

# JOHN WESLEY'S SOTERIOLOGY: A RESPONSE TO FAITH AND WORKS DICHOTOMY AMONG CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS

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## Abstract

The debate between "faith alone" and the role of good works has divided Christians since the Protestant Reformation. Many contemporary believers fall into one of two extremes: some embrace an "easy believism" that suggests only mental agreement with the gospel is required. In contrast, others slip into legalism, attempting to earn God's favour through rules and effort. This article employs a descriptive and theological research method, investigating John Wesley's Soteriology as a response to the faith and works dichotomy among contemporary Christians. This false dichotomy weakens Christian life and witness. John Wesley (1703–1791), the founder of Methodism, offers a clear biblical answer that avoids both dangers. Wesley taught that salvation is entirely by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), however true faith is never alone, it always produces good works as its natural fruit (James 2:17; Galatians 5:6). Wesley describes the Christian journey as a process that begins with God's prevenient grace, grace that goes before humans and awakens every person, moves to justification, being declared right with God the moment we trust Christ; continues in sanctification, growing gradually in holiness and love by the power of the Holy Spirit; and ends in final glorification. Good works do not earn salvation; they prove it and complete it. Wesley calls this "faith working through love" and "responsible grace": God always takes the first step and gives the power, but we must freely respond with obedience and love. This balanced teaching is especially helpful today, including in African Christianity, where salvation is often understood as deliverance from real-life evils such as poverty, injustice, sickness, and spiritual oppression. Wesley's emphasis on practical holiness and social love fits well with African values of community, moral living, and visible transformation.

**Keywords:** Soteriology, Faith, Works, and Dichotomy.

## Introduction

The debate over how faith and good works fit together has troubled Christians since the time of the Reformation in the 1500s. Leaders like Martin Luther and John Calvin pushed hard for "faith alone" to counter the Old Catholic idea that people could earn salvation through rituals and merits. Luther's key verse, "The just shall live by faith" from Romans 1:17, put all the focus on God's free gift, not human efforts. But this sometimes made people think works do not matter at all, leading to a split where faith seems cut off from daily right living. Today, this split shows up in many churches. Some

believers stress faith so much they live without much change, like saying "I believe" but not acting kindly or justly, this is called easy believism. Others go the other way, making rules and efforts the main thing, which can turn into strict legalism where you feel you must prove yourself to God. The Bible says salvation is God's grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9), but also that faith without works is dead (James 2:17). So, how do we join these? John Wesley's teaching on salvation gives a balanced answer. As the founder of Methodism, he based his ideas on the Bible and early church fathers, making them useful for everyday life. Wesley opines that faith starts salvation, how we get justified, but works come as natural results, showing we are growing holy with the help of the Holy Spirit. Salvation is not just one moment; it is a whole life of change where faith works out in love and obedience. This fixes the extremes by focusing on "faith working through love" from Galatians 5:6. Wesley blended Paul's focus on faith with James's call for action. Grace does not just forgive; it gives power for holy living. This is helpful now, especially in Africa where scholars like Emiola Nihinlola say theology must be alive and aid real living. Peter Kasenene notes that African religions see salvation as escape from evils like witchcraft or famine, tying faith to practical protection and good relations. Wesley's view invites contemporary Christians to a faith that is both trusting God and doing good, for His glory.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework here builds on Wesley's soteriology as a middle way, or synthesis, between extremes. It is rooted in the Bible, early church teachings, and practical life experiences. Wesley's salvation teaching mixes faith and works under grace. He calls it "responsible grace": God starts it, but we respond freely without claiming credit. This balances God's control and our choice.<sup>i</sup> Wesley saw salvation as a process which begins with God's grace reaching out - prevenient grace, leads to faith that justifies - makes us right with God, then continues in sanctification -growing holy, and ends in glorification - perfect in heaven. Prevenient Grace: God gives everyone a bit of grace first, to wake up their conscience and let them choose faith. This avoids thinking people save themselves or that God forces it. Justification by Faith: We are forgiven through trusting Jesus, not by works. But true faith changes us inside - regeneration. Sanctification and Works: Faith shows in love and good deeds. Wesley calls this "faith working through love" (Galatians 5:6). It is not earning salvation but living it out. Christian Perfection: Believers can reach a point of perfect love, free from willful sin, but still growing.

This framework draws from Protestant reformers but adds Arminian ideas (free will) and Eastern church views on becoming like God. In African settings, scholars like Mary Kathambi Kinoti apply it to modern Methodism, saying Wesley's emphasis on holy living fits African values of community and ethics, helping to unite churches split by cultural issues.<sup>ii</sup> Kwame Bediako sees it as renewing Christianity in non-Western ways, where faith tackles real problems like poverty and injustice.<sup>iii</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop links it to African ethics, where good works are signs of true faith, not separate. This setup responds to the dichotomy by showing grace unites faith and works in a lifelong journey.<sup>iv</sup>

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Soteriology:** Soteriology is the study of how God saves people from sin and brings them into a right relationship with Him. It is God's sovereign rescue of sinners through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, received by faith alone.<sup>v</sup>

**Faith:** Faith means trusting in God and what Jesus did on the cross. It is not just agreeing with facts but putting full confidence in God's promises. In the Bible, faith is described as the way we receive God's free gift of salvation, without earning it (Ephesians 2:8-9). "Faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person and reliance on him for salvation."<sup>vi</sup> Faith is believing and trusting God with the whole heart, even when one cannot see Him.

**Works:** Works are the good things we do because we already love and trust God, helping the poor, forgiving others, living honestly, praying, and obeying God's commands. They are the fruit and flowers that grow out of the root of faith. Good works do not buy salvation; they show that real faith is alive inside us, just as a mango tree proves it is alive by producing mangoes.<sup>vii</sup> Works are the good things one does as acts of kindness, justice, and service to humanity.

**Dichotomy:** Dichotomy is when people separate faith and works too much; some say only faith matters and ignore good living, while others think works can earn God's favor, like a checklist for heaven. This split started a great deal during the Reformation in the 1500s, when leaders like Martin Luther said salvation is by faith alone to fight against ideas that people could buy or work their way to God. But it led to extremes, like thinking rules do not apply anymore or that you must be perfect on your own.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Biography of John Wesley**

John Wesley (1703–1791), an Anglican priest, theologian, and evangelist, stands as one of the most influential figures in the history of Protestant Christianity. He was born on June 17, 1703, in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England, to Samuel and Susanna Wesley, both of whom were deeply devoted to the Anglican faith.<sup>ix</sup> His father served as the rector of the local parish, while his mother, Susanna, played a crucial role in shaping John's spiritual and intellectual development through her disciplined home education and emphasis on personal holiness. This early exposure to religious devotion laid the foundation for Wesley's later commitment to a methodical and disciplined approach to Christian living, which eventually inspired the term "Methodist."<sup>x</sup>

Wesley attended Charterhouse School in London before entering Christ Church, Oxford, in 1720, where he distinguished himself as a scholar. In 1726, he was elected a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and soon after, he was ordained as a deacon in the Church of England.<sup>xi</sup> During his time at Oxford, Wesley, along with his brother Charles and a small group of friends, formed what became known as the "Holy Club." This group was dedicated to prayer, Bible study, fasting, and works of mercy among the poor and imprisoned.<sup>xii</sup> Their methodical devotion to spiritual discipline and moral rigor earned them the nickname "Methodists," initially used derisively but later adopted proudly by Wesley and his followers.

A pivotal moment in Wesley's life occurred during his missionary journey to the American colony of Georgia in 1735. The experience was marked by both failure and spiritual introspection, as he struggled with questions of faith and assurance.<sup>xiii</sup> On his return to England, Wesley encountered a group of Moravian Christians whose emphasis on faith and inner assurance deeply impressed him. This encounter set the stage for what is famously known as his Aldersgate experience on May 24, 1738, when he attended a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London and felt his "heart strangely warmed" as he listened to a reading from Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle

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to the Romans.<sup>xiv</sup> In that moment, Wesley gained a personal assurance of salvation through faith in Christ alone, an event that marked a profound turning point in his spiritual journey.<sup>xv</sup> As the Scriptures affirms, “For by grace are ye saved through faith...” (Eph. 2:8).

After his conversion experience, Wesley’s ministry took on new vigor and purpose. He began preaching the message of salvation by faith, the necessity of the new birth, and the pursuit of holiness. Denied many pulpits within the Church of England, Wesley turned to open-air preaching, reaching thousands across England and Wales.<sup>xvi</sup> His sermons, tracts, and writings emphasized the universality of grace, the call to repentance, and the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. Wesley’s organizational skills were equally significant; he established societies, classes, and bands for mutual accountability, spiritual growth, and pastoral care, thereby laying the structural foundation for what would become the Methodist Church.<sup>xvii</sup>

Wesley’s theological insights emerged within the broader Protestant context, yet his emphasis on sanctification and holy living distinguished him from the Calvinistic traditions that prioritized predestination and justification alone. He rejects the Calvinist notion of limited atonement, affirming instead that Christ’s atonement was universal and that salvation was available to all who would believe.<sup>xviii</sup> His doctrine of *Christian perfection* or *entire sanctification*; (the belief that believers could attain perfect love and freedom from willful sin through divine grace), was one of his most distinctive contributions to Christian theology.<sup>xix</sup> For Wesley, the Christian life was a continual journey toward holiness, expressed in love for God and neighbor.

Wesley’s influence extended beyond theology into social reform and education. He advocated for prison reform, opposed slavery, and promoted healthcare and literacy among the poor. His message of practical Christianity emphasizing faith must be expressed in action, resonating deeply with the working classes of eighteenth-century England and gave rise to a movement that would later spread to America, Africa, and beyond. At his death in 1791, Wesley left behind a global spiritual legacy that transformed the religious landscape and continues to shape Methodism and broader evangelical theology today. His life and teachings embody the dynamic interplay between divine grace and human response, illustrating a faith that works through love and service.<sup>xx</sup>

## **Overview of Soteriology**

Salvation is one of the most important themes in the Bible. It is the redemptive plan of God through Christ for mankind, often means more than just personal forgiveness. In African contexts, salvation means different thing to different people. Some sees it as protection from evil, harmony with ancestors, and community well-being. African scholars like John Mbiti explain that in traditional beliefs, salvation is a healthy bond between the living, the dead, and God, where good actions keep that balance.<sup>xxi</sup> Peter Kasanene, opines that “religion constitutes a way of salvation for its adherents.” He echoes religious claims to be “the way to redeem man from evil, often personified as the devil.”<sup>xxii</sup> Vincent Donovan, shares the same concept that the subject of salvation is at the centre of every religion, but differs from Christianity and says religion is man sincerely seeking God in their own ways.<sup>xxiii</sup> The Swazis of Africa have their own interpretation of salvation. Salvation is defined as finding protection from the threat of witchcraft and healing from sickness.

In Kasanene’s words, salvation in Swazi traditional belief is absence of suffering and life-threatening environments, such as natural calamities, social injustices, war, hatred, tyranny,

oppression, famine, physical illness, and death. Africa traditional religion understands salvation as the healthy relationship between the living, ancestors and God. If the relationship is healthy, the ancestors will protect the people from life-threatening situations. God is also known as *Umlente ngamunye* (One-footed Superior being), the creator of everything who can only be approached through the mediatory spirits of the ancestors. This God cannot be approached by man, but only ancestors, who are close to Him.<sup>xxiv</sup> On the contrary, mankind can approach God, because He has given man the free will to approach Him, as affirmed in Isaiah 1:18 which says “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD:...” and in Matthew 11:28 “Come unto me, all ye that labour...” Humanity does not need any mediatory spirits or ancestors to approach God. Jesus is the only mediator and the way to the Father (John 14:6).

The Greek term for salvation is *Soteria*, which connotes “deliverance”, “preservation”, or “rescue” and it reflects God’s redemptive initiative in liberating humanity from spiritual death and alienation. The term *Soteria* turned to be very inclusive, which brings together the concept of redemption with other cognitive terms. Salvation speaks of material and temporary deliverance from dangers (Lk1: 69, 71, Act.7:25, 27:34), spiritual and eternal deliverance granted immediately by the Triune God to those who accept His condition of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus from whom it is to be obtained, upon confession of him as Lord (Act. 4:12, Rom 10:16). *Soteria* is salvation as a present experience of the power of God to deliver from bondage of sin (Phil. 2:12), and future deliverance of believers with the second coming of Christ for his saints (Rom. 13:11, 1Thessalonians 5:8-9). *Soteria* also refers to the total sum of blessings and privileges bestowed by God to those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour (2Cor.6:2, Heb. 5: 9, 1Pet. 1: 9-10).

This is a comprehensive and inclusive New Testament meaning of salvation as applied and understood by the Apostles.<sup>xxv</sup> Norman Geisler, adds the theological concept of the word salvation as a broad term, which embraces three elements of salvation: justification, sanctification, and glorification.<sup>xxvi</sup> McCain, defines salvation as *Sozo*, which directly corresponds with *Yasa* of the Old Testament. This is the term, which was used by the early Church. *Sozo* was used for salvation, emphasizes the spiritual, moral and eschatological deliverance. *Sozo* also speaks of salvation, which includes healing as restoration to health (John 11:12).<sup>xxvii</sup> Taylor, says the main concept of deliverance as in *Sozo*, is safety and soundness. The *Sozo* comes with the concept of salvation in its perfection state, where it is completely sound and without elements of spiritual and physical sickness. The term *Sozo* includes deliverance from peril and preservation. *Sozo* also includes cosmic salvation from sin-infested environment (Eph.2:5).<sup>xxviii</sup> Salvation, therefore, is not merely a moral improvement but an ontological transformation, in which the believer is reconciled to God and made partaker of divine life. Salvation is also holistic and eschatological in dimension. It involves deliverance from sin’s penalty (justification), from its power (sanctification), and ultimately from its presence (glorification).<sup>xxix</sup> Salvation is eternal life, it is holistic, ontological and eschatological in nature in the sense that the blood of Jesus shed on the cross is efficacious enough to save humanity from sins, in the past, present, and future and till the *parousia*, the second coming of Christ.

In Christian thought, soteriology seeks to answer fundamental questions concerning how sinful humanity can be reconciled to a holy God and restored to divine fellowship. The term appears frequently in the New Testament, where it signifies not merely rescue from danger but the comprehensive restoration of life, wholeness, and communion with God through Christ.<sup>xxx</sup> It covers

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key theological concepts such as justification, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification, each reflecting a distinct phase of God's redemptive work in the believer. Justification refers to the divine act by which God declares a sinner righteous on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ's atoning work on the cross. Regeneration, often called the "new birth," is the inward transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit, enabling believers to respond to God's grace. Sanctification is the lifelong process through which believers are progressively conformed to the image of Christ, and glorification marks the final state of redeemed humanity in eternal union with God. These stages highlight that salvation is both an event and a process, a divine initiative that unfolds in time yet culminates in eternity.<sup>xxxii</sup>

The Christian understanding of salvation finds its foundation in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, who, through His incarnation, death, and resurrection, reconciled humanity to God. Scripture affirms that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This salvation is entirely the work of divine grace, received through faith and not by human effort. However, while faith serves as the channel through which grace is received, good works function as the necessary evidence of inward transformation. Hence, in the Christian experience, faith and works are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing realities; the former the root of salvation, the latter its fruit.<sup>xxxiii</sup> Therefore, Christians should rely on God's grace to do good work – showing forth the fruit of salvation.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century profoundly reshaped soteriological understanding. Reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin championed the doctrine of *sola fide*: justification by faith alone as a protest against the medieval Roman Catholic emphasis on meritorious works. Luther, deeply moved by Romans 1:17 "The just shall live by faith", argues that human beings are justified solely by trusting in Christ's righteousness, not by performing good deeds.<sup>xxxiv</sup> This is supported by Emiola Nihinlola, who affirms that "Theology is a living and lively exercise: a theology that will aid human living must necessarily be living itself."<sup>xxxv</sup> Nevertheless, while this emphasis reinstates the primacy of grace, it also gave rise to a misleading interpretation among some later adherents who dismisses the moral demands of the gospel.<sup>xxxvi</sup> The result was antinomianism, the belief that moral law is no longer binding upon Christians because of grace.

### **Wesley's Soteriology as a Response to Faith and Works**

John Wesley's theology represents a dynamic synthesis of faith and works rooted in divine grace. He proposes a framework of "responsible grace," which holds that while salvation begins entirely with God's initiative, human beings must respond freely and faithfully to that grace without claiming merit for their response.<sup>xxxvii</sup> This concept emphasizes the cooperation between God's sovereignty and human responsibility, reflecting Wesley's conviction that grace does not invalidate effort but rather enables it. Wesley rejects both antinomianism, the view that moral law is irrelevant to the believer and legalism, the belief that salvation can be earned through good works.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Instead, he taught that genuine faith naturally produces good works as its fruit, harmonizing Paul's declaration that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28) with James's affirmation that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26). The writer here completely agrees with Wesley's view that salvation cannot be earned by good works, but by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. However, good works are the fruit from a genuine faith.

For Wesley, salvation was not a single momentary event but a lifelong process encompassing justification, regeneration, and sanctification. Justification refers to the believer's pardon and acceptance by God through faith in Christ, while regeneration signifies the new birth which is the inward transformation wrought by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification, which follows justification, represents the believer's progressive growth in holiness and love.<sup>xxxviii</sup> Wesley describes this as "holiness of heart and life," wherein faith expresses itself in acts of love and mercy.<sup>xxxix</sup> In this sense, faith is the root of salvation, while works are the fruit that confirm and nourish that faith. Wesley's response to the faith and works dichotomy is most clearly articulated in his doctrine of prevenient grace, which asserts that God's grace precedes all human decision and makes obedience possible. These teaching guards against both Pelagianism, which overemphasizes human effort in salvation and Calvinistic determinism, which negates human freedom. By affirming prevenient grace, Wesley preserves the tension between divine initiative and human cooperation, showing that faith and works are not competing forces but divinely harmonized responses empowered by grace.<sup>xli</sup>

Wesley's soteriology emerged as a corrective to such extremes. His theological vision integrates the doctrines of faith and works under the unifying principle of divine grace. For Wesley, salvation is wholly initiated by God's prevenient grace, the grace that "goes before" human response enabling the will to cooperate with divine influence.<sup>xli</sup> This prevents both Pelagianism, which overemphasizes human effort to earn salvation, and Calvinism, which denies genuine human freedom in salvation. Wesley teaches that faith is the condition for justification, while good works are indispensable evidences to sanctification, the process by which believers are renewed in holiness through the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Wesley expressed this harmony between faith and works through the Pauline phrase "faith working by love" (*fides caritate formata*), emphasizing that true faith is never idle or abstract but active and fruitful. In his Sermons on Several Occasions, he wrote, "True faith, even that which justifies, is a faith that works by love, which produces all good works, and holiness of heart and life."<sup>xlii</sup> This synthesis allows Wesley to reconcile the apparent contradiction between Paul's assertion that justification is "by faith apart from works" (Rom. 3.28) and James's claim that "faith without works is dead" (James 2.26). His theology proposes that faith and works are not competing agents but cooperative expressions of grace working through human freedom.<sup>xliii</sup> Indeed, faith and works are not competing against one another but rather cooperates and complements each other in the expression of grace working through the believers.

In this sense, Wesley's soteriology redefined salvation not merely as deliverance from sin's penalty but as participation in God's ongoing sanctifying grace. The believer is not only declared righteous but also made righteous through the continual transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, soteriology, in Wesley's view, is relational and dynamic, a journey of grace wherein believers grow in holy love toward God and neighbor. His emphasis on practical holiness and ethical responsibility underscores that salvation is not only a matter of belief but of lived faith, manifested in acts of mercy, justice, and compassion.

In contemporary Christianity, the tension between faith and works continues to create division; some believers stress "grace alone" to the neglect of moral transformation, while others emphasize activism (works) devoid of spiritual dependence. Wesley's soteriology offers a

correction by affirming that salvation entails both trusting in God's grace and participating actively in holy living. His well-known exhortation, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can,"<sup>xliv</sup> embodies his conviction that faith must issue in love and service. For Wesley, the Christian life is not passive belief but active discipleship, faith working through love (Gal. 5:6). His theology thus calls contemporary believers to recover a holistic spirituality that unites belief with practice, grace with responsibility, and justification with sanctification.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Church should teach and preach the biblical truth, that we are saved by grace through faith alone, but saving faith is never alone, it always leads to a changed life and good works (Eph 2:8-10; James 2:14-26).
2. Restore the doctrine of prevenient grace, help believers understand that God is already at work in every person, giving light and freedom to respond, so no one can boast and no one is forced.
3. Make sanctification and growth in holiness a normal Christian expectation again, not an optional extra. Encourage small groups, accountability, and spiritual disciplines as Wesley did.
4. The Church should reject both cheap grace, faith without obedience and legalism, obedience without joy and trust. Instead, promote "faith working through love" as the only healthy Christian life.

### **Conclusion**

John Wesley's soteriology remains profoundly relevant as a theological response to the enduring tension between faith and works that continues to shape Christian thought and practice. His understanding of salvation as both a divine gift and a human responsibility presents a theology of grace that is both dynamic and participatory. For Wesley, salvation is not a static declaration of righteousness but an ongoing journey of transformation in which believers cooperate with God's grace toward holiness of heart and life. His framework of responsible grace affirms that while justification is wholly the work of God, sanctification requires human responsiveness to the Spirit's enabling power. By emphasizing that faith must be active in love, Wesley bridged the theological divide between the Protestant insistence on *sola fide*, faith alone and the Catholic stress on the necessity of good works. His balanced approach offers a corrective to both extremes, rejecting the notion of a passive faith that bears no moral fruit, and the legalistic tendency to seek merit through human effort. Wesley's synthesis of faith and works thus provides a model of holistic discipleship in which belief and behavior are inseparably united. In his view, salvation reaches its fullest expression not merely in justification but in the continual pursuit of sanctification, culminating in the believer's perfection in love.

Moreover, Wesley's theology speaks powerfully to contemporary Christian practice, where the polarization between faith and works often manifests in spiritual complacency on one hand and moral activism devoid of grace on the other. His insistence that there is no holiness but social holiness posits the communal and ethical dimensions of salvation; faith must express itself in acts of compassion, justice, and service. Wesley's soteriology therefore challenges the contemporary Christians to embody a faith that transforms both the individual heart and the surrounding community. In essence, Wesley's doctrine of salvation offers a timeless corrective to the fragmented

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theological perspectives of the Church. By framing salvation as the harmonious cooperation of divine grace and human response, he restores the unity of faith and works as twin expressions of authentic Christian life. True salvation, according to Wesley, is neither faith without works nor works without faith, but faith that works through love (Gal. 5:6). This vision continues to inspire a spirituality that is evangelical, and ethical, contemplative and active, a faith that not only believes in Christ but lives out His love in the world.

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<sup>i</sup> Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994, 143-145. <https://archive.org/details/responsiblegrace0000madd> (Accessed on Friday, December 5, 2025).

<sup>ii</sup> Mary Kathambi Kinoti, "Rethinking Wesley's Theology in the 21st Century for a Contemporary Methodism in Africa," *Global Scientific Journal* 9, no. 7 (July 2021): 1234-1256.

<sup>iii</sup> Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, 150-155.

<sup>iv</sup> Samuel Waje Kunhiyop, *African Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008, 75-80.

<sup>v</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960, 3.1-3.

<sup>vi</sup> Martin Luther, "Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans," in *Word and Sacrament I*, vol. 35 of Luther's Works, American Edition, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-1986, 365-380. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020, 803.

<sup>vii</sup> John S. Mbiti, *Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986, 188-192. Mbiti often explained that in African thought, belief is never private only; true faith always shows itself in action toward the community, so faith and works belong together like seed and fruit.

<sup>viii</sup> Martin Luther, Heidelberg Disputation (1518), theses 19-24, and Against the Antinomians (1539).

<sup>ix</sup> Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. 3rd ed., London: Epworth Press, 2002, 18.

<sup>x</sup> Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. 2nd ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013), 23.

<sup>xi</sup> Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. 3rd ed., London: Epworth Press, 2002, 34.

<sup>xii</sup> Maddox, 56.

<sup>xiii</sup> Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 44.

<sup>xiv</sup> John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*. Edited by Percy Livingstone Parker, London: Epworth Press, 1938, 47.

<sup>xv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xvi</sup> Heitzenrater, 89

<sup>xvii</sup> Rack, 243.

<sup>xviii</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007, 62.

<sup>xix</sup> Maddox, 112.

<sup>xx</sup> Heitzenrater, 147.

<sup>xxi</sup> John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann, 1969, 210-215.

<sup>xxii</sup> Kasanene, 14.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Vincent Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovery*. Mary Knoll: Orbis Books, 1978, 98.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Kasanene, 3, 10.

<sup>xxv</sup> W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament words*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997, 988.; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1965, 253–256.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology: Sin, Salvation*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House, 2004, 240.

<sup>xxvii</sup> John McCain, (2000). *God's design of salvation for Africa: A Biblical perspective. Salvation for African AJBS XV*, April 2000, 101.

<sup>xxviii</sup> W. Illard Taylor, *The right concept of sin*. Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill press, 1984, 78.

<sup>xxix</sup> Anthony A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1989, 20–22.

<sup>xxx</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013, 293.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, 716.; Akinwale Oloyede, *Essentials of Christian Doctrines in African Context: A Guidebook for Theological Students, Researchers, Church Pastors, and Teachers of God's Word*. Osogbo: Hirise Celebrity Publishers, 64.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Erickson, 296–297.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> McGrath, 215.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Emiola Nihinlola, *Theology for Living: Essays in African Context*. Ogbomoso: The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021, 19.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Maddox 24.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Maddox 23

<sup>xxxvii</sup> John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872, 198.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> Kenneth J. Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007, 80–82. <https://www.academia.edu> (Accessed on Wednesday, December 3, 2025).

<sup>xxxix</sup> John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. London: Epworth Press, 1872, 17.

<sup>xl</sup> Oden, 137.

<sup>xli</sup> Maddox, 23–27.

<sup>xlii</sup> John Wesley, “The Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained,” in The Works of John Wesley, vol. 9 Nashville: Abingdon, 1987, 193–194.

<https://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/The-Wesley-Center-Online/The-Works-of-John-Wesley-Volume-9/Principles-of-a-Methodist-Farther-Explained> (Accessed on Friday, December 5, 2025).

<sup>xliii</sup> Collins, 81–83.

<sup>xliv</sup> John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 8 London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872, 12.