

Steven D. Reece

From: Rachel McRae <rachel.mcr@matzevah.org>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2020 11:52
To: Steven Reece
Subject: Dissertation Notes

I have finished reading your dissertation. And I'm pleased to say that I read just about all of it over the last several weeks! I do admit to scanning some of the paragraphs that were showing your support readings, etc.

I captured notes to myself on a Google doc of things that jumped out at me.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CaqnNSYIYVJm30ptdT1SblvMYBVePxpjc2LtUJEhmOo/edit?usp=sharing>

Overall Reflections

Acknowledgements were lovely. Did you send it to Scott Harris? I think he'll appreciate the acknowledgements but even more so, it would be great for him to read and ponder on the recommendations you make to Christians.

I am overwhelmed by the sheer amount of work, reading, researching, thinking, writing, rewriting, etc. you had to do. Seeing it all here in one place is amazing. I know we all knew you were pouring your life (blood, sweat, and tears) into this but seeing it first hand just... wow.

I can see how your writing has grown as a result of this work. You always wrote fine, but this exercise of the last 3+ years has shaped you into a more clear and effective writer. And it's not just here in the dissertation.. I've noticed it for awhile in your emails and even in the way you speak in front of a group.

I'm disappointed no one's name was Sammy Davis Jr. Jr.

Reading it has given me more of a sense of urgency for our work. But I think my greatest takeaway is how, yes, it's definitely time for our work to shift. We'll always conduct commemorations and restoration projects. Those are the avenues for so much of what you've outlined. In addition to being in the cemetery, we have to help get you (and TMF) in front of groups, peers, and communities where you can help communicate the recommendations you've made to Christians and to the Jewish community. Most of that will be done outside of the cemetery.

I have enjoyed reliving so many wonderful memories of people, trips, work, and conversations! And I loved the perspective of people on projects I've been on. It gave me new insight on how they saw many of the same things I did. And Markuszow remains a top favorite trip for me out of the 12 I've done (other top one is the year my mom came).

Even after reading some of my comments to you and remembering things I've written in my trip journals (which I still do... but the entries are shorter than they used to be!), I'm impressed at how easy dialogue is and should be. And how I need to be more intentional about it in other areas of my life... not just Poland. Your paper is full of the benefits of it and I trust it will be an encouragement and inspiration to all who read it.

I pray time will come when you're done with everything for school, you've had some moments to breathe, that you can just feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in what you've achieved here. Not just for yourself or TMF but for the greater good, the greater community. There are ideas and reflections here that if people will read, ponder, and try to put into action, that will cause significant strides towards reconciliation, remembering, and restoring... on many levels... not just in the Jewish - Christian dialogue.

Well done.

Action point

I plan on doing a one page document that lists the 10 recommendations you make to the board. I want us all to have quick and easy access to it as we move forward. These should be our guiding principles as individuals and as an organization. I'll send you a draft of it when I get it pulled together... might be a few days.

If I have other reflections after mulling on it for awhile, I'll let you know!

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