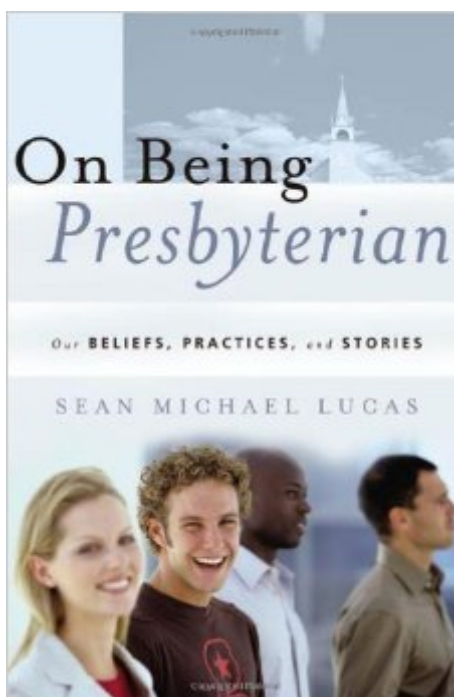


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# On Being Presbyterian: Our Beliefs, Practices, And Stories



## Synopsis

A lay-friendly introduction to Presbyterian beliefs, practices, and history. Helps readers grasp what it means to be a (conservative) Presbyterian in a postmodern age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Despite being Baptist, I love and admire Presbyterianism. My parents are Presbyterians and raised me in that environment. Though I may not necessarily believe in them, I am at least sympathetic to many of the tenets of Presbyterianism, such as covenant theology, infant baptism and the Presbyterian system of church government. It was with some interest, then, that I began to read *On Being Presbyterian* by Sean Michael Lucas. This book, recently published by P&R Publishing, is intended to serve as a primer on all things Presbyterian. Lucas wants to show "how a particular type of identity is formed, as the confluence of beliefs, practices and stories." He seeks to introduce the beliefs, practices and stories that have converged to create Presbyterianism as it exists today. These three divisions form the structure for the book. In the section dealing with beliefs, Lucas looks at God's sovereignty, the priority of grace, covenant and kingdom, the nature and purpose of the church and the signs and seals of God's grace. When dealing with practices, he examines piety, worship and church government. The final section looks at the genesis of Presbyterianism through the leadership of Calvin and Knox, and then turns to an examination of Presbyterianism in America. The book wraps up with an epilogue entitled "On Becoming Presbyterian" where he suggests what would be expected of a person who wished to adopt this system of beliefs and how a person might

set about finding such a church body. This book often recalled memories from my youth, many of which were very good memories.

One of my favorite truisms after my years as a minister is "no one grew up Presbyterian". What I mean by that is that in most of our churches, there are very few people for whom the whole idea of being "Presbyterian" is a new thing. Combine this with the fact that, as I'm also fond of saying, "you don't have to be a Presbyterian to join a PCA church", means that a lot of us don't completely understand or buy in to all that a Presbyterian church believes. Sean Michael Lucas, a church history professor at Covenant Seminary, understands this dynamic. He did not grow up Presbyterian either! And to help teach a new members class at his former church, Lucas began writing what became, *On Being Presbyterian*. On Lucas' blog page, he describes his goal for the book as follows: "I meant this book to be a lay-oriented introduction to Presbyterianism. As I wrote, I imagined that I was sitting across the table from someone at a Starbucks, trying to explain Presbyterian beliefs, practices, and stories to them. My hope was that the book would represent "vanilla Presbyterianism" in a winsome and warm way." [...] The book is helpful in many ways. It is divided, as the subtitle suggests, into three parts, 1. Presbyterian Beliefs, 2. Presbyterian Practices, and 3. Presbyterian Stories. The book deals with many of the common struggles people have with Presbyterian beliefs such as infant baptism, predestination, the Five points of Calvinism and rule by elders. It also does a great job of describing Presbyterian views and practices on worship and church discipline. Each chapter also has helpful study questions at the end, along with suggestions for further reading.

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