

NEW BOOK PROPOSAL

DATE: July 31, 2014

TITLE: *The Evangelical Mary: Biblical Common Ground for Protestants and Catholics*

AUTHOR: Rev. John R. Waiss, Pastor, Retreat Master, Speaker

AUDIENCE: Catholic and Bible Christians (from late teens to adults) who desire to break doctrinal divisions and pursue Christian unity through Scripture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: *The Evangelical Mary's* groundbreaking Scripture research into the Virgin Mary helps present-day Christians rediscover and employ ancient Christian biblical keys and principles of hermeneutics that will foster dialogue and unity.

REPRESENTED BY: Author

MANUSCRIPT: 110,000 words, completed

RIGHTS OFFERED: World

INCLUSION: Proposal

BOOK SYNOPSIS:

After surveying recent Protestant scholars on Christ's Mother, Waiss researches the roots of Marian teaching in early Christians, discovering biblical principles that guided them in applying Scripture to the most "blessed among women." What he discovers is the *Evangelical Mary*, a wonderful biblical portrait that cuts through the polemics dividing Christians.

Many Protestants value Scripture yet have little knowledge of the early Christians who gave us the New Testament or how those early Christians read and interpreted the Bible, especially the Old Testament. Using the topic of Mary in the Bible, Waiss uncovers their methods and how they substantially differ from modern hermeneutics. He shows how biblical types and early Christian interpretive keys can be applied to Mary as well as to Christ.

Unique to Waiss' approach is his interest in discovering all the passages that potentially apply to the Virgin Mary. He then fits these together in a consistent and coherent manner, to draw out the early Church's picture of Mary.

This study has the potential of returning *sola scriptura* to its moorings, with a biblical approach faithful to ancient Christendom. Understanding how early Christians interpreted the Bible will aid modern readers to transcend biblical blind spots to essential Christian doctrines, not just on Mary.

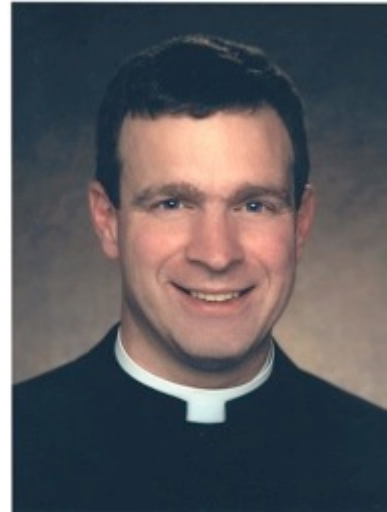
This study fosters Christian unity around a topic that has divided Christians for centuries. A more unified way of reading Scripture—that Waiss proposes—could lead to more unified doctrinal beliefs, eliminating many unnecessary polemics.

Waiss' research and style are simple and straightforward, easy for anyone to follow and reproduce. He addresses many challenges and concerns in a question and answer section at the end of each chapter. This helps the reader address the controversial questions he may have while keeping the prose non-contentious.

The book ends with several useful appendices describing early Christian authors, why and how to pray the Rosary, the early Christian keys for identifying Marian passages of the Bible—upon which the research is based—and an annotated Scripture index.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY:

Rev. John R. Waiss is the pastor of St. Mary of the Angels, a large parish church in the city of Chicago. Besides his duties of weekly preaching, he teaches in the school, leads parent workshops, preaches retreats, spiritual conferences, and gives personal spiritual guidance.



Waiss has written five other books: *Letters between a Catholic and Evangelical : From Debate to Dialogue* (Harvest House, 2003); *Couples In Love : Straight Talk on Dating, Respect, Commitment, Marriage, and Sexuality* (Crossroad, 2003). Spanish version, *Hablando del Amor* (Minos, 2006); *Cielo o infierno, es tu eleccion : La vida despues de la muerte* (Minos, 2008); *Message of Hope : The Words of Pope Benedict XVI in the United States* (Scepter, 2008); *Born to Love : Gay-Lesbian Identity, Relationships, and Marriage—Homosexuality, the Bible, and the Battle for Chaste Love* (Outskirts, 2009).

Waiss has been a guest on both Protestant and Catholic radio and television across the country. His disarming smile, humor, straight-talk and real-life experiences create a relaxed, informative, and easy interview, addressing the most controversial issues with charity and clarity.

Dr. Waiss is a Catholic priest ordained in 1987 for the Catholic Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei. He has a B.S., M.S. in Mechanical Engineering (from the University of Notre Dame and Stanford University respectively) and a Ph.D. in Philosophy from the Santa Croce Pontifical University in Rome.

COMPETITION:

There are various Christian books on Mary by both Catholic and Protestant authors. *The Evangelical Mary* surveys a number of them, including by Protestant authors Charles Dickson (*A Protestant Pastor Looks at Mary*), John Macquarrie (*Mary for all Christians*), Scot McKnight (*The Real Mary: Why Evangelical Christians Can Embrace the Mother of Jesus*), and Jaroslav Pelikan (*Mary Through the Centuries*). The most popular Catholic works on the subject are Luigi Gambero (*Mary and the Fathers of the Church*), Ignace de la Potterie, SJ (*Mary in the Mystery of the Covenant*), and Scott Hahn (*Hail, Holy Queen*).

Yet, *the Evangelical Mary* stands out with a unique and more extensive biblical approach. It is directed to both Catholic and Protestant Christians, tackling doctrinal divisions by recovering the ancients' approach to Scripture. Readers will discover:

- how to expand his scriptural vistas beyond the limits of modern hermeneutics, which causes blind spots to essential biblical doctrines; this allows us to put greater confidence in the Bible as a source of God's revelation;
- how the Holy Spirit inspired early Christians to read the Old Testament even as they wrote the New;
- the biblical foundations for beliefs in and piety towards Mary, and how Mary can be a source of unity, rather than of doctrinal discord;
- that the biblical Mary leads to unique feminine insights into Christian discipleship.

The Evangelical Mary does this by:

- uncovering the biblical keys and interpretive principals that guided early Christians as they read and wrote Scripture, including scriptural types;
- using these keys and principals to identify all passages that apply to Mary;
- piecing together the "puzzle" of Mary's doctrinal portrait, discovering how early Christians developed a biblical teaching on Mary in defense of their beliefs about Christ.

This book will interest those who are frustrated with the complexities of modern exegesis, looking for a faith-filled approach to the Bible that is truly logical and systematic.

Those who have family members on different sides of the Catholic-Protestant divide will also receive this book with joy, since it offers hope to break down the walls that divides Christians. How often Catholics have felt condemned for having non-biblical beliefs about Mary; how many Protestants have felt Catholics were not really Christians because of their Marian beliefs.

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY—SEEKING UNITY: Jesus prayed for unity among all his disciples, so that the world might believe his Gospel (cf. John 17:21). Yet today God's people lack that unity, especially in areas of doctrinal beliefs.

Recently, Pope Francis created a real buzz among Evangelicals when an Evangelical pastor, whom the Pope had invited to Rome, did an iPhone video of the Pope giving a heartfelt invitation to pray with him for unity among Christians. The video went viral! This reflects a interest in Christian people's heart to pursue unity (it also reflects a great media opportunity).

Is unity really possible? Does that mean Christians must ignore their doctrinal differences? Of course not. While many think Mary exemplifies our doctrinal divide, the opposite was true for early Christians, as *The Evangelical Mary* shows.

Do not be afraid—Christ told us—to step out onto the terrifying waters at Christ's invitation. The source of unity will be found in what the Bible says about the most difficult topics that divide us—including Mary—as we rediscover the biblical keys and hermeneutical principles employed by our ancient predecessors.

THE EVANGELICAL MARY—A DETAILED SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION: A PORTRAIT OF LOVE Introduces the book’s aim and approach, and how the Marian controversy can enrich our understanding of the Bible.

Part I: Modern Scriptural Insights into Mary

CHAPTER 1: NEW ENTHUSIASM FOR MARY This chapter surveys Protestant authors who humbly welcome a new openness to Mary after years of neglect. Some discover maternal and other feminine ways of reading Scripture in their approach to Mary.

CHAPTER 2: LITERAL INSIGHTS We review Protestants insights into Mary that begin with literal biblical references, including Old Testament prophecies, such as Isaiah 7:14, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, and St. Paul’s letters.

CHAPTER 3: INSIGHTS FROM LUKE Luke’s Gospel reveals a lot about Mary, with insights into God’s amazing grace, how Mary *magnified* God, and how she trusted God’s plans and pondered them in her heart. Other insights come from when she presented Jesus in the Temple, when Christ was lost and found in the Temple, and when she accompanied the early Church.

Part II: Early Christian Biblical Keys to Mary Uncovering early Christian keys and principles lead to additional Scripture references to Mary and new insights.

CHAPTER 4: MARY—*BLESSED* IN CHRIST Christ is the key that early Christians used to understand Mary. They saw Mary as *blessed* in Christ, since she bore him in her womb. But she is particularly blessed with her spiritual relationship of faith. Mary is a model of faith, a model disciple of her son, and blessed for her love of him.

CHAPTER 5: BLESSED AMONG *WOMEN* The Holy Spirit calls Mary blessed among women, which means that Mary is more blessed than any woman. Other Old Testament women become scriptural types and figures for Mary, including Eve. Mary was blessed with feminine qualities that are praised in the Bible. Mary is linked to other great women of the Bible and to other “handmaids of the Lord.”

CHAPTER 6: EMMANUEL—GOD WITH US Jesus is the Emmanuel—*God-with-us*—making Mary God’s miraculous dwelling on earth. She is thus linked to God’s many dwelling places in the Old Testament, such as the Tabernacle and Ark. Christ is also the *blessed fruit* of her womb, which links her to figures of fruit. As the virgin with child, she is the great sign, linking her to other great signs, especially to barren women who miraculously gave birth.

CHAPTER 7: POETIC LICENSE Early Christians often were so captivated by the more blessed of women that, with poetic license, they applied biblical personifications of the feminine to Mary, including Lady Wisdom, collective persons and places and some objects. Women who were antithetical to Mary identified qualities that were contrary to hers.

CHAPTER 8: THE CHRISTIAN CANON AND DOGMA After giving a short history of the Bible and the opposition to the Septuagint Old Testament, the author reviews the Septuagint books of Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, and First and Second Maccabees. He compares what these books say about Mary to what the rest of the Old Testament says about her. Finally we note how the dogmatic insights and traditions arose about Mary

Part III: Scripture’s Portrait of Mary Having identified all or almost all passages of Scripture that refer to Mary, the author begins gathering them together according to topics, drawing out the portrait of love intended by the author of Scripture.

CHAPTER 9: MARY’S VIRGINITY Early Christians witnessed to Mary’s virginity as a way to reaffirm Christ’s divinity: if the conception of Christ was without intercourse with man, then God was Christ’s father. They based this on John chapter 1, Luke 1:34, the parallels between Mary’s *Magnificat* and Hannah’s song, and the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14. Also, many Marian types and figures reinforce this conclusion.

CHAPTER 10: MARY’S DIVINE AND SPIRITUAL MOTHERHOOD Early Christians defended Mary’s divine motherhood against those who denied Christ’s humanity. Mary’s maternity over Christ is referred to literally and through types and figures, without implying her being a goddess. They also found scriptural support for Mary as the mother of all Christians and of the Church.

CHAPTER 11: MARY’S IMMACULATE CONCEPTION Early Christians began reflecting on Mary as *full of grace* or as *full of God’s favor* and developed the conclusion of her immaculate conception. This doctrine developed alongside the doctrine of Original Sin and was linked to the full meaning of Mary’s virginity. They compared Mary to Eve, to Eve’s sinlessness before the Fall, and to the Ark of the Covenant.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER 11: ROMANS 3:23 Mary's immaculate conception seems to contradict the "all have sinned" of Romans 3:23. We explore in detail the context of this passage and two traditional interpretations, both of which are compatible with the early Christian conclusion of Mary's original sinlessness.

CHAPTER 12: MEDIATING COOPERATION Early Christian did indeed affirmed Christ's unique mediation. The author explores what this means after distinguishing between primary and secondary forms of mediation. He compares Mary to Paul as Christ's co-worker, noting Mary's maternal role alongside Christ, including in his *hour* of suffering. Mary's cooperation with Christ also extends to the Church.

CHAPTER 13: A HELPER FIT FOR THE REDEEMER We explore Mary as the New Adam's helper and how Mary had a role antithetical to Eve's role as "co-condemntrix," and she contrasted with other anti-redemptrices. We also explore how Christ and Mary crush Satan's head, referring to Genesis 3:15. The author explores the sacrifices of Isaac and the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter to connect Mary to Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross.

CHAPTER 14: MARY'S RAPTURE Although many today find the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven disturbing, early Christians did not. We explore New Testament beliefs about death and the empty tomb, and how the early Christians used the biblical evidence of raptured saints and of the Ark—a type of Mary—to draw their conclusions.

CHAPTER 15: PRAYING TO AND BLESSING MARY IN HEAVEN We explore Christian prayer and why praying for others is so powerful. We can only adore God, yet the Bible and early Christians support dialoguing with and honoring angels and saints, especially Mary. We explore the scriptural foundation of her unique greatness as queen and model of femininity, apparitions, and images of her.

CONCLUSIONS Exploring the expanse of Marian Scripture leads to discovering many dogmatic insights. Reaching a greater understanding of the evangelical Mary can only aid Christian unity. In particular, it can help crush the head of disunity, discover a new hermeneutics (that is really quite old), and deepen our relationship with Christ with a deeper relationship with his mother.

Appendices

APPENDIX I: THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THEIR WRITINGS Besides the Scriptures themselves, many early Christians wrote about their faith. Some of these are found in non-canonical "Scriptures" and writings of the apostolic Fathers. Many Christian writers are preserved from the

age of martyrs, written by those who offered their lives for their belief in Christ. Later we have the flourishing of early theology in the post-Nicene Fathers, with Augustine shining among them. Finally, the author gives us a framework to judge the value of these early Christian writers.

APPENDIX II: PRAYING THE ROSARY The Rosary is a stumbling block for many, so the author gives us a dispassionate description of it. He starts with a brief history of the Rosary and then describes the prayers used in praying the Rosary and their biblical roots. He also describes how one should meditate the mysteries of the Rosary, which come directly from the Bible. He also shows how this prayer is Christocentric and a way to listen to God's Word. He also describes how not to pray the Rosary; that mechanical repetition is to be avoided. He ends with giving biblical references to the invocations of the Litany of Loreto.

APPENDIX III: CLASSIFICATION OF POSSIBLE TYPES FOR MARY This appendix give some of the Key-Word links to Scriptural References used in researching and categorizing the Scriptures that refer to Mary.

SCRIPTURE INDEX WITH CLASSIFICATION KEYS The author includes an annotated Scripture Index that allows others to evaluate the author's research and as a foundation for advancing this research.