

American Presbyterian History

1. John Knox (1513-1572) and the Scottish/English Reformation

- a. Knox was a Scottish churchman and pastor serving in the Church of England.
 - i. He was a friend of John Calvin, and was responsible for helping to bring many of the Reformation ideas to the Church of England and Scotland.
 - ii. His great desire was to see the church be reformed according to the Word of God.
- b. The Church of England was on unsteady ground at this time.
 - i. Its separation from Roman Catholicism was sparked by King Henry VIII's desire for a divorce, but later gained traction due to the Reformation. However, there were still some Catholic sympathies in the Church of England.
 - ii. There were two struggles going on: the Church of England vs. Roman Catholicism, and regarding how far the Reformation should go.
 - iii. Mary Tudor ("Bloody Mary" – Catholic) became queen in 1553, and Knox fled to Geneva for several years until her death.
 - iv. Elizabeth I (Protestant) became queen after Mary in 1558; Knox and others returned to Scotland with a renewed hope of reforming the Church of England.
- c. The rest of Knox's life was dedicated to reforming the Scottish church.
 - i. Knox wished to see both the church's theology and the worship reformed according to the Word of God.
 - ii. Much of the worship was influenced by Catholic practices, especially with all the ceremony and the Mass.
 - iii. He also wished the church government to be presbyterian (led by elders).
 - iv. Knox believed that the preaching of the Word would reform Scotland.
- d. Knox's desire was to see the church reformed according to the Word of God.
 - i. What does it mean for our worship to be reformed according to God's Word?
 - ii. How does worship according to God's Word differ from other types of worship?
 - iii. Are these matters of the manner and substance of worship even important?
 - iv. Is church governance important? Does it matter who oversees the church?



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Week 3 – Scottish Presbyterian History

Trinity Presbyterian Church

2. The Covenanters

- a. After Knox, the Presbyterians were distressed as there were efforts to push the Anglican church practices upon Scotland.
 - i. The English King Charles I wanted control over both church and state, and imposed the Church of England's liturgy on the Scottish church.
 - ii. The Scots saw this as usurping the authority of the church, and began to riot.
- b. The National Covenant (1638) led to war between Scotland and England.
 - i. It was a covenant among the Scottish people that reestablished the Presbyterian government and called for a complete reformation of the church.
 - ii. They decided to go to war because the issues were too great: independence of the church from civil control, purity of worship, and the right for reformation.
- c. The Solemn League and Covenant (1642) was both a civil league and religious covenant.
 - i. It was written to the English parliament as a sort of treaty to limit the king.
 - ii. Oliver Cromwell led the parliamentary party and the Covenanters won.
 - iii. The Scots held the king to the covenant; the WCF was adopted in 1649.
- d. The aftermath: the king later returned to the throne, and the "killing times" began.
 - i. Peace was later restored under William and Mary in 1689, but the Solemn League and Covenant was passed over.
 - ii. Presbyterianism continued to remain the state church in Scotland, but the subjugation of the state to the church ultimately failed.
- e. What kind of authority does the church have?
 - i. Did the Scottish church overstep its bounds in its attempts to subject the king?
 - ii. The independence of the church from the state is an important distinction.

3. The Seceders (1733) and the Free Church of Scotland (1843)

- a. The Seceders were formed by a mass exodus of ministers from the Church of Scotland over the issue of patronage and increasing doctrinal laxity.
 - i. Instead of congregations calling ministers, wealthy patrons began sponsoring ministers for the churches.
 - ii. A group seceded and formed their own presbytery, the Associate Presbytery.
- b. The Free Church of Scotland left over issues of patronage and matters of church/state.

Next Week...Early American Presbyterianism