

ONE OF MY RECENT POSTS ON BRUCE METZGER MADE ME THINK OF WHEN I GOT MY FIRST TEACHING JOB. NOT SURE WHY. BUT HERE ARE SOME REFLECTIONS ABOUT IT....

My students are alternatively comforted and chagrined to learn how hard it was for me to get a teaching position. It makes them feel good that they are not alone, but bad that they too might have a hard time - even harder. I was on the job market while I was writing my dissertation.. And even though there were job openings, I couldn't get an interview to save my soul. Part of the problem was that my PhD was from a theological seminary, and a lot of the jobs were at secular institutions - state universities, private colleges, and the like. Most places simply don't want to take a chance on someone who has been trained in a theological environment. Especially someone like me at the time. I had never set foot in a secular setting since high school! Starting when I was 17, I was at Moody Bible Institute (3 years), Wheaton College (2 years), and then Princeton Seminary (7 years). Yikes!

And even theological schools and Christian colleges were not, by and large, interested in me, in no small measure because of my area of expertise. Greek manuscripts? Patristic citations of the New Testament? Didymus the Blind??? Are you kidding? Most places wanted someone who was an expert on the letters of Paul, or the Gospel of John, or biblical hermeneutics, or - well, or anything besides what I was an expert in.

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