

Astonishment is the only word to describe my reaction when I received news of David Balch's death on June 30. He was a treasured colleague.

After degrees from Abilene Christian University and Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, a Fulbright Grant to Tübingen and a year at Tantur Ecumenical Institute and Hebrew University in Israel, David completed the Ph.D. from Yale University in 1974. After several short teaching positions, he came to Brite Divinity School in 1991. There our paths crossed in the mid-1990s, when Don Browning of the University of Chicago was looking for someone to write the New Testament book in his series on Family, Religion, and Culture.

David had already established his interest and competence in social context and social history in his earlier publications on the household codes, social environment, and social history. I had been considered to author the volume for the series but had been judged by Browning as too busy. Nevertheless, both David and I were invited to a meeting with the project team in downtown Chicago. He had now been asked to do the volume for the series, but insistently taking me aside at a coffee break, he proposed with determination that we co-author the book that became *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (1997). David further insisted that the woman author's name on the book should be first. I thought it should be alphabetical. The publisher left it up to us. We were both stubborn in our position. I went away for four months to teach in Africa and when I returned, the book was out, and my name was first.

When there was a New Testament position open at Brite alongside his, David earnestly invited me to consider it, and I moved from Chicago to Fort Worth in 2003. We had a colleague relationship that was enriching both for us and for our students, until largely for family concerns, David moved to Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA in 2006.

One summer after a meeting in Rome, a friend and I got into the back seats of a rental car driven mostly by David with help from his son Justin, for a sweep through northern Italy and into coastal Croatia to see the amazing archaeological and historical treasures of Aquileia and Istria. It was then that I discovered one of David's hidden talents, that somewhere in his career, he had been a New York City taxi driver. His driving showed it: risky but in perfect control.

In the summer of 2003, we were both participants in a travel seminar in Rome and Tunisia funded by the International Catacomb Society, on "Roman Burial and Memorial Practices and Earliest Christianity," known by the participants as "the Grateful Dead."

There David discovered the extensive remains of Roman domestic art in Pompeii, which led to many years of continuing scholarship on its interaction with Christian themes, developed into such publications as: *Roman Domestic Art and Early House Churches* (WUNT 228; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); *Contested Spaces: Houses and Temples in Roman Antiquity and the New Testament*, edited with Annette Weissenrieder (WUNT 285; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012); and *Contested Ethnicities: Studies in Acts and Art* (WUNT 345; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

We were eventually co-editors of each other's festschrifts, he with my student Jason T. Lamoreaux (*Finding a Woman's Place: Essays in Honor of Carolyn Osiek*, Wipf & Stock,

2011), and I with David's student Aliou Cissé Niang (*Text, Image, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World: A Festschrift in Honor of David Lee Balch*, Wipf and Stock, 2012).

My last correspondence with David was in August 2023. His final book that year was a collection of eleven of his best articles: *Jesus, Paul, Luke-Acts, and 1 Clement: Studies in Class, Ethnicity, Gender, and Orientation* (Cascade, 2023). He was frustrated that he could not get it reviewed, while at his request, I was ready and willing. The invitation from a review editor never came. Nevertheless, in his email he stated: "At 80, I am glad God allowed me to finish that project!" Indeed.

Carolyn Osiek