

1. Two Different Missions Boards

- a. In 1932, a book called ***Re-Thinking Missions*** was published and proved to be a major catalyst to conflict over foreign missions in the PCUSA.
 - i. **Robert Speer**, a moderate and the secretary of the **Board of Foreign Missions**, gave a lukewarm response to the book, rejecting much of the theology, but praising many of its recommendations.
 - ii. This lukewarm response to such rank modernist propaganda, along with the continued employment of modernist **Pearl S. Buck** as a foreign missionary to China, set the stage for a showdown between Speer and Machen.
- b. Machen and Speer engaged in debate in 1933 both on a presbytery and GA level.
 - i. Machen made six charges against the Board:
 1. They had not clearly denounced the *Re-Thinking Missions* book.
 2. They had not released Pearl S. Buck.
 3. The Board's Candidate Secretary had signed the Auburn Affirmation.
 4. A Board Department recommended books full of modernist theology.
 5. The Board commended certain social gospel proponents.
 6. The Board cooperates with modernist groups in China.
 - ii. Speer's response
 1. It was discriminatory to single out this Board when these concerns were throughout the denomination's boards and committees.
 2. The Board did not have the authority to sit in judgment over ministers.
 3. The Board did not require "tolerance" for its candidates.
 4. Acknowledged that "union" activities with modernist organizations on the mission field had some dangers, but so did being separate.
 - iii. GA decided with Speer in an overwhelming fashion. The decision seemed to come down more to an issue of loyalty to Speer than the doctrinal concerns.
- c. Accordingly, conservatives created the **Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions** on October 17, 1933.
- d. At the 1934 GA, ministers were ordered to resign from the Independent Board, and presbyteries called to bring noncompliant ministers to trial.
- e. This led to Machen's conviction and suspension from ministry in 1935 by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, ruling all the arguments by Machen in his defense as out of order.

American Presbyterian History

Week 12 – Formation of the OPC

Trinity Presbyterian Church

- f. On June 27, 1935, the **Constitutional Covenant Union** was organized by approximately 100 conservatives to continue the fight against modernism, and to prepare for a church split if the members of the Independent Board were expelled from the church.
 - g. At GA in 1936, Machen's appeal was denied, suspending him and 7 others from ministry.
 - h. On June 11, 1936, the Covenant Union formed the **Presbyterian Church of America**, with 34 ministers, 17 ruling elders, and 79 laymen. Machen was elected moderator.

On Thursday, June 11, 1936, the hopes of many long years were realized. We became members, at last, of a true Presbyterian Church; we recovered, at last, the blessing of true Christian fellowship. What a joyous moment it was! How the long years of struggle seemed to sink into nothingness compared with the peace and joy that filled our hearts!" - Machen, June 22, 1936, in the Presbyterian Guardian
 - i. Only about 5,000 members of a 2-million-member denomination ended up leaving.
 - j. In November, 1936, the new denomination adopted the Westminster Standards, removing most of the 1903 additions, thus creating a new 1936 edition.
 - k. In 1938, the PCUSA won a lawsuit against the new denomination on the grounds that the name was too similar. On February 9, 1939, the GA of the Presbyterian Church of America changed its name to **The Orthodox Presbyterian Church**.
 - l. On January 1, 1937, Machen died at the age of 55.
2. The First Split: The Creation of the BPC
 - a. Three controversies quickly emerged in the OPC.
 - i. Doctrine: About premillennialism
 - ii. Morality: About abstinence
 - iii. Polity: Should the Independent Board remain independent
 - b. This resulted in many, under the leadership of Carl McIntire, leaving to form the **Bible Presbyterian Church** on June 4, 1937.
3. Assessment
 - a. What does being fundamentalist mean?
 - b. What does being Presbyterian mean?



Carl McIntire

Next Week... *American Presbyterianism Post-1936*