

# PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HISTORY

## The Pattern of Presbyterianism

### I. A Biblical Pattern of Spiritual Republicanism

#### A. Defined

1. =Rule by law through select representatives: Representative church government
2. As opposed to
  - a. spiritual monarchy: prelacy
    - 1) Spiritual commonwealth vs. ecclesiastical hierarchy
  - b. spiritual democracy: congregationalism.
    - 1) There is not one example in the Bible of democratic, congregational rule

#### B. OT

Before the Exodus, the children of Israel were governed by representative elders in Egypt (Exo 3.16). These elders were tribal heads recognized for their wisdom, experience, and gravity.

Before the ceremonial law, Moses began to organize the covenant people into graduated layers of administration under judges who shared the qualifications of elders:

“...capable men from among the people who fear God,  
trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain” (v.21 of Exo 18.17-26)

Note the “Elders in the gate” through the times of the Judges and the monarchy.

#### C. Intertestament

Synagogue system. By the time after the exile when the synagogue system was established, the representative elder was an established, universal office in Palestine.

“As each particular synagogue was governed by a bench of Elders, of which the Bishop or “Angel of the Church,” was the presiding officer; so also, as the whole Jewish body was one—one Catholic Church—there were always appeals admitted, in cases of alleged incorrectness of judgment, to the “great synagogue” at Jerusalem, where an opportunity was given for redressing what was done amiss. Nothing like the independency of particular synagogues was admitted or thought of. A system which bound the whole community together as one visible professing body, was uniformly in operation.” –(Miller, p. 78 in Halls’ *Paradigms in Polity*)

The NT gospel accounts repeatedly mention the “rulers of the synagogues” with one “chief ruler” who was the first among equals and who often was a scribe who served as the moderator of the bench of elders and was the preacher.

Significantly, in the intertestamental period and in the Gospels, these local elders are always distinguished from the order of priests. A sacerdotal priesthood does not continue in the church after Pentecost.

## D. NT

### 1. The Apostles adopted the synagogue system of representative government

The government of the synagogue was already familiar to native Jews, the first converts

It was a proven system and convenient

Examples of collective elders

- “bishops and deacons [in Philippi]” (Phil 1.1)
- “ordain elders in every town” (Tit 1.5)
- “Apostles and elders” [at the Jerusalem Council] (Acts 15)
- “Elders who rule well” (1Tim 5:17)
- “call the elders of the church” (Jam 5.14)
- Ordination: a plurality of elders and officers ordained others (Acts 13.1-3; 6.6; 1Tim 4.14)

### 2. The unity of the apostolic church and uniformity of government is evinced by the Jerusalem Council.

Appeal had come from a local body to a higher body, much as from a Jewish synagogue or the regional Sanhedrin to the Great Sanhedrin at Jerusalem. Council decisions were reached collectively by the apostles and gathered elders.

These judicial and doctrinal decisions were sent back down to “all the churches,” and were “meant to be registered and obeyed.”

Compliance would be assured by the leaders (elders) at the local level. As Miller asserts, “If this be not Presbyterianism, then there is nothing of the kind in Scotland or in the United States” (p. 79).

## II. ECCLESIASTICAL DEVELOPMENT of PRESBYTERIANISM

### A. Pre-Reformation Evidences of biblical Presbyterianism (outlined by Samuel Miller in his work, *Presbyterianism: the Truly and Primitive Apostolical Constitution of the Church of Christ*)

#### 1. Early Fathers

- a. Clement of Rome (ca. 95 A.D.) indicates in his “Epistle to the Corinthians” that bishops and presbyters were the same office, and that presbyters were “set over the church” by the choice of the church. Clement says the Apostles appointed two orders of office-bearers: presbyters and deacons.
- b. Polycarp (ca. 110 A.D.), in his “Epistle to the Philippians,” recognizes only two church offices, the same that Paul did in his epistle (Phil 1.1) to this church: bishops and deacons.
- c. The “Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians” (6.1) (ca. 110 A.D.), notes that every particular church was furnished with a bishop (pastor), a bench of elders, and deacons. The elders, with the bishop at their head, conducted the government and discipline of the church.
- d. Irenaeus (ca. 140 A.D.) sometimes applies the titles bishop and presbyter to the same men, and represents the succession of the episcopate as the same as presbyterial succession.

#### e. Evolution of Prelacy

- 1) Ignatius’ record is the earliest recorded distinction between bishop and presbyter. Richard Gamble (“Presbyterianism and the Ancient Church”) suggests that Ignatius’ calling the pastor the “bishop” in contra-distinction to the ruling presbyters was the beginning of the

evolution of the monarchical bishop in the Roman empire. From this recognition of a congregational bishop, later dynamic pastors who may have presided at regional presbytery meetings were elevated to regional bishops, especially in times of persecution.

Cyprian (ca. 250) witnessed a fixed president of presbytery called “bishop,” although he himself says he never acted in major decisions without the consent of the presbytery.

2) Samuel Miller notes the temptations toward prelacy.

a) With the influx of illiterate barbarians into the empire, there was an appeal for more centralized authority in the church (bishop = chieftain), and for more glamorous trappings of the priesthood.

b) Pressures of heresy from within (heresy) and from without (persecution) also led toward centralization and away from representative government in the church.

3) For a response to Romanists who see alleged references to prelacy in the Early Fathers, see Richard Gamble’s essay, “Presbyterianism and the Ancient Church” in *Pressing Toward the Mark*

## 2. Later Church Fathers

Key post-Nicene fathers admitted that their church government was not that of the apostles:

a. Ambrose of Milan (ca. 376)

“After churches were planted in all places, and officers ordained, matters were settled otherwise than they were in the beginning. And hence it is that the Apostles’ writings do not, in all things, agree with the present constitution of the Church; because they were written under the first rise of the Church; for he calls Timothy, who was created a Presbyter by him, a Bishop, for so, at first, the Presbyters were called.”

b. Jerome (ca. 400)

“Among the ancients, Presbyters and Bishops were the same. But by little and little, that all the seeds of dissension might be plucked up, the whole care was devolved on one. As, therefore, the Presbyters know, that by the custom of the Church, they are subject to him who is their president, so let Bishops know, that they are above Presbyters more by the custom of the Church, than by the true dispensation of Jesus Christ!”

“Elder is identical with bishop; and before the urging of the devil gave rise to factionalism in religion, so much that it was being said among the people, ‘I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas, the churches were governed by a joint council of elders. After[wards] it was... decreed throughout the world that one chosen from among the presbyters should be placed over the others.’” *Commentary on Epistle to Titus*

c. Augustine (ca. 400) writing to Jerome

“I entreat you to correct me faithfully when you see I need it; for, although, according to the names of honor which the custom of the Church has now brought into use, the office of Bishop is greater than that of Presbyter, nevertheless, in many respects, Augustine is inferior to Jerome.”

## 3. Early II Millennium

a. Waldenses (1170ff.)

“The Church of the Alps, in the simplicity of its constitution, may be held to have been a reflection of the Church of the first centuries. The entire territory included in the Waldensian limits was divided into parishes. In each parish was placed a pastor, who led his flock to the living waters of the Word of God. He preached, he dispensed the Sacraments, he visited the sick, and catechised the young. With him was associated in the government of his congregation a consistory of laymen.

“The synod met once a year. It was composed of the pastors, with an equal number of laymen, and its most frequent place of meeting was the mountain-engirdled valley at the head of Angrogna. Sometimes as many as a hundred and fifty *barbes*, with the same number of lay members, would assemble. We can imagine them seated—it may be on the grassy slopes of the valley—a venerable company of humble, learned, earnest men, presided over by a simple moderator (for higher office or authority was unknown amongst them), and intermitting their deliberations respecting the affairs of their Churches, and the condition of their flocks, only to offer their prayers and praises to the Eternal, while the majestic snow-clad peaks looked down upon them from the silent firmament. There needed, verily, no magnificent fane, no blazonry of mystic rites to make their assembly august.” –J.A. Wylie. *History of Protestantism*, pp. 34,35

b. Wycliffe (d. 1384)

“From the faith of the Scriptures,” says he in his *Triologus*, “it seems to me to be sufficient that there should be presbyters and deacons holding that state and office which Christ has imposed on them, since it appears certain that these degrees and orders have their origin in the pride of Caesar.” And again he observes, “I boldly assert one thing, namely, that in the primitive Church, or in the time of Paul, two orders of the clergy were sufficient—that is, a priest and a deacon. In like manner I affirm that in the time of Paul, the presbyter and bishop were names of the same office. This appears from the third chapter of the first Epistle to Timothy, and in the first chapter of the Epistle to Titus.” –Wylie, p. 82

c. Conclusion: Presbyterianism was not a 16<sup>th</sup> century innovation of the Reformers

## B. Rediscovery of Presbyterianism by the Reformers in Switzerland

### 1. Zwingli of Zurich (d. 1531)

a. Led first stage of Reformation in Switzerland simultaneous with the German Reformation

b. Compiled his biblical system in the form of 67 Articles, (1523)

- 1) Differed from Lutheran belief system in forms of worship and government
- 2) Set the stage for the Reformed faith in contradistinction to Lutheranism

### 2. succeeded by his student, Heinrich Bullinger (d. 1575) in Zurich

a. Collaborated with other Swiss theologians on First Helvetic Confession, 1536

- 1) Attempt of several cantons to find common ground with Lutherans to encourage political alliance
- 2) Followed Lutheran Augsburg Confession (1530) wherever possible
- 3) Differed on definition of original sin and on meaning of Lord's Supper (see Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, II:466,67)
- 4) No positive response from Lutherans

b. Bullinger's Second Helvetic Confession of 1566

- 1) A personal yet universal Reformed creed drawn up in the face of death in 1564
- 2) Drawn up in the year of Calvin's death, and in anticipation of his own death by the plague after he had lost his wife and three daughters (he would survive another 11 years)
- 3) it was a mature reflection of the Reformed faith, especially on predestination and the Lord's supper
- 4) codifies Presbyterianism in chpt 18
- 5) This exhaustive creed became the basis of other European Reformed confessions

### 3. Calvin (d. 1564), Father of the Reformed faith

a. Biblical principle of the "self-sufficiency of the church under Christ"

- 1) Contrary to the Papists' system of "priesthood, papacy, and prelacy"
- 2) Calvin and the early Swiss Reformers taught that the church "...was vested by Christ with entire self-sufficiency, such full intrinsic capacity with respect to everything external, for the attainment of its own ends and the promotion of its own welfare by means of His ordinances, as to be entitled, in extraordinary emergencies, to do anything, however ordinarily irregular, that might be necessary to secure these results."

This Reformed sentiment is captured in the WCF (25:2,3): "...to the catholic visible church, consisting of all those throughout the world who profess the true religion, together with their children, Christ has given the ministry, the oracles, and the ordinances of God."—William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, II:514-15.

### 3) Reformers used this principle to defend

- c) the church's biblical right to appoint officers
- d) the church's independent right to reform itself

- e) their own ministerial calling in reforming and leading the church
- b. Drafted 26 articles in 1549
  - 1) to clarify the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper
  - 2) Adopted by Geneva and Zurich, and spread from there
- c. Calvin's Genevan Confession of 1551 clarified the Reformed position on predestination
- d. Church government
  - 1) While not condemning non-Presbyterian churches as anti-Christian, Calvin insisted on following the biblical pattern of church government that could not be dismissed by democratic effort. Beza's biography of Calvin relates that "He demonstrated that not only doctrines, but also the form of Church government, must be sought for in the Scripture..." –(Beza's "The Life of John Calvin" in Beveridge's edition of the *Selected Works of John Calvin*, pp. xl-xli)
  - 2) This approach to establishing a biblical pattern of church government was termed the *jure divino* ("by divine right/legislation") or *jus divinum* ("divine right/legislation")
  - 3) Upon his return from Strasburg, Calvin drew up the Ecclesiastical Ordinances that gave the church a good measure of spiritual independence in Geneva. With its officers, system of discipline, and independent form of government, it was finally a Presbyterian Church. It was called the "Reformed Church."
  - 4) Nature of the church
    - f) Democratic and aristocratic —> rule by oligarchy
      - (i) Against monarchical rule of papal prelacy
      - (ii) Power vested in the members of the church who delegate their collective, priestly authority to a plurality of ordained leaders
      - (iii) Right of congregations to call their own pastor and to refuse imposition of "uncalled" pastors
    - g) Four church offices from among the people
      - (i) Pastor
      - (ii) Teacher
      - (iii) Elder
      - (iv) Deacon
    - h) Consistory
      - (i) Made up of pastors and elders
      - (ii) Met every Thursday for church discipline. "No right seemed to Calvin so vital to the independence of the church as that of excommunication" –Williston Walker
      - (iii) No full ecclesiastical independence till Calvin's later years: final excommunication and appointment of elders reserved by city council for a number of years.

e. A ministry of the Word

- 1) Sola Scriptura
- 2) Systematic exposition vs. topical sermons

4. Spread of Presbyterianism through Calvin's students

a. Neighboring lands

"From Geneva alone (by no means the only "sending" center) more than two hundred preachers were sent out during the fifteen year period 1555-70. The sober fact is that many were arrested, imprisoned, and executed before they ever reached the destinations for which they had set out. Others served faithfully where they were called and saw Protestant congregations take root and flourish." --Kenneth Steward, Prof. of Theology at Covenant College, cited from his article in *Themelios* (April 2009), "Calvinism and Missions: the Contested Relationship Revisited"

b. Foreign missions

1557 mission to Brazil through France opened up; when few French volunteered to colonize in Brazil, land-locked Geneva was invited to send French speaking pastors and settlers. 'Contemporary chronicler (and participant in the expedition) Jean de Léry recorded, "Upon . . . hearing this news, the church of Geneva at once gave thanks to God for the extension of the reign of Jesus Christ in a country so distant and likewise so foreign and among a nation entirely without the knowledge of the true God.' --cited from Steward in *Themelios*  
The mission would end with the forcible return of the Genevan pastors to France.

C. Expressions of the Reformed faith in Reformation Europe

1. France

a. The French Protestant churches were organized on the model of Geneva by 1555. In 1559, the First National Synod of France was convened discreetly in Paris. It authorized a doctrinal statement similar to the 39 Articles of the Church of England, the Gallican Confession, composed by Calvin's disciple, Antoine de la Roche Chandieu. The Confession established graded courts:

- the Consistory
- regional Colloquys that met twice yearly
- provincial Synods
- the National Synod that was comprised of two ministers and two elders from every provincial synod.

b. The French Church established term limits for its elders, and introduced the office of an elected superintendent, who served as moderator of the classis and synod. The French system would influence Scotland's First Book of Discipline.

(By 1562 there were 2,150 Huguenot churches in France. Three million of France's twenty million professed the Reformed faith.)

2. Poland

Jan a Lasco (1499-1560) teaches in Britain and spreads Presbyterianism in Poland following self-exile under Bloody Mary. This Reformed Polish priest was first friends with Erasmus and Zwingli before pastoring the Strangers Church in London.

"His contributions to the Reformed churches were the establishment of church government in theory and practice, a denial of any distinction between ministers and elders except in terms of who could teach and administer the sacraments, and an understanding of the Eucharist that was more Zwinglian than Calvinist."



- Arminians hold to
  - o) election based on foreknowledge
  - p) universality of Christ's atonement
  - q) free will and partial depravity of man
  - r) resistibility of grace
  - s) possibility of lapse from grace
- 2) First ecumenical Reformed council, meeting for 7 months
  - t) 61 Hollanders and 28 delegates from England, Scotland, Palatinate, Hesse, Switzerland, Nassau, E. Friesland, and Bremen
  - u) Estates General of Holland levied taxes of 100,000 guilders to pay for delegates expenses
- 3) TULIP (originally organized as ULTIP) was affirmed and the Arminian Remonstrants were rejected
- 4) The Canons were received by churches on the continent, but refused by the Anglican under King James I who in 1620 forbade any preaching on predestination

Note the Three Forms of Unity: Heidelberg, Belgic, Dordt creeds

## 5. Scotland

### a. John Knox (d. 1572)

- 1) Principle composer of the first Scots Confession, 1560
- 2) Led committee in formulation of Book of Discipline, 1560
  - v) Regulated the call and office of pastors, elders, and deacons
  - w) Term limits of one year for non-pastoral offices "...lest by long continuance of such officers men presume upon the liberty of the church." (in Lingle & Kuykendall, p. 40)
  - x) This First BoD also called for
    - (i) Banishing observance of church holy days
    - (ii) Universal education
    - (iii) a grammar school at each congregation to teach Latin, grammar, and the catechism
    - (iv) advanced schools for gifted lads
    - (v) This idea did not take effect since the Scottish state was not ready to fund this vision of the state church.
    - (vi) Hallmark of the Reformed faith: an educated ministry and laity; Ps. 119:130 & John 8:32
- 3) "Knox made Calvinism the religion in Scotland, and Calvinism made Scotland the moral standard for the world." (Egbert Watson Smith in Carlson's *Presbyterian Heritage*. Smith goes on to say that the most Calvinistic regions of the world are the most crime-free, a very practical fruit of Calvinism.)

b. Andrew Melville

- 1) Returned from Geneva to Scotland in 1574, two years after the death of Knox to take up that Reformer's mantle.
- 2) More than any other disciple of Calvin, Melville promoted Calvin's teaching of *jure divino*—the true form of church government which can be ascertained from the Scriptures. This view would greatly influence the deliberations and conclusions of the Westminster Assembly.
- 3) At the urging of Melville, the Scottish general assembly agreed to revise its Book of Discipline of 1560.
  - y) It had allowed for 10 regional "superintendents" along the lines of the French church. With the death of Knox in 1572 and the reintroduction of episcopacy in Scotland the same year, these superintendents were moved from the responsibility of the assembly to the control of the regent in Scotland. The superintendents became monarchical bishops that the Protestants nicknamed "tulchan bishops." A tulchan was stuffed calf used to induce the cow to yield her milk by leading the cow to the milk shed; i.e., the "barnyard bishops" were set up to milk the church of Scotland.
  - z) Melville introduced church government by representative elders with graded courts of appeal to uphold the headship of Christ and the liberties of the people.
- 4) The Second Book of Discipline (1578), sometimes called the "Magna Carta of Presbyterianism," denied the legitimacy of episcopacy and states that "bishop, pastor, and ministers" are equivalent terms.

c. Ulster, Northern Ireland

- 1) From 1607 (accession of James VI to throne of England) till 1690 (Battle of Boyne), 100,000 Scotch Presbyterians migrated to the six northern counties of Ireland, a.k.a., Ulster
- 2) The Presbytery of Ulster was formed in 1642 as independent from the Church of England. Pastors were sent to the new world from this presbytery.

## 6. England

### a. 42 Articles, 1552

- 1) Thoroughly Calvinistic, while holding to prelatical episcopacy
- 2) Drafted by Archbishop Cranmer and Bishop (of London) Latimer for King Edward VI
- 3) In 1555 the Polish scholar, Jan a Lasco, alluded to King Edward VI's desire for the Church of England to be guided by principles of government found in the Scriptures, and alluded to the *jus divinum* from Geneva

### b. 39 Articles of Queen Elizabeth, 1571

- 1) Revision of the 42 Articles
- 2) While Calvinistic, it makes the Anglican creed more appealing to Lutherans, especially in the sacraments
- 3) Affirms the British monarch as the earthly head of the church

### c. Presbyterianism gets traction, 1570s

- 1) Influenced by Scottish Presbyterianism and refugee scholars returning from Geneva after Bloody Mary
- 2) 1572, first English Presbytery secretly organized under leadership of Thomas Cartwright (d. 1603)
- 3) In 1574, Cambridge scholar Thomas Cartwright published the first book of discipline by and for English Puritans: *The Sacred Discipline of the Church, Described in the Word of God*
- 4) While Presbyterianism was strong around London, Elizabeth's insistence upon the *Via Media* neutralized this budding church within a church
  - aa) Archbishop Whitgift's natural law theology clashed with the Puritan Presbyterians' call for worship and polity based on Scripture: the "regulative principle"
  - bb) Whitgift enforced conformity to the CoE and, after a short pamphlet war, got Cartwright fired from Cambridge

### d. Westminster Confession, 1647

- 1) Westminster Assembly called by the Puritan Parliament (1643)
  - cc) Originally to revise the 39 Articles and Book of Worship
  - dd) While the head of the Anglican Church, Charles I, was battling to keep his throne
- 2) The Confession shows dependence upon the Canons of Dordt
- 3) Was a product of the Solemn League and Covenant between Parliamentary England and Presbyterian Scotland during the English Civil War
  - ee) Scots sent a handful of influential theologians
  - ff) Church government was the first item and most contested
  - gg)i) Competing parties were a few Erastians,\* a majority of Presbyterian divines in league with the Scottish commissioners, a subset of Presbyterians who wanted to maintain some form of Bishops within Presbyterianism, and a group of vocal Independents called the "dissenting brethren."

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\* Erastus was a medical doctor in Heidelberg (1568) who promoted the theory of a total state church: the government and officers of the church may be appointed by the state and serve at the behest of the state. This removed independent ecclesiastical and spiritual jurisdiction from the church since the state retained power of excommunication and corporal punishment.

- hh)ii) Presbyterianism prevails due to the Scottish influence and with a majority of Presbyterian Puritans in Parliament
- ii) Scottish Church would jettison their Scotch Confession for the Westminster Confession, setting the stage for the spread of Westminster's influence as the Scots moved into Ulster and the new world
- 4) The Westminster Confession is the high water mark in the making of Reformed confessions
- 5) Cromwell's Savoy Confession of 1658 closely follows Westminster
  - jj) Mainly changed polity to Congregationalism
  - kk) Revision committee led by John Owen and Thomas Goodwin (a repr. of the Independents at the Westminster Assembly), the "very Atlas and patriarch of Independency" per Anthony Wood in Shedd's *History...*, p. 481
- e. By 1719, many English Presbyterian bodies were infected with Unitarianism. Continuing and faithful Presbyterian churches organized by 1876 into the Presbyterian Church of England.

### III. Presbyterian History in Reformation Europe

#### A. Calvin in Geneva

1. on his way to Strasburg

2. Recruited by William Farel's threats after entreaties failed, 1536

"Then Farel, finding he gained nothing by entreaties, besought God to curse my retirement and the tranquility of my studies if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so struck by terror that I desisted from that journey that I had undertaken.... I felt as if God from heaven had laid his mighty hand upon me to stop me in my course."

3. Persevered in the face of opposition and mob threats to throw him in the river

"Although it was a very troublesome province to me, the thought of deserting it never entered my mind. For I considered myself placed in that position by God, like a sentry at his post, from which it would be impiety on my part were I to move a single step. Yet I think you would hardly believe me were I to relate to you even a very small part of those annoyances, nay miseries, which we had to endure for a whole year. This I can truly testify, that not a day passed in which I did not long for death ten times over. But as for leaving that church to remove elsewhere, such a thought never came into my mind." –Calvin's letter to associates in Zurich

4. Expelled with Farel in 1538
  - a. Last controversy over the council's directive to offer the Lord's supper to all citizens and their decision to jettison Calvin's liturgy for Bern's
  - b. Recognizing the breakdown of discipline and the loss of freedom of the church, Calvin had refused to offer the Lord's supper
5. Returns in 1541
  - a. Skillfully answers the RC apologist, Cardinal Sadolet, who had been wooing Geneva
  - b. Geneva re-invites Calvin who is able to gain concessions
  - c. Calvin had been influenced by Martin Bucer at Strasbourg
    - 1) Followed Bucer on the four offices of church government
    - 2) Took a wife
6. Through the decade of the 1550s, 5000 refugee immigrants swell Geneva from 13,000 to 18,000. Many would take the message of Geneva back to their homelands.
7. Calvin's legacy as a Reformer
  - a. Set modern biblical exegesis on a firm footing
    - 1) employed a refined renaissance approach of a literary-historical method of interpretation
    - 2) skillfully developed his biblical theology into systematic theology to show the logical and biblical consistency of the Reformation
  - b. Having codified the civil and constitutional laws of Geneva, his model of representative government influenced western Europe and the new world (see Kelly's *Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World*)  
 German historian Leopold von Ranke called Calvin "The virtual founder of America." (in Lingle & Kuykendall, p. 28)
    - 1) Principles
      - ll) Consent of the governed
      - mm) Separation of powers: "Pride blinds princes so totally that they think they ought to be put in the rank of God." (Calvin's 18<sup>th</sup> Sermon on 2 Samuel)
    - 2) Worked for a healthy economy to promote community self-sufficiency and individual freedoms
      - nn) Right of charging reasonable interest on loans
      - oo) Imported the silk industry and addressed employment needs by putting people to work as weavers
      - pp) Established services for medical treatment, garbage pick up, urban renewal
    - 3) Geneva never was a theocracy

"Basil Hall once pointed out that far from being a theocratic dictator, 'Calvin in Geneva had less power either in theory or in practice than had Archbishop Whitgift in England, and less again than had Archbishop Laud, or Cardinal Richelieu in France, for he had neither the authority of their office nor the consistent and powerful political support which they received.'" –Kelly, *Emergence of Liberty...*, p. 14.

"The most perfect school of Christ since the days of the apostles." –John Knox

  - c. Promoted universal and public education, from the primary grades to the Academy (now the University of Geneva)

“We boast of our common schools. Calvin was the father of popular education, the inventor of the system of free schools.” (Historian George Bancroft in *Our Presbyterian Heritage*, p. 31)

- d. “He succeeded more than all, in an age and a country that called for reaction against Christianity, simply because he was the most Christian man of his century.”  
–Ernst Renan

## B. France

### 1. Huguenots

- a. French Reformed believers in the tradition of Calvin

- b. Uncertain meaning: “oath companions?” “confederates?”

A major theory is that the name is a derogatory conflation of the German *eidgenosse*, (“confederate,”) applied to followers of Besançon Hugues (d. 1532), a religious/political leader in Geneva favoring the city’s confederation with Swiss Confederation. The term Huguenot was first applied in France to Reformed aristocrats who attempted in 1560 to align the country with Switzerland as opposed to the Roman Catholic house of Guise.

### 2. An early Huguenot congregation organizes (in Paris) in 1555

- a. Precipitated by the need for a Protestant baptism
- b. Home group constituted themselves a church and elected their own pastor, elders, and deacons
- c. Like the breaching of a dam, this beginning spawned the organization of 2000 Presbyterian churches over the next six years. Geneva sent 120 covert missionaries into France through 1572.

### 3. 1559: enough Protestant congregations to hold a [covert] national assembly in Paris that adopted

- a. Confession of Faith drafted by Calvin
- b. Book of Discipline recognizing the four courts of appeal

### 4. Growing Protestant strength brings resistance

- a. From 5-25% of the population was identifying with the Huguenots, including some aristocrats
- b. 1562: Massacre at Vassy: 60 Huguenots killed when their meeting place was set ablaze
- c. August 24, 1572: St. Bartholomew Day Massacre

- 1) RC Conspiracy to extirpate the cream of the Huguenots

- 2) Wedding day of Huguenot Prince Henry of Navarre to the king’s sister

- 3) 1000s slaughtered in Paris with the carnage spreading throughout France until 30,000 to 70,000 Huguenots were murdered in the two months following.

- 4) Dancing and bonfires in Rome upon hearing news of the massacre

- 5) Beginning of Huguenot wars against the crown and the powerful RC Guise family behind the crown

- d. 25 years of war reduce the congregations of the Huguenot “Church of the Cross” by 2/3. War and subsequent persecutions lead to the martyrdom or flight of approx. 4 million skilled Frenchmen. This loss “...prepared the way for the inevitable degradation of the national character and removed the last serious bulwark that might have broken the force of that torrent of skepticism and vice, which, a century later, laid prostrated in merited ruin, both the

altar and the throne.” (rationalist historian Wm. Lecky in Carlson’s *Presbyterian Heritage*, p. 50)

5. Truce comes with the Edict of Nantes, 1598. Protestant Henry of Navarre accepts the capitulation of Paris on condition that he become a Roman Catholic. Henry is reported to have said, “Paris is worth a mass.”
  - a. Freedom of worship allowed in Huguenot cities of the south
  - b. Restrictions
    - 1) No public office to be held
    - 2) No fortifications except La Rochelle
  - c. Subsequent erosion of freedoms
    - 1) No education of their children
    - 2) Quartering of troops to prevent bright flight
  - d. Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685
  - e. The poverty of the church of the Huguenots became the riches of the nations as they took their faith and skills throughout Europe and the New World seeking sanctuary

### C. Hungary

1. Hungarian Reformed Church established in 1567 in Debrecen, Hungary.
2. Today in the Karpathian Basin, formerly known as Greater-Hungary, three-million Hungarians identify with this church. The confessional documents are the Heidelberg Catechism and the Second Helvetic Confession.

## D. Netherlands

1. Fertile ground for the Reformation
  - a. “Modern Devotion” encouraged by spreading Brethren of the Common Life before Luther
  - b. Holland proximate to Lutheranism of northern Germany
  - c. 1531: 25 vernacular Bible translations already in Netherlands
  - d. Political desire to throw off [RC] Spanish overlords
2. 1563—Presbyterian constitution drafted by a commission in Antwerp, (Belgium), to go with the Belgic Confession of 1561
3. 1571—Synod organized on the model of the Reformed Church in France
  - a. After eight years of spreading congregations
  - b. One exception to the French plan was the “collegiate church system” whereby several congregations in a city could be governed by one session/consistory in the city
4. 1570s—Revolt against Spain
  - a. Tyrannical Philip II of Spain inherited the Netherlands in 1555
  - b. 1566—Protestant appeal for relief
    - 1) 500 nobles petition Philip’s regent, the Dutchess of Parva for justice. They proudly assume the name of “Dutch Beggars” after her counselor encouraged her not to be intimidated by a “pack of beggars.”
    - 2) Frustration leads to iconoclasm against the cathedrals
  - c. 1567—Philip sends the Duke of Alva with 10,000 Spanish troops into the Netherlands. 1,800 Dutch are executed for sedition
  - d. Revolt led by William the Silent, Prince of Orange (d. 1584)
    - 1) Declared himself a Protestant in 1573, rallying his co-religionists to the cause for independence
    - 2) 1574—Dutch break the North Sea dikes to flood their farms and villages. Providential winds turn leeward to bring the seas and Dutch rescue ships to the very walls of besieged Leyden
    - 3) This was the turning point of the struggle
    - 4) William soon established the University of Leyden as a reward to this Dutch city for their steadfast resistance during the Spanish siege.
    - 5) The University became a leading center of Calvinist thought on the continent.
    - 6) Jacob Arminius taught there and in the 1590s and would contribute to the Remonstrants controversy, and Prince William III was educated here before taking the throne of England in 1688.
    - 7) 1584—Prince William was assassinated by a RC fanatic
  - e. 1579—Seven northern provinces form the Union of Utrecht and declare self-rule (a.k.a. Holland) while Belgium was kept in a Spanish orbit. Full recognition of Holland did not come till the end of the 30 Years War in 1648.
5. Religious toleration. While the Reformed faith was the official religion in Holland, William, as founder of the Dutch Republic, tolerated other persecuted faiths, thus making Holland a new sanctuary for religious refugees. Anabaptists, Huguenots, Scottish Covenanters, and Pilgrims found refuge there.

## E. Scotland

1. Mission by Columba to the Isle of Iona, 563 A.D.
  - a. His followers evangelized the mainland of Britain/Scotland
  - b. His disciples were the Culdees, who behaved like Presbyterians and who were persecuted by the Roman church, especially after the eleventh century. They found sympathy with the Lollards in England, and provide a cultural backdrop of the resistance of the Scots to Rome in the early days of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century Reformation.
2. Patrick Hamilton, morning star of the Scottish reformation
  - a. Nobleman who taught at St. Andrews University
  - b. Lutheran training at Wittenberg
  - c. Betrayal by Cardinal Beaton and martyrdom in February 1528. "The smoke of Master Patrick has infected everyone it has touched."
3. George Wishart & Knox
  - a. Wishart was a Cambridge scholar turned Scottish preacher. His bodyguard was a priest turned Protestant, young John Knox, who carried a claymore
  - b. Wishart martyred by Cardinal Beaton in March 1546
  - c. Cardinal Beaton murdered a few weeks later
4. John Knox (d.1572)
  - a. Chaplain to rebels at Castle of St. Andrews
  - b. 19 months on a French galley till 1549
  - c. Released to England where he becomes a court chaplain to King Edward
  - d. To Geneva under Bloody Mary. Ministered to English church there.
  - e. Return to Scotland in 1559. "O God give me Scotland or I die!"
    - 1) Roman Catholicism abolished by Scottish Parliament in 1560
    - 2) Knox and companions were commissioned by Parliament to prepare a FoG and BoD
  - f. Rebuke of Queen Mary (Stuart)

Summoned by the queen after he railed against the mass at Holyrood Palace as "more fearful than 10,000 (invading) armies." There would be five interviews.
  - g. Two Marriages
  - h. Major contributions
    - 1) Shaped early polity and belief of the Scottish Church
    - 2) While tempering Scottish parochialism through his broad view of Protestant ecumenism, he sowed seeds for later development of idea of covenanting in Scotland
    - 3) Writings
      - qq) History of the Reformation of Religion within the Realm of Scotland
      - rr) First [Scottish] Book of Discipline
      - ss) First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women
      - tt) Against Anabaptism

5. Andrew Melville (d. 1622) vs. King James

a. King James' antipathy to Presbyterianism based in his belief of "divine right"

"Scottish Presbytery agrees as well with monarchy as God and the devil."

b. After fleeing the King's summons in Scotland, he later appears at Hampton Court (1606) to confront King James, even as Knox had confronted the king's mother, Mary

Grabbing the king's sleeve, he would say, "Sir, as divers times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of the Commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the King of the Church, whose subject James is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. \*\*\* We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience, but again I say that you are not the head of the Church." (cited in Carlson's *Our Presbyterian Heritage*, pp. 55,56) Melville at other times told King James that he was "God's silly (weak) vassal."

c. James locked Melville in the Tower of London for four years and then banished him. Melville spent his remaining days teaching Bible in France.

6. Covenanting Nation

a. Basis: believed their social pacts were covenants before God

b. National Covenant, 1638

1) Popular revolt against imposition of the CoE prelacy and liturgy

a) begins in Scotland July 23, 1637, at the St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburg, the church of John Knox

b) Jenny Geddes throws her milking stool vs. the CoE emissary: "Fause loon! Dost thou say mass at my ear?!"

2) Initially subscribed at Greyfriar's Church, 300,000 Scots pledge to defend the doctrine and discipline of the Church of Scotland, as well as their homeland and own freedom of conscience; viz., a national return from prelacy to Presbyterianism leads to political revolt

3) Upshot

a) King Charles I of England tries to invade Scotland but runs out of money

b) The Covenanters begin to organize for defense of church and homeland

c) The legal precedent for a national, religious revolt is established, paving the way for 1688 and 1776

c. Solemn League & Covenant, 1643

1) A religious alliance between Scotland and England represented in the latter's Protestant Parliament

a) Precipitated by Parliament's desperate need for a political ally in 1643

b) Penned by Alexander Henderson, Moderator of the Scottish Church and subsequent Scottish representative to the Westminster Assembly

2) Essence: Scotland pledged its support to Parliament and Parliament pledged to reform its own church in England and Ireland according to the model "of the best reformed churches," guaranteeing a Reformed Church in Scotland.

7. Charles II and the Killing Times in Scotland: Covenanters

a. Despite the Solemn League and Covenant, the Scots had been scandalized by Cromwell's

regicide. They participated in the recall and coronation of Charles II. Charles II, however, said that “Presbyterianism was no religion for a gentleman (aristocrat).”

- b. Covenanters then charged that back-stabbing King Charles II was a usurper who was breaking his oath in denying the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant. Covenanters regarded these as more than social contracts, but as covenants with God.
  - c. Their “sedition” and pursuit of true religion led to the “Killing Times” in Scotland. (See *Men of the Covenant* by Howe or *Fair Sunshine* by Purves.)
  - d. Covenanters refuse to be a part of the State Presbyterian Church in Scotland because William and Mary refused to subscribe to the historic covenants that these Scots of conviction believed to be permanent and worth regular renewal. The children of the Covenanters finally joined the Church of Scotland in 1876.
8. Glorious Revolution of 1688: William III and Mary come to the throne

## F. England

1. Henry VIII (d. 1547)
  - a. makes the break from Rome in the Act of Supremacy, 1534
  - b. confiscates church lands for the crown
    - 1) numerous lands used for bribes and empowering aristocratic friends and gentry
    - 2) makes the reform movement odious to common people
2. King Edward VI (d. 1553)
  - a. pro-Calvinist under influence of his mother’s chaplain and of Archbishop Cranmer
  - b. moderate Reformation gains in England
3. Bloody Mary (d. 1558)
  - a. Martydoms chronicled by John Foxe
  - b. Demise of Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer
  - c. Geneva refugees and their Bible
4. Elizabeth I (d. 1603)
  - a. Via Media in the Church of England
  - b. Her Act of Uniformity expelled at least a third of ministers from their pulpits and effectively quashed nascent Presbyterianism in England
5. King James I (reigned in England from 1603-1625)
  - a. Hampton Court Conference in response to the Puritan Millenary Petition
  - b. Creation of Ulster Plantation out of six northern RC provinces of Ireland was an attempt to
    - 1) pacify decimated N. Ireland after series of religious wars started by Henry (lands of Irish rebels had been declared forfeit to the King),
    - 2) and to relieve restive lowlands of Scotland by offering free land to Scottish settlers
  - c. “Book of Sports”
    - 1) Promoted by James I in 1617 and reinstated by Laud under Charles I in 1638
    - 2) Reaction against Puritan Sabbath
      - c) Allegedly to keep Englishmen fit for war
      - d) To avoid offending the RCs

6. King Charles I (reigned 1625-1648)

a. Archbishop Laud was a staunch ally in persecuting Puritans and pushing for conformity to the CoE in the British Isles

b. Developments in Ulster

1) Laud's Anglican discipline enforced by calling on citizens to renounce "Scottish covenants" and subscribe to the "Black Oath" on pain of death or imprisonment; some Presbyterian homes were pulled down

2) 1641, Roman Catholics from the south perpetrate a massacre on the harried Presbyterians of northern Ireland

3) Scottish ministers came as regimental chaplains with 10,000 troops from Scotland sent to suppress the RC insurrection. These chaplains were used to fan the flames of revival in the new Scottish plantation loyal to the King of England

4) The first Presbytery in Ulster was established in 1642. With an influx of ministers from Scotland, 80 churches were planted within 20 years with a total church membership of 100,000.

c. King Charles' forays emptied his treasury and forced him to convene Parliament to collect taxes

1) Short Parliament soon dismissed

2) Long Parliament

d. Solemn League and Covenant, 1643

7. King Charles II gave an ultimatum to Presbyterian Ministers in Ulster to convert to the CoE or lose their pulpits. They went underground and turned the tide.

8. The ejected King James II besieged the Protestant town of Derry which resisted at the encouragement of its minister. Deposed King James, trying to make a comeback, was defeated at the Battle of the Boyne (1690) in Ulster by King William of Orange.

IV. Post-Reformation European Presbyterian Developments

A. Scotland

1. Splits, largely over "Lay Patronage"

a. Lay Patronage Act of 1712 = appointment of ministers, often unworthy, by large land holders or else magistrates

b. 1733—Seceders led by Ebenezer Erskine form the Associate Presbytery to protect the church against "lay patronage"

c. 1753—George Gillespie leads in the formation of the Relief Synod

d. Associate Presbytery merged with Relief Church in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland

e. 1843—Dr. Thomas Chalmers leads a third of the ministers and elders out of the Church of Scotland

1) Called the "Great Disruption"

2) Form the Free Church

3) Lost their property and pensions

2. The trend turns
  - a. 1874—Lay Patronage was abolished by Parliament
  - b. 1893—Most of the Free Church unites with the United Presbyterian Church
    - 1) This majority union forms the United Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
    - 2) The “Wee Frees” remain separate and were pensioned with properties. They form the Free Presbyterian Church.
  - c. 1929—the UFPCoS reunited with the Church of Scotland
3. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland can rightly be called the Mother church of modern Presbyterianism. It influenced English Presbyterianism at Westminster and it planted churches in Ulster and in the New World. Calvin spoke through Knox and Melville to the rest of the world.

#### B. Ireland

1. Support for new world missions: Francis Macemie ordained and sent in 1683
2. Synod of Ulster united with the Secession Church (doing mission work in Ulster) in 1840
  - a. becomes the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland
  - b. No instrumental music or non-biblical hymns allowed till 1890s

#### C. England

1. Calvinistic Methodism in Wales
  - a. Fanned by George Whitefield, but anticipated before his coming by evangelical preachers like Griffith Jones and Howel Harris
  - b. Organized in Wales in 1742
    - 1) in contradistinction to the Arminian organization of the Wesleys
    - 2) Not dissident churches, but originally evangelical societies within the CoE. Would not become independent until 1811 with its own Calvinistic confession of 42 articles based upon the Westminster Confession. It was called the “Calvinistic Methodist Connexion.”
    - 3) The constitution combines features of Presbyterianism and Congregationalism
2. TBD...

## D. Holland

1. 1792—Napoleon occupies Holland and disestablishes the state church (Dutch Reformed Church)
  - a. Existing churches were recognized by the state and supported by it.
  - b. After Napoleon's defeat (1815), the Dutch Republic was replaced by a kingdom (including Belgium until 1830) that maintained Napoleon's church policy.
2. 1820-30, the European *Reveil* reaches Holland
  - a. 1834—an evangelical/pietistic element separated from the Dutch Reformed Church that was by now overly tolerant in doctrine
  - b. Groen van Prinsterer (d. 1867)
    - 1) was an aristocratic statesman who (along with others like the poet Bilderdijk), encouraged vital piety, but who also warned of the logical end of humanism spreading out of the French Revolution
    - 2) He served as a bridge from the Reveil to Kuyper's Dutch Calvinistic renaissance
3. Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)
  - a. Followed his father into the ministry of the majority church
  - b. Infected with modernism at University of Leyden
  - c. Return to faith of his fathers

“I had not yet found the Word of reconciliation. In their (pietists of his first congregation) simple language they brought me this in the absolute form in which alone my soul can rest. I discovered that the Holy Scripture does not only cause us to find justification by faith, but also discloses the foundation of all areas of human life.” (Rom. 11:33-36)
  - d. No reformation without the printing press: his newspaper was *The Herald*, and his Christian Magazine, *The Standard*
  - e. 1880—Started the Free University to bypass the rationalism of Leyden University
  - f. 1886—another separation from the majority church. Kuyper's group would merge with the 1834 group
  - g. 1898—Stone Lectures at Princeton Univ.: popularly called “Lectures on Calvinism.” God is sovereign over His world and all human activity
  - h. Political life
    - 1) Kuyper taught that politics are not neutral, but are wedded to ultimate issues. He said, “No political scheme has ever become dominant which was not founded in a specific religious or anti-religious conception.”
    - 2) Inherited leadership of the “Anti-Revolutionary Party” of van Prinsterer. There were still revolutionary seeds in Europe of “No God—No Master.”
    - 3) Kuyper was elected to parliament in 1874. Elevated to national leadership in 1901: Prime Minister and leader of the “Monstrous Coalition” (with RCs), 1901-1905

## V. Worldwide Presbyterianism today

### A. Latin America

#### 1. Brazil

- a. Presbyterianism planted in 1862 by Princeton seminary graduate, Ashbel Green Simonton (1833-1867)
- b. The Presbyterian Church of Brazil, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a million strong, underwent a renewal around the year 2000. Bible-believing leaders have been reforming the denomination's schools and courts since then.

2. Mexico boasts the largest Presbyterian denomination in Latin America with 2.5 million adherents (National Presbyterian Church of Mexico).

### B. Africa

1. Presbyterianism came to Africa in the 1800s, particularly through Scottish missionaries.
2. Now represented in 29 African countries. A large presence is found in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa with four million adherents.

### C. Asia

1. Korea has by far the largest Presbyterian presence in Asia with 20,000+ congregations, and the church there claims to have the largest single congregation in the world (Myung-sung Church). Korean Presbyterianism is the world's second largest sender of missionaries.
2. Taiwan Presbyterianism has promoted Taiwanese language church services because of interest in translating Scriptures into native tongues.

### D. Oceania

New Zealand and Australia have many Presbyterian churches through their countries' history with Scotland and Ulster. There are Presbyterian churches in every state of Australia. Similar to a merger in Canada in 1925 (United Church of Canada), a majority of liberal Presbyterians merged in 1977 with the Methodists and Congregationalists to form the Uniting Church in Australia.