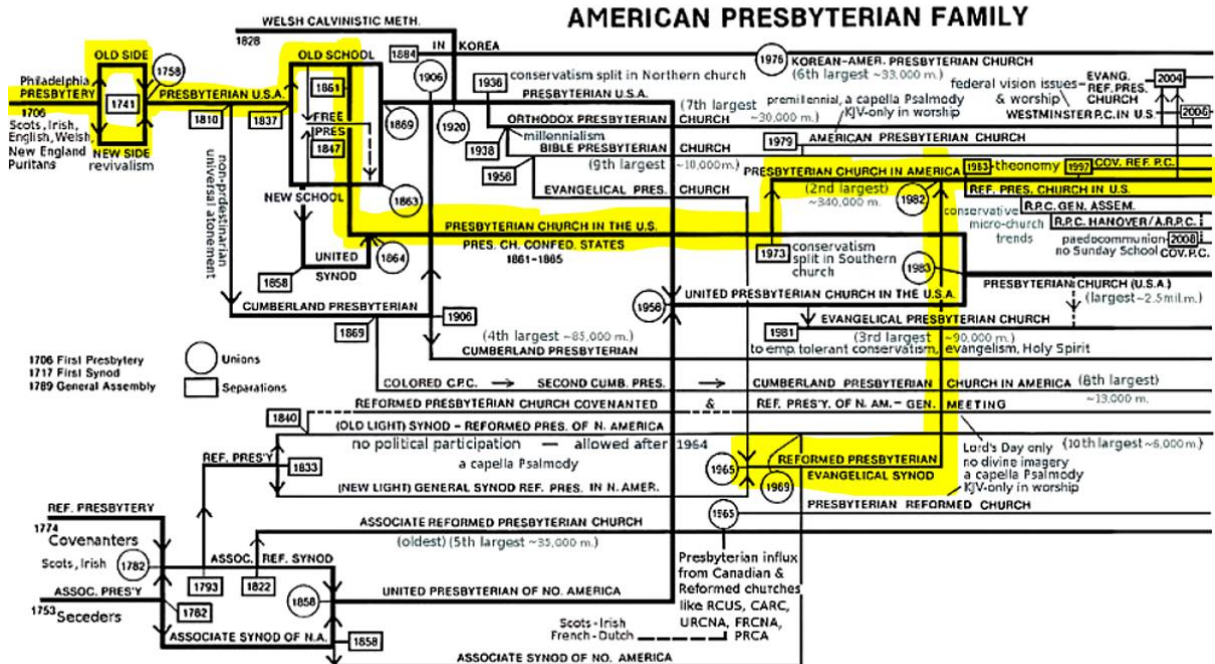


“Intown is Part of the Presbyterian Church In America”
Some Orientation

I. Some PCA (and Intown) History



- Formed in 1973 from many churches leaving the mainline southern Presbyterian church, the PCUS; this latter denomination then (re)merged with the mainline northern Presbyterian denomination, the PCUSA, in 1983
- Presbyterian history makes Spaghetti Junction look pedestrian
- The experience that the founders of the PCA had in the PCUS was similar to the experiences of conservative-evangelical-orthodox believers in many mainline Protestant denominations. This plot line was:
 - 1) A decline in theological orthodoxy (the centrality of Scripture, doctrines of Jesus and salvation)
 - 2) A decline in discipline (unchecked heterodoxy)
 - 3) An abuse of ecclesiastical power (particularly connected to property)
- Perimeter Church started in the metro Atlanta area in 1977, with roots leading both to Briarwood Presbyterian (site of the PCA’s first General Assembly) and Westminster Presbyterian (site of the “Convocation of Sessions” in 1972 that led to the formation of the PCA)
- Intown was one of the first satellite congregations planted by Perimeter Church in 1983; we particularized as an independent church in 1990

II. Some PCA Distinctives vs. Other Presbyterians

- “Grass roots”, non-hierarchical polity
- The supremacy of the PCA Constitution (hard to change, no authoritative interpretation, non-binding judicial cases, etc.):
 - 1) Scripture
 - 2) The “Westminster Standards” (Confession, Shorter and Longer Catechisms)
 - 3) The Book of Church Order
- A principle-driven, non-comprehensive, generally non-directive Book of Church Order (allowing, for example, individual church bylaws)
- A session based on the parity of elders (profession, or “Teaching” and lay leaders, or “Ruling”)
- Dynamic tension between voluntary association and mutual submission
- “Good faith” theological alignment, or “Subscription”
- Offices of church governance restricted to men (a “complementarian view”)

III. PCA Structure

- Three “Courts”:
 - The local Session (Intown Community Church)
 - Currently meets roughly every two weeks
 - Focus is on the governance and health of a local church
 - The regional Presbytery (Metro Atlanta Presbytery)
 - Currently meets three times per year at rotating churches
 - Focuses on fellowship and support among teaching elders, credentialing, development and shepherding of pastoral candidates, regional church planting, other regional ministries like RUF
 - The General Assembly (current Moderator: Rev. Irwyn Ince, director of the GraceDC Network Institute for Cross-Cultural Mission)
 - Meets once a year in rotating cities hosted by a presbytery
 - Focuses on broader issues of church governance, theology, strategy, general concerns of the church, etc.
- Some notes on interactive dynamics:
 - Teaching elders are members of presbytery, not their local church
 - These courts operate cooperatively, and through reviews and where necessary appeals of decisions in the lower courts; they do not function with proactive power and oversight
- Committee and Agencies
 - The Administrative Committee
 - Mission to North America
 - Mission to the World

- Committee on Discipleship Ministries
- Reformed University Fellowship
- Covenant College
- Covenant Seminary
- Ridge Haven Conference Center
- PCA Foundation
- PCA Retirement and Benefits
- More info at “pcanet.org”
- Other PCA bodies include the Standing Judicial Commission, the Committee on Constitutional Business, the Cooperative Ministries Committee, the Theological Examining Committee, a Nominating Committee, assorted ad interim/study committees