

## **Tennent Reflection Paper: Chapter 8**

### **Summary of Chapter**

This chapter discusses the controversial issues of how the growing “churchless christians” in the Muslim world are identified from biblical, exegetical, theological and ethical lens.

### **Key Learning/Questions**

John Travis introduced the reference spectrum of C-1 to C-6 to discuss contextualization (from low to high) in the Islamic context, where C stands for Christ-centered communities.

Contextualization refers to the positive goal of evangelistical success in a local context.

Evaluation of C-1 to C-4 yields little controversy (where C-1 and C-2 refer to “foreign-type Christians, C3 refers to the “contextually sensitive Christians, and C-4 refers to the “followers of Isa”), while C-5 referring to Muslim believers (MBs) warrants critical discussion in biblical, exegetical, theological and ethical areas surrounding the crux of the issue: self-identity. At the end of the chapter, Tennent purports that the best approach is to regard C-5 as a “temporary, transitional bridge” for some Muslims to cross over into explicit Christian faith and identify; Tennent also compares that to a form of Reformation in reverse, where Muslim followers of Jesus gradually come to see that their truest identity is with the people of God (217-218).

### **Missional implications**

This ecclesiological discussion serves as a great example of the much-needed contribution that global missionary movements can give to the Global Church and its theological formation. As my mentor spent two decades ministering to the Muslim community in China, I intimately understand the missional challenges therein which is truly the biggest mountain the Global Church needs to tackle by reference of the sheer number of souls involved. I appreciate the categorical treatment and contextual sensitivity that we learn in this chapter, and that “C-6 believers should be the subject of our prayers, not our analysis”.