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**Review/Response Paper 1:
Tennent's "Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?"**

In the second chapter of his textbook, Theology in the Context of World Christianity, David Tennent tackles an increasingly relevant question concerning God's personhood: "Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?" To answer this, Tennent divides his response in three parts: an etymological, ontological, and practical analysis.

In terms of etymology, the question of intersection between the Christian God and God of Islam simply remains, "Can the word *Allah* be used to address both the Christian God and Islamic God?" Tennent offers a quick study that concludes the usage of the word Allah to pre-date the religion of Islam. More likely is the fact that Allah was used by monotheists to denote the existence of a one, true God. Much in the same way that the English word "God" is used to translate the Hebrew *Elohim*, Allah can likewise be used to reference "the true God". Tennent is sure to note, however, that the covenantal, personal name of God YHWH cannot be accurately embodied by the title, Allah.

The ontological perspective of this issue likewise looks less to the nuances of the individual faiths in question but rather at the nature of monotheism. In the strictest sense, a "true monotheist" (as described by Tennent) would be sure to agree that both the Christian God and Islamic Allah reference the same God for only one supreme, divine being exists. However, such an understanding of the question of the God/Allah distinction fails to address the real doctrinal differences in the way a Christian understands God and a Muslim understands their Allah. A side-by-side comparison of the predicates used by both religions' sacred texts do observe overlap in the characterization of God. However, the differences – though few in number – provide a

theological incongruence that cannot be ignored. Though through the purview of monotheism, both Allah and God are the same, the soteriological differences alongside the denial of Christology from those in the Islamic camp suggest that the divine being described by both religions are not one and the same.

Practically, then, the succinct answer to the question at hand is that no, the Father of Jesus cannot be equated to the God of Muhammad. Even the usage of the word Allah to describe the Christian God finds difficulties due to the cultural contextualization of Allah to specifically reference the God of Islam. Despite the religious similarity of both God and Allah referencing the God of Abraham, there is no way to reconcile the Islamic denial of the doctrine of the Trinity and of the divinity of Christ without forgoing the integrity of faith for the Christian.

Overall, Tennent's discourse perhaps provided the most meaningful contribution to systematic theology not through the specific topic at hand, but how addressing such a question forces the believer to reapproach their understanding of their theological position. As Tennent suggests in his conclusion, the globalizing context of our modern world demands for Christian theology to contextualize one's understanding and communicating of God to the world around us. There exists today more religions than just Judaism and Christianity that identify itself as monotheistic; and amongst polytheistic religions, the concept of a single, supreme deity is not foreign. How, then, can the Church communicate the person of Jesus Christ as the singular way of access to this one, supreme deity? How do the whispers of a single, supreme God force us to understand YHWH God in a deeper, richer way?