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2010 Adventist Historians' Conference: Epilogue

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Memory, Meaning & Faith

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March 28, 2010

2010 Adventist Historians' Conference: Epilogue

The compelling, rich, challenging, and deeply spiritual [presentation of Dr. Diop](#) was a moving and inspiring capstone to a series of thought-provoking and excellent meetings. At the end of his presentation and discussion the formal meetings of the conference ended. (Although there will be a final business meeting tomorrow morning, though many of us will be on the road and unable to attend. Substantial rumor has it, though, that the decision will be made that the next conference will be held at Union College.)

The attendees retired to the WAU cafeteria where a wonderful Sabbath lunch, and further delicious discussions, was enjoyed by all, preparatory to a Sabbath afternoon tour of historic Adventist sites in D.C. We had a short time here, but it was a time of fellowship, challenge, provocation (in the best sense) and interchange. Special recognition should be given to our gracious hostess and ASDAH President Joan A. Francis, whose organizational efforts, assisted by colleagues and students, were superb at making us feel both at home, and as participants at well-run, very efficient meetings.

We leave with a sense that the Adventist historians have perhaps more work to do to engage questions of faith, providence, and prophecy with which members and evangelists grapple. There has been an increasing disconnect and disengagement of many Adventist historians from those questions with our increasing concerns with professionalization. But this has only caused layman and others to handle these questions with less care and reflection, not caused the questions themselves to disappear.

How do we develop and engage professionally as Historians, while taking seriously our role as members and thought-leaders in our prophetic Adventist community of faith? Perhaps the [closing lectures of Dr. Land](#), challenging us to take more seriously questions of the philosophy of faith and history, and of Dr. Diop, challenging us to engage more fully the comprehensive Adventist mission, crossing over our from our comfort zones, which can perhaps include our zones of professional comfort, help point the way. We hope that the discussion can continue, especially on the pages of this blog, on our way to the next meetings at Union!

Posted by [Nicholas Miller](#) on March 28, 2010 in [2010 Adventist Historians' Conference](#), [Church History](#), [Philosophy of History](#) | [Permalink](#)

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Why do you think it is that Adventist historians have stayed out of the prophetic/apocalyptic in recent years? Is it because they're been burned there in the past? Because Froom said essentially everything there was to say and left us only enough room to criticize it? Or has their professional training taught them that apocalyptic prophecy is an improper venue for historical research?

Posted by: [David Hamstra](#) | [March 29, 2010 at 08:24 PM](#)

I think it is primarily the third reason. Surely Froom has not said everything, and being wrong certainly does not stop historians from trying again. Rather, professionalization has led to essentially a secular view of history, in which historians believe they do not have the tools to answer questions asked about prophecy. This seems to me, however, to represent a triumph of the historian over the Christian, and is an unnecessary and unfortunate decision to check one's faith at the door of the library or historian's study.

Posted by: [Nicholas Miller](#) | [March 29, 2010 at 08:44 PM](#)

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