TRAINING PASTORS AND A THEOLOGY OF RELIGIONS

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Category: Observations

> *Tragically, many seminar and divinity school programs have been slow to respond to this new situation. It is quite astonishing that theological students in the West will spend countless hours learning about the writings of a few well-known, now deceased, German theologians whose global devotees are actually quite small and yet completely ignore over one billion living, breathing Muslims who represent one of the most formidable challenges to the Christian gospel today. Many seminaries and divinity schools still do not require the study of any other religion besides Christianity as part of the core curriculum. The study of other religions or the development of a theology of religions generally appears only as an elective course and, therefore, is still not considered essential for ministerial training in the twenty-first century. Traditionally, such course work is directed either to those preparing for the mission field or for those interested in the academic study of religion. However, even a seminarian preparing to serve a pastorate in Kansas can no longer afford to ignore these issues. Indeed, it is increasingly evident that all who are interested in Christian leadership today Â must have a well-articulated, robust theology of religions as a normative part of their theological training.*

FromÂ Invitation to World Missions (Invitation to Theological Studies)Â by Timothy Tennent p.192

I found this quote intriguing but also wondered how much the generalisation about pastoral training holds true in the UK. My gut feeling is that there is a longer tradition of interacting with other religions on this side of the Atlantic and that most pastors will have some serious exposure to the study of religions. Can anyone comment authoritatively?

I reckon he's dead right about the deceased, German theologians, though.