With respect to South America, Winston Persaud (Wartburg Seminary) addresses the witness of Lutheranism in the Caribbean and intertwines a strong sense of social justice with an equally strong confessional theology: "justification by faith is both evangelical proclamation... and a necessary hermeneutic to distinguish between the gospel and distortions of it" (89). With respect to ethnic pluralism, he points out that "the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana (ELCG) has a majority East-Indian membership and a significant minority Afro-Guyanese membership, due to the replacement of African slaves as laborers on sugar plantations with East Indian immigrants between 1838 and 1917" (82). And, Victoria Cortez Rodriguez (Bishop, Nicaragua) provides an overview of the work of the church in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Looking to the Middle East and Europe, Munib Younan (Bishop, Jerusalem) indicates the role of the Lutheran Church in health and social work in Palestine, as well as a robust theology of the cross (103). Maria Jepsen (Bishop, Germany) provides a fine overview of the Protestant territorial churches in Germany; the governance of these churches is often unknown to German-Americans. And, Per Lønning (Bishop, Norway) argues that the Lutheran World Federation needs to keep globalism at the forefront of its ventures.

Voicing the concerns of North Americans, Phyllis Anderson (Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary) presents the challenges Lutheranism faces in the secular outlook of the West Coast, highlighting integrity and humility as strengths for ministry (143). Mark Hanson (Presiding Bishop, ELCA) convincingly contends that Lutheranism offers a resilient theology for North Americans as we move into the twenty-first century, a belief shared with his counterpart, Raymond Schultz, in Canada.

All in all, this is an outstanding book to spend time with, one which keeps our own ministries in perspective, as we sense God working in many races, languages, and cultures.

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Studying the Bible without (Much) Knowledge of Greek (or Hebrew): A Conversation with William D. Mounce's Greek for the Rest of Us and Reverse Interlinear


In a perfect world with unlimited time and resources for seminary education and formation, future pastors and other interested lay people would have two years (or more) to study both biblical Greek and Hebrew. Not all of us have...
that calling or leisure, however. To "the rest of us," William D. Mounce (M) offers two resources with much promise and potential. In Summer 2005 I used Greek for the Rest of Us and portions of M's Reverse Interlinear in a lay education course for the Lutheran School of Theology in St. Louis. The following remarks reflect both my and the students' reactions to these books.

While teaching at LSTC (1998-2000), I used M's serviceable introduction to biblical Greek, which has since appeared in a second edition (Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar [Zondervan, 2003]). M offers Greek for the Rest of Us as a companion to his NIV English-Greek New Testament: A Reverse Interlinear. Thus Greek for the Rest of Us is of valuable use. To his credit, M humbly cautions what Greek for the Rest of Us cannot offer and notes aptly that there is no substitute for a thorough introduction to Koine Greek. The book begins with an introduction to the Greek language, alphabet and pronunciation. Most chapters are devoted to offering basic principles of Greek semantics—easily digestible introductions to the most common uses of Greek conjunctions, adjectives, phrases, clauses, verb tenses and moods, and noun cases (nominative, genitive, etc.), and how each of these compares with English uses. These chapters are mostly clear and well written and offer a helpful reference to which students can return time and again. In addition, M disperses throughout the volume several essays, which can be read and appreciated independently of the chapters on Greek semantics. The essays concern English Bible translations and translation theory; a Bible study method that M calls "Phrasing" (two essays); using reference books (e.g., concordances) and computer Bible software; word studies; how to read a Bible commentary; and textual criticism. For those interested in a similar approach to biblical Hebrew, M offers a twenty-one page appendix on "Hebrew for the Rest of Us." The CD-Rom included with the book offers recordings of M's lectures and guides for pronouncing Greek, among other resources. Some students shared with me that reading Greek for the Rest of Us gave them greater motivation for (read: less anxiety about) learning Greek in the future; doubtless others will have a similar reaction.

Without a thorough knowledge of Greek, what skills for Bible study can one gain from Greek for the Rest of Us? I wish M had addressed this question more clearly throughout his volume. Let me share what I think M wishes to accomplish and how the students and I that summer used this book in conjunction with other resources. After one has worked through Greek for the Rest of Us, I would highly recommend the following three steps and additional resources.

Step One: Any of us can compare two (or more) divergent English translations and wonder why they are different. The main purpose of a reverse interlinear is to rearrange the original word order of the Greek (or Hebrew) according to the word order of a contemporary translation. Then one can readily see which English word(s) correspond to which Greek word(s). M's Reverse Interlinear also parses each word in the Greek New Testament (for example, identifying a word as a noun in the dative case, singular and feminine; or a verb in the imperfect tense, active voice, third person and singular). With this information from M's interlinear, the student can consult Greek for the Rest of Us and ascertain that two translations differ because, for example, of different construals of the dative case, the imperfect tense, or a particular type of participle or infinitive. Instead of the NIV, I would have preferred a reverse interlinear based on the NRSV. Nevertheless, M's reverse interlinear is useful even to those unfamiliar with the NIV. Comparing the NIV and NRSV, among other translations, on matters of Christology and gender inclusivity offers much food for thought indeed. One can do so with greater insight because of these two books by M.

Step Two: In M's interlinear each Greek word is assigned a number (Goodrick/Kohlenberger's numbers). For example, both ἀποκαλύφθησεν (Matt 10:26) and ἀπεκάλυψεν (1 Cor 2:10) have the same number (636), since they are forms of the same verb. One can look up that number to
find the lexical (i.e., dictionary) form of the Greek word (in this case, ἀποκαλύπτω) in a resource such as John R. Kohlenberger III et al., eds., *The Greek English Concordance to the New Testament* (Zondervan, 1997). Such a concordance will also list every occurrence of that Greek term in the New Testament and allow for study of the term (in English translation) in other contexts. Upon looking up ἀποκαλύπτω under its number (636), the student will find twenty-six occurrences in the New Testament-four in Matthew, five in Luke, one in John, nine in the undisputed Pauline letters, one in Ephesians, three in 2 Thessalonians, three in 1 Peter and, interestingly, none in Mark or Revelation.

Step Three: Finding the lexical term in a Greek-English concordance allows one to look up the word in Frederick W. Danker’s lexicon, which offers a wealth of additional information (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000]). Danker has completed the manuscript for a shorter lexicon of New Testament Greek that will appear from the University of Chicago Press in the near future (precise title not yet known). The only prerequisite is knowledge of the Greek alphabet, which M introduces at the beginning of *Greek for the Rest of Us*.

The good news is that these four resources—*Greek for the Rest of Us*, a reverse interlinear, an English-Greek concordance and Danker’s lexicon—can be used with great profit even by those who have not learned Greek. For that matter, they offer much to pastors who may have forgotten (most of) their Greek years ago. In a perfect world such resources would be unnecessary. Given that all of us must now be content with imperfect knowledge and, as the apostle Paul says, seeing through a glass darkly (cf. 1 Cor 13:12a), our thanks are due to M, who offers to many the opportunity to see and learn so much more than is possible with only English language resources. I look forward to using again with students M’s Greek for the Rest of Us along with his revised reverse interlinear.

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**Briefly Noted**

In *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Erdmans, $20), Hurtado examines manuscripts used by early Christians as artifacts that reveal aspects of early Christianity: the earliest texts of Old and New Testament; the preference for the codex over the scroll; the use of nomina sacra (abbreviations for sacred names); the staurogram (the chi–rho as the earliest symbol of the cross), and the size of codices. It is not a work of textual criticism, but of theological and social history. Hurtado includes a table of 246 second and third century manuscripts (92 OT; 85 NT, and 49 other texts—plus a few from the fourth century). This clearly written, interesting book illuminates an otherwise overlooked source for early Christian culture and faith. *Edgar Krentz*

John E. Wilson’s *Introduction to Modern Theology: Trajectories in the German Tradition* (Westminster John Knox Press, $29.95) surveys German theology from Kant to Pannenberg and Jüngel. Along the way he includes discussions of Whitehead, Tillich, Reinhard and Richard Niebuhr, and Martin Luther King Jr. Useful for understanding the state of theological research today. A good read. *EK*

*Giving to God: The Bible’s Good News about Living a Generous Life’s* seven chapters (Erdmans, $13.00), by Mark Powell, are a readable guide to a life of stewardship. Each chapter ends with good questions for discussion and a good bibliography that will provide additional resources for the leader. This book deserves a place in parish libraries and wide use. *EK*
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