
PROCLAIMING JESUS CHRIST

*Catholic and Evangelical
Perspectives on Evangelization*



edited by
Steven Hoskins *and* Christian D. Washburn



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Dedicated to Fr. Walter Kedjierski

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Foreword

THIS IS THE THIRD VOLUME to be published as the fruit of the ongoing National Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue. In the first book, *Justified in Jesus Christ: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue*, Christians from various faith traditions reflected on the nature of soteriology and justification. Subsequent rounds of conversations gave rise to the second book, *Walking with Jesus Christ: Catholic and Evangelical Visions of the Moral Life*, in which the group wrestled with many contested questions about the nature of the human person and the moral consequences of our life in Christ.

In this third book, *Proclaiming Jesus Christ: Catholic and Evangelical Perspectives on Evangelization*, the group examines various issues that arise from the Great Commission that was given us by Jesus Christ. How can we best proclaim the good news of the love that God has shown us in his incarnate Son, to a world that desperately needs to hear this kerygma, this good news that will thoroughly transform the hearts and minds of all who dare to embrace it? Many of us, Evangelicals and Catholics together, strive to find ways to proclaim the living Christ anew to those whose ears have been deafened by the din of secular ideologies.

As is typical of ecumenical dialogues that are undertaken with honesty and good will, the participants of the National Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue discerned many moments of profound agreement, of shared joy in the Risen Christ, moments that were sometimes surprising and energizing, while still acknowledging, with clarity and charity, those positions that still keep us from perfect unity.

This text is the work of many gifted and dedicated persons. Although the contributors to this volume—pastors, theologians, and other scholars—strive to work as faithful leaders within their

respective ecclesial traditions, they speak here for themselves, and not in any official capacity for their affiliated institutions or faith communities. The members of the dialogue hope this book will provide a fruitful starting point for future conversations between Evangelicals and Catholics as we strive together to proclaim Christ to the world.

We would like to thank all those who have made this work possible. We are most grateful for the hospitality extended to us by The Saint Paul Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and for the invaluable support offered by the Rector there, the Reverend Joseph C. Taphorn, JCL. We also wish to thank the following for their invaluable assistance in fostering this ongoing dialogue and for helping to prepare this work for publication: Gretchen K. Washburn, Kathryn Wehr, Erika Zabinski, Sibyl Niemann, and Judy Gilats.

May the Lord bless all of us, writers and readers of this book, as we continue this dialogue and work together toward a deeper unity between us, a unity that will bear witness to the life of Christ within each of us. May the world look upon our work and exclaim: “Behold how these Christians love one another!”

Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert

Bishop, Allentown, PA

*U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee for Ecumenical
and Interreligious Affairs*

Catholic Chair

Reverend Bruce N. G. Cromwell, PhD

Superintendent, Central Region Conference

Free Methodist Church–USA

Protestant Chair

Evangelization and Friendship

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:19–20).

THIS BOOK, *Proclaiming Jesus Christ: Catholic and Evangelical Visions of Evangelization*, is the fruit of the National Evangelical-Catholic Dialogue’s common commitment to Jesus Christ and a desire to fulfill his Great Commission to the church at the end of his earthly ministry. The common statements are indicative of our shared commitment to evangelization, even if we sometimes have understood this commitment and how it is to be achieved differently. As in the last round of the dialogue on the moral life, there was an exciting amount of convergence. That convergence and the shared vision of evangelism among our communions is, in many ways, indicative of where the dialogue has come after many years together and the common commitment we share to the Gospel.

This dialogue began as a regional Evangelical-Catholic dialogue in 1993. For many years this dialogue gathered for annual meetings, discussing a new topic every year. In 2014, the dialogue made the decision to move to the format of having “rounds,” i.e., a series of annual meetings focused on a particular topic, and that has helped the dialogue mature in its common work and proven productive in issuing common statements and books that reflect the dialogue’s proceedings and the papers given.

In the first round, lasting from 2014 to 2017, the dialogue took up the issue of justification. Each year some aspect of the doctrine of

justification was examined. These meetings were held on the campus of the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND. The result was our first volume, *Justified in Jesus Christ: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue*, which was published in 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.¹

In 2017, the dialogue moved back to The Saint Paul Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN, the original site of its beginnings. The dialogue decided to discuss the moral life for its second round, which lasted from 2017 to 2021. The topic was chosen because the dialogue members hoped that there would be significant convergences on the issue between Catholics and Evangelicals, and indeed there were. Those many convergences reflected the commitment of Evangelicals and Catholics to faithfully adhere to the word of God and make faithful Christian disciples. The fruit of this dialogue was *Walking with Jesus Christ: Catholic and Evangelical Visions of the Moral Life*, published in 2024.²

After the successful completion of that round, the dialogue decided that the topic of the third round would be evangelization. Again, we hoped that there would be significant points of convergence. In three meetings held at The Saint Paul Seminary, the dialogue discussed three aspects of evangelization: evangelization and doctrine (spring 2023), evangelization and salvation (fall 2023), and evangelization and culture (fall 2024). At each of these meetings, both Evangelical and Catholic members presented background papers on that meeting's topic. These formed the basis of that meeting's discussion and served as the starting point for constructing a common statement presenting points of convergence and divergence.

The Catholic essays offered during this round of the dialogue begin with the contributions of Catholic theologians Daniel Keating and Christian D. Washburn, who examine the nature of evangelization and the role of doctrine in it (spring 2023). Michael Sirilla and Mary Healy then examine evangelization and salvation as presented in

1. Steven Hoskins and David Fleischacker, eds., *Justified in Jesus Christ: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue* (University of Mary Press, 2017).

2. Steven Hoskins and Christian D. Washburn, eds., *Walking with Jesus Christ: Catholic and Evangelical Visions of the Moral Life* (Saint Paul Seminary Press, 2024).

Scripture and the doctrine of the Catholic Church (fall 2023). Finally, Daniel Keating and William Stevenson discuss what “culture” is and what it means to evangelize in a particular cultural context (2024).

The Evangelical essays presented to the group begin with the contribution of Evangelical theologians Gregg Allison and M. William Ury, who jointly discuss what evangelization is and the interaction between evangelization and doctrine from their denomination’s perspective (2023). Dennis Jowers next discusses the destiny of the unevangelized from a Reformed perspective, and Alex Mayfield provides a Pentecostal perspective on justification and evangelization (2023). Finally, Dean Erickson and Steve Hoskins discuss evangelization and culture from the perspectives of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Wesleyan tradition (2024).

The Catholic participants were chaired by the Most Reverend David Kagan, Bishop of the Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota (2023) and the Most Rev. Alfred A. Schlert, Bishop of Allentown (2024). Reverend Walter F. Kedjierski, Executive Director of the Secretariat of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs for the USCCB, was an encouraging and insightful presence. The Evangelicals were chaired by Bruce Cromwell, Superintendent of the Central Region Conference of the Free Methodist Church, with participants coming from a variety of Evangelical churches and communions throughout the United States.

This book is the fruit of the work on the round on evangelization and the many years we have worked together to achieve common understanding. It is composed in the same format as its two predecessors. This book contains the convergence statements drafted at the end of each meeting, followed by the background papers that formed the basis for the discussion that led to the convergence statement. The book also includes a list of those who participated in the dialogue in the three sessions from 2023–2024.

As was noted in our first volume, “Christian dialogue, especially ecumenical dialogue, is a testament to friendship.”³ Our dialogue

3. Steven Hoskins, “A Dialogue in Testament to Friendship,” in *Justified in Jesus Christ: Evangelicals and Catholics in Dialogue*, 5.

is not an ecumenism of hate; instead, it springs from the common belief that Christ is Lord and that he desires that “all Christians be one” (John 17:21). This firm conviction leads our members to undertake ecumenical dialogue as a means to this end. Through dialogue and prayer, the members of the dialogue over the years have become friends. The friendship we share in the happiness of ecumenical work has built up the conditions for deeper dialogue and sharing the concerns and commitments among us as we share Christ with the world. As a result, we are able to recognize significant convergences in the arena of evangelization and offer them here in a humble spirit, thankful for the work we are called to in him.

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