

A Light to the Centurions by Fr. Robert Beck

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A Light to the Centurions by Fr. Robert Beck is a book that has me excited. As I dug deeper into his exploration of the Gospel of Luke and Acts I kept seeing parallels to Luke's time and ours.

A quick google search for Nuns and Nones will take you to places like: <https://www.nunsandnones.org/community>
<https://www.ncronline.org/preview/nuns-and-nones-modern-religious-community>
<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/trends/nuns-and-nones-modern-religious-community-55831>
and this is just a sample.

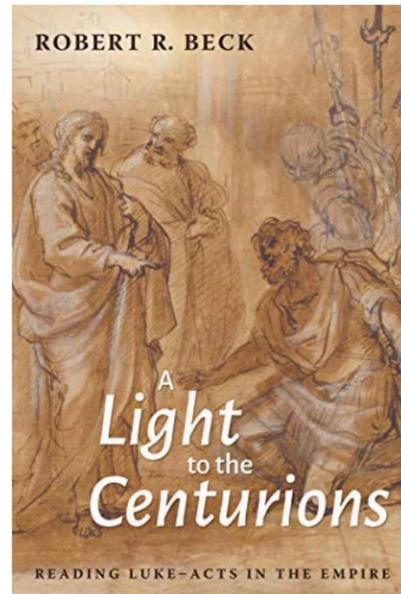
I am sure Fr. Beck has been working on this book for many years as it would take almost a lifetime to bring together all the insights in this work. But especially this being the year of Luke in the lectionary cycle no one preaching, teaching or reflecting on Luke's works, will go away unrewarded from engaging this book.

A few quotes might give you a taste. "It is a tradition that will invite them into the community of the one God's salvation *as Gentiles*, and not as converts to Judaism. It means an expression of faith community that moves beyond the identity markers that safeguard the Jewish community, which it turns was commissioned to safeguard the revelation of the one God." (153) Are the 'nones' a modern day example of the God-fears of Luke's day?

"The very honor-shame value system that structures the culture of the empire are called into question by the teaching of Jesus." (153) Are these young adults calling into question of the 'empire' today?

"Has Luke, in making the gospel available to the empire, had the inverse effect of making the empire the authoritative reader of the gospel? That is a large part of the question generating this book."(156) Are the nuns making the Word available by living the values and practices that attract the nones? Am I living those values?

Beck quotes Thomas Merton on pg. 163: "Instead of trying to use the adversary as lever for one's own effort to realize one's ends however ideal, nonviolence seeks to enter into a dialogue with him in order to attain together with him, the common good of man." Is this the method we can use as we engage with the ones in our lives who hold other ideas than the ones we hold?



“Luke moves the narrative from a depiction of repentance to an address to the reader, a call for the reader to repent. And in so doing, he presents a case for the Graeco-Roman Gentile to reconsider his cultural heritage: the values that were simply a given now are put under the lens to require a deliberate choice-to continue living by these values or not.” (172) Are we looking at our choices with eyes looking to the future that those choices create?

Beck concludes on pages 172-3: “Luke’s writing not only serves to offer his reader a “certainty concerning the things about which you were taught (Luke 1:4), but also a challenge- to remain on a journey as its radical implication continue to be discovered.” Reading and reflecting on this book will continue to challenge me and I invite you to join me in these questions.

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