

Rynkiewich Chapter 2 Interaction Paper

Jennifer Hanly
People as Social and Cultural Beings
02/05/2023
Dr. Stanley John

Chapter 2 in Rynkiewich's, *Soul, Self, and Society* shows how culture, ethnocentrism, and contextualization affect how people sense, think, and feel about reality (12).

Culture is a collective system of feelings, knowledge, and values to help organize and understand the thoughts of the world around a person or people group. Culture helps people understand how to relate to and live with others. Ethnocentrism is the idea that a person's birth or primary culture is considered the best standard of culture over other cultures, and all different cultures are considered less valuable. Contextualization is the process of experiencing another culture to understand the particular culture to the best of a person's ability.

Rynkiewich argues, "In this process of relating to the world around us, the actions of perception, cognition, and emotion contribute to our humanity" (13).

Rynkiewich's explanation of *Contextualization of the Gospel* (41-44) is one of the foundational principles of missions and evangelism. Every culture, and even every person, needs to have the gospel presented to them in ways that convey God's message of love. Each person has their own set of ideas and ways of thinking, so even within a defined culture, differences must be addressed with familiar words and symbols so that the specific person can understand the gospel message. I love how Rynkiewich shows how God, from the beginning of human existence, had contextualization as part of his mission. Rynkiewich shows how throughout the Bible, we see the authors using contextualization to show God's love and to bring the gospel to different cultures.

1. When talking about overcoming ethnocentrism, Rynkiewich says, "First, they can be self-aware and account for their own lenses, that is, their concepts, values, and biases" (33).

What are some more practical ways to identify our own lens?

2. How can individuals concretely know that their evaluations of a specific culture have been "described, analyzed, and understood" (29) properly? I may be afraid to analyze for fear of incorrect judgments.