

(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 in the modern period:

/1/ The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Since 1936 this has been a continuing body formed after the loss of Princeton and the mandate of 1934. The leadership of Machen was primary. The parties that originally left the denomination proved too diverse in goal and intent to continue well together and further divisions followed. The Orthodox church then retreated into doctrinal solidarity and did not grow well for some time. In more recent years it has shown more progress but is beset with the problems of "true reformed theology", etc. It has considered merger with the PCA but has not moved on this line.

/2/ The Bible Presbyterian church

Since 1937 it has continued albeit with many struggles, divisions, and difficulties. Marked with evangelistic fervor it grew after its separation from the Orthodox church but then suffered a major division in 1956 and three others since that time. In 1956 a party left forming the Evangelical Presbyterian church that later merged with the old Reformed Presbyterian church to form the Reformed Presbyterian Evangelical Synod (RPCES) which has since merged with the Presbyterian Church in America.

/3/ The Presbyterian Church in 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 previously) and has sought union with the OP church. It is by far the largest of the Presbyterian separatist bodies but much less stable in makeup and probably not well positioned as far as its direction is concerned.

/4/ The Evangelical Presbyterian Church

A group of former United Presbyterian churches that were able to leave the parent denomination on a constitutional technicality about ten years ago. They are conservative but not militant in a fundamentalist line and continue the ideas of a feminine eldership although not necessarily of a similar place in ministry.