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Welcome From John Reeve

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March 19, 2010

Welcome From John Reeve

Welcome to Memory, Meaning & Faith! You will notice from [Who We Are](#), [Why We're Here](#) and [What We Believe](#) that we want to have a faith-building historical and theological dialogue that is Bible-based, Christian, and Adventist. Now I want to speak from my heart about what motivates me to want this dialogue.

My study of the early Christian church has taught me (at least) two things:

1. Protecting yourself against the possibility of being wrong sets you up to go farther and farther wrong, all the while claiming to be right.
2. Even people that are right sometimes make wrong choices with bad results and, conversely, even people that are wrong sometimes make right choices with good results.

I do not suggest by the second that there is no moral imperative to do right, but rather, that I can learn from the mistakes and successes of all people in history by standing on their shoulders and choosing to emulate that which is right and true. This, of course, means that I must critique all people and movements in history in both thought and action. The first thing I learned, however, means that I must also be willing to critique myself and my own movement and be critiqued by what I have found right and true in history.

This calls for an attitude of humility—neither arrogance nor sheepishness, neither vindictiveness nor quiescence, neither defensiveness nor an attitude of aggression. I believe in acting with confidence while standing ready to be corrected, in teaching with authority while remaining teachable, in listening and not just speaking, in critiquing all thoughts and actions while respecting all people and leaving the judgment to God. I also believe that truth can stand being inspected and must be in order to be passed on. This is the attitude I intend to have permeate the [discussions](#) on this blog. You are welcome to join in.

Check out [our giveaway!](#) This week we'll be giving away books authored by our regular contributors, including John Reeve, as a way of saying thank you for subscribing to us on Facebook, Twitter, and via our email newsletter. More information is available [here](#). -DH

Posted by [John W. Reeve](#) on March 19, 2010 in [Blog Information](#), [Philosophy of History](#) | [Permalink](#)

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These are good reasons for a blog, Dr. John Reeve. (I can't decide what to call you, so I thought the full name would cover my bases.)

I especially resonate with that first thing you've learned from history, the danger of protecting ourselves against the possibility of being wrong. Perhaps our Adventist heritage exacerbates this natural human tendency? From the beginning we've been the weirdos, the protestors, the fringe-people. Even now as we're evangelical-izing, we're still not completely "in," right? Seems to me that we have developed sort of a gut reaction to challenges to the (traditional?) Adventist understanding. I see that same tendency in myself, so I'm looking forward to seeing what MMF will contribute to this lesson in teachability.

Posted by: [Kessia Reyne Bennett](#) | [March 19, 2010 at 01:28 PM](#)

Kessia Reyne,

Thank you for your encouragement and candor. (John is fine, by the way.) I appreciate that when you made the obvious jump in application from the early Church to the Adventist Church that you referred to "this natural human tendency." I did intend the current application to our own movement, but I did not want to single us out.

The early Christians did insulate themselves against being wrong by holding on to tradition even as it developed. And, in their defense, it did keep them from having gnostic or docetic understandings of Jesus Christ from becoming the norm. I think the problem is as much that they insisted that they were not changing even as they changed. This is particularly true in the area of liturgy, but also holds true in many areas of theology as well; like in the area of theological anthropology.

So my comment on the lesson learned from the early Church was directly descriptive of the early Church, but is also somewhat universal and, therefore, applicable to ourselves. However, it is not meant to be prescriptive in a deterministic way. We are not doomed to follow a pattern, but we do have to keep from following the pattern.

Thanks for the comments.

Posted by: John W. Reeve | [March 19, 2010 at 08:44 PM](#)

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