

Theology in the context of World Christianity

Reflection Paper Chapter 2

“Theology: Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad?”

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In chapter two, Tennant focuses on answering a specific question. “Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammed?” In order to properly answer this specific question, he clarifies what he means by it and goes into depth in answering this question. First, he goes into the etymology of the word “Allah,” and highlights its use prior to Islam ever being formed. Afterwards, he addresses the ontological question of both being Monotheistic, but when going deeper into the specifics, there are many predicates associated when a Christian will use the term “Allah” to when a Muslim uses this term. In other words, the question becomes, “is Allah the same as Allah?” While etymologically speaking, God and Allah can be interchangeable, it is precisely the predicates revealed in both the Bible and the Quran that make a world of a difference. After all of that background work, Tennant then goes on to speak pastorally to this question and also challenges Christian theologians to engage this global reality with a missional perspective.

A key learning experience and missional implication I take from this, is that very challenge Tennant gives towards the end of the chapter. He challenges us not to be stuck on just studying a few deceased German theologians who only have a few followers, but to go further than that and engage a global reality. I am reminded how Apostle Paul when in Athens, studied his surroundings and shows knowledge of their own poets. As a result, he incorporates this knowledge in how he shares the gospel with them. In a similar way, knowing more about Islam and Muhammed, can help us in many ways be able to engage missionally to individuals with Muslim backgrounds. Being able to show and properly represent Islamic views to other Muslims can help build more credibility when we present our own views to them. In my own previous studies, I have not spent as much time studying Islam, but in the world we live in, I think it will be important for me to apply more diligence in knowing their faith. As a result, being able to engage people from Muslim backgrounds more effectively.