

Rynkiewich Chapter 13 Interaction Paper

1. About anthropology and Christianity, Rynkiewich states the main point to keep at the forefront “... without participation, observation deceives us; without observation, participation is meaningless. There is no way out, no objective place on which to stand disconnected and hope to understand.” (pp. 245)

2. The final chapter of Rynkiewich’s book addresses how those who study anthropology must contend with the reality that culture is more complex than ever before and “... 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.” (pp. 244) As Christianity has impacted many cultures around the world, anthropologists must address the fact that the “old traditional ways” of a people may have new shared values adopted from their new faith “... anthropologists tend to prefer established traditions as an explanation for behavior, and not more recent additions to culture and religion.” (pp. 246) For the Christian missionary, it is important they remember that they may think they know “Christianity” and how it is practiced, but when they are guests in a host country, they should be open to understanding how the Christian faith is expressed in different ways. In a postmodern world, hospitality, relationships, involvement, and contextualization are just some of the ways missionaries can reach the lost and commune with larger body of saints.

3. This quote on page 247 summarizes everything I have been learning over the course of the spring semester “Anthropology has changed, and it would be worthwhile for missiologists to discover anew how fresh insights can contribute to their understanding of local cultures, local Christianities, and the missionary situation.” Christ is real and alive and is working in the world. As he permeates the culture and sanctifies all things, we must remember that he allows people to keep their distinctiveness as well as many of their values. Where traditional values end and Christian values begin should not confound us, rather, we can accept that there will be indistinguishable blends as people live out their faith in their contextualized situation. This reminds me of the Nyrobi Statement or worship that says all worship is 1) Transcultural, 2) Contextual, 3) Countercultural, and 4) Cross Cultural.

4. Questions:

- a) What assumptions about anthropology and Christianity must we consider revising?
- b) Where in our own lives can we see Christ both usurping cultural values and affirming our cultural distinctiveness?