

Alex Worthington  
Theology in a Global Context  
Tennent Reflection Paper, Chapter 4  
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In chapter 4 Tennent looks at shame-based cultures and specifically how our doctrine of the atonement can be greater informed by understanding shame and honor.

Starting in anthropology, Tennent points out that shame and honor are dominant features in many cultures outside of the West (Tennent, 77). "Shame-based" cultures are contrasted with "guilt-based" cultures. Shame cultures rely on "external sanctions for good behavior," (79), while guilt cultures rely on "an internalized conviction of sin," (79). Some helpful definitions were given: shame "stimulates fear of psychological or physical rejection, abandonment, expulsion, or loss of social position and relies predominantly on external pressure from an individual group," (79). Guilt on the other hand "is a response to a transgression against internalized societal or parental prohibitions or against boundaries that form an internal authority, the conscience," (79). All cultures have some sense of both, but cultures in the West are much heavier on guilt and many non-Western cultures are heavier on shame. Shame cultures have a much stronger value on interdependence while guilt cultures have a higher value on independence (81).

Moving to theology, Tennent affirms that the legal aspect of salvation is the most clear and central aspects given in Scripture (82). However, when we look to sin and its affects, we see clearly shame and fear emphasized alongside guilt (83). Biblical concepts of shame run throughout the Old and New Testament. The gospel writers and Paul go to great lengths to emphasize the honor and shame dynamics present in the passion. Tennent draws out clearly the shame aspect of the cross: "as sinner, the most profound shame is that of being publicly separate and judged by God. Jesus bears this judgment through his passion and death," (91).

Tennent concludes, "a more biblical understanding of human identity outside of Christ that is framed by guilt, fear, *and* shame will, in turn, stimulate a more profound and comprehensive appreciation for the work of Christ on the cross," (92). Further, "while the cross is never less than a judicial act, it is certainly more than a judicial act," (93). Thus, by letting the concept of shame inform our understanding of atonement, we not only have a more robust doctrine of atonement for those in guilt-based cultures, we also are more ready to share hope with shame-based cultures. "We, who once were identified by guilt and shame, now have a new identity in Christ and have become partakers of his righteousness and his honor," (101).

