

### **Rynkiewich Chapter 4 Interaction Paper**

1. The way we view ourselves independently, within society, and the behavioral expectations we value is greatly determined by our cultural context; therefore, we must resist the assumption that from a cultural perspective people are “basically the same” as us.

2. “There is no static culture, anywhere, contrary to reports in the popular press.” (pp. 65) is the basis of chapter 4 and Rynkiewich highlights the dynamics that shape one culture from another culture. Status and role, history, traditions, religion, technology, and ecology affect how cultures develop, but no culture is isolated from others; rather, every culture is part of a larger network of social systems. As these systems interact with each other they will inevitably work to change each other or create subcultures. As with any change some is adopted quickly while other change is resisted, and it is the recognition of this tension that will help us be more aware of our own biases as well as make us more empathetic towards others outside of our culture.

3. I was intrigued by the concept of *Role Confusion*. Rynkiewich uses the example of Roy’s and Bob’s civilian work relationship and how it swaps in their National Guard relationship. They are the same people, but depending on where they are working at the time their *role* and *status* changes. Me being a Navy reservist, I have experienced this feeling of suspended reality. I could be working with a Sailor who is a police officer as a civilian, but at Navy training they fall under my charge. In my case I am a licensed C&MA pastor in my civilian vocation, but in the Navy we have a dedicated chaplain who I support but I cannot conduct counselings because my role is a chaplain assistant. Now imagine refugee who once was a successful businessperson or perhaps even royalty, and now they someone who is pitied and needs support.

With Role Confusion in mind, I see the ultimate example of this displayed during Jesus’ earthly ministry. Scripture tells us in Philippians 2:1-11 that Jesus “He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant” and becoming a human and all that it entails. Jesus’ willingness to take on a role that was beneath him is what made him worthy to save us, and consequently has glorified us through him. This view of role confusion should make us hesitant about asserting our own perceived role of importance on others who may not need our help or simply would not value it. Instead, we should consider humbling ourselves for the sake of others.

4. Questions:

a) How can we follow Jesus’ example and place ourselves into a role of weakness for the sake of others? What does this look like?

b) What are some ways we can make the church a place where the gospel can be expressed over an expanse of cultures? Can we invite guest congregations/pastors or visit other churches?