

Interaction Essay: Chapter 4 Soul, Self and Society

In Chapter 4 of *Soul, Self and Society*¹, Rynkiewicz discusses elements including Self, Society and Behavior. His main thesis is that to understand a people, it takes at least a cultural perspective, a social perspective, a ecological perspective, and a historical perspective. The author has discussed numerous interpretations of the self in society, personal and social identity, statuses and roles, the difference between simplex and multiplex roles, and the differences between societies that emphasize honor and shame and those that emphasize sin and guilt¹.

Two key themes that we interact with are personal and social identity and multiplex roles. Let's first take a look at status and roles. In my own life, my status is that I am a chemical engineer. My role as chemical engineer is that I design, build and optimize commercial scale chemical manufacturing processes. Secondly, we are in agreement with Rynkiewicz's statement that, "In other societies, people are involved in relationships with others, but often with fewer others, and the relationships are more multi-stranded and complex¹". For example, I may relate to a single other person as a son to a father, a church member to a pastor, an employee to a supervisor, and as a student to a teacher. These roles are characterized as multiplex.

Two questions for further engaging this topic are:

1. How can a missionary communicate with a society that emphasizes honor and shame?
2. What implications does status and role have on the church?

¹ Rynkiewicz, M. *Soul, Self and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial World*. Eugene, OR; Cascade Books, 2011.