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of an important and controversial topic in British military history. It is a model of clarity and percipient analysis, and convincingly demonstrates that the previously held notions on the failure of British armor during the lean years of World War II are erroneous. This failure was due to the mental inflexibility of the British officer corps which did not permit them to advance their doctrine beyond the concepts of a war of attrition, in which armored forces would play a minor, subsidiary role.

This fascinating book is strongly recommended as essential reading for students of military history as well as for professional soldiers concerned with the innovative development of strategic and tactical doctrine.

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Bruce J. Malina. Christian Origins and Cultural Anthropology: Practical Models for Biblical Interpretation. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986. v + 230 pp.

Bruce J. Malina, professor of theology at Creighton University, offers in Origins a cogent testimony to the current eclectic state of New Testament studies. The book attempts to discover what the actors in the New Testament mean and to understand meaning from the readers' perspective. In addition, since the implied reader of Malina's work is the college-educated non-specialist of New Testament studies, this volume should be the pragmatist's choice both for New Testament courses and for undergraduate history classes surveying the early Christian movement. Particularly useful is the book's overview approach, one which obviates the need for a mass of biblical commentary and heads off ethnocentrism from the outset.

The basic framework of Malina's approach is the application to the biblical text of sociologist Mary Douglas' group/grid model of cultural analysis. However, Douglas' work is neither slavishly followed nor reproduced without modification. Where necessary, Malina draws upon the work of such other leading theorists as

Talcott Parsons and Hayden White. After all, Malina is consciously working within the category of qualitative social analysis. Nevertheless, the major portion of the work discusses Malina's adaptation of Douglas' group/grid model as it relates to both the New Testament and to contemporary Americans. Two final sections - the first concerning historians and their cultural scripts, the second a test of Douglas' model - complete the volume.

Origins' singular contribution is, without a doubt, the adaptation of Douglas' group/grid model to "the social context of the New Testament documents" (p. iv). Primarily, the adapted model serves to acquaint readers with the complex games of social behavior as they relate to the New Testament. In addition, Malina contends that this same model is useful for identifying the reader's perspective, which, for most of his audience, is that of mainstream U.S. culture. This two-fold analysis, that of delineating the point-of-view of the New Testament text, as well as that of the reader, is the practical task of Malina's adaptation. The implied reader should be able to locate both the perspective of the New Testament (mostly strong group/low grid) and his or her own perspective (Americans are generally weak group/high grid) on the group/grid model. (To be sure, part of the enjoyment of Malina's volume is in the reader being able to locate himself according to the model and the several script features within each quadrant.) In Malina's adaptation of Douglas,

grid points to the degree of match a person finds between the values, norms, and perceptions a society proclaims, such as the values persons learn from parents and relatives in the course of growing up, and the experiences one has that society ... Group, as noted above, refers to the degree of social pressure at work on a given individual or group to conform to the norms of a society (pp. 17-18).

In short, grid refers to the degree of correspondence the person realizes when comparing his childhood and adult experiences, whereas group refers to the degree of social pressure the individual senses within his own society.

But the relevance of the model does not stop here. Group/grid social interaction also results

in meaningful human living involving four main games. The four main games - belonging, meaning, power, and wealth - are somewhat abstract, but simply put "they are the symbolic means that people employ reciprocally to have each other do what they want and value" (p. 77). It is in this complex intersection of the group/grid model with the four main games that action is channeled and facilitated. Malina's volume analyzes the New Testament along the lines of this intersection (complete with 17 figures and 6 tables).

Two final chapters supplement Malina's analysis of the New Testament. The penultimate chapter explains how historians describe the flow of the action, an analysis not only simple but enjoyable for any aspiring or professional historian. This chapter "is entirely indebted to Hayden White" and summarizes well his work on how historians tell stories (p. 167). White's work is a succinct summary of how historians relate a story, the telling of which reveals the respective historian's own social world.

The last chapter, which tests Malina's models as they apply to fasting, is presented in order "to demonstrate the usefulness of those models" (p. 185). The chapter generally encourages the testing of models (also useful in Malina's other work, New Testament Introduction (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981)), since often the non-specialist reader of a volume is unable to apply a work pragmatically - at least with any ease. This chapter is also replete with ideas for lesson plans (making an instructor's task that much easier).

In conclusion, Malina has written an eminently practical work, historically sound, and innovative in its application of models to the New Testament. The work deserves wide reading, especially considering the increasing application of social science models to the New Testament and related literature. In short, the work offers an approach sensitive to the benefits fostered by a sympathetic reading of the New Testament when it is coupled with contemporary social science theory.

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