

ALLIANCE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Chapter Interaction Papers: Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and Postcolonialism

Submitted to Dr. Stanley John,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the completion of

CS501

People as Social and Cultural Beings

by

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Thesis Sentence

Because a majority of world societies have been negatively impacted by colonialism, missionaries, particularly those from colonizing nations in mission to a colonized people group, must be keenly aware of past damages and present a Gospel which is capable of bridging deep divides wrought by both the Fall and by colonizing nations.

Summary

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the global colonization brought about by the European nations and the takeover of Native American lands by the hands of American settlers. Rynkiewich is keen to point out that the matter of colonization was not contested by the Church. Worst yet, the Church occasionally condoned colonization, supported it through poor interpretation of Biblical texts, and on a few occasions personally supported colonization efforts through various members of differing denominations.¹ The chapter continues from colonialism into neocolonialism, which is the state in which colonized nations are given independence from their colonizers, only to still be influenced, governed, or in some capacity controlled by the colonizers. An example of this is clearly reflected in Rynkiewich's discussion of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*, in which "they (Blacks) were expected to imitate the European colonizer, but forever were prevented from achieving that goal by the racism of colonial society."² Finally, the impact of postcolonialism, the battle for the mind of the colonized, is discussed. The Church, whether intentionally or unintentionally, has been utilized by the colonizer, along with other factors such as education, to influence the minds of the colonized peoples into accepting the worldview of the colonizers and to reject their own. The Church's role

¹ Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Post-Colonial World* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011), 135-45.

² *Ibid.*, 147.

in this process, both past and present, has made postcolonial civilizations leery of missionaries and evangelists, and the Church must be aware of this attitude when engaging cross-culturally.

Personal Interaction

The timing of this chapter could not have been better. I recently attended my ordination training module which was titled ‘Missional Leadership.’ We discussed the challenges of engaging cross-culturally and awareness of tensions between White and non-White peoples because of systemic racism, generational trauma, and low cultural competence on the part of the evangelizer. Many, if not all of the ten points at the end of the chapter were topics of discussion and played into both mission strategies and served as points of introspection, particularly for those of the dominant culture. I am happy to see my church district making intercultural engagement a focal point of their ministry objectives.

Questions for Further Engagement

1. Do you agree with Albert Memmi’s assessment of the colonizer and the colonized?³ Why or why not?
2. Of the ten points listed at the end of the chapter, which do you agree with most? Which do you think would be most difficult for you to live out?

³ Michael Rynkiewich, *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Post-Colonial World* (Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011), 148.

Bibliography

Rynkiewich, Michael. *Soul, Self, and Society: A Postmodern Anthropology for Mission in a Post-Colonial World*. Oregon: Cascade Books, 2011.