

## AC Distortion Compared to Pauline Doctrine: the Great Divide

<http://www.reformed.org/calvinism/>

The teachings of **reformed.org** summarize one example of Calvinist error addressed in **SummerSalon14** discussion. Online searches locate many more websites like it.

Central to the work of this foundation is polemic exposure of error that *opposes* divine revelation. Paul asked the Galatians, “Have I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?” And Jude exhorts believers to contend earnestly for the faith. Paul’s letters form the bulk of New Testament doctrine, constituting the foundation of truth that identifies believers as the blood bought body of Christ. *So, to incorrectly teach Pauline doctrine is to teach error.*

Exposing this error must include, among many topics, peeling back the layers of hundreds of years of mistranslated, misstated, and mischaracterized theology. Central in that effort is exposing the errors of what I call, *Applied Calvinism (AC)*. (AC) pervades the back waters of many seminaries —if it is not in open evidence in institutions’ formal documents. And pulpit exposition of (AC) confuses evangelical, charismatic, and mainline denominations alike with distorted doctrines of *election* and *salvation*; dominionist *identity for Christ’s body*; and lack of distinction in the identity of the *nation Israel*.

Today, the fate of John Calvin is not known. (While technically this is true in the case of *every* departed soul<sup>1</sup>) —the ill effect of what has been devised from the Institutes of the Christian Religion —requires individuals to consider whether Five-Point Calvinism is truth or whether its worst applied tenants are evidence of biblical and theological error. While we honestly admit harm has come by use of Calvin’s teachings and writings — at the same time we agree: If there is merit in his work he will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ. But the *application* of Calvin’s Institutes, (AC) in the flower, TULIP, reveals Reform doctrines counter to doctrines penned by the church’s appointed teacher, Paul.

The first mischaracterization by (AC) is the notion that all facets of the discussion revolve around *either* defending God’s sovereign grace *or else* needing to refute a tentative nature of salvation. But dialectic cannot address the conundrum of AC. That polarization only takes us away from some of the key questions that should be answered.

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<sup>1</sup> This does not suggest any chinks in the armour of the doctrine of assurance of salvation. The statement merely reflects the fact that no one is privy —this side of eternity —to the spiritual condition of a departed soul. Our beliefs on this matter are entirely a matter of personal conviction. But Heb 11:1, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” is not interpreted by AC as *certain* and knowable by us.

Rather, it's more a matter of agreeing that contradictory ideas cannot all be true. All may be false, but all cannot be true. What is presented as "gospel" in AC cannot be true *if* what contradicts (AC) *is* true...regardless of any points of agreement between AC and non-Calvinist teachings. (We do thank God we are of One body. Heaven forbid when polarity in this discussion judges as lost another's spiritual standing based on that one's position on Calvinism.)

Since 2004 an effective refutation of applied Calvinism has been Dave Hunt's book, *What Love is This?* (subtitled: *Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God.*) Ten years later **SummerSalon14** is featuring the work of Dr. Steve Lemke, Provost of NOBTS. He has co-authored with David Allen, *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism.* Since this Forum could literally spend the entire 2 hours on "TULIP," Dr. Lemke will limit his discussion to a brief overview of that flower and then focus on the "I", Calvinism's teaching on irresistible grace. See elsewhere in **SummerSalon14** paraphrased transcript of Dr. Lemke's remarks.