

Why Do Catholics and Evangelicals Think So Differently? Evaluating the Roman Catholic View of Scripture

The “Biblical Renewal” is one of the most significant movements that have both preceded and followed the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). After centuries of prohibiting the circulation of the Bible in the vernacular languages, the Roman Catholic Church has been working hard to reconnect with the Scriptures. While rejoicing for some fruits of the “Biblical Renewal” that is taking place in Roman Catholicism, the analysis of key magisterial texts shows that in no way has Rome come closer to *Sola Scriptura*, that is, the obedience to the self-attesting Word of God. In this workshop, we will unpack the Roman Catholic view of Scripture and consider how it leads Catholics to think so differently from Evangelicals.

Leonardo De Chirico is the pastor of Breccia di Roma, a church that he helped plant in Rome in 2009, and Vice Chairman of the Italian Evangelical Alliance. Previously, Leonardo planted and pastored an evangelical church in Ferrara, Italy from 1997 to 2009. He earned degrees in history (University of Bologna), theology (ETCW, Bridgend, Wales) and bioethics (University of Padova). His PhD is from King's College (London); it was published as *Evangelical Theological Perspectives on Post-Vatican II Roman Catholicism*. His recent books are *A Christian Pocket Guide to Papacy* (Christian Focus, 2015); *A Christian Pocket Guide to Mary* (Christian Focus, 2017), and *Same Words, Different Worlds. Do Roman Catholics and evangelicals believe the same gospel?* (IVP, 2021). He is a lecturer of historical theology at Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione in Padova, Italy. Additionally, Leonardo is the director of the Reformanda Initiative, which aims to equip evangelical leaders to better understand and engage with Roman Catholicism, and the leader of the Rome Scholars and Leaders Network (RSLN).

Introduction

1. The Same Bible? Almost

1.1. The issue of the OT Canon and the Deuterocanonical Books

1.2 The Ideological Decision of the Council of Trent

2. The Same Encouragement to Read it? Not quite

2.1 The RC fear of the private reading of Scripture

2.2 The Index of the Prohibited Books

2.3 The change at Vatican II

2.4 Preaching the Bible according to the Vatican handbook

3. The Same High View of Scripture? Not really

3.1 Pre-Vatican II views of the Bible

3.2 *Dei Verbum* (Vatican II)

3.3. Recent developments in Roman. Catholic magisterium: from the documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission to *Verbum Domini* (Benedict XVI)

4. The Same Interpretation of the Bible? Unfortunately not

4.1 The Roman Catholic rejection of the “Scripture alone” principle

4.2 The Tradition-Scripture-Magisterium triad

4.3 The development of Mariology as a case study

Conclusion: taking advantage of the recent Roman Catholic openings towards the free circulation of the Bible while being aware of the existing gulf in how we receive, interpret, and obey the Scriptures.

Helpful resources:

D.A. Carson, J.D. Woodbridge (eds.), *Scripture and Truth* (Leicester: IVP, 1983)

D.A. Carson, J.D. Woodbridge (eds.), *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon* (Leicester: IVP, 1986)

L. De Chirico, *Same Words, Different Worlds. Do Roman Catholics and evangelicals believe the same gospel?* (London: IVP, 2021)