

In chapter 2 of the book *Soul, Self, and Society* author explains how the concept of culture, its origins, and the various ways that human beings react to culture itself. The chapter begins with an explanation of Anthropology and its origins, stressing the importance of fieldwork in the advancement of the practice. What was once a hobby of amateurs and elitists, can now be considered a profession and field of expertise, one that is deserving of sufficient credit. From there, the author goes on to write about the effects, expressions, and challenges of culture itself, highlighting ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, and culture shock. Finally, the chapter ends with a section on the importance of contextualization and the Gospel. In this section, the author argues that contextualization stands as the opposite of ethnocentrism.

In my reading of the chapter, I was particularly appreciative of the section in which the author explains the idea of culture shock. Admittedly, I have used that term to describe any number of phenomena that I have encountered in my own life. However, the attention that the author gives to this subject helps reframe my understanding of this very topic, particularly the idea of reverse culture shock. It has been my experience that when friends or acquaintances spend any considerable amount of time living in a culture outside of the one that they are familiar with, they will sometimes come back with a 'renewed vision' of their own home culture. Previously, I did not have a framework for this idea. Now I can accurately call that feeling reverse culture shock.

At the close of the chapter, the author asks the question, "How can the next group of people best hear the gospel so that they have a fair chance at responding?"¹ To that I might add another question. Do certain cultures struggle with the message of the gospel more intuitively than others? Do certain cultures accept the gospel message more easily than others?

¹ *Soul, Self, and Society*; Rynkiewich, 44

Works Cited

Rynkiewich, Michael A. 2011. *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.