

d. Within the Presbyterian Community

Prefacing this discussion is the fact that the presbyterian community always had a number of polity divisions within itself that tended to produce divergent bodies. Many of these have been overcome in the more recent years but the doctrinal differences have produced the new presbyterian groupings, not the older arguments about method, etc. We sketch those best known to us.

--The Orthodox Presbyterian church...since 1936

It was formed after the defections at Princeton and under the leadership of Machen, et al. The persons banded together in the enterprise were too diverse in goal and intent to continue well together and further divisions soon followed. Then the Orthodox church rather retreated into doctrinal solidarity and did not grow well for a season...although in more recent years it has shown a lot of progress.

--The Bible Presbyterian church...since 1937

A number of those who left Princeton (the church at that time) found it hard to work together and the original body divided with the Bible Presbyterian church being the outgrowth. It was marked by growth but in 1956 re-divided with one group taking the name "Evangelical Synod". This body later merged with the Old Reformed Presbyterian Church (not the North American Synod, however) and formed the Reformed Presbyterian Evangelical Synod (or something such as that.) The original body has suffered further disruptions since.

--The Presbyterian Church of America

The nucleus of this body gathered in the early 70's and it was rooted essentially in the old southern Presbyterian church. It merged with the Reformed church (mentioned in the earlier paragraph) and has sought union with the OP church. It is by far the larger of these bodies and much less stable in makeup.

--The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

A group consisting of a number of former United Presbyterian churches that took advantage of a legal situation a few years ago and withdrew with their properties.

Possession of property was a key feature in these disputes since the synods claimed title. It was ruled, however, that titular authority was not in the synodical hands, a few years ago, and a number of Presbyterian churches left the liberal denominations with their property. A lot of these settings are still in litigation but so far, in instances where the majority of members was clear and final and where there were no financial entanglements, most of the decisions have favored the departing conservatives.