

By Rev. Don Livesay

## Presbyterian Church Dates From English Committee

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Church, through the ages, has been one of the sturdy foundation stones of civilization. It has constantly been one of the guiding forces behind the realization that a community is a group of people who live within certain codes for the betterment of all. As one of the most significant forces in

binding the community together, the ministers of Sandy's churches have volunteered to picture as vividly as possible the meaning of their individual churches to the Sandy-Mt. Hood community. The first in the series was written by Donald S. Livesay, minister of the Sandy Community - Presbyterian church. In the interest of brevity and clarity, Rev. Livesay's article precedes as answers to the pertinent questions his church answers:

#### What Is a Presbyterian?

A Presbyterian is a protestant who belongs to a particular type of Church government. The word 'Presbyterian' does not refer to a system of doctrine but rather to a form of Church government.

#### How Is The Presbyterian Church Governed?

The Presbyterian Church is governed by elders. The 'teaching elders' are ordained ministers who have completed four years at an accredited college or university and three years at a recognized seminary and been approved. The 'ruling elders' are elected from the congregation and ordained as 'ruling elders'. Thus the people themselves govern the Church through elected representatives. The

property of the Presbyterian Church is vested in the laymen and not in ministers or bishops. In the higher judicatories of the Church (above the local Church level) the vote of every minister is balanced by the vote of a layman. Laymen are eligible for the highest office ('Moderator') in each judicatory.

#### What Is The Basis Of The Presbyterian Creed?

The parliament of England appointed 151 laymen, clergymen, and Church scholars in 1643 to draw up a system of reformation doctrine and government. They labored for six years holding 1163 sessions, and produced among other important theological works, the Westminster Confession Of Faith, which is recognized as the creed of English speaking Presbyterians. Most Presbyterians accept also the creeds of the early undivided Christian Church, the Nicene and Apostles Creed.

#### What Do Presbyterians Believe About Baptism?

Do Presbyterians believe baptism is necessary to salvation? Presbyterians distinguish between the rite and the spiritual experience. The rite is performed by sprinkling water on the person and stands as a sign or seal of the covenant of grace. It is an outward symbol of an inward regeneration. While baptism is urgently recommended by the Presbyterian Church and its omission regarded as a grave fault, it is not held to be necessary for salvation.

#### Do Presbyterians Baptize Children?

Presbyterians baptize children to signify that they too have fellowship within the Church and are in union with Christ. When these children reach the age of decision, they will assume the obligation taken on their behalf by the parents. Presbyterians do not believe that children dying without baptism are excluded from 'heaven'.

#### Do Presbyterians Believe In Heaven And Hell?

Yes. The Bible and human experience teach that we are living in a moral universe in which sin reaps its own appropriate penalty, and righteousness its own reward. The New Testament points out the nature of the punishment which sin inevitably incurs, the severest of which is separation from fellowship of God. The pictures of 'heaven' as streets of gold and gates of pearl and 'hell' as fire and brimstone are taken to be symbols of spiritual reality. 'Heaven' is spiritual fellowship with God and 'hell' is separation from God. They have their commencement in the here and now.

#### What Sacraments Do The Presbyterians Observe?

That of 'Baptism' and the 'Lord's Supper' or 'Communion' or 'Holy Communion'. How Do Presbyterians Interpret The Holy Communion (The Lord's Supper)?

Presbyterians do not believe that Christ is physically present in the sacrament of the Holy Communion. Presbyterians believe that Christ is spiritually present in the Holy Communion. They do not believe that Christ is offered up in the sacrament to the Father or that any

real sacrifice is made. The sacrament is a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ once offered for all men.

#### Do Presbyterians Believe Jesus Christ Is The Son Of God?

Yes. This belief is central in the Presbyterian doctrine which teaches that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God and true man and at the same time the revealer of God and Saviour of Men.

#### Do Presbyterians Believe In Trinity?

Yes. When God is spoken of as three persons . . . Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Presbyterians do not think of Him as three individuals. Rather they are three manifestations of one God . . . that is, three distinct manners in which God has revealed Himself. Nor are these to be considered limited.

#### Do Presbyterians Believe In Heaven And Hell?

Presbyterians believe that man was created to have fellowship with God. For this purpose was man created. Man's destiny, as chosen by God, is fellowship with Him. Man may reject his destiny. In this sense, man is predestined to have fellowship with God.

#### Do Presbyterians Accept The Virgin Birth?

Yes. The majority of Presbyterians believe the entrance of Jesus into our world was by a miraculous birth as related in Luke and Matthew. All Presbyterians believe in the incarnation . . . that is, that God was made flesh and came to man in Jesus Christ.

#### Do Presbyterians Believe In Resurrection?

Presbyterians do not believe or interpret the phrase

in the Apostles Creed "the resurrection of the body" as meaning the physical body. They understand "the resurrection of the body" as a reference to the spiritual body, which is a medium of growth and self expression appropriate to a spiritual world.

#### What Do Presbyterians Believe About The Bible?

Presbyterians believe that the scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God and "the only infallible rule of faith and practice", and that they are the source of those truths by which men live. They believe in the inspiration of the scriptures: that God spoke through men whose minds and hearts He had touched. They therefore emphasize inspired men, not inspired words. Presbyterians reject the view that the inspired men were "possessed" or "entranced" by a spirit so that they became pens of God or wrote down what He had dictated. Rather they believe God employed the personalities of people who responded to the spirit of God. God thus works through the personalities of men and women to make complete His revelation.

#### What Do Presbyterians Believe About Salvation?

Presbyterians reject the idea that 'salvation' is earned by good works. Works are rather the fruits or the results of salvation. Works are evidence that we are growing in the knowledge of Christ. Presbyterians believe salvation is found only through a complete commitment and surrender to God as He is revealed in Jesus Christ. God pardons our sins and accepts us, not for

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Donald Livesay

Minister

Parsonage MU 7-3065

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Westminster Fellowship

High School Group 7 PM

Nursery care during worship.

### Seventh Day Adventist

Phone MO 5-2459

Elder E. F. Coy, Pastor

Sabbath School 9:30 AM

Church Service 11 AM

Young People's Meeting

Friday 7:30 PM

Sandy MU 7-2706

### Immanuel Lutheran

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## SCALES of Sandy