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# Jesus and the city: reflections on the urban context of Galilee

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The urban character of primitive Christianity is widely recognised today, even if not always given the significance it demands in commentaries on the literature that makes up the New Testament. It is now more than a quarter of a century since Wayne Meeks' ground-breaking study, *The First Urban Christians*, was published, with its claim that Pauline Christianity 'was entirely urban', and its mission 'was conceived from start to finish as an urban movement'.<sup>2</sup> Meeks drew a contrast between the urban character of Paul's mission and the 'village culture of Palestine' as the context for Jesus' own ministry. He wrote that within a decade of the death of Christ, 'the village culture of Palestine had been left behind, and the Greco-Roman city became the dominant environment of the Christian movement'.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent studies have confirmed the correctness of Meeks' broad thesis, so that, for example, Ekkhard and Wolfgang Stegemann can conclude that by the thirties of the first century, 'Christ confessing communities' had emerged across the Roman Empire, and 'we basically find them only in urban regions'.<sup>4</sup>

The contrast between the village culture which formed the context for the life and ministry of Jesus and the urban world of Paul and his companions has often been presented in such a manner as to suggest that primitive Christianity's mission to the cities of the Empire was an entirely fresh initiative which owed little or nothing to the example of Jesus. Unlike Paul, whose very language reflected his identity as a city person, Jesus displayed the characteristics of a traditional, rural background. His Galilean origins, the connection to the village culture of Palestine, and the imagery and illustrations employed in his teaching, especially in the parables, reflect a prophet whose life was shaped by the countryside rather than the metropolitan centre. Dieter Georgi, who wrote one of the few really serious studies to offer biblical foundations for an urban theology, argued that

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1 This article is based on part of a chapter in a forthcoming book to be published by Inter Varsity Press under the title, *Seeking a City With Foundations: Theology for an Urban World*. Geoff Grogan's friendship and interest in this project is gratefully acknowledged.

2 Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 8-10.

3 *Ibid.*, 11.

4 Ekkhard and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: A Social History of its First Century* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 266.

Jesus' teaching was 'oriented toward the small town and the surrounding countryside' and that Jerusalem was of no importance to his ministry.<sup>5</sup> Commenting on the return of the disciples to the city of Jerusalem after the resurrection, Georgi claimed that the concentration on Jerusalem after Easter 'did not rest on the authority of the earthly Jesus', and that the disciples' decision to return to 'the murderous city' was taken *despite* 'their Galilean origin and their experience with Jesus in that region'.<sup>6</sup>

The clear implication of Georgi's claim is that Jesus of Nazareth showed little awareness of urban life and could not have provided his later followers with guidance and direction for their subsequent witness within cities. In this case, urban mission was an apostolic invention, even if it can be seen as a legitimate development within the context of the culture of the Roman Empire. Of course, the scene of the ministry presented to us in the synoptic gospels is largely rural; Jesus moves 'throughout Galilee', entering village and small town communities and preaching to 'the lost sheep of Israel'. He uses vivid illustrations drawn from nature, referring to birds, flowers and foxes as providing lessons to be imitated and dangers to be avoided. His followers are, for the most part, rural peasants, including fishermen whose lives have been spent close to the Lake of Galilee. All of which appears to justify the conclusion that the urban mission of the early Christians was a radical innovation, something unknown and unanticipated by their Lord, a simple rabbi as far removed from the power and politics of the great urban centres as could be imagined.

However, this image completely ignores the reality of the wider context of Jesus' ministry within Galilee at a time of massive social dislocation, increasing economic distress, and a rising tide of resentment, anger and resistance to the forces creating this situation. Many recent studies have highlighted the fact that the peasant population of Galilee at the time of Jesus lived in a context marked by a profound clash of cultures in which traditions and values that could be traced back to the period of Israel's earliest history were being overwhelmed by powerful forces representing a quite different worldview. Thus, while Jesus' teaching was indeed oriented toward 'the small town and the surrounding countryside', as Georgi claims, the population of those towns and villages consisted of people facing great tensions and distress on account of political and economic decisions taken by powerful rulers at the centre of imperial power and implemented by their agents within Palestine. Consequently, as John Vincent observes, 'the peaceful, idyllic Galilean countryside was penetrated by many aspects of urban life, and was subject to them in many ways'.<sup>7</sup>

We need to recall that the Roman Empire had extended its control into Palestine in 63 BC and from that point it became the major power shaping the po-

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5 Dieter Georgi, *The City in the Valley: Biblical Interpretation and Urban Theology* (Atlanta: Society for Biblical Literature, 2005), 54.

6 *Ibid.*, 56. Emphasis added.

7 J. W. Rogerson and John Vincent, *The City in Biblical Perspective* (London: Equinox, 2009), 52.

litical and economic conditions of life both in Jerusalem and Galilee. Richard Horsley describes how the Roman legions conquered Galilee, terrorising the people into submission: 'Rome warlords laid the countryside under tribute' and 'appointed client rulers, Herodian kings and Jerusalem high priests, to control the country and collect the tribute'.<sup>8</sup>

The reference to the payment of tribute demanded by the imperial power and the creation of what amounted to three tiers of government within Israel, highlights how the populace found themselves subjected to multiple demands for the payment of taxes, some of which were the direct outcome of the massive building projects which represented both the civilising and urbanising projects of the occupying power. Rome was an urban empire not just in the sense that the greatest then known city lay at its heart, but also because of its policy of extending political control and spreading its civilisation through a programme of urban development which left the ancient world 'dotted with cities, all patterned after Rome and all submissive to Rome'.<sup>9</sup> In Palestine Herod and his successors undertook huge projects, establishing the Jerusalem Temple in Graeco-Roman style, making it one of the marvels of the imperial world, and building new cities in honour of the Caesars, including Sepphoris and Tiberias in Galilee.

The city of Sepphoris, within an hour's walk from Nazareth and clearly visible from there, is of particular importance to this discussion. Archaeological excavations at this site have revealed evidence of a sophisticated urban culture which must have impinged on the life of Christ. Almost two decades ago Richard Batey observed that the Galilean culture within which Jesus lived and preached was 'much more urban than previously believed' and he concluded that the 'popular picture of Jesus as a rustic growing up in the relative isolation of a small village of four hundred people in the remote hills of Galilee' was misleading in the light of 'the newly revealed setting of a burgeoning Greco-Roman metropolis boasting upwards of thirty thousand inhabitants – Jews, Arabs, Greeks, and Romans'.<sup>10</sup>

The reference here to the ethnic diversity of the population of this Roman city further underlines the major changes occurring within Galilee at the time of Jesus. He lived through a period during which Herod Antipas, ruling as the agent of imperial power, not only rebuilt Sepphoris in Roman style, but also created a new capital within his domain in the shape of Tiberias on the western shore of

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8 Richard Horsley, 'Jesus and Empire' in Richard Horsley (ed.), *In the Shadow of Empire: Reclaiming the Bible as a History of Faithful Resistance* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2008), 77.

9 Justo Gonzalez, *For the Healing of the Nations: The Book of Revelation in an Age of Cultural Conflict* (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), 106. On Roman cities in Palestine in general, see Daniel Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

10 Richard A. Batey, *Jesus and the Forgotten City: New Light on Sepphoris and the Urban World of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 1991), 14. See also, Netzer Ehad and Zeev Weiss, 'New Mosaic Art from Sepphoris' *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 18/2, November/December, 1992: 37-78.

Lake Galilee. This new city formed the centrepiece of Antipas's policy designed to transform the Lake 'as a tourist attraction, in furtherance of his geopolitical agenda'.<sup>11</sup> Herod Antipas was aware that streams of pilgrims from across and beyond the empire made their way toward the magnificent city of Jerusalem, either by entering Palestine at the newly built Mediterranean port of Caesarea, or, if coming from the East, through the area known as the Decapolis, from where they travelled down the East bank of the Jordan, and he sought to divert this international traffic by providing travellers with reasons to cross the Lake and enter the region of Galilee. In other words, the building of Tiberias was part of a clear strategy of development intended to place this region on the international map and to promote business contacts, 'not just for the Herodians, but for any local agricultural or food-producing interests astute enough to get a piece of the action'.<sup>12</sup> Sawicki describes this policy as involving the attempt to 'mediterraneanize' the Sea of Galilee, turning it into 'Little Italy'.

These huge building projects involved vast expenditure and, while obviously providing employment for considerable numbers of skilled craftsmen and labourers, this had a significant economic impact on the population through the increased taxation required to fund such projects. Horsley describes how the 'extraordinary revenues' needed for the construction of the new cities in Galilee 'exacerbated the economic burden on peasant producers' and he concludes that these cities, built 'by a king who had been educated in Rome, must have seemed like an alien urban culture' within 'the previously Israelite rural landscape remote from the dominant high culture'.<sup>13</sup>

What made this culture 'alien', however, was not simply its urban character, but the threat which the underlying worldview posed to a way of life shaped by the values and beliefs of Israel's ancient faith. That faith, rooted in the narratives of the Old Testament, involved the confession of Yahweh's supreme authority and the use of his gifts of land and resources in ways that reflected patterns of social life governed by 'justice and justice alone'. The Romans and their agents within Israel, in the shape of the royal and priestly elites, and an army of lesser people able to make comfortable livings as functionaries of the system, treated these ancient traditions as backward and redundant and as an obstacle to the advance of their superior civilisation. Consequently, the land of Israel, gifted by Yahweh and distributed among families and tribes according to rights of inheritance enshrined within the Torah was being bought up by a privileged and wealthy elite whose identification with the imperial regime was richly rewarded. Horsley and Silberman describe the process by which the villages of Israel 'were passing into the hands of aristocratic families, who happened to have influence

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11 Marianne Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee: Architectures of Contact in the Occupied Land of Jesus* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2000), 134.

12 *Ibid.*, 146.

13 Richard Horsley, *Jesus in Context: Power, People and Performance* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 46.

in royal or priestly circles, or large reserves of disposable wealth'. They comment that this was a 'horrible reversal' of the traditions of Exodus and Conquest which were kept alive in village assemblies when the scrolls of the Law 'were taken out to be read on Sabbaths and festival days'.<sup>14</sup>

Once this context is recognised, the picture of a rural Christ whose actions and teaching were so conditioned by the countryside as to offer little or no guidance to his later followers in urban situations becomes impossible to sustain. Consider, for example, Luke's description of Jesus' own action in reading from the scroll of the prophecy of Isaiah in his native village of Nazareth. The text has Yahweh's servant announcing the arrival of the 'year of the Lord's favour', bringing good news to the poor, freedom to prisoners, and sight to the blind (Luke 4:18-19). Not surprisingly, this reading, and Jesus' statement that the prophecy was at that very moment fulfilled in the hearing of those present, electrified his peasant audience. However, the text of Isaiah has a clear *urban* reference, relating these promises to 'those who grieve in Zion' and predicting the renewal of 'ruined cities that have been devastated for generations' (Isaiah 61:4). Even more significant is the fact that the Old Testament prophet associates this urban renewal with a radical redistribution of the 'wealth of nations' and the extension of Yahweh's just rule to 'all your brothers, *from all the nations*' (Isaiah 61:6 and see 66:20). This pregnant phrase was used in imperial literature and propaganda to describe the universal reach of Rome's rule. For example, Virgil's *Aeneid* predicted that 'glorious Rome' would 'extend her empire to earth's ends', controlling the whole world and bringing all the nations 'under its sway in peace'.<sup>15</sup> Seen in this light Jesus' statement contains both an implied challenge to Roman hegemony and the promise of a new community in which economic resources, instead of being sucked into the imperial centre, would be redistributed in a manner that reflected Yahweh's intention to bring justice for 'all the nations'.

It is surely clear that when, later in the first century, the followers of Jesus living in the cities of the ancient world heard this narrative read, his actions and words must have connected powerfully to the context within which their lives were lived, providing guidance and inspiration as they confronted the ideology of an urban empire which increasingly demanded not only their submission, but also their worship. The narratives contained in the gospels, including the specific teaching of Jesus, were relevant to the lives and witness of these urban disciples because the Christ they describe had revealed an alternative kingdom to the one within which they lived and, in many cases, suffered. Indeed, once the context outlined above is taken into account, many aspects of Jesus' ministry can be seen to have clear significance in relation to urban situations. Mat-

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14 Richard A. Horsley and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Message of the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 29.

15 Quoted in Davina Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Re-imagining Paul's Mission* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 78.

thew's gospel contains no less than 27 occurrences of the term *polis*, and makes frequent use of urban imagery. We may wonder whether when Jesus likens his new community to 'a city on a hill' which 'cannot be hidden' he had the view of Sepphoris, clearly visible from his native Nazareth, in mind? More to the point, the frequent references to the desolating problem of debt, including the linkage between the reception of God's forgiveness and the remission of the debts owed to the disciple, mirror a context within which 'the land-grabbing of the rulers' and the 'heavy burden of taxation' was opening a chasm between rich and poor and driving small farmers, day labourers, fishermen, shepherds, widows and orphans into absolute poverty and despair.<sup>16</sup> When the familiar language of the Sermon on the Mount is heard within this context, it becomes clear that, by contrasting the ethics and spirituality of the kingdom of God with a culture in which an urban elite were addicted to wealth and accumulation, Jesus is repudiating an alien worldview which creates an insatiable and idolatrous appetite for money and possessions.<sup>17</sup>

However, Jesus does more than merely teach; the reign of God is demonstrated by acts of power and deliverance in which the victims of evil are liberated and given new life. Mark describes how Jesus and his disciples 'went across the lake' into the region the evangelist describes as Gerasa (Mark 5:1). There are problems with this statement in that the city of this name was some distance from the scene of the action which the evangelist proceeds to describe, but the intention may be to indicate that Jesus was entering territory which lay outside Galilee and was populated by Gentiles. In other words, the description of the movement across the lake does more than simply chart geographical progress from west to east, but rather indicates the crossing of religious, cultural and political boundaries, so taking Jesus into new and challenging territory. That territory, also identified as the Decapolis (the 'ten cities'), was a Hellenised area which 'represented the eastern frontier of the Roman empire, beyond which lay the Arabian steppes'.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in crossing the lake and demonstrating the power of the kingdom of God *beyond* the limits of Galilee, Jesus displays the universal reach of his message and mission and, in this process, challenges the power of Rome in a region in which its dominance appeared to be absolute.

The conflict is dramatically played out through the encounter with a possessed and broken man who runs to meet Jesus the moment his feet touch the soil of the Decapolis. At the heart of the story Jesus asks this tragic person his name and receives the reply, 'My name is *Legion*' (5:9). Despite the fact that, as Myers points out, this word had only one meaning in Mark's social world, signifying a troop of Roman soldiers, commentators frequently ignore this fact and overlook the presence of military imagery throughout the passage. While

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16 Stegemann and Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement*, 134.

17 On this see Ben Witherington III, *Jesus and Money* (London: SPCK, 2001).

18 Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 190.

Josephus's description of the scorched earth policy of the Romans in this very area relates to a later period, it serves to illustrate the kind of actions for which the legions were notorious, compelling us to ask whether the name proffered by this de-humanised person suggests a connection between the incidence of demon possession in this area (Matthew indicates the presence of *two* possessed men among the tombs of Gadara) and Roman military violence. According to the account, the legions 'killed a thousand young men', crushed the population with acts of brutal violence, and looted and burned all that remained.<sup>19</sup>

The climax of Mark's story is reached when, having heard the report of Jesus' deliverance of the possessed man, crowds come from 'town and countryside' to investigate. They discover to their amazement that the former demoniac is now 'sitting, dressed and in his right mind' (5:15). There cannot be a more beautiful description of the healing power of Christ anywhere in the gospels, but we should not allow that beauty to divert our attention from the fact that the response of the populace is one of fear bordering on sheer terror, reflected in their pleading with Jesus to 'leave their region' (5:16-17). If we are justified in suspecting that the demoniac's name reflects a connection between his tragic, broken life and the brutal violence with which the Roman legions had established and maintained their iron grip on power in this region, then an explanation of the terror the local population felt when faced with Jesus' liberating action is at hand. For these people the disturbance of the status quo (which the fate of the pigs in this story suggests had serious *economic* implications) involves a price too high when it brings the threat of intervention from those same legions to re-establish Roman authority and control. The citizens of the Decapolis know instinctively that the release of marginalised people whose tragic biographies constitute living evidence of Roman injustices is likely to result in renewed acts of repression, and as a result Christ and his kingdom are refused.

In a final twist to the narrative, Jesus declines the liberated man's impassioned plea to be allowed to follow him back across the lake with the instruction to 'Go home' and tell his family 'how much the Lord has done for you'. As a result the 'Ten Cities' become the context for his witness and Mark concludes with the comment that 'all the people were amazed' (5:18-20). We are left to ask not only what an incident like this tells us concerning the response of Jesus to the increasingly urbanised culture which he encountered on both sides of Lake Galilee, but also how Mark's gospel itself would have been heard and understood a generation later by a largely urban church facing the renewed threat of persecution and suffering as the direct consequence of its witness to Christ. So far as Galilee in the 20s and 30s is concerned, Ben Witherington rightly comments that the 'image of Jesus as a gentle shepherd sitting in verdant pastures teaching enjoyable but inoffensive parables to audiences who all loved him, is far from an accurate assessment of the situation' and he notes that in Jesus' world 'politics and religion were always intimately intertwined, even if one was not part of a

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<sup>19</sup> Josephus quoted in Myers, *Ibid.*, 191.



zealot movement or a political appointee of a Roman ruler, like the high priest.<sup>20</sup>

With regard to the first hearers of Mark's gospel, if we adopt the traditional view that his initial audience consisted of Christians in Rome in the mid- to late-60s, after the fire of Rome and Nero's decision to make the followers of Jesus the scapegoats for his own evil actions, the narrative we have just discussed begins to resonate in powerful ways in precisely such a context. It is not hard to imagine how a group of Christ-followers, most of whom were low-status and living in difficult conditions at the very heart of the empire, would have heard this narrative as good news: Jesus had entered Gentile, Roman territory and confronted and overcome demonic evil there; he had demonstrated God's love and liberating power to someone brutalised and confined to the margins of respectable society; and he had commissioned this new follower to remain where he was, not fleeing the difficult context, but bearing witness to his family and neighbours. There is thus a connection between the social setting of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (and in the Decapolis) in the 30s and the context of Mark's hearers in Rome in the 60s, *so that members of an urban church in the imperial city would hear the stories of Jesus' teaching and miracles as absolutely relevant to the context in which they found themselves.*

The fact that we have spoken of a *conflict* between Jesus and the urban culture of the imperial power which controlled Palestine does *not* lead to the conclusion that Jesus should be understood as locating the source of personal and social evils in the city as such. We need to note the connections between the Jesus movement and people who must be classified as urban dwellers who, because of their access to significant financial resources, were in a position to provide material support for the emerging movement. This includes wealthy tax collectors who joined the movement and who, like Zaccheus, renounced the rule of Mammon and deployed their considerable fortunes in line with the new values of the kingdom of God. In other cases, as Luke 8:1-3 clearly suggests, the financial resources of high-status followers of Jesus were used to provide support for him and his disciples. According to Luke, Jesus was frequently accompanied by women 'who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases' and these people, some of whom are named, helped to support the movement 'out of their own means'.

Who were these women? The fact that some of them possessed resources which they were free to deploy in constant support of Jesus suggests that they were wealthy people who, unlike the peasant population referred to above, operated *within* the new urban culture, exploiting the opportunities it provided for people 'with an eye for business'. As we have noted, the entire region of Galilee, including the towns along the shore of the lake which were being transformed by the impact of the new city of Tiberias, was becoming 'an international commercial hub for the promotion of agribusiness and industrial expansion'.<sup>21</sup> It is

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20 Ben Witherington III *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 32.

21 Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 134.

especially significant that the home town of one of these women in Magdala had undergone dramatic changes as the fishing on Lake Galilee ceased being a seasonal occupation of farmers in the slack period between sowing and harvest and became an intensive and highly profitable business. Once Roman control of the area had been established, new techniques for the salting and pickling of fish were developed, resulting in the growing commercialisation of the fishing enterprise, the massive expansion of the market for the resultant fish products, and the growth of the entire process 'on something approaching an industrial scale'.<sup>22</sup> The spicy fish sauce known as *garum* and fish stews called *salsamentum* became well known throughout the Empire, so much so that Josephus called Magdala, *Tarichaeae*, a word signifying factories for the salting of fish, or the processing of food for international markets.

The transformation of Magdala was thus linked to changes on and around the shores of the Lake, since the new businesses demanded a massively increased yield of fish. These changes affected the adjacent farming population even as they turned a once-sleepy lakeside town into a commercial centre. Horsley and Silberman describe how the excavations at Magdala have revealed 'a complex pattern of narrow urban streets, reservoirs, and buildings where the town's putrid business was conducted' and at least one spacious private villa 'whose owner proudly announced the source of his fortune with a mosaic depiction of a boat and large fish installed on the floor of his entrance courtyard'.<sup>23</sup>

How did Mary of Magdala obtain the wealth that enabled her to become one of the sponsors of the Jesus movement? And how did a sophisticated woman like Joanna, 'wife of Chuza, manager of Herod's household', manage to retain her position within the court of Antipas while apparently helping to fund the journeys of Jesus and his disciples, frequently accompanying them on these missions? While caution is needed when drawing inferences from brief statements in the gospels, the role of these women appears to have been of considerable significance and Luke's statement clearly suggests that the message of Jesus was heard and believed at the very heart of imperial power in the court of Herod Antipas. Whether we can go further and follow Marianne Sawicki's proposals regarding the likely links between these two women as the result of commercial contacts related to the supply of fish products to the court is debatable, but her reconstruction may shed fresh light on the earliest history of the Jesus movement.<sup>24</sup>

However these women may have met each other, it is clear that, along with many others, they had experienced the healing and delivering power of Jesus, becoming his devoted followers from *within* the Roman-Herodian, urban culture. What is more, while the words and actions of Jesus were clearly resistant to and subversive of Roman ideology, undermining 'its perceived reasonableness' and challenging its 'hegemonic ability to offer the superior rationale for organis-

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22 Horsley and Silberman, *The Message and the Kingdom*, 25.

23 Ibid.

24 See Sawicki, *Crossing Galilee*, 180.

ing human activities', the reign of God which he both announced and embodied could not exist entirely outside of this world in some kind of free-standing, a-historical context, but rather appeared *within* the existing socio-political situation.<sup>25</sup> And for those followers of Jesus whose discipleship was expressed through supportive roles during preaching trips in Galilee, and back at home *within* the city, where both family and business responsibilities demanded their presence, Jesus' metaphors concerning salt, light and leaven offered encouragement and direction. In Sawicki's words, they expressed 'a theology of digging in and staying put, an ecclesiology of infiltration rather than escape and conquest'.<sup>26</sup>

Within the limits of this article it is impossible to consider the relationship between Jesus and the city of Jerusalem, even though this clearly looms large in all the gospel accounts and is of critical significance to the full understanding of his relationship to urban culture.<sup>27</sup> Our concern here has been restricted to challenging those presentations of the context for Jesus' ministry in Galilee which depict this in terms of a sharp contrast between a traditional, rural culture, isolated from the very different urban world which later became the scene for the mission of Paul and his companions. It is suggested that this approach fails to recognise the impact of Roman, urban culture within Galilee itself and consequently, overlooks the extent to which the actions and words of Christ have direct relevance to the city, both at the time of Jesus' ministry, and for the original hearers of the gospels scattered across the urban empire. In the twenty first century, facing a world becoming urbanised to a unprecedented degree, and in which the tension between traditional values and community life, and the very different worldview of a global empire of market capitalism creates massive problems for millions of people, it is vitally important that we recover the real nature of the relationship between Jesus and the city.

## Abstract

The article challenges presentations of the context for Jesus' ministry in Galilee which depict this in terms of a traditional, rural culture, isolated from the very different urban world setting of Paul's mission. This approach fails to recognise the impact of Roman, urban culture within Galilee itself and the direct relevance of the actions and words of Christ to the inhabitants of first-century cities. In the contemporary highly urbanised world it is vital to recover the real nature of the relationship between Jesus and the city.

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25 Ibid., 173-174.

26 Ibid., 155.

27 This has been dealt with in great detail by Peter Walker in his *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). See too Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions During the New Testament Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).