

# Dr. Roger Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 27, Modern Theologies Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 27, Modern Theologies, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

**Dr. Roger Green's lecture**, part of a church history course titled "Reformation to the Present," **focuses on modern theologies**. The session **begins with reflections on a Catholic pronouncement** and then **shifts to the relationship between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism**, highlighting historical changes like Vatican II and the ecumenical movement. Green **explores the reasons behind evangelical movement** toward Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, contrasting this with the opposite trend in South America. The lecture **concludes by examining different approaches to world religions** (exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism) and **analyzing contemporary theological movements** such as neo-conservatism, theologies of hope and liberation, pluralism, and evangelicalism, offering some critical perspectives on these trends.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 27 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History → Reformation to the Present).**



**Green\_ReftoPres\_Se  
ssion27.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 27, Modern Theologies

Briefing Document: Modern Theologies and Protestant-Catholic Dialogue

#### Main Themes:

- **The Ongoing Dialogue Between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism:** This lecture focuses significantly on the historical and current state of dialogue between these two major Christian traditions, highlighting both persistent differences and areas of growing understanding.
- **Theological Movements in the Modern Era:** The lecture briefly touches upon various theological movements shaping contemporary Christian thought, including a "new conservatism," theologies of hope, theologies of liberation, and pluralism, alongside the enduring influence of evangelicalism.
- **Approaches to Other World Religions:** Dr. Green outlines three common Christian approaches to understanding and relating to other religious traditions: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism.
- **The Nature and Importance of Christian Theology Today:** While initially skipped, the lecture returns to discuss the characteristics of modern theology, its potential pitfalls, and the enduring principles that should guide theological reflection.

#### Key Ideas and Facts:

##### 1. Protestantism and Roman Catholicism: Dialogue and Change:

- **Historical Attitudes and Persistent Differences:** Dr. Green reiterates long-standing points of contention between Protestants and Catholics, such as:
  - The authority of Scripture versus Scripture and Tradition.
  - The place of Mary.
  - The role of the Pope.
  - The canon of Scripture.
- *"So, there have been these kinds of differences of opinion between Protestants and Roman Catholics that they've had to kind of come to grips with."*
- **Historic Changes Fostering Dialogue:** Four major shifts are identified:

- **Vatican II (1962-1965):** This council "radically changed the Roman Catholic Church" and moved it "closer to Protestantism." Dr. Green recounts the anecdote of Pope John XXIII initially seen as a "caretaker pope" whose calling of Vatican II surprised many.
- **Election of John F. Kennedy:** The election of the first Roman Catholic president of the US "changed things remarkably and opened up, in a sense, a better understanding of what Roman Catholicism is all about" for Protestants.
- **Ecumenism in the Trenches:** This refers to the discovery of "common moral and ethical values" leading to mutual support on issues like "the value of marriage and family," "abortion," and the "repudiation of pornography and the sex trade."
- **Evangelicals Moving to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy:** Dr. Green notes a significant trend of evangelicals being "attracted to the tradition" and "worship experience" of these older traditions, citing the long history and "drama of worship" as potential factors. He also contrasts this with the reverse trend in South America, where Catholics are joining evangelical and Pentecostal churches.
- **Nature of the Dialogues:** Roman Catholics have engaged in dialogues with a broad range of Protestant denominations, including Anglicans, Lutherans (despite Martin Luther's excommunication and criticisms), and even Seventh-day Adventists (despite seemingly limited common ground).
- **Continued Agreements and Disagreements (Impasses):** While dialogue continues, certain issues remain points of significant divergence:
- **Mary:** Dr. Green believes "Catholics have made too much of Mary. Protestants have made too little of Mary."
- **Authority:** Protestants hold to *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone), while Catholics affirm Scripture and Tradition. This is seen as unlikely to change.
- **Structure of the Church:** The Catholic Church claims its hierarchical structure originates from the early church with Peter as the first Pope, a view Protestants reject.
- **Basic Practices:** Examples include the celibacy of the priesthood (with noted exceptions for some Anglican converts) and the ordination of women (practiced by some but not all Protestant denominations and not by the Catholic Church).
- **Sacraments:** Disagreement persists over the number (two for most Protestants, seven for Catholics) and the nature of the sacraments.

- **Institutional Implications (Gordon College Example):** The differing views on authority create practical challenges, exemplified by the policy at Gordon College where full-time professors are required to sign a doctrinal statement affirming the sole authority of Scripture, thus precluding serious Roman Catholics who adhere to Tradition as a co-equal authority.

## 2. Three Approaches to Other World Religions:

- **Exclusivism:** "Only those people who hear and respond to the gospel will be saved." This view does not readily acknowledge potential salvific work of God outside of explicit Christian faith.
- **Inclusivism:** While "Christianity represents the normative revelation of God in Christ for the salvation of all people," inclusivism allows that "it's possible that if they believe in God and live according to the light that God has given them by his preeminent grace, they will come unto salvation" even without hearing the Gospel.
- **Pluralism:** "All religions are equally valid" paths to God, suggesting that one should not necessarily choose one religion over another. Dr. Green notes Paul Tillich's later theological conclusion aligning with pluralism.
- **Critique of Pluralism (John Cobb):** Dr. Green discusses John Cobb's "Christ in a Pluralistic Age," where Cobb argues that "the Christ spirit was in Jesus, but no more so in Jesus than the Christ spirit was in maybe in Gandhi... or in Hindu gods and goddesses... or in Confucius... or in the Islamic religion, in Muhammad." Dr. Green expresses his disagreement with this view.

## 3. The Nature of Christian Theology Today (E4):

- **The New Conservatism (Post-1976):** Marked by the election of Jimmy Carter ("the year of the evangelical"), this movement represents a "marriage" of preaching the gospel and social ministry, drawing inspiration from figures like Finney and emphasizing the integration of love for God and neighbor (Matthew 22).
- **Theologies of Hope (Jürgen Moltmann):** Moltmann's work, exemplified by "The Theology of Hope," involves "a rethinking of the whole of theology from the standpoint of eschatology, not as an end, but as hope, as the future of God, and thereby our future." This perspective shifts theological focus from restoring a past Eden to the anticipation of a "whole new heaven and a new earth."

- **Theologies of Liberation:** These interpret theology through the lens of liberation for specific groups. Examples include:
- **Black Theology (James Cone):** Interpreting the Exodus narrative as a central experience of liberation for the black community.
- **Theology of Liberation (Gustavo Gutiérrez):** Focusing on care for the poor and marginalized, originating in South America.
- **Feminist Theology (Early Mary Daly):** Initially focused on reinterpreting biblical language for women, but later, in figures like Mary Daly, becoming radically anti-Christian and moving towards "new age" spirituality.
- **Pluralism (Revisited):** The presence of pluralistic perspectives within Christian theology, as seen in John Cobb's work.
- **Evangelicalism (Alastair McGrath):** McGrath's "Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity" portrays evangelicalism as a significant hope for the future of the church in engaging with the contemporary world and proclaiming the Gospel.
- **Criticisms of Modern Theologies: "Theology of the Month Club":** The concern that theological trends might be too driven by cultural shifts rather than a consistent, biblically grounded approach.
- **Moving Away from Biblical Grounding:** Some theologies, even those starting with biblical foundations, may drift away from seeing the Bible as a unique revelation of God.
- **Moving Away from Christological Grounding:** A similar concern that theologies may lose their central focus on Christ, as seen in the shift in John Cobb's writings.
- **Anti-Christian Movements:** Some movements, like the later work of Mary Daly, can become explicitly opposed to Christian faith.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks on Studying Theology:

- Employ the method of analyzing **people, ideas, and events** to understand theological developments.
- Historically, significant theologians often had a strong **pastoral sense**, aiming to serve the people in the church, a trend that Dr. Green laments has diminished in some academic circles today.

- Appreciate the **grand sweep of theological development** from the Reformation to the present.
- Maintain **Christ as the center of theology**, using a Christological lens for theological reflection.
- Formulate personal theology within the **context of the church community**, not in isolation.
- Recognize that **theology must be reinterpreted in every generation** to remain relevant and understood.

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and ideas presented in Dr. Green's lecture on Modern Theologies and the dialogue between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. It includes direct quotes to illustrate specific points and highlights the lecturer's personal perspectives and concerns regarding contemporary theological trends.

## 4. Study Guide: Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 27, Modern Theologies

Modern Theologies: A Study Guide

### Quiz:

1. What was the significance of December 8th, 1854, according to the lecture?
2. Name two of the questions that arose as Protestants and Roman Catholics historically viewed each other.
3. Identify two of the four major historic changes that have shaped the Roman Catholic and Protestant dialogue since Vatican II.
4. What is "ecumenism in the trenches," and provide one example given in the lecture?
5. According to the lecturer, what are two potential reasons why some evangelicals are moving towards Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy?
6. Describe the differing trends in religious conversion between the Western world and South America as mentioned in the lecture.
7. Name two specific Protestant denominations that the Roman Catholic Church has engaged in dialogue with, besides Anglicans.
8. What are the fundamental differences between Protestant and Roman Catholic views on the authority for Christian faith and practice?
9. Briefly explain the three approaches to other world religions discussed in the lecture.
10. What was the lecturer's main criticism of the "Theology of the Month Club" concept?

### Quiz Answer Key:

1. December 8th, 1854, was the day the Roman Catholic Church proclaimed the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This was highlighted as an important historical pronouncement by the Catholic Church.
2. Two questions that arose historically include the authority of scripture compared to tradition for Roman Catholics, and the place of Mary in Protestantism versus

her place in the Roman Catholic Church. Other examples include the role of the Pope and the understanding of the canon of scripture.

3. Two major historic changes are Vatican II (1962-1965), which moved the Catholic Church closer to Protestantism, and the election of John F. Kennedy as the first Roman Catholic president of the United States, which fostered better understanding.
4. "Ecumenism in the trenches" refers to the finding of common moral and ethical values between different Christian traditions. An example is the shared values regarding the importance of marriage and family among Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox.
5. Two potential reasons for the evangelical move are an attraction to the long-standing tradition and historical connection of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, and the perceived drama and richness of their worship experiences.
6. In the Western world, there is a noticeable movement of evangelicals into Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Conversely, in South America, there is a significant movement of Roman Catholics into evangelicalism, particularly Pentecostalism.
7. Besides Anglicans, the Roman Catholic Church has engaged in dialogue with Lutherans and Seventh-day Adventists. These dialogues are notable considering historical differences and perceived limited common ground.
8. Protestants generally hold the Bible as the sole authoritative word for Christian faith and practice (*sola scriptura*). In contrast, Roman Catholics recognize both the Bible and tradition as authoritative sources.
9. The three approaches are exclusivism (only those who hear and respond to the gospel will be saved), inclusivism (Christianity is normative, but those who haven't heard the gospel may be saved by living according to the light they have), and pluralism (all religions are equally valid paths to God).
10. The main criticism of the "Theology of the Month Club" is that it suggests theology is merely chasing after current cultural trends, leading to a lack of a stable and biblically grounded theological framework for the church in the 21st century.



## Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of Vatican II in shaping the modern dialogue between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Consider both the changes within the Catholic Church and the impact on interfaith relations.
2. Discuss the phenomenon of evangelicals moving into Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. What factors contribute to this trend, and what are its potential implications for the future of these Christian traditions?
3. Compare and contrast the three approaches to world religions (exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism). What are the strengths and weaknesses of each perspective from a Christian theological standpoint?
4. Evaluate the lecturer's criticisms of modern theological movements, such as the "Theology of the Month Club." To what extent do you agree with these criticisms, and what are their implications for contemporary theological discourse?
5. Drawing on the lecture, discuss the ongoing points of agreement and disagreement between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Which of these issues do you believe have the most potential for future reconciliation, and why?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Immaculate Conception:** The Roman Catholic doctrine that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was conceived without original sin.
- **Vatican II:** The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) of the Roman Catholic Church that brought about significant reforms and a more open stance towards other Christian traditions.
- **Ecumenism:** The principle or aim of promoting unity among the world's Christian churches.
- **Ecumenism in the Trenches:** The finding of common moral and ethical values and mutual support between different Christian denominations on social issues.
- **Exclusivism:** In the context of world religions, the belief that only one religion (typically Christianity) offers the true path to salvation.

- **Inclusivism:** In the context of world religions, the belief that while one religion (typically Christianity) is the normative revelation, salvation may be possible for those who sincerely follow other faiths based on God's grace.
- **Pluralism:** In the context of world religions, the belief that all religions are equally valid paths to the same ultimate reality or God.
- **New Conservatism:** A theological movement emphasizing the integration of gospel preaching and social ministry, drawing inspiration from figures like Charles Finney.
- **Theology of Hope:** A theological movement, notably associated with Jürgen Moltmann, that reorients theology towards eschatology (the study of end times) as a source of hope for the future transformation of creation.
- **Theologies of Liberation:** Theological movements that interpret Christian faith through the lens of liberation from social, political, and economic oppression (e.g., Black Theology, Liberation Theology, Feminist Theology).
- **Christology:** The branch of Christian theology concerned with the person and nature of Jesus Christ.
- **Sola Scriptura:** A Latin phrase meaning "Scripture alone," a foundational principle of the Protestant Reformation asserting that the Bible is the sole infallible source of religious authority.
- **Tradition (in Catholicism):** The body of teachings, practices, and customs handed down from the time of Christ and the apostles, considered authoritative alongside Scripture in the Roman Catholic Church.
- **Sacraments:** Religious rites or ceremonies that are believed to be outward signs of inward spiritual grace. Protestants generally recognize two (Baptism and Holy Communion), while the Roman Catholic Church recognizes seven.

## 5. FAQs Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 27, Modern Theologies, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Modern Theologies and Protestant-Catholic Dialogue

**1. What significant historical event in the Roman Catholic Church is mentioned at the beginning of the lecture, and why is it noteworthy?** The lecture begins by noting the anniversary of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception of Mary on December 8th, 1854. This doctrine, which states that Mary was conceived without original sin, is a significant theological point within Roman Catholicism and highlights a key difference in Mariology between Catholics and Protestants. Its anniversary serves as a reminder of the ongoing development and articulation of Catholic doctrine.

**2. What are some of the historical points of tension and questions that have historically existed between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism?** Historically, numerous points of tension have existed between Protestants and Roman Catholics. These include differing views on the authority of Scripture versus tradition, the role and place of Mary, the significance and authority of the Pope, and the understanding of the biblical canon. These fundamental disagreements have shaped the historical attitudes of both traditions towards one another.

**3. What four major historical changes have significantly shaped the dialogue between Roman Catholics and Protestants in more recent times?** Four major historical changes have fostered a shift in the relationship between Roman Catholics and Protestants: \* **Vatican II (1962-1965):** This council brought about radical changes within the Roman Catholic Church, moving it in some ways closer to Protestant perspectives. \* **The Election of John F. Kennedy:** As the first Roman Catholic president of the United States, his election fostered a better understanding of Roman Catholicism among Protestants. \* **Ecumenism in the Trenches:** The discovery of shared moral and ethical values between Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians, leading to mutual support on issues like marriage, family, and abortion. \* **Evangelical Movement into Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy:** A notable trend of evangelicals being drawn to the tradition and worship experiences of these older Christian traditions.

**4. What are the three main approaches to understanding and relating to other world religions discussed in the lecture, and how do they differ?** The lecture outlines three primary approaches to world religions beyond Christianity: \* **Exclusivism:** This view holds that only those who explicitly hear and respond to the Christian gospel will be saved, suggesting that other religions do not offer a path to salvation. \* **Inclusivism:**

While maintaining that Christianity represents the normative revelation of God, this perspective allows for the possibility that individuals who believe in God and live according to the light they have been given may find salvation, even without direct knowledge of the gospel. \* **Pluralism:** This approach asserts that all religions are equally valid paths to God, suggesting that no single religion holds a monopoly on truth or salvation. The lecture mentions theologian Paul Tillich and John Cobb as proponents of a more pluralistic viewpoint.

**5. What are some of the ongoing points of disagreement ("impasses") that continue to exist between Protestants and Roman Catholics despite dialogue?** Despite increased dialogue, several key issues remain points of significant disagreement between Protestants and Roman Catholics, often described as impasses. These include the place of Mary in theology and practice, the ultimate source of religious authority (Scripture alone for Protestants vs. Scripture and tradition for Catholics), the structure of the church (particularly the role and authority of the Pope), basic practices such as the celibacy of the priesthood and the ordination of women, and the number and nature of the sacraments.

**6. What is the "new conservatism" in Christian theology mentioned in the lecture, and what are its key characteristics?** The "new conservatism" in Christian theology, which gained prominence around the 1970s, represents a movement that seeks to reintegrate the preaching of the gospel with social ministry and social justice concerns. Drawing inspiration from figures like Finney, it critiques the separation of these two aspects of Christian faith and practice, emphasizing the dual command to love God and love one's neighbor. Donald Dayton's work is cited as a call for this reintegration.

**7. What are the "theologies of hope" and "theologies of liberation" discussed as significant movements in modern Christian theology?**

- **Theologies of Hope:** Primarily associated with Jürgen Moltmann, these theologies reorient theological thinking from the perspective of eschatology, not just as an end but as a future hope grounded in God's promises. They emphasize the future transformation of creation into a new heaven and a new earth, influencing how Christians understand the present and the ultimate goal of God's work.
- **Theologies of Liberation:** These theological movements interpret Christian faith through the lens of liberation from various forms of oppression. Examples include James Cone's Black Theology, which draws on the Exodus narrative as a symbol of liberation for the Black community; Latin American Liberation Theology, focused on the liberation of the poor; and Feminist Theology, which critiques patriarchal

structures and seeks to reinterpret theology from women's perspectives (though the lecture notes that some feminist theologians have moved beyond Christian orthodoxy).

**8. What are some of the criticisms raised in the lecture regarding modern theological movements, including the "Theology of the Month Club"?** The lecture raises several criticisms of modern theological movements. One is the concept of the "Theology of the Month Club," suggesting that some theological trends are driven more by cultural shifts than by a consistent grounding in Scripture. Another criticism is that while many movements begin with biblical and Christological foundations, they sometimes drift away from these core principles. Additionally, the lecture notes that some movements can become distinctly anti-Christian in their trajectory. The speaker emphasizes the importance of theology being rooted in the Bible and remaining centered on Christ, rather than merely chasing cultural trends.