

Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue and Relationship Building: A Small Group Discussion Guide

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Introduction and Getting Acquainted

Welcome to Evangelicals¹ and Catholics² in dialogue and relationship building! What unites believers in Christ in the two traditions, far exceeds what divides.

This resource is offered with the conviction there is need for a small group discussion guide for dialogue at the grassroots level between Catholics and Evangelicals. Dialogue often happens on an international or national level, and sometimes on a local level, but perhaps more rarely in ‘living room’ settings. The hope is this resource will change that. This is an invitation for more Catholics and Evangelicals to be part of the conversation and relationship building.

This study guide consists of the introduction, as well as seven topics, which translates to a total of eight sessions. All the topics of conversation provide an Introductory Overview followed by discussion questions. The Introduction however is different in that the discussion questions are provided upfront, largely to guide the conversation at the initial meeting. May the Lord bless each of you as you participate in what hopefully will be a dynamic, and life-giving experience.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: Introduce yourselves, giving attention to the following question: When you received the invitation to be part of this Dialogue, what was your initial reaction? What prompted you to say ‘yes’? What is it about this Dialogue that captured your attention?

Two: Read below, out loud, the section entitled “Why Dialogue?” Of the three reasons provided, which one most captures your attention, and why? Are there other reasons that you might add?

Three: We are called to a oneness in Christ. With Jesus’ prayer in mind, as found in John 17:20-24 (provided immediately below), identify a phrase or thought that captures your attention. What does that phrase or thought say to you?

- My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:20-24).

Four: Faith, for both Catholics and Evangelicals, is expressed well by the Nicene Creed. Believers, world-wide have looked to this Creed as expressing the critical theological points of the Christian faith. Recite the Creed together, and after so doing, identify phrases or statements that capture your attention. Further, is there anything in this Creed that might prompt you to say “Hallelujah”!

- I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Five: Read below the section entitled Commonalities and Differences. From the listing, which one would you most look forward to discussing? What is it about that topic that sparks your interest?

Six: It was Augustine who said, “The one who has Christ has everything. The one who has everything except for Christ really has nothing. And the one who has Christ plus everything else does not have any more than the one who has Christ alone.”³ How do you react to the quote? What does it say to you about the overwhelming importance of Jesus Christ?

Seven: Read through the Small Group Consideration section (below). Are there any outstanding questions or details about how the group will function? (And at your own leisure, read the remaining sections, on Sources, and on Backgrounds.)

For the conclusion, it would be good to wrap up each meeting with prayer. One option is to use the Lord’s Prayer. The version generally used by Catholics is a little shorter than the one used by Evangelicals. At a Catholic service, such as a funeral or wedding, where the Lord’s Prayer is recited, Evangelicals are sometimes apparent, as they are apt to continue the prayer with the longer version! But Catholics are also acquainted with the longer version, which is provided below:

- Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Why Dialogue?

Why should we put the effort into relationship building with fellow Evangelicals or Catholics? Why should we invest time into understanding respective beliefs? Below are three primary reasons.

First, our common relationship with Christ warrants coming together. A fellow believer is a brother or sister in Christ. The very nature of Christianity creates a bond of unity between fellow believers. In dialogue, we lean into the very spirit and heartbeat of oneness and unity. Further we give expression to the biblical mandate ‘to love one another.’ “A first-class gospel calls for a first-class fellowship.”⁴ Christ is the centering Person who brings us together. Or as put by others, “If God has not been dealing with us as if we were apart from Him, why should we continue to live as if we were apart from one another.”⁵ Why continue the estrangement? “Evangelicals and Roman Catholics have not listened to and spoken with each other for the last 500 years!”⁶ Christ would have it otherwise. Passages of Scripture that speak to this include John 17:20-23; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 4:1-6; and Philippians 2:1-5.

Second, we have gifts to share. Catholics have strengths, resources, capacities that Evangelicals would do well in accessing. Evangelicals stand to be enriched by Catholicism’s strengths in scripture reading; the sacred; significance of the church; art in worship; community; prayer; salvation as journey; and a host of other strengths. Equally, Evangelicals, have much to contribute. Catholics stand to benefit from Evangelicals on the experience of grace; personal relationship with Christ; engagement in Scripture; and their emphasis on evangelism.⁷

Third, both Catholics and Evangelicals share a common missional imperative. Catholics and Evangelicals, together, can do more in influencing the nation for Christ than we could independently of each other. Reginald Bibby, Canadian sociologist, speaks of the potential synergy between Catholics and Evangelicals.⁸ Canadians, with roots in Catholicism, comprise about 40% of the nation. The Roman Catholic contribution to Canadian life is substantial, with a rich spiritual heritage. Evangelicals, though not as numerous in Canada, bring a certain vitality and zeal with their faith. In the U.S., Evangelicals stand at 27% (and perhaps higher) and Catholics at about 23%.⁹ Given the strength of the two traditions, both in Canada and the U.S., collaboration can bring an added Christian witness and voice to our respective nations, especially in times of unbelieving ideologies and moral uncertainties. There are differences between the two traditions, but at the same time there are common beliefs that merit exploration and cultivation.

Commonalities and Differences: An Overview of the Study Guide

This discussion guide identifies selected common points of belief, but at the same time, addresses differences between the two traditions. Both Catholics and Evangelicals embrace divine revelation; the importance of the church; salvation

in Christ; baptism; communion; an understanding of the saints; as well as the importance of missional engagement. However, there are differences. The following points of agreement, as well as disagreement, are at the heart of this study guide.

- We agree that God has revealed Himself to humanity. But with revelation, is it ‘scripture alone’ as Evangelicals assert, or is ‘scripture and tradition’ as taught by Catholics?
- We concur on the importance of the church. Yet, is it a multiplicity of churches as within the Evangelical fold, or should it be ‘one’ as championed by Catholicism?
- We are of the same mind that salvation is provided through Jesus Christ. However, is it a ‘point-in-time’ experience as understood by many Evangelicals, or is more a ‘progressive journey,’ as advocated by Catholics?
- We both accept that baptism is central to faith. But, is it ‘symbolic’ of a faith already exercised, as taught by most Evangelicals, or it is ‘salvific,’ providing salvation, as espoused by Catholics?
- We agree that participation in communion is an essential part of faith. However, are the elements ‘emblematic’ of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, or do they become the ‘actual’ body and blood, central to Catholic theology and teaching?
- We concur that believers that have passed away find themselves in heaven, part of the ‘cloud of witnesses.’ However, are they ‘inactive’, or are they ‘engaged’ in ministry, specifically, that of intercession? And as a part of this, what is Mary’s role, particularly with respect to intercession?
- And we both understand the church has a missional mandate. Given our differences, should Catholics and Evangelicals work independently of one another, or is there sufficient agreement to work together in missional ways?

Small Group Considerations

This resource is shaped around seven topics of conversation. The sessions focus on the above commonalities and differences. In terms of group life and dynamics, the following considerations are offered:

- Meetings can be weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- Time allocated for meetings should have a set start time, as well as an understood, and heeded, conclusion time. A suggested length for meetings is anywhere from 75 to 120 minutes.
- It would be valuable to always conclude meetings with prayer. One option would be recitation of the Lord’s Prayer. A copy of the prayer is provided above.
- The spirit of dialogue needs to be marked by respect. Dialogue is not a place to win debates. At the same time, participants need to feel a freedom in expressing their differences, not compromising on their doctrinal convictions. But all thoughts and opinions need to be expressed in the context of respect and charity.
- The aim is to complete the study in a total of eight meetings, but there may be more questions and ensuing discussion than time allotted. The suggestion is to limit one evening per topic, regardless of how many questions are left untouched, thereby keeping the overall experience to the original number of meetings. Another option would be to extend the number of sessions. Either way, the journey should be viewed as the destination. The goal is for relational growth, understanding, mutuality in faith, and added missional engagement, regardless of whether all the questions are discussed or not.
- Each of the seven sessions has an Introductory Overview. Participants are encouraged to read the material (Introductory Overview and Discussion Questions) before the meetings. At the same time, it is advisable, and profitable, for the facilitator to arrange for volunteers to read out loud the Introductory Overview at each meeting. In doing as such, everyone will be together on the same page. On average, reading times are approximately 7 to 8 minutes.
- The anticipation is that there will be a fair amount of resourcing that will happen in the group via informed sharing from individual participants. At the same time, questions will come up that will call for additional exploration and study outside of group time, followed by reporting to the group. Participants are invited to view this as an interactive opportunity for growth.
- This dialogue is intended to include those with a limited understanding on Catholic-Evangelical thought and practise. There is much to be learned through the collective sharing of the group. Those, possibly with

limited understanding about the issues and opportunities, are encouraged to not exclude themselves from the group. This will be a growth opportunity.

Backgrounds

This study guide was birthed largely through my involvement with the Saskatoon Catholic-Evangelical Dialogue. The dialogue in Saskatoon was initiated through an invitation from Bishop Don Bolen, then, of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. The invitation was extended to the Saskatoon Evangelical Ministers Fellowship (SEMF). Through the invitation, Evangelicals and Catholics entered a local dialogue, consisting of nine Catholics and ten Evangelicals. Nicholas Jesson, ecumenical officer for the Catholic Diocese, and I, were asked to co-chair the dialogue. One outcome was the preparation and release of a joint statement, *Called to Common Witness*.¹⁰

In terms of my own background, I am an Evangelical with roots in the Catholic tradition. I was born a Catholic, raised a Catholic, and attended Catholic high schools, one run by the Jesuits (Campion High, Regina, Canada), the other by Oblates (College Mathieu, Gravelbourg, Canada). During my early university days, I became inactive in my Catholic faith, having little to do with church or spiritual practises. However, I came to a point where I found myself wrestling with questions related to the ultimate purpose and meaning of life. Parallel with this time of questioning, I became acquainted with fellow university students, Evangelicals, who freely shared about their purpose in life, largely defined via a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, whom I readily embraced in belief. This started a life-long relationship with the Evangelical world, including studies at two Evangelical seminaries (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas) and Fuller Theological Seminary (Pasadena, California), as well as 35 plus years of pastoral ministry.

During my engagement with Evangelicals, there was always a high level of appreciation for my Catholic roots. Experiences as a Catholic included regular attendance of mass, serving as an altar boy, and attendance of Catholic schools, elementary and high school. Some Evangelicals, with roots in the Catholic Church, speak derisively about their initial spiritual upbringing. Such would not be my experience, though it would be fair to say there are some teachings on which I have differing perspectives. But there is much I value and appreciate about the Catholic tradition. There are even some emphases that I miss such as the sense of sacredness and mystery in worship, the discipline of extensive Scripture reading in Catholic worship services, emphasis on the communion of the saints, and space for reflection and retreat.

Sources

The primary source for belief and practise, common to both Evangelicals and Catholics, is the Bible. Several biblical references are cited throughout this resource with the acknowledgement many more could have been included. The translation used throughout this study guide is the New International Version, 2011.

For the Catholic perspective, the main additional source used in this study guide is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which consists of some 600 pages. Upon my first reading of the *Catechism* I was struck by the richness of the doctrinal content, and the extent to which Evangelicals could readily embrace much of its teachings. Evangelical writer Mark Noll suggests agreement with at least two-thirds of the *Catechism*.¹¹ Jack van Impe, known by many Evangelicals for his extensive memorization of the Bible, commented that his soul was immensely blessed in reading the *Catechism*, indicating there are some 5,000 to 6,000 biblical references within it.¹² This study guide draws several quotes from the *Catechism*, identified by reference numbers in the Endnotes. Standard practise for quoting the *Catechism* is not to reference a page number, but a numbered paragraph or sentence.¹³

In looking for a statement of faith for Evangelicals, I first examined one provided by the World Evangelical Alliance. Given the breadth within the evangelical world, and the need for the World Evangelical Alliance to reflect that diversity well, their statement is very concise, consisting of only a few lines, and therefore not as helpful to this undertaking. My desire was to use a fuller statement which prompted me to utilize the one that I am most familiar with, the *Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith*.¹⁴ I have been involved with the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Churches for most of my pastoral calling. In using their *Confession* as a representative statement for Evangelicals, I do so recognizing that ultimately no one statement speaks for all Evangelicals. Even in making general statements

about Evangelicals in this resource, there are undoubtedly other Evangelicals who have differing perspectives. All kinds of exceptions exist in the Evangelical sphere! My apologies, upfront, to Evangelicals, where I may have not captured well our collective and somewhat diverse expressions of faith.

May the Lord Jesus Christ bless you richly as you journey together in dialogue! Though not personally present, I certainly would like to think of being present in spirit. Part of my involvement will come through prayer for those who have engaged in this journey. I welcome comments, questions, and input. My email address is below.

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I. Revelation

Introductory Overview

It is my experience that both Catholics and Evangelicals place great emphasis on the Bible. Catholics and Evangelicals understand and embrace 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

For Evangelicals, the Word of God is central in devotional use, preaching, small groups, Sunday school, Bible school education, and in a host of other ways. The Scriptures are central. Evangelicals look to the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, as God’s authoritative guide for matters of faith and practise.

Most Evangelicals would accept the following about the Scriptures. “We believe that the entire Bible was inspired by God through the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit guides the community of faith in the interpretation of Scripture. The person, teaching and life of Jesus Christ bring continuity and clarity to both the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament bears witness to Christ and Christ is the one whom the New Testament proclaims. We accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and the authoritative guide for faith and practice.”¹⁵

Catholics also have high regard for the Bible. They understand it as the very Word of God. The *Catechism* states, “The Sacred Scriptures contain the Word of God and, because they are inspired they are truly the Word of God.”¹⁶ One cannot help but note the sacredness attached to Scripture when visiting a Catholic service. The beginning of mass is marked by a processional which includes bringing in a large and very visible copy of the Scriptures, elevated for all to see. Further Catholics bring substantive attention to the Bible by the consistent practise of scripture reading. There are usually four readings: Old Testament; the psalms; the epistles; and from the gospels. Based on my observation on visiting Catholic services, Catholics probably experience more scripture reading than evangelicals. A Catholic priest, on visiting several evangelical worship services, once asked me why Evangelicals didn’t read the Bible in their worship services!¹⁷

The Bible is used differently by Catholics and Evangelicals. “Faithful and spiritually active Catholics tend to pray with the Bible while Evangelicals prefer to study it. In other words, Bible study is a regular part of Protestant church life while the Catholic experience of the Scriptures has been primarily in the context of prayer, liturgical and contemplative.”¹⁸ Consequently, there is added emphasis on Bible readings by Catholics in their worship services. In contrast, preaching in Catholic services, wouldn’t carry the same time-attention as in Evangelical settings. In many Evangelical services, a sermon might be about 30 minutes in length, whereas in a Catholic mass the homily might be approximately 10 to 15 minutes.¹⁹

A point of interest is that with the readings from the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John), Catholics are always invited to stand. On this the *Catechism* states, “The Gospels are the additional heart of all the Scriptures ‘because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour.’”²⁰ I suspect that a Catholic, on visiting an Evangelical service where one of the gospels would be read, might be taken back by the failure of participants to stand. In Catholic liturgy, that practice is fully implanted within the heart of the worship experience.

Catholics base their authority on the Bible, but they also include the contribution of Tradition, which signals a key difference between Catholics and Evangelicals. Is authority based on scripture alone, or is it based on scripture and tradition? Tradition would include the original ‘oral traditions’ handed down by the apostles,²¹ but also the collective discernment and wisdom gained through the centuries. As stated by the *Catechism*, “Through Tradition, ‘The Church, in her doctrine, life and worship perpetuate and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes.’ The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice of the Church, in her belief and her prayer.”²² The *Catechism* speaks of the connection between Tradition and the Word of God: “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And Holy Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.”²³

In contrast, Evangelicals, embrace ‘sola scriptura’ which means ‘scripture alone.’ Evangelicals are cognizant of the value and importance of the ‘collective wisdom’ of those that have preceded present day believers. There is an indebtedness for their contribution, be it the creeds from the past, or present-day confessions of faith. However, Evangelicals would not place these at the same level as Scripture.

An interesting point relates to the canonization of the New Testament. The books of the New Testament, as used today, were first listed by Bishop Athanasius in 367 A.D., and later ratified as the canon at the Council in Carthage in 397 A.D. The early church did not have a canon for the New Testament, though they clearly were very involved in that canon emerging.²⁴ For the early believers, their Bible was the Old Testament. Catholics would suggest that the oral tradition of the first few centuries played a key part in establishing the canon.²⁵ Catholics would argue that Tradition was critically operative in the early church, which suggests an ongoing role through church history.

A final point of difference is that the Bible used by Catholics is a little longer in that the Old Testament includes seven additional books. These are referred to as the *Deuterocanonical* books, which includes *Tobit*, *Judith*, *1 and 2 Maccabees*, *Wisdom*, *Sirach*, and *Baruch*. Evangelicals refer to these same books as the *Apocrypha*.²⁶

May God bless you as you share about the role of Scriptures in your respective traditions.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview, what most caught your attention and why? Were there any surprises?

Two: Share how you see the Bible being used in your worship services. What do you most appreciate on how the scriptures are used in your setting?

Three: Outside of the worship service experience, do you use the Bible in any way, and if so, how? What benefit does it bring to you?

Four: Of the exchange of ideas shared thus far (including the Introductory Overview), is there anything about how Scripture is used in the other tradition that you would value being more prominent in your own? If so, what is it, and why are you of that thinking?

Five: As you consider the wealth of biblical revelation, identify a verse, story, parable, teaching or Bible book that has been meaningful to you. Why is that biblical text special to you? Prominent examples would include Psalm 23 (The Lord is my Shepherd), John 3:16 (For God so loved the world), Parable of the Lost Son (Luke 15), and a host of other possibilities.

Six: Psalm 119, the longest chapter of the Bible, speaks of the value of the Word of God. For example, verse 72 states the following: “The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.” What are some contributing factors that could potentially motivate us to not only engage more fully with the Word, but also to value the Scriptures as being “more precious than thousands of pieces of silver and gold”? When and where have you found scripture invaluable to you?

Seven: On Bible reading, the *Catechism* says, “The Church “forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful....to learn ‘the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ’, by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. ‘Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.’”²⁷ Interaction with Scripture should ultimately take us to Jesus Christ. Related to this, George Weigel, a Catholic writer, makes this comment: “Evangelical Catholicism begins not with knowing about Jesus, but with knowing Jesus.”²⁸ Identify one attribute about Jesus that you highly appreciate. Possibilities include teacher, healer, Savior, king, Lord, resurrected, intercessor, etc.

II. The Church

Introductory Overview

Evangelicals and Catholics concur on the importance and value of the church. At the same time, perhaps the most significant difference between Catholics and Evangelicals relates to the understanding of the church. The two traditions interpret Matthew 16 very differently. “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19).

In Catholicism, Peter is recognized as the rock on which Jesus builds his church. With this interpretive lens, Peter becomes the first apostolic leader, followed by a long succession of popes. Catholic thinking about Peter’s role is captured by the following statement from the *Catechism*. “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” The “power of the keys” designates authority to govern the house of God, which is the Church. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate after his Resurrection: “Feed my sheep.” The power to “bind and loose” connotes the authority to absolve sins, to pronounce doctrinal judgments, and to make disciplinary decisions in the Church. Jesus entrusted this authority to the Church through the ministry of the apostles and in particular through the ministry of Peter, the only one to whom he specifically entrusted the keys of the kingdom.”²⁹

For Evangelicals, the church is the people called by God through Jesus Christ. Those who respond in faith are united with their congregations by the public confession of baptism. The church is one body of believers, male and female, from every nation, race and class. The head of this body is Christ. The Church, united by one Spirit, makes Christ visible in the world. The church exists as local bodies of believers and as a worldwide community of faith.³⁰ For Evangelicals, the ‘rock’ in Matthew 16:18 is interpreted as Jesus building his church on the truth that He is the “Messiah, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Catholic teaching is that God provided design, structure, and authority for the church. As stated in the Nicene Creed, the church is “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” These four words define God’s design. The church is ‘one,’ with unity being critically important. The church is ‘holy,’ set apart by God. The church is ‘catholic,’ universal in its scope. And the church is ‘apostolic,’ with a succession of leadership from Peter to the present day.

Evangelicals, reciting the Nicene Creed, wouldn’t necessarily have the same understanding about the church. Yet, the four words (“one, holy, catholic, and apostolic”), understood from an Evangelical perspective, would be affirmed by most. Evangelicals uphold the ‘oneness’ of the church, a spiritual unity with all believers in Christ. They would also affirm the church’s call to be ‘holy.’ And as the church is to be missional in her ‘catholic’ or ‘universal’ calling, most Evangelicals would embrace that understanding. The word ‘apostolic’ for Evangelicals would vary in meaning, carrying elements of ‘leadership’ and being ‘missional.’ It could also be understood as speaking of a loyalty to the apostolic scriptures of the New Testament.³¹ But to suggest ‘apostolic’ as a line of leaders from Peter to the present, would be a critical point of divergence.

On using the term ‘catholic,’ Roman Catholicism brings a multi-layered understanding. On the meaning of the word, it can include believers that are outside the Catholic church. The *Catechism* indicates that all believers are part of the ‘catholic unity,’ even those believers separated from the Roman Catholic Church. “However one cannot charge with the sin of separation those who at present are born into these communities [that resulted from such separation] and in them are brought up in the faith of Christ, and the Catholic Church accepts them with respect and affection as brothers....All who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic Church.”³²

Though Evangelicals might embrace what is said about the church via the Nicene Creed, reality is that the understanding of the church, compared to that of Catholics, might be deemed, by some, as 'limited.' At Catholic-Evangelical dialogue meetings, some Evangelicals have suggested that: "The main difference between us and the Catholics is ecclesiology. They have one and we don't."³³ In other words, Catholics have a well-articulated understanding and theology of the 'church' whereas Evangelicals don't! Part of this may seemingly be substantiated by the lack of any central authority, as well as the multiplicity of churches and denominations. Catholics cannot understand this somewhat 'unstructured' structure of Evangelicals. Yet for Evangelicals there is a deemed 'oneness' in Christ, whether Baptist, Pentecostal, Alliance, or Methodist.

A concluding observation about the 'church' is that Evangelicals tend to think of individuals being saved and eventually folded into a church, whereas Catholics think of the salvation story beginning with the body, the community of faith. For Catholicism, the church is all-important, not only emphasizing a corporate sense of belonging, but also in providing the way to salvation. That difference has been captured well by the following question: "Are we to imagine that salvation is a gift to individuals who then go on to decide to form a church, or does God's grace constitute a community of lost souls (say, twelve of them!) by membership in which the souls are no longer lost? This is the heart of the issue: is it an entire people or individual persons that God saves?"³⁴

Despite the differences on the nature of the church, believers in Christ are called to a bond of relational unity. Blessings as you discuss similarities and differences related to the nature of the church.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview, what most caught your attention and why? Were there any surprises?

Two: To become better acquainted with our respective traditions, share one aspect of your church life that you highly appreciate and value. What is it about that one facet that brings blessing to you?

Three: To become even better acquainted with our respective traditions, share one dimension of your church life that you would say is a weakness, and in need of change and/or strengthening?

Four: Have you ever had the opportunity to visit outside of your tradition, be it an Evangelical or a Catholic church? If so, what were your impressions? What was new and favorable to you? (Related, an idea that merits exploration is that of visiting respective worship services. Would group members be interested in making this happen? If so, when and how?)

Five: Eric and Susan, a young couple, with two preschoolers, were raised as Evangelicals. However, of late, they have been drawn to the Catholic fold. They have attended several Catholic services and are considering taking membership classes. Eric and Susan indicate that they are drawn by the sense of history as well as the 'oneness' of the church. They have become somewhat uncertain about the 'fragmented' nature of Evangelicals. On the other hand, another couple, Bob and Joy, both Catholics, who have been inactive in their faith, have recently started attending an Evangelical church. They speak positively and enthusiastically of the emphasis on a personal relationship with Christ. For the time being they intend to continue attending the evangelical church. What do you make of the cross-overs happening between Catholics and Evangelicals? To what extent have you seen people shifting in their church affiliations? What do you think are some of the primary reasons?

Six: Present day history has seen the Catholic Church blessed with outstanding papal leaders: John Paul II (whom some have suggested will come to be known as 'John Paul the Great'); Benedict XVI; and Francis. What have you observed these men bringing to the international stage, not only on behalf of Catholics, but the broader Christian community? What role do these men play in challenging the secular mindset which makes either little or no room for God?

Seven: The Spirit of Christ flourishes in the Church.³⁵ And where the Spirit is, the missionary impulse follows. The Spirit is the principal agent of the Church's mission³⁶ in bringing the message of salvation found in Jesus Christ. As you think of your church, what are evidences or indicators of that missionary and outward orientation?

Conclude the meeting with prayer.

III. Salvation

Introductory Overview

The 'saving work of Jesus Christ' is predicated on an understanding that humanity is faced with the problem of sin, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

The *Catholic Catechism* is explicit about sin. It is defined as "disobedience toward God and lack of trust in his goodness."³⁷ A quote from St. Gregory of Nyssa describes the impact of sin: "Sick, our nature demanded to be healed; fallen, to be raised up; dead, to rise again. We had lost the possession of the good; it was necessary for it to be given back to us. Closed in the darkness, it was necessary to bring us the light; captives, we awaited a Saviour; prisoners, help; slaves, a liberator. Are these things minor or insignificant? Did they not move God to descend to human nature and visit it, since humanity was in so miserable and unhappy a state?"³⁸ Yet, humanity tends to minimize sin. "We are tempted to explain it as merely a developmental flaw, a psychological weakness, a mistake, or the necessary consequence of an inadequate social structure."³⁹

Evangelicals also speak of the sinfulness of humanity. "We believe that the first humans yielded to the tempter, Satan, and fell into sin. Since then, all people disobey God and choose to sin, falling short of the glory of God. As a result, sin and evil have gained a hold in the world, disrupting God's purposes for the created order and alienating humans from God and therefore from creation, each other and themselves. Human sinfulness results in physical and spiritual death. Because all have sinned, all face eternal separation from God."⁴⁰

Many Evangelicals speak of 'eternal separation from God.' Those without Christ, without a remedy for the sin problem, face an eternity without God. The *Catholic Catechism* also speaks of this reality, identifying it as 'hell.' "The teaching of the Church affirms the existence of hell and its eternity... The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in who alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs."⁴¹

Catholics speak of 'original sin' whereas Evangelicals speak of the 'sin of Adam.' Catholics will also speak of 'mortal' sin (a serious sin, which if unconfessed, can lead to spiritual death), as well as 'venial' sin, or smaller sins. These terms (original, mortal, and venial sin) are generally not used by Evangelicals, though they would see all sin as serious affronts to God.

A component of the Catholic worship experience is the intentional confession of sin. Catholics prepare themselves for worship via the penitential rite where they collectively confess their sins. Liturgical wording will vary, but one that is employed is as follows: "I confess to Almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters that I have sinned through my own fault in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do." The balance of the confession then asks for prayer and forgiveness. Evangelicals would not have the same liturgical penitential rite, though opportunity for confession of sin might be readily provided. But it would not necessarily be a weekly exercise as expressed in Catholic liturgy. Nor would it be an intentional confession of sin through the sacrament of reconciliation.⁴²

With respect to salvation, Catholics and Evangelicals agree that redemption can be found only in Jesus Christ. The *Catechism* speaks on this: "The name Jesus means 'God saves.' The child born of the Virgin Mary is called Jesus, 'for he will save his people from their sins' (Matthew 1:21); 'there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved' (Acts 4:12)."⁴³ Evangelicals fully embrace this.

This common conviction of 'salvation in Christ' is consistent with the *Joint Declaration of Justification* issued by the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation in 1999. Clearly indicating a new level of understanding between Catholics and Lutherans, one of its central sentences says, "Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works."⁴⁴ The saving work of Jesus Christ is the foundation of faith, a truth which Evangelicals, with Lutherans and Catholics, affirm.

A major separating point between Catholics and Evangelicals comes more around the 'how' or the 'when' of salvation. Is it a 'point-of-time' experience, as championed by many Evangelicals, or is it more the result of a 'progressive' and lifelong journey, as taught by Catholics? For Catholics salvation is a process, generally beginning with baptism, and carried forward to fruition by the believer's faithfulness, supported by the sacraments of the Church. Somewhat comparable to this, though different, is that of Evangelicals speaking of 'discipleship' as core to the salvation journey.

The Evangelical, Mark Noll writes, "Since Catholics view salvation as a process, not a single event, there is a possibility of interruption (through choice or mortal sin) anywhere along the continuum. That interruption can lead to a departure from God's kingdom, even to eternity in hell. Catholics, therefore, find it presumptuous to announce assurance that salvation is complete, and heaven is certain. They take seriously the biblical admonition, "He who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). Against standard evangelical teaching on the assurance of salvation, they ask if any of us knows for certain the limitations of our endurance."⁴⁵

Yet most Evangelicals speak of eternal salvation as a 'certainty.' Evangelicals would base their assurance on bible verses (such as John 3:16) which would suggest as such, whereas Catholics would not think of salvation as a certainty, though they would speak of it as an assured hope.⁴⁶

Good works are important to both traditions, but perhaps more so for Catholics, specifically with respect to the salvation journey. For Evangelicals, salvation is a gift offered to all who trust Christ for their righteousness. Initially, this excludes good works. Good works are evidence of justifying faith, but they don't contribute to justification. Sanctification, or holiness, is a fruit of justification, not part and parcel of it as in Catholicism, where faith combines with the works of love to make one holy, to become actually righteous.⁴⁷ And yet, the Joint Statement on Justification clearly articulates that salvation is solely by the work of Christ: "By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works."⁴⁸

May God guide your conversation on this critical topic, which carries implications not only for today, but for all eternity.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview, what most caught your attention and why? Were there any surprises? Were there any objections?

Two: Jesus Christ is central to the salvation story. Can you identify when Jesus became more than just a word or name to you? If so, what were the circumstances? If not, what is your present understanding of Jesus Christ?

Three: Common language in Evangelical circles is that of a 'personal relationship' with Jesus Christ. That language however may not be understood, or well received by Catholics. Father Dimitri Sala, a Catholic priest, suggests, "I've heard some in my denomination even bristle at the term 'personal relationship,' citing that those words aren't even found in the Bible."⁴⁹ How do you react to the terminology? Are you positive, negative, or neutral with the language? If negative, what would be the preferred language?

Four: The *Catechism* indicates that "Christ's death...accomplishes the definitive redemption of men, through "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world," and the sacrifice of the New Covenant, which restores man to communion with God by reconciling him to God through the "blood of the covenant, which was poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."⁵⁰ The work of Christ, understood and appropriated by the believer, can generate a great deal of joy. In what kind of spiritual experiences and/or disciplines are you most apt to understand and experience the joy that comes from the salvation story?

Five: Ephesians provides a helpful biblical perspective on good works. As you read the text below, identify key thoughts related to good works. How do those thoughts fit into your understanding about the role of good works and salvation? How do those thoughts fit with James 2:14, 17, also below?

- For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:8-10).
- “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?...Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:14, 17).

Six: The good news of salvation generally leads to a desire for sharing that message of Christ with others. Evangelicals and Catholics are both of that persuasion. The *Catechism* is marked by many statements that are very evangelistic in tone. Below is a sampling of those quotes. Of the three provided, which one most captures your attention and why?

- The transmission of the Christian faith consists primarily in proclaiming Jesus Christ in order to lead others to faith in him. From the beginning, the first disciples burned with the desire to proclaim Christ.⁵¹
- From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to 'evangelize' and to lead others to the 'yes' of faith in Jesus Christ.⁵²
- It is the divine name that alone brings salvation, and henceforth all can invoke his name, for Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation, so that 'there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:2).⁵³

Seven: How does evangelism take expression in your respective traditions? What does it look like? What are some of the primary initiatives?

Conclude the meeting with prayer.

IV. Baptism

Introductory Overview

Catholics and Evangelicals both view baptism as an important part of faith. However, a key difference is that Catholics identify it in a sacramental way, whereas Evangelicals generally do not.

Catholics have seven sacraments. Sacraments, as defined by the *Catechism* “are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church by which divine life is dispensed to us.... The Holy Spirit prepares the faithful for the sacraments by the Word of God and the faith which welcomes that word in well-disposed hearts.”⁵⁴ “The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ, and, finally, to give worship to God.”⁵⁵ In short, the sacraments give grace. The seven sacraments are Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Penance-Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

Evangelicals generally do not speak of sacraments but have two practises that are often referred to as ‘ordinances,’ Baptism and Communion. An ‘ordinance’ would be understood as a prescribed practise. Both are important for Evangelicals, though neither would be viewed, at least by most, in a ‘sacramental’ way. With respect to the other Catholic sacraments, Evangelicals would readily affirm the value of infilling of the Spirit (part of the confirmation emphasis); confession and reconciliation; praying for the sick; God’s calling of spiritual leaders; and marriage. All very important and sacred, but not understood in a sacramental way.

Baptism for an Evangelical is “a public sign that a person has repented of sin, received forgiveness of sins, died with Christ to sin, been raised to newness of life, and received the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁶ “When people receive God’s gift of salvation, they are to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism is a sign of having been cleansed from sin.”⁵⁷ As suggested, baptism is a ‘sign,’ or symbolic of the salvation that a believer has experienced in Christ. For many Evangelicals, baptism is practised by immersion, where a believer, upon confession of faith, is fully immersed in water, symbolizing their death and resurrection to new life.

In terms of the original meaning for the word ‘baptism,’ Evangelicals and Catholics share a similar understanding. The *Catechism* says, “to baptize (Greek baptizein) means to ‘plunge’ or ‘immerse’; the ‘plunge’ into the water symbolizes the catechumen’s burial into Christ’s death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as a ‘new creature.’”⁵⁸ Very similar to what an Evangelical might say! Some Catholic churches practise baptism by immersion, or at least include it as an option with that of sprinkling. For example, the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon has a pool of water that provides for ‘immersion.’

Baptism is important for Evangelicals, but it might be appropriate to say that for Catholics it is even more so. As indicated in the *Catechism*, “Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word.”⁵⁹

For Catholicism, baptism and salvation are intricately linked. On this the *Catechism* teaches: “The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; that is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are ‘reborn of water and the Spirit.’ God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.”⁶⁰

A key bible passage that Catholics use to substantiate salvation through baptism is John 3:5-6. “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” Catholics take this text literally, whereas Evangelicals are more likely to interpret the phrase “born of water” symbolically for spiritual cleansing.

Because the grace of God comes through the sacraments, wholly apart from human merit, Catholics fully embrace the efficaciousness of infant baptism. The grace of God, via Christ, to the priest, to the infant, is fully expressed,

experienced, and effective. For a Catholic, how better to illustrate God's grace than to apply baptism to a helpless infant.⁶¹ Most Evangelicals would differ on this and contend that baptism is only for those who have reached a certain level of understanding and accountability. However, most Evangelicals would embrace 'child dedication', which is not sacramental, but at the same time, provides for an experience where parents dedicate their child to the Lord.

Because of the salvific value in baptism, Catholicism links baptism and justification. From the *Catechism*: "Justification has been merited for us by the Passion of Christ who offered himself on the cross as a living victim, holy and pleasing to God, and whose blood has become the instrument of atonement for the sins of all men. Justification is conferred in Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us inwardly just by the power of his mercy. Its purpose is the glory of God and of Christ, and the gift of eternal life."⁶² Most Evangelicals would not embrace the linking of baptism and justification.

A perplexing piece for Evangelicals relates to the lasting value of baptism for Catholics. Once baptized, is a Catholic assured of eternal salvation or not? Or can someone lose their salvation subsequent to baptism? A helpful perspective on this comes from Dr. Robert Stackpole, a Catholic writer. "Perhaps the shortest way to sum up the Catholic position would be this: We believe that we are *initially* "saved" in the sense of "brought into a state of grace," a life-giving union with Jesus Christ, through the free gift from God's grace of living faith (Eph 2:8-10), but *final* salvation, the attainment of heaven at the last, involves "faith working in love" (Gal 5:6), through the assistance of God's grace, leading to full "sanctification, and its end, eternal life" (Romans 6:22).⁶³

May God guide your conversation as you look at a topic on which Catholics and Evangelicals have differing perspectives.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview what most caught your attention and why? Were there any surprises? Were there any objections? Were there any points of questioning?

Two: How is baptism practised in your church? What does a typical baptism service look like?

Three: Grandma Joy, a dedicated and committed Catholic, recently saw her seventh grandchild born, a first child to her daughter Anne. To Joy's dismay, and concern, Anne, inactive in her Catholic faith, has little regard for church attendance and participation. And what is most concerning for Joy is the apparent disregard Anne has with respect to having the baby baptized. Discuss what would be some of the critical issues in the situation. Why would this be of such concern to Joy? Parallel to this, what would be the equivalent concern of an Evangelical grandmother?

Four: Below are three biblical passages on baptism. Which passage is most helpful to you in understanding the meaning of baptism?

- John 3:5-6. Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."
- Romans 6:3-4. Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.
- Acts 2:38-39. Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Five: The Catholic Church recognizes baptisms that occur outside of the Church. They can do as such because of the sacramental understanding. Below is a quote from a Catholic priest, with teaching consistent with the *Catechism*.⁶⁴ How do you react to the quote? And as a part of this, why is it that most Evangelicals would not be as prepared to recognize a Catholic baptism, particularly infant?

- In the eyes of the Catholic Church, any Baptism that uses water and the invocation of the Holy Trinity, as well as the intention to do what the Church does—that is, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"—is a valid sacrament.⁶⁵

Six: One component of baptism, as expressed in the *Catechism*, is the renunciation of Satan. A similar emphasis is not necessarily expressed by Evangelicals at baptism services. Below are quotes, the first from the *Catechism*, the second from a Catholic priest. How do you react to the quotes? Surprised? Affirming? Questioning? Beyond the baptismal experience, to what extent is Satan talked about in church life, be it Catholic or Evangelical?

- Since Baptism signifies liberation from sin and from its instigator the devil, one or more exorcisms are pronounced over the candidate. The celebrant then anoints him with the oil of catechumens, or lays his hands on him, and he explicitly renounces Satan. Thus prepared, he is able to confess the faith of the Church, to which he will be 'entrusted' by Baptism.⁶⁶
- At baptism, the priest asks "Do you renounce Satan? And all his works? And all his empty promises?"⁶⁷

Seven: Baptized Catholics are encouraged to think of the Cross through the Sign of the Cross. The *Catechism* states, "The Christian begins his day, his prayers and his activities with the Sign of the Cross: 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.' The baptized person dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Saviour's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father. The sign of the cross strengthens us in temptations and difficulties."⁶⁸ The Sign of the Cross is not taught or utilized by Evangelicals. However, Evangelicals consider deeply the importance of the Cross and the related 'crucified life.' A key passage, among others, would be Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." For Catholics, what does the sign of the Cross mean to you personally? For Evangelicals, what does it mean to reflect on a verse such as Galatians 2:20?

Conclude the meeting with prayer.

V. Eucharist (Lord's Supper)

Introductory Overview

Both Catholics and Evangelicals participate in Communion, also known as the Eucharist or Lord's Supper. Additional terminology, particularly in Catholic practise includes Holy Communion, or Holy and Divine Liturgy.

For Catholics, Communion is one of the seven sacraments whereby the believer experiences the grace of God. For Evangelicals, Communion is one of two ordinances, with Baptism being the other. Most Evangelicals do not bring a sacramental view to the Lord's Supper.

In Catholic belief and practise, the elements (bread wafer and wine) become the body and blood of Christ. "The moment the priest or bishop says the words of consecration—the words of Christ at the Last Supper, "This is my body" and "This is my blood," (Matthew 26:26-29)—Catholics believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ.⁶⁹ The word used to describe this change is 'transubstantiation.' "It has always been the conviction of the Church...that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood."⁷⁰ In partaking in Communion, the believer engages in life, experiencing the very grace of God. John 6:53 underscores the importance of participation: "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." The full text, John 6:53-58, is a foundational passage.

Further, the *Catechism* says, "In brief, the Eucharist is the sum and summary of our faith: 'Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn confirms our way of thinking.'⁷¹ In contrast, Evangelicals wouldn't have the same thinking about Communion, though Evangelicals would readily say, "In brief, Christ is the sum and summary of our faith: Our way of thinking is attuned to Christ, and Christ in turn confirms our way of thinking."

Many Evangelicals think of Communion in symbolic terms. For example, Southern Baptists, one of the largest Evangelical groups in North America articulate their belief as follows: "The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members...memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."⁷² Others, such as the Mennonite Brethren use language of Communion pointing to Christ.⁷³ "The church observes the Lord's Supper, as instituted by Christ. The Lord's Supper points to Christ, whose body was broken for us and whose blood was shed to assure salvation for believers and to establish the new covenant. Through the supper, the church identifies with the life of Christ given for the redemption of humanity and proclaims the Lord's death until he comes. The supper expresses the fellowship and unity of all believers with Christ and embodies remembrance, celebration, and praise, strengthening believers for true discipleship and service."⁷⁴

For Evangelicals, many churches share in Communion once a month. Yet there would be churches that would celebrate Communion every Sunday, whereas other churches only occasionally, be it once every two to three months. On the other hand, Catholics celebrate the Eucharist every time they gather for Mass. It is the central act of Christian worship. Given its sacramental nature whereby participants experience the grace of God, Catholic worshippers are invited, and encouraged, to share in the Eucharistic experience frequently.

One of the separating points between Evangelicals and Catholics is that the Eucharistic experience in the Catholic mass is exclusively for Catholics.⁷⁵ Consequently, Evangelicals are not invited to be participants. Much of this stems from the understanding of the apostolic office as well as the sacramental perspective, particularly transubstantiation. The *Catechism* speaks on this: "Ecclesial communities derived from the Reformation and separated from the Catholic Church, "have not preserved the proper reality of the Eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Holy Orders." It is for this reason that Eucharistic intercommunion with these communities is not possible for the Catholic Church. However, Evangelicals are welcome, during the serving of the Eucharistic meal to come forward with other participants, to receive a blessing from the priest. The request for such a blessing is signalled by the crossing of one's arms and hands over the chest. It should also be noted that the *Catechism* indicates the following about ecclesial communities outside the Catholic church: "When they commemorate the Lord's death and resurrection in the Holy Supper...they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and await his coming in glory."⁷⁶

In contrast to the above, Catholics would be welcome to participate in Communion in most Evangelical churches. The key qualifier would be relationship with Christ. A believer, in relationship with Christ, is deemed a brother or sister in the faith, and welcome at the Lord's Table. However, given that those presiding over Communion are not part of the apostolic order, one might assume that Catholics would choose to not participate, or would even be discouraged from doing so by Catholic leaders.⁷⁷

Eventually all genuine believers in Christ will be invited to a common supper. Revelation 19:9 says: Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." The 1984 movie, *Places in the Heart* partially captures this future reality in the final scene, a Communion service, which unexpectedly shifts to include the deceased, now living, participating in the Communion service! The movie, in part, is shaped around painful realities, such as murder, associated with racial issues. Yet, at the end, with one foot on earth, and the other in heaven, the movie depicts a communion service marked by love, forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace. Though the movie has nothing to do with Catholic-Evangelical relations, indirectly, it suggests a future potential reality of oneness for all those who embrace Jesus Christ as Lord.

May there be much fellowship in Christ as you discuss this topic where there are some points of congruence, but at the same time significant differences.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview what most caught your attention and why? Were there any surprises? Were there any objections?

Two: Describe how Communion is practised in your church? Related, what do you derive from participating in the Lord's Supper.

Three: A Catholic priest, about to serve Communion to his people, accidentally stumbled, and with that mishap, the chalice in his hands, full of consecrated Communion wafers, ended up all over the floor.⁷⁸ Aside from the embarrassment of the moment, what theological unsettledness faced the priest and those sharing in Communion with him? If the same were to happen in an Evangelical setting, which undoubtedly has occurred, why might it have a lesser sense of 'unsettledness'?

Four: The following is an unflattering quote about how Catholics and Evangelicals might view their respective worship experiences. The quote also includes a reference to Communion. As you read the quote, how do you react? Defensive? Agreeing? Angry? Receptive?

- Many Catholics see Protestant worship services, when Communion is not celebrated, as little more than light religious entertainment accompanied by a motivational speaker. By contrast, evangelicals see Catholic worship as prescribed ritual devoid of a personal response to God and lacking adequate teaching from Scripture.⁷⁹

Five: Some Catholics practise Eucharistic adoration where, meditatively and quietly, they reflect on the Eucharistic host as the very presence of Christ. For Catholics, perhaps nothing could be more Christ-centered than the sacramental presence of Christ in the Eucharistic elements. Evangelicals don't do as such, but they will, during a devotional time, reflect meditatively and quietly on the very presence of Christ with them. For Evangelicals, what does it mean to think meditatively on Christ? For Catholics, what does it mean to engage in Eucharistic adoration? What is similar with the two practises? What is different?

Six: It has been said that a "First-class gospel calls for a first-class fellowship."⁸⁰ Even though Evangelicals and Catholics are limited in their capacity for fellowship around the Eucharistic table, potential for 'first-class' fellowship still exists. John 15:9-17 is provided below. Read the text, identifying thoughts or ideas that contribute to the sense of a 'oneness' in Christ.

9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit —fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other."

Seven: As indicated above, eventually all genuine believers in Christ will be invited to a common supper. Revelation 19:9 says: Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." Heaven, among many other blessings, will include shared fellowship by Catholics and Evangelicals! How often do you think of heaven? Is it seen as some distant future reality, or is it perceived as more immediate and near? And what impact does reflection on that future heavenly meal have on the sense of fellowship today?

Conclude the meeting with prayer.

VI. The Communion of Saints

Introductory Overview

The church consists of all believers, past, present, and future. With respect to those already in heaven, are they 'inactive', or are they 'engaged' in ministry, specifically, that of intercession?

Catholics believe that the Church encompasses not only those on earth, but also those that have already passed away. The Catechism states, "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always attentive to our prayers."⁸¹

Catholics believe there is a lively, ongoing, dynamic exchange between those that are on earth and those in heaven. For example, the experience of worship (the mass) is a gathering not only of those on earth, but additionally those in heaven. When Catholics worship on earth, those in heaven worship with them. In effect, the dividing line between earth and heaven is somewhat 'fluid.' There is a communion between the saints that is never broken.

A key biblical passage is Hebrews 12:1. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles." From a Catholic perspective, we are always surrounded by those that have preceded us. Reality is that much of the church is not here...but rather in heaven, as the cloud of witnesses. Other passages that would suggest a lively exchange between heaven and earth include the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke 16:19-31), as well as the fifth seal account in Revelation 6:9-11. With the Revelation 6 passage, those in heaven are making specific inquiries to God about matters on earth. Further it could be understood that they are also involved in intercession (Revelation 8:3-5), engaged and active.

Evangelicals believe that indeed those on earth are "surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1)." But to suggest that that there is exchange between heaven and earth would be new and foreign to most Evangelicals. Fellow believers are in heaven, but the line between heaven and earth would be more 'set.' The flow between heaven and earth would not have the same measure of 'fluidity.'

For Catholics, prayer is a critical piece within the overall understanding of the communion of saints. Those in heaven are afforded the time and spiritual focus to intercede for those on earth. This is a vital part of Catholic thinking and practise. Because of this understanding, Catholics will ask their fellow believers in heaven to pray for them. This would parallel asking a fellow believer on earth to pray for them. Evangelicals might see this as Catholics praying to the dead. But for Catholics, they are simply asking their fellow believers, now in heaven, and very much alive in spirit, to intercede for them. The Catechism reinforces this: "The witnesses who have preceded us into the kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were "put in charge of many things." Their intercession is the most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world."⁸²

Catholics can appeal to anyone in heaven to pray for them, but one of the principal intercessors is Mary. Correctly understood, Catholics do not pray to Mary nor do they worship her.⁸³ But Catholics do ask Mary to pray for them. The Hail Mary is a prayer that at its core asks Mary to pray on behalf of believers. As a part of the communion of saints, it is understood that Mary is positioned, and prepared, to intercede for believers.

Evangelicals value the humility and obedience of Mary, and would look to her, as well as other biblical figures, as role models for the life of faith. But Evangelicals would not accord the same level of veneration that would be found within Catholicism. Nor would Evangelicals think in terms of asking Mary to intercede for them. Evangelicals might be critiqued by Catholics for failing to adequately honor Mary. On the other hand, Catholics would be critiqued by Evangelicals for doctrinal statements about Mary that seemingly go beyond Scripture. Specifics would include the

Immaculate Conception (which indicates Mary was born without sin) and the Bodily Assumption (which teaches Mary went directly to heaven). Given the spread between the differing perspectives, this is one of those areas where Catholics and Evangelicals live with the tension associated with ‘agreeing to disagree,’ doing so in a respectful manner.

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, may the Spirit of God guide your conversation!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview what most caught your attention and why? Were there any surprises, and if so, what were they?

Two: For Catholics, how and where does the Church give recognition to the communion of the saints? Is it primarily in the Mass, and if so, how? For Evangelicals, is there anything comparable in theology and practise?

Three: A primary passage of scripture related to the communion of the saints is Hebrews 12:1, “Therefore, since we are surround by such a great cloud of witnesses....” On more of a personal level, how often do you think of that cloud of witnesses, particularly loved ones who are already in heaven? Related, are you struck by the extent to which people in general, even where there may be an absence of faith, reference their loved ones (who have passed away) as if they were still conscious and alert to what is happening? What does that say about the human yearning for life after death?

Four: Four siblings (all Evangelicals), having just lost their mother, a dedicated intercessor for the family, were with a pastor working out the details for her funeral service. During the discussion, one of the adult sons said that in driving into the city that day, he didn’t feel the same prayer protection that came with their mother’s prayers, as she was no longer alive. His siblings concurred. His comment would not be out of step with what other Evangelicals, in a similar situation, might equally say. In contrast, what is it that a Catholic might say in such a situation? How does belief in the ‘communion of the saints’ provide for a very different perspective?

Five: The Hail Mary Prayer is used extensively by Catholics. With this prayer, Catholics appeal to Mary, who is part of the communion of the saints, to pray for them. For Catholics, what does the Hail Mary prayer mean to you? How often do you use it? For Evangelicals, what question or questions might you want to ask Catholics on the use of this prayer? The prayer is provided below.

- Hail Mary, full of grace. Our Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Six: What does an understanding of the communion of the saints and the related intercession say about continued and anticipated ministry in heaven? Would heaven ultimately give added opportunity and impulse for intercession in a way that may have eluded believers when on earth? In other words, when you die, do you anticipate opportunity to pray for those on earth? Respond, doing so with the following quotes in mind, taken from those anticipating an intercessory ministry in heaven.

- Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life. St. Dominic, dying, to his brothers.⁸⁴
- I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth. St. Therese of Lisieux⁸⁵

Seven: Much of the emphasis on the communion of the saints is connected to worship and prayer. But as an additional outcome, what can a theology on the communion of the saints do in terms of comforting those that grieve the loss of loved ones? Can it make a difference in believing that loved ones are part of the ‘cloud of witnesses,’ only slightly removed?

Conclude the meeting with prayer.

VII. Missional Engagement

Introductory Overview

All dialogue should ultimately give way to missional engagement.

One of the outcomes from the Saskatoon Catholic-Evangelical dialogue is *Called to Common Witness*, a statement that outlines common points of faith in the first section, followed by differences in the second segment. The third and final section is given to shared missional possibilities between the two traditions. Whether prison ministry, social engagement, evangelism, marriage, prayer, ethical issues, children and youth, the poor, hospital visitation, etc., Catholics and Evangelicals, and in turn our communities, stand to benefit from collaborative missional efforts. This conviction that missional engagement should follow dialogue is not unique to the Saskatoon experience. That similar emphasis exists with the Canadian Catholic-Evangelical dialogue; the international dialogue between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity; as well as the work that has been done by in the U.S. by Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). Dialogue should ultimately give expression to missional engagement.

The merit to working together in missional engagement has always been true, but perhaps even more so today, given the rampant secularization which continues to marginalize the significance of God in our society. Given the unbelieving ideologies that mark culture, Catholics and Evangelicals can potentially do more, together, than by working independently of one another. There is much to be gained in shared ministry.

Back in the early 1960's when J.F. Kennedy ran for president, doing so as the first Catholic candidate for president, Southern Baptists were concerned that the Vatican would be telling Washington what to do. How the times have changed. "In the run-up to the 2004 U.S. presidential election, Gary Bauer, head of a conservative advocacy group, spoke for a growing number of his fellow evangelicals when he stated, 'When John F. Kennedy made his famous speech that the Vatican would not tell him what to do, evangelicals and Southern Baptists breathed a sigh of relief. But today evangelicals and Southern Baptists are hoping that the Vatican will tell Catholic politicians what to do.'"⁸⁶ Evangelicals clearly recognize that there are shared values with Catholics. What unites the two traditions is greater than what divides. And what unites can bring added 'salt' and 'light' not only to our communities, but to our country.

Catholics have much to offer Evangelicals and equally Evangelicals have much to offer Catholics. As noted earlier, Canadian sociologist Reginald Bibby is a voice for added collaboration between the two traditions.⁸⁷ His conviction is that there are affinities between the two that can be cultivated ultimately for the good of Canada. Resourcing one another can contribute to a mutual strengthening which in turn can enhance capacity for missional engagement and witness.

Some time ago, I started a list of ways in which Evangelicals could learn from Catholics.⁸⁸ At this point the list has grown close to a dozen itemizations. Evangelicals can learn the following, all of which can contribute to a stronger missional foundation:

- The practise of extensive reading of Scripture in worship services.
- The sense of sacredness and mystery that pervades Catholic liturgy and life.
- The awareness and belief in active spiritual realities between heaven and earth, such as the communion of saints.
- The attention given to art in worship and teaching.
- The space given to prayer, spiritual formation and direction, rest and retreat.
- Salvation as a journey.
- Ancient sources for Christian spiritual wisdom.
- The vital place of the intellectual life and Christian scholarship in the mission of God.
- The history, and fruit, associated with 2000 years of witness.
- The meaning of the church especially the strong emphasis on 'community.'

- Biblical values related to social and moral issues.

And what can Catholics learn from Evangelicals? Dr. Robert Stackpole, a Catholic theologian and writer has identified at least four, all of which also contribute to a stronger missional focus.⁸⁹

- The primacy of grace
- The privileged expression of divine revelation in Holy Scripture...Many of our Evangelical friends...expect to find the light, the active guidance, and the living voice of the Spirit of the Lord whenever they sincerely and prayerfully read its pages. We should foster a similar attitude to the Bible—an attitude that is very much a part of our heritage too as Catholics.⁹⁰
- The fullness of a ‘personal’ relationship with Jesus Christ.
- A passion for evangelism. Catholics can learn more effective means of witnessing to Christ in the world, and gain a more heartfelt zeal for bringing lost souls to the love of Jesus Christ, through frequent contact with Evangelicals, and by sharing (to some extent) in missionary endeavors with them as our brothers and sisters in Christ.⁹¹

The possibilities for missional engagement are extensive. However, a point of focus is that of evangelism, or as identified within the Catholic realm, the New Evangelization. Since Pope John Paul II there has been a call for renewal in evangelism in reaching out to not only those without any faith, but also to those under the Catholic umbrella who are inactive in their faith, and perhaps without a meaningful relationship with Jesus Christ.

That New Evangelization has been echoed by Catholic writer George Weigel. Writing to Catholics in *Evangelical Catholicism*, but indirectly to all believers in Christ, he is passionate in calling Christians to engage fully in the call to evangelize the world. “Being a Christian—being an evangelical Catholic—is a full-time occupation, according to John Paul II. The Church cannot evangelize or sanctify the world if the Church is imagined to be a kind of clerical game preserve into which the laity are occasionally permitted entry in order to observe what’s going on. No, the Church is every baptized Christian, and every one of those baptized Christians is called to both holiness and mission. To foster that holiness among laypeople, and to serve and empower that lay mission, is the task of those in Holy Orders. The mission, however, is for everyone.”⁹²

The mission is for everyone, and given the importance, there is value in efforts aimed at working together in a cooperative spirit. In a past Evangelical and Catholics Together meeting, Cardinal Edward Cassidy, then president of the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, spoke in support of Evangelicals and Catholics sharing the gospel with each other, especially with those who were nominal in either camp, because, “It is far more important for one truly to know Jesus and find salvation in him than to belong without conviction to any community.”⁹³

One fascinating story of crossover is that of David Bjork, an evangelical, sent by the Missionary Church to establish an evangelical church in France, a nation with much of its religious roots in Catholicism, albeit it somewhat nominal today. Rather than establishing an evangelical church, he spent twenty plus years working in Catholic parishes to help Catholics deepen their own faith and ecclesial life.⁹⁴ Perhaps there are many other creative ways in which Catholics and Evangelicals can work together.

It is a new day where Catholics and Evangelicals are invited into relationships marked more by ‘trust’ than by ‘suspicion.’ And it is out of dialogue that missional expression takes shape. God bless as you discuss missional engagement possibilities.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

One: In reading through the Introductory Overview what most caught your attention and why? What were you most drawn to?

Two: As a group, take inventory of where Catholics and Evangelicals are already working together. What is happening in your community that you know about?

Three: The biblical mandate for missional engagement can be found from Genesis to Revelation. As you consider the following biblical passages, is there a verse or a phrase that most inspires you for that outward focus? If so, what is it about the verse that inspires you?

- Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age. Matthew 28:19-20
- We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:20-21
- May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us—so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations. - Psalm 67:1-2

Four: The Holy Spirit is a key player in missional activity. In Acts 1:8, the resurrected Jesus Christ said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Where do you see evidence of the Holy Spirit's work? Or is the Holy Spirit somewhat unknown, the silent third person of the Trinity?

Five: Below are several quotes, all related to missional engagement. Which one most captures your attention and why?

- God is calling an army, not an audience. John Wimber⁹⁵
- Missional engagement is a nobody telling everybody about somebody that can change anybody.
- One individual, with a heart for reaching out to others, would always sign her emails with the words, "Your Fellow Candle."
- The enthusiasm of the kingdom is missing because there is so little enthusiasm for the King. Andrew Murray⁹⁶
- From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to 'evangelize' and to lead others to the 'yes' of faith in Jesus Christ. Catechism⁹⁷
- A missionary is not someone who lives outside the boundaries of their own country for Christ, but someone who lives outside the boundaries of their own self for Christ.
- We face a humanity that is too precious to neglect. We know a remedy for the ills of the world too wonderful to withhold. We have a Christ who is too glorious to hide. We have an adventure that is too thrilling to miss. Theodore Williams⁹⁸
- Evangelical Catholicism is thus unapologetically missionary Catholicism. The evangelical Catholic—lay disciple, priest or bishop, consecrated religious—sees every venue of his or her life as an evangelical opportunity. George Weigel⁹⁹

Six: Given the missional theme, is there anything that you as an individual or as a group aspire to do in promoting Catholic-Evangelical dialogue and missional engagement? What are some next steps?

Seven: As you conclude this dialogue, what has been one major take-away or blessing for you?

Conclude the meeting with prayer

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Endnotes

¹ Evangelicals are estimated to number around 500 million represented through a multiplicity of denominations and churches. Operation World, online, suggests Evangelicals number around 545 million. The World Evangelical Alliance has the estimate at 600 million. Others would provide a narrower definition of Evangelicals, with a lower estimate of around 300 million. Common points of emphases included scripture, salvation, Christ, and evangelism. Some of the many Canadian evangelical entities include the Alliance, Baptists, Mennonites, and Pentecostals.

² The Roman Catholic Church is the oldest and largest social institution in the world. Approximately 1.2 billion people identify with Roman Catholicism, with the pope as the primary spokesperson for the Church.

³ Augustine, quoted by David Bryant, *Christ is All!* (New Providence: New Providence Publishers, 2004), 45.

⁴ Line used by Dr. Jack McGorman, in a class on Galatians, at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth Texas.

⁵ International Consultation between the Catholic Church and the World Evangelical Alliance, 2002, "Church, Evangelization, and the Bonds of Koinonia," 9.

⁶ Email observation from Father Bernard de Margerie, of Saskatoon, Canada.

⁷ Potential contributions as cited by Dr. Robert Stackpole, a Catholic writer.

⁸ Reginald Bibby, *A New Day. The Resilience and Restructuring of Religion in Canada*. Available in e-book format, complimentary, at Project Canada Books.

⁹ Wikipedia, "Christianity in the United States" at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_the_United_States.

¹⁰ This short document outlines common points of faith, differences, and missional opportunities. Though the language is different, the outline of this study discussion guide largely follows section two of *Called to Common Witness*. For those interested in receiving a copy, please email strauss.harry@gmail.com.

¹¹ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over? An Evangelical Assessment of Contemporary Roman Catholicism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2005), Kindle location 1272.

¹² Jack van Impe quoted in *Will Catholics be Left Behind*, Kindle location, 1852.

¹³ The *Catechism* merits reading, not only by Catholics, but equally by Evangelicals. Copies can be purchased online or through most good book stores. The full *Catechism* can also be found online at www.vatican.va. At the web site, language option is at the upper right-hand corner. The Search will take one to the *Catechism*, Table of Contents, with each topic linked.

¹⁴ The *Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith* can be found online. With the balance of the footnotes, this source will simply be referenced as the *MB Confession*.

¹⁵ *MB Confession*, Article 2, "Revelation of God."

¹⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 135. With the balance of the footnotes, this source will simply be referenced as *Catechism*.

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- ¹⁷ Question was raised by Father De Margerie of Saskatoon.
- ¹⁸ Ralph Del Colle, *Talking with Evangelicals, A Guide for Catholics* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), 78.
- ¹⁹ At least such is my observation with Catholic churches in my community
- ²⁰ *Catechism*, 125.
- ²¹ Note 2 Thessalonians 2:15, “So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.” Some would suggest the word ‘traditions’ for ‘teachings.’
- ²² *Catechism*, 78.
- ²³ *Catechism*, 81.
- ²⁴ Clearly, the writings of the apostles, though not immediately recognized as canonical, were recognized and valued. Of interest is the following quote from Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165). “And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostle or the writings of the prophets are read.” Quoted by Norman Geisler and Ralph Mackenzie, *Romans Catholics and Evangelicals. Agreements and Differences* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 31.
- ²⁵ Comments in this vein can be found in *Is the Reformation Over*, Kindle location 1881.
- ²⁶ In 1546 the Council of Trent pronounced these books as canonical. Part of the argument for inclusion is the suggestion that they were part of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). In contrast Protestants base their Old Testament on the Palestinian canon.
- ²⁷ *Catechism*, 133.
- ²⁸ George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism. Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church* (New York: Basic Books, 2013), Kindle location 1161.
- ²⁹ *Catechism*, 553.
- ³⁰ This paragraph quotes, somewhat verbatim, from the *MB Confession of Faith*. Article 6, “Nature of the Church.”
- ³¹ From Norman Geisler and Ralph Mackenzie, *Romans Catholics and Evangelicals. Agreements and Differences* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 115.
- ³² *Catechism*, 818.
- ³³ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location 1614.
- ³⁴ Question posed by William Shea, and quoted in Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location 2765.
- ³⁵ *Catechism*, 749.
- ³⁶ *Catechism*, 852.
- ³⁷ *Catechism* 397.
- ³⁸ *Catechism*, 457.
- ³⁹ *Catechism*, 387.
- ⁴⁰ *MB Confession*, Article 4, “Sin and Evil.”
- ⁴¹ *Catechism*, 1035.
- ⁴² With the sacrament of reconciliation, a Catholic believer can confess sins to a Catholic priest who grants absolution.
- ⁴³ *Catechism* 452.
- ⁴⁴ “The Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification” (1999/2000), Section 3: “The Common Understanding of Justification,” Paragraph 15.
- ⁴⁵ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location 1558.
- ⁴⁶ *Talking with Evangelicals* has a section entitled “Eternal Salvation as Evangelical Certainty and as Catholic Hope,” p.63.
- ⁴⁷ Ralph del Colle, *Talking with Evangelicals*, pp 6-7.
- ⁴⁸ *Joint Declaration on Justification*, from paragraph 15.
- ⁴⁹ Father Dimitri Sala, *The Stained-Glass Curtain: Crossing the Evangelical-Catholic Divide to Find Our Common Heritage*, (Lake Mary: Creation House, 2010), Kindle 736.
- ⁵⁰ *Catechism*, 613.
- ⁵¹ *Catechism*, 425.
- ⁵² *Catechism*, 429.
- ⁵³ *Catechism*, 432.
- ⁵⁴ *Catechism*, 1131, 1133.
- ⁵⁵ *Catechism*, 1123.
- ⁵⁶ *MB Confession*, Article 8, “Christian Baptism.”
- ⁵⁷ *MB Confession*, Article 8, “Christian Baptism.”
- ⁵⁸ *Catechism*, 1214.
- ⁵⁹ *Catechism*, 1213.
- ⁶⁰ *Catechism*, 1257.
- ⁶¹ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location 1514.
- ⁶² *Catechism*, 1992.
- ⁶³ Dr. Robert Stackpole. “How Are We Saved by God’s Merciful Love?” Article can be found online.
- ⁶⁴ *Catechism*, 1271.
- ⁶⁵ *Catholicism for Dummies*, 108.
- ⁶⁶ *Catechism*, 1237.
- ⁶⁷ *Catholicism for Dummies*, 113.

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- ⁶⁸ *Catechism*, 2157.
- ⁶⁹ *Catholicism for Dummies*, 118.
- ⁷⁰ *Catechism*, 1376.
- ⁷¹ St. Irenaeus, *Catechism*, 1327.
- ⁷² *Southern Baptist Statement of Beliefs*. Available online.
- ⁷³ *MB Confession*, Article 9, The Lord's Supper.
- ⁷⁴ *MB Confession*, Article 9, The Lord's Supper.
- ⁷⁵ It should be noted that there are some exceptions, where Evangelicals are welcome to participate.
- ⁷⁶ *Catechism*, 1400.
- ⁷⁷ One Catholic believer indicated that her priest said that it would be best for her to not participate in Communion at an Evangelical church.
- ⁷⁸ The mishap, a true story, occurred at Holy Cross Church in Regina, during the 1960's.
- ⁷⁹ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location 1597.
- ⁸⁰ Quote used by Dr. Jack McGorman, Southwestern Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas.
- ⁸¹ Pope Paul VI, *Catechism*, 962.
- ⁸² *Catechism*, 2683.
- ⁸³ Catholics are very explicit on this. Take for example a quote from *Catholicism for Dummies*: "Mary and the canonized saints of the Church are not objects of worship (which would be idolatry—something condemned by the First Commandment)," page 20.
- ⁸⁴ *Catechism*, 956.
- ⁸⁵ *Catechism*, 956.
- ⁸⁶ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location L120. The story behind this quote is that when John F. Kennedy ran for president of the U.S. in 1960, there was concern that as a Catholic president, the pope would potentially have input into the affairs of the U.S. In that presidential campaign, he made a speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association (September 12, 1960), that clearly articulated separation between church and state. That speech can be viewed on YouTube.
- ⁸⁷ Reginal Bibby, *A New Day*.
- ⁸⁸ It should be noted that some of the thoughts were reinforced, or sourced, from a presentation by Dr. Gordon Smith, April 30, 2015, Saskatoon. The topic was "What Can Evangelicals Learn from Believing Catholics?"
- ⁸⁹ Dr. Robert Stackpole, *"Reflections on the Theological and Spiritual Identity of Redeemer Pacific College."*
- ⁹⁰ Ibid, Dr. Stackpole.
- ⁹¹ Ibid, Dr. Stackpole.
- ⁹² George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism. Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church* (Basic Books: New York, 2013), Kindle location 3518.
- ⁹³ Mark Noll and Carolyn Nystrom, *Is the Reformation Over?* Kindle location 1788.
- ⁹⁴ Thomas Rausch (ed.), *Catholics and Evangelicals: Do They Share a Common Future?* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), Kindle 165.
- ⁹⁵ John Wimber, *Signs and Wonders Syllabus*, 229.
- ⁹⁶ Andrew Murray, *Key to the Missionary Problem* (Fort Washington: Christian Literature Crusade, 1979), 7.
- ⁹⁷ *Catechism*, 429.
- ⁹⁸ Theodore Williams, quoted in David Bryant, *In the Gap* (Madison: Inter-varsity Missions, 1979), 129.
- ⁹⁹ George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism. Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church* (Basic Books: New York, 2013), Kindle location 1038.
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