[Template:Redirect2](/wiki/Template:Redirect2" \o "Template:Redirect2) [Template:For](/wiki/Template:For) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [upright=1.35|thumb|](/wiki/File:ReformationsdenkmalGenf1.jpg)[Reformation Wall](/wiki/Reformation_Wall) in [Geneva](/wiki/Geneva); from left to right: [William Farel](/wiki/William_Farel), [John Calvin](/wiki/John_Calvin), [Theodore Beza](/wiki/Theodore_Beza), and [John Knox](/wiki/John_Knox)

[Template:Calvinism](/wiki/Template:Calvinism)

**Calvinism** (also called the **Reformed tradition**, **Reformed Christianity**, **Reformed Protestantism** or the **Reformed faith**) is a major branch of [Protestantism](/wiki/Protestantism) that follows the theological tradition and forms of Christian practice of [John Calvin](/wiki/John_Calvin) and other [Reformation-era](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation) [theologians](/wiki/Protestant_Reformers).

Calvinists broke with the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) but differed with [Lutherans](/wiki/Lutherans) on the [real presence of Christ in the Eucharist](/wiki/Real_presence_of_Christ_in_the_Eucharist), [theories of worship](/wiki/Regulative_principle_of_worship), and the [use of God's law for believers](/wiki/Law_and_Gospel#Lutheran_and_Reformed_differences), among other things.[[1]](#cite_note-1)<ref name=muller>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Calvinism can be a misleading term because the religious tradition it denotes is and has always been diverse, with a wide range of influences rather than a single founder. The movement was first called *Calvinism* by Lutherans who opposed it, and many within the tradition would prefer to use the word *Reformed*.[[2]](#cite_note-2)[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Since the [Arminian controversy](/wiki/Arminian_controversy), the Reformed tradition — as a branch of [Protestantism](/wiki/Protestantism) distinguished from Lutheranism — divided into separate groups, [Arminians](/wiki/Arminians) and Calvinists.[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) While the Reformed theological tradition addresses all of the traditional topics of Christian theology, the word *Calvinism* is sometimes used to refer to particular Calvinist views on [soteriology](/wiki/Christian_soteriology) and [predestination](/wiki/Predestination), which are summarized in part by the [Five Points of Calvinism](/wiki/Calvinism#Five_points_of_Calvinism). Some have also argued that Calvinism as a whole stresses the [sovereignty](/wiki/Omnipotence) or rule of God in all things including salvation.

Early influential Reformed theologians include [Ulrich Zwingli](/wiki/Ulrich_Zwingli), [John Calvin](/wiki/John_Calvin), [Martin Bucer](/wiki/Martin_Bucer), [Heinrich Bullinger](/wiki/Heinrich_Bullinger), [Peter Martyr Vermigli](/wiki/Peter_Martyr_Vermigli), [Theodore Beza](/wiki/Theodore_Beza), and [John Knox](/wiki/John_Knox). In the twentieth century [Abraham Kuyper](/wiki/Abraham_Kuyper), [Herman Bavinck](/wiki/Herman_Bavinck), [B. B. Warfield](/wiki/B._B._Warfield), [Karl Barth](/wiki/Karl_Barth), [Martyn Lloyd-Jones](/wiki/Martyn_Lloyd-Jones), [Cornelius Van Til](/wiki/Cornelius_Van_Til) and [Gordon Clark](/wiki/Gordon_Clark) were influential, while contemporary Reformed theologians include [J. I. Packer](/wiki/J._I._Packer), [R. C. Sproul](/wiki/R._C._Sproul), [Timothy J. Keller](/wiki/Timothy_J._Keller), [John Piper](/wiki/John_Piper_(theologian)), and [Michael Horton](/wiki/Michael_Horton_(theologian)).

Reformed churches may exercise several forms of [ecclesiastical polity](/wiki/Ecclesiastical_polity), but most are [presbyterian](/wiki/Presbyterian_polity) or [congregationalist](/wiki/Congregationalist_polity) with some being [episcopalian](/wiki/Episcopal_polity). Calvinism is largely represented by [Continental Reformed](/wiki/Continental_Reformed), [Presbyterian](/wiki/Presbyterian), and [Congregationalist](/wiki/Congregationalist_church) traditions. The biggest Reformed association is the [World Communion of Reformed Churches](/wiki/World_Communion_of_Reformed_Churches) with more than 80 million members in 211 member denominations around the world.[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6) There are more conservative Reformed federations like the [World Reformed Fellowship](/wiki/World_Reformed_Fellowship) and the [International Conference of Reformed Churches](/wiki/International_Conference_of_Reformed_Churches), as well as [independent churches](/wiki/List_of_Reformed_denominations).

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [upright|thumb|left|Calvin preached at](/wiki/File:Geneva_Cathedral.jpg) [St. Pierre Cathedral](/wiki/St._Pierre_Cathedral), the main church in Geneva [thumb|right|upright|Calvin's](/wiki/File:CalvinInstitutio.jpg) [magnum opus](/wiki/Masterpiece): [*Institutio Christianae religionis*](/wiki/Institutes_of_the_Christian_Religion)

First-generation Reformed theologians include [Huldrych Zwingli](/wiki/Huldrych_Zwingli) (1484–1531), [Martin Bucer](/wiki/Martin_Bucer) (1491–1551), [Wolfgang Capito](/wiki/Wolfgang_Capito) (1478–1541), [John Oecolampadius](/wiki/John_Oecolampadius) (1482–1531), and [Guillaume Farel](/wiki/Guillaume_Farel) (1489–1565). These reformers came from diverse academic backgrounds, but later distinctions within Reformed theology can already be detected in their thought, especially the priority of [scripture](/wiki/Bible) as a source of authority. Scripture was also viewed as a unified whole, which led to a [covenantal theology](/wiki/Covenantal_theology) of the [sacraments](/wiki/Sacraments) of [baptism](/wiki/Baptism) and the [Lord's Supper](/wiki/Lord's_Supper) as visible signs of the [covenant of grace](/wiki/Covenant_of_grace). Another Reformed distinctive present in these theologians was their denial of the bodily [presence of Christ in the Lord's supper](/wiki/Real_presence_of_Christ_in_the_Eucharist). Each of these theologians also understood salvation to be by grace alone, and affirmed a doctrine of [particular election](/wiki/Unconditional_election) (the teaching that some people are chosen by God for [salvation](/wiki/Salvation)). [Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther) and his successor [Philipp Melanchthon](/wiki/Philipp_Melanchthon) were undoubtedly significant influences on these theologians, and to a larger extent later Reformed theologians. The doctrine of [justification by faith alone](/wiki/Justification_by_faith_alone) was a direct inheritance from Luther.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[John Calvin](/wiki/John_Calvin) (1509–64), [Heinrich Bullinger](/wiki/Heinrich_Bullinger) (1504–75), [Wolfgang Musculus](/wiki/Wolfgang_Musculus) (1497–1563), [Peter Martyr Vermigli](/wiki/Peter_Martyr_Vermigli) (1500–62), and [Andreas Hyperius](/wiki/Andreas_Hyperius) (1511–64) belong to the second generation of Reformed theologians. Calvin's [*Institutes of the Christian Religion*](/wiki/Institutes_of_the_Christian_Religion) (1536–59) was one of the most influential theologies of the era.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Toward the middle of the 16th century, the Reformed began to commit their beliefs to [confessions of faith](/wiki/Creed), which would shape the future definition of the Reformed faith. The 1549 [*Consensus Tigurinus*](/wiki/Consensus_Tigurinus) brought together those who followed Zwingli and Bullinger's [memorialist](/wiki/Memorialist) theology of the Lord's supper, which taught that the supper simply serves as a reminder of Christ's death, and Calvin's view that the supper serves as a [means of grace](/wiki/Means_of_grace) with Christ actually present, though spiritually rather than bodily. The document demonstrates the diversity as well as unity in early Reformed theology. The remainder of the 16th century saw an explosion of confessional activity. The stability and breadth of Reformed theology during this period stand in marked contrast to the bitter controversy experienced by Lutherans prior to the 1579 [Formula of Concord](/wiki/Formula_of_Concord).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Due to Calvin's missionary work in France, his programme of reform eventually reached the French-speaking provinces of the Netherlands. Calvinism was adopted in the [Electorate of the Palatinate](/wiki/Electorate_of_the_Palatinate) under [Frederick III](/wiki/Frederick_III,_Elector_Palatine), which led to the formulation of the [Heidelberg Catechism](/wiki/Heidelberg_Catechism) in 1563. This and the [Belgic Confession](/wiki/Belgic_Confession) were adopted as confessional standards in the [first synod](/wiki/Synod_of_Emden) of the [Dutch Reformed Church](/wiki/Dutch_Reformed_Church) in 1571. Leading divines, either Calvinist or those sympathetic to Calvinism, settled in England (Martin Bucer, [Peter Martyr](/wiki/Peter_Martyr_Vermigli), and [Jan Łaski](/wiki/Jan_Łaski)) and Scotland ([John Knox](/wiki/John_Knox)). During the [English Civil War](/wiki/English_Civil_War), the Calvinistic [Puritans](/wiki/Puritan) produced the [Westminster Confession](/wiki/Westminster_Confession), which became the confessional standard for [Presbyterians](/wiki/Presbyterians) in the English-speaking world. Having established itself in Europe, the movement continued to spread to other parts of the world including North America, South Africa, and Korea.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Calvin did not live to see the foundation of his work grow into an international movement; but his death allowed his ideas to break out of their city of origin, to succeed far beyond their borders, and to establish their own distinct character.[[8]](#cite_note-8)

### Spread[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[thumb|Calvinism has been known at times for its simple, unadorned churches and lifestyles, as depicted in this painting by](/wiki/File:Interior_of_the_Oude_kerk_in_Amsterdam_(south_nave),_by_Emanuel_de_Witte.jpg) [Emanuel de Witte](/wiki/Emanuel_de_Witte) c.1661 Although much of Calvin's work was in [Geneva](/wiki/Geneva), his publications spread his ideas of a *correctly* Reformed church to many parts of Europe. In [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland), some cantons are still Reformed and some are Catholic. Calvinism became the theological system of the majority in [Scotland](/wiki/Scotland) (see [John Knox](/wiki/John_Knox)), the [Netherlands](/wiki/Netherlands) (see [William Ames](/wiki/William_Ames), [T. J. Frelinghuysen](/wiki/T._J._Frelinghuysen) and [Wilhelmus à Brakel](/wiki/Wilhelmus_à_Brakel)) and parts of Germany (especially these adjacent to the Netherlands) in the [Palatinate](/wiki/Palatinate_(region)), [Kassel](/wiki/Kassel) and [Lippe](/wiki/Lippe) with the likes of [Olevianus](/wiki/Olevianus) and his colleague [Zacharias Ursinus](/wiki/Zacharias_Ursinus). In [Hungary](/wiki/Hungary) and the then-independent [Transylvania](/wiki/Transylvania), Calvinism was a significant religion. In the 16th century, the Reformation gained many supporters in Eastern Hungary and Hungarian-populated regions in Transylvania. In these parts, the Reformed nobles protected the faith. Almost all Transylvanian dukes were Reformed. Today there are about 3.5 million Hungarian Reformed people worldwide.[[9]](#cite_note-9) It was influential in France, [Lithuania](/wiki/Lithuania) and [Poland](/wiki/Poland) before being mostly erased due to the [counter-reformational activities](/wiki/Counter_Reformation) taken up by the monarch in each country. Calvinism gained some popularity in [Scandinavia](/wiki/Scandinavia), especially Sweden, but was rejected in favor of [Lutheranism](/wiki/Lutheranism) after the [Synod of Uppsala](/wiki/Synod_of_Uppsala) in 1593.[[10]](#cite_note-10) Most settlers in the American Mid-Atlantic and [New England](/wiki/New_England) were Calvinists, including the English [Puritans](/wiki/Puritan), the French [Huguenots](/wiki/Huguenot) and Dutch settlers of New Amsterdam (New York), and the [Scotch-Irish](/wiki/Ulster_Scots_people) [Presbyterians](/wiki/Presbyterianism) of the Appalachian back country. [Nonconforming Protestants](/wiki/Nonconformist), [Puritans](/wiki/Puritans), [Separatists](/wiki/Ecclesiastical_separatism), [Independents](/wiki/Independent_(religion)), [English religious groups coming out of the English Civil War](/wiki/17th_century_denominations_in_England), and other [English dissenters](/wiki/English_dissenters) not satisfied with the degree to which the [Church of England](/wiki/Church_of_England) had been reformed, held overwhelmingly Reformed views. They are often cited among the primary founders of the United States of America. Dutch Calvinist settlers were also the first successful European colonizers of South Africa, beginning in the 17th century, who became known as [Boers](/wiki/Boer) or [Afrikaners](/wiki/Afrikaner_Calvinism).

[thumb|left|Blue indicates some of the historical Calvinist strongholds in Europe. It retains a notable presence there.](/wiki/File:Protestant_Reformed_Confessions_in_Europe.png) [Sierra Leone](/wiki/Sierra_Leone) was largely colonized by Calvinist settlers from [Nova Scotia](/wiki/Nova_Scotia), who were largely [Black Loyalists](/wiki/Black_Loyalist), blacks who had fought for the [British](/wiki/British_Empire) during the [American War of Independence](/wiki/American_Revolutionary_War). [John Marrant](/wiki/John_Marrant) had organized a congregation there under the auspices of the [Huntingdon Connection](/wiki/Countess_of_Huntingdon's_Connexion). Some of the largest Calvinist communions were started by 19th and 20th century [missionaries](/wiki/Missionary). Especially large are those in [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia), [Korea](/wiki/Korea) and [Nigeria](/wiki/Nigeria). In [South Korea](/wiki/South_Korea) there are 20,000 [Presbyterian](/wiki/Presbyterian) congregations with about 9–10 million church members, scattered in more than 100 Presbyterian denominations. In South Korea, [Presbyterianism](/wiki/Presbyterianism) is the largest Christian denomination.[[11]](#cite_note-11) A 2011 report of the [Pew Forum](/wiki/Pew_Forum) on Religious and Public Life estimated that members of Presbyterian or Reformed churches make up 7% of the estimated 801 million Protestants globally, or approximately 56 million people.[[12]](#cite_note-12) Though the broadly defined Reformed faith is much larger, as it constitutes Congregationalist (0.5%), most of the United and uniting churches (unions of different denominations) (7.2%) and most likely some of the other Protestant denominations (38.2%). All three are distinct categories from Presbyterian or Reformed (7%) in this report.

The Reformed family of churches is one of the largest Christian denominations. According to adherents.com the Reformed/Presbyterian/Congregational/United churches represent 75 million believers worldvide.[[13]](#cite_note-13) The [World Communion of Reformed Churches](/wiki/World_Communion_of_Reformed_Churches), which includes some [United Churches](/wiki/United_Churches) (most of these are primarily Reformed), has 80 million believers.[[14]](#cite_note-14) WCRC is the third largest Christian communion in the world, after the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches.[[13]](#cite_note-13) Many conservative Reformed churches which are strongly Calvinistic formed the [World Reformed Fellowship](/wiki/World_Reformed_Fellowship) which has about 70 member denominations. Most are not part of the World Communion of Reformed Churches because of its ecumenial attire. The International Conference of Reformed Churches is another conservative association.

## Reformed identity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

Reformed Protestants disagree among themselves about the definition and boundaries of the Reformed tradition, and often find it difficult to define what makes them Reformed. Reformed churches do not have a single global leader or set of confessional documents to summarize their beliefs.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Instead, different Reformed churches have written different confessional documents.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Reformed theologians have proposed several interpretations of Reformed identity. Some define the tradition by a certain church polity, some by a set of essential beliefs, some by doctrinal themes and emphases in the tradition, some by a certain "habitus" or character, and some by a certain theological grammar.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Liberal Reformed theologians such as Shirley Guthrie have argued that churches which have revised and rejected long-held theological beliefs are more faithful to the Reformed tradition than more conservative theologians because Reformed confessions are provisional and always open to revision.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) [Historical theologian](/wiki/Historical_theologian) [Richard Muller](/wiki/Richard_Muller_(theologian)), however, has argued that the Reformed tradition has historically maintained certain distinctive beliefs and practices despite confessional and theological diversity.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

## Theology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

### Revelation and Scripture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Reformed theologians believe that God communicates knowledge of himself to people through the Word of God. People are not able to know anything about God except through this self-revelation. Speculation about anything which God has not revealed through his Word is not warranted. The knowledge people have of God is different from that which they have of anything else because God is [infinite](/wiki/Infinity_of_God), and finite people are incapable of comprehending an infinite being. While the knowledge revealed by God to people is never incorrect, it is also never comprehensive.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|left|The seal of the](/wiki/File:Presbyterian_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America_no_background.png) [Presbyterian Church in the United States of America](/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America), an early American Presbyterian church According to Reformed theologians, God's self-revelation is always through his son [Jesus Christ](/wiki/Jesus_Christ), because Christ is the only mediator between God and people. Revelation of God through Christ comes through two basic channels. The first is [creation](/wiki/Genesis_creation_narrative) and [providence](/wiki/Divine_providence), which is God's creating and continuing to work in the world. This action of God gives everyone knowledge about God, but this knowledge is only sufficient to make people culpable for their sin; it does not include knowledge of the gospel. The second channel through which God reveals himself is [redemption](/wiki/Redemption_(theology)), which is the gospel of [salvation](/wiki/Salvation_(Christianity)) from condemnation which is punishment for sin.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In Reformed theology, the Word of God takes several forms. Jesus Christ himself is the Word Incarnate. The prophesies about him said to be found in the [Old Testament](/wiki/Old_Testament) and the ministry of the [apostles](/wiki/Twelve_Apostles) who saw him and communicated his message are also the Word of God. Further, the [preaching](/wiki/Preaching) of ministers about God is the very Word of God because God is considered to be speaking through them. God also speaks through human writers in the [Bible](/wiki/Bible), which is composed of texts set apart by God for self-revelation.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Reformed theologians emphasize the Bible as a uniquely important means by which God communicates with people. People gain knowledge of God from the Bible which cannot be gained in any other way.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Reformed theologians affirm that the Bible is true, but differences emerge among them over the meaning and extent of its truthfulness.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Conservative followers of the [Princeton theologians](/wiki/Princeton_theologians) take the view that the Bible is true and [inerrant](/wiki/Biblical_inerrancy), or incapable of error or falsehood, in every place.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This view is very similar to that of [Catholic](/wiki/Catholic) orthodoxy as well as modern [Evangelicalism](/wiki/Evangelicalism).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Another view, influenced by the teaching of [Karl Barth](/wiki/Karl_Barth) and [Neo-Orthodoxy](/wiki/Neo-Orthodoxy), is found in the [Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s](/wiki/Presbyterian_Church_(U.S.A.)) [Confession of 1967](/wiki/Confession_of_1967). Those who take this view believe the Bible to be the primary source of our knowledge of God, but also that some parts of the Bible may be false, not witnesses to Christ, and not normative for today's church.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In this view, Christ is the revelation of God, and the scriptures witness to this revelation rather than be the revelation itself.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Dawn DeVries, a professor at [Union Presbyterian Seminary](/wiki/Union_Presbyterian_Seminary), has written that Barth's doctrine of Scripture is not capable of resolving conflicts in contemporary churches,[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) and proposed that Scripture not be thought of as the Word of God at all, but only human reports of the revealed Jesus Christ.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Covenant[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[thumb|*Fall of Man* by](/wiki/File:Jordaens_Fall_of_man.jpg) [Jacob Jordaens](/wiki/Jacob_Jordaens) [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Reformed theologians use the concept of covenant to describe the way God enters fellowship with people in history.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The concept of covenant is so prominent in Reformed theology that Reformed theology as a whole is sometimes called "covenant theology".[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) However, sixteenth and seventeenth-century theologians developed a particular theological system called "[covenant theology](/wiki/Covenant_theology)" or "federal theology" which many conservative Reformed churches continue to affirm today.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) This framework orders God's life with people primarily in two covenants: the covenant of works and the covenant of grace.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The covenant of works is made with [Adam and Eve](/wiki/Adam_and_Eve) in the [Garden of Eden](/wiki/Garden_of_Eden). The terms of the covenant are that God provides a blessed life in the garden on condition that Adam and Eve obey God's law perfectly. Because Adam and Eve broke the covenant by eating the [forbidden fruit](/wiki/Forbidden_fruit), they became subject to death and were banished from the garden. This sin was passed down to all mankind because all people are said to be in Adam as a covenantal or "federal" head. Federal theologians usually infer that Adam and Eve would have gained immortality had they obeyed perfectly.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

A second covenant, called the covenant of grace, is said to have been made immediately following Adam and Eve's sin. In it, God graciously offers salvation from death on condition of faith in God. This covenant is administered in different ways throughout the Old and New Testaments, but retains the substance of being free of a requirement of perfect obedience.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Through the influence of Karl Barth, many contemporary Reformed theologians have discarded the covenant of works, along with other concepts of federal theology. Barth saw the covenant of works as disconnected from Christ and the gospel, and rejected the idea that God works with people in this way. Instead, Barth argued that God always interacts with people under the covenant of grace, and that the covenant of grace is free of all conditions whatsoever. Barth's theology and that which follows him has been called "monocovenantal" as opposed to the "bi-covenantal" scheme of classical federal theology.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Conservative contemporary Reformed theologians, such as [John Murray](/wiki/John_Murray_(theologian)), have also rejected the idea of covenants based on law rather than grace. [Michael Horton](/wiki/Michael_Horton_(theologian)), however, has defended the covenant of works as combining principles of law and love.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### God[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) For the most part, the Reformed tradition did not modify the medieval consensus on the [doctrine of God](/wiki/Doctrine_of_God).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) God's character is described primarily using three adjectives: eternal, infinite, and unchangeable.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Reformed theologians such as [Shirley Guthrie](/wiki/Shirley_Guthrie) have proposed that rather than conceiving of God in terms of his attributes and freedom to do as he pleases, the doctrine of God is to be based on God's work in history and his freedom to live with and empower people.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|The "](/wiki/File:Shield-Trinity-Scutum-Fidei-English.svg)[Shield of the Trinity](/wiki/Shield_of_the_Trinity)" diagrams the classic doctrine of the [Trinity](/wiki/Trinity) Traditionally, Reformed theologians have also followed the medieval tradition going back to the early church councils of [Nicaea](/wiki/First_Council_of_Nicaea) and [Chalcedon](/wiki/Council_of_Chalcedon) on the doctrine of the [Trinity](/wiki/Trinity). God is affirmed to be one God in three persons: [Father](/wiki/God_the_Father), [Son](/wiki/God_the_Son), and [Holy Spirit](/wiki/Holy_Spirit). The Son (Christ) is held to be eternally begotten by the Father and the [Holy Spirit eternally proceeding](/wiki/Procession_of_the_Holy_Spirit) from the Father and Son.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) However, contemporary theologians have been critical of aspects of Western views here as well. Drawing on the [Eastern](/wiki/Eastern_Christianity) tradition, these Reformed theologians have proposed a "[Social Trinity](/wiki/Social_Trinity)" where the persons of the Trinity only exist in their life together as persons-in-relationship.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Contemporary Reformed confessions such as the [Barmen Confession](/wiki/Barmen_Confession) and Brief Statement of Faith of the Presbyterian Church (USA) have avoided language about the attributes of God and have emphasized his work of reconciliation and empowerment of people.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Feminist theologian [Letty Russell](/wiki/Letty_Russell) used the image of partnership for the persons of the Trinity. According to Russell, thinking this way encourages Christians to interact in terms of fellowship rather than reciprocity.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Conservative Reformed theologian Michael Horton, however, has argued that social trinitarianism is untenable because it abandons the essential unity of God in favor of a community of separate beings in community.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Christ and atonement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Reformed theologians affirm the historic Christian belief that [Christ](/wiki/Christ) is eternally [one person with a divine and a human nature](/wiki/Hypostatic_union). Reformed Christians have especially emphasized that Christ truly [became human](/wiki/Incarnation_of_Christ) so that people could be saved.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Christ's human nature has been a point of contention between Reformed and Lutheran [Christology](/wiki/Christology). In accord with the belief that finite humans cannot comprehend infinite divinity, Reformed theologians hold that Christ's human body cannot be in multiple locations at the same time. Because [Lutherans](/wiki/Lutheran) believe that Christ is bodily [present in the Eucharist](/wiki/Real_presence), they hold that Christ is bodily present in many locations simultaneously. For Reformed Christians, such a belief denies that Christ actually became human.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Some contemporary Reformed theologians have moved away from the traditional language of one person in two natures, viewing it as unintelligible to contemporary people. Instead, theologians tend to emphasize Jesus' context and particularity as a first-century Jew.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[thumb|This Dutch stained glass allegory shows Christ ascending the cross with Satan and several dead people on his back. Faith is personified as a woman to the right of a naked man on the ground asking Christ the way of salvation.](/wiki/File:Allegorie_van_Christus_als_redder_van_de_mensheid.jpg) John Calvin and many Reformed theologians who followed him describe Christ's work of redemption in terms of [three offices](/wiki/Threefold_office): [prophet](/wiki/Prophet), [priest](/wiki/Priest), and [king](/wiki/Kingly_office_of_Christ). Christ is said to be a prophet in that he teaches perfect doctrine, a priest in that [he intercedes to the Father](/wiki/Intercession_of_Christ) on believers' behalf and offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, and a king in that he rules the church and fights on believers' behalf. The threefold office links the work of Christ to God's work in [ancient Israel](/wiki/Ancient_Israel).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Many, but not all, Reformed theologians continue to make use of the threefold office as a framework because of its emphasis on the connection of Christ's work to Israel. They have, however, often reinterpreted the meaning of each of the offices.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) For example, Karl Barth interpreted Christ's prophetic office in terms of political engagement on behalf of the poor.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Christians believe [Jesus' death](/wiki/Jesus'_death) and [resurrection](/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus) makes it possible for believers to attain forgiveness for sin and reconciliation with God through the [atonement](/wiki/Atonement_in_Christianity). Reformed Protestants generally subscribe to a particular view of the atonement called [substitutionary atonement](/wiki/Substitutionary_atonement), which explains Christs death as a sacrificial payment for sin. Christ is believed to have died in place of the believer, who is accounted righteous as a result of this sacrificial payment.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Contemporary Reformed theologians such as [William Placher](/wiki/William_Placher) and [Nancy Duff](/wiki/Nancy_Duff) have criticized this view, claiming it makes God appear abusive or vindictive and sanctions violence by the strong against the weak.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Sin[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) In Christian theology, people are created good and in the [image of God](/wiki/Image_of_God) but have become corrupted by [sin](/wiki/Sin), which causes them to be imperfect and self-interested.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Reformed Christians, following the tradition of [Augustine of Hippo](/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo), believe that this corruption of human nature was brought on by Adam and Eve's first sin, a doctrine called [original sin](/wiki/Original_sin). Reformed theologians emphasize that this sinfulness affects all of a person's nature, including their will. This view, that sin so dominates people that they are unable to avoid sin, has been called [total depravity](/wiki/Total_depravity).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) In colloquial English, the term "total depravity" can be easily misunderstood to mean that people are absent of any goodness or unable to do any good. However the Reformed teaching is actually that while people continue to bear God's image and may do things that are outwardly good, their sinful intentions affect all of their nature and actions so that they are not wholly pleasing to God.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Some contemporary theologians in the Reformed tradition, such as those associated with the PC(USA)'s Confession of 1967, have emphasized the social character of human sinfulness. These theologians have sought to bring attention to issues of environmental, economic, and political justice as areas of human life that have been affected by sin.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Salvation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Rembrandt_Harmensz_van_Rijn_-_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)[*The Return of the Prodigal Son*](/wiki/The_Return_of_the_Prodigal_Son) by [Rembrandt](/wiki/Rembrandt), based on the [Parable of the Prodigal Son](/wiki/Parable_of_the_Prodigal_Son) illustrating forgiveness [Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Reformed theologians, along with other Protestants, believe salvation from punishment for sin to be given to all those who have [faith](/wiki/Faith_in_Christianity) in Christ.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Faith is not purely intellectual, but involves trust in God's promise to save.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Protestants do not hold there to be any other requirement for salvation, but that [faith alone](/wiki/Faith_alone) is sufficient.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Justification](/wiki/Justification_(theology)) is the part of salvation where God pardons the sin of those who believe in Christ. It is historically held by Protestants to be the most important article of Christian faith, though more recently it is sometimes given less importance out of [ecumenical](/wiki/Ecumenical) concerns.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) People are not on their own able even to fully [repent](/wiki/Repent) of their sin or prepare themselves to repent because of their sinfulness. Therefore, justification is held to arise solely from God's free and gracious act.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

[Sanctification](/wiki/Sanctification) is the part of salvation in which God makes the believer holy, by enabling them to exercise greater love for God and for other people.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The [good works](/wiki/Good_works) accomplished by believers as they are sanctified are considered to be the necessary outworking of the believer's salvation, though they do not cause the believer to be saved.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Sanctification, like justification, is by faith, because doing good works is simply living as the son of God one has become.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Predestination[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Reformed theologians teach that sin so affects human nature that they are unable even to exercise faith in Christ by their own will. While people are said to retain will, in that they willfully sin, they are unable to not sin because of the corruption of their nature due to original sin. To remedy this, Reformed Christians believe that God [predestined](/wiki/Predestined) some people to be saved. This [choice by God to save some is held to be unconditional](/wiki/Unconditional_election) and not based on any characteristic or action on the part of the person chosen. This view is opposed to the [Arminian](/wiki/Arminian) view that God's [choice of whom to save is conditional](/wiki/Conditional_election) or based on his foreknowledge of who would respond positively to God.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

Karl Barth reinterpreted the Reformed doctrine of predestination to apply only to Christ. Individual people are only said to be elected through their being in Christ.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Reformed theologians who followed Barth, including Jürgen Moltmann, David Migliore, and Shirley Guthrie, have argued that the traditional Reformed concept of predestination is speculative and have proposed alternative models. These theologians claim that a properly trinitarian doctrine emphasizes God's freedom to love all people, rather than choosing some for salvation and others for damnation. God's justice towards and condemnation of sinful people is spoken of by these theologians as out of his love for them and a desire to reconcile them to himself.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

#### Five points of Calvinism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:TULIP](/wiki/Template:TULIP)

Most objections to and attacks on Calvinism focus on the "five points of Calvinism," also called the doctrines of grace, and remembered by the [mnemonic](/wiki/Mnemonic) "TULIP."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The five points are popularly said to summarize the [Canons of Dort](/wiki/Canons_of_Dort);[[16]](#cite_note-16) however, there is no historical relationship between them, and some scholars argue that their language distorts the meaning of the Canons, Calvin's theology, and the theology of 17th-century Calvinistic orthodoxy, particularly in the language of total depravity and limited atonement.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The five points were popularized in the 1963 booklet *The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended, Documented* by David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas. The origins of the five points and the acronym are uncertain, but the acronym was used by [Cleland Boyd McAfee](/wiki/Cleland_Boyd_McAfee) as early as circa 1905.[[18]](#cite_note-18) An early printed appearance of the T-U-L-I-P acronym is in Loraine Boettner's 1932 book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*.[[19]](#cite_note-19) The acronym was very cautiously if ever used by Calvinist apologists and theologians before the booklet by Steele and Thomas.[[20]](#cite_note-20) More recently, theologians have sought to reformulate the TULIP acronym to more accurately reflect the Canons of Dort.[[21]](#cite_note-21) The central assertion of these points is that God saves every person upon whom he has mercy, and that his efforts are not frustrated by the unrighteousness or inability of humans.

* "[Total depravity](/wiki/Total_depravity)," also called "total inability," asserts that as a consequence of the [fall of man into sin](/wiki/Fall_of_Man), every person is enslaved to sin. People are not by nature inclined to love God but rather to serve their own interests and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures (the term "total" in this context refers to sin affecting every part of a person, not that every person is as evil as they could be).[[22]](#cite_note-22) This doctrine is derived from [Augustine's](/wiki/Augustine) explanation of [Original Sin](/wiki/Original_Sin).[[23]](#cite_note-23) While the phrases "totally depraved" and "utterly perverse" were used by Calvin, what was meant was the inability to save oneself from sin rather than being absent of goodness. Phrases like "total depravity" cannot be found in the Canons of Dort, and the Canons as well as later Reformed orthodox theologians arguably offer a more moderate view of the nature of fallen humanity than Calvin.[[24]](#cite_note-24)\* "[Unconditional election](/wiki/Unconditional_election)" asserts that God has chosen from eternity those whom he will bring to himself not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people; rather, his choice is unconditionally grounded in his mercy alone. God has chosen from eternity to extend mercy to those he has chosen and to withhold mercy from those not chosen. Those chosen receive salvation through Christ alone. Those not chosen receive the just wrath that is warranted for their sins against God.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)
* "[Limited atonement](/wiki/Limited_atonement)," also called "particular redemption" or "definite atonement", asserts that Jesus's [substitutionary atonement](/wiki/Substitutionary_atonement) was definite and certain in its purpose and in what it accomplished. This implies that only the sins of the elect were [atoned](/wiki/Penal_substitution) for by Jesus's death. Calvinists do not believe, however, that the atonement is limited in its value or power, but rather that the atonement is limited in the sense that it is intended for some and not all. Some Calvinists have summarized this as "The atonement is sufficient for all and efficient for the elect."[[25]](#cite_note-25) All Calvinists would affirm that the blood of Christ was sufficient to pay for every single human being *IF* it were God's intention to save every single human being. But Calvinists are also quick to point out that Jesus did not spill a drop of blood in vain (Galatians 2:21), and therefore, we can only be sure that His blood sufficed for those for whom it was intended, however many (Matthew 26:28) or few (Matthew 7:14) that may be. Some Calvinists also teach that the atonement accomplished certain benefits for all mankind, albeit, not their eternal salvation.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The doctrine is driven by the Calvinistic concept of the sovereignty of God in salvation and their understanding of the nature of the atonement.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) At the Synod of Dort, both sides agreed that the atonement of Christ's death was sufficient to pay for all sin and that it was only efficacious for some (it only actually saved some). The controversy centered on whether this limited efficacy was based on God's election (the view of the Synod and of later Reformed theologians) or on the choice of each person and God's foreknowledge of that choice (the view of Arminius).[[27]](#cite_note-27)\* "[Irresistible grace](/wiki/Irresistible_grace)," also called "efficacious grace", asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom he has determined to save (that is, the elect) and overcomes their resistance to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to a saving faith. This means that when God sovereignly purposes to save someone, that individual certainly will be saved. The doctrine holds that this purposeful influence of God's [Holy Spirit](/wiki/Holy_Spirit) cannot be resisted, but that the Holy Spirit, "graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ." This is not to deny the fact that the Spirit's outward call (through the proclamation of the Gospel) can be, and often is, rejected by sinners; rather, it's that inward call which cannot be rejected.
* "[Perseverance of the saints](/wiki/Perseverance_of_the_saints)" (or perseverance of God with the saints) (the word "saints" is used to refer to all who are set apart by God, and not of those who are exceptionally [holy](/wiki/Holy), [canonized](/wiki/Canonization), or in heaven) asserts that since God is sovereign and his will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else, those whom God has called into communion with himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who apparently fall away either never had true faith to begin with (1 John 2:19), or, if they are saved but not presently walking in the Spirit, they will be divinely chastened (Hebrews 12:5–11) and will repent (1 John 3:6–9).[[28]](#cite_note-28)

#### Comparison among Protestants[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Comparison among Protestants](/wiki/Template:Comparison_among_Protestants)

### Church[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Reformed Christians see the [Christian Church](/wiki/Christian_Church) as the community with which God has made the covenant of grace, a promise of eternal life and relationship with God. This covenant extends to those under the "old covenant" whom God chose, beginning with [Abraham](/wiki/Abraham) and [Sarah](/wiki/Sarah).[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) The church is conceived of as both [invisible](/wiki/Invisible_church) and [visible](/wiki/Visible_church). The invisible church is the body of all believers, known only to God. The visible church is the institutional body which contains both members of the invisible church as well as those who appear to have faith in Christ, but are not truly part of God's elect.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

In order to identify the visible church, Reformed theologians have spoken of certain [marks of the Church](/wiki/Marks_of_the_Church). For some, the only mark is the pure preaching of the gospel of Christ. Others, including John Calvin, also including the right administration of the [sacraments](/wiki/Sacrament). Others, such as those following the [Scots Confession](/wiki/Scots_Confession), include a third mark of rightly administered [church discipline](/wiki/Church_discipline), or exercise of censure against unrepentant sinners. These marks allowed the Reformed to identify the church based on its conformity to the Bible rather than the [Magisterium](/wiki/Magisterium) or church tradition.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### Worship[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

#### Regulative principle of worship[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|200px|The](/wiki/File:Bay1640.jpg) [Bay Psalm Book](/wiki/Bay_Psalm_Book) was used by [Pilgrims](/wiki/Pilgrims_(Plymouth_Colony))

The regulative principle of worship is a teaching shared by some Calvinists and Anabaptists on how the Bible orders public worship. The substance of the doctrine regarding worship is that God institutes in the Scriptures everything he requires for worship in the Church and that everything else is prohibited. As the regulative principle is reflected in Calvin's own thought, it is driven by his evident antipathy toward the Roman Catholic Church and its worship practices, and it associates musical instruments with [icons](/wiki/Icon), which he considered violations of the [Ten Commandments'](/wiki/Ten_Commandments) prohibition of graven images.[[29]](#cite_note-29) On this basis, many early Calvinists also eschewed musical instruments and advocated [a capella](/wiki/A_capella) [exclusive psalmody](/wiki/Exclusive_psalmody) in worship,[[30]](#cite_note-30) though Calvin himself allowed other scriptural songs as well as psalms,[[29]](#cite_note-29) and this practice typified [presbyterian worship](/wiki/Presbyterian_worship) and the worship of other Reformed churches for some time. The original Lord's Day service designed by John Calvin was a highly liturgical service with the Creed, Alms, Confession and Absolution, the Lord's supper, Doxologies, prayers, Psalms being sung, the Lords prayer being sung, Benedictions.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Since the 19th century, however, some of the Reformed churches have modified their understanding of the regulative principle and make use of musical instruments, believing that Calvin and his early followers went beyond the biblical requirements[[29]](#cite_note-29) and that such things are circumstances of worship requiring biblically-rooted wisdom, rather than an explicit command. Despite the protestations of those who hold to a strict view of the regulative principle, today [hymns](/wiki/Hymn) and musical instruments are in common use, as are [contemporary worship music](/wiki/Contemporary_worship_music) styles with elements such as [worship bands](/wiki/Worship_band).[[32]](#cite_note-32)

### Sacraments[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) The [Westminster Confession of Faith](/wiki/Westminster_Confession_of_Faith) limits the sacraments to baptism and the Lord's Supper. Sacraments are denoted "signs and seals of the covenant of grace."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Westminster speaks of "a sacramental relation, or a sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) Baptism is for infant children of believers as well as believers, as it is for all the Reformed except [Baptists](/wiki/Baptists) and some [Congregationalists](/wiki/Congregationalists). Baptism admits the baptized into the [visible church](/wiki/Visible_church), and in it all the benefits of Christ are offered to the baptized.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) On the Lord's supper, Westminster takes a position between Lutheran sacramental union and Zwinglian memorialism: "the Lord's supper really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of his death: the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance as the elements themselves are to their outward senses."[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

The [1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith](/wiki/1689_London_Baptist_Confession_of_Faith) does not use the term sacrament, but describes baptism and the Lord's supper as ordinances, as do most Baptists Calvinist or otherwise. Baptism is only for those who "actually profess repentance towards God," and not for the children of believers.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Baptists also insist on immersion or dipping, in contradistinction to other Reformed Christians.[[34]](#cite_note-34) The Baptist Confession, describes the Lord's supper as "the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally, but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance," similarly to the Westminster Confession.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn) There is significant latitude in Baptist congregations regarding the Lord's supper, and many hold the Zwinglian view.

### Logical order of God's decree[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) There are two schools of thought regarding the logical order of God's decree to ordain the fall of man: [supralapsarianism](/wiki/Supralapsarianism) (from the [Latin](/wiki/Latin_language): *supra*, "above", here meaning "before" + *lapsus*, "fall") and [infralapsarianism](/wiki/Infralapsarianism) (from the Latin: *infra*, "beneath", here meaning "after" + *lapsus*, "fall"). The former view, sometimes called "high Calvinism", argues that the Fall occurred partly to facilitate God's purpose to choose some individuals for salvation and some for damnation. Infralapsarianism, sometimes called "low Calvinism", is the position that, while the Fall was indeed planned, it was not planned with reference to who would be saved.

Supralapsarians believe that God chose which individuals to save logically prior to the decision to allow the race to fall and that the Fall serves as the means of realization of that prior decision to send some individuals to hell and others to heaven (that is, it provides the grounds of condemnation in the reprobate and the need for salvation in the elect). In contrast, infralapsarians hold that God planned the race to fall logically prior to the decision to save or damn any individuals because, it is argued, in order to be "saved", one must first need to be saved from something and therefore the decree of the Fall must precede predestination to salvation or damnation.

These two views vied with each other at the Synod of Dort, an international body representing Calvinist Christian churches from around Europe, and the judgments that came out of that council sided with infralapsarianism (Canons of Dort, First Point of Doctrine, Article 7). The Westminster Confession of Faith also teaches (in Hodge's words "clearly impl[ies]") the infralapsarian[[35]](#cite_note-35) view, but is sensitive to those holding to supralapsarianism.[[36]](#cite_note-36) The Lapsarian controversy has a few vocal proponents on each side today, but overall it does not receive much attention among modern Calvinists.

## Variants[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Protestantism](/wiki/Template:Protestantism)

### Amyraldism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Amyraldism (or sometimes Amyraldianism, also known as the School of Saumur, hypothetical universalism,[[37]](#cite_note-37) post redemptionism,[[38]](#cite_note-38) moderate Calvinism,[[39]](#cite_note-39) or four-point Calvinism) is the belief that [God](/wiki/God), prior to his decree of election, decreed [Christ's atonement](/wiki/Atonement_in_Christianity) for all alike if they believe, but seeing that none would believe on their own, he then [elected](/wiki/Predestination) those whom he will bring to [faith in Christ](/wiki/Faith_in_Christianity), thereby preserving the Calvinist doctrine of [unconditional election](/wiki/Unconditional_election). The efficacy of the atonement remains limited to those who believe.

Named after its formulator [Moses Amyraut](/wiki/Moses_Amyraut), this doctrine is still viewed as a variety of Calvinism in that it maintains the particularity of sovereign grace in the application of the atonement. However, detractors like [B. B. Warfield](/wiki/B._B._Warfield) have termed it "an inconsistent and therefore unstable form of Calvinism."[[40]](#cite_note-40)

### Hyper-Calvinism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Hyper-Calvinism first referred to a view that appeared among the early English [Particular Baptists](/wiki/Strict_Baptist) in the 18th century. Their system denied that the call of the gospel to "[repent](/wiki/Repentance) and believe" is directed to every single person and that it is the duty of every person to trust in Christ for salvation. The term also occasionally appears in both [theological](/wiki/Theological) and secular controversial contexts, where it usually connotes a negative opinion about some variety of [theological determinism](/wiki/Theological_determinism), [predestination](/wiki/Predestination), or a version of Evangelical Christianity or Calvinism that is deemed by the critic to be unenlightened, harsh, or extreme.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says that the gospel is to be freely offered to sinners, and the Larger Catechism makes clear that the gospel is offered to the non-elect.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)[[41]](#cite_note-41)

### Neo-Calvinism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Neo-Calvinism, a form of Dutch Calvinism, is the movement initiated by the theologian and former Dutch prime minister [Abraham Kuyper](/wiki/Abraham_Kuyper). [James Bratt](/wiki/James_Bratt) has identified a number of different types of Dutch Calvinism: The Seceders—split into the Reformed Church "West" and the Confessionalists; and the Neo-Calvinists—the Positives and the Antithetical Calvinists. The Seceders were largely [infralapsarian](/wiki/Infralapsarian) and the Neo-Calvinists usually [supralapsarian](/wiki/Supralapsarian).[[42]](#cite_note-42) Kuyper wanted to awaken the church from what he viewed as its pietistic slumber. He declared:

No single piece of our mental world is to be sealed off from the rest and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'[[43]](#cite_note-43)

This refrain has become something of a rallying call for Neo-Calvinists.

### Christian Reconstructionism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Christian Reconstructionism is a [fundamentalist](/wiki/Christian_fundamentalism)[[44]](#cite_note-44) Calvinist [theonomic](/wiki/Theonomic) movement that has remained rather obscure.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Founded by [R. J. Rushdoony](/wiki/R._J._Rushdoony), the movement has had an important influence on the [Christian Right](/wiki/Christian_right) in the United States.[[46]](#cite_note-46)[[47]](#cite_note-47) The movement declined in the 1990s and was declared dead in a 2008 [*Church History*](/wiki/Church_History_(magazine)) journal article.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Christian Reconstructionists are usually [postmillennialists](/wiki/Postmillennialist) and followers of the [presuppositional apologetics](/wiki/Presuppositional_apologetics) of [Cornelius Van Til](/wiki/Cornelius_Van_Til). They tend to support a decentralized political order resulting in [laissez-faire](/wiki/Laissez-faire) capitalism.[Template:Sfn](/wiki/Template:Sfn)

### New Calvinism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The New Calvinism is a growing perspective within conservative Evangelicalism that embraces the fundamentals of 16th century Calvinism while also trying to be relevant in the present day world.[[49]](#cite_note-49) In March 2009, *Time* magazine described the New Calvinism as one of the "10 ideas changing the world".[[50]](#cite_note-50) Some of the major figures in this area are [John Piper](/wiki/John_Piper_(theologian)), [Mark Driscoll](/wiki/Mark_Driscoll_(pastor)), [Al Mohler](/wiki/Al_Mohler),[[50]](#cite_note-50) [Mark Dever](/wiki/Mark_Dever),<ref name=Burek>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> [C. J. Mahaney](/wiki/C._J._Mahaney), [Joshua Harris](/wiki/Joshua_Harris_(pastor)),[[49]](#cite_note-49) and [Tim Keller](/wiki/Timothy_J._Keller).<ref name=CRN>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> New Calvinists have been criticized for blending Calvinist soteriology with popular Evangelical positions on the sacraments and [continuationism](/wiki/Continuationism).[[51]](#cite_note-51)

## Social and economic influences[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

### Usury and capitalism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

One school of thought attributes Calvinism with setting the stage for the later development of capitalism in northern Europe. In this view, elements of Calvinism represented a revolt against the medieval condemnation of [usury](/wiki/Usury) and, implicitly, of profit in general.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Such a connection was advanced in influential works by [R. H. Tawney](/wiki/R._H._Tawney) (1880–1962) and by [Max Weber](/wiki/Max_Weber) (1864–1920).

Calvin expressed himself on usury in a 1545 letter to a friend, Claude de Sachin, in which he criticized the use of certain passages of scripture invoked by people opposed to the charging of interest. He reinterpreted some of these passages, and suggested that others of them had been rendered irrelevant by changed conditions. He also dismissed the argument (based upon the writings of [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle)) that it is wrong to charge interest for money because money itself is barren. He said that the walls and the roof of a house are barren, too, but it is permissible to charge someone for allowing him to use them. In the same way, money can be made fruitful.[[52]](#cite_note-52) He qualified his view, however, by saying that money should be lent to people in dire need without hope of interest, while a modest interest rate of 5% should be permitted in relation to other borrowers.[[53]](#cite_note-53)

## Politics and society[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

Calvin's concept of God and man contained strong elements of freedom that were gradually put into practice after his death, in particular in the fields of politics and society. After the successful fight for independence from Spain (1579), the Netherlands, under Calvinist leadership, became the freest country in Europe. It granted asylum to persecuted religious minorities, e.g. French [Huguenots](/wiki/Huguenot), English [Independents](/wiki/Independent_(religion)) ([Congregationalists](/wiki/Congregationalists)), and [Jews](/wiki/Jews) from Spain and Portugal. The ancestors of philosopher [Baruch Spinoza](/wiki/Baruch_Spinoza) were Portuguese Jews. Aware of the trial against [Galileo](/wiki/Galileo), [René Descartes](/wiki/René_Descartes) lived in the Netherlands, out of reach of the [Inquisition](/wiki/Inquisition).[[54]](#cite_note-54) [Pierre Bayle](/wiki/Pierre_Bayle), a Reformed Frenchman, also felt safer in the Netherlands than in his home country. He was the first prominent philosopher who demanded tolerance for atheists. [Hugo Grotius](/wiki/Hugo_Grotius) was able to publish a rather liberal interpretation of the Bible and his ideas about [natural law](/wiki/Natural_law).[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) Moreover, the Calvinist Dutch authorities allowed the printing of books that could not be published elsewhere, e.g. Galileo's *Discorsi*.[[57]](#cite_note-57) Even more important than the liberal development of the Netherlands was the rise of modern [democracy](/wiki/Democracy) in England and North America. In the Middle Ages state and church had been closely connected. [Martin Luther's](/wiki/Martin_Luther) [doctrine of the two kingdoms](/wiki/Doctrine_of_the_two_kingdoms) separated state and church in principle.[[58]](#cite_note-58) His doctrine of the [priesthood of all believers](/wiki/Priesthood_of_all_believers) raised the laity to the same level as the clergy.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Going one step further, Calvin included elected laymen ([church elders](/wiki/Church_elder), [presbyters](/wiki/Presbyters)) in his concept of [church government](/wiki/Church_government). The Huguenots added [synods](/wiki/Synod) whose members were also elected by the congregations. The other Reformed churches took over this system of church self-government which was essentially a representative democracy.[[60]](#cite_note-60) [Baptists](/wiki/Baptists), [Quakers](/wiki/Quakers), and [Methodists](/wiki/Methodists) are organized in a similar way. These denominations and the [Anglican Church](/wiki/Anglican_Church) were influenced by Calvin's theology in varying degrees.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Another precondition for the rise of democracy in the Anglo-American world was the fact that Calvin favored a mixture of democracy and aristocracy as the best form of government ([mixed government](/wiki/Mixed_government)). He appreciated the advantages of democracy.[[62]](#cite_note-62) The aim of his political thought was to safeguard the rights and freedoms of ordinary men and women. In order to minimize the misuse of political power he suggested dividing it among several institutions in a system of checks and balances ([separation of powers](/wiki/Separation_of_powers)). Finally, Calvin taught that if worldly rulers rise up against God they should be put down. In this way, he and his followers stood in the vanguard of resistance to political [absolutism](/wiki/Absolute_monarchy) and furthered the cause of democracy.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The [Congregationalists](/wiki/Congregationalists) who founded [Plymouth Colony](/wiki/Plymouth_Colony) (1620) and [Massachusetts Bay Colony](/wiki/Massachusetts_Bay_Colony) (1628) were convinced that the democratic form of government was the will of God.[[64]](#cite_note-64)[[65]](#cite_note-65) Enjoying self-rule they practiced separation of powers.[[66]](#cite_note-66)[[67]](#cite_note-67) [Rhode Island](/wiki/Rhode_Island), [Connecticut](/wiki/Connecticut), and [Pennsylvania](/wiki/Pennsylvania), founded by [Roger Williams](/wiki/Roger_Williams_(theologian)), [Thomas Hooker](/wiki/Thomas_Hooker), and [William Penn](/wiki/William_Penn), respectively, combined democratic government with [freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion). These colonies became safe havens for persecuted religious minorities, including [Jews](/wiki/Jews).[[68]](#cite_note-68)[[69]](#cite_note-69)[[70]](#cite_note-70) In England, Baptists [Thomas Helwys](/wiki/Thomas_Helwys) and [John Smyth](/wiki/John_Smyth_(Baptist_minister)) influenced the liberal political thought of Presbyterian poet and politician [John Milton](/wiki/John_Milton) and philosopher [John Locke](/wiki/John_Locke), who in turn had both a strong impact on the political development in their home country ([English Civil War](/wiki/English_Civil_War), [Glorious Revolution](/wiki/Glorious_Revolution)) as well as in North America.[[71]](#cite_note-71)[[72]](#cite_note-72) The ideological basis of the [American Revolution](/wiki/American_Revolution) was largely provided by the radical [Whigs](/wiki/Whigs_(British_political_party)), who had been inspired by Milton, Locke, [James Harrington](/wiki/James_Harrington_(author)), [Algernon Sidney](/wiki/Algernon_Sidney), and other thinkers. The Whigs' "perceptions of politics attracted widespread support in America because they revived the traditional concerns of a Protestantism that had always verged on [Puritanism](/wiki/Puritanism)."[[73]](#cite_note-73) The [United States Declaration of Independence](/wiki/United_States_Declaration_of_Independence), the [United States Constitution](/wiki/United_States_Constitution) and (American) [Bill of Rights](/wiki/Bill_of_Rights) initiated a tradition of human and civil rights that was continued in the French [Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen](/wiki/Declaration_of_the_Rights_of_Man_and_the_Citizen) and the constitutions of numerous countries around the world, e. g. Latin America, Japan, India, Germany, and other European countries. It is also echoed in the [United Nations Charter](/wiki/United_Nations_Charter) and the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights).[[74]](#cite_note-74) In the nineteenth century, the churches that were based on Calvin's theology or influenced by it were deeply involved in social reforms, e.g. the [abolition of slavery](/wiki/Abolitionism_in_the_United_Kingdom) ([William Wilberforce](/wiki/William_Wilberforce), [Harriet Beecher Stowe](/wiki/Harriet_Beecher_Stowe), [Abraham Lincoln](/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln), and others), [women suffrage](/wiki/Women_suffrage), and [prison reforms](/wiki/Prison_reform).[[75]](#cite_note-75)[[76]](#cite_note-76) Members of these churches formed [co-operatives](/wiki/Co-operatives) to help the impoverished masses.[[77]](#cite_note-77) [Henry Dunant](/wiki/Henry_Dunant), a Reformed pietist, founded the [Red Cross](/wiki/Red_Cross) and initiated the [Geneva Conventions](/wiki/Geneva_Conventions).[[78]](#cite_note-78)[[79]](#cite_note-79) Some sources would view Calvinist influence as not always being solely positive. The Boers and so-called Afrikaner Calvinists allegedly used a twisted form of Calvinism and [Kuyperian](/wiki/Kuyperian) theology to justify apartheid[[80]](#cite_note-80) in South Africa (see [Afrikaner Calvinism](/wiki/Afrikaner_Calvinism)). As late as 1974, the majority of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa was convinced that their theological stances (including the story of the Tower of Babel) could justify apartheid.[[81]](#cite_note-81) In 1990, the Dutch Reformed Church document *Church and Society* maintained that although they were changing their stance on apartheid, they believed that within apartheid and under God's sovereign guidance, "...everything was not without significance, but was of service to the Kingdom of God."[[82]](#cite_note-82) It should be noted that these views were not universal and were condemned by many Calvinists outside South Africa. It was pressure from both outside and inside the Dutch Reformed Calvinist church which helped reverse apartheid in South Africa.

Throughout the world, the Reformed churches operate hospitals, homes for handicapped or elderly people, and educational institutions on all levels. For example, American Congregationalists founded [Harvard](/wiki/Harvard) (1636), [Yale](/wiki/Yale) (1701), and about a dozen other colleges.[[83]](#cite_note-83) [Princeton](/wiki/Princeton_University) was a Presbyterian foundation.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [List of Calvinist educational institutions in North America](/wiki/List_of_Calvinist_educational_institutions_in_North_America)
* [List of Reformed denominations](/wiki/List_of_Reformed_denominations)
* [Synod of Jerusalem (1672)](/wiki/Synod_of_Jerusalem_(1672)): Eastern Orthodox council rejecting Calvinist beliefs

### Doctrine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

* [Common grace](/wiki/Common_grace)
* [Reformed confessions of faith](/wiki/Reformed_confessions_of_faith)

### Related[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

* [Boer Calvinists](/wiki/Afrikaner_Calvinism): [Boere-Afrikaners](/wiki/Boere-Afrikaner) that hold to Reformed theology.
* [Huguenots](/wiki/Huguenot): followers of Calvinism in France, originating in the 16th and 17th century.
* [Pilgrims](/wiki/Pilgrims_(Plymouth_Colony)): Puritan separatists who left Europe for America in search of religious toleration, eventually settling in [New England](/wiki/New_England).
* [Presbyterians](/wiki/Presbyterians): Calvinists in Scotland and England.
* [Puritans](/wiki/Puritan): English separatists.
* [Continental Reformed church](/wiki/Continental_Reformed_church): Calvinist churches originating in continental Europe.
* [Waldensians](/wiki/Waldensians): Italian Protestants, preceded Calvinism but today identify with Reformed theology.

### Similar groups in other traditions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

* [Crypto-Calvinism](/wiki/Crypto-Calvinism): German Protestants accused of Calvinist leanings within the Lutheran church in the late 16th century
* [Jansenism](/wiki/Jansenism): a radical, Roman Catholic Augustinian group with some doctrinal distinctives similar to those of Calvinism
* [Calvinistic Methodists](/wiki/Calvinistic_Methodists)
* [Molinism](/wiki/Molinism)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

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## Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also)

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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* Picken, Stuart D.B. (2011) *Historical Dictionary of Calvinism* (2011) [excerpt](http://www.amazon.com/Historical-Dictionary-Calvinism-Dictionaries-Philosophies/dp/0810872242/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1402910792&sr=1-1&keywords=9780810872240)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Template:In Our Time](/wiki/Template:In_Our_Time)
* ["Five Points of Calvinism"](http://www.reformed.org/calvinism/index.html?mainframe=/calvinism/5Points_Dabney.html) by [Robert Lewis Dabney](/wiki/Robert_Lewis_Dabney).

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