**Comparison of Calvinism versus Wesleyan-Arminianism**

At the Synod of Dort in 1619, Dutch Calvinists ruled against the beliefs of Remonstrants. Calvinists followed Theodore Beza’s teaching on double predestination. Beza was a student of the Protestant Reformer John Calvin. Remonstrants followed Jacob Arminius’ teaching on free will. Arminius was another student of John Calvin. Since then, the debate between the Calvinists and Remonstrants in Holland has shaped the conversation across many Protestant denominations concerning the nature of salvation through Christ. In fact, branch of theology known as soteriology (meaning “study of salvation” in Greek) has dealt extensively with the points of dispute at the Synod of Dort for over 400 years.

TULIP is an acronym that represents the Five Points of Calvinism as formulated at the Synod of Dort. TULIP was first mentioned by Cleland McAfee in 1905 at a lecture to other Presbyterian ministers in Newark, NJ. In contrast, the Four Alls is a theological shorthand for Wesleyan-Arminianism, developed by W.B. Fitzgerald in the *Roots of Methodism (1903)*. Both sides of the debate refer to the Bible. Wesleyans emphasize God’s grace while Calvinists emphasize God’s Sovereignty. Historically, the emphasis on God’s grace has led to more effective sharing of the Gospel, and has led Methodists to engage in ministry with the poor and marginalized of society to a greater degree than Calvinists.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Five Point Calvinism (TULIP) | Wesleyan-Arminianism (The Four Alls) |
| Total Depravity (Ephesians 2:1-6)  *The Image of God is shattered by sin. Only Christ can regenerate it.*  Key Doctrine: Original Sin  (Chapter 6) | All Need to Be Saved (Romans 3:23).  *The Image of God is tarnished by sin. Christ can restore us to our intended purpose.*  Key Doctrines: Original Sin, The Image of God  (MC Article VII, Sermon 44: Original Sin, Sermon 45: The New Birth) |
| Unconditional Election (John 15:16)  *God has chosen whom He will save, and whom he will condemn. God’s election prior to our actions is not dependent on our choices or free will (double predestination).*  Key Doctrine: Predestination  (Chapter 3) | All Can Be Saved (1 Timothy 2:4).  *God foreknows who He will save, but determines their salvation based on the faith in Christ of an individual.*  Key Doctrine: Prevenient Grace (MC Article VIII, EUB Article VII, Sermon 3, Sermon 46) |
| Limited Atonement (John 10:11)  *Christ died only for the elect, meaning those He knew would be His Sheep in advance.*  Key Doctrines: Atonement, Justification  (Chapter 8, Chapter 11) | All Can Be Saved (Romans 5:6-8)  *Christ died to atone for the sins of the whole world, both those who would accept Him as Savior and those would reject Him.*  Key Doctrines: Atonement (MC Article XX, EUB Article VIII), Justifying Grace (MC Article IX, EUB Article IX, Sermon 5) |
| Irresistible Grace (John 6:44)  *God’s effectual calling to the elect cannot be resisted. If it is resisted, the calling was not effectual from the start.*  Key Doctrine: Election (Chapter 10) | All Can Know They Are Saved (Hebrews 11:1)  *God’s grace can be rejected. However, once someone accepts God’s offer of grace in their life, they can feel through faith in Christ that they are assured of their salvation.*  Key Doctrine: Assurance (Sermon 7, Sermon 17) |
| Perseverance of the Saints (Revelation 14:12-13)  *Once saved, always saved.*  Key Doctrines: Perseverance of the Saints (Chapter 17) | All Can Know They Are Saved to the Uttermost (1 Thessalonians 5:23)  *It is possible to become perfectly aligned with God’s will in our lifetime by God’s grace.*  Key Doctrines: Sanctifying Grace  (EUB Article XI, Sermon 18), Christian Perfection (Sermon 40) |

Note: Chapters under TULIP refer to “The Westminster Confession of Faith”. Articles refer to the Articles of Religion for The Methodist Church and the Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren, established as church doctrine since 1968. Both documents remain permanently in The United Methodist Church’s Book of Discipline as a part of the Doctrine and Standards of the UMC’s Constitution. Both are based on the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religions found in *The Book of Common Prayer (1662)*. Sermons refer to John Wesley’s 52 “Standard Sermons” assigned to preachers on the circuits of Britain and the North American frontier in the late 1700s and early 1800s.