

BOOK REVIEW

P.J. Williams, Andrew D. Clarke, Peter M. Head and David Instone-Brewer (eds.), *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting: Essays on Context and Background in Honour of B.W. Winter on His 65th Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). xxxii + 335 pp. Hdbk. US\$50.00.

This volume is a collection of articles to honour Bruce Winter for his illustrious contribution to the study of the New Testament and promotion of the cultural setting in which it is placed. This tribute begins with an inspiring forward on his life and an impressive listing of his publications over the past four decades.

The book is a compilation of twenty-one articles divided into four main categories: Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse. Each article focuses on a specific historical, cultural or textual element and its relation to the larger text of the New Testament.

The Gospel section is composed of six entries, including: P.J. Williams' 'The Linguistic Background to Jesus' Dereliction Cry (Matthew 27.46; Mark 15.34)', Alan Millard's 'Zechariah Wrote (Luke 1.63)', David Peterson's 'Atonement Theology in Luke–Acts: Reflections on Its Background, and Andreas J. Köstenberger's "'I suppose" (οἶμαι): The Conclusion of John's Gospel in Its Literary and Historical Context'.

Of particular interest is Rikki Watts's article, 'Jesus and the New Exodus Restoration of Daughter Zion: Mark 5.21-43 in Context'. Watts proposes that Mark uses Isaiah as a horizon for the stories of Jairus's daughter and the woman with the issue of blood. In using Isaiah as a backdrop for this section, Mark wishes to portray the women within these passages as representatives of exiled Israel. Watts finds that there are a number of subtle references within the two stories that would trigger, for the Jewish reader, references to Israel. In addition to this, Watts

places Mk 5.21-43 within its surrounding context and establishes connective imagery to other texts in Mark.

Another fine article is 'Papyrological Perspectives on Luke's Predecessors (Luke 1.1)', written by Peter M. Head. This piece begins with an outline of a number of recent discoveries and developments within the papyrological discipline that are helpful for interpreting Luke's preface. Head continues by examining a range of vocabulary employed by ancient writers and how these words are utilized. The article is concluded with Head challenging some of Loveday Alexander's ideas regarding the scientific nature of Luke's preface.

The Acts section is completed with Steve Walton's 'ὁμοθυμαδόν in Acts: Co-Location, Common Action or "On One Heart and Mind"?', and Irina Levinskaya's 'The Italian Court in Acts 10.1'. However, this section is highlighted by Conrad Gempf's article, 'Before Paul Arrived in Corinth: The Mission Strategies in 1 Corinthians 2.2 and Acts 17'. In his article, Gempf examines Paul's different missionary strategies employed at different cities, namely Athens and Corinth. Gempf wishes to contradict the belief that Paul changed his preaching strategy because of his failure in Athens, and emphasizes Paul's brilliance in adapting his style in order to be the most effective witness to the Gospel. Gempf concludes with the concise observation that in both cities Paul collided with the leading people in the hopes that Christ's foolishness would be shown.

Within the Gospel section, Andrew D. Clarke discusses the interpretation of 'brother' in his article, 'Equality of Mutuality? Paul's use of "Brother" Language'. Clarke begins by outlining the different uses of brother within the NRSV in order to determine the connotations behind each use; whether the author is using it to indicate equality or hierarchy. To determine this, Clarke examines Greek papyri and historical works to elicit a cultural understanding of the term. Clarke concludes that interpreters must resist the urge to impose a modern understanding of the term 'brother' and understand that within an ancient context it was predominantly used within hierarchical relationships. Although Clarke does develop Greek historical use, his article would have benefited from a more thorough application to the biblical text and corresponding interpretations.

Brian S. Rosner's article, "'With What Kind of Body Do They Come?'" (1 Corinthians 15.35b): Paul's Conception of Resurrection Bodies' seeks to understand the relationship of resurrection to Greek and Roman philosophies regarding the afterlife. Rosner interprets this

question by the Corinthian church as emerging from the exclusion of bodily resurrection in Greek and Roman beliefs. According to Rosner, both Paul's Jewish and Christian beliefs promote bodily resurrection and he supports this through allusion to the Old Testament. Rosner concludes that Paul's most important example is Christ and that the expression that we will arise with glorious spiritual bodies is not a concession to Greek or Roman thought, but a focus on the Holy Spirit.

David W.T. Gill writes an excellent brief article entitled 'A Saviour for the Cities of Crete: The Roman Background to the Epistle to Titus'. In this work, Gill, using archeological evidence, places the major Cretan cities within their Roman milieu. Gill uses this understanding to attempt to explain the consistent pairing of the term 'savior' with God or Jesus within Titus. Gill explains that within this cultural setting the term 'savior' was attributed to the Roman emperors and consequently needed to be distinguished within Titus to avoid associating with Roman pagan cults.

Another solid contribution was presented by Peter Walker in his article 'A Place for Hebrews? Contexts for a First-Century Sermon'. Walker views Hebrews as an artfully crafted sermon to the Jews combining sound correction with cultural sensitivity and acceptance. Walker then attempts to apply this epistle to the modern controversy between the Jews and the Palestinians. This intriguing application is a unique attempt to bring relevance to a misunderstood letter and to explain how different cultures might come to different conclusions about the same work and how God can still speak to us today through his word.

Other entries for the Gospel section include: Alanna Nobbs's "'Beloved Brothers" in the New Testament and Early Christian World'; I. Howard Marshall's "'For the Husband Is Head of the Wife": Paul's Use of Head and Body Language'; E.A. Judge's 'The Appeal to Convention in Paul'; Peter T. O'Brien's 'The Summing Up of All Things (Ephesians 1.10)'; David Instone-Brewer's 'James As a Sermon on the Trials of Abraham'; and D.A. Carson's "'You Have No Need that Anyone Should Teach You" (1 John 2.27): An Old Testament Allusion that Determines the Interpretation'.

The volume concludes with two articles interacting with the apocalypse: Bruce W. Longenecker's 'Rome, Provincial Cities and the Seven Churches of Revelation 2-3'; and Paul Barnett's 'Revelation 12: An Apocalyptic "Church History"?''. Of special interest is Longenecker's article which begins by outlining the Romanization of the cities

within Asia Minor and the growth of Roman allegiance. Longenecker nicely outlines the development of competition between the differing city-states for Roman favour, and the corresponding pride of being 'first'. It is within this context of civil prestige, competition and alliances, Longenecker contends, that the letters to the different churches need to be understood and interpreted.

Overall, this volume is full of interesting and useful insights into the cultural background of the New Testament and challenging ideas for modern interpretation and application. There is a strong unity of method within the articles deriving from Bruce Winter's leadership and inspiration. In conclusion, *The New Testament in Its First Century Setting* is an excellent tribute to Bruce Winter and his legacy to the academic world.

Sean A. Adams
McMaster Divinity College