

Roman Catholicism as a “Temptation” for Evangelical Leaders

Tens of millions of Roman Catholics around the world are becoming Evangelical. At the same time, a small trickle of Evangelical leaders is becoming Catholic. Why? What is attracting them? What reasons are they giving for their departure from the Evangelical faith? This session will seek to understand this trend and evaluate the arguments for why some convert to Roman Catholicism.

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1. The Four Temptations for Evangelical Leaders

1.1 Fundamentalism, i.e. the temptation of practising “theological eccentricism”

1.2 Atheism, i.e. the temptation of envisioning a “middle ground” between belief and unbelief

1.3 Protestant Liberalism, i.e. the temptation of sacrificing gospel integrity

1.4 Roman Catholicism

2. Roman Catholicism as a Temptation

2.1 Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT), i.e. confusing cultural co-belligerence and common mission

2.2 Recent Conversions to RC, e.g. F. Beckwith, U. Ekman, M. Galli, ...

2.3 More General Ecumenical Trends

3. Rome is Different! Three statements by Al Mohler

3.1. “To be evangelical is to understand that one of the questions we’ll always have to answer is why we’re not Catholic.”

- In what sense does being evangelical mean not being Roman Catholic?

3.2. “I believe to go to Rome is to abandon the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I believe it is to join a false church based on false and idolatrous presuppositions.”

- How far is Rome’s deviation from gospel truth?

3.3. “To be an evangelical is to recognize that we don’t have a backstop. We have no alternative. We’re left with the Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety as the Word of God.”

- How critical is ‘Scripture Alone’ for evangelical leaders? How different is Rome’s commitment to the Word of God?

4. Responding to the Roman Catholic Temptation

4.1 The Biblical Gospel is at Stake

4.2 The Reformation is not over

Further readings

- “Is the Reformation Over?” (2016): www.isthereformationover.com
- L. De Chirico, *Same Words, Different Worlds. Do Roman Catholics and Evangelicals believe the same gospel?* (London: IVP, 2021).
- K.J. Collins – J.L. Walls, *Roman but not Catholic. What Remains at Stake 500 Years after the Reformation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2017).