

survey of these various aspects of ecclesiology as well as the discussion of the numerous questions and challenges still being raised.

It is difficult to summarize and critique a volume of this kind given the diversity of topics and authors. But one common thread easily emerges out of the summaries and reviews of the various denominational ecclesiologies, major theologians, and contemporary movements of the twentieth century it presents. Modern ecclesiologies have moved away from primarily discussing issues of form, governance, and authority, to emphasize the nature of the church as the people of God and the community of believers in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, commissioned to witness in the power of the Holy Spirit to the world of the gracious and saving love of God. While an ecumenical consensus on the doctrine of the church and its multitude of questions and concerns is far from being reached, this emphasis on the church as a community is perhaps one of its greatest and most helpful achievements.

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Black, David Alan, and Benjamin L. Merkle, eds. *Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020. xi + 276 pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

Scholars working in the field of biblical exegesis have at times struggled to incorporate current linguistic theories into their use of biblical languages. To begin addressing this lacuna, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary held a symposium about it on April 26–27 of 2019. The title of the meeting became the title of the current book, since the papers delivered at the conference have now been collected, with a preface and postscript offered by the editors. The volume is concluded with a glossary, biographies of the contributors, and an index. With this volume, David Black writes, “students of Greek [will] think more linguistically about the language they are studying” (3). Each essay represents a summary of a way in which linguistic theory can affect the teaching and interpretation of New Testament Greek.

In chapter 1 Stanley Porter introduces the reader to various linguistic schools. He divides the schools into “traditional,” “formal,” “cognitive,” and “functional.” The reader will not grasp all of the nuances of each linguistic school based solely on this chapter. The explanation for Systemic Functional Linguistics—perhaps the most important school for future study on Koine Greek—comprises a single paragraph. This dearth of explanation is mitigated somewhat by numerous references to New Testament studies that make use of the various linguistic schools. The next three chapters focus on the Greek verb. In chapter 2, Constantine Campbell discusses advances in understanding the Greek verbal aspect, including the question of whether temporality is encoded in tense morphology. Michael Aubrey follows with a discussion

about the form of the Greek perfect tense. Both of these chapters are distilled from their authors' research emphases. Campbell wrote on the verbal aspect for his doctoral dissertation at Macquarie University, a dissertation that was subsequently published by Peter Lang. Aubrey's interest in the perfect tense stems from his Master's thesis, completed at Trinity Western University. In chapter 4, Jonathan Pennington writes on the middle voice and its implication in exegesis. He argues that a proper understanding of middle-voice semantics will eliminate the need to speak of certain Greek verbs as "deponent." More specifically, he suggests Greek middle morphology decreases the transitivity of the verb and marks the verb for subject-affectedness. Of these two proposals, the latter is more convincing. In the New Testament, examples abound of intransitive active verbs and transitive middle verbs. In the case where middle forms are chosen in lieu of active ones, it is often difficult to see how a loss of transitivity could be the deciding factor in choosing one form over another. On the other hand, subject-affectedness is likely the key to understanding the Greek middle. It is instructive that when Pennington offers examples of exegesis, his two texts (Jas 4:2–3; Mark 6:22–25) illustrate the middle form's emphasis on subject-affectedness, but not loss of transitivity.

The following two chapters deal with the promising field of discourse analysis. In chapter 5, Stephen Levinsohn introduces the topic by applying discourse analysis to Galatians. Beginning with large thematic boundaries and moving to smaller functional markers, Levinsohn demonstrates well how functional grammar and discourse analysis can be applied to New Testament books from both a macro- and micro-perspective. In chapter 6, Steven Runge applies the methodology of discourse analysis more specifically to word, phrase, and clause ordering. Runge expands on concepts found in his *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), a volume that has already become a standard in its field. Runge includes several helpful examples from the Gospel of John to illustrate how emphasis can be deduced from the order of constituents in one or more clauses.

The final five chapters focus on issues of language acquisition and pedagogy. In chapter 7, T. Michael Halcomb charts the trajectory of language pedagogy from the Renaissance to the twenty-first century. He is especially inclined toward "Living Language" approaches to teaching, as exemplified by the "Lingua Latina" series. In a passionate conclusion, Halcomb calls on Greek teachers to be willing to rethink their methods to accommodate a changing world. On the importance of learning Greek through pronunciation, Randall Buth makes the case in chapter 8 that oral language learning has more to do with reading comprehension than had previously been thought. He follows this argument with a demonstration of how scholars can come to a reasonable approximation of the spoken Koine Greek dialect through spelling variations attested in ancient letters, manuscripts, and inscriptions. His suggestions fall between Modern and Erasmian pronunciation systems,

which is sure to make educators on both sides of the debate uncomfortable. Thomas Hudgins's chapter (9) on "Electronic Tools and New Testament Greek" describes numerous resources available online covering the topics of language acquisition, textual criticism, lexical analysis, and syntactic analysis. He admits that "a chapter on electronic tools and New Testament Greek is almost futile" due to the ever-changing nature of technology and resource access (195). Nevertheless, his chapter will be useful for at least the near future. Chapter 10, by Robert Plummer, is a short imaginative exposition of what an "ideal beginning Greek grammar" would look like. For those who do not see themselves embarking on the task of creating such a grammar, Plummer also includes resources to supplement the teaching of beginning Greek. The last chapter, by Nicholas Ellis, lays out how linguistic theory has affected biblical exegesis over the last hundred years, with some significant overlap with the history told by Porter (ch 1). Ellis, however, focuses more on lexical studies. He concludes with a few notes on how linguistic theory can continue impacting biblical exegesis. Following these essays, editor Benjamin Merkle offers a postscript, in which he asks "Where do we go from here?" (247). Summarizing much of what was discussed in the book, Merkle spends special attention on the studies on verbs.

*Linguistics and New Testament Greek* represents a promising trend in the biblical scholarship of incorporating broader linguistic theory into exegesis and pedagogy. Rather than viewing biblical Greek as a code that needs to be cracked, the contributors to this volume encourage the reader to view Koine Greek as a language spoken by real people. Insights gained from modern languages can thus assist us in understanding what the biblical authors were communicating long ago. The topics covered in this volume are by no means simple nor settled. The book should be viewed as a starting point toward further research since most chapters leave the reader with more questions than answers. The authors give helpful references that will assist the reader to dig deeper into a chosen topic. Linguistic theory has come a long way since the hay-days of Noam Chomsky. Best practices in second-language acquisition have developed greatly from the rote memorization of previous centuries. Such a jumping-off point is needed, given the weight of tradition that hangs upon Greek exegesis and pedagogy. Change does not come easy, but *Linguistics and New Testament Greek* offers reasons to challenge long-held assumptions regarding the teaching and use of Koine Greek in biblical studies. Teachers of the Greek New Testament would do well to accept some of its proposals.

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