

# Amyraldianism (Amyraldism)

*Historical Theology*

Date: 5/7/23

Author: Lonnie Moore

Is this just a type of Arminianism or is it just a bit different from Calvinism?  
Are there any people today that embrace Amyraldianism?

- I. Life and work of Moise Amyraut (Moyses Amyraldus) 1596-1664
  - A. Early days
    1. Not much is known about his childhood
    2. Grew up in western France in a Huguenot family
    3. Father was a lawyer and wanted Moise to follow in that profession
    4. Studied Law at Orleans
    5. On the way home, he visited a Protestant church in Saumur where the pastor tried to convince young Moise to study theology instead of law
    6. Moise's father was not against the change but told him to first read Calvin's *Institutes*
  - B. New path
    1. Enrolled in the Theological Academy of Saumur (Huguenot, not Catholic)
    2. Was considered a great student
    3. Was greatly influenced by one of the teachers: John Cameron, a Scottish theologian
    4. After graduation, he pastored a Huguenot church for two years in Maine (no, not that Maine)
    5. He was appointed to teach at the Academy and Saumur as well as the pastor of the Huguenot church in Saumur.
  - C. National influence
    1. He published several works
    2. At an assembly of Huguenot churches, he argued that Lutherans should be able to take communion in Huguenot churches in France.
    3. A conference was held to discuss the matter of violations of the Edict of Nantes (freedom of religion in specified French cities)
    4. Amyraut was chosen to bring the list of grievances before King Louis XIII
    5. Amyraut was more than willing to do this task, but announced that he would not kneel before the king. (Catholic clergy was not required to kneel)
    6. A fifteen day standoff occurred – Cardinal Richelieu even went to Amyraut to convince him to kneel
    7. Amyraut must have been blessed with unbelievable skills of persuasion, because Richelieu (enemy of Protestants) went away believing that Amyraut had the right to stand before the king.
    8. Amyraut published 32 books including: *Brief Treatise on Predestination and its Dependent Principles*. Nick Needham wrote, "the treatise landed like a bomb on the playground of theologians.....it made Amyraut's life become one long controversy."
    9. (Hundreds of students sat in on Amyraut's lectures including William Penn)
- II. Amyraut's theology
  - A. Battling a false view of Reformed theology
    1. Amyraut wanted to counter the enemies of Reformed theology
    2. The enemies were claiming that Reformed theology called for God creating some people (the non-elect) to the sole purpose of condemnation

3. Many French Catholics believed that the Huguenots and other Reformers were believing in an unloving and unjust God.
4. Amyraut countered that election should be viewed in the light of the Cross, not the Cross in the light of the election.
5. Amyraut believed that what prompted Christ to come to the earth to die on the cross was the love for the whole human race without any limitations.
6. Salvation was procured for humanity by Christ's work on the Cross, but must be received personally through faith.
7. There is a universal aspect/scope to Christ's death, but it is effectual only by faith.
8. That faith is beyond the power of fallen humans to will or muster.
9. Election is God's sovereign decision to give faith to some sinners.
10. This makes the mission of Christ bear fruit among humankind.
11. For Amyraut, this weaves together God's general love for all humanity, the universal aspect of Christ's atoning death, and the divine sovereignty of personal salvation.

B. Analysis

1. He felt this understanding was more Biblical, more evangelistic, more faithful to Calvin than what Reformed theology was in his day.
2. The system became known as "hypothetical universalism"
  - a. Christ's death was universal
  - b. The effect of His death was effectual only on faith made it hypothetical.
3. The order of God's decrees according to Amyraldianism:
  - a. God decreed to create humanity
  - b. God decreed to permit the fall
  - c. God decreed the mission of Christ to save humanity, on the condition of faith
  - d. God decreed to give faith to some (election), so that Christ's mission will bear fruit
4. Natural ability v. moral ability
  - a. Despite the fall, sinners have a natural ability to believe the Gospel. Otherwise how could God require people to believe for their salvation and hold them blameworthy for not believing?
  - b. Natural ability means we have the mental equipment to perform the act of believing.
  - c. What human's lack is the moral ability to believe. God gives the elect the ability to overcome the nature corrupted by sin. This ability can only come from God's divine grace.
5. Amyraut's sources
  - a. The Bible
  - b. John Calvin
  - c. John Cameron
  - d. There are arguments how true the theology is to the Bible or Calvin, but it is definitely true to Cameron.
  - e. The theology can also be traced to some of the views of Heinrich Bullinger.
  - f. There are arguments how true the theology is to the Bible or Calvin, but it is definitely true to Cameron.

III. Friends and Foes

A. Friends

1. France

- a. Jean Daille-pastor of Huguenot church in Charenton

- b. David Blondel-pastor of Huguenot church in Roucy
- c. Louis Cappel-teacher at Saumur-Hebrew scholar (Masoretic text controversy)

## 2. England

- a. Stephen Marshall, Richard Vines, Edmund Calamy, John Arrowsmith, Lazarus Seaman
- b. Bishop John Davenant (English delegate to Synod of Dort)- may have actually had an influence on Amyraut
- c. John Preston-very popular preacher/speaker in England, a favorite of the King. (At one point in his life he was suffering from insomnia. A doctor proscribed smoking tobacco help him relax. Preston died of lung disease at the age of 41.)

## B. Foes

- 1. Pierre du Moulin-was very upset with the Amyraut. Du Moulin believed Amyraut was a crypto-Arminian. After battling Arminianism, du Moulin was super sensitive to teaching that was outside of the Five Points.
- 2. Andre Rivet-had been a friend of Amyraut, but he was a brother-in-law of du Moulin.
- 3. Samuel des Marets, Friedrich Spanhiem (German), Johann Heidgger (Swiss), John Owen (English Puritan) – all wrote opposition critiques.

## IV. Controversy and Outcomes

### A. Synod at Alencon in 1637

- 1. Amyraut was brought before the Synod.
- 2. Rivet and du Moulin were highly prepared to argue against Amyraut.
- 3. The Synod president was also pre-disposed to be against Amyraut. Even seemed to accuse Amyraut to be a serpent.
- 4. Amyraut explained his beliefs and affirmed the canons of Dort.
- 5. The Synod declared Amyraut not guilty of heresy
- 6. Why was he exonerated?
  - a. Most of the opposition came from non-French theologians-so maybe the French delegates believed outsiders were “ganging up” on one of their own.
  - b. The delegates may have feared a schism at a time when the French Reformed Church needed when they needed to be united against Cardinal Richelieu.
  - c. Amyraut was eloquent, sincere, classy, and convincing.

### B. Synod of Charenton 1644

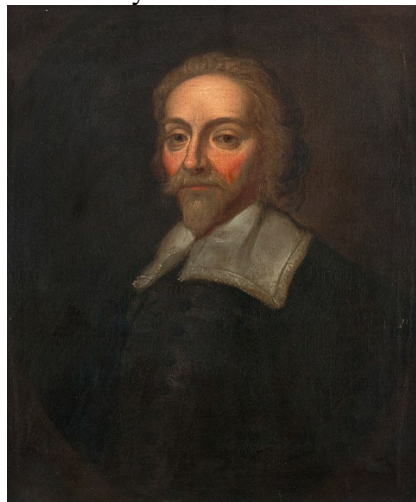
- 1. Accused by a German theologian of false teaching
- 2. Amyraut was found not guilty, again

### C. Synod at Loudun

- 1. After Amyraut’s cohorts published works on the synods of Alencon and Charenton implying that Church fathers and early Reformers were in total agreement with Amyraut
- 2. The Synod found Amyraut not guilty, again.



Moise Amyraut



John Cameron

Sources:

*2000 Years of Christ's Power, book 4*, Nick Needham

Wikipedia: Moise Amyraut, John Cameron, Saumur, Jacobus Arminius, Gnosticism

Five Points of Calvinism, W.J. Seaton

GotQuestions.org