long gone. As Lynn G. Lockward researched A Puritan Heritage; The First Presbyterian Church In Horse-Neck (published 1955), she studied floor plans and furnishings. An artist, she drew and painted what could no longer be seen.



↑ CEILING FIXTURE in AUDITORIUM  
First piped for gas, then converted to electricity in 1900.  
(See page 218)

COLLECTION →  
BOXES  
used until 1900.  
(See page 275)



↑ INTERIOR OF THE OLD CHURCH

As it appeared after the renovation of 1838 when ceiling was lowered and new pulpit platform built.