

## “New Calvinism”

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by Wayne Goff

“**New Calvinism**” is what the recently embattled preacher for a megachurch in the Northwest has been attributed as believing. It is indeed “new” in a sense, because it is not the usual Calvinism. But the one point that was emphasized in a recent newspaper article was that he was a proponent of **Predestination**. I would think that would be one of the more unpopular doctrines of Calvinism, yet here is a very popular preacher espousing the doctrine. Time Magazine marked “**New Calvinism**” as one of the “10 Ideas Changing the World Right Now.” So how does this differ from the old Calvinism?

### Mark Driscoll

Mark Driscoll and John Piper are two popular advocates of “New Calvinism.” Mr. Driscoll has mentioned four main differences between the old and new Calvinism.

1. New Calvinism is missional and seeks to create and redeem culture.
2. New Calvinism is flooding into cities.
3. Old Calvinism was generally cessationist (gifts of the Holy Spirit have ceased), while New Calvinism believes in ongoing miracles.
4. New Calvinism is open to dialogue with other Christian positions.

Not all denominational Calvinists are thrilled with these “New Calvinists.” They **both** claim to believe in all five points of Calvinism — total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints — but it appears that New Calvinists do not talk about these things unless you ask them. And New Calvinists do not hold to the same doctrines on the subjects of infant baptism, covenant theology, and spiritual gifts as the old Calvinists believe.

Mark Driscoll, for example, does not affirm infant baptism. He argues that there is no case of infant baptism in the whole Bible. Many Calvinists would reject that idea, but good for Mr. Driscoll. And as Mr. Driscoll pointed out himself in the four differences, he believes in the continuation of miracles. The typical Calvinist would not believe that. And finally, New Covenant theology teaches that the Old Testament and the New Testament are two separate “covenants” and that the New supersedes the Old. Many Old Calvinists believe in both the Old and New Testaments as binding on Christians today.

### So What?

This article is just to bring us up to date with what is going on in some of the megachurches in the country and how their religious doctrines are evolving. Mr. Driscoll was asked to step down from his position recently, and he has agreed to do so. However, his views and those of his fellow preachers remain the same.

### Predestination

These “**New Calvinists**” believe in the *Calvinistic* doctrine of predestination. That is, that some people in the world were chosen *unconditionally* by God to eternal life and some were chosen *unconditionally* by God to eternal condemnation. That is certainly an unpopular doctrine today, and while I admire those who will admit to believing an unpopular doctrine, it is still a false doctrine.

In a contradictory fashion, Mr. Driscoll still believes that you should preach to the lost because they *might become* the elect! So he says one thing, but seems to practice another.

Yes, God “*predestined*” people to be saved, but not arbitrarily, unconditionally. Romans 8:29-30 teaches us that He “*predestined*” the saved to “*be conformed to the image of His Son.*” So He chose **THE KIND** of people who would be saved before the Scheme of Redemption was ever enacted. But He did not choose in advance which particular individuals would be saved! God desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (2 Pet. 3:9).

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