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# Presbyterians in South Carolina

## 1925–1985

*Mid-Century Change in Historic Denominations*

**NANCY SNELL GRIFFITH**  
**CHARLES E. RAYNAL**

The history of South Carolina Presbyterians between 1925 and 1985 covers a period of great development achieved through many difficulties in church and society. We tell the story not only of the churches belonging to the PCUS, sometimes called “southern Presbyterians,” but also African American churches and institutions in South Carolina established after the Civil War by PCUSA missionaries from the North. For all Presbyterians, events between the World Wars challenged the moral stances birthed by Protestants to build a Christian America. Women’s right to vote came to the nation in 1920, but claiming equality of women’s roles in mainline churches took decades of advocacy. The Great Depression engulfed the whole nation, eroding funds for churches, missions, and institutions. World War II set the scene for a great period of church expansion. When moral and cultural challenges came from the Civil Rights Movement and the war in Vietnam, the church increasingly began to face these issues and tensions, both theological and social, as they arose among the members of historic denominations. An effort began to reintegrate African American churches into the Synod of South Carolina. As the Synod of South Carolina was taken up into a larger regional body in 1973, its more conservative churches began to withdraw from the PCUS. Many congregations began to shrink and the resources for mission diminished. In telling this story we hope to provide insights into how Presbyterians in South Carolina contributed to culture, connecting their religious life and practices to a larger social setting. May a fresh look at the recent past stir us to renewal ahead.

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“In an era in which ‘big data’ sometimes portrays the story of American religion as an ecclesiological crazy quilt, there is always room for a well-crafted piece of the patchwork which helps to make sense of the whole. By their meticulous and thoughtful study, Nancy Griffith and Charles Raynal have made a singular contribution to our understanding of denominational religion in the South during its era of greatest change.”

—**JOHN W. KUYKENDALL**, President and Professor of Religion Emeritus, Davidson College

“Griffith and Raynal have written a detailed and accessible history of ‘Mainline’ Presbyterianism in South Carolina from 1925-1985. Most revealing is their important treatment of African American Presbyterians as South Carolinians have struggled to move beyond the burdens of their past.”

—**ERSKINE CLARKE**, author of *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic*

“Here is an interesting account of Presbyterians in South Carolina during a yeasty and significant era. This story has historical importance and illumines how the major Presbyterian denomination faced important moral and social issues. A fine study!”

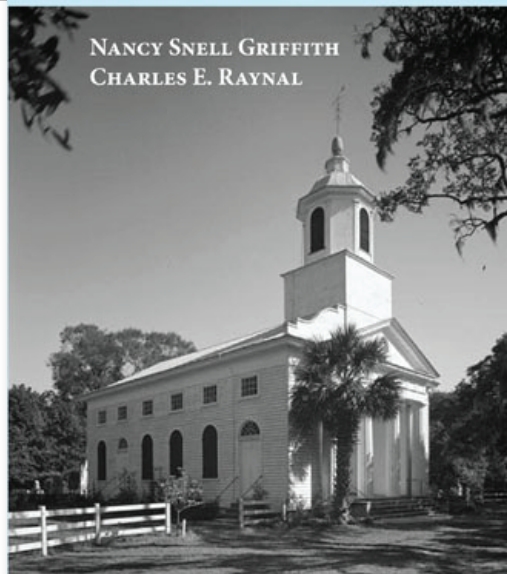
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