

Summary

This chapter introduces itself with an article written by Andrew Walls called "Theological scholarship needs a renaissance of mission studies." Then Tennent will talk about four key themes; four ways the rise of the Majority World church and the studies modeled that might help to promote a renaissance in Western theological scholarship. The first theme is called Reintegration of the Theological Disciplines, where Tennent discusses the discourse of Christian history in America being centered around a specific group of Christians and Tennent explains the importance of integrating the history and theology of Christians from countries around the world. The second theme is called Renaissance in Systematic Theology, where Tennent talks about how different cultures are struggling to be Christian in their own contexts. Tennent also discusses the environments that systematic theology thrives in and the variables needed in order for the vitality of systematic theology to decline. The third theme is called Particularization of Theological Discourse and in this part of the chapter Tennent talks about how even though Christianity is moving East, the discourse stays centered around Western theology. He also talks about how it is important to give a voice to our brothers and sisters of other cultures and nations. The fourth and last theme is called Theological Engagement with Ideologies of Unbelief and with Non-Christian Religions. In this part, Tennent discusses the importance of the engagement with ideologies of different religions, because that is where many Eastern Christians are coming from. However, Tennent also talks about how it is important that everyone comes together in this kind of discussion, that we are not coming as our own distinct "kind of" Christianity, but as one body in Christ.

Key Learning/ Questions

- Systematic Theology - the systematic organization of biblical answers or insights into questions we pose to the text of Scripture.
- The whole structure of historical theology assumes our Christian history as the starting point, from which everyone else eventually derives their own history.
- Different things that work in Western settings may not work or be applicable to the Majority World peoples.
- The example given in the text is where Tennent could not answer some questions that his students in India had for him concerning the "prasad," which is food offered up to their idols and then taken to different homes as acts of hospitality and friendship. But to refuse it is to reject the hospitality and friendship of your neighbor.
 - How do we answer a question like this, where there are things in their culture that are not allowed in Western theology?
- Many Christians around the world are struggling to understand the presence of church in the larger context they're in.
- Systematic Theology loses its vitality when
 - It becomes overly confident.
 - It loses its missiological focus.
- Theological education can become separated from the vitality of the church's mission.
- The church of Jesus Christ is now the largest, the most culturally, ethnically diverse movement anywhere in the world.
- Tennent says that "hyphenated theologies" are not healthy ways to celebrate the growing diversity in the life and experience of the global church

Mission Implication

I think the mission implication of this chapter would be to learn about other cultures with a humble heart that is quick to learn and slow to teach. As missionaries, we often go to different countries eager to push our own agenda onto other people. We want them to know the God that we love, in the way that we love and know Him thinking it is the only way to love and know God. But we don't recognize that we are boxing Him in. So many people are learning about God and experiencing God in their own ways, how could we ever tell them the way they're experiencing God is wrong? Of course, yes, scripture is important. And there are going to be things that are in the Bible that seem to go against their culture, especially in countries where their religion is their culture. But we let them ask the hard questions and move forward together in answering the questions with the goal to love and worship the same God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. And a goal to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.