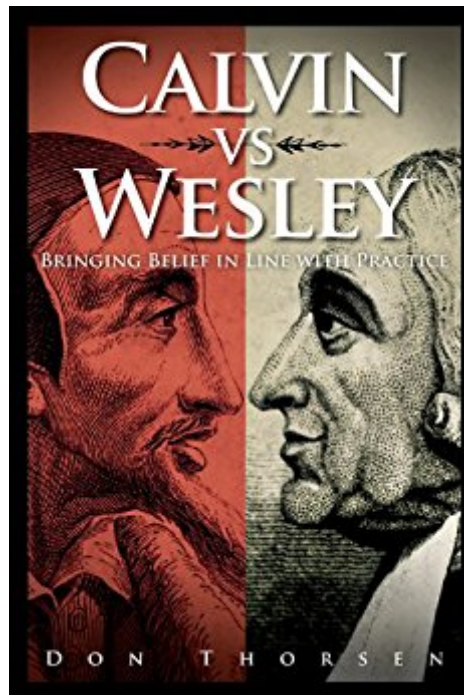




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Calvin Vs. Wesley: Bringing Belief In Line With Practice



Synopsis

Congregations are made up of people with all sorts of theologies. Pastor Mike Slaughter even says that these can stand in the way of the church's mission of social and personal holiness. But most people do not adopt a theology on purpose, mostly they merely breathe in the prevailing cultural air. The theology "de jour" seems to be Calvinist, with its emphasis on the elect and the other worldly salvation. In fact, there is so much Calvinism saturating the culture, that some do not even know there is an alternative way of thinking about their faith. They don't know where to go to find a viable option; they don't even know the key words to search Google. So people are left thinking like Calvinists but living with a desire to change the world, offering grace and hope to hurting people in mission and ministry—loving the least, the last, and the lost. In other words, they are living like Wesleyans. This book shows what Calvinist and Wesleyans actually believe about human responsibility, salvation, the universality of God's grace, holy living through service, and the benefits of small group accountability--and how that connects to how people can live. Calvinists and Wesleyans are different, and by knowing the difference, people will not only see the other benefits of Wesleyan theology but will be inspired to learn more. By knowing who they are as faithful people of God, they will be motivated to reach out in mission with renewed vigor. And they won't be obstacles to grace and holiness, but they can be better disciples and advocates for Christ through service in this world.

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Customer Reviews

This book, one which I have found helpful, really is more about bringing belief in line with practice, then it is about either John Calvin or John Wesley. This is the stated purpose of the author, as it is not a book putting down or lifting up either the person of John Calvin or John Wesley. The author believes very clearly that Wesley's method is how people really live out their spiritual commitments. It may actually dispel some of the institutional mythology for folks who are "reluctant to pick up one more institutional church book". Why like this book about an old and seemingly never ending battle, If it even is a battle in a postmodern era? In my opinion, the church seems to refuse to talk about theology anymore. Instead we leave that to the "trained professional", and much to church's embarrassment, find itself lacking when asked to look at questions such as the author asks in the book? Questions such as: "Do you believe in the power or the love of God??" Each position implies an entirely different sequence of events. If your personal theology, which implies that every Christian is also a theologian, differs from the pastor of the church; then this may result in the simple but perfectly understandable position that so many Christians take of "that's wrong!!!" Wrong is questionable but for people involved in the certainty of the binary positions of "Yes" or "No", it can easily become an all out war. There is so much more in this book that the author takes great pains to explore.

Excellent presentation that clarifies the basic and specific differences between Wesley's and Calvin's doctrines as related to scripture and the human condition. It describes the key issues about the nature of God as viewed by each and how those views bode for the salvation of individuals with respect to man's free will to accept or reject salvation vs God's sovereignty and pre-destination. It is an easily understood presentation of the differences and agreements of the theological / biblical precepts between the two views and the basis for each theology. While it favors Wesley's view, it clarifies the arguments of both. Must read for any who is interested in the topic of salvation, or even those who may not consider religion as an institution or don't think of the nature of God.

I think this book is a MUST read for anyone interested in how Calvin and Wesley differed. The only downside of the book is that it is too short (about 150 pages). However, that may be a plus for people who may not be looking for a book that takes too long to plow through. This book is an easy read, very clear, and very informed. The author presents evidence for every claim he makes and makes it obvious when he is sharing his own opinion on a matter. This book is a great intro for anyone who wants to make a careful comparison between John Calvin and John Wesley. David Martinez

Excellent book on theological differences between Calvin and Wesley. Good and easy read. Excellent commentary on modern day Christianity in the Wesleyan tradition.

This was a very well written, engaging book juxtaposing John Calvin's thought with John Wesley's. The author argues that most Christian ought to follow Wesley's understanding of Christianity over above (not necessarily against) Calvin's and that even when unaware we tend to lean toward Wesley's vision.

I wish I had Dr. Thorsen's book when I attended Asbury Theological Seminary as a young man. Calvin vs. Wesley is a clear, easily understood presentation of basic Calvinist and Wesleyan theology. It uses the tool of "compare and contrast" to express what every Methodist, Wesleyan, "holiness," Pentecostal, or "charismatic" Christian, both clergy and lay, should know about why they believe and behave as they do. Thorsen doesn't attack Calvin or Calvinists. He simply lays different aspects of the theologies side by side. As always, you get to choose. The book certainly convinced my Lutheran wife. She ordered copies to give to friends.

This book really helped me understand the differences between the Christianity I was taught as a child (Calvin-based) and the only Christianity I was willing to embrace as an adult (Wesley-based). The author proposes an interesting hypothesis as well: that even those who pay lip allegiance to Calvinistic interpretations of scripture actually live more in accord with Wesleyan interpretations!

With so much professional bias written into study bibles, commentaries, Christian history and the like it is really refreshing to read such a well balanced book giving us an honest and well researched account of the contrast between these two men. As well as where they agree. Highly recommend. It and one can only hope that Thorsten will continue to write.

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