

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY



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#### Editors’ Note

The year 2019 marks the 500th anniversary of the Leipzig Debate (or Leipzig Disputation). In Leipzig at the Pleissenburg Castle, Luther's colleague Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt debated John Eck from June 27 to July 3 on grace, free will, and justification. From July 4 to 8, Luther took Karlstadt's place and debated with Eck especially on the question of whether the pope was established by God as head of the Church. Our first two articles commemorate this debate. They were presented originally at the Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions at CTSFW, which was held Jan. 16–18, 2019. They remind us of what was at stake, and what we still joyfully affirm: Christ as the head of the Church, and God's Word as the sole infallible authority.

## Theological Observer

### “What Can We Learn from Them?”

Four travelers went to Ethiopia in March: Presidents Dale Meyer of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, and Lawrence Rast of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Skopak and Mr. Andemichael Tesfazion of Grace Lutheran Church in Jacksonville, Florida. Pastor Skopak and Mr. Tesfazion went especially to see the support of their congregation for orphans and to explore future ways to support local congregations in and around Bishoftu. Presidents Meyer and Rast went especially to meet with Dr. Bruk Ayele, president of the Mekane Yesus Seminary (MYS) in Addis Ababa, to discuss how our three seminaries can partner in our Lutheran mission for the Lord Jesus.<sup>1</sup> It was an absolutely inspiring trip. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) is experiencing growth like that of the early church in Acts and soon will be the church home of ten million people. Upon returning to the United States and sharing our experiences, people asked, “What can we learn from them?”

There are several fundamental learnings for congregations, seminaries, and our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod; but first, Ethiopia is a storied land, mentioned already in the ancient poem of Homer:

But now Poseidon had gone to visit the Ethiopians worlds away,  
Ethiopians off at the farthest limits of mankind,  
A people split in two, one part where the Sungod sets  
And part where the Sungod rises. There Poseidon went  
To receive an offering, bulls and rams by the hundred—  
Far away at the feast the Sea-lord sat and took his pleasure.  
But the other gods, at home in Olympian Zeus’s halls,  
Met for full assembly there. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The fifth-century BC Greek historian Herodotus tells a tale, perhaps essentially true but delightfully embellished with myth, how the king of Ethiopia dealt with spies sent by Cambyses, the king of Persia. In a second passage, Herodotus describes the dress and weaponry of Ethiopians who fought for Xerxes.<sup>3</sup> The Greek geographer Strabo (ca. 64 BC–AD 21) has many descriptions of the land and its

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<sup>1</sup> Strengthening ties with church leadership at both the national and local synod level was also a central purpose, and meeting with Teshome Amenu, General Secretary, was a highlight. EECMY President Yonas Dibisa was continuing his PhD studies at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, during our visit, and so we were unable to visit with him on this trip.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, *The Odyssey*, I.21–25.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, *The Histories*, III.17–23; VII.69–70.

people throughout his seventeen books. Ethiopia, sometimes identified as Cush, is often mentioned in the Bible.<sup>4</sup> Most familiar to us is the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26–40.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah [53:7–8] . . . And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

In ancient history, “Ethiopia” defined various regions in Africa, sometimes even the Saudi Arabian peninsula, but “by late biblical times . . . the geographical meaning of the term had come to be well limited to the lands south of Egypt.”<sup>6</sup>

Ethiopia’s more recent history has not always been favorable. Emperor Haile Selassie was deposed in 1974 and replaced by the Derg, a military government that identified with communism and the Soviet Union. It was a time of persecution for Christians. Our fellow traveler Mr. Tesfazion had been an officer in the Ethiopian Air Force and spent years in jail under the Derg. Many of his fellow prisoners were executed. One Ethiopian pastor told us how he and others would leave their homes and spend nights in the desert to escape Derg soldiers who might break into their homes to conscript them. In these times of persecution, the church grew. “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.”<sup>7</sup> The Derg’s reign of terror ended in 1987, and today Ethiopia has a federal parliamentary government. Christians are free to worship and evangelize, although there are some restrictions. For example, private schools cannot teach Christianity. Christianity is about sixty-three percent of the country’s 102 million inhabitants. Muslims, about one third of the population, are aggressively seeking converts. But it was the growth of the EECMY that amazed us, showing us that God is fulfilling prophecies from long ago: “Nobles shall come from Egypt; Cush [Ethiopia] shall hasten to stretch out her hands to God” (Psalm 68:31). “In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. In that day the Lord will extend his hand yet a second time to recover

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<sup>4</sup> Genesis 2:13; 10:6 (Cush, son of Ham); Numbers 12:1; 2 Samuel 18:21–23; 1 Chronicles 1:8; Psalm 68:31; Isaiah 11:11; Ezekiel 38:5.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 8:27–28, 34–35. This and all other quotations from Scripture are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

<sup>6</sup> Katharine Doob Sakenfeld ed., *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 177.

<sup>7</sup> Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, chapter 50.

the remnant that remains of his people, from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush” (Isaiah 11:10–11).

Now to the pressing question, what can we learn from them? People ask that question because the LCMS is not growing. President Rast gave a presentation to about seventy pastors and evangelists of the EECMY and laid out how our LCMS has grown through its history up to 1970. First he presented our growth, noting LCMS growth by decade:

1847–1850	58%	1900–1910	20%
1850–1860	343%	1910–1920	14%
1860–1870	154%	1920–1930	15%
1870–1880	90%	1930–1940	24%
1880–1890	32%	1940–1950	29%
1890–1900	39%	1950–1960	65% <sup>8</sup>

More recent decades have painted a more challenging picture:

Year:	Congregations:	Baptized Members:
1847	30	4,099
1967	5,993	2,847,425
1977	6,051	2,776,958
1987	6,269	2,707,134
1997	6,213	2,603,036
2007	6,158	2,383,084
2017	6,052	1,968,641 <sup>9</sup>

The first basic learning is that the American cultural context has changed. We live in different circumstances today. They are not better or worse; they are different. Yet our synod and many of its institutions developed their structures in a time and for a world that has since radically changed. We are all familiar with the decline

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<sup>8</sup> August R. Suelflow, “The Congregation-Synod Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Historical Perspective, 1897–1961: A Report to the Synodical Survey Commission (Report 3A),” 94.

<sup>9</sup> These numbers are drawn from *The Lutheran Annual*, various years.

of mainline Christianity and the rise of the “nones,” people who do not identify with a Christian denomination. We find ourselves in the midst of a culture that is changing before our eyes and doing so with a rapidity that the LCMS has not experienced since we transitioned from German to English between the World Wars. Traveling throughout the church, in a different congregation almost every weekend, we meet pastors and laypeople who know we are in changed times. Some are discouraged and resigned to decline, grieving what they’ve seen lost in their lifetimes. A few are rejoicing to see their congregation growing. In general, however, and this is a subjective opinion, a large percentage of people in the Synod—in national, district, and congregational structures and agencies—have not come to terms with our changed times and hence not moved toward changes necessary for our new American context. We hasten to add that we are not talking about changing or watering down our precious doctrine!

With that overarching change in our LCMS cultural context, what else can we learn from the growing EECMY? A vision that God’s work is global and multiethnic in the United States is a key to energizing local ministry and mission. Hence a second fundamental learning is that we do well to weave mission stories and mission trips into our shared life as Missouri Synod Lutherans. A St. Louis–area pastor recently asked President Meyer how he could energize his congregation. His church is at peace, relationships are fine, finances passing, but this pastor wants more “get up and go.” President Meyer’s suggestion was mission trips. When people have an experience with Christians in a different context than the friendly confines of their congregation, they see worship and congregational life at home in a different way. You don’t need to leave the country; short experiences are effective too. St. Louis and Fort Wayne both have numerous opportunities for outreach to immigrant groups. All major metropolitan areas have significant ethnic groups, first- and second-generation immigrants, who need the Gospel, and Lutheran outreaches are many. LINC has vibrant ministries in several major metropolitan areas. Mapleton, Iowa, is home to Mission Central, always an inspiring visit.

A third learning is “two wings.” The Rev. Dr. Wakseyoum Idossa, immediate past president of the EECMY, described their church’s approach as having “two wings.” The first is evangelization. The second is human care. Ethiopia is one of the poorest nations in Africa. So, as just one example, the Central Ethiopian Synod has a program for congregations that involves fifteen church members of a local congregation and fifteen non-church members. The program teaches the thirty how to become entrepreneurs and thus work their way out of poverty. Obviously, the non-church members learn about Jesus and the fellowship of the local congregation. “Two wings” is not how most of our congregations saw their mission in the days of twentieth-century “Christian America.” Local congregations preached and

shared the Gospel, but human care was often done by church and government institutions. The larger Christian cultural milieu understood that we are all to love our neighbor through works of mercy. In today's post-churched America, the witness of the local congregation will be more effective with the "two wings," evangelization and human care. "Don't tell me what a friend I have in Jesus until I see what a friend I have in you." Interestingly, Walther's *The Proper Form of a Christian Congregation* shows that this "two wings" approach was an important aspect of the congregations of the Synod's life together in our early history.

A fourth fundamental learning is to communicate to people throughout the LCMS how our seminaries are partnering to share confessional Lutheran theology at home and abroad. This consumes a far greater portion of our professors' time and seminary resources than most people realize. Yes, we form the next generation of pastors and deaconesses for the LCMS, but our involvements with seminaries overseas is forming generations to come in confessional Lutheranism. Both American seminaries have sent professors to teach at MYS and to present to EECMY pastors and evangelists. The EECMY sends students to both of our seminaries, as do many other overseas church bodies. Thirty-four students from fifteen countries are studying at Concordia Theological Seminary, and thirty-eight students from seventeen countries are at Concordia Seminary. Not only do these international students get world-class formation in confessional Lutheran theology, but they also enlarge the panorama of mission for American seminarians and form friendships which will enrich future ministries overseas and in America. As our seminarians learn from international students and hear our professors talk about mission overseas, they cannot help but take the vision to the congregations where they will be called. "This gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations" (Matthew 24:14). Indeed, a growing global vision of our Lord's church will invigorate ministry and mission in local congregations.

Related to that global vision is your seminaries' passion to share Lutheran theology with people in America who are not Lutheran. Professors tell us that non-LCMS Christians, especially evangelicals, are discovering the theological depth they desire in the writings of Luther and Lutheran theologians. Non-Lutheran publishers, like Baker and Eerdmans, have been finding a market of Christian readers for distinctively Lutheran theology.<sup>10</sup> The graduate programs at both seminaries have long been open to non-LCMS students, and *nota bene!* This openness does not mean a watering down of what we teach. Your two seminaries will not become

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<sup>10</sup> E.g., *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, ed. Timothy Wengert (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2017); *God's Two Words: Law and Gospel in the Lutheran and Reformed Traditions*, ed. Jonathan Linebaugh (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2018).

generic divinity schools because we will continue to focus our residential programs on the formation of workers for the LCMS and because the bond between the Synod and her seminaries remains strong. Our vision for the future features our graduate programs acting as “Lutheran leaven” by offering substantial Gospel theology to Christians both at home and overseas.

Fifth, congregations and seminaries can cast a vision for a truly multiethnic Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This is more than mission information, which is inspiring to read and hear; this is working to change the faces of the LCMS so that more and more we reflect American demographics and anticipate in time what Revelation chapter seven teaches we will see in heaven. Among other effects, the decline of the LCMS has shrunk the pool of pastors for the future if . . . and this is a big if . . . if we continue to think of future clergy as white Lutherans of European descent. We certainly do need these candidates for the future; they can invigorate and grow, by the Spirit’s grace, congregations in communities where the LCMS traditionally does well, but how will ethnic communities in the United States “hear without someone preaching?” (Romans 10:14). Increasing our number of ethnic pastors will help us reach these communities that otherwise may well not be blessed with our wonderful Lutheran, christocentric understanding of Law and Gospel, that “everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame” (Romans 10:11). The student populations at your seminaries are already more diverse than the overall LCMS. The Center for Hispanic Studies and the Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology at CSL and the Latino SMP program at CTSEW offer online learning, but the residential population remains predominantly white and of European descent. We need to begin recruiting the children and grandchildren of immigrants now for residential MDiv and deaconess study. This is your seminaries’ vision, and we pray you and your congregation will find it invigorating and partner with us.

What can we learn from our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus? These points and much more, but we circle back. We in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod live in different circumstances today than in past days of growth. Today’s circumstances are not better or worse; they are different. And they are abundant with new opportunities to share the everlasting Gospel. As our years in office lengthen, we presidents find ourselves spending much time discussing the vitality of our seminaries twenty and thirty years into the future. We’re habituated to think that future vitality will depend upon money, but in years to come the real challenge facing seminaries may not be money, but people. We’re not going to get our future pastors and deaconesses solely from the demographics of the past. While some are doing so, we need a more general passion throughout the Synod, pews, and pulpits to reach into the diasporas, those immigrants and their children throughout the United States. The Ethiopian



diaspora is some 2 million people in the United States. When we reach them for Jesus, the second and third generations will have become more Americanized and will be well qualified for the residential programs at our seminaries. Future pastors and deaconesses with European surnames are needed, yes indeed, but will not be enough to make the composition of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod grow so that we reach America's demographics with the Gospel and start to see in time what we will see in eternity, "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9). The prophecy of our Savior in Isaiah 49 should be true of us, Christ's Body today.

And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him—for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength—he says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."  
(Isaiah 49:5–6)

We are your seminaries—for the Gospel!

Dale A. Meyer  
Lawrence R. Rast, Jr.

### Teaching Elementary Greek<sup>11</sup>

Teaching elementary Greek is dependent upon a larger question: “Why should one learn Greek (or Hebrew) at all?” The answer to that question, however, is not that straightforward. On the one hand, it is not right to say, “If you don’t know Greek, you really cannot understand the New Testament at all.” That is not true. Many strong believers and many strong witnesses to the Gospel have had no knowledge of Greek. (St. Augustine may well have been one; certainly my mother was.) On the other hand, it is not right to say, “It really doesn’t make any difference at all if you don’t know the original; it’s just a seminary hoop to jump through.” That, too, is not true.

Here is my answer by way of analogy. The difference between reading the New Testament in English, on the one hand, and knowing Greek and interpreting the New Testament with it, on the other, is like the difference between watching an NFL game on a twelve-inch black-and-white TV and being at the game. The two experiences are not *entirely* different. It is not as if the Indianapolis Colts win if you watch on the small TV, but the Green Bay Packers win if you are at the game. When you are at the game, however, *you see so much more* and *you have a much deeper understanding of what is going on*. This was driven home to me in 1995, when the Rams moved to St. Louis from L.A., and my colleague Chuck Arand and I got season tickets for the games. *Only when you are at the game* do you understand the terror of playing press cornerback in the NFL—you’re out on an island against a lightning-fast, jitterbug wide receiver, backpedaling, flipping your hips, and then, it’s apparent, just how much ground you have to make up to close and deflect the pass. *Only when you are at the game* is it apparent what a fantastically accurate cannon of an arm Dan Marino has. Indeed, *only at the game* can you feel momentum shift in the building, as when Jim Kelly just “willed” the Buffalo Bills to a win in the last two minutes of a game in which he had done almost nothing for the previous fifty-eight.

It is the same way when you read a text of the NT in the Greek. Perhaps to oversimplify, by having knowledge of three specific features of the language, you have a great advantage over interpreters who do not know Greek, three features that help to “take you to the game.” These are word order, middle voice, and aspectual features of the verbal system. Indeed, all of these are features of the Greek language that standard English versions regularly neglect or deliberately *under translate*. (I know this from my experience as one of the “Translation Review Consultants” of the ESV.)

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<sup>11</sup> Presented at a convocation at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, October 10, 2019.

With word order—which is more flexible in Greek as an inflected language than it is in English, which is largely non-inflected—you can see points of emphasis that are not normally conveyed in English translations. With the middle voice and verbal aspect features, dimensions of meaning not easily communicated in English without often awkward extra verbiage become readily apparent.

A passage that illustrates all three features is well-known Acts 20:28, often used at ordinations, part of St. Paul’s farewell to the Ephesian elders, the beginning of which the ESV translates thus: “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God . . . .”<sup>12</sup>

But when we read this text in the Greek, we see that the “you” of the phrase “made you overseers” is thrust to the front of its clause—“in which **you**, the Holy Spirit has made overseers”; it is *emphatic*. Then, the form of the word for “made”—or better, “placed”—τιθημι, is ἔθετο, *middle* voice, not the simple active voice form, conveying that such an action is done with *deliberation* and *purpose*, to fulfill the Spirit’s plans. And then when Paul tells the elders to care for—literally, “shepherd”—the church of God, he uses the *present* infinitive, ποιμαίνειν, not the aorist, which *connects* the action to his hearers, conveying that they are involved not in a mere job but in a thoroughly engaging calling. So let us translate the beginning of Acts 20:28 like this: “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed *you*, for his own purposes as overseers, to *engage in tending as a shepherd* does the church of God . . . .”

When you, as interpreter of the sacred text, bring these sorts of dimensions to life for your people—and you can—you are, as I have come to call it, “taking them to the game.”

This, then, is the baseline and the foundation for the classroom experience of elementary Greek. Yes, such a class is a kind of “hoop” for students to jump through in order to commence seminary training. Yes, it is an academic class. But overall, the experience of elementary Greek is a chance to be electrified by the depth of the text of the New Testament, which then allows future pastors to convey that electricity to God’s people—or, to use my phrase, to “take them to the game.” And from the standpoint of the professor, everything done in the classroom must be directed to this end, whether that be the discussion of forms/morphology, the discussion of syntax, the discussion of the Greek verbal system, the discussion of vocabulary, or whatever. Such features are never ends in themselves, but they are

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<sup>12</sup> Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

always building blocks for creating a fuller understanding of God's dynamic, saving word.

Let me conclude with several observations concerning, specifically, the *teaching* of elementary Greek. A good teacher has three qualities—qualities that are at a *premium* when teaching introductory courses such as elementary Greek. First, a good teacher must know his subject thoroughly. That is why it is important to stay up to date on a whole range of linguistic issues and to be a regular participant (not just attendee) at scholarly society meetings. Second, a good teacher must love people. If he does not have genuine affection for his students, he should be doing something else. And third, that teacher must remember what it is like not to know, what it is like not to “get” what a chapter (or a section of a chapter) is about.

Especially the last of these qualities is so critical. It gives empathy with the student. It gives insight into the source of a student's struggling. And it, thus, enables the professor to build necessary interpersonal relationships and to communicate effectively—all foundations to a successful classroom experience. Such an experience is not merely a transfer of information—though such transfer does occur—but it entails having a common learning experience together.

James W. Voelz

### Using *Fundamental Greek Grammar* to Teach Greek at the Seminary<sup>13</sup>

I would like to thank Jim personally for having produced a noteworthy textbook—*Fundamental Greek Grammar*<sup>14</sup>—that has more than adequately prepared many pastors of our church body with a foundation in the Koine Greek of the NT. This is no small matter, since Jim noticed already in the early to mid-eighties (when he began putting the textbook together) that most beginning Greek students bring “very little” with them to seminary.<sup>15</sup> What Jim does consistently in *FGG*, therefore, is move the class from knowing next to nothing about Greek to setting a path upon which students can be led—in ten weeks’ time—to acquire enough philological competence to begin our seminary’s required exegetical sequence in the New Testament: Gospels I (Matthew), Gospels II (Luke/Mark), Pauline Epistles (Galatians/Romans selections), Gospels III (John), five NT Greek Readings courses, and, for the students of exceptional interest and ability, Advanced Greek.<sup>16</sup> Hence, *FGG* is an excellent textbook for achieving the purposes to which it has been put in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for the past thirty-two years. (The first edition of *FGG* appeared in 1986.) Nevertheless, I believe the textbook could be substantially improved and so serve our church better than it has prior to this point.

First, one immediate problem is that *FGG* is riddled with accentual errors which mar the book and impede progress as professors are obliged to interrupt instruction to set students straight. Missed graves for acutes, or acutes for graves, obviously do not trouble people who do not know Greek at all or are mere beginners;<sup>17</sup> however, as students are subjected to nearly daily quizzes, I deduct for missed accents (half point), to say nothing about missed endings (which are a one-point deduction).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Presented at a convocation at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, October 10, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> James W. Voelz, *Fundamental Greek Grammar*, 4th ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014). Hereafter *FGG*. Since the colloquium with Dr. Voelz, a 4th Revised edition of *FGG* has appeared, published in 2019. Unfortunately, nearly all of the errors in the 4th edition have been perpetuated in the 4th revised edition.

<sup>15</sup> Voelz, *FGG*, v.

<sup>16</sup> For the (at the time) “new curriculum” for which most of these courses were developed originally at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, see Charles A. Gieschen, “‘They Bear Witness to Me’: Christ, the Scriptures, and the New Curriculum,” *For the Life of the World* 9, no. 3 (July 2005): 18–19.

<sup>17</sup> For the differences between grave, acute, and circumflex accents in the Greek language, see *FGG*, 8–11. See also John G. Nordling, “Teaching Greek at the Seminary” *Logia* 21, no. 2 (Eastertide 2012): 70.

<sup>18</sup> In making the course my own, I have added two sets of quizzes, administered four days out of five—namely, Monday and Friday, brief vocab quiz; Tuesday and Thursday, paradigm quiz; Wednesday, no quiz. The so-called “brief vocab quiz” consists of the following exercises: (1) passive

Hence, it is frustrating to use a book—now in its fourth revised edition—that is riddled with errors of this type. I have used *FGG* twice per year since 2006 and taken careful note of the mistaken accents, breathing marks, and iota subscripts and sent these some time ago to Concordia Publishing House for revision. Sloppy accents and other errors convey the impression that fine points do not matter—and that Greek itself probably is not that important, especially if one can simply read Bible passages in a good translation (for example, the English Standard Version). I believe, however, that accents *do* matter, and that students still can learn them well, especially when they are trained to learn Greek—and then after Greek, theology—at a high level.

Second, I object to the verbosity of *FGG*—to what I call in class the “Voelzian verbiage” (with all due respect to Jim Voelz himself). Years ago, while learning how to teach Latin at the University of Wisconsin—Madison during graduate school, I had a colleague who used to quip, “*non multa praecepta, multa exempla*,” which I may paraphrase: “Not many precepts [about teaching a language], but many good examples [used well and correctly].” Exposure to good *exempla* is how students actually begin to acquire a foreign language—not by talking *about* the language *ad infinitum* (this is what I refer to as “verbiage”), but by compelling students to use the language actively by thinking, writing, and speaking in the source language.<sup>19</sup> Granted, it is next to impossible to compel modern students to *speak* ancient Greek nowadays; nevertheless, there are many things an enterprising professor can do to make Greek more active—such as have students change plurals to singulars (and vice versa) or have them change phrases, clauses, and entire sentences from English into Greek (composition). Composition has always been an indicator of language mastery, and the best programs in Greek and Latin use composition to this day. After chapter 12, *FGG* has only one English-to-Greek sentence per chapter through the duration of the book—and provides the sentence in the answer key! Hence, I have myself written two English-to-Greek sentences per chapter to be used each day. I compel students to write them on the whiteboard, and I call on still other students to correct the inevitable mistakes. Is this a laborious, time-consuming class procedure? Well, of course it is! The students can be counted on to make many blunders. But they are constantly corrected—for each and every error—and

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vocab (five words); (2) active vocab (three words); (3) noun-adjective pair, verb conjugation, or noun-participle combination; (4) principle parts (one to two verbs); (5) composition (English to Greek). The “paradigm quiz” consists of the following: (1) nominal declination or verbal conjugation; (2) passive vocab (six to eight words); (3) passive translation (Greek to English).

<sup>19</sup> By “source language,” I mean the language from which a translation originates as opposed to the “target” or “receptor language” (e.g., see Matthew S. DeMoss, *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of New Testament Greek* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001], 115, 120). See also Nordling, “Teaching Greek at the Seminary,” 72 n. 13.

over time stop making the mistakes that other students do who have not been exposed to the rigors of composition. Jim's book, then, perpetuates the problem of learning Greek passively in the schools of our church; and such passive learning, I would argue, has resulted—sadly—in a good number of pastors who do not use Greek very well in the course of their ministries since the requisite vocabulary, forms, and paradigms were never instilled in them from the beginning.

Let us not forget that we are dealing with *beginning* students who cannot be expected to know or understand the fine points of Greek. So things like “focus on the action” (the action itself) or “focus on connection” (the bond or linkage between the doer and the activity) can be postponed to a later stage of Greek language acquisition, if taken up at all (perhaps not).<sup>20</sup> No other Greek grammar uses such idiosyncratic terminology, however, so when I use *FGG* to teach beginning Greek at the seminary I use such “jargon” sparingly. Nevertheless, I am convinced that my students learn Greek better by not getting sucked into such hairsplitting too early. And chapter 9 in *FGG* is way too early to get a handle on aspect. This fine point can be worked on collectively in New Testament Greek Readings (our students are required to have five Greek Readings classes for the MDiv)—or as pastors in the field who meet weekly to read and appreciate next Sunday's gospel in the glorious Greek. Then, to be sure, aspect (and many other fine points) can be referenced and put to use to preach God's Word powerfully to the Christians who constitute our congregations.

Third, I have begun a second list of what I call overlooked constructions in *FGG*. Of course, no beginning Greek grammar can be expected to cover all grammatical constructions needed to read Greek adequately. However, it is astonishing how many constructions *FGG* does *not* take up: the possessive dative, accusative of respect, future participle of purpose, the Jussive Noun Clause (or at least content clauses such as one encounters repeatedly in the Pauline epistles), the so-called cognate accusative, the fear clause, indirect question, the use of the definite article to indicate possession (admittedly, more of a classical construction), and grammatical apposition. The infinitive in indirect discourse construction (sometimes referred to as ACI = Accusative with Infinitive) appears in chapter 42 (the final chapter of *FGG*), so students never really learn this construction—no, not even exceptionally gifted students.<sup>21</sup> Were I to revise *FGG*, I would put the infinitive

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<sup>20</sup> For the distinction between so-called “focus on the action” and “focus upon connection,” see chapter 9 (Aspect, and Imperfect Indicative Active and Middle Verb Forms) in *FGG*, page 56, and several additional times throughout the book.

<sup>21</sup> This type of indirect discourse consists of a verb of saying/thinking/knowing etc. that sets off a depending clause wherein a noun in the accusative case serves as the subject of a verb in the infinitive mood. Thus, “the apostle says [λέγει] that Jesus [τὸν Ἰησοῦν] loves [ἀγαπᾷν] the sinners.”

in indirect discourse construction much earlier in the book (at chapter 17, which is the second chapter on the infinitive); I would also add at least one example of this challenging construction in the practice sentences of all subsequent chapters so that students could understand it well before chapter 42. A similar argument can be made for the ACP construction—namely, Accusative-with-Participle-after-a-verb-of-Perception—which does not appear until chapter 41.<sup>22</sup> However, if ACP were introduced by chapter 22 (the third chapter on the participle) and drilled in the practice sentences of subsequent chapters, students would learn this construction by the time they got to the end of the book.

Admittedly, no one Greek grammar by itself is without fault or cannot be improved upon. Indeed, that is the job of any professor worth his or her salt—not to take a textbook “as is,” but indeed to work with it to teach students optimally, playing to strengths and helping each student to learn, regardless of limitations. *FGG* has served our church and its constituencies well and faithfully for many years—and, I hope, will continue to do so into perpetuity. But it can be improved upon in the ways just shown.

John G. Nordling

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For many examples of this construction that occur in the NT, see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 604–605.

<sup>22</sup> An anarthrous participle in the accusative case, in conjunction with an accusative noun or pronoun, sometimes indicates indirect discourse after a verb of perception or communication. Thus, “when Jacob heard [*ἀκούσας*] that there was grain in Egypt [*ὄντα σιτία εἰς Αἴγυπτον*]” (Acts 7:12). For this example (and several others), see Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 646.