

Part 2 - Governance



WHAT DO PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE?



What Kind of Church Is Journey?

- Theology:
 - the study of the nature of God and religious belief.
- Know God:
 - **John 6:39** - These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.
- Glorify God:
 - **1 Cor 10:31** - So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

God's Glory: "Big" God



- **2 Timothy 1:9** – who has saved us and called us to a holy life – not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Presbyterian Church Beginnings



- 1st C - Day of Pentecost , Acts 2 Church
- 4thC - Emperor Constantine established spiritual & political church under Roman Empire
- Roman Catholic Church – W. Europe
- Eastern Orthodox Church – E. Europe, Asia
- 15th C - Protestant Reformation
 - Martin Luther: question authority of Catholic Church
 - Reformed Theology: John Calvin, John Knox
 - Reformed communities: England, Holland, France
 - Presbyterian Church: Scotland (Knox), England

Acts 2 Church



- **Acts 2:1-4** – When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Acts 2 Church, 2...

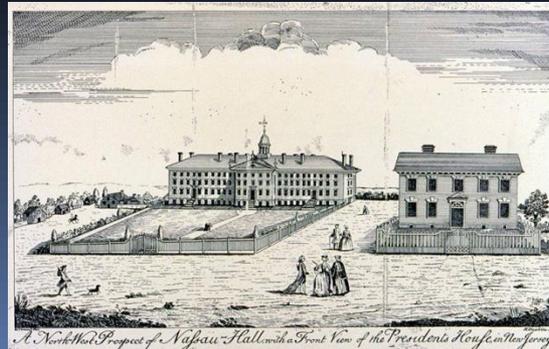


- **Acts 2:42-46** - They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Presbyterian Church in New World



- Reformed immigrants to America
- Reformed denominations dominate colonial life at time of Revolutionary War
- Stand for religious and civil liberty, as mistrust British colonial power
- Voluntary societies: education, missionary, evangelical and reforming work



Influence of Presbyterian Views On U.S. Government

- God's sovereignty
- Human sinfulness
- Led to:
 - Representative assemblies
 - Checks and balances
 - Separation of powers
- Declaration of Independence
- State and national Constitutions



Declaration of Independence

- Rev. John Witherspoon in 1746 helped form College of New Jersey (later became Princeton University)
- Witherspoon was one of twelve Presbyterians who signed the Declaration of Independence (out of forty-six signers)



“Great Awakening” 1720-1746



- Religious revivalism throughout the American colonies
- Presbyterian ministers Jonathan Edwards and Gilbert Tennard played important role
- Deemphasize church dogma & doctrine
- Importance on individual & relationship to God
- Colonies develop stronger sense of independence

Other Presbyterian Influences

- Urge Americans to arms in Revolutionary War
- Women's societies: relief to poor, aided missionaries, established schools
- Abolition of slavery
- 20th C – ecumenical movement in World Council of Churches



Presbyterian Polity



- **1 Timothy 3:1-5** - Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)
- **Titus 1: 9** - He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it

Presbyterian Polity, 2...

- **1 Timothy 5:17** – The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.
- **1 Peter 5:2-3** – Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve;



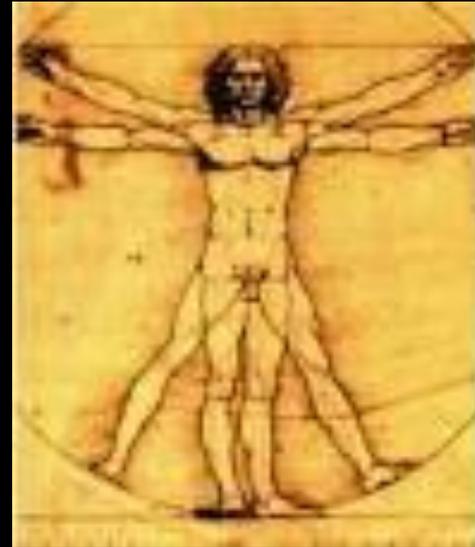
Presbyterian Polity, 3...

- **Psalm 78:70-72** – He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; from tending the sheep he brought him to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance.

And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skillful hands he led them.



Presbyterian Polity, 4...



- **1 Corinthians 12:27-28** – Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.

Presbyterian Polity, 5...



- **Matthew 18:15-17** – If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Presbyterian Polity, 6...



- **1 Peter 2:9** – But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.
- **1 John 5:1-2** – Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands.

Summary: Presbyterian Polity



- An elder is an “overseer”
- Preaching, administer governments, is by a teaching elder (minister)
- Gifts of government is to elders, ruling elders
- Pastoral care, church discipline, leadership and legislation is by ministers and ruling elders
- All Christians together are the priesthood, all elders are called to serve by consent of congregation



Republicanism

- Representative form of government organization
 - Centered on citizenship in a state organized as a republic
 - Democracy with government chosen by the people
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Federalism

- Mixed or compound mode of government (central & regional)
 - Single political system
 - Division of power outlined in a Constitution
 - Some degree of regional self-rule
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Political Federalism

- Parliamentary republicanism (representative form of government, citizenship in a state organized as a republic)
- Presbyterian denominations
- Local church ruled by elected elders
- Each church sends representatives (commissioners) to Presbyteries and further to a General Assembly
- Shared sovereignty – each level some level of sovereignty over itself; each greater level has ruling authority over its members

Ecclesiastical Federalism



- Earliest source of political federalism is in Bible (Acts 15)
- Council of Jerusalem to govern the church
- Apostles – universal church
- Elders – regional church

Jerusalem Council



- **Acts 15:1-3** – Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them on their way,

Jerusalem Council, 2...



- **Acts 15:**
- **4** – When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.
- **6** - The apostles and elders met to consider this question.
- **12** - The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

Church Governance

- Developed in Geneva under John Calvin
- Rule of assemblies of presbyters (elders)
- Each local church governed by elected elders call a Session
- Authority flows both:
 - Top down – higher assemblies limited but have important authority over individual congregations i.e. ordain ministers
 - Bottom up – moderator and officers are not appointed from above but elected by members of the assembly

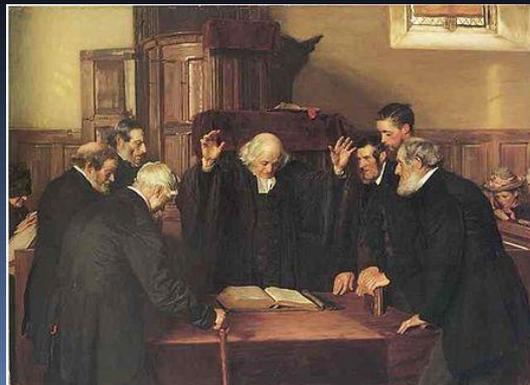


Church Governance, 2...

- Councilor method: leadership by the group or council
- Group for the service of the congregation, to pray for them and to encourage them in the faith
- Individual congregations not independent, answerable to the wider church through its governing bodies (presbyteries, synods, assemblies)

Presbyterian Offices

- **Elder** – teaching elder, ruling elder
- **Minister** - teaching elder, called to a congregation (pastor), distinct ordination & function (preachers, teachers, celebrants of Sacraments)
- **Deacon** – practical matters of finance and fabric, welfare matters of congregation



Presbyterian Governing Bodies



- **Session** – elected council; pastor serves as Moderator & ruling elders; Clerk of Session (secretary, notes of meetings & records of congregation)
- **Presbytery** – congregations united in accountability to a regional body; minister & elder commissioned
- **Synod** – several Presbyteries
- **General Assembly** – highest court; Presbytery selects number of members to be commissioners



all spiritual blessing

EPHESIANS 1:1-3

- **Ephesians 1:3-6** - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

All Life Relates To God



- **1 Cor 10:31** – So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.
- **Isaiah 46:9-10** – Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.