

Why Evangelicals Need to Engage Roman Catholicism

Do the debates of the Reformation still matter for evangelicals today? How should evangelicals understand Roman Catholicism and why is it important for evangelicals to continue to engage the Roman Catholic Church from a biblical perspective? This opening session highlights the relevance and urgency for evangelicals to both better understand and more winsomely engage the Roman Catholic Church, including its theology and practices.

Leonardo De Chirico is the pastor of Breccia di Roma, a church that he helped plant in Rome in 2009. 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*. In 2015, he published *A Christian Pocket Guide to Papacy* through Christian Focus. 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 Network (RSN).

I. The Sociological Motivation: The Two Main Christian Constituencies

A. The evangelical and Roman Catholic trajectories of growth

B. The global diffusion of both constituencies

C. The growing popularity of recent popes

II. The Historical Reason: 500 Years Later

A. The Reformation then and now

B. Is the Reformation over?

III. Common (Evangelical) Misconceptions about Roman Catholicism

A. Is a spiritual renewal occurring?

B. Is there a common creedal basis?

C. Can we deal with individual Catholics only, and not with the institution?

IV. The Gospel Issue

A. A Galatians 1:6-9 issue or a Philippians 1:15-18?

B. The Catholic Gospel and the Evangel