

TH502 – Theology in Global Context
Tennent Chapter Seven Interaction Paper
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Summary of Chapter

Tennent wants us to study and understand the Holy Spirit, this chapter is about pneumatology aka the study of the Holy Spirit in Latin American and global Pentecostalism and to enable us to examine so holy-spirit inspired gospel and the risk of creating new theology that is not biblical. Tennent acknowledged the challenges in attempting to define “Pentecostalism” however he shared 3 aspects of it. First, Pentecostals fully affirm the authority of the Bible. Second, they believe full range of gifts and miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit in NT are available for believers today. Third, they are known for less formalized and expressive form of worship. Tennent decided to focus on Latin America due to its vibrant and highest growth rate, the break-free aka way from Christendom of the west specifically from Roman Catholic, and lastly, the challenges it posts to the traditional evangelical of North American theologies.

Key Learning/Questions

Tennent focused on 3 key questions. 1) There are vast and diverse expression of Holy Spirit in different denomination as well as the Pentecostals are not eager to establish or create a systematic theology that could fully reflect the work of God’s Spirit. However, the nature of Pentecostalism emerged among uneducated people, thus they do not have preconceived notions eg. the universe like many of the traditional western theologians who get their education from established university. Thus, Pentecostalism from Latin America is in must suitable better position to see clearly the work of the Holy Spirit in this “not yet” kingdom. 2) “The death of Christendom aka Christianization of Latin America transformed from “ontocratic” (highly religious, closed, and inwardly focus/directed) society to “technocratic” (open and outwardly focus/directed). 3) The negative view of Pentecostal churches and for evangelicals not to accept Pentecostal into NAE is a missed. Because “there are great ecumenical truths in it there is a deeper spiritual unity beyond denominations.”

Missional implications

Reading this chapter reminding me of a reading assignments/book review with Dr. Ron Walborn class “The Word and Power Church” Dr. Doug Banister shared many testimonies of how the congregants were somewhat “incomplete” prior to experiencing both the word and power of God through the Holy Spirit. I am very glad that since Tennent wrote this book (published in 2007) there has been more openness to pneumatology or to be more expecting of miracles and to see all of the Spirit gifts in displayed. And I agreed with Tennent said, we have to stay true to the scriptures else new theologies such as “prosperity gospel” dose give Pentecostalism a bad reputation.