

Theology in the Context of World Christianity
Timothy Tennent – Interaction Paper – Chapter 4

Summary of Chapter

Tennent detailed how Christians must realize how the concept of cultural shame and honor is prevalent in some non-Western cultures and how Christ's sacrifice restored our honor and bore our shame before God (Tennent, p. 94.)

Christians have to identify how one's identity is shaped by group and social dynamics and what role sin and shame is used as well. The concept that sin and dishonor are interrelated in some human relationships and particularly in our relationship with God was profound (Tennent, p. 97, 100.) The act of sin is "both personal and relational" (Tennent, p. 97.) The effects of sin are never solitary. Once we engage in sin, this action produces the "fruit of a broken relationship" (Tennent, p. 101.) With our sin, we are not just individually guilty of dishonoring God. This sinful action also makes us a corporately shamed before God (Tennent, p. 97.)

Those who are in a shaming culture must be aware of that, with Christ's blood sacrifice, His being dishonored enabled Him to bare our shame for our overall benefit and spiritual restoration (Tennent, p. 95.) Also, Tennant highlights the critical importance of publicly restoring an individual's broken honor. To engage in public restoration recognizes a person's inherent worth (Tennent, p. 95.)

Key Learning/Questions:

Some questions: 1) What are some methods the Church is using to dialogue with cultures which engage in shame and guilt? 2) What are the biblical ways human alienation guilt and shame are successfully dealt with individually and collectively?

Missional implications

When addressing cultures steeped in guilt and shame in the missional context, Christians must be knowledgeable to any potential relational, cultural and social barriers which are present. (Tennent, p. 98.) Doing so assists us in effective ways of engaging in lasting missions work. Also, with a knowledgeable and personal approach, this may impact groups and individuals for the Lord's glory.