

# REDEEMING THE TIME

*"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).*

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NO JUSTICE!  
NO PEACE!

## INJUSTICE IN AMERICA?

BY BRAD K. GSELL

**A**nger! Discord! Accusations! Acrimony! Grievances! Hatred! Jealousy! Betrayal! Businesses burned to the ground. Innocent police officers murdered. Guilty criminals tragically killed while police attempt to uphold the rule of law. The awful effects of sin rage around us every day — both in our neighborhoods and those of neighbors around the world.

### Injustice in America?

Everyone must stand against proven instances of government officials abusing their power to unjustly harm citizens, and such cases should be dealt with swiftly and decisively. However, not a few people have been led to believe that America is basically an unfair place, with great injustice being institutionalized and persistent. Many of our top political leaders promote this belief by stoking discord between black and white, rich and poor, male and female, and so forth. Children are taught this at home, and our schools and colleges — largely in the control

of the far left — reinforce the narrative. The Revs. Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson have made careers out of preaching discord — instead of the Gospel of the Prince of Peace.

### "Equality" and "Liberty"

In many cases, what is termed "injustice" is in fact a disdain for the founding principles of the United States. Our Founders proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence that "All men are created equal." However, the Declaration continues that all men "are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Our Founders nobly formed a government which would defend and uphold these unalienable rights, but they viewed a government seeking to manufacture equal outcomes for all to be antithetical to these rights. Commentator Charles Krauthammer once wisely stated that "There is a reason that in the New York Harbor there's a Statue of Liberty — it's not a Statue of Equality."<sup>1</sup>

Those governments which have attempted such managed "equality" have turned free men into slaves of the state. In such cases, those in power usurp the prerogatives of God and make themselves the arbiters and dispensers of rights and material goods. One need only look to the Soviet Union, China and other communist and socialist nations throughout the 20th century to see that "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" were forcefully snuffed out in the name of "equality." The results were profoundly disastrous, with more human suffering than the world has ever known. Freedoms were extinguished, but equality did not follow.

### What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible, on the other hand, requires each of us to be reliant upon God, with individual responsibility for our own actions and for the provision of the needs of our families. This can never give rise to haughty pride in our accomplishments, for "Thine, O

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# STANDING FOR CHRIST'S CROWN RIGHTS

BY MARK W. EVANS

**I**n the nineteenth century, Scottish Presbyterians recalled the valiant struggle of their Covenanting forefathers. Once again, the issue of the “Crown Rights of Jesus Christ” arose as the civil government attempted to impose its power upon the Church of Scotland. An old practice of patronage, in which a candidate for the pulpit was presented to a church, became a means of thwarting the right of a congregation to choose and ordain its own minister.

In 1834, a civil court ruled in favor of a patron and ordered a church to receive and ordain a patron’s candidate. This violation of Christ’s authority to govern His Church ended in a secession from the state subsidized Church. The lengthy and complicated legal case was decided on the principle that the civil government created the Church. Counsel for the state introduced the principle: “[A]fter annulling the popish system in Scotland, the state had created the Reformed Church in its room, and that from the state she received her whole government and jurisdiction.”<sup>1</sup>

The controversy advanced in complexity. One event especially awakened the Scottish people. In 1837, a patron presented a candidate, Mr. John Edwards, to fill the vacant pulpit of a church in Marnoch, Strathbogie. The congregation rejected the candidate. The civil court ruled that the candidate must be accepted. Moderates of the Presbytery defended the civil government. The General Assembly, by commission, ruled against the moderate ministers, suspended

them from the ministry, and prohibited their interference. The ministers ignored the Assembly and proceeded to install the patron’s candidate.

When the delinquent Presbytery arrived at the church on January 21, 1841, they found some 2,000 of the congregation gathered to oppose them. After the Presbytery members were seated, they were presented a written protest: “We earnestly beg you ... to avoid the desecration of the ordinance of ordination under the circumstances; but if you shall disregard this representation, we do solemnly, and as in the presence of the great and only Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, repudiate and disown the pretended ordination of Mr. Edwards, and his pretended settlement as minister of Marnoch. We deliberately declare that, if such proceedings could have any effect, they must involve the most heinous guilt and fearful responsibility in reference to the dishonor done to religion, and the cruel injury to the spiritual interests of a united Christian congregation.”<sup>2</sup>

Robert Buchannan, in his book *The Ten Years’ Conflict*, described what followed: “In a body the parishioners rose, and, gathering up the Bibles which some of them had been wont to leave, for long years, from Sabbath to Sabbath in the pews, they silently retired. The deep emotion that prevailed among them was visible in the tears which might be seen trickling down many an old man’s cheek, and in the flush, more of sorrow than of anger, that reddened many a young man’s brow. ‘We never witnessed,’ said an onlooker, ‘a scene

bearing the slightest resemblance to this protest of the people, or approaching in the slightest degree to the moral beauty of their withdrawal; for, stern though its features were, they were also sublime. No word of disrespect or reproach escaped them; they went away in a strong conviction that their cause was with the Most Powerful, and with Him rested the redress of all their wrong. Even the callous-hearted that sat in the pew, the only pew representing intrusionism and forced settlements, were moved — they were awed; and the hearts of some among them appeared to give way. ‘Will they all leave?’ — we heard some of them whispering. Yes; they all left, never to return until the temple is purified again, and the buyers and sellers — the traffickers in religion — are driven from the house of God. They all left.”<sup>3</sup>

This event, along with many others, decided the issue for faithful Presbyterians. They faced the reality that they must obey God rather than man. The issue was finally settled at the General Assembly of May 18, 1843, assembled in the Church of St. Andrews, Edinburgh. When the preliminary ceremonies and sermon were finished, all the commissioners gathered at the church in their appropriate pews. The retiring moderator, Dr. David Welsh, took his place at the head of the assembly and lifted his voice in prayer. Rev. Thomas Brown described the scene that followed: “‘Fathers and Brethren,’ he said, and his voice sounded clear to the furthest limits of the great audience, ‘according to the usual form of procedure, this is the time for making up the roll, but in consequence of certain proceedings affecting our rights and privileges — proceedings which have been sanctioned by Her Majesty’s Government, and by the Legislature of the country; and more especially in respect that there has been an infringement on the liberties of our Constitution, so that we could not now constitute this Court



without a violation of the terms of the Union between Church and State in this land, as now authoritatively declared — I must protest against our proceeding further. The reasons that have led me to come to this conclusion are fully set forth in the document which I hold in my hand, and which, with permission of the House, I shall now proceed to read.”<sup>4</sup>

After stating the Scriptural principles upon which the Church stood and detailing the transgressions of the civil government, he said: “We protest that, in the circumstances in which we are placed, it is and shall be lawful for us, and such other Commissioners chosen to the Assembly, appointed to have been this day holden, as may concur with us, to withdraw to a separate place of meeting, for the purpose of taking steps, along with all who adhere to us — maintaining with us the Confession of Faith and Standards of the Church of Scotland as heretofore understood — for separating in an orderly way from the Establishment, and thereupon adopting such measures as may be competent to us, in humble dependence on God’s grace and the aid of the Holy Spirit, for the advancement of His glory, the extension of the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour, and the administration of the affairs of Christ’s house according to His Holy Word; and we now withdraw accordingly, humbly and solemnly acknowledging the hand of the Lord in the things which have come upon us because of our manifold sins, and the sins of this Church and nation, but, at the same time, with an assured conviction that we are not responsible for any consequences that may follow from this, our enforced separation from an Establishment which we loved and prized, through interference with conscience, the dishonor done to Christ’s crown, and the rejection of His sole and supreme authority as King in His Church.”<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Brown said, “With these words, the Moderator laid the Protest on the table — lifted his hat — turned to the Commissioner, who had risen — and bowed respectfully to the representative of Royalty, an act which seemed to many as if the true old Church of Scotland were then and there bidding farewell to the State which had turned a deaf ear to her appeals.”<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Thomas Chalmers<sup>7</sup> followed Dr. Welsch and to the astonishment of their adversaries, man after man

**“These followers of the Lamb lost their church buildings, manses and salaries. They faced the possibility of losing their congregations as well. Wealthy landowners refused to sell land for the building of new churches. They had to meet in barns, in the open, or wherever they could find a place. Some pastors suffered physically from exposure to the weather. Yet, the Lord raised a testimony for His glory through this Church willing to separate for the glory of Christ and His truth.”**

filed out of the church. Opponents were at first complacent, but, as the numbers swelled, “there came an expression of perplexity, which in not a few instances seemed to deepen into bewilderment and dismay.”<sup>8</sup> A witness said, “[I]n the course of twenty minutes there did not remain inside the church above one hundred human beings.” Brown commented, “Looking at such a sight, what could men think but that it was the Church of Scotland which had gone out?”<sup>9</sup>

This secession eventually included over 400 ministers that formed the Free Church of Scotland. These followers of the Lamb lost their church buildings, manses and salaries. They faced the possibility of losing their congregations as well. Wealthy landowners refused to sell land for the building of new churches. They had to meet in barns, in the open, or wherever they could find a place. Some pastors suffered physically from exposure to the weather. Yet, the Lord raised a testimony for His glory through this Church willing to separate for the glory of Christ and His truth. Our present dark hour portends another attack upon the Crown Rights of Jesus Christ. All branches of government have set themselves against the commandments and institutions of Almighty God. Our privilege is to follow the Lamb and bear a witness for His glory. This spiritual duty cannot be accomplished apart from God’s grace. Our hope is in the Lord. He told the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). •

<sup>1</sup>Thomas M’Crie, *The Story of the Scottish Church* (Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd., n.d.), p. 538.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Brown, *Annals of the Disruption* (Edinburgh: John MacLaren and Son, n.d.), pp. 25,26.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Buchannan, *The Ten Years’ Conflict* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1852), pp. 198,199.

<sup>4</sup>Brown, pp. 92,93.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>Dr. Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847) was professor of theology at the University of Edinburgh from 1828-1843. He served as Moderator of the Church of Scotland in 1832. His preaching, writings, and leadership had a prominent part in the secession from the Church of Scotland. After the Disruption, he was elected as the first Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland.

<sup>8</sup>Brown, p. 94.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

## THE DIVISION OF 1937

Between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Bible Presbyterian Church

### PART 4

# Presbyterian Church Government

BY BRAD K. GSELL

*It is important to have read Parts 1, 2 and 3 of this series, which were published in the Winter, Spring and Summer 2014 issues of Redeeming the Time. They serve as the general background for understanding this segment and those to come. These may be found on our website ([www.rttpublications.org](http://www.rttpublications.org)), or we would be glad to mail copies to you.*

*The last article in this series dealt with the word “Independent” in the name of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. This issue will examine controversies surrounding the word “Presbyterian.”*

All those who founded and served on The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions were, of course, Presbyterian. All of the Board’s missionaries were Presbyterian. The very name of the organization indicates that it was dedicated to promoting “Presbyterian foreign missions.”

This was not some mere loyalty to a name or organization. The Board’s Charter states that the missions it was established to promote would be “true to the Bible and to the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and to the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church government.”

However, when the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA) began disciplining men and women BE-

CAUSE they refused to resign from The Independent Board, it placed these men in a state of unprecedented crisis. Pastors of churches found not only their salaries, pensions and places to live in jeopardy, but congregations were being locked out of their buildings, having their assets seized and summoned into Court by the PCUSA. The very buildings congregations had sacrificed to build,

**“We believe that when the Presbyterian system of government is administered by men who are sound in the faith and filled of the Spirit, it is closer to apostolic practice than any other form of church government....”**

H. McAllister Griffiths

where families had worshipped for generations, were being confiscated by the denomination.

The PCUSA even took the new Presbyterian Church of America denomination to court, seeking to force it to change its name. Rather than wasting time and money, and creating further scandal in the public eye, the new denomination changed its name in 1939 to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC).

PCUSA Stated Clerk Lewis Mudge had done everything in his power to thwart and harass the Bible believers, with his actions often being recorded in the secular press. It even got to the place where groups totally unconnected to either denomination were pressured to cancel the use of the facilities where meetings connected with the OPC had been scheduled.<sup>1</sup>

All of these events caused the Bible-believing Presbyterians to reassess their alliances, and the members of some local congregations questioned whether they ever again wanted to be under the control of a powerful denomination. Even some congregations fully committed to Presbyterianism believed it would be prudent and wise to remain independent until the dust should settle and they could make wise choices after much prayer and seeking wisdom from the Lord.

All were agreed that no congregation should ever again be put in the place of having to violate its conscience and the clear teaching of the Word of God to retain the facilities for which THEY had sacrificed and paid. Most believed that the problem was not with Presbyterian church government, but rather with the perversion of it in the face of great apostasy. They also believed that embracing independency was NOT the answer, and sought to convince ministers and laymen alike that they

should join in starting a new Presbyterian denomination which would be faithful to God's Word and the principles of historic Presbyterianism.

### **Why the Insistence on Presbyterian Government?**

Presbyterianism (the Greek word *presbuteros*, used in the New Testament, means "elder") bases its form of government on the fact that a number of places in Scripture refer to a plurality of elders in each local church, and that ministers and elders from various churches gathered from time to time to deliberate on various matters. Acts 15:6, in the account of what is often called the Jerusalem Council, states: "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." After a number of men spoke, and some listened in silence, the body wrote a letter to the Gentile Christians in "Antioch, Syria and Cilicia," and sent two representatives to deliver the letter and to personally tell these Christians the decision of this council.

The new Testament is replete with references to a plurality of "elders" in various churches (Acts 21:18, 1 Timothy 5:17, James 5:14), and so forth. Acts 14:23 says of Paul and Barnabas: "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." Paul tells Titus to "ordain elders in every city ... (Titus 1:5).

Other Biblical supports for Presbyterian government are Paul's calling from Miletus for the elders in Ephesus to come meet with him (Acts 20), and the ordination of Timothy by "the presbytery" (1 Timothy 4:14). A study of Biblical church government, in much greater detail than can be provided in the scope of this article, would be beneficial to all.

### **Independency Warned Against**

In the midst of ecclesiastical trials of a number of the members of

The Independent Board, the *Presbyterian Guardian*, under the editorship of future Bible Presbyterian leader H. McAllister Griffiths, carried an article simply entitled "Independency." It was by ruling elder Dr. Gordon H. Clark, who was a noted 20th century scholar of the Bible and philosophy. Clark cautioned that the famous Five Fundamentals<sup>2</sup>, as crucial and central as they were to the Christian faith, were by no means all that the Scriptures taught. He warned against the tendency of some independent churches to adopt shorter, more vague creeds than the great historic creeds of the Reformation — including the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Clark also cautioned: "After bitter experiences with corrupt ecclesiastical inquisitions it is a natural reaction to establish churches independent of ecclesiastical control. If this be a temporary device pending the formation of other congregations and their unification into a truly reformed church, it is a practical and necessary expedient. But if, on the other hand, the independency is regarded as a permanent insurance against the inroads of Modernism it is but another example of reliance on human depravity instead of upon the arm of the Lord.

"The conclusion is that neither a long nor a short creed, neither courts nor independency, guarantee purity in doctrine and practice, but that a well-developed creed and a definite system of church courts retard the sinful but natural tendency to degeneration. This retardation is most effective, and that church is most nearly ideal where these elements and functions are conformed to the Word of God...."<sup>3</sup>

Just a few months after this article appeared, on June 11, 1936, Dr. Griffiths called to order the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America (now OPC), with Dr. J. Gresham Machen elected as Moderator. Throughout the first

year of its existence, various ministers and churches joined the new denomination, as the Lord led them. Others were more cautious, waiting to see how things would develop. When controversy arose in the fall of 1936, quite a few decided to keep observing for a longer period of time before taking any action.

In the last issue of the *Guardian* before Machen's death, an article was published by the Rev. James L. Rohrbaugh, an Independent Board missionary to Ethiopia. It was entitled "Is Undenominationalism Better?" Rohrbaugh pointed out the tendency of undenominational groups to have a great lack of doctrinal precision (which often leads to error being accepted) and a lack of Biblical accountability. In conclusion, he stated: "The hope of America is not in doing away with the denominations, but in the resurrection of the denominations from their graves of unbelief, growing out of decades of doctrinal neglect."<sup>4</sup>

Neither Clark's article in February 1936, nor Rohrbaugh's in December 1936, caused any known controversy among the members of The Independent Board. They, to a man, identified themselves as "Presbyterians." Men on both sides of the coming division agreed with Dr. Machen that The Independent Board, and other independent agencies associated with the new denomination, must be careful not to compromise their Presbyterian convictions. They nonetheless enjoyed precious Christian fellowship with those who held to other forms of church government.

Even after Dr. Machen's death, the *Presbyterian Guardian* carried favorable articles about the work of the Board, several times announcing the appointment of new missionaries and highlighting the ministry of the Board in a positive way. Such articles as "Executive Committee of Board Appoints Four New Mission-

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aries,”<sup>5</sup> “Appoint New Missionaries Under Independent Board,”<sup>6</sup> and “Westminster Graduates Greatly Appreciated on Foreign Field: Southern Baptist Missionary Praises Work of Appointees Under Independent Board”<sup>7</sup> were carried.

### A New Charge of “Independency” and a Struggle for “Control of the Board”

Only after Dr. Allan A. MacRae and several members of the Board of Westminster Seminary resigned in April 1937 did the *Presbyterian Guardian*’s attitude change quickly into one of open attack on the Board. (See details in the Winter 2014 issue of *Redeeming the Time*, pp. 13-15.)

Noted historian George M. Marsden<sup>8</sup> states that the Westminster men “decided to challenge the legality of having independents on a board for Presbyterian foreign missions. To do this they had to insert a new issue into the controversy — that of independency.”<sup>9</sup>

They began suddenly to publicly accuse those who elected Dr. Laird to the presidency, six months before, of attempting to take over the Board and of being against Dr. Machen.<sup>10</sup> Since there were no changes to the membership of the Board at the fall 1936 Board meeting, the real issue — rather than this discredited claim (see spring 2014 issue of *Redeeming the Time*, pp. 3-7) — is identified by Marsden. He points out that “With the death of Machen (January 1, 1937) they [the Westminster men] became a minority on the executive committee [of The Independent Board] as well as on the board itself.” He continues: “... one can hardly imagine that the issue of the independency of certain members of the board would have been pressed

as it was, if the question of control of the board had not been involved.”<sup>11</sup>

At the May 31, 1937, meeting of The Independent Board, the spirit had turned decidedly hostile. Members of the Independent Board with ties to Westminster Seminary (Edwin H. Rian, Ned B. Stonehouse, Murray Forst Thompson and Paul Woolley) sought to have a resolution passed which challenged the President (Dr. Harold S. Laird), the Vice President (Dr. Merrill T. MacPherson), and Dr. Roy Talmadge Brumbaugh of Tacoma, WA, for supposedly being in violation of the Board Charter because they were “independents.” When the resolution failed to gain majority support, these men and four ladies sympathetic to them resigned from the Board.

The charge was believed by many to be manufactured. Until the previous month, Drs. Laird and Brumbaugh had been distinguished members of the Board of Westminster Seminary. If these men were in such grave error, why had the issue not been raised previously at that institution? Would this attack have been waged had these men not just resigned from the Board of Westminster — for issues far removed from any questions over “independency”? Why was the founding Vice President of The Independent Board, who had again been overwhelmingly reelected just six months before, now suddenly become the object of such attack?

Carl McIntire noted well: “At the election last November [1936], no mention of any objection to Mr. Laird on the ground of ‘independency’ was made.”<sup>12</sup> He further stated that “It seems that the men were looking for an excuse on which to base their action, and the best excuse they could get, and without doubt one of the most flimsy, was the fact that the Board was in favor of Independency.”<sup>13</sup>

This dispute carried over into the Third General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church meeting

from June 1-4, 1937. The majority of the members of the missions committee of the General Assembly recommended that the church cease its support of The Independent Board and erect a General Assembly-controlled Committee on Foreign Missions. The delegates to the General Assembly adopted this recommendation.<sup>14</sup>

The June 12, 1937, issue of the *Guardian*, was largely devoted to attacking The Independent Board, with the front page headline reading: “Why I Resigned as General Secretary of The Independent Board.” It was by Dr. Charles Woodbridge.<sup>15</sup>

Woodbridge, whose mother was a cousin of President Woodrow Wilson, was swayed by the Westminster men and immediately became the General Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Missions of the OPC. However, he only stayed in that position for three months before announcing that he had accepted a call to become pastor of a congregation in the Southern Presbyterian Church.<sup>16</sup>

### Carl McIntire Presents the Minority Report

While the Missions Committee recommendation was being discussed on the floor of the General Assembly, Carl McIntire presented a minority report. He clearly and forcefully dealt with these issues, stating: “... Nowhere in the pledge [required of all members of The Independent Board] does it say that a man, in order to be able to carry into effect the provisions of the charter and to promote the great design of the Board, must be a member of a particular Presbytery.... Those who have now resigned from the Board [the Westminster men and four others] have erected a new and artificial condition which was not envisioned by the pledge and which is not required by the pledge.”<sup>17</sup>

McIntire continued by debunking claims of a takeover, showing that of 11 new members added to

The Independent Board, at its last meeting, eight were members of the OPC. Of all of the 33 Board members, 21 were members of the OPC.<sup>18</sup>

The issue of “independency” of three Board members was dealt with next. McIntire stated: “It should be observed, as was pointed out in the [Independent Board] meeting, that they [the three men in question] have paid ‘the supreme sacrifice’ ecclesiastically for the testimony of The Independent Board, and it appeared most ungrateful for their positions on the Board to be challenged in less than a year after the judicial decisions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. — to be questioned on the ground that they had no place on The Independent Board because they were ‘independents?’ ... These men are now so-called independents because they were made that by their expulsion from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and they have not yet seen their way clear to unite with a particular Presbytery. We would point out that, in view of the issues which have been raised in the Presbyterian Church of America [OPC], many have hesitated and are hesitating to unite with the Church until they are assured of the way it is to take; as to whether it is to be the true spiritual successor of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. or some other kind of a body...”<sup>19</sup>

The *Guardian* printed an abridged version of the minority report, which is understandable due to space limitations. However, it left out some of the facts most damaging to the majority report, and which highlighted the glaring inconsistencies of the accusers. The specifics of the defense of Laird, MacPherson and Brumbaugh were not printed.

McIntire laid out facts which clearly demanded an answer. He stated: “Just here it should be observed that an independent seminary for the training of Presbyterian ministers called Westminster Theological Seminary, which has no connection with

the Presbyterian Church of America, has as the pledge of the members of its Board the identical pledge, word for word, which is contained in the charter of The Independent Board and which Mr. Laird took.... On April 19 certain members of those who have resigned from The Independent Board, including the secretary [Paul Woolley], had a conference with Mr. Laird in which they told him that because of his ‘independency’ he should leave The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Though Mr. Laird was at that time a member of the Board of Westminster Theological Seminary

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*The Presbyterian Guardian*

and was serving as an executive officer, the secretary of the Board, no request whatsoever was made that he leave the Board of Westminster Theological Seminary because of his ‘independency.’ They seemed particularly zealous to get him off The Independent Board, but made no objection to his serving on [the] Westminster Seminary Board....”<sup>20</sup> Does this glaring inconsistency not give credence to the skepticism voiced by historian George Marsden, which we quoted above?

McIntire further pointed out: “... the Rev. Milo Jamison was a so-called ‘independent’ when he was recommended to the Board by Dr. Machen, Mr. Paul Woolley, and oth-

ers. They strenuously advocated his election. He had been thrown out of the Presbytery of Los Angeles, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and had no presbyterial connection. His election was secured as a member of The Independent Board at the insistence of the men who have now resigned. Mr. Jamison remained ‘independent’ for over three years.”<sup>21</sup>

This was no endorsement of or weakness concerning “independency.” Even the *Guardian* reported: “Mr. McIntire, in the final speech in favor of the minority report [defending The Independent Board], declared that if he believed this were an issue between Independency or vague fundamentalism on the one hand and Presbyterianism on the other he would take his stand on the side of Presbyterianism.”<sup>22</sup>

Ned Stonehouse, in the *Guardian*, tried to explain the difference between Milo Jamison being “independent” for three years, and the men presently under attack all being “independent” for a much shorter period of time.<sup>23</sup> His claim that they knew Jamison was going to join once a new denomination was formed, and that they did not know this about the three now in question, was an implausible defense at best. In fact all three of the men in question had publicly stated their continued firm adherence to Presbyterian doctrine and polity.

Dr. J. Oliver Buswell also spoke concerning intimations by these Westminster men that some members of The Independent Board were not sufficiently “Reformed.” It was Buswell’s contention that if these men genuinely believed this and had evidence, they had an obligation to bring the specifications to the Board for its consideration — instead of publishing vague statements reflecting on the integrity of fellow Board members and the Board itself.

Rather than attempting a reasoned response, as one might expect

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from a ruling elder of his stature, Attorney Murray Forst Thompson sidestepped the issue by casting further unsubstantiated aspersions against the minority. The *Guardian* summarized Thompson's response in these words: "Obviously, if the Board was unable or unwilling to discriminate between open Independency and the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church government, no confidence could be placed in its judgment on other matters of Presbyterian doctrine."<sup>24</sup> Such statements show the level of hostility faced by The Independent Board and its defenders — most of whom were still members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church!

### A Response From The Independent Board

With the defamation of the Board by the General Assembly of the OPC being reported in the *Guardian* and the public press, the Board felt it must give a response to its supporters. The next issue of *The Independent Board Bulletin* asked some pertinent questions: "Just what is the meaning of this sudden zeal against so-called 'independency'? Has a new and dangerous enemy suddenly reared its head?... They [the men under attack] are original members of the Board, men who have been with the Board since it was first incorporated...."

"... At the last meeting of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions its members affirmed their entire allegiance to the Charter of the Board which includes the acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures and of the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church Government...."<sup>25</sup>

"Mr. Laird is as truly Presbyterian as he ever was. He accepts the Westminster Confession and Catechisms without the slightest mental reservation. He believes thoroughly in the fundamental principles of the Presbyterian Form of Government. He is at present in a state of transition waiting to determine his precise future ecclesiastical affiliations. Before joining a new Presbyterian organization he and his people naturally would like to be sure exactly what sort of organization they would be entering...."<sup>26</sup>

"Mr. MacPherson accepts the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms and approves of the fundamental principles of Presbyterian Church Government. He has declared that he could just as honestly and sincerely take the pledge of The Independent Board now as on the day he helped to form it.... If some who have never lost anything tangible for their stand for the principles of the Board feel that they must resign from the Board if he is to remain, that is their privilege. It is only strange that they should thus suddenly come to such a decision after having never once opposed his repeated reelections to the vice-presidency of the Board...."<sup>27</sup>

"Dr. Brumbaugh declares that he is in full agreement with the purpose of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions and able just as honestly to take the pledge now as on the day he joined the Board.... Since his church was organized on its present basis, a number of semi-annual meetings of The Independent Board have been held. Never before has his right to membership on the Board been questioned."<sup>28</sup>

The Westminster professors stated that the majority of The Independent Board members had elected "independents" to be President and Vice President, as if it were some sort of coup. However, it is seldom mentioned that Dr. MacPherson had served from the very beginning of

the Board as the Vice President, with the complete approval of Machen, and Dr. Machen had asked Dr. Laird to be the first president of the Board, instead of himself.

### "A Practical and Necessary Expedient" Combined With Christian Grace and Love

This issue had a great deal to do with simple Christian grace and love. Carl McIntire, Allen MacRae, H. McAllister Griffiths, J. Oliver Buswell, and a number of others, felt it would be wrong to force these men and their churches accused of "independency" into an immediate decision concerning the joining of a presbytery. They heartily agreed with the principles stated by Dr. Gordon Clark that there were times when being independent was necessary as "a temporary device" and a "practical and necessary expedient."

They felt it would be far more sinful for these churches and their pastors to make rash, hasty decisions on matters of such importance, than to remain as they were until they felt the clear leading of the Lord. It is obvious that McIntire, as evidenced in the Minority Report quoted above, had trouble comprehending that these men who had been so unjustly harmed by the PCUSA, should now be facing attacks from their own brethren in the battle for Biblical truth. His consternation was further evidenced in an editorial about this in the *Christian Beacon*, in which he exclaimed: "How strange! How sad! How almost unbelievable!"<sup>29</sup> H. McAllister Griffiths offered a much needed reminder that "Church government is important, equally as to its form and *the spirit in which it is administered*" (emphasis ours).<sup>30</sup>

With the calamity and devastation of being forced out of their church facilities, and leaving everything behind, including the church bank accounts, some congregations were understandably cautious in mov-



ing too quickly to join another denomination. Finding suitable quarters to house their congregations, and raising the funds to support their pastors, were of immediate and real importance. The primary men leading the offensive against them were seminary professors and administrators. These men had indeed suffered, but simply were not in the midst of the catastrophic circumstances being faced by Laird, MacPherson, Brumbaugh and others.

The majority in the OPC took a new hardened approach that an individual congregation could never in any way be considered “Presbyterian.” They quoted Charles Hodge, who had written concerning Presbyterianism: “That the outward and visible Church is, or should be, one, in the sense that a smaller part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole.”<sup>31,32</sup>

Dr. MacPherson’s new church had voted to call itself the Church of the Open Door. After having been locked out of their old church building by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, they declared that the doors of the new church would never again be locked against its members coming to worship the Lord. They also voted that the church was to remain independent. This was a matter of particular concern. Yet, Dr. Griffiths pointed out correctly that, although all could wish this congregation would join a faithful Presbyterian denomination, “historically, many Presbyters have ministered to churches which are not themselves Presbyterian. The practice is of long standing, nor has it ever been contended, so far as I know, that the fact makes the minister anything less than a Presbyterian.”<sup>33</sup>

Ned Stonehouse stoked the controversy in the pages of the *Guardian*. Years later, the chairman of the



**Harold S. Laird**



**Merrill T. MacPherson**



**Roy Talmadge Brumbaugh**

faculty of Westminster Seminary, D. Clair Davis, commented: “To me the Stonehouse-edited *Presbyterian Guardian* had been unnecessarily provocative and it wasn’t surprising that at the very beginning the people who became Bible Presbyterians didn’t feel welcome....”<sup>34</sup> Davis didn’t consider the Bible Presbyterians to be “guiltless either,”<sup>35</sup> but he does not elaborate.

While being strong for Presbyterian church government, the men who would become Bible Presbyterians were not willing to cave to the new harsh and impatient demands suddenly springing from the Westminster men to depose ministers from membership on The Independent Board who were seeking the Lord’s leading as to where their ministerial and church memberships should be placed. They believed, much like Charles Hodge, who said: “Deprive the Church of discretionary freedom to *adapt* her principles to the exigency of cases as they arise, and you tie her, hand and foot. The Church cannot submit to it; it will not submit to it.”<sup>36</sup>

### **What Makes a Minister or a Church “Presbyterian” in Polity?**

Much discussion was engendered and many questions asked as various missionaries, ministers and laymen in the pew became concerned

over these matters. Dr. Allen A. MacRae, who was a member of the OPC, and a founding member of the Bible Presbyterian Church, wrote years later that “The term Presbyterian ... literally means ‘rule by elders.’”<sup>37</sup> While challenging local congregations and ministers as to the necessity of “profit[ing] by the greater spiritual insight of others,”<sup>38</sup> MacRae pointed out that rule by elders in local congregations is a crucial and fundamental part of Presbyterianism. Although he believed in church courts, he saw this sudden attack as more politically motivated than genuine.

H. McAllister Griffiths also stood firmly for the Presbyterian system of government. He wrote a “Memorandum” to answer questions concerning this controversy. Concerning Drs. Laird, MacPherson and Brumbaugh, he wrote: “They were Presbyterians when they joined the Board, Presbyterians when they left the old body and are still Presbyterians. Merely belonging to a presbytery does not make a man a Presbyterian, nor does non-membership take away his Presbyterian character. That character is conferred by ordination.

“The test by which a congregation is to be judged as to its Presbyterian character (in government) is a simple one. It is this: is the body gov-

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erned by Presbyters? Included in this query is another: are both kinds of Presbyters joined together in government—ministers (preaching presbyters) and elders (ruling presbyters)? If they are, you have a Presbyterian Church. This is true entirely apart from the question as to whether the church is connected with other churches under a Presbytery or not. Presbyterianism, historically, means government by presbyters, not government by a body which may happen to be called a Presbytery.... A presbytery is called such only because it is composed of presbyters. A presbyter is not called such simply because he belongs to a body called a presbytery, but because he was made a presbyter by ordination.”<sup>39</sup>

Concerning churches which left the PCUSA and had not seen fit to join another Presbyterian denomination, Griffiths writes: “Not to do so might be a grave error of judgment, it might withhold strength from a body which needed it, but the bare facts would not make the minister something else than a Presbyter or his church a non-Presbyterian Church.”<sup>40</sup>

Griffiths concludes: “Please do not misunderstand me. I believe that graded courts, in a national Presbyterian Church, are a necessity if a denomination is to function. I believe in such a church, for many reasons. I only say that not belonging to one does not make a Presbyter into something else.”<sup>41</sup>

It should be remembered that this is the same Dr. Griffiths who was praised by Dr. Machen in superlative terms, less than a year before, in the *Presbyterian Guardian*, for his unparalleled knowledge and understanding of Presbyterianism! (See pp. 9-10 of *Redeeming the Time*, spring 2014.)

## Griffiths and Hodge

Some thought Griffiths’ thinking was too lenient when compared with the quotation from Charles Hodge, used by the Board’s opponents, about the necessity of graded courts in the church. Yet, in many ways, much of what Griffiths wrote parallels views expressed by Hodge a century before.

Hodge, in debating Southern Presbyterian leader James Henley Thornwell, stated: “The power of the Church is where the Holy Ghost is; but in externals He has given her *discretion*. I glory as much as does my brother Thornwell in the *principles* of Presbyterianism; they are the glory of the land, and are working for the salvation of the world; but one of those principles, and a most important one, is freedom in that which the Bible leaves to the discretion of Christ’s people.”<sup>42</sup>

Griffiths wrote: “We believe that when the Presbyterian system of government is administered by men who are sound in the faith and filled of the Spirit, it is closer to apostolic practice than any other form of church government.... Certainly the details of organization that have slowly developed in Presbyterianism — such as the system of graded courts, with their respective powers and duties — have not been revealed in the Bible. They are inferences from apostolic practice and what is implied by apostolic practice. But one cannot elevate them to a place of equal importance with the great doctrines of redemption.”<sup>43</sup>

Does this not sound similar to Hodge, who wrote: “Let any man open the New Testament and say if our Form of Government is there as our *faith* is there? No, sir, this is making the scaffolding to hide the building; it is making the body the same in value as the soul. I cannot see how any man can say that all the details of our system are in the Bible.”<sup>44</sup>

In writing to the missionaries of The Independent Board about these attacks being made against it, Griffiths challenged them to “Bring in your souls, organize and shepherd them into churches, make those churches Presbyterian. But do not allow them to think that growth in grace is inseparable from Church government or that that government is infallible, or that all the details of that government have been revealed in the Bible....”<sup>45</sup>

Does this not reflect the views of Hodge, who appealed to the Reformers, stating that they did not believe the Scriptures taught a system of church government “in all its details,” but rather that it gave us “general principles”? Hodge continued concerning American Presbyterian history, stating: “The theory [that the Scriptures reveal all details of Presbyterian government] is emphatically no part of American Presbyterianism; it was never held by the Tennets, Smiths, Blairs, Alexanders and Millers of the Church.”<sup>46</sup>

Hodge indeed had no use for those who held to independency as a *principle*. He held strictly to the Scriptural teaching that the church has a responsibility to a wider and wider sphere. However, Hodge fully acknowledged that circumstances must be taken into consideration for church government, when the full-orbed, ideal structure is not possible, or has not yet had time to come to fruition.

Hodge pointed to the the early settlers in the New England states, who were Calvinists, but put more emphasis on local control of each congregation. He writes: “... the early disciples of the New England churches approached much nearer to Presbyterianism than it does at present. Elders, indeed, were a regular part of the organization of the churches of the Independents even when totally disconnected from Presbyterians.”<sup>47</sup> True Congregationalism at that time placed the leadership in the hands of all the male members



of each congregation. But, many had the Presbyterian system of elders at the local level, and various alliances were made between ministers and churches, which approached the Presbyterian system.

He also stated that Presbyterians “came [to America] as a general rule, as individuals, or in small companies, and settled in the midst of people of other denominations. It was, therefore, in most instances, only gradually that they became sufficiently numerous in any one place to form congregations, or to associate in a Presbyterian capacity.”<sup>48</sup> They were not considered non-Presbyterian just because of the circumstances in which they found themselves.

Hodge went back, even further, into Scottish Presbyterian history, showing that adjustments had to be made in certain circumstances. Concerning a requirement that every congregation have elders, Hodge writes: “... knowing it was vain to try to make bricks without straw, it [the Church of Scotland] wisely ordered that this [a requirement that every congregation have elders] should not be attempted, and hence in the early period of that church, there were multitudes of congregations without a session.... ‘When we speak of the eldership of particular congregations,’ says the book of policy of 1581, ‘we mean not that every particular parish kirk [church] can or may have their own particular eldership, particularly inlandward....’ The Presbyterianism, therefore, of the Scotch and Irish ministers who came to this country, need not be very violently questioned, if, after the example of their fathers, they appointed elders when they could obtain suitable persons, and where they could not, did the best they could without them.”<sup>49</sup>

### **Dr. Machen and Presbyterianism**

Before his death, Dr. J. Gresham Machen made quite clear his desire

that The Independent Board remain Presbyterian in both polity and doctrine — and not settle for a generic Fundamentalism. Certainly, the members of a Presbyterian board should indeed be expected to be Presbyterian in polity and doctrine. However, there is ample evidence that Dr. Machen did not take the extreme view held by these Westminster professors.

A study in contrasts can be seen over a very short period of time. While Dr. Machen was still alive, *The Presbyterian Guardian* reported that one of its regular writers, the Rev. Luther Craig Long had become pastor of a “Presbyterian” church in

### **When the Bible Presbyterian Church was founded in 1938, it was a matter of great priority to establish its Form of Government and Book of Discipline in accordance with historic Presbyterianism.**

New Haven, Connecticut, which “is free of ecclesiastical affiliation, and conducted in faith.”<sup>50</sup> Even in the descriptions of the writers for the *Guardian*, Long was described as “Pastor of the Calvin Presbyterian Church, (Independent)...”<sup>51</sup> Another article told how Dr. Machen had come to preach there, and described the church as “independent of any ecclesiastical affiliation or control.”<sup>52</sup> Long and this church later joined the OPC, but there apparently were no objections raised to them during the period of time in which they were “independent.”

Another example is an article in the *Guardian*, under the headline “Dr. Roy T. Brumbaugh Leads Most of Congregation Out of Church.” It reported that in August 1935 Dr. Brumbaugh and most of the congregation walked out of the First Pres-

byterian Church of Tacoma, Washington, and “formed a new congregation called ‘The First Independent Church of Tacoma.’ The congregation retains its Presbyterian polity and doctrine, aiming to continue the spiritual succession of true Presbyterianism in Tacoma.”<sup>53</sup> After Dr. Machen’s death, the *Guardian*, under the editorship of Ned Stonehouse, Edwin H. Ryan, Murray Forst Thompson and Leslie W. Sloat, started using such phrases as “unscriptural independentism.”<sup>54</sup>

As mentioned in earlier installments of this essay, some on the Board and faculty of Westminster Seminary were opposed to Dr. Machen’s having founded The Independent Board. Many of these men had decided they were just going to remain in the old church. Dr. Machen feared greatly that Westminster would be lost to a compromising position. Like The Independent Board, Westminster Seminary was an independent institution which required its Board members to adhere to Presbyterian polity and doctrine.

On December 21, 1935, Dr. Machen wrote a letter to Dr. Brumbaugh, addressed to him at “The First Independent Church of Tacoma.” It was written on the stationery of Westminster Theological Seminary. Dr. Machen wrote: “I know what devotion to the cause that Westminster Seminary serves is indicated by the sacrifices that you have made. It looks rather to me as though Westminster Seminary is more likely to be destroyed on January 7th than it is to be saved.... I tell you Brumbaugh, it is a great crisis.... I am begging you, with all my heart and soul, to come on to that [Westminster Seminary Board] meeting. Don’t bother about the expenses of it. There will be a fund to take care of all expenses that arise to you in any kind of way.... I think your comprehension of the need here is

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magnificent. If this battle is won, you will certainly have a very large share indeed in the joy of having been the instrument in such a result.”<sup>55</sup> Within months after Machen’s death, the Westminster men were out to remove from The Independent Board this very same Dr. Brumbaugh in whom Dr. Machen, as this letter reveals, placed such great trust.

### In the Years to Follow ...

In the years immediately following Dr. Machen’s death, Drs. Laird and Brumbaugh joined the Bible Presbyterian Church, as did their churches. Dr. Brumbaugh was a leader in the Bible Presbyterian Church at the time of his death. Through the years, Dr. Laird was a leader in several conservative Presbyterian denominations, and was a key player in the union of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (not to be confused with the present denomination of that name).

Dr. MacPherson eventually left the membership of The Independent Board and joined the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. He remained in wider fellowship with the men of The Independent Board and the Bible Presbyterian Church through such organizations as the American Council of Christian Churches.

The Independent Board, after more than 80 years, maintains its original position. All of its members and missionaries continue to be faithful to the Board Charter. This they must reaffirm on a regular basis. They love and promote the same Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms and Presbyterian polity which Dr. Machen loved.

WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PHILADELPHIA

J. GRESHAM MACHEN  
POST OFFICE ADDRESS  
208 SOUTH THIRTEENTH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

December 21, 1935.

Rev. Roy Talmage Brumbaugh, D.D.,  
First Independent Church of Tacoma,  
Division Avenue at G Street,  
Tacoma, Washington.

Dear Dr. Brumbaugh:

I am hastening to reply to your letter of December 18th. Your willingness to come on to the meeting on January 7th goes straight to my heart. I know what devotion to the cause that Westminster Seminary serves is indicated by the sacrifices that you have made.

It looks rather to me as though Westminster Seminary is more likely to be destroyed on January 7th than it is to be saved. At any rate, I think it is rather clear that the decision may hang upon one vote.

I tell you, Brumbaugh, it is a great crisis. When I think of the momentous issues that hang upon the two or three hours of that meeting on January 7th, and the exceedingly small group which is our only human support for the continuance of the thing into which so much of sacrifice and devotion has gone, I feel truly appalled. I can only rejoice that in our Faculty we have a group of men who are ready to leave even such an issue as that calmly in the hands of God. All the same, God does use human instrumentalities, and so I am begging you, with all my heart and soul, to come on to that meeting. Don't bother about the expenses of it. There will be a fund to take care of all expenses that arise to you in any kind of way. Paul Wobley will be the treasurer of such a fund, as before.

I understand to the full how hard it is for you to leave Tacoma just at that time. If I were not desperately pressed this afternoon and under the necessity of leaving town, I should tell you more in detail how thoroughly I do understand. I think your comprehension of the need here is magnificent. If this battle is won, you will certainly have a very large share indeed in the joy of having been the instrument in such a result.

Cordially yours,

*J. Gresham Machen*

Although publications produced by the official OPC Committee for the Historian in recent years continue to repeat the dubious accusations of “independency,” there are signs that at least some in the OPC and Westminster Seminary have not been as harsh or rigid on this matter as their forebears in the 1930s. The Orthodox Presbyterian official website carries a question and answer forum. One question submitted in recent years was: “What is your denominational structure and where do you get the basis for it?” Although the website makes clear that “The answers come from individual ministers in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church expressing their own convictions and

do not necessarily represent an ‘official’ position of the Church,” the reply to this question acknowledges that some independent churches “are Presbyterian as to local rule within particular churches, and have elders to exercise spiritual rule, but they are the exception.”<sup>56</sup>

At Westminster Seminary, John Bettler, professor of Practical Theology Emeritus, once found himself the subject of a faculty motion because of his attendance at an “independent church.” Although the vote was very close, the majority did not see Bettler’s action as an impediment worthy of inquiry.<sup>57</sup>

Even the OPC’s *Form of Government* concedes that Presbyterian

government “is not essential to the existence of the church visible.”<sup>58</sup> This would imply a belief that a church could indeed operate with certain other forms of government than Presbyterianism, and not be considered sinful.

## The Bible Presbyterian Church

When the Bible Presbyterian Church was founded in 1938, it was a matter of great priority to establish its *Form of Government* and *Book of Discipline* in accordance with historic Presbyterianism. The leaders of the new denomination actively promoted this. Carl McIntire wrote an editorial entitled “Independency,”<sup>59</sup> in which he clearly laid out the shortcomings of independency and advocated Presbyterianism as being the closest system to that taught in the Bible. Shortly thereafter, H. McAllister Griffiths wrote “Shall We Have Bible Presbyterianism or Independency?”<sup>60</sup> He stated plainly why like-minded men should join the Bible Presbyterian Church, rather than remain independent.

As its name implies, the founders of the Bible Presbyterian Church sought to be true to the Scriptures as their “only infallible rule of faith and practice,” as understood by historic Presbyterianism. Although the Bible Presbyterians were active in their fellowship with godly men and churches which were not Presbyterian, any received into the new denomination were required to hold to these convictions. The *Form of Government* I:2 states that “every Christian Church, or union, or association of particular Churches is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed....”

This is developed further in the Bible Presbyterian *Form of Government* IV:1: “... we believe that gov-

ernment by presbyters is founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God and the practice of the primitive Christians, and is highly expedient.... Believing that Synods and Councils as set forth in our Confession of Faith are founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God, and believing further that, when Scripturally conducted, such courts are an aid to the faith and life of the flock of Christ, we authorize the spiritual government of this Church by Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods, which are to be composed only of Presbyters.”

<sup>14</sup>Drs. Mudge and Barnes Pursue ‘Gag’ Policy: Christ Reformed Episcopal Church Yields to Pressure,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, June 22, 1936, p. 143.

<sup>2</sup>The famous “Five Fundamentals” are from the Doctrinal Deliverance of 1910 of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. This Deliverance stated that the following are “essential doctrine[s] of the Word of God and our Standards”: 1. The inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures; 2. The virgin birth of Christ; 3. the substitutionary atonement of Christ; 4. The bodily resurrection of Christ; 5. The historicity of the Biblical miracles. (For the full text of this Doctrinal Deliverance, see *The Minutes of the General Assembly*, PCUSA, 1910, pages 272-273). The General Assemblies of 1916 and 1923 passed similar statements.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon H. Clark, “Independency,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, February 3, 1936, p. 140.

<sup>4</sup>James L. Rohrbaugh, “Is Undenominationalism Better?” *Presbyterian Guardian*, December 26, 1936, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup>“Executive Committee of Board Appoints Four New Missionaries,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, February 13, 1937, p. 200.

<sup>6</sup>“Appoint New Missionaries Under Independent Board,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, April 10, 1937, p. 20.

<sup>7</sup>“Westminster Graduates Greatly Appreciated on Foreign Field: Southern Baptist Missionary Praises Work of Appointees Under Independent Board” *Presbyterian Guardian*, April 10, 1937, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup>George M. Marsden spent most of his career in the history departments at the University of Notre Dame and Duke University. He is a graduate of Westminster Seminary and

the son of the Rev. Robert S. Marsden, who was a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It is of interest that J. Gresham Machen had been asked by the senior Marsdens to officiate at their wedding. However, before the event could take place, Dr. Machen was suspended from the ministry for his Biblical stand. Carl McIntire officiated in Dr. Machen’s place.

<sup>9</sup>George M. Marsden, “Perspective on the Division of 1937,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, Vol. 18, 2007, pp. 163-164.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Woodbridge, “Why I Have Resigned as General Secretary of the Independent Board,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, June 12, 1937, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Marsden, p. 170.

<sup>12</sup>Carl McIntire, “Give Thanks,” *Christian Beacon*, June 10, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup>Carl McIntire, “Independency,” *Christian Beacon*, June 3, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup>Minutes of the Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America [OPC], June 1-4, 1937, pp. 16-17.

<sup>15</sup>Woodbridge later became a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. Observing firsthand the devastating consequences of New Evangelicalism on that institution, Woodbridge left and became a strong advocate of Biblical separation, writing several books on the subject. His book *Reaping the Whirlwind*, documenting the decline of Fuller, which institution had eventually dropped the requirement that professors must believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures, was published by Carl McIntire’s Christian Beacon Press.

<sup>16</sup>Charles Woodbridge, “By Way of Explanation,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, September 1937, p. 142.

<sup>17</sup>“The Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, June 26, 1937, p. 89.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>“Ind. Board Object of New Attack,” *Christian Beacon*, June 10, 1937, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup>“The Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, June 26, 1937, p. 90.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup>Harold S. Laird, “Statement by the President of the Board,” *The Independent Board Bulletin*, June 1937, p. 2.

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<sup>26</sup>“The Independent Board Carries on Despite New Attacks,” *The Independent Board Bulletin*, June 1937, p. 6.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup>Carl McIntire, “Give Thanks,” *Christian Beacon*, June 10, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup>H. McAllister Griffiths, “Memorandum,” March 1938, p. 4. This nine-page document sought to answer accusations by those in the OPC against The Independent Board. Griffiths, who at that time was serving as General Secretary of the Board, states: “I have prepared the following memorandum which embodies my understanding of the position and policies of the Board as revealed by its actions and by my own intimate contact with its members.”

<sup>31</sup>Charles Hodge, “What Is Presbyterianism?,” an address before the Presbyterian Historical Society at their Anniversary Meeting in Philadelphia, May 1, 1855.

<sup>32</sup>Charles Hodge, *Discussions in Church Polity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1878), p. 125.

<sup>33</sup>Griffiths, “Memorandum,” p. 5.

<sup>34</sup>D. Clair Davis, “The Significance of Westminster Seminary Today” (copy in author’s file), p. 14.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>Charles Hodge, *Discussions in Church Polity*, p. 230.

<sup>37</sup>Allan A. MacRae, “What Is True Presbyterianism?,” *The Free Press* (Vol. 1, No. 1) (Baltimore, June 30, 1955), p. 1.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup>Griffiths, “Memorandum,” pp. 4-5.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>Charles Hodge, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, Vol. IV (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 1986), p. 229.

<sup>43</sup>Griffiths, “Memorandum,” p. 4.

<sup>44</sup>Charles Hodge, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, Vol. IV, p. 229.

<sup>45</sup>Griffiths, “Memorandum,” p. 4.

<sup>46</sup>Charles Hodge, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*, Vol. IV, p. 229.

<sup>47</sup>Charles Hodge, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United*

*States of America*, Part I (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1851), pp. 30-31.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>50</sup>“New Calvin Church to Be Dedicated,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, April 6, 1936, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup>“Who’s Who in This Issue,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, October 7, 1935, p. 19.

<sup>52</sup>“Calvin Church of New Haven Appeals for Emergency Help,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, December 2, 1935, p. 81.

<sup>53</sup>“Dr. Roy T. Brumbaugh Leads Most of Congregation Out of Church,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, October 7, 1935, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup>“Gardens Tabernacle of Los Angeles Votes to Re-Enter Presbyterian Church of America,” *Presbyterian Guardian*, December 1937, p. 217.

<sup>55</sup>Letter from J. Gresham Machen to Roy Talmadge Brumbaugh, December 21, 1935 (courtesy of Mrs. Nancy Anderson).

<sup>56</sup>[http://opc.org/qa.html?question\\_id=274](http://opc.org/qa.html?question_id=274)

<sup>57</sup>Davis, p. 13.

<sup>58</sup>Form of Government I:3, *Book of Church Order of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Willow Grove, PA: Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2011), p. I:2.

<sup>59</sup>Carl McIntire, “Independency,” *Christian Beacon*, June 1, 1939, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup>H. McAllister Griffiths, “Shall We Have Bible Presbyterianism or Independency?,” *Christian Beacon*, August 10, 1939, p. 1.

## REDEEMING THE TIME

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# INJUSTICE IN AMERICA?

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LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty.... **Both riches and honour come of thee....** for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee” (1 Chronicles 29:11-14; emphasis ours).

God’s Word further teaches that:

➡ **Giving back to the Lord is a key to prosperity:** “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Proverbs 3:9-10).

➡ **Diligent, hard work is required of everyone:** “For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee” (Psalm 128:2).

“I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings” (Jeremiah 17:10).

“... he that gathereth by labour shall increase” (Proverbs 13:11).

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).

➡ **Men have a right to enjoy the fruit of their own labor:** “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands” (Isaiah 65:21-22).

➡ **The very premise of the Eighth Commandment — “Thou shalt not steal” — is that individual property rights are considered basic in the Scriptures.** The Scriptures give a remedy for the thief: “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is



good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

➡ **"Inequality" is tied many times to our own sinful actions.**

Sin — "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God" — is not only an affront to God, but profoundly harms ourselves and all those around us. The failure to learn a useful trade, to work hard, to save, to obey God's design for marriage, to name just a few, are all sins and can lead to poverty.

Solomon tells us: "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags" (Proverbs 23:21).

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Proverbs 13:4).

"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

Unfortunately, many have turned their heads to some of the real causes of poverty in our country, and have instead blamed this problem on "white privilege," the wealthiest "One Percent," the "War on Women," and so forth. Our society has been raised on the idea of entitlement, and the welfare state is running up our national debt by the trillions of dollars. Yet, improvement in poverty statistics is not happening.

There is little recognition that the breakdown of the family — one husband and one wife, working and living together to support and train any children coming from this union — is key to the problem. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 73 percent of black children in America are born out of wedlock. The statistic for Asian Ameri-

cans is 17 percent, and "Non-Hispanic Whites" is 29 percent.<sup>2</sup>

This one alarming set of statistics lies at the root of a plethora of societal ills: extra expense of father and mother maintaining two households, alcoholism, drug addiction, poor grades and dropping out of school, violence and killing, gang activity, to name a few. This should alarm those of all races. When will the Rev. Sharpton look at these facts and work constructively to lessen this blight which is so disproportionately high in the black community?

In a day when no one is held responsible for his own actions, this may sound harsh and uncaring. But, the inevitable results of these widespread "transgression[s] of the law of God," must be dealt with. Excuses and "redistribution of wealth" will never solve these problems.

➡ **It is a sin to envy what others have gained by the honest engagement in their profession.**

The violation of the Tenth Commandment — "Thou shalt not covet" — is a major problem in America today. Men want what other men have, but are not always willing to live according to the principles of a temperate lifestyle and long hours of hard work and risk-taking, or are bitter against God for the circumstances in which they find themselves. When I was a child, my parents worked very diligently, and provided well for my sister and me. However, never once was there even a tinge of jealousy expressed for those who lived in the much wealthier areas of town. Conversely, we did not look down on those who had less than we had. We were taught respect for all who worked diligently and honestly, and were happy for what they had, and did what we could to help those less fortunate.

➡ **Much inequality and injustice is the result of man's sin against his fellow man.**

The majority of the Ten Commandments deal squarely with man's sinful actions

against others, due to hatred, lust, deceit, jealousy, greed and a wide range of other sins. The Lord Jesus Christ boiled these commandments down into one: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mark 12:31). Therefore, we cannot just silently ignore what is going on around us. We have a clear Scriptural duty to our neighbors and to stand for those who are truly being abused.

But, these points do not tell the whole story. There is much more that we as Christians must consider when seeking to live according to God's Word.

### **The Preeminence of Truth**

It is important, first of all, to seek Truth. This is very different from the prevailing philosophy in 21st century America, which tells us that truth is subjective and thus may be different for one person than for another. When this moral relativism has its sway, the desires and emotions of each individual become all that matter. Men pretend that they are God, and the whims of each sinful individual trump the rule of law and objective facts. The usurpation of that which belongs to God alone is Satanic in its origin. The great sin of Lucifer was when he proclaimed: "I will make myself like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14).

The disastrous result of this illogical and wicked philosophy is that beliefs and actions are legitimized which bear no correlation to objective reality and facts. Even when facts are discussed, the interpretations placed on them are often outside the realm of what can legitimately or scientifically be deduced. Some are so set in their hatred or zeal for their cause that they willfully ignore objective fact — and thus the truth.

It has often been said that "perception is reality." TV's Dr. Phil has "Ten Life Laws," one of which is:

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“There is no reality, only perception.”<sup>3</sup> Stephen Colbert, heir apparent to the CBS Late Show, once stated: “It used to be, everyone was entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts. But that’s not the case anymore. Facts matter not at all. Perception is everything.”<sup>4</sup> But, this philosophy stands in opposition to the teaching of Jesus Christ, who said: “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). “... for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Truth never changes. All conflict concerning Truth involves our inability or unwillingness to ascertain all relevant facts, our predilection to highlight certain facts and ignore others, our tendency to make unsupported assumptions concerning those facts, and/or our utter rebellion against them.

But even far above the facts involved in specific situations, we must look at the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, who in His High Priestly prayer declared, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17). The wickedness and deceit of men’s hearts make all of us ultimately incapable of standing for Truth. Only the immutable principles of God’s Word and the work of His Spirit in “guid[ing us] into all truth” (John 16:13) will help us to accurately “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

### A Real Need for Justice!

In our fallen, sinful world, inequality and injustice will ALWAYS exist. The fact that many misappropriate the term “justice” for evil purposes, does not allow us to shrink from our duties. A defense of Biblical liberty, justice and righteousness is a hallmark of the Church of Jesus Christ. The Prophet Amos speaks in

the strongest of terms against the injustices of his day. Amos 5:12 says: “For I know your manifold transgressions and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.” Those in power were abusing the poor and vulnerable. The wealthy could buy “justice” in their own favor. The whole system had become onerous and bitter like wormwood (verse 7).

In contrast to this injustice, the Prophet exhorts the people to “Seek good, and not evil...” (verse 14), and to “Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment [justice] in the gate” (verse 15). The Prophet pairs true justice with righteousness: “But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (verse 24). God despises their sacrifices and worship when they are disobedient to Him (Amos 5:21-23).

The Prophet Isaiah used similar language: “... Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me.... yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow” (see Isaiah 1:11-17).

Many other prophets exhort us to be just. “The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God (2 Samuel 23:3). “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8).

### Kindness and Compassion

Many are downtrodden through no direct fault of their own. Throughout history, war, famine, illness, pestilence, natural disasters, evil governments, and so forth, have brought

many to poverty and suffering. Save for the mercy of God, we could all face such things. We as Christians must have a genuine heart of compassion for those in need. We are commanded to have much more than our own interests at heart. Paul tells us: “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Philippians 2:4). Moses told the Israelites: “For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land” (Deuteronomy 15:11).

This is not just a begrudging duty, but must come from a heart filled with Christlike compassion. “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” (Proverbs 19:17). “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2). “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

No other example in the Scriptures highlights this better than when a lawyer asked Christ in Luke 10, “Who is my neighbor?” Christ told of the Good Samaritan who helped a man who had been injured by thieves and had his possessions stolen from him. A priest and a Levite walked right past him, but a hated Samaritan showed compassion and loved his neighbor as himself.

May we have a passion for Biblical truth, justice and mercy, and the discernment to detect those who would pervert these principles to evil ends. •

<sup>1</sup>January 26, 2013, to the National Review Institute Summit.

<sup>2</sup>Statistics from 2010, published in 2012.

<sup>3</sup><http://www.drphil.com/articles/article/44>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.avclub.com/article/stephen-colbert-13970> (January 25, 2006).