

Rynkiewich Chapter 4 Interaction Paper

One sentence Thesis statement: For missionaries to understand the people, they have to look at cultural, social, ecological, and historical perspective.

In Chapter 4, Rynkiewich describes how it takes a deeper level to understand a people. The author states that one needs to look through “the lens of culture, society, ecology, and history”¹ He then continues that status and their role can be seen differently depending on where you are located. Rynkiewich shows examples of the differences of status and roles from the U.S and East Africa. The point he makes is that the status and roles each society makes, can be given by different life stages or can be earned depending on the location. Rynkiewich explains multiplex and simplex roles where the roles of a one person can either have many or one with another person. The author then concludes this chapter with defining guilt and shame and seeing the differences from the west and south/east countries.

I personally thought the shame culture Rynkiewich mentions was interesting because as a Korean American who was born in Korea, I’m not sure if I fully agree with what he is saying. The author uses Ruth Benedict’s work and quotes “She argued that the Japanese, and by implication Chinese and other Asian cultures, were not bothered when they did something wrong unless and until someone else discovered the fault and revealed it to the public”² When reading this statement, I had to reflect if I personally felt that and if it is for the Asian cultures. I understood this point because many Asian cultures care about what others think and tend to hide our own true feelings, especially Japanese culture. However, I do feel that this does not only apply to Asian cultures but every culture. The reason why I say this is because to think of an extreme case, there are criminals who have committed a murder who feels no remorse or guilt even after they are caught.

Two questions:

1. Can missionaries do harm to the culture if he/she properly not study the culture, society, ecology and history?
2. If missionaries are sent to a foreign country for a long term mission trip, is it wiser to get to know the people before actually reaching the people?

¹ Michael A. Rynkiewich, “Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial Word. ed. Eugene Oregon (Cascade Books, 2011), 65

² Michael A. Rynkiewich, “Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Postcolonial Word. ed. Eugene Oregon (Cascade Books, 2011), 73