

## 6. ‘CALVINISM’ AND ‘ARMINIANISM’

In this section of our report we turn, as we have been asked to do, to an area of doctrine that, in the past, has been contested within the traditions of our churches, but that also has significant implications for mission and evangelisation today. The issues are far from dead: for example they are sometimes aggressively promoted in university and college Christian Unions. We believe that the challenge of the mission of the Church today is the proper context within which the tension expressed in the historic terms ‘Calvinism’ and ‘Arminianism’ should be considered.

The terms ‘Calvinist’ and ‘Calvinism’ usually refer to a specific aspect of the theology of salvation (soteriology) that arose from the teaching of the French Reformer John Calvin (1509-1564) in Geneva. Drawing extensively on the theology of St Augustine of Hippo, and deploying a wide range of biblical material, Calvin applied the doctrine of the sovereignty of God with some logical rigour to the work of grace in the individual.<sup>1</sup> His teaching on unconditional election, with its corollary of double predestination (predestination to salvation or damnation) was further developed by later Reformed theologians and was articulated by the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. To reject that particular tenet is not to disown the Reformed tradition as a whole or to disparage Calvin’s massive contribution to the Christian theological tradition, particularly through his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and his many commentaries on the books of the Bible. The whole question was been recast by Karl Barth in the mid-twentieth century, who placed the decrees of God and the destiny of the whole human race within Christology: Jesus Christ is both the Elect of God and the one rejected by God. The terms ‘Calvinist’ and ‘Calvinism’ are used here to refer to specifically to the area of Calvin’s theology that is often described as ‘the doctrines of grace’.

The terms ‘Arminian’ and ‘Arminianism’ spring from the work of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), a Dutch reformed theologian who, in the early seventeenth century, wrote and preached against the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and reprobation.<sup>2</sup> From the seventeenth century onwards Arminius’ name has often been used to describe anti-calvinist religious

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1 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk III, chs xxi-xxiv; *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trans. and ed. J.K.S. Reid (London: James Clarke, 1961).

2 Jacobus Arminius, *Theological Works*, ed. C. Bangs (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986).

thought, whether or not that thought is directly based on Arminius' work.<sup>3</sup>

The Formal Conversations that led to the Covenant asked: 'What can Anglicans and Methodists confess together about God's gracious purpose, the mission of God, in which we are called to share?' The report believed that a shared understanding about the mission of God would 'put our quest for unity into the right perspective and give direction to the ways in which it is worked out in practice' (AMC: 84). We too believe that this missiological framework is the right one in which to consider the issues around 'the doctrines of grace'. We are also convinced that the conclusion that the Formal Conversations reached is fully justified, namely that, in spite of the various emphases that have existed in the past and may still remain to some extent today, our two churches should not be separated by this area of doctrine: 'We do not believe, therefore, that this issue, though an important one, should prevent closer unity between our churches, any more than it prevents communion between them' (117).

The Formal Conversations explored the terms in which our two churches confess the apostolic faith as a whole, as one of the marks of visible unity. They concluded that we share a common faith and make the same confession. They also recognised differences of context, idiom and emphasis. The report of the Conversations stated:

A careful comparison of Anglican and Methodist formularies and of more recent doctrinal statements will show that the two churches stand side by side in confessing the fundamental apostolic faith as it has been received in the orthodox Christian tradition. This inheritance of faith essentially comprises the trinitarian and christological doctrines, ecclesiology, and the doctrines concerning salvation. (110)

The report then lists eleven key areas of doctrinal common ground. These include – significantly in our context – belief in 'the prevenient grace of the Holy Spirit at work in us' and in 'the power of the Spirit, working through the means of grace, to overcome habits of sin and to conform us more and more to the image of Christ and to bring forth in us the fruit of the Spirit'.

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3 From an extensive literature, see e.g. Nicholas Tyacke *Anti-Calvinists: the Rise of English Arminianism c1590-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); P. White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Against this background, the report of the Formal Conversations goes on to note two areas of difference: the first concerning the individual's appropriation of salvation (sometimes called 'the doctrines of grace'), the second concerning 'Christian perfection'. In this chapter we explore the first of these issues, as we have undertaken to do. As the report puts it, this matter 'concerns such issues as: whether human beings have freewill to respond to the gospel; whether divine grace is irresistible; whether Christ died for all or only for the elect; and whether those who are saved will persevere to the end' (113). The report notes that these particular issues were among those that historically divided Arminians and Calvinists and that they continue to be important. 'We do not underestimate the seriousness of these issues' (113). Conscious of the sensitivity of these matters, we endorse the points that the report goes on to make, summarised as follows.

First, it is not the views of individuals, however influential they may have been in the formation of our traditions, that need to be considered when churches seek to reach theological agreement with each other, but the official positions of the churches as expressed in their formularies or doctrinal standards. It is what our churches have said in their official teachings – and what they have not said – that counts; and that is what we are concerned with primarily here.

Second, in the case of both our churches, these official statements have always been interpreted with differing emphases by individuals. Our churches today recognise and accept that this is the case and both of them make some space for a range of viewpoints. The report suggests, therefore, that 'the way in which the terms of subscription to the formularies [of both churches] are expressed softens the impact of underlying historical controversies' (117).

Third, these official statements are not polemical and are characterised by moderation. They do not advance the more extreme positions within the existing spectrum, but point to the possibility of some centre ground. In particular, those of the Church of England's formularies that are broadly 'Calvinist' in character do not support the doctrine of double predestination (predestination to condemnation; 'reprobation'); and the Methodist Church's 'Arminian' doctrinal standards do not countenance the view that we can be saved by our own efforts without prevenient divine grace (which would be Pelagianism) (114).

Against this background, we now comment briefly and in very general terms on the traditions of our churches and we look at the relevant formularies.

### **The Church of England<sup>4</sup>**

Although the first generation of English Reformers does not appear to have taken what would later come to be called a Calvinist approach to the doctrine of predestination, such an approach came to be widely accepted across the Church of England from the 1560s to the 1620s. Its classic expression was the treatise *The Golden Chain* by the Cambridge theologian William Perkins, which explained in great detail how the decrees of God work out in the lives of the elect and the reprobate respectively.

The Calvinist consensus in the Church of England was challenged from the 1620s onwards by Arminian theologians such as Richard Montague, later Bishop of Chichester, who responded to Roman Catholic criticism of the Church of England's Calvinism by arguing that the official formularies of the Church of England were not Calvinistic but allowed for the possibility of salvation for all. However, the dispute between Calvinists and Arminians was not only about 'the doctrines of grace', but also about polity and worship. The agenda of some Calvinists included radical further 'reform' of the English Church and the establishment of presbyterian church government, while the Arminians were associated with a high sacramental emphasis and the beautifying of church buildings. The battle that then ensued, precisely on these issues, tore apart both the English nation and the English Church during the middle years of the seventeenth century. The Calvinist position was put forward in the Westminster Confession of 1647, but Arminianism became the dominant tendency in the period following the restoration of the monarchy and the Church of England in 1660, and during the High Church reaction to the abolition of 'Anglicanism' before and during the Commonwealth.

During the early years of the eighteenth century the prevailing tendency within the Church of England was Arminian. However, although not all Calvinists were Evangelicals, there was a strong Calvinist strand within the Evangelical movement that emerged during the 1740s, associated with figures such as George Whitefield and Augustus Toplady (author of the hymn 'Rock of Ages, cleft for me'). As we shall see in more detail

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4 We are grateful for advice from Dr Martin Davie and Dr Colin Podmore in this section.

shortly, at the end of the eighteenth century moderate Evangelicals such as Charles Simeon were able to establish a theological *modus vivendi* with the Arminianism of Methodists such as John Wesley on the grounds that, while the two sides might disagree about predestination, they were agreed on the central point that our salvation is totally dependent on the prevenient grace of God. The belief that it was legitimate to differ on questions of predestination provided that the priority of grace was upheld became the standard approach within the Evangelical wing of the Church of England from the beginning of the nineteenth century until the middle years of the twentieth century and is reflected in the writings of representative Evangelical theologians such as William Goode, E.A. Litton and W.H. Griffith Thomas.

In the years after the Second World War there was a revival of specifically Calvinist theology among Anglican Evangelicals. This revival of Calvinism was influenced by a re-discovery of the Puritan theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth century whose works were reprinted by the newly formed Banner of Truth Trust and the most influential Anglican associated with it was the Evangelical scholar J. I. Packer. It should be noted, however, that the Evangelical movement has continued to include many who would not describe themselves as Calvinists. Calvinism represents one school of

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5 'Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season; they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely; they be made sons of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ; they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity. As the godly consideration of Predestination and our Election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons and such as feeling in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things, as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's Predestination is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation or into wretchedness of most unclean living no less perilous than desperation. Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth in Holy Scripture; and in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.'

thought in Anglican Evangelicalism and is definitely a minority position in the Church of England as a whole.

The principal text, dealing with this topic, in the Church of England's historic formularies is Article XVII of the Thirty-nine Articles.<sup>5</sup> The character of the statement is essentially biblical and pastoral. Its opening words are 'predestination to life'. It is extensively made up of the very words of Scripture: Romans 8 and 9 and Ephesians 1. It speaks of the comfort and assurance that believers derive from knowing that their salvation is in the hands of God and that God's purposes will be fulfilled. It warns against speculating about divine mysteries and of the shipwreck of faith that that can bring, either in despair or in throwing off all restraint in the belief that, if we are elected, no wilful sin of ours can affect our salvation (which would be Antinomianism). Finally, it exhorts us to embrace God's promises as they are set forth in Scripture and to live in accordance with God's expressed will in his Word.<sup>6</sup>

The approach of Article XVII follows the tone and content of the article on predestination in Cranmer's abortive attempt to produce a reformed canon law for the Church of England, the *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* (1553).<sup>7</sup> Beyond that source lies Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, which strikes exactly the same notes. (It was, of course, during the reading of Luther's Preface to the Romans that John Wesley's heart was 'strangely warmed' at the Aldersgate Street meeting on 24 May 1738.) Luther points out that Paul's teaching on predestination is necessary because it takes our salvation entirely out of our hands and places it in God's. 'For we are so weak and uncertain that, if it depended on us, not even a single person would be saved,' he says. Luther attacks those proud spirits who attempt to 'search the abyss of divine predestination' and to locate their position in God's secret purposes. They are bound to plunge to destruction, either through despair, or by casting off all restraint. In approaching this doctrine, Luther continues, we need to follow carefully the order of argument in the epistle. Paul first shows us our sin and weakness, then teaches us to embrace Christ and his gospel, and when we are securely set under the cross, yet facing the perils of suffering and

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6 For an exposition (with the Latin text) see E.C.S. Gibson, *The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England* (7<sup>th</sup> edn, London: Methuen, 1910), pp. 459-487.

7 Text in G. Bray, ed., *Tudor Church Reform: The Henrician Canons of 1535 and the Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press and Church of England Record Society, 2000), pp. 210-213.

death, he comforts us with the message of God's eternal purpose.<sup>8</sup> Luther's points are closely paralleled in the Article.

It is significant that every edition of the Book of Common Prayer, from Cranmer's first book in 1549 to the definitive edition of 1662, affirmed in the eucharistic prayer that Christ died 'for the sins of the whole world'.<sup>9</sup> Thus at the heart of the Church of England's historic liturgy (which was of course the service of Holy Communion that John and Charles Wesley used) we find this affirmation of the universal scope of Christ's redeeming love. It is also significant that the Thirty-nine Articles, unlike the later Lambeth Articles of 1595 and the Irish Articles of 1615 (and the Westminster Confession of 1647) make no mention of double predestination. And unlike the Lambeth Articles and the Westminster Confession, they have nothing to say about final perseverance. They present the hidden purpose of God as part of the good news, the gospel, and address it in a pastoral manner.

**While John and Charles Wesley would have made an explicit (ex animo) assent to the Articles of Religion, clergy and Readers of the Church of England now affirm that, together with the Book of Common Prayer (1662) and the Ordinal of 1662, 'they bear witness to the faith revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds'. This 'inheritance of faith' is taken as their 'inspiration and guidance under God' (Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C 15).<sup>10</sup>** As it has done since the early seventeenth century, the Church of England today contains some who identify with the Calvinist or Reformed tradition in this area of doctrine and some who more readily fit the description Arminian (as well as many who are hardly aware of the issues at all). And although communion between Anglicans is sometimes strained, 'the doctrines of grace' are not a particular pressure point. Those who see themselves as upholding the Reformed element within Anglicanism are noted, like others, for their commitment to evangelism, to the proclamation of the gospel.

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8 M. Luther, 'Preface to the Epistle to the Romans' [1522, 1546] in H.T. Lehmann, ed., *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960), vol. 35, p. 378. William Tyndale also used Luther's Prefaces to the New Testament extensively, but freely and creatively: see D. Daniel, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 119ff, 149f.

9 *The First and Second Prayer Books of Edward the Sixth* (London: Dent [Everyman], 1910).

10 For a study of the development of clerical assent in the Church of England see C.J. Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity* (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), ch.4.

## The Methodist Church<sup>11</sup>

The collective self-understanding of the Methodist Church today is unequivocally Arminian. The doctrinal clause of the Methodist Church's Deed of Union does not make any explicit comment on these matters, but refers to the first four volumes of John Wesley's sermons and to his *Notes on the New Testament*, which are clearly Arminian in emphasis. The clause makes it clear that these secondary standards 'are not intended to impose a system of formal or speculative theology on Methodist preachers, but to set up standards of preaching and belief which should secure loyalty to the fundamental truths of the gospel of redemption and ensure the continued witness of the Church to the realities of the Christian experience of salvation.' Like the Anglican Article XVII, this statement is restrained, pastoral and experiential in tone. Though, as a priest of the Church of England, John Wesley had lived with Article XVII in his ministry in that Church, he omitted it from the version of the Thirty-nine Articles that he prepared for Methodists in America.<sup>12</sup>

A popular summary of Arminian Methodism – later incorporated into the Catechism of the Methodist Church – derives from the founder of the Wesley Guild, William Fitzgerald, in 1903, which he called 'the four-Alls of Methodism':

1. All need to be saved
2. All can be saved
3. All can know they are saved
4. All can be saved to the uttermost

To many today this way of putting it seems rather individualistic and inward looking, with no mention of the Church, the sacraments or, indeed, the wider world.

John and Charles Wesley came from Puritan stock through both their parents, Samuel and Susanna: their mother kept the Puritan tradition of devotion and discipline alive. The brothers also inherited the High Church, Arminian tradition within the Church of England from both parents. The

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11 We are grateful to the Revd J.Munsey Turner and the Revd Dr Martin Wellings for advice in this section.

12 See F. Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1970), p. 249; T.C. Oden, *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), p. 122. H. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), p. 509, n.70.



sixteenth-century writings that particularly shaped John Wesley's theology were not the works of Arminius, but the Church of England's Homilies and Richard Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.<sup>13</sup> We should not overlook the fact that Arminius himself (a Reformed theologian) and both the Wesleys taught the doctrine of prevenient (or 'preventing') grace, the divine initiative that precedes any human response. John Wesley held that 'no man living is without some preventing grace, and every degree of grace is a degree of life.'<sup>14</sup> The Methodist Conference of 1745 considered how close Methodist preachers could come to Calvinism. The answer agreed was:

1. In ascribing all good to the free grace of God.
2. In denying all natural free-will and all power antecedent to grace.  
And
3. In excluding all merit from man, even from what he has or does by the grace of God.<sup>15</sup>

As Charles Wesley wrote (*italics original*):

Thy *undistinguishing Regard*  
Was cast on *Adam's* fallen race  
For *All* Thou hast in Christ prepared  
*Sufficient, sovereign, saving Grace.*

The sense of the universality of the love and grace of God was what motivated their evangelistic zeal. As Charles Wesley put it in the hymn ('Where shall my wond'ring soul begin?') that he wrote after his 'conversion' on 21 May 1738:

Outcasts of men, to you I call...  
He spreads his arms to embrace you all.

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13 H.B. McGonigle, *Sufficient Saving Grace: John Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2001); K. Cracknell and S. White, *An Introduction to World Methodism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 100.

14 13 Letter to John Mason (1776), cited Kenneth Cracknell, *Our Doctrines: Methodist Theology as Classical Christianity* (Cliff College Publishing, 1998), p. 63. G. Wainwright, *Geoffrey Wainwright on Wesley and Calvin* (Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1987).

15 Conference *Minutes* (1812 edn), I, p. 24.

The strong affirmation of the prevenience of grace has continued to mark Methodist doctrine to the present day.

The early Methodist movement was divided between the Arminian views represented by the Wesley brothers and John Fletcher, on the one hand, and the Calvinist views, in the persons of George Whitefield and Selina Countess of Huntingdon and the leaders of the Welsh revival, notably Howell Harris, on the other, with Evangelical polemicists who were not part of organised Methodism, such as Augustus Toplady, contributing ferociously from the wings. Bitter conflicts, marked by caricature and mutual insult, disfigured the Evangelical revival, largely within the Church of England, over these doctrines in the second half of the eighteenth century. Attempts at reconciliation there were, however. For a time John Wesley and Whitefield agreed not to attack each other publicly and to work in separate spheres of influence. John Wesley preached at George Whitefield's funeral in 1770 (though this was not quite the olive branch that it appeared to be and it was what Wesley left out of his oration that enraged Whitefield's supporters). Eventually part of the Calvinist constituency of Methodism went out from the Church of England, forming the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and the Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales (later the Presbyterian Church of Wales). The quarrel within the Evangelical Revival movement during the eighteenth century was not so much resolved as overtaken by issues of social reform and the anti-slavery movement. In the nineteenth century the controversy became less intense.<sup>16</sup> The membership of the Methodist Church today is overwhelmingly Arminian.

### **Affirming together the grace of God**

The convictions that were so passionately proclaimed in the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival are still alive within both our churches. As the Common Statement noted, in practice both our churches contain a range of emphases in this area of doctrine, within the limits of the forms of assent that they require. This degree of latitude helps to maintain communion (koinonia) within each of our churches. The report concluded that this issue, though important, should not prevent closer unity between our churches, any more than it prevents communion within them (117).

The tension between the Reformed and the Methodist approaches to questions of the appropriation of salvation was addressed by the international dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the

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16 Cracknell and White, pp. 113-7.

World Alliance of Reformed Churches at its meeting in Cambridge in 1987.<sup>17</sup> The dialogue noted that grace had been a major emphasis in both traditions; both had affirmed that ‘from first to last our salvation depends on the comprehensiveness of God’s grace as prevenient, as justifying, as sanctifying, as sustaining, as glorifying.’ But, in their ways of confessing that primary truth, the two traditions had emphasised different aspects: the one stressing God’s sovereignty in election, the other the freedom of human response. The dialogue believed that these differences of emphasis should not be overstated. It cited John Wesley’s account (though without references) of three areas in which he concurred with Calvin: ‘(1) in ascribing all good to the free grace of God; (2) in denying all natural free will, and all power antecedent to grace; (3) in excluding all merit from man, even for what he has or does by the grace of God.’ The dialogue stated that, for John Wesley, prevenient grace was the universal inheritance of Christ’s saving work and enabled a free, responsible decision in response to the offer of the gospel, while not guaranteeing salvation in any individual case. It affirmed that the imperative of missionary outreach applied equally in the two traditions, though the emphasis in terms of motivation might be different. It concluded that such historic differences of perspective can be mutually corrective and enriching and certainly should not constitute barriers that divide the churches.<sup>18</sup>

Two hundred years before, on 30 October 1787, a rather similar dialogue had occurred between John Wesley and the moderate Calvinist Charles Simeon (1759-1836, vicar of Holy Trinity, Cambridge 1782-1836). Simeon opened the conversation, remarking that as they were known as Arminian and Calvinist respectively, they should be at daggers drawn. But before that happened, he wished to ask Mr Wesley a few questions.

‘Pray, sir,’ Simeon began, ‘do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not put it into your heart?’

‘Yes,’ replied Wesley, ‘I do indeed.’ ‘And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything that you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?’ continued Simeon.

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17 Text in J. Gros, H. Meyer and W.G. Rusch, eds, *Growth in Agreement II: Reports and Agreed Statements of Ecumenical Conversations on a World Level, 1982-1998* (Geneva: WCC Publications; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), pp. 270-274.

18 See also Wainwright, *Geoffrey Wainwright on Wesley and Calvin*.

‘Yes, solely through Christ.’...

‘Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God. Are you not in some way or another to keep yourself by your own power?’

‘No.’

‘What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother’s arms?’

‘Yes, altogether.’

‘And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God, to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?’

‘Yes, I have no hope but in Him.’

‘Then, sir, with your leave,’ replied Simeon, ‘I will put up my dagger again: for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification, my final perseverance. It is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be the ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.’<sup>19</sup>

Simeon’s irenic conclusion is still relevant today. Whether we lean towards the Calvinist or the Arminian tradition, we can affirm together the truth of the prevenient grace of God, as expressed in the words of Scripture: ‘By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no-one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life’ (Ephesians 2.8-10). Differences of emphasis within that shared affirmation should not hold Christians apart or prevent communion between churches. Because the grace of God goes before us into every situation we have an incentive for working closely together in mission and evangelisation.

### **Working with the grace of God in mission**

A clear area of convergence among many churches in contemporary mission theology is the *missio dei*, the mission of God. This concept provides a framework for a shared understanding of mission that allows for the different emphases that Calvinism and Arminianism have brought

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19 L.E. Elliott-Binns, *The Early Evangelicals* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1953), pp. 206-207, citing Carus, *Memoirs of Simeon*, pp. 182f.

to mission and evangelism. The central insight of *missio dei* is that mission is primarily an activity of the Trinitarian God. God the Holy Trinity is the origin of mission and the church is ‘the privileged instrument of God’s mission’,<sup>20</sup> though not the exclusive instrument.

*Missio dei* holds the different emphases of Calvinism and Arminianism within its overarching concept. However, both Calvinist and Arminian approaches are likely to be worked out differently in the actual practice of mission and evangelism. Calvinists may emphasise the element of rescue from depravity, while Arminians are likely to emphasise the personal response to the gracious activity of God.

Calvinism’s stress on the sovereignty of God in election means that the missional activity of God in the world is not dependent on the Church or on human activity – God’s action in the world is both free and sovereign. Equally, the emphasis in Arminianism on the freedom of human response reflects the essence and motivation of God’s missional activity, which is love. God’s prevenient grace, common to both understandings of salvation and strongly affirmed by Anglicans and Methodists alike, is an outworking of the mission of God, the divine activity that draws the created order to the Creator’s love.

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20 See *Called to Love and Praise* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing House, 1999), 3.2.1 and *The Mission and Ministry of the Whole Church*, GS Misc 854 (Archbishops’ Council 2007), page 57.