

Interaction Paper - Rynkiewich Chapter 13 “The Anthropology of Christianity”

This chapter discussed the topics of ‘The Anthropology of Christianity,’ which pointed out that anthropology has changed, and Christianity has been emphasized. It would be worthwhile for missiologists to discover anew how fresh insights can contribute to their understanding of local cultures, local Christianity, and the missionary situation. The postmodernity affects anthropology and missiology, since postmodern people think that not everything will make sense, not everything can be explained with certainty and finality, and not every problem can be solved nor ever issue resolved. Therefore, the anthropologist and the missiologist make an epistemological choice: to participate while observing, and to observe while participating in order to have the best chance of understanding the meaning, feeling the emotions, and discerning the values of an event. The new anthropology of Christianity is refreshing because young anthropologists realize “that it is not sufficient to assume that we know in advance what Christian experience is.

My response for the Anthropology of Christianity is that Christian anthropology is the study of the human as it relates to God. It differs from the social science of anthropology, which primarily deals with the comparative study of the physical and social characteristics of humanity across times and places. Therefore, I agree with the author’s suggestions for reaching postmodern people: 1. Incarnation, engage people with the whole gospel on all levels, addressing whole persons in their intellectual, emotional, and ethical dimensions. 2. Tolerate uncertainty, doubt, immaturity, and exploratory spirit. Work to build community. 3. Be prepared to listen, learn, and appreciate the story of the other. Two questions for further engaging this topic: 1. What is the relationship between Christianity and Anthropology? 2. What are the main branches of Anthropology?