

Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers:
Exploring Christian Faith

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Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers: Exploring Christian Faith

By Donald K McKim

Book Review by Don Muir, Associate Secretary, General Assembly Office



Has anyone ever asked you a question like, “Why do we baptise infants?” and you find yourself thinking, “Hmmm. I should know this one.” Maybe you’ve puzzled over questions of faith like these yourself. No one can be expected to have all the answers, but as elders and spiritual leaders in the church it is good for us to grow in our knowledge of the Christian faith and to be able to articulate at least some of the church’s doctrine.

Naturally, the primary source of our spiritual edification must be the word of God. As we

know, all Christians should read the Bible and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, endeavour to unravel the mysteries of scripture and be nourished by the bread of life. As expressed in *Living Faith*, the Bible is the rule of faith and life and the standard of all doctrine.

There are countless resources, of course, that can supplement our study of the Bible. Two of them are books by The Rev. Dr. Donald K. McKim.

EQUIPPING FOR . . . Elders

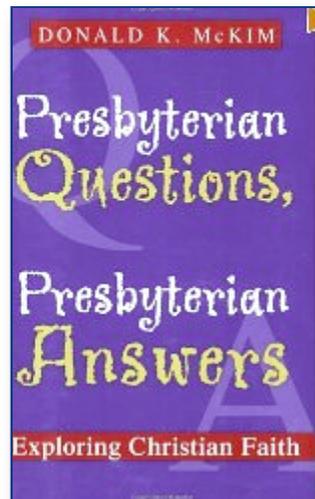
McKim is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Executive Editor for Westminster John Knox Press. He has served as Academic Dean and Professor of Theology at Memphis Theological Seminary and as Professor of Theology at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. He is also the author or editor of over 25 books.

The two books highlighted in this article are called *Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers* and *More Presbyterian Questions, More Presbyterian Answers*. The first was published in 2003 and the second in 2011. Both are subtitled *Exploring Christian Faith*. Bearing the titles in mind, you will not be surprised to discover they are laid out in a question-and-answer format. Each of the 183 one-sentence questions is followed by a concise, clearly worded answer.

The questions tend to be ones commonly asked by people who are wondering about the Presbyterian Church and its theology. They may be liberating for those who have spiritual queries or even ruminating doubts but are hesitant or embarrassed to voice them. These books allow such thoughts to be expressed openly.

The 2003 book is divided into the following chapters:

- Presbyterian History and Heritage
- Bible
- God
- Jesus Christ
- Humanity
- Holy Spirit
- Salvation
- Church
- Worship
- Sacraments
- Christian Life
- Reign of God
- Polity

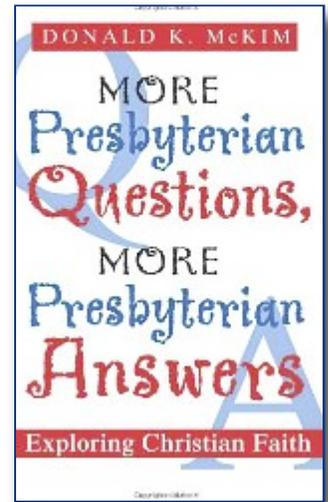


Here are some same sample questions from this book:

Do Presbyterians believe in a literal Adam and Eve? Can we prove that God exists? Does God will evil and suffering in the world and in our lives? What do we mean by original sin? Why are Presbyterians associated with “predestination”? Why did Jesus have to die? What do Presbyterians believe about “the gifts of the Holy Spirit”? What do we believe about the end of the world? What is ordination?

The 2011 book is divided into the following chapters:

- About Presbyterians
- Presbyterians and Others
- Presbyterian Theology
- Christian Life
- Worship and Sacraments
- Social-Ethical Issues
- The Future



Here are some same sample questions from this book:

What do Presbyterians believe about evangelism? What should be our attitudes toward other religions? Why do we say, “He descended into hell,” in the Apostles’ Creed? How can “all things work together for good”? How do we know we are saved? How do Presbyterians observe Sunday? What should the attitude of Presbyterians be toward government? What will heaven be like?

In churches as diverse as The Presbyterian Church in Canada or the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), it is unrealistic to expect the answers supplied to satisfy the full theological spectrum that makes up these denominations. There may also be some cross-border differences that influence the answers. Nevertheless, McKim has written thoughtful explanations that many would find helpful and could provide an impetus for further reflection and deeper study even for those who disagree with his positions.

These books could be used not only for the personal spiritual growth of elders but also for group study, for membership classes, or for anyone interested in learning more about Presbyterian theology.

Both books are available from



currently priced at \$15.50. (includes S&H)

1-800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111,

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