

surprising comment on the back cover of the book, “ ... Messianic Jews have the right to be included in the Jewish people.”

The book seems to be free from typos, except for the rather glaring oversight on p. 19, where the twelve “Principles of the Jewish Faith” of Rabinowitz are listed; the fifth principle has erroneously been recorded as a duplicate of the sixth principle. For a correct rendering cf. K. Kjær-Hansen, *Joseph Rabinowitz and the Messianic Movement*, (Scotland: The Handsel Press, 1995), p. 94.

In sum, Cohn-Sherbok has done a commendable job of depicting the history and practice of Messianic Judaism in ancient and modern times in what will no doubt prove to be a valuable and user-friendly resource for Messianic Jews and those interested in the movement. The author has also (regardless of his motivations) done a service to Messianic Jews. By taking the time and effort to dedicate a fair-handed book to the movement, Cohn-Sherbok has aided the Messianic Jewish movement in its quest for recognition, affirmation, and acceptance by the wider Jewish community. Although, there are still probably more “spitters” than “listeners” (to use the authors’ own terms, p. 213), in Cohn-Sherbok, Messianic Jews have surely found a listener and a friend, and for that the movement should be grateful. Cohn-Sherbok is to be applauded for his courage to go where more tradition-bound souls have been afraid to travel.

*After Paul Left Corinth. The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Changes*, Bruce W. Winter. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, 2001, xx + 344 pp.

### **Kai Kjær-Hansen**

With his book *After Paul Left Corinth* Bruce W. Winter, director of the Institute of Early Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World, Tyndale House, Cambridge, UK has given us a thought-provoking new book. Well-written and documented, it offers a new understanding of how the relationship developed between the church in Corinth and Paul, the founder of the church.

In *Mishkan* 24/1996: 78-84 we brought a presentation of the five volume series *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting*, of which Bruce W. Winter is a series editor.

In 51 AD Paul left Corinth after having worked there for about 18 months. Four years later at the end of a three-year stay in Ephesus, Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians. Much had changed since Paul left Corinth and these changes are the subject of Winter’s book. By giving a picture of the Roman colony of Corinth through the help of literary, non-literary and archaeological sources he attempts to answer the question of what went wrong in the church

in Corinth and who is to blame for the detour taken by the church after the good beginning made by Paul.

Several factors change in Corinth during the 50s, according to Winter. He mentions the creation of a provincial or federal cult with Corinth as its headquarters and indicates that the cult of the emperor was much more common than is often assumed. Several years of severe grain shortages also caused instability in the region. The moving of the Isthmian Games from Corinth to the ancient, nearby site of Isthmia affected in no minor way the social elite in the church. As citizens of Rome the social and privileged elite of the church were invited to the big banquets held in connection with the games. Apart from the imperial cult and the worship of idols associated with the games, the banquets were made up of "the unholy trinity of eating, drinking and immorality" – in which the host offers the guests prostitutes as "dessert." It is against this background Winter understands Paul's fight against the social elite of the church, which tried to introduce into the church the norms of the non-believing Roman elite outside the church.

Such an approach sheds fresh light on the elite's new view of sexuality which Paul argues against, but also many other conditions are revealed through Winter's approach. While Paul during his first stay in Corinth would know of nothing else but Jesus Christ as crucified (1 Cor 2:2), the rich and influential in the church wanted to dress Paul up like a sophist or a wandering preacher who would deliver his speech like a great orator. Furthermore they wanted him to receive payment for his work. They were used to sophists having disciples who showed great loyalty towards their teacher by defiling the teacher of other disciples. This Roman norm to which they subscribed meant that they saw no problem in playing Paul and Apollos against each other.

These examples will suffice to represent Winter's view that the lamentable development in the church in Corinth was caused by the social elite who let Roman elite thinking influence them with distressing consequences for the life and the lifestyle of the church.

All exegeses are incomplete and that includes exegesis based on historical sources. But this does not change the fact that Winter has presented a historical work and come up with an inspiring interpretation which sheds new light on many of the issues with which Paul was concerned in his first letter to the Corinthians.

The best recommendation I can give the book is that it has changed much of my understanding of what Paul was concerned with when he wrote 1 Corinthians.