Reformed resurgence is happening today. It is young and vast, and stretches across the English-speaking world. You can see this resurgence in Australia, North America, Britain, and other parts of the world where conferences on Calvin are held, not only in old-line Calvinist denominations, but also in Baptist churches, independent churches, and charismatic churches. A fever for the glory of God has gotten into the bloodstream of a new generation. Even *Time* magazine noted this trend in the past year, calling "New Calvinism" one of ten key ideas sweeping the Western world today.1

What is going on? Where did this resurgence of Calvinism come from?

I first read William Cunningham’s *Introduction to Historical Theology* about twenty-five years ago. It said that in the year 1800, weakness, slumber, and death reigned in the Church of Scotland. Pulpits that had proclaimed the glories of God and the crown covenant rights of the Lord Jesus Christ had become cold and moralistic.

God did three things to change this situation. The first was to prompt the publication of a book by Thomas McCrie titled *The Life of John Knox*. Within a matter of years, that book was in the home of every godly layperson in Scotland. Reading what God had done through the life and ministry of Knox restoked the fire of evangelicalism.

Second, a minister was converted. This preacher had been more interested in mathematics than the gospel, but when he thought he was about to die, he was brought to God by saving grace and faith in

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Christ. That man was Thomas Chalmers. Under his teaching, a new evangelical revival in Scotland blossomed into full flower.

Third, boys born from 1801 to 1810 with names such as McCheyne, Bonar, and Buchanan grew up under the evangelical influence of Chalmers. That led to the revival of Reformed Christianity in Scotland. It also influenced the entire English-speaking world from that time to today.

I believe a similar resurgence is under way today, and I believe there are similar factors behind it. In fact, I see at least nine factors that have contributed specifically to the resurgence of Calvinism in America. But before I go into those factors, let me explain a few things.

First, the new Calvinism is not the full-orbed confessional Calvinism of the Three Forms of Unity or the Westminster Standards. The new Calvinism draws from the rich deposit of truth that has been bequeathed to us from older and wiser theologians, and it appreciates the soteriology of the older confessional Calvinism. But it does not adequately appreciate the ecclesiology that goes with it. In short, the new Calvinism is not identical to the old Calvinism. That is important for us to understand.

Second, the new Calvinism is a mixed theology. Every work on earth is a mixture. If you see slow but sure spiritual growth in your congregation due to the operation of the Holy Spirit and to the faithful administrations of the means of grace, is that work in your congregation pure and without sin? No, it is not. Every church in this world has some impurity. Likewise the new Calvinism contains considerable impurity.

In every factor that I list, we could find something to criticize. So I suggest, especially if you have drunk deeply from the pristine well of confessional Calvinism, that you appreciate what God is doing in a work that is mixed in character, and glorify Him by shepherding this awakening to a fuller appreciation of the glorious doctrine of the church as revealed in Scripture.

That said, here are nine factors that have contributed to this resurgence of Calvinism in America.

1. Three Preachers

Three key preachers have contributed to this new Calvinism: Charles


Under his teaching, a new name such as McCheyne, into full flower. The evangelical influence of evangelical Christianity in Scot-speaking world from that day today, and I believe I see at least nine factors in the old Calvinism. That is that work in your theology. Every work isn't sure spiritual growth in the Holy Spirit and to the grace, is that work in your it is not. Every church in the new Calvinism contains something to criticize. So reply from the pristine well state what God is doing in glorify Him by shepherd the glorious doctrine of the have contributed to this new Calvinism: Charles Spurgeon in the nineteenth century; David Martyn Lloyd-Jones in the middle of the twentieth century; and John MacArthur, who is still preaching today. One preacher was Baptist, one a Presbyterian/Independent Congregationalist, and one a dispensationalist. God certainly showed His sovereignty in choosing three such disparate men to revive an appreciation for Calvinism!

Spurgeon's fifty-seven-volume set of sermons preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle has been commended by ministers as diverse as W. A. Criswell, Billy Graham, Stephen Olford, John Wolvoord, R. G. Lee, Charles Feinberg, Jack Hyles, and D. James Kennedy. Some of those men were avid anti-Calvinists, yet all heartily recommended the work of the great Calvinistic Baptist preacher Spurgeon to a generation of unsuspecting evangelicals, who swallowed his teachings hook, line, and sinker.

Spurgeon said, "I have my own private opinion that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified unless you preach what is nowadays called Calvinism." He consistently introduced generation after generation of Bible-believing preachers to the Word of God via the teachings of Calvinism in a grand vision of the display of God's grace in the work of salvation.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, whom J. I. Packer says is the greatest man he has ever known, also has had a staggering impact on twentieth-century evangelicalism. He towered like a giant in Britain in influencing Tyndale House, InterVarsity Fellowship, the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the Christian Medical Society, and the Evangelical Library. He also inspired many leaders in the United States. His sermons spoke powerfully to men such as my boyhood pastor, who had never read anything like Lloyd-Jones's exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. My pastor was completely caught up with that exposition and passed on the essence of those great sermons to me and others.

In his Preaching and Preachers, Lloyd-Jones encouraged a generation of expositional evangelical ministers. In his Spiritual Depression,
he encouraged numerous hurting saints by providing comfort from the gospel.

Donald A. Carson said that he once slipped into a service at Westminster Chapel in London to hear Lloyd-Jones. After one sermon, Carson thought: “What’s all the fuss about? He’s just preaching the Bible.” Eight weeks later, Carson realized that he was sitting under the most masterful expositor of Scripture ever.

Leader after leader can testify about Lloyd-Jones’s impact. In short, Lloyd-Jones had a massive impact on his generation.

Lloyd-Jones was a Calvinist. He didn’t wear that label on his sleeve and didn’t use Calvinistic theological jargon, but he was emphatically a Calvinist. From the Welsh Methodist Church, which is Presbyterian, Lloyd-Jones brought sound Reformed theology into every sermon he preached. Lloyd-Jones would preach an evangelistic sermon every Sunday evening. Three hundred of those sermons were recorded on tape. Tim Keller, pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, has listened to all of those sermons. He credits Lloyd-Jones with teaching him how to preach the gospel.

The third key preacher of the new Calvinism, John MacArthur, is still preaching today. MacArthur was raised in a dispensational Bible church, but he was so committed to the Word of God that he was willing to go wherever the Word took him. It led him to the glory of the sovereign God and the doctrines of grace. MacArthur’s preaching, which was enriched by the doctrines of Calvinism, is heard in many languages by millions of people all over the world today.

I will never forget the story MacArthur told at one of his conferences about a young girl from a Muslim country who was attending the Master’s College. She had come to faith in Christ by listening to a broadcast of MacArthur’s sermons read by a man in her own language. She was from a Muslim family in a Muslim country, but she came to faith by listening to a radio-broadcast sermon.

Her father was a mid-level official in government. He loved his daughter so much that he allowed her to pursue her dream of going to the Master’s College in California. She majored in computers and technology because her country would not allow her to study anything that included Christianity or the Bible. But along with her studies in computers, she began to study Greek, Hebrew, and related languages because she wanted her language of her people.

When she flew home, vice agents of her country were released her. When she got home, she was asked, “Are you a Christian?”

She said, “Yes, I am.” Her father then took a leg and began beating her. Her father walked in and told her he would put her on a plane and take her to California at the Master’s with MacArthur.

MacArthur asked her as your uncle was beating you thinking that this man has a Savior that I would die for you.

I was humbled to the depth of the glory of God’s grace, the sovereignty of God that she was with MacArthur.

She learned that from MacArthur and the sovereignty of God.

2. Books
The second factor in the Reformation of Truth Trust. Lloyd-Jones in the late 1950s to establish a trust fund, you could find Puritan neglected libraries or antique shops in England. The Banner of Truth carefully publish Puritan literature. Students in the 1970s writing, suddenly had access to Satan’s Devices and Stephen’s Attributes of God. These books
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languages because she wanted to translate the Scriptures into the language of her people.

When she flew home, she was met at the airport by secret service agents of her country, who interrogated her for two hours, then released her. When she got home, her uncle was waiting for her. He asked, “Are you a Christian?”

She said, “Yes, I am.” He said, “You have shamed our family and you will pay the price.” He picked up a chair, broke it over her back, then took a leg and began beating her. When she feared for her life, her father walked in and rescued her. He drove her to the airport, put her on a plane, and told her not to come back. She arrived back in California at the Master’s College, and just a few days later met with MacArthur.

MacArthur asked the young woman, “What were you thinking as your uncle was beating you to death?” She responded, “I was thinking that this man has a religion that he would kill for, but I have a Savior that I would die for.”

I was humbled to the dust that this young woman knew so much of the glory of God’s grace, the power of the Savior, and the sovereignty of God that she was willing to lay down her life for her Savior. She learned that from MacArthur, who teaches the doctrines of grace and the sovereignty of God.

2. Books

The second factor in the Reformed resurgence has been books. The grandfather organization that influenced this movement is the Banner of Truth Trust. Lloyd-Jones, Iain Murray, and others met in the late 1950s to establish a trust to republish Puritan literature. In those days, you could find Puritan literature only on the dusty shelves of neglected libraries or antiquarian bookstores in Britain and New England. The Banner of Truth Trust began to systematically and carefully publish Puritan literature as well as a magazine, to whet an appetite for sound, spiritual books.

Students in the 1970s who were used to shallow spiritual reading, suddenly had access to Thomas Brooks’ Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices and Stephen Charnock’s massive The Existence and Attributes of God. These books, and scores of others, led to a deepening
grasp of biblical truth. All of these books, of course, were Calvinistic and exalted the sovereignty of God in grace and salvation. This, then, encouraged other publishers, such as Reformation Heritage Books, to produce more sound, Calvinistic books.

3. Evangelists
Evangelists were another factor in the resurgence of Calvinism. The idea of a Calvinistic evangelist would not have struck anyone as surprising in the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, for the greatest evangelists of those days were Calvinistic preachers. However, in the twentieth century, perhaps because of the deleterious effects of the Second Great Awakening and the pragmatic revivalism of Charles Finney and D. L. Moody, Calvinism became disassociated with evangelism.

Calvinism birthed the modern missions movement and fed the fires of evangelical preaching for decades. To help him preach 28,000 sermons during the Great Awakening, for example, George Whitefield read four times a day on his knees the writings of Matthew Henry, the great English Calvinist. Yet one of the great charges levied against Calvinism in the twentieth century was that it killed the gospel, diminished evangelicalism, and was deficient in evangelism.

D. James Kennedy changed that viewpoint. Kennedy, who developed the Evangelism Explosion outreach method, was a passionate Calvinist and a passionate evangelist. We may fault some of his methods as high-pressure sales tactics and decision-based, but no one could question this man's commitment to the doctrines of grace, to passionate evangelism, and to the public proclamation of the gospel. After Kennedy became well known, it became difficult for people who listened to him to say that Calvinists couldn't evangelize because of their theology. In Kennedy's wake, many more helpful and biblical Calvinistic presentations of both the gospel and of how one shares the gospel have been developed. Kennedy was a pioneer for evangelism who dispelled the myth that Calvinism was anti-evangelistic.

4. The Battle for the Bible
The fourth influence on the Reformed resurgence was the battle for the Bible. This theological controversy of the late twentieth century
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stretched across denominations of modern evangelicalism in North America and Britain.

Though many prominent non-Calvinists took a brave stand for the inerrancy of Scripture during the battle for the Bible, the most well-known people who defended Scripture through the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy were Packer, R. C. Sproul, James Montgomery Boice, and Roger Nicole.

In the late 1970s, a committee was asked to draft a document for the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy listing the affirmations and denials that would be debated at its next gathering. When the committee met, however, the draft was not finished. So Packer and Sproul sat up all night to draft that document.

It is almost impossible to calculate the exponential effect of their labor. Because the men of the International Council took a stand for the Bible, people outside of their own confessional traditions trusted them to defend and expound Scripture. They knew that when these men taught the sovereignty of God and the salvation of sinners, they had gotten those truths not from their own minds or from the opinions of the age, but from the Bible itself.

Calvinism thus spread through the denial of the inerrancy of Scripture by theological liberals. Don't tell me you don't serve a sovereign God, for He who sits in heaven says: "How will I spread the glories of grace? I'll raise up a generation of men who deny the Bible. Then I will raise up others who stand fast by My Word. I will win people to the teaching of that Word through the defenders of that Word."

5. Two Church Controversies

In the 1940s, a medical missionary to China was run out of the country during the Maoist Communist takeover. Along with hundreds of other Presbyterian missionaries, he came back to his native South to a church that was not the one he had left years before. It was a church rife with theological liberalism, and he was shocked.

This man, L. Nelson Bell, was the father of Ruth Graham Bell and the father-in-law of Billy Graham. Bell set about to establish a movement to recapture the Southern Presbyterian Church for the Bible, for the gospel, and for evangelism in missions. His dream was never realized; the old church did not recover.

However, in 1973, fifty thousand people left their churches to
establish the Presbyterian Church in America, with a commitment to the Bible, to the Reformed faith, and to the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. That church has now grown to about a half-million people. It is the largest conservative Presbyterian church in the English-speaking world. Its Reformed University Fellowship is the largest campus ministry of a conservative Reformed group in the English-speaking world. Its Reformed missionary force is the largest in the history of the world. God has blessed that little backwater Southern gathering of Christians in spreading the Reformed faith around the world.

At about the same time, there was a resurgence in Calvinism in another Southern denomination of about 15 million people, the Southern Baptist Convention, because of the influence of R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In the nineteenth century, there was a shocking revival of Calvinism at the seminary because of its Abstract of Principles, which had been drafted by two professors who had studied under Charles Hodge and Samuel Miller at Princeton Theological Seminary. Hodge and Miller were thoroughgoing Calvinists. But over the years, Southern Seminary had drifted away from those confessional roots, largely due to the influence of Karl Barth.

When Mohler was a student at Southern Seminary, he was deeply influenced by the theological liberalism of Barth. However, a man named Carl F. H. Henry, a former editor of Christianity Today and author of God, Revelation, and Authority, came to visit the campus, and Mohler was assigned to show him around. When Henry asked Mohler, “What is your view on inerrancy?” Mohler admitted he had never heard of the doctrine. What Henry taught him in the next hours dramatically transformed his theology, bringing him back to the confessional roots of Southern Seminary.

Years later, when Mohler was asked to be president of the seminary, he did so with the understanding that he would turn things around. When he first preached for the entire seminary, his sermon was titled, “Don’t Just Do Something; Stand There.” It was a call to stand up for the authority of Scripture. The bulk of the student body of fourteen hundred turned their backs on him. What’s more, several deans followed Mohler back to his office, where they said: “We will not stand for this. We are calling for a vote of no confidence on you at the faculty meeting tomorrow morning.”

Mohler’s response was, “Fine. We will turn its back on liberalism and Calvinism.”

When Mohler invited me to visit a year after its dramatic turn away, I was astounded at what God had given back. Southern Seminary is now the biggest God-based seminary in the world. Every professor without a theological “liberal” Principles.

You don’t think God is some kind of paint-by-numbers operation? No way! Southern Baptist Seminary knows better.

6. A Book and an Anglican

Knowing God was written by Presbyterian. Packer was already respected for his book Fundamentalism and the Religion of God. He was a better writer of Philosophy and a finer brief defense of the authority of Scripture than that book. After a series of magazine articles, which were edited and published as Knowing God.

Because Packer was trusted through Knowing God, which Bill Clinton enjoyed, a new generation of people in our time have read The Death of Death than have read the book on Calvinism without learning about the doctrine.

Whatever differences we may have about Evangelicals and Catholics, we are all grateful to him for teaching us about the doctrines of grace.

7. A Theologian Philosopher

You cannot give a top ten list of

4. See Collin Hansen, Young Rest.

New Calvinists (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway
Mohler’s response was, “Fine, you’re fired.” And the seminary turned its back on liberalism and began finding its way back to Calvinism.4

When Mohler invited me to come to Southern Seminary four years after its dramatic turn away from liberalism, I wept uncontrollably at what God had given back to His people and His churches. Southern Seminary is now the largest theological seminary in the world. Every professor without exception supports the Abstract of Principles.

You don’t think God is sovereign? Mohler and others at the Southern Baptist Seminary know He is.

6. A Book and an Anglican
Knowing God was written by Packer, an evangelical Anglican theologian. Packer was already respected by British evangelicals because of his book Fundamentalism and the Word of God. There had never been a finer brief defense of the authority, inspiration, and inerrancy of Scripture than that book. After writing that book, Packer wrote a series of magazine articles, which InterVarsity Press later compiled and published as Knowing God.

Because Packer was trusted by the larger evangelical world through Knowing God, which Billy Graham and other centrist evangelicals approved, a new generation of believers was introduced to a sovereign God and the fullness of His grace. Packer also taught believers about the doctrines of grace in his famous introduction to John Owen’s The Death of Death in the Death of Christ. Ten times more people in our time have read Packer’s introduction to Owen’s Death of Death than have read the book. They could not read that introduction without learning about the doctrines of grace.

Whatever differences we may have with Packer, our dear brother, about Evangelicals and Catholics Together (ECT), we are eternally grateful to him for teaching Christians today about the doctrines of grace.

7. A Theologian Philosopher
You cannot give a top ten list of factors in the Reformed resurgence

without mentioning R. C. Sproul. For almost fifty years, Sproul has faithfully taught the Reformed perspective on church history, systematic theology, philosophy, and the Bible to hundreds of thousands of people in seminaries, on the radio, in books, and in conferences all over the Western world.

I am always astounded at the diversity of people who gather at Sproul’s conferences. At one of his recent conferences, I saw a mother, a father, and their seven children, ranging in age from about three to fourteen. I thought they must be from a Bible church, but they were members of a United Methodist congregation outside Chicago. The father listened daily to Sproul on the radio and wanted his children to hear him speak. When I asked whether they knew that Sproul was Reformed, the father asked, “What’s that?”

8. A Force of Nature

The eighth influence on the Reformed resurgence is John Piper, of whom it was recently written, “His Desiring God Ministries is the conduit through whom so many of these others who had preceded him now find their word mediated to this rising generation.” That is especially true of Jonathan Edwards. Piper is intoxicated by Edwards, and that appreciation is channeled into nearly every sermon he preaches.

The powerful message of Piper’s ministry is that all unction about God’s truth comes from God and all fruit of our labor comes from God. But in terms of human observation, what sets John’s labors apart from others is his theological precision meeting up with spiritual, life-consuming passion, and his profound hope of imparting a serious joy that leads to satisfying sacrifice. The starkness of John’s statements and the uncompromising nature of his sermons, calls, and claims have captivated the world-weary generation of today. Piper may have turned sixty not long ago, but his discipleship, Bible reading, preaching, and writing have the freshness of a young convert. This man has no fear; he serves only One. That is evident in everything he says and does.

Collin Hansen tells the story of a young woman who sat under

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Almost fifty years, Sproul has perspective on church history, systematic Bible to hundreds of thousands in books, and in conferences all over the world of people who gather at certain conferences, I saw a mother, aging in age from about three to an a Bible church, but they were gregation outside Chicago. They had radio and wanted his children ether they knew that Sproul was that?

The resurgence is John Piper, Desiring God Ministries is one of those others who had precluded to this rising generation. Piper is intoxicated by annealed into nearly every ser-

Piper's preaching for the first time. "I was terrified," she said. "I realized I had never named the God of the Bible. Then I fell down and worshiped Him."

9. The Decline of a Movement

One final influence of the Reformed resurgence is not a person, man, seminary, denomination, or movement. It is the decline of a movement.

One of the key things that has led to a Reformed resurgence is the decline and death of liberalism. Liberalism today is sustained only by the life support of endowment. Try to name a liberal church, denomination, or seminary that is growing. There are none. The liberal alternative to secularism is gone.

What is left? The non-Calvinistic denominations of our day are fading in an increasingly hostile, secular environment. Mark Dever writes:

The theological climate in which weaker, more vapid versions of Christianity pale and fade, and in which more uncut vigorous versions thrive, is upon us. The lies of secularism and the decline of Christian nominalism has caused a generation of young people to grow up looking for something that they can pin their lives to the mast on. They are not looking for compromise with the world. They are looking for full-bore, high-octane, no-holds-barred, sold out commitment, and they cannot find that from nominal Christianity anywhere. So where do you find it? Well, irony of ironies, they've looked to the Calvinists!

This yearning for deep preaching is evident everywhere in the young Reformed awakening. Have you personally been attracted to Piper, Mohler, or Sproul? These men didn't hold their fingers to the wind to find out what this generation wanted; they preached what their generation needed. Their listeners weren't used to someone telling them the truth, no matter what. They found themselves drawn to Piper, Mohler, or Sproul because these men neither feared nor flattered any flesh, only God. These leaders were consumed by passion for God. And thousands of people were attracted to that.

It was amazing to see people with bodies covered with tattoos and piercings at the 2009 Gospel Coalition conference in Chicago,
grabbing every Reformed book they could buy at the book tables. Only God could inspire such thirst!

This generation needs the doctrine of the church. It desperately wants community but it doesn’t want authority, and you can’t have community without authority. The only way we can serve these hungry people is to tell them: “You inspire us with your zeal, and your commitment to service is contagious. Could we serve you by showing you some things that we have learned from Scripture about how to minister together in the church, which is the family of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and support of the truth? Could we serve you by showing you these things?”

This generation is also confused about methodology. Even the best of them will say: “We must be strong and biblical in our theology, but we can do that any way we want. Methodology is neutral.” They have bought into the great error of evangelicalism, which says methodology is unrelated to theology, that the method does not affect the message. We must serve them by saying: “God has given us a gospel message, but He also has given us the means of grace, which are: the faithful preaching of the Word, the biblical administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of church nurture and discipline. He has told us how to preach and how to pastor. And these principles, however applied in different cultures and generations, are universally applicable. What’s more, they are required of all by the apostle Paul. We cannot define ministry as we go along. We must follow the Book. And we must respect those who say to us, ‘Let’s learn not only to preach by the Book but also to minister by the Book.’”

This generation is fatherless. If you have worked among young people in the world, you will find them aching for a godly man to pour life into them. They come from homes that are broken. They come from homes where fathers were too busy and too distracted to invest themselves in their children. They come from homes where the fathers couldn’t have led them in family worship to save their lives. So they have an aching void in their lives for fathers to come alongside them and pour their lives into them. Would you be that for them? Do you see why it is important for you not just to criticize them? They expect that of fathers who have rejected them all of their lives. What they need is for you to come alongside them and love them by shepherding and nurturing them. They need gentle correc-

The key characteristics of the resurgence are, first, that every Jones, and MacArthur to Piper, the PCA, has been motivated to begin seeking numbers, promising denominations will surely be in vain. This generation needs the surge only to be faithful and leave the vacuum.

Second, all of these men, insisting on a high view of God. The only churches that today are churches with a big view of God, because you can’t meet the little God and a little gospel. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years in our view of God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God. We have seen a universe fourteen billion years be captivated by a little God.

Third, all of these men, insisting on strong confessional convictions holding a hundred years, evangelicals say a movement is to downplay or give up sharing the gospel. That is wrong, and if we can’t agree on what the Commission entails—as Jesus commanded you” (Matt. 28:19), scaling up mission will not unify.

Today, thousands of like-minded people are not for doctrinal ministry. We are for confessional convictions holding a high view of God, and a high view of God, and a high view of God. We are for confessional convictions holding a high view of God, and a high view of God, and a high view of God.
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deal with them. Tell them what encourages you, then pour your life
into them.

Conclusions

The key characteristics of the first eight factors of this Reformed
resurgence are, first, that every single one, from Spurgeon, Lloyd-
Jones, and MacArthur to Piper, from the Banner of Truth Trust to
the PCA, has been motivated to seek faithfulness, not success. When we
begin seeking numbers, prominence, and the praise of the world,
our labors will surely be in vain. None of these men, institutions, and
denominations sought the success that God gave them. They sought
only to be faithful and left the fruit of that faithfulness to God.

Second, all of these men, institutions, and denominations had a big
view of God. The only churches that are growing in the Western world
today are churches with a big view of God. That does not surprise
me, because you can’t meet the skepticism of this generation with a
little God and a little gospel. When men have peered into telescopes
and seen a universe fourteen billion light years across, they cannot
be captivated by a little God. It is the old, faithful, tried-and-true
Bible teaching, the old confessional Calvinism, that is drawing this
new generation to the vivifying air of a sovereign, colossal God.

Third, all of these men, institutions, and denominations had strong confessional convictions held with broad sympathies for others. For
a hundred years, evangelicalism has said the way to stay united as
a movement is to downplay our theological differences and to play
up sharing the gospel. That is wrong because the gospel is theol-
ogy, and if we can’t agree on what the gospel is and what the Great
Commission entails—as Jesus said, “teaching them... all that I have
commanded you” (Matt. 28:20)—then scaling down theology and
scaling up mission will not unify us.

Today, thousands of like-minded brethren are standing up to say:
“We are not for doctrinal minimalism but for doctrinal maximizing.
We are for confessional commitment, but alongside it we will have
broad sympathies with those who have a high view of Scripture, a
high view of God, and a high view of the doctrines of grace, and
who understand the gospel as we understand it. We will work with
them, not minimizing or belittling our differences, but recognizing
how important those differences are in the lives of our churches and working together for the gospel.

Fourth, in all these men, institutions, and denominations, God in His inscrutable wisdom chose to favor them outside of their narrow ecclesiastical constituency. Spurgeon was part of a theological minority in the British Fellowship of Baptist Churches. Controversy dogged him at the end of his career as he saw his church forsake its commitment to doctrine and the gospel. Yet today you can hear Africans and Australians preaching like him. Someone in China and someone in Russia is preaching like him. In just this way, all over the world, God has favored men outside of their own narrow ecclesiastical constituencies and given them broader influence to fuel a new understanding and appreciation for Calvinism. Praise God for His blessing in all of these men, institutions, and denominations that He has used to bring a resurgence of Calvinism to America. Let us pray that that resurgence will be multiplied, deepened, and prolonged, to the glory of His grace.

Honoring John Calvin may seem like putting a passing shadow or nail in the door of a cathedral. His teaching knowledge of God and the kind of stuff that most would consider after it was written.

So why is Calvin important? What did he teach and do in the church of Jesus Christ? Calvin scholars and friends. In this concluding article, I received. Twenty-four of the thirty respondents mentioned Calvin's continuing importance in the responses under twenty-one role Calvin played. Nine of the correspondents. They are:

- Calvin the historian, who unfolded
- Calvin the polemicist, who combated
- Calvin the pilgrim, who longed
- Calvin the traditionalist, who resisted
- Calvin the catechist, who stressed
- Calvin the deacon, who showed
- Calvin the vocationalist, who demonstrated
- Calvin the law-promoter, who taught
- Calvin the author, who promoted

ings on an astonishing number of