

Tuesday, March 21, 2006

Peter Bolt on Faith Based Scholarship

From Down Under, [Moore Theological College](#), Peter G. Bolt offers some brief comments concerning the importance of accepting the Bible as the word of God.



(1) How would you describe the role of personal faith as it relates to biblical scholarship? What are some presuppositions that you might have when it comes to the interpretative task?

Biblical Scholarship should be an enterprise of 'faith seeking understanding'. As we seek to understand the Bible, we do so because we want to hear God's Word. We presuppose that the word of the apostles is just as understandable as any other human conversation, but, because these were the eyewitnesses of God-made-flesh, through their word we hear the word of God. The basic task then becomes: what did they say? The basic challenge: to live under their word as the word of God.

(2) What are the advantages and pitfalls associated with a more “secular” brand of biblical scholarship? What does the church have to do with the academy and vice versa? What are the some possible avenues of fruitful dialogue between “faith-based” and “secular” approaches in biblical scholarship?

If the basic task is discovering 'what did they say?', then all kinds of people and resources can help us in that journey of discovery. Much fruitful dialogue here. The basic challenge is to be confronted by the apostolic word and to hear it and respond to it as the word of God. The scholar who is a 'believer' knows the God of grace and, like any believer, seeks to invite others to hear the voice of the gracious God who has made himself known in Jesus Christ.

(3) Who would you considered to be stellar examples of evangelical scholarship? Who are some of the best examples of mainstream critical scholars?

A good scholar is someone who listens carefully and patiently to his/her sources, reading what is there, not reading what is NOT there. The 'stellar examples' of evangelical scholarship are those who do this, and seek to live by what they discover. The best examples of mainstream critical scholars are still those who listen to the sources, those

who don't take the stance of the 'critic' in the first instance, but who seek to use their greater skills to become better readers.

(4) Any additional thoughts on this subject?

Anything that is not from faith is sin, according to the apostle. From that point of view, scholarship -- like any other area of life -- ought to arise from and lead to faith in Jesus Christ. Scholarship properly begins in wonder, and the wonder of God's love for a lost world seems to be a perfect place to begin biblical scholarship.