

A Pentecostal response to the five doctrines of grace in Calvinism

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Dates:

Received: 29 Nov. 2025

Accepted: 12 Feb. 2026

Published: 20 July 2026

How to cite this article:

Kgatle, M.S., 2026, 'A Pentecostal response to the five doctrines of grace in Calvinism', *African Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 3(1), a121. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajops.v3i1.121>

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Background: Calvinism is known for its five doctrines of grace, embraced within Reformed Christianity, and has previously been conceptualised and theorised within the theology of grace. This doctrine requires a Pentecostal response that is necessary in developing a Pentecostal theology of grace in an era where Pentecostalism is expanding.

Objectives: The five doctrines can be summarised as: (1) total depravity, (2) unconditional election, (3) limited atonement, (4) irresistible grace, and (5) the perseverance of the saints.

Methods: This article is a Pentecostal response to these five doctrines of grace in the development of a Pentecostal theology of grace.

Results: In other words, the article examines how Pentecostals relate to each of the doctrines as a means of defining a theology of grace within the Pentecostal tradition. To achieve this, a historical overview of Calvinism was given as part of the background to the five doctrines of grace.

Conclusion: The five doctrines were outlined, and each was explained through a review of Calvin's works and contemporary literature, offering a Pentecostal response. The primary objective of the article is to develop a Pentecostal theology of grace that applies to the Pentecostal tradition.

Contribution: This article makes a valuable contribution to the theology of grace by proposing a Pentecostal response to the five doctrines of grace in Calvinism. The article proposes a Pentecostal theology of grace that recognizes human agency in the plan of salvation.

Keywords: Pentecostal theology; Calvinism; reformation; theology of grace; atonement; perseverance; election; depravity.

Introduction

Calvinism is a protestant tradition that adheres to the teachings of John Calvin, which are mainly embraced by Reformed churches, Presbyterians and other congregational churches. Calvinism is known for the teachings of the five doctrines of grace that have been studied as the foundation of the protestant reformation. These doctrines are perceived as the pillars of Calvinism and consequently the Reformation. However, little has been written on how Pentecostalism responds to these five doctrines of grace in Calvinism. Therefore, the main research question is: *What is the Pentecostal response to the five doctrines of grace taught in Calvinism?* To respond to or address this main research question, this article collects data using the literature analysis in qualitative research. The article works within the theoretical framework of the theology of grace as embraced by Calvinism. The article conceptualises Calvinism as an important historical background to the five doctrines of grace in the movement. The main section of the article unpacks each of the five doctrines to understand the position of Calvin and contemporary literature. The five doctrines are (1) total depravity, (2) unconditional election, (3) limited atonement, (4) irresistible grace, and (5) the perseverance of the saints. The article will offer a Pentecostal response to each of the five doctrines to understand the position of Pentecostals through a literature review. The main aim of the article is to develop a Pentecostal theology of grace through an engagement with the five doctrines of grace taught in Calvinism. This concept of grace will be defined in Christian theology before its application to the five doctrines.

Calvinism: A brief introduction

There are different definitions or references to the concept of Calvinism. Firstly, Calvinism is derived from the name of a reformer, John Calvin (1509–1564). Calvin was French by birth, but his

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ministry work and teachings flourished in Geneva, Switzerland. Wagner (2013:47) explains that Calvin was converted to Protestantism in 1530 and became a leading figure of its teachings by 1534. However, given persecutions because of his teachings and religious convictions, Calvin had to flee from France to Switzerland. Calvin's teachings were widely accepted in Geneva, Switzerland, where he also became a minister and could give his lectures on Protestantism. However, Wagner (2013:47) continues to say that while in Geneva, Calvin tried to establish a system of governance that clearly defined the relationship between the church and the state, whereby the state would be governed by the principles found in the Bible. The government of Switzerland did not like this idea and expelled him in 1538. However, in 1941, the Swiss government recalled Calvin to establish a theocratic government as he had proposed before his expulsion. This is what made Calvin to have a great influence in Europe and even the United States. Secondly, Calvinism refers to the main teachings of Calvin, which, according to Dally (2009:16), are 'expressed in his final edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, his expansive biblical commentary, and his other treatises on various subjects and pieces of correspondence'. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* which was first published in 1536 and later 1559 was circulated throughout the continental Europe (eds. Schultz, West & Maclean 1998:37). In addition, the teachings of John Calvin are also found in the various reformed confessions according to Schultz et al. (eds. 1998:37) such as 'Belgic (1561), Scots (1580), Westminster (1647), thirty-nine articles of the church of England (1563) and the canons of the synod of Dort (1619)'. Beyond these confessions, there is an ongoing engagement with the teachings of Calvinism from both the church and in literature.

Thirdly, Calvinism is deeply expressed in its Christian doctrinal teachings embraced by many Reformed churches, Presbyterian and congregational churches. In this way, John Calvin and his teachings are acknowledged as the main leaders in the history of these churches. Therefore, Calvinism is understood here in the context of other Christian teachings such as Puritanism, Pietism, Methodism, Lutheranism and others. Calvinism mainly taught about the authority of the biblical text, also known as *sola scriptura* [scripture alone], the sinfulness of humanity, and the sovereignty of God (eds. Schultz et al. 1998:37). Taliaferro and Marty (eds. 2018) add that:

Calvin stressed the sublime sovereignty of God as the gracious, just, and provident Lord of creation. The created order is the result of common grace, while the redeemed order of those called to salvation through Christ is a function of special grace. Salvation is not merited by good works but by unmerited grace. (p. 41)

All human and creation history for Calvin is dependent on the grace and sovereignty of God for Calvin. Calvinism became the teaching that saw all of the universe and all its dwellings under the control of God. At the core of Calvin's teachings is the concept of predestination and election. Therefore, Calvinism has come to be known for its theological beliefs as articulated by John Calvin in his different writings

and other scholarly reflections on the same. Fourthly, Calvinism extends beyond the ecclesiastical doctrinal teachings into the social, ethical and political teachings that influenced continental Europe, or mainly Western society. The term Calvinism, according to Schultz et al. (eds. 1998:37), also refers to the 'sociological and political impact of Calvin's thought and institutions on subsequent western history, particularly in Switzerland, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and the United States'. Therefore, Calvin's influence is not limited to the ecclesiastical community, but he also had a great influence on the Swiss government (Dreyer 2010).

The doctrinal teachings of Calvin can be summarised in the context of his positions in relation to the five doctrines of grace. As highlighted in the introduction, the doctrines are: (1) total depravity, (2) unconditional election, (3) limited atonement, (4) irresistible grace, and (5) the perseverance of the saints (Sproul 2016). These five doctrines, as pointed out previously they are very much acknowledged in the Reformed churches. McMahon (2013:177) calls them the five *Solas* [alone] of reformation with a concrete biblical foundation; hence, they were acknowledged by the Synod of Dordt. For McMahon (2013), the doctrines have been helpful in the systematic theological foundation of salvation that comes by grace. Chapman (2011:38) concurs that the five doctrines are more of a summary of Calvin's doctrine of grace. Chapman (2011) continues to say that:

[A]lthough the Synod of Dordt was held fifty-four years after his death, the adoption of the five doctrines of Calvinism reflects Calvin's strong influence on the Reformed churches and his understanding of the nature of divine grace and predestination as it relates to salvation. (p. 38)

Most recently, Andrews (2023: 174) says that other than their centrality to Reformed theology, the five doctrines are also influential to other Christian traditions around the world; hence, they have been embraced by millions of Christians. But Andrews (2023) is quick to point out that they serve as a summary of Calvin's positions on salvation and God's sovereignty. The five doctrines in this article are unpacked by looking at Calvin's position on each doctrine. The main aim is not to reject or accept them but to reflect on them from a Pentecostal theological point of view. However, each doctrine is analysed below to offer an objective reflection from a Pentecostal perspective.

The five doctrines of grace in Calvinism

This section unpacks the five doctrines of grace, which are: (1) total depravity, (2) unconditional election, (3) limited atonement, (4) irresistible grace, and (5) the perseverance of the saints. In Christian theology, grace refers to the kindness that is given to human beings by God without expecting any form of a ransom (Bridges 2018; Cheng 2012; Williams 2004). Therefore, it is believed in Christian theology that no amount of work or human effort can bring redemption from sin but grace. First, the total depravity refers to the inability of

humanity to save itself because of its sinful nature (Akin 2014; Calvin 1559; Pink 2015; Steele & Thomas 1963:16). Akin (2014:369) explains that human beings were created perfectly to be in a relationship with God. However, given the sin that entered the world, it created some form of depravity for all of humanity. This led to the corruption of the relationship between human beings and their God. The sinful nature of humanity makes it possible for them to choose to do the right thing or even to choose to follow the things of God. Pink (2015) explains that:

The fall has brought man into subjection to the power of death, into hopeless bondage to sin, into complete spiritual blindness. Man has become the bondsman of Satan. In that dreadful state, he does not possess a particle of power to deliver himself or even to mitigate his wretchedness. (p. 47)

This is mainly taken from Romans 3:23 that 'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'. This is where grace comes in to make it possible for humanity to decide to follow God. In this doctrine, the role played by faith is not a human invention but rather also part of the gift of God in the quest to deliver humanity out of its sinful nature. In this doctrine, faith is defined as the gift of God to humanity as opposed to the ability of human beings to reach out to God. Another important aspect of this doctrine is the role of the Spirit in salvation, whereby the doctrine sees salvation as beyond the work of the Spirit to require the grace of regeneration for humans to be delivered from evil.

The second doctrine of grace is unconditional election. This doctrine states that before the earth was created, God had already chosen those who would be saved in the future (Calvin 1559; Sproul 2016; Steele & Thomas 1963:16). Calvin (1559:3, 23, 13) states, 'God is said to set apart those whom he adopts for salvation'. Unconditional election refers to God's act of giving faith to those he had already selected for salvation. The doctrine also emphasises that God's choice was not based on human qualifications but on his own decision to elect particular people. It asserts that those God has chosen are brought to grace by the power of the Spirit, leading them to accept Christ as their Saviour. Calvin (1559) believed that God had already determined who would be saved without any conditions or requirements attached. Therefore, an election means that God chooses the sinner; the sinner does not choose God. For the chosen to be saved, grace is essential to bring them to salvation because, although they are chosen, their total depravity prevents them from making the right decision, as discussed above. Another interesting point in this doctrine is that those who are not chosen to be saved are destined for eternal damnation. Calvin (1559) states that:

Those, therefore, whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other cause but because he is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children. (pp. 3, 23, 14)

This also means that according to this doctrine, they are destined to eternal damnation, and there is nothing they can do to decide their fate. Biblical texts such as Matthew 15:13, 'Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will

be uprooted', are used to support eternal damnation for those who are not chosen to be saved.

The third doctrine of grace in Calvinism is the limited atonement, which basically alludes that Christ's atonement was specifically done for the elect and not for everyone. This doctrine posits that the redeeming work of Christ on the cross was for the elected sinner (Calvin 1559; Sproul 2016; Steele & Thomas 1963:17). The position of this doctrine is that even though the atonement of Christ is sufficient for everyone, it is only reserved for the selected few who are the chosen to partake of the grace. This implies that only the sins of the elected can be forgiven and not necessarily the sins of everyone. The life, the death, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ were all done for the specific people who needed to be saved. Therefore, according to this doctrine, by going to the cross, Christ wanted to secure salvation for the selected sinners, including the faith that needs to be granted to the elected sinners. Since only the elected can be saved, the gift of faith cannot fail in securing the elected to be part of the work of salvation. This, according to this doctrine, is therefore more like a guarantee given to the elect for them to receive redemption through the limited atonement. This means that the chosen would not have to compete in any form with those who were not chosen for salvation, hence the guarantee of the elected to be saved.

The fourth doctrine of grace is irresistible grace. This doctrine says that even though a general call can be made to everyone to receive salvation, there is a special call for the chosen through the Spirit in which they can be saved (Calvin 1559; Sproul 2016; Steele & Thomas 1963:18). Calvin (1559:3, 24, 1, 13) uses this doctrine to articulate that those whom God calls to come to grace will definitely come without any hindrance. The irresistible grace also means that those who previously had stony hearts are given the hearts of flesh in which they can accept the grace (Calvin 1559:3, 24, 1, 16). The heart of flesh, therefore, cannot resist the grace of God when he calls the chosen ones to himself according to this grace. The general call for salvation, which is made to everyone according to this doctrine, is often rejected by the general sinners. This doctrine says that the inward call, which is made specifically for the chosen sinner, cannot be rejected; hence, the concept of irresistible grace, also known as efficacious grace. Therefore, through the power of the Spirit, the elected sinners cannot reject the grace apportioned to them for their salvation. The Spirit, according to this doctrine, is not limited to bringing salvation to humanity; hence, the elected sinners cannot reject the work of salvation through the Spirit and the power of God. Therefore, to bring salvation to the elected sinners, the Spirit does not require the cooperation of human beings, as they are already elected and have already received the faith to believe in Christ. Hence, the doctrine defines salvation beyond the will of humanity to be saved; it is through the grace reserved for the elect.

The last doctrine of grace is perseverance of the saints, which suggests that all those who were chosen, redeemed, and given the faith through the power of the Spirit to be saved

are also given the authority to endure all hardship so they can be saved until the end (Calvin 1559; Sproul 2016; Steele & Thomas 1963:18). The doctrine teaches that those who are truly saved will remain in their salvation no matter what challenges they face in their salvation. The biblical texts, such as John 10:28 and Romans 8:38–39, are used to support this notion that once saved, forever saved. This doctrine basically says that the elect, once they are saved, cannot or are not in a position to lose their salvation. The perseverance of the saints goes with the preservation of the saints in the sense that God gives grace to the elect for them to endure until the end for their preservation. Therefore, the concept of perseverance highlights the human agency in the work of salvation as activated by God's grace for their preservation. Therefore, this doctrine asserts that the grace of God is available in determining the eternal salvation of those who have been elected to spend their eternity with God. The perseverance of the saints is eschatological as it guarantees the salvation of the elect in eternity, and something that gives the elect an assurance of their salvation. Those who have been predestined according to this doctrine become the partakers of the eternal glory. Calvin (1559:4, 1, 1, 1) calls this 'eternal blessedness', which on its own explains the link between the perseverance of the saints and eschatology. Therefore, since those who have not been chosen to receive eternal damnation, those who are chosen to receive eternal blessedness according to this doctrine. The next section offers a Pentecostal response to each of the five doctrines of grace in Calvinism.

A Pentecostal response to the five doctrines of grace

By a Pentecostal response in this article, the writer refers to the position of Pentecostals regarding the five doctrines of: (1) total depravity, (2) unconditional election, (3) limited atonement, (4) irresistible grace, and (5) the perseverance of the saints. This does not mean that this article will outline the positions of all Pentecostals worldwide, but rather, through a literature review, outline what is generally acceptable in Pentecostalism in relation to the five doctrines of grace. On the issue of total depravity, a Pentecostal scholar, Marius Nel (2022:211), concurs that human beings are born with sin and require grace. However, Nel also points to the importance of surrendering to the work of the Holy Spirit to deal with the challenges of original sin. For Nel, the total depravity, which involves the human being in totality, requires the power of the Holy Spirit, in which the human being can be transformed into a sinless life. The point raised by Nel (2022) is important since Romans 8:26 speaks of the Holy Spirit engaged in the work of helping the believer deal with their infirmities. This means that the Holy Spirit plays an important role in the transformation of the sinfulness of the world, in addition to the grace that the sinner received from God. This demonstrates that even with the grace, the believer can struggle with sin without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit not only convicts human beings of their sin but also works in them to deal with the challenge permanently. Yong (2005) reiterates this point that the theology of the

Spirit in Pentecostalism offers triumph over sin, sickness and disease. Therefore, it is correct that in Pentecostalism, the work of the Holy Spirit, in addition to the grace of God in dealing with total depravity, is an important one.

On the doctrine of unconditional election, Prewitt (2022) quotes Galatians 3:36, 'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus', to argue that salvation is always by a condition of one's faith in Christ. Prewitt (2022:38) continues to say that 'our adoption as a child of God is absolutely conditional on our willing faith'. No person has ever been saved apart from his will to become so. Even in the cases of extreme conversions, such as that of Paul the apostle, he was a willing participant as soon as his spiritual eyes were opened. Romans 10:10 can also be read with Galatians 3:36, that a human being should believe in their heart and confess with their mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and only then will salvation come in their lives. This somehow also negates the notion that there are specific people who are predestined to receive salvation and the assurance of their salvation, even if they do not believe in Christ. Warrington (2008:38) says that even though it is correct to say that God has provided a means to salvation or simply the grace of salvation, he has, on the other hand, left it to individuals to decide whether they accept such salvation or not. Warrington also clarifies the issue of predestination, that even though there are chosen people, such as the children of Israel, in the new covenant, they would still be required to believe and confess salvation for them to be saved. Warrington is the main reason why Pentecostals are active in the preaching of the gospel for people to believe so that they can be saved. Therefore, Pentecostals discourage passivity in the name of people being predestined or already elected to be saved as per the doctrine of unconditional election in Calvinism. Hence, for Richie (2020, 2022), the doctrine of unconditional election is not sustainable in scripture since there is an activity of faith demanded of the sinner to be saved, which points to the importance of human agency and human will in salvation.

Pentecostals, according to Richie (2022), reject the notion that the atonement of Christ is limited to those who were chosen to receive the grace. For Richie (2022), salvation has been freely given to those who would freely accept it. This means that anyone who can accept salvation will be saved. In this way, atonement is open to everyone and not just the selected few. Jacobsen (ed. 2006) takes it further to speak about the finished work of Christ, wherein not only does it result in the salvation of all who believe, but also carries all the blessings. Jacobsen (ed. 2006) says that:

There can come no blessing, benefit, experience, or victory, in body, mind, or spirit, in time or eternity, except as it comes through the Blood of Jesus, and that alone. The blood purchased everything absolutely for us. (p. 117)

The point made in this current study is that the same blood of Jesus is sufficient for all who would believe in Christ, not the selected work. Therefore, the concept of the finished work of Christ, as pointed out by Jacobsen (ed. 2006), is a framework for the inclusion of all sinners as opposed to the selected few.

It is for the same reason that Pentecostals emphasise the full gospel as part of the finished work of Christ. Pentecostal soteriology, according to Vondey (2017:2), embraces the full gospel inclusive of salvation, sanctification, Spirit baptism, healing and glorification. The point made in the current study is that this full gospel is available for everyone. In addition, simple biblical text demonstrates that God's love and grace is available for all human beings in the world (Jn 3:16). Even in the early church when they were amazed on the pneumatic experiences because of the infilling of the Spirit, Peter explained that those who repent and call upon the name of the Lord will be saved (Ac 2:21). This demonstrates that it is the desire of God for all humanity to be saved and the reason many are still not saved is because they do not repent, believe or even confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. This has nothing to do with the insufficiency of the atonement of Christ.

The Pentecostals believe that grace comes from God but also requires human commitment in embracing it. There must be a willingness from human beings to cooperate or even embrace the grace so it can materialise in the life of the believer. This means that human beings can reject or accept the grace. Whoever is willing and has the commitment to partake of the grace of God can be able to do so. Revelation 22:17 states that '... the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.'

Therefore, in Pentecostalism, according to Richie (2022), anyone willing to receive that water of life or the grace of God can receive it. Laurito (2023:37) concurs that, in contrast to a Calvinist perspective on salvation:

'the Pentecostal seeks to show that while salvation is wholly of God, the application of God's saving work and the reception of the Spirit depend on human response. In this way, Pentecostal confirms the sovereignty of God while still maintaining humanity's need to respond to God's grace'. (p. 37)

This means that within Pentecostalism, both the divine and the human are active in making the grace of God to be realised among human beings. According to Warrington (2008:38), the grace of God is not irresistible, as it can be rejected by human beings. Warrington (2008) continues to say that with this knowledge, Pentecostals always guard their walk with God so that they do not lose their salvation. Pentecostals believe in working out their salvation that they have received through fear and trembling so that they will not lose it (Phlp 2:12). Therefore, it is correct to say that in Pentecostalism, even though salvation came by grace, there is a need for human agency in keeping such salvation because unlike in Calvinism, the salvation can be lost, the grace can be resisted.

As highlighted above, Pentecostals believe that salvation can be lost, as opposed to the Calvinist view that once saved, forever saved. Hence, the scriptures consistently call those who are in salvation to endure until the end because

there is a possibility of losing their salvation through an entanglement with the life of sin. The epistle of Peter actually refers to those who get entangled in sin such that their state becomes worse than before they were born again (2 Pt 2:20–21). The fear of losing salvation has actually demanded among Pentecostals to maintain a high moral lifestyle in the quest to remain in their salvation. Ross (2019) puts it in this way:

As Arminianism can be interpreted to mean that the perseverance of the saint is not guaranteed, the possibility of eventual total rejection and the loss of a true salvation once gained is possible for Pentecostals, which can only be avoided by personal perseverance, never rejecting the gift. This being the case, Pentecostals do look to the Spirit for assistance in this perseverance and must rely on pneumatology to do so, because it is here that the individual is, it is here that part, at least, of the decisions concerning his eternal salvation are being made, so it is here that the Spirit must be present and working. (p. 43)

Therefore, in Pentecostalism, the endurance of the saints is linked with the very work of the Holy Spirit. This means that the Holy Spirit not only gives the believers strength to pray and deal with weakness but is also the Spirit of perseverance, wherein believers are able to maintain their salvation only with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is true since perseverance is one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit; thus, the Spirit-filled believer can have the perseverance to maintain the salvation until the end, because in Pentecostalism, it must be reiterated that such a salvation can be lost.

The development of a Pentecostal theology of grace

Grace is an important aspect of salvation because human beings cannot rescue themselves from original sin. The understanding of the grace of God comes from the knowledge that all humanity has sinned and can no longer have friendship with God (Rm 3:23). The fall of the first man Adam was actually the fall of humanity; hence, a reference to 'all human beings' in Romans 3:23. Romans 5:12, 'Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned'. In addition, grace is also understood in the context of the inability of humanity to save itself from the same fall. Since the fall of humanity through Adam, human beings have been trying by all means possible to deliver themselves, but could not achieve salvation until God sent his son through grace. Therefore, grace becomes a framework in which humanity can be saved from sin and eternal damnation. It is only those who have received an abundance of the grace of God who can overcome the fall of humanity (Rm 5:17). Salvation does not come by the works of humanity; hence, the importance of the grace of God (Eph 2:9–11). Therefore, grace is understood as divine assistance to humanity for them to overcome the challenges of sin while here on earth. Hence, it can be reiterated that salvation itself is the work of grace, not the works of humanity. In this definition of grace, both Calvinism and Pentecostalism are in agreement about original sin and about the failure of humanity to save itself. The difference is that Pentecostals

believe that grace is available to all human beings who come to Christ through repentance and confession of their sins.

The theology of grace in Pentecostalism recognises the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was released in the very same context of the grace of God because human beings cannot overcome sin on their own, even though they have received the grace. The Holy Spirit in Pentecostalism is an extension of the grace of God in helping humanity to fight sin. This means that the grace of God does not end with the sending of the Son on earth and his atonement on the cross, but continues with the sending of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Jesus Christ to heaven. The purpose of the Holy Spirit in the believer is to help them win against the fallen world and the sinfulness of humanity. John 13:15–16 states very well that ‘If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever’. Therefore, Jesus knew that even with the grace of salvation, there is still a need for the helper so that the believer can continue to live under the grace of God. This is the same reason that Pentecostals worldwide emphasise the baptism in the Holy Spirit, because a Spirit-filled believer has the power to overcome sin. In addition, Pentecostals value the importance of the Holy Spirit in convicting any sinner of their sinful life and a call for repentance. Hence, in Pentecostalism, the Holy Spirit is part of the plan of salvation and the grace that both the sinner and the believer require in a fallen and sinful world.

Some Pentecostal and charismatic churches speak of grace without any human agency or human involvement. The reviewed literature above demonstrates that the grace of God comes when we activate our faith. In addition, salvation comes when a sinner exercises their faith in Christ. Therefore, grace is accompanied by works of grace, hence the importance of human agency in the work of salvation. In this instance, Romans 11:6, where Paul speaks of grace without works, needs to be understood in context because Paul here is speaking of those in the old covenant who tried to receive salvation through their own efforts. Here, Paul is denouncing works because indeed Christ has already completed the work of salvation on the cross. Christ has already shed his blood, and therefore, there is no need for the shedding of the blood of bulls and goats as it was done in the Old Covenant. However, on the specific matter of faith in Jesus Christ, it must be accompanied by works of repentance and confession (Rm 10:10). Moreover, for a believer to be saved until the end, their salvation must be accompanied by works of endurance and perseverance because there is a possibility of losing their faith. Hence, Pentecostals believe that to experience the fullness of the gospel, which is inclusive of the glorification, there is a need to endure until the end. Pentecostals also understand that grace must be accompanied by the works of righteousness. Because receiving grace does not mean that one needs to continue to live the life of sin in the name of the grace (Rm 6:1–2). This explains the rationale for Pentecostals to embrace the holy life not only in fear of losing salvation but in pursuit of attaining eternal glory as part of the full gospel.

Conclusion

This article offered a Pentecostal response to the five doctrines of grace within Calvinism. The articles analysed these doctrines of grace, which include depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. The article found that Pentecostals agree that indeed humanity has fallen into sin and therefore cannot save themselves, hence the need for the saving grace of God. However, even though Pentecostals believe that no works of human beings can save them, they believe that anyone who submits to the grace of God can be saved, as opposed to the doctrine of election in Calvinism, which asserts that only the chosen can be saved. Pentecostals believe that the grace of God is for anyone who believes in God. The article also found that salvation is not only made for those who have been elected, but rather anyone who believes in God, the grace of atonement can reach their lives through the price of Christ's blood. Although the grace of God is irresistible, it is possible for those who were once saved to decide against the grace of God; hence, the scriptures speak about those who were once saved but later backslid and lost their salvation. Therefore, one can lose their salvation; hence, the Bible teaches about enduring until the end, meaning the one who received the grace is duty-bound to keep their salvation. It is for the same reason that those who have been saved are called upon to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, so they do not lose it. Therefore, the five doctrines of grace in Calvinism require a proper engagement in the development of the Pentecostal theology of grace. This theology should pay attention to the importance of human agency in salvation because in as much although grace is available and irresistible, human beings have a role to play in keeping their salvation. Most importantly, the grace of God is available for all who open their hearts to receive Christ.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology for the support provided in conducting this research.

Competing interests

The author, Mookgo S. Kgate, declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

CRedit authorship contribution

Mookgo S. Kgate: Conceptualisation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. The author confirms that this work is entirely their own, has reviewed the article, approved the final version for submission and publication, and takes full responsibility for the integrity of its findings.

Ethical consideration

Ethical clearance to conduct this study was obtained from the University of South Africa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee (No. 2019-CHS-90343018-Dept).

Funding information

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

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