

Christians will be challenged by Messer's insistence on the inclusivity of Christ, as well as his insistence that Jesus died, not for the church, but for the world. Readers will also have to accept that the gospel is much more inclusive than it is exclusive, and that Christians, followers of the inclusive Christ, should be inclusive also.

This book will broaden the spiritual and mission perspective of most readers. It will serve well as a textbook in classes dealing with the relationship of the church to the world, missions, and community service.

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Neyrey, Jerome H. *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991. xvi + 436 pp. \$19.95.

Neyrey's seminal work, *The Social World of Luke-Acts: Models for Interpretation*, is a major contribution to scholarship and will influence the study of Luke-Acts particularly, Gospel studies generally, and even biblical studies as a whole. It does what it purports to do: to present models for interpretation. In fact, it may even function as a handbook or desk reference for students and a paradigm for scholars.

Written by the Context Group, this volume is an attempt to apply the social sciences to biblical explication without disavowing the historical-critical method. Viewing any approach to biblical studies "which attends to the linear uncovering of the relations between separate facts" as inadequate, the authors propose a "systems approach," which pays attention to "'wholes' as well as 'parts,' to 'totalities' as well as 'facts'" (ix). The volume is a comprehensive work on Luke-Acts, which, it is hoped, will serve as a representative collection of materials and models for understanding biblical texts within their original cultures.

Contrived as more than just another collection of exegetical essays or a historical reconstruction, the work seeks the meaning implicit in Luke-Acts by examining the values, social structures, and customs of Luke's society. The aim is to give modern Western readers insights that can assist in better understanding the peoples of Luke's time—their values, attitudes, and behavior. Having accepted the presupposition that there is no such thing as objective history, the authors' concern was the historical-critical method, insofar as it could help to ascertain what was typical in Luke's society so as to highlight the particular and the distinctive. Thus, their interest was in common, recurrent patterns of conceptualization, perceiving, and behaving, and not with the unique or occasional.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I has four chapters dealing with social psychology. Part II contains five chapters treating social institutions, while Part III's four chapters analyze social dynamics.

In chapter 1, Bruce Malina argues that meaning in a given document is not found in exchanging its words for those of an interpreter's language, but in the social system of individuals held together by shared culture, values, and meanings along with social institutions and social roles. Malina sees information about meanings which were familiar to the original audience as the missing links for the historical interpretation of the meaning of ancient texts.

Chapter 2 presents honor and shame as pivotal values in Mediterranean societies. Neyrey and Malina claim that an adequate scenario for understanding the people in Luke-Acts must include a firm appreciation for the value of honor. They view the entire Gospel of Luke, as well as most of its social interactions, through the lens of honor and shame. This, perhaps, is one of the most valuable chapters of the book, though I might not agree that female honor is to be called shame.

Chapter 8, again by Malina and Neyrey, suggests that first-century Mediterraneans were group-oriented rather than individualistic. The basic and most elementary unit of social analysis was the person in relation with and connected to at least one other social unit. To capture the biblical perspective, Westerners, especially Americans, who are so individualistic, need to perceive that Mediterranean peoples saw themselves in stereotypes, such as family and clan, place and/or group of origin, inherited craft/trade and parties/groups. This point is, indeed, significant for viewing Jewish Messianism and Christian identity.

This notion also holds implications that some might question—for example, the authors' claim that conscience is an internalization of what others say, do, and think about one, since others play the role of witness and judge. An outcome of this dyadic approach is the conclusion that "the essential covenant law, the ten commandments, formed the bedrock of basic ethical thinking for Jews and Christians in the first century, . . . But the ethics had little to do with individual consciences. Rather, what was of concern was to maintain the rights of God and other males, to not infringe on their prerogatives, to respect the honor of God and other males" (77).

Part II deals with social institutions. It explores the pre-industrial city and its urban social relations, the countryside, sickness and healing, temple versus household, and patron-client relations and the New Testament community. It presents valuable material for discussion and insights which will assist readers and researchers of the gospel. The presentation on the city is constructive, especially since one half of the references to city in the NT are in the Lukan writings. So, too, is the chapter on the countryside, though it needs more study, discussion, and research.

Part III explores the social dynamics of Luke-Acts by noting the symbolic universe, the social location of the implied author, the rituals of status transformation, and ceremonies in the books. The notion that Christians turned the world upside down is explored, and the conclusion is reached that Jesus and His followers did not always obey the social

norms of their contemporaries. The chapter on rituals assists readers in establishing an adequate scenario for assessing status changes and transformations by raising several unanswered questions. The chapter on ceremonies gives Luke's narrative of Jesus' meals and table fellowship as ideal ceremonies and suggests how they should be perceived. It also raises questions respecting the genders of those who ate with Jesus. Perhaps one might question whether, in light of Luke 8:1-8, which is not discussed, Jesus' table companions should be regarded as only men.

This significant work accomplishes what it sets out to do. The book raises questions, provides some answers, stimulates debate, challenges students and other readers to further investigation of controversial issues and themes. Furthermore, it has a good bibliography and reflects research and thought, even though one might not agree with all the conclusions.

Although the book purports to provide Western readers with a better understanding of the times of Luke, most of its comparisons are with American society: There are at least 72 references to America, Americans, and American society, while there are very few to Western society generally and none to any other country. Whether American society is viewed as synonymous with Western society or as illustrative of the latter, is not made clear. Again, while I applaud Vernon Robbins' conclusion that "Luke-Acts celebrates diversity and claims that God has 'cleansed' it" (332), and while it is refreshing to see his references to the ethnic variety in the Christian movement, it is disappointing that he employs standard groupings and is neither inclusive nor interpretative.

On the whole, I would recommend this volume as a reference work for undergraduate students and a text for graduate students. Biblical scholars and researchers will also find it provocative and helpful.

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Rice, Richard. *Reason and the Contours of Faith*. Riverside, CA: La Sierra University Press, 1991. 310 pp. \$14.95.

In his book, *Reason and the Contours of Faith*, Richard Rice argues for the importance of reason in every imaginable theological enterprise, with the repeated proviso that reason must not be thought to possess *intensive* persuasiveness despite its *extensive* applicability. To put it differently, reason speaks to faith at *every* point but does not compel faith at *any* point: "there is a positive relation between faith and reason, but...rational investigation cannot produce personal religious commitment" (preface, x). Thus, Rice conceives the relationship between faith and reason as lying midway between *fideism* (the radical independence of faith from reason) and *rationalism* (the radical dependence of faith upon reason).