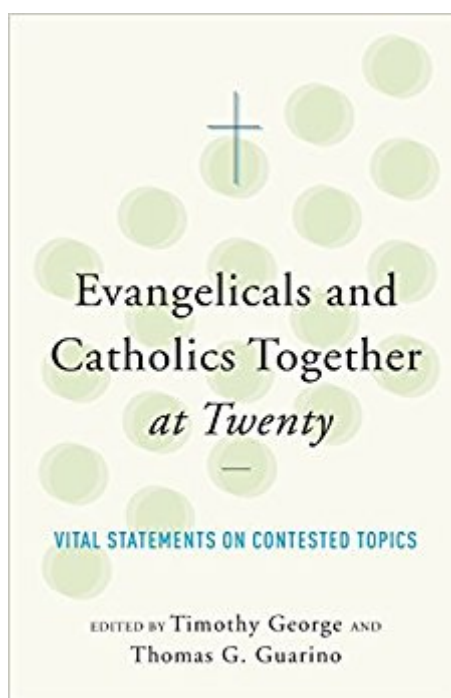


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# Evangelicals And Catholics Together At Twenty: Vital Statements On Contested Topics



## Synopsis

Founded by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus in 1994, Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) has fostered a fruitful conversation on the meaning of the gospel in today's world. Over the course of twenty years, ECT has issued nine statements addressing contemporary topics. This one-volume guide, the first collection of the ECT statements, explores the key accomplishments of this groundbreaking, ongoing dialogue. Introductions and notes provide context and discuss history and future prospects. The book also includes prefaces by J. I. Packer and Cardinal Timothy Dolan, a foreword by George Weigel, and an epilogue by R. R. Reno and Kevin J. Vanhoozer.

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## Customer Reviews

A "unique witness to faith-filled dialogue"Founded by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus in 1994, Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) has fostered a fruitful conversation on the meaning of the gospel in today's world. Over the course of twenty years, ECT has issued nine statements addressing contemporary topics. This one-volume guide, the first collection of the ECT statements, explores the key accomplishments of this groundbreaking, ongoing dialogue. Introductions and notes provide context and discuss history and future prospects. The book also includes prefaces by J. I. Packer and Cardinal Timothy Dolan, a foreword by George Weigel, and an epilogue by R. R. Reno and Kevin J. Vanhoozer."These statements and their accompanying essays deserve a wide and attentive readership because of both the pertinence of their concerns and the sophistication of their theological argument. This volume reflects ecumenical writing done at

a superior level."--Lawrence S. Cunningham, University of Notre Dame"Evangelicals and Catholics Together continues to make a very positive contribution to Christian theology, moral action, and ecumenical integrity. While its independent, noninstitutional, and ad hoc way of working is distinctly American, the fruits of its labors offer a great, ongoing gift to the entire Christian world."--Mark A. Noll, coauthor of *Is the Reformation Over?*"It is wonderful to have these ecumenically rich and theologically substantive statements gathered into a single volume, which is further enhanced by helpful and insightful introductions to each of the nine statements as well as a general introduction and epilogue that set the context and foster ongoing discernment. This unique witness to faith-filled dialogue not only enlightens but also inspires and emboldens. Such witness takes on even greater urgency in a contemporary culture increasingly adrift."--Fr. Robert Imbelli, Boston College

Timothy George (ThD, Harvard University) is founding dean and professor of divinity, history, and doctrine at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama. He has authored or edited numerous books. Thomas G. Guarino (STD, Catholic University of America) is professor of systematic theology at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

A must read for both evangelicals and Catholics. Well written and an important step forward for the Church.

This book is a compendium of the nine joint statements published by the ecumenical dialogue team called Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT). It's an excellent single-volume testament, if you will, of the painstaking work by this group of serious theologians on areas of agreement, as well as on those issues that continue to divide Evangelical Christians and Catholics. When this project started twenty years ago, who could have imagined the depth and breadth of these discussions, to say nothing of their longevity. In those days, it seemed that "ground zero" for ecumenical dialogue was between the mainline churches and Rome (or between Rome and the Orthodox churches). Well, those discussions have all but ground to a halt due to a seeming lack of interest on the part of the Protestants. That's because they have become transfixed with women's ordination, abortion, gay marriage, gay ordination, and an ever growing list of "social justice" issues, to include denunciations of "white male privilege," etc. As an indication of how the dialogue is going between the Catholic Church and the Lutheran World Federation - once a promising endeavor - their combined website hasn't been updated in two years. These ECT visionaries knew that there was far more in common with each other than that which divided them - despite the occasional hyperbolic screeds from both

traditions to the contrary. They have harnessed their intellectual prowess to "bravely go where no man has gone before." I thoroughly recommend this book. It's easy to read, yet challenging no matter where you stand on the ecclesiastical spectrum. May the work of ECT continue for another twenty years and beyond. Great work Timothy George and Thomas Guarino.

Over twenty years ago, a group of Evangelicals and Catholics have come together to dialogue on the common matters of faith. Founded by Charles Colson and Richard John Neuhaus in 1994, the Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT) produced nine statements of faith. The key aim is to affirm that while they do have serious differences in belief, they too have lots of common ground. Together, they believe that: They have more in common than differences They desire a deepening understanding of each other They want to demonstrate what it means to tolerate differences They want to re-examine at why certain issues are so difficult to resolve They want to champion religious freedom through mature dialogue They can encourage deeper theological discussions so that both parties can learn from one another. They can engage the culture, society, political, and social strata. In this book, three themes form the basis of dialogue: The content of the Christian faith The place of Scripture and Tradition Ecclesial Reform Each of the nine statements of faith are accompanied by an essay written by a respected theologian. On "Unity," Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School writes about the project as an initiative that represents a group of individuals rather than the institutions they represent. On "Justification," Thomas Oden compares and contrasts the two sides' interpretations of justification by faith alone. Rather than getting stuck on the nitty gritty of faith and works, the common motivation is to preach the gospel to all who have not heard about the grace of God. On "Scripture," Thomas Guarino, Professor of Systematic Theology at Seton Hall University, expand on the points of agreement with regard to how Scripture and Tradition inform each other. On "Saints," Robert Louis Wilken looks at the people of God, the communion of saints, and calls this a "treasured inheritance" of both Evangelicals and Catholics. On "Holiness," Cheryl Bridges Johns sees the common interests in God; in being the image of God; in discipleship; and a call to holy living. On "Pro-Life," RR Reno emphasizes the sanctity of life. On "Mary," Dale Coulter highlights some misconceptions while at the same time brings out the concerns of the Marian dogma. On "Freedom," George Weigel agrees that religious freedom is increasingly being threatened. On "Marriage," Timothy George and Thomas Guarino tackle the difficult issue of same-sex marriage and together agree on a common definition of what marriage is and what it is not. Since the beginning of the ECT initiative, there has been lots of suspicion with regard to the potential of ecumenism. Suspicions range from theological compromise to the fear of

one bloc dominating or controlling the other. There are valid reasons to protest against the ECT. Yet, there are also equally valid reasons to expand on the common grounds of understanding. If there are areas that can be agreed upon and cooperated with, why not? In general, there are two ways in which to adopt such theological discussions. The first is to major on the differences and minor on the similarities. This first way will keep both parties entrenched in their own views. This way, it is very hard to even begin a proper discussion. The second way is to major on the commonalities and be mindful of the differences. This is the way of the ECT. I remember evangelical missionaries in poorer countries telling me about them being forced to work with Roman Catholics simply because the authorities of the land had lumped them together under the Christianity umbrella. Usually, the atheistic and secular governments do not understand the differences between the two anyway. Being forced to speak as one voice, they had to do whatever is necessary to survive together. Otherwise, everyone will be put to various forms of persecutions and difficulties. When the going gets rough, a united front is the way to go. Maybe, theologians and religious scholars who argue without compromise may have taken their freedom of expression and religious practice for granted. In the real world, sometimes we do not really have a choice whether to work together or not. Circumstances can make strange bedfellows. Maybe, the ECT is a precursor of the need to prepare for persecutions that are to come. When those times arrive, we have ready documents to immediately begin cooperation based on our common beliefs first. For the sake of the gospel. Rating: 4.25 stars of 5. conrade This book is provided to me courtesy of Brazos Press and Graf-Martin Communications in exchange for an honest review. All opinions offered above are mine unless otherwise stated or implied.

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