

Western Illinois University
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Abstract

Live Scholarly Presentation

Major: Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Mentor: Amy Carr

Calvinism and Arminianism: The Road to Reconciliation

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Within Protestant Christian theology, Calvinism and Arminianism are soteriological (having to do with salvation) positions that are at odds with each other. While predestination has been in Christian thought since the beginning, the Protestant Reformation in the 15th and 16th centuries centralized this point and made it one measure of orthodoxy. This debate continues to this day and separates well-meaning Christians from one another.

Rather than add to the list of works that attempt to persuade someone to the other side, this essay strives to bridge the gap and help these two positions see eye to eye. My method involved reading works from each camp (plus works from Molinism, a theological attempt to reconcile these ideas) and determining where the real differences lie. One cannot fairly judge something until they study it in an unbiased manner.

While reading, it became apparent that the language used by all involved led to the perception that these ideas are polar opposites. It does not help that there are acronyms that exist to clearly lay-out these doctrines which define themselves by their difference from the other side. I noticed that a few key terms became central and how one defines them determines which system they will be drawn to.

In reality, these systems are not polar opposites and can coexist within the universal Christian Church. I believe there are other more pressing issues that Christians are facing and this theological difference is slight in comparison.