

TH502 – Theology in Global Context  
Tennent Chapter Six Interaction Paper  
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April 18, 2023

### Summary of Chapter

Tennent is explaining how one could fail to see the differences in the Buddhism and Christian, if she/he take it by face value eg. “salvation by grace through faith”. Tennent wrote about Shinran Sonin, someone who was trying to escape the trouble of life by practicing Buddhism as a way out. Buddhism does teach about salvation, and it often leads the followers to step in-to spiritual world that is free from human nature of pain and suffering.

Four key elements according to Shinran are 1) Turning Through the Three Vows to Embrace “Other Power”; 2) Single Repetition of the Nembutsu; 3) Hard Way – Easy Way – Only Way; and 4) Denial of the Merit Acquisition Principle. Tennent said, one could see this similar to Martin Luther takes on “salvation by grace through faith”. However Tennent share major fundamental differences:

Christianity	Buddhism
Sin (a rebellion against God)	Karma
The divine transcendence of God	Dharamakara, man exalted as savior aka god
Grace – unmerited gift from God	Grace – merit based
Salvation in Jesus’s blood ALONE	Salvation require & depends on human efforts

### Key Learning/Questions

I’ve seen white westerners convert and become monks in Thailand and I’ve heard them often say Buddhism is the true religion and they contrast and downplay Christianity. This Chapter is so rich and breakdown clearly; Tennent did a great job tackling and explaining in the doctrine, theology, or practice of the two. I wish those who are confused about the differences between Buddhism and Christian have access to this chapter.

### Missional implications

For someone who grew up as a Buddhist, I am so grateful that God saved me and opened my eyes and heart to see and know Him. It is very difficult to do mission work in Thailand, because they believe every religion is good, and it all depends on how good or bad the person is, and they think religion should lead to true happiness. And I can see why some westerners are attracted to Buddhism because its market/taught as an escape from the miserable world into “peace”. However, in reality it's only temporary and no one can maintain that utopianism. Hence it is very critical for us to experience, know, and share the gospel and biblical truths else we will fail to see the value of the cross.