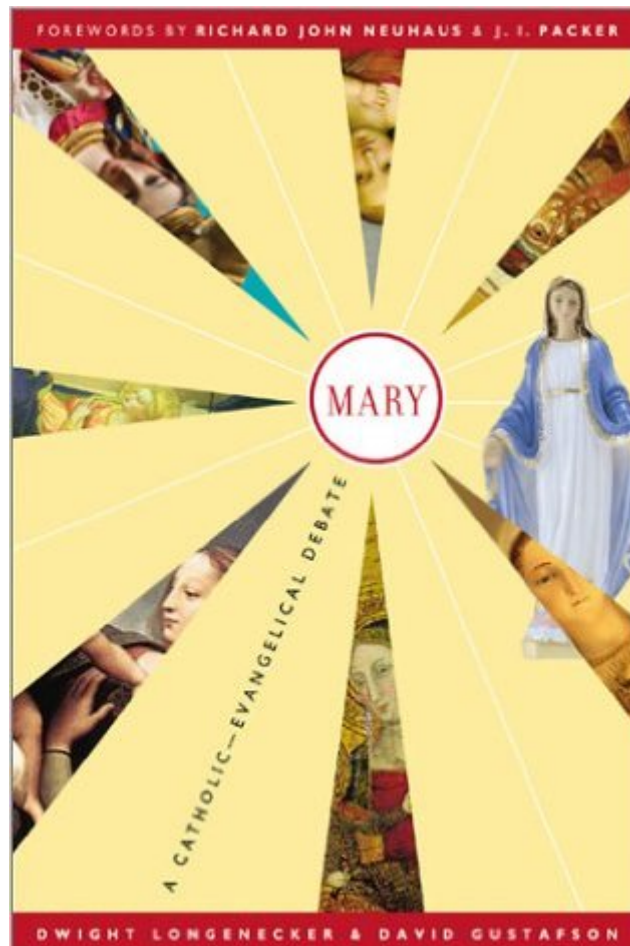


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Mary: A Catholic-Evangelical Debate



Synopsis

What happens when an Evangelical and a Catholic get into a discussion about Mary? Believe it or not-something wonderful. We invite you to eavesdrop on Dwight Longenecker and David Gustafson in *Mary: A Catholic-Evangelical Debate*. This engaging exchange between two laymen tackles the most controversial doctrines and practices surrounding Mary. The conversation, while expertly researched and rigorously argued, is witty and accessible. It is a fine model of the honesty and humble reflection required for successful communication between evangelicals and non-evangelical believers. Ultimately, we might find that to better understand Mary is to better understand our incarnate Lord. *Mary* features questions at the end of each chapter for study, discussion and reflection, as well as a useful bibliography for further reading on the topic. Forewords by J. I. Packer and Richard John Neuhaus are included.

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Customer Reviews

When one deals with the subject of Mary, he is stepping into a sensitive arena especially with all that mutual misunderstandings between Catholics and Protestants for each others points. But before I state my opinion about the subject, allow me once again to state my denominational background so that I won't be misunderstood or considered blindly biased for my denomination: I was born of an Orthodox father (thus I am officially an Orthodox), raised as a Catholic by my mother and school, and recently I am getting more acquainted with the Evangelical doctrines. So I can describe myself as a NON-denominational believer trying to take the best from each of those

three mainline churches; this is where reading and studying comes in. So back to the subject of Mary, ever since I became a believer and started to read the Bible as well as read about the Evangelical line of thought, I noticed there is something wrong with some of the doctrines my Church (Catholic, and to a lesser degree Orthodox) taught me. The Bible doesn't mention anything about the Immaculate Conception (Mary being exempt from the stain of original sin), doesn't mention anything about her rapture, nothing about her being a co-redeemer or mediatrix or advocate, the Bible doesn't mention anywhere that we should pray to her or venerate her. | So naturally, I had a lot of questions and since there is a big dispute about these between the Catholics and Protestants, I needed a book that is the least possibly biased so that I get to know their respective arguments. And here is the real strength of this book! The title says it all. "Mary: a Catholic-Evangelical debate" is written in a form of a debate between a Catholic (Dwight Longenecker) and an Evangelical (David Gustafson).

Few topics can get the tempers flaring between Catholics and Protestants than devotion to Mary. While Catholics (as well as the Orthodox and some Anglicans) see it as a natural outgrowth and reflection of the Incarnation, there is a general feeling within much of Protestantism to look upon Marian devotion as bordering on idolatry. Attempts to mediate the differences usually take one of two paths: either the real differences between Christians are minimized in a banal soup of least common denominator theology or else it dissolves into angry polemical exchanges shedding far more heat than light. The debate presented in Mary between Dwight Longenecker and David Gustafson is a wonderful exception to this unfortunate pattern. Both participants graduated from Bob Jones University (a known bastion of anti-Catholic polemic) before moving from the Protestant fundamentalism promoted there to a more historically rooted Christianity in Anglicanism (with Longenecker favoring the more Catholic and Gustafson the more Evangelical wings of the Anglican tradition). Longenecker has since moved on to Rome and with it an acceptance of beliefs peculiar to it - many dealing with Mary. These and other Marian beliefs and practices are the center of the debate and the result is an almost unparalleled attempt to discuss the truth in love on both sides. It is indeed rare to have a book endorsed by both Richard Neuhaus and J. I. Packer (both of whom write forwards) as well as by both Michael Horton and Peter Kreeft (both of whom write cover blurbs), and the backing by such noted theologians on both sides is testimony to the book's clear exposition of the issues. It is a joy to see both men desiring to fully comprehend the other's position and addressing their objections accordingly.

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