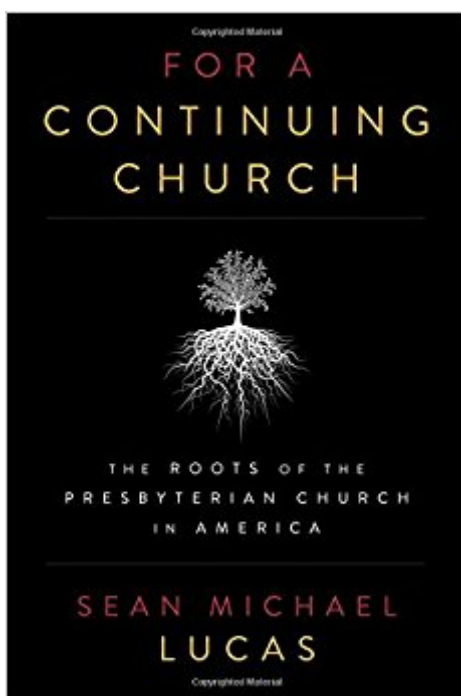


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For A Continuing Church: The Roots Of The Presbyterian Church In America



Synopsis

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is the largest conservative, evangelical Presbyterian denomination in North America. *For a Continuing Church* is the first full scholarly account of the theological and social forces that brought about its creation. In the 1920s and 1930s, emerging progressive leadership in the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) led to rising dissent from conservatives. This fascinating story of conviction and struggle resonates today more than ever.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: P & R Publishing (December 11, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1629951064

ISBN-13: 978-1629951065

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #247,360 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Denominations & Sects > Protestantism > Presbyterian](#) #1488 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Churches & Church Leadership > Church History](#) #1876 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > History](#)

Customer Reviews

"I don't care if you're not a conservative Presbyterian; you still need to read *For a Continuing Church*. It tells an important yet often neglected story in the history of American evangelicalism; combining original research and outstanding engagement with current scholarship. . . . It should be read widely, not only by historians, but by anyone who wants to think carefully about the intersection of faith and culture." --Matthew J. Hall, Vice President of Academic Services, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"This is about far more than the PCA. This book is nothing less than a history of Presbyterianism in the twentieth century; with all its theological wrangling, all its political maneuvering, all its failings, and all its faithfulness. This is certainly a story worth telling, and Sean tells it very well." --Kevin DeYoung, Senior Pastor, University Reformed Church

"Full of both inspiring moments and cautionary tales. . . . A faithful and engaging retelling of the church's past in the service of her present and future calling." --Stephen J.

Nichols, President, Reformation Bible College; Chief Academic Officer, Ligonier Ministries

Sean Michael Lucas (PhD, Westminster Theological Seminary) is senior minister at the First Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, and associate professor of church history at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi.

Very informative and helpful in understanding the history of my denomination. History has to be taught so that future generations will know the ground on which they are standing, but also so that they can see how the truth needs to be wisely applied in their times and contexts. This book will help young churchmen to interpret the past, respond to the present and prepare for a future that will be more just.

I liked the thorough research to the extent that it focused on the PCUS, with which I was not as familiar as I wanted to be. Four aspects are both criticisms and encouragements: (1) Condense the current length by reducing the number of times conservative essentials are presented--I realize it may have been used to ensure readers of chapters only got the message--but it became boring. (2) Main arguments of the liberals of the PCUS were not clear. (3) More history of how the RPCES (college and seminary included) developed and the issues of joining and receiving would make the picture more interesting. (4) Racial reconciliation could be more fully fleshed out, but that might require another book! Best book I have come across on the subject!

An excellent book, especially for those PCA people who didn't live through these events.

Thoroughly enjoyed the concise, yet well-researched history of our denomination! Helps me have a greater appreciation for what it means to be a 'continuing church.' Excellent work, Sean!

Helped me understand our past and gave clarity and encouragement for the next part of our journey. I enjoyed it.

Great introduction to history of the southern Presbyterianism and the beginning of the Presbyterian Church in America. As a northerner joining the PCA it was helpful to understand both the negative and positives of its history.

Dr Lucas does an excellent job of telling the story about the history of the PCA in a way that sounds like a discussion over a cup of coffee. It is not dry history at all. If you want a readable story about the PCA this is excellent. I have to confess there was so much info there that was new to me. I became a member of the PCA way back in 1993 and know of some of the characters in the book personally---the late DJK and Kennedy Smart to name a few. I am even a graduate of Knox Seminary. I have to confess that I never had any idea that the PCA had any racial issues in its past until recently. Although the author is in favor of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement, this book can be read and enjoyed by those who still question that movement. I just didn't know there was such a history in the PCA. As I read the book and thought about today's Civil Rights Activists, white guilt, micro aggressions, structural racism and slavery reparations, it actually made me wish I could live in a community that wasn't so obsessed with racial issues. The PCA isn't a racist denomination. Yes, there is a history of racial segregation in the south, but that is no longer the case. Anyone reading this book should not get angry with the founders of the PCA. Dr Lucas is just telling us the history of the PCA. A lot of history has happened since the founding of the PCA. I would like to thank Dr Lucas for being so willing to give a history that might otherwise have been forgotten or "air brushed" to suit today's PC culture. Only by telling the story in all of its details can we see the way forward which might be in a direction that looks to the past for answers.

What has happened in history never stays in the past. It echos and ripples and reverberates throughout time. That sounds cliché for two, legitimate reasons. 1) I am an average writer who is being somewhat lazy and, more importantly, 2) it is just plain true. History repeats itself and we are doomed to repeat our past if we don't learn from it and etc, etc. Our history is important. And before you look at a work about the foundation of the PCA and think it has no edifying benefit outside of that denomination, do not forget how universally sinful we humans are and how hopelessly unoriginal we tend to be. The failures and flaws that led to the formation of the PCA (as well as the failures and flaws within the process of formation and the years since) can be found in many (if not all) Christian denominations, churches, individual lives. The evolution of the Protestant liberal, a regression to a virtually Scripture-less, authority-less, Gospel-less, authority-less, Christ-less, "do good and be good"ianity, is a danger to be guarded againstt by all Christians. The emergence of the PCA is an example of a rejection of this regression. In that sense, Lucas's history of the PCA offers a service to the church at-large. But the primary ministry of this book will be to Christians more closely associated with the PCA. As someone brand-new to the PCA (and presbyterianism in general), I benefitted greatly from this work. This is a detailed historical work that was not

necessarily written for a PCA-novice like me. But, purposely or providentially, Lucas writes in a way that has great depth but does not leave the uninitiated gasping in the wake. History texts, for me, are generally vegetables. You consume them more out of necessity than for pleasure. They are not as pleasant to the palette as a sweet dessert or as fun to chew on as a perfectly grilled steak. And sometimes you get a turnip. :-(But a good cook can present vegetables in a way that makes them the star of a meal. "Yes, banana pudding sounds great, but is there anymore broccoli?" Ok, so maybe that doesn't happen all that often at the supper table, but For a Continuing Church is a history book that provides nutrition and pleasure. It deserves a spot in seminary, church, and personal libraries (and it deserves a printing in hardback!). I would have loved to see a full timeline included of the key events. If you are a history buff or PCA minister, grabbing a copy of this is a no-brainer. But I would encourage all PCA members and people interested in the ebb and flow of Christian life at a macro level to give this a read as well. Double Disclaimer¹. I received a review copy of this book - standard fair.² I went into this work with just north of 0% knowledge of the history of PCA. I am certain, as with any history text, that there are many who will criticize the content of this work. I am not in a position to do that. As far as this volume goes, I commend it for a number of reasons. First, the presentation. It is immensely approachable. Second, Lucas's credentials as an historian and the preponderance of citations make me have a good bit of faith in the content. Third, Lucas, from all indications, is a man of character who loves the Lord and desires to serve the church. I have no reservations taking For a Continuing Church to be an accurate assessment of the formation of the PCA and feel comfortable encouraging others to do likewise.

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