

## Why I Am Not A... Presbyterian

### I. History

A. Presbyterianism has its roots in Protestant Reformation and the teachings of John Calvin

B. John Knox (1513?-1572)

1. First appears as a reformer in the Catholic church in Scotland
2. Was briefly part of the Church of England until forced to leave England under "Bloody Mary"
3. Spent time in Geneva and Frankfurt. In these places he came in contact with other Reformers such as John Calvin.
4. In Scotland, his fiery sermons and leadership helped establish the Church of Scotland and put him in opposition to Mary, Queen of Scots.
  - a) Mary supposedly said "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe."

C. In America

1. In 1706, independent Presbyterian churches founded the first presbytery (more on that in a bit) in America
2. In 1788, the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was held.
3. Through the years there have been major debates, schisms, and reunifications due to issues like the Great Awakening, slavery, and Modernism.
4. Today, the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA) has about 2.3 million members and the more conservative Presbyterian Church of America (PCA) has about 335,000 members.

D. Famous Presbyterians

1. John Witherspoon, Mr. Rogers, J. Gresham Machen, Billy Sunday, William Jennings Bryan, Peter Marshall, Lewis Sperry Chafer

### II. Some Issues

A. Calvinism

1. "TULIP"

a) Total Depravity

- (1) Men are so fallen that they are unable to seek salvation
- (2) um, see Ephesians 2:8,9 and Joshua 24:15

b) Unconditional Election

- (1) God picks and chooses individuals that He will save
- (2) um, see Ephesians 2:8,9

c) Limited Atonement

- (1) Christ only died for the people who would be saved
- (2) um, see Isaiah 53:6 and I John 2:2

d) Irresistible Grace

- (1) If God chose to save you, you cannot turn it down
- (2) um, see Acts 7:51
- e) Perseverance of the Saints -
  - (1) The saved cannot help but be holy until God calls them home
  - (2) um, see Jude 1 (Preservation, not Perseverance!)
- B. Presbyterian church government
  - 1. Authority Flowchart
    - a) Congregation - LOWEST
    - b) Session - Elders/Deacons/Boards
      - (1) Pastors are called "teaching elders"
    - c) Presbytery (representatives of some congregations meeting together)
    - d) Synod (more regional)
    - e) General Assembly (National level)
  - 2. "Top -> Down" leadership
  - 3. Congregations are not independent
  - 4. um, see Acts 9:31, Acts 16:5, Romans 16:16, etc.
- C. Infant Baptism
  - 1. "We believe the Bible teaches that baptism is a covenant sign for believers and their children. We do not think that baptism saves someone but it signifies them as a part of the community of the church, receiving all of the benefits of that community. As an infant, parents bring their child to be baptized in obedience to God, trusting that the child will one day respond to God's promises in faith... As an older child or adult, baptism is for believers who have not previously been baptized but with the same meaning, you being brought into the community of the church. Adult baptism is the final step of church membership. We love to celebrate baptisms." - <http://www.faithpcachurch.org/baptism/>
  - 1. Bible verse supporting infant baptism - 0. Zero. Zilch. Nada.
- D. Bible churches
  - 1. A variation of the Presbyterian church that is growing very fast in America is the Bible church.
  - 2. Bible churches are usually independent congregations, but most I've seen espouse some form of Calvinism and at localized form of church government based on the Presbyterian system.