

Chapter two of *Soul, Self, and Society* provides the basis for understanding the concepts of culture, ethnocentrism, and contextualization. However, the focus is primarily on culture. Michael Rynkiewicz prioritizes clarification on what culture is, so that his readers are on the same plane of understanding. He supplies ample examples to convey the thoughts behind each tenet of culture. A key component of culture that Rynkiewicz observes is that it is “a human construction” where people “forget that their reality is a social construct.”<sup>1</sup> This is noteworthy because it powerfully influences people, their worldviews, and how they interact with their world and the world around them. Furthermore, the relationship between the gospel and culture is just as complex as is culture is itself. Lastly, Rynkiewicz provides a theological basis for contextualization of culture. The task of understanding culture and its dynamic nature is crucial if the gospel is to be seen and heard in all generations, cultures, and people groups.

One striking remark is that “the gospel only comes to us wrapped in culture.”<sup>2</sup> More often do I hear in my context the evils or idolatries of culture than how culture positively contributes to the conversation of faith. For example, as a Chinese-American Christian, many cultural practices are frowned upon or are outright dismissed such as ancestral worship or veneration or the Chinese zodiac. Yet, the gospel came to humanity through the lens of a specific culture and people group. Of all the ways that God chose to reveal himself and the gospel, it was through human means for us to best understand Him and His mission.

The two questions for further engaging in the topic of culture is: 1) how will each generation of Christians overcome their fear of subsequent generations to reach them for the

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Rynkiewicz, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 22.

<sup>2</sup> Rynkiewicz, *Soul, Self, and Society*, 41.

gospel, and 2) why is the Church so slow in responding to the dynamic and rapid pace of cultural change?