

concur in Christ as the fount of all grace.”

19. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.xv.6: IV.xiv.21.
20. Calvin, *Commentary on Hebrews*, “Theme”; *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries*, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), pp. 1, 3.
21. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.xv.6; III.xx.17-20; IV.vi.2; “Catechism,” p. 96; *Commentary on 1 Timothy 2:6*. Cf. Paul van Buren, *Christ in Our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin’s Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), pp. 89-91.
22. Calvin, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 51:9.
23. Calvin, *Commentary on Romans*, 9:3; *Commentary on Hebrews*, 2:17.
24. Calvin, *Institutes*, II.xv.6: “Catechism,” p. 96.
25. Calvin, *Commentary on Hebrews*, 9:11.
26. Melancthon, *Annotationes in Evangelium Matthei*, caput 16, *Corpus Reformatorum* 14:889-90; translation supplied.
27. Cf. Bryan W. Ball, “A High Priest in Heaven,” a chapter in a forthcoming book which deals with Puritan antecedents to Adventist theology. The most important primary source is John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, With Preliminary Exercitations*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), 1:512-27; 2:3-259; 3:465-86; cf. also *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, 16 vols. (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1850-53; London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), 12:397-411.
28. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols. in 13 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936-69), 3/1:98-99, 213-28; 3/4:47-72. Barth, Puritan theology, and Seventh-day Adventism are all distinguished by their

attention to both the Sabbath and the high-priestly ministry of Christ.

29. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 4/1:275-77.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 314-16.
31. Emil Brunner, *The Mediator* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1934), pp. 399-590; *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1952), pp. 270-315.
32. G. C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 58-87.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-85.
34. For the purposes of the enterprise advocated here, some of the most useful in English are Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (New York: Macmillan, 1889; reprinted Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964); Alfred Cody, *Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (St. Meinrad, Indiana: Grail Publications, 1960).
35. GC, 488-89.
36. GC, 422.
37. Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1958), p. 358.
38. W. W. Prescott, “Our Time and Work from the Prophetic Standpoint,” *Review and Herald*, 16 December 1909.
39. M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service*, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1947), pp. 299-321; *The Book of Hebrews* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1948), pp. 417-70.
40. Edward Heppenstall, *Our High Priest: Jesus Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1972), p. 179; cf. pp. 157-85.

## Interview With Desmond Ford

by Adrian Zytkoskee

*The following is a shortened interview with Dr. Desmond Ford conducted in his home in Newcastle, California, on September 23, 1980.*

**S**PECTRUM: After 30 years in the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, how did you feel when you actually received

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word that you were no longer a minister in the Adventist Church?

FORD: It did not come as a surprise because Australia had pledged itself to follow the counsel of the General Conference, but I suppose it is impossible to answer your question properly — unless I briefly touch on the theology of church ordination. The Seventh-day Adventist movement is a divinely raised movement to do a special work, but the church is a much bigger thing. It is composed of all who trust in Jesus Christ and His merits, and the ministry, according to

the New Testament, is a priesthood of all believers. While some are delegated to specific tasks of leadership, the New Testament knows no such division as between laity and clergy. That was brought in as a part of the great medieval apostasy which resulted in the blunting of missionary endeavor for hundreds of years. A professional elite was given the task of spreading the gospel. One of the missing links in twentieth-century evangelism is the failure to restore the New Testament witness about the nature of the church, the nature of ministry and the stress on the priesthood of all believers.

As far as I am concerned, I think of the poet Whittier's words, "Mine, the mighty ordination of the pierced hands." While there is definitely a regret, because of the bonds of fellowship with my brethren in the ministry these many years, it would be untrue to say there had been emotional trauma involved, because I see the issue of church and ordination in terms of New Testament positions, rather than traditional ones.

SPECTRUM: Let me then ask you a very practical kind of question. You must have many things to consider in regard to your future. For example, are you going to get retirement benefits? What kind of arrangement has been made with you?

FORD: I have not yet received any official statement on this matter. But the Australian way of providing sustentation is quite different from that in America. In Australia, it is not inevitable. Sustentation is given at the discretion of the church to those whom it considers have remained loyal Adventists until they reach retirement age. I think the brethren plan to make some sort of settlement with me whereby they will give me so many months wages as a final settlement, or a lesser amount with a promise of some type of sustentation if my behavior until I am sixty-five could be classified by them as being that of a good Adventist.

SPECTRUM: What are you going to do now?

FORD: I was invited by Dr. Zane Kime to join with his health education center. He plans very soon to hold public meetings, and we hope that these meetings will become a

source of providing listeners for gospel meetings that I will hold separately. In addition, Dr. Kime hopes that we can start a radio and television series on the gospel if the Lord opens the way. Our work will be largely for non-Adventists to offer them the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ, though Adventists will be welcome.

SPECTRUM: Will you have any problem as far as a visa is concerned? You are here, I assume, on some kind of temporary visa from Australia.

FORD: Yes, our visa has run out and we do have a problem about securing a permanent visa. As you know, these are not easy to get. An employer has to prove that he cannot

**“As long as we treat the church people as children, they will behave like children and not gather to themselves the burden a responsible adult should carry. . . .**

get a nonalien who could do the job he has in mind. This is a difficult matter, but we trust the Lord will work it out if He wants us to be here.

SPECTRUM: I would like to go back now to that fateful meeting of October 27, 1979, when you accepted our invitation to speak at the Forum meeting at Pacific Union College. Do you regret that you accepted our invitation?

FORD: I regret that many good people have been hurt by what I have said, but I could not truthfully say that I regret taking the meeting. It seems to me this trauma was necessary to lead a Laodicean church to a deeper biblical study of topics long held as foundations, but which have received no treatment for many years. The subject of the sanctuary and the investigative judgment is not preached in the church, and scholars have not written on it for decades, with the sole exception of Dr. Heppenstall, whose presentation was hardly traditional. These have become dead-letter doctrines in the church, yet we hold them at the masthead when they are threatened. I regret that I have been the cause of bringing sorrow to many sincere people

by making it appear that I was disloyal to the church, when actually it was a loyalty to the church that led me to make the statement. But I do not regret taking the meeting, because I believe it will bring good in the long run as men and women are led to study the Scriptures again on the Bible relationships among the themes of the Old Testament sacrificial system, prophecy and the gospel.

**SPECTRUM:** Do you think that meeting was the reason you have been deprived of your ministerial credentials, or were there other reasons?

**FORD:** I think it would be too simplistic to say that the talk was the reason. You and I have heard many strange things said in some Forum meetings. As a matter of fact, I think I was told that this was the place to say something that perhaps could not be said elsewhere. Probably the basic reason is that there have been many opposed to my stress on the primacy of justification, and it has not proved possible to expel me on that basis, though many have felt over the years that I should be, because this stress, too, seemed a challenge to traditional Adventist thought. Over the years, I have had a lot of opposition in this area. I think that there are some good, earnest Adventists who feel that it was providential that I spoke as I did in that Forum meeting, thus giving a lever for my removal from the ministry. To their mind, that could only be a blessing and a safeguard.

**SPECTRUM:** One of the criticisms that has been made quite frequently is that if you had not allowed your sanctuary manuscript to get out, the church would have been able to solve this problem in a more quiet and satisfactory way. How do you respond to this accusation that you are not really playing as a team man?

**FORD:** I did not leak the document; I had never at any time given the document or sections of it away to anybody. I have been very, very careful and have very close, intimate friends who would have loved to have had the document ahead of time, or chapters of it, but the document did not get out through me. However, it would seem to me that it is a medieval mentality to think that

truth can be kept in a corner or that even criticisms about truth can be kept in a corner. As long as we treat the church people as children, they will behave like children and not gather to themselves the burden a responsible adult should carry in taking the gospel to the world.

**SPECTRUM:** It sounds as if you do not regret having spoken as you did on October 27, but let me ask you this question, which is probably not a fair question for anyone: If you had the last year to live over, thinking about the Forum meeting, the manuscript, Glacier View, all of that, would you have done anything differently?

**FORD:** Most things I do, I do very imperfectly, and I am conscious of that all the time. But as regards conscious volition and choices, I doubt if any major choice would have been different. I have been very grateful that the church has taken the matter seriously. I think a lesser administrator than Elder Wilson would have swept it under the rug and ignored it. I was grateful for the opportunity the General Conference gave me to write the manuscript. I only have praise for Elder Wilson's attitude through that time. I am quite grateful for the year, and I would not consciously have chosen otherwise.

**SPECTRUM:** Time and again during the past few weeks, you have expressed your confidence in our church leaders. Do you maintain this confidence, or do you feel they treated you unjustly?

**FORD:** No, I do not feel they treated me unjustly. I have confidence in their well-meaning intentions. I do not have great confidence in some of their understandings of the Bible. I must be frank about that. My experience in mixing with administrators from the top down is that these men mean well, but are tremendously busy. In other words, the urgent takes the place of the important. An administrator is like a man in a swamp with his rifle raised, picking off the alligators one by one as they come toward him, instead of being able to get out and drain the swamp. It is the great gulf fixed between administrators and scholars that is the root of the problem. I see no malice in the men who dealt with me. I have the highest of regard for the men with whom I associated.

**SPECTRUM:** To follow up on your analogy of the swamp, I am wondering if there is not wisdom in getting out of the swamp when there is an opportunity offered. Some have thought that such an opportunity occurred on Friday morning at Glacier View, when we understand that you had already indicated that you could support and preach the consensus statement as you understood it and it was voted by the people there. In your judgment, why wasn't the process ended there? Why didn't everyone just go home and say, "We have problems that need further study, but we have unity on the important issues"?

**FORD:** I expressed my willingness to bury the sanctuary topic. I mentioned to the brethren in whole assembly there that I had only spoken publicly on the issue once in 30 years and that by request. On Friday afternoon, I expressed, to the brethren that met with me, a little group of administrators (there were no scholars there), that I was quite happy with the essence of the consensus statement and could preach it in sincerity. This they found very hard to believe. So it seems to me that there must have been some other issues.

**SPECTRUM:** I would like to come to those other factors in a moment, but first one more question regarding the process at Glacier View. How could the brethren have responded differently to the events at Glacier View? What do you think you might have done differently if you had been Elder Neal Wilson?

**FORD:** I suspect I would have made many more mistakes than Brother Wilson. I am a very poor administrative type. But I do hope someone would have said to me, "Des, don't dare make a decision in PREXAD as to whether a man is a heretic unless you have biblical scholars present. Don't dare make a decision about heresy unless you are sure you have the actual data from the men that are involved in it all day, every day. Don't dare do it on the basis of what administrators say." I think this, perhaps, is the greatest problem in the situation. Of course, it is easier for me to be critical than correct, and I can only say, had I been in Neal Wilson's

place, I might have made a dozen such mistakes.

**SPECTRUM:** In the months prior to Glacier View, I heard you indicate several times your belief that the theologians and biblical scholars in the church were in essential agreement with your position, yet published reports from Glacier View seem to indicate the opposite. Was your assessment of the scholars' position in error?

**FORD:** I would agree with Dr. Ray Cottrell's appraisal of that situation. He has gone on record as saying that 90 percent of the

**"I was quite happy with the essence of the consensus statement and could preach it in sincerity. This they found very hard to believe."**

scholars would agree with the main essence of my positions. I know personally, from talking to these men over a period of about twenty-five years, where many of them individually stand. Now I could name men that do not stand where I stand — for example, the men whom I understand had the most to do with the special issue of *Ministry*, men such as Drs. Shea, Hasel and Damsteegt. These are diligent scholars whom I personally respect and who would not agree with my positions. But they are a minority. I am quite certain that the majority of theologians and biblical scholars do hold the major positions that I hold, and I could name the men who have individually told me so. The real problem with Glacier View is that these scholars did not feel that in an hour or two a day in the large meetings over four days they had any chance of educating those who had not previously been confronting the issues. The scholars spoke up more freely in the small committees, but some of the things they said were not understood. The reaction of the scholars since Glacier View shows that this assessment of mine is correct. There have been letters, as you know, from several of our educational institutions and from individual scholars which have protested that the administrators did not rightly interpret the

low-keyed protests uttered in the small committees.

SPECTRUM: You mention the low-keyed protests. You suggested that it would have been ineffective for them to state their positions in the large meetings. Yet, since the issue of your employment in the church was involved, should they have spoken up more boldly?

FORD: I cannot really be the judge of that. I should say, in favor of the scholars, that they did not really think that I was going to lose my credentials. I am quite sure the majority of scholars never thought my credentials would be involved. It seems to me, from the reaction of scholars who talked to me, that no one thought of the Friday afternoon meeting as a meeting where an ultimatum would be given to me and things would be at all finalized. I guess the scholars were influenced by the fact that Elder Wilson had said on the back of the *Review*, "This will not be a trial of Desmond Ford," or something to that effect. I would like also to say, on behalf of the scholars, that there were men like Jack Provonsha who spoke out very frankly. For example, he said in the big committee words to this effect: "I don't agree with Des's position on forensic justification, but I do agree with most of Des's manuscript. I couldn't teach the investigative judgment the way I was taught it."

SPECTRUM: Many people, Des, after reading your response to the letter that you received from the Australasian Division, have been unable to understand why the General Conference recommended, despite your apparent effort to be responsive and conciliatory, that Australasia remove your credentials. Someone said to me that there must be a missing link somewhere that would help him to make sense of this sequence of events. I have a feeling that the missing link is best found by looking at the role and influence of Robert Brinsmead as it relates to our church and its leaders. Is such an analysis valid? If so, can you clarify for me and for our readers exactly why Brinsmead and your relations with him seem to be so important?

FORD: This is a sensitive area and probably a key area as you have suggested. It is true that for a long time I have been under pressure to speak against Robert Brinsmead publicly. I have refused to do this. It is helpful to know a little bit of the background. I first met Robert Brinsmead when the division called me back to Avondale College to complete a degree after about seven years in evangelism. At that time, Robert, following extreme traditional Adventism, believed that a type of perfection somehow had to be reached by the time probation closed; otherwise we would never be able to stand without a mediator. For the next ten or eleven years, I fought Robert very strongly and we lost hardly anybody from the ministerial working force or the student body at Avondale, though the Brinsmead literature was pouring into the college over the period of a decade. It should be noted that while I engaged in polemics with Robert, we were not personally alienated. He and I met on various occasions to make sure we understood each other.

Some years later, when I was in England, the brethren called me to be present in Washington, D.C., at a week of meetings involving General Conference officials and Robert. After I got back to England, Robert wrote me and said that he had given up his old perfectionistic teachings — the doctrine in which the unconscious mind was the sanctuary to be cleansed by the latter rain in connection with the investigative judgment. He had given all that up and I rejoiced. It should be noted that among the last published statements regarding the church and Brinsmead was a statement that conversations between the church and Brinsmead were proceeding in an amiable manner. And probably, I was in some sense the most amiable. While opposing Bob's old positions, I knew him best and understood his positions best. But then we fell afoul of the *Review*, which seems to have disinterred the perfectionistic bone that Robert had buried and was flaunting it before the *Review* readership right throughout the world. While the *Review* in the sixties had opposed perfection, the *Review* in the seventies advocated perfection and, also, the sinful nature of Christ. So these issues have caused an upheaval right

round our world field and it seems, to many, that Bob and I are in collusion to wreck the church. This has never been true at any time. Bob and I have maintained an open attitude and I find he has been most thoughtful in not trying to embarrass me. We have had almost no contact during the past year.

He and I do not agree in everything. Bob has taken some positions on apocalyptic that I think may only be tentative on his part, but with which I wholeheartedly disagree. He has taught such things as the white horse in the seals as anti-Christ, and I think that is a rather pivotal part of prophecy. I retain our traditional position — that the white horse represents the gospel going forth. It may be that we may differ on some aspects of mil-

**“We have a wrong attitude toward Ellen White and a wrong attitude toward the Bible, because we make it secondary to Ellen White.”**

lenialism. So while Bob and I may disagree, we have been able to disagree without being disagreeable. The brethren find that hard to understand. The General Conference asked me years ago to write a book against Bob, which I did. There was one particular point in the book with which someone on the committee disagreed, so it was never printed; it was just circulated in xeroxed form. Bob answered that book, but he answered very courteously. There was no personal antagonism. But many people have forgotten this past, and the fact that now I do not find it in my heart to damn Bob is looked upon as a very heinous thing by administrators. They would stress the necessity of being loyal to the Church. It seems to me that Bob Brinsmead is still loyal to the truth of the church universal as he understands it. The reason he was not re-baptized as Elder Pierson recommended, was, because to quote his own words, “I made many mistakes, did some things I regret, but I never apostatized from Christ.” And I’m prepared to take that statement at face value. I could not find it in my heart to go publicly against Bob, lest it be

misunderstood as though I were trying to repudiate his emphasis on righteousness by faith. I can only say I agree wholeheartedly with that emphasis.

**SPECTRUM:** On the organizational point, some of us have heard that Bob Brinsmead is in the process of organizing another church; that it will actually be incorporated, and have a name. Have you heard anything like that? And how would such a development affect anything that you have previously said?

**FORD:** I have heard all kinds of rumors, and I have read one statement that Bob has written about a call for a new church structure. I heard the rumor that he was going to announce in Australia a call to a congregational system, but when I inquired of one of his close associates, I was told that he had made no such announcement to the press. I do think that Bob was planning to call a meeting in October in southern California to discuss a congregational church. I was invited to attend by someone who was planning to go, but I told them I would not be there because I thought that would be misunderstood. I think Bob himself might feel this is premature. My own attitude is that I want to be loyal to the church and do all I can to reform it from inside. I do not want to do anything that could be construed as a malicious action toward the administrators or the organization. When I think of the many young men who have phoned me asking if they should pull out — start congregational churches — I have advised all of them, “Don’t do it, stick with the church.” But I have to admit they have something of a case, when they say, “Hey, look, we have a hierarchical structure in which the place of the laity is not given its due weight. We’re contrary to the New Testament in this thing.” In addition, the church has been very, very slow in the gospel emphasis and even allowed the official church paper to give antirighteousness by faith material in issue after issue during the last decade. Some say to me, “How can we be true to Christ, who is the truth, and yet be true to the organization?” My only plea with them is that Christ has always been patient with His people and He’s been patient

with us as individuals. I have pled with those young men to be patient. So my desire is to do all that I can to help changes come from within. At this point, I have no plans of starting some new organization or anything like that.

SPECTRUM: What will become of your sanctuary manuscript now?

FORD: There are people on both the East Coast and the West Coast who want to print it. I have no certainty that it will be done. Some of these people have inquired of the legal situation, and while there hasn't been absolute certainty, the weight of the evidence seems to be that the author has the copyright, especially inasmuch as there was no contract between me and the General Conference in regard to a copyright and the General Conference, itself, did not copyright it. I would not be opposed to the printing inasmuch as all public discussion so far has been on procedure, rather than on the doctrine. I have listened to tapes from Australia and tapes from America where reports have been given on Glacier View and none of those reports ever discuss the doctrinal issues. So, it seems to me that the discussion of doctrine has not proceeded very far and, for that reason, I would not be opposed if the sanctuary manuscript appears.

SPECTRUM: I understand you are also writing a book on Revelation. How is that book coming, and when can we expect to see it?

FORD: That book was finished over a year ago, except for a few minor changes. I expect that it should be out within six months. F. F. Bruce of Manchester University has kindly written an introduction for this book, as he did for the Daniel commentary, and I have been grateful for that. You may be interested to know that for years one of the typical charges in Australia and America against me is that I have copied the futurism of Professor Bruce. The truth is, of course, that F. F. Bruce is not a futurist; he does not believe, among other things, that in the last few years of time, the sacrificial services will be resumed in the temple at Jerusalem. Actually, Bruce's main concentration is on the original meaning of the prophecies to the people who first received them. My own position is, I

think, akin to Ellen White's, if I understand her correctly, that prophecy has an immediate meaning to the people who receive it, has a continuing application in later ages, and has a final application in the future. I have never taken the position that the prophecies apply only to the future. So it is that when Ellen White talks about the second advent sermon of Matthew 24, she applied it to 70 A.D., she applied it to later historical events, and she applied it to the end of time; and that's my own position.

SPECTRUM: Do you have any preliminary reactions to the issue of the *Ministry* that analyzes the Glacier View meetings?

FORD: The *Ministry* is to be congratulated for acknowledging the importance of the present discussions. The editor, an esteemed friend, has conscientiously done his best in giving the background, but I wish his picture of the pre-Glacier View Committee had revealed that most of the members, most of the time, did not bother to write the required chapter critiques. Similarly, the majority had little or nothing to offer orally. Protests brought no improvement.

I am forced to agree with the reaction of many of our university and college teachers who have voiced their dismay at the one-sidedness of the anonymous *Ministry* presentations. There is an obvious reluctance to admit the significant divergence by the consensus statement from the traditional arguments, and there is a similar veiling of the facts as to where most of our scholars stand. Worst of all, the biblical testimony on the key issues is sadly truncated and misused.

Furthermore, though I am accused of taking statements out of context, the proffered evidence does not support the oft-repeated charge. For the main areas, readers should go to my manuscript to read the extracted sentences in their original context. For an example, notice the top of column three on page 61 of the *Ministry*. A bald denial is offered ("none of these statements," etc.), and mere assertions, but no evidence. As all can verify, and as claimed by my manuscript, the *Acts of the Apostles* (p. 33) does specifically apply the Day of Atonement ceremonial to Christ's incarnation and death as well as to his coming again. The *Signs of the Times* 1905 statement

does affirm that Christ's entrance into the most holy took place at his ascension, and the *Testimonies* (vol. 4, p. 122), by their cleansing of the sanctuary reference, do indicate the same. Similarly, *The Desire of Ages* (p. 756) applies Hebrews 10:19, 20 (concerning the high priest's entrance into the most holy through the veil) to the cross-ascension event.

The *Ministry* perpetrates its own heresy on Daniel 8 by saying that Antichrist comes into the investigative judgment. That is not the traditional position, and had the brethren forgotten that the little horn applies also to pagan Rome?

A serious instance of bias is found in the omission of Glacier View documents which contradict the doctrinal stand of the *Ministry* — namely those by Cottrell and Haloviak. It is difficult to excuse such obvious partisanship.

SPECTRUM: What do you think is going to happen in the next decade as far as the church is concerned?

FORD: Well, I am not a prophet or a son of a prophet, but it seems to me that everything hinges on whether the church will humbly accept the rebuke of the True Witness to the Laodicean people, who think they are in need of nothing. It will depend on the church whether the church will repent and give the gospel its true place — first, last and best in everything, whether preaching law, prophecy, or doctrine. All must be made to revolve around the cross. It seems to me that the church which has fought tradition in Roman Catholicism and has avowed by its Sabbath position that it is opposed to tradition, that this church, itself, has sinned by its traditionalism. At Glacier View, I mentioned about a dozen key areas where we had changed our doctrinal position over the years: areas such as the Trinity, person of Christ, deity of Christ, personality of the Holy Spirit, Armageddon, role of Turkey, interpretation of the daily in Daniel 8, and many others. Yet, the church always opposes change and, today, when a new area is offered for investigation, we are in danger of doing what we have done in all these other areas, taken decades and decades. Do you know that it took the church 60 years to lose

its antitrinitarianism! It took the truth on the daily 50 years to become established, and there are still some who don't accept it! So we are really traditionalists despite our boast over the Sabbath.

We have not done what Ellen White repeatedly told us to do, make the Bible our only foundation of doctrine. She never meant that her writings should be used for doctrine. We are guilty of idolatry. We have taken a good gift and abused it. We have given Ellen White a position she never claimed. She certainly did claim that God spoke to her in a way He has not spoken through us, and I believe that claim. But she never ever claimed to be the basis of doctrine. We have a wrong attitude toward Ellen White and a wrong attitude toward the Bible, because we make it secondary to Ellen White. We interpret the Bible through Ellen White, so we make the Bible the lesser light and, unless the church repents, the next decade is going to be very dim indeed. We have become lazy in Bible study. In our lesson quarterlies, we give a text and then we explain it all through the Spirit of Prophecy. We forget the clear testimony of history. W. C. White said that his mother took her doctrinal expositions from denominational literature. So on the sanctuary, she copied Uriah Smith — phrases and paragraphs. I have documented that in my thesis. Ellen White did not set out as a pioneer in doctrine. She changed many doctrinal positions. She changed her view on pork as a food. In *Testimonies*, Volume 1, she forbids men to forbid it to be eaten, while later she says it should not be eaten. She changed her position on the observance of Sabbath from 6 p.m. to 6 p.m. when Bible evidence was shown for sundown to sundown observance. She changed her position on the law in Galatians. In *Sketches from the Life of Paul* she said it was the ceremonial law. After 1888, when she was challenged on her new designation of it as the moral law, she said, "I'm willing to be taught by the humblest of my brethren." She also changed her position on the covenants. These changes show that she did not intend her past statements to be used as an *imprimatur* of doctrine. I believe she does have teaching authority, but it is teaching author-



ity that is supportive of what is clearly laid down in Scripture.

So here is the future for the next ten years. What will we do with the relationship between Ellen White and the Bible? What will we do with the primacy of justification? Will we give it primacy even in our evangelistic work? Will we cease from our sin of counting

heads as David did, which brought the wrath of God upon him? Statistics have a place but when statistics are used as the motivation for soul-winning work, instead of the cross of Christ, God may treat us as He treated David. So it seems to me that the next decade revolves around our attitude to the cross, the scripture, and to Ellen White.

## Ford Dismissal: Reactions and Response

### An Open Letter to President Wilson

*This letter was forwarded to Elder Wilson with 39 signatures. It was formulated during the summer break at Andrews University when the greater part of the student body was on vacation. It therefore represents only a portion of the interested parties. The letter was prepared in consultation with Seminary faculty.*

September 10, 1980  
**D**ear Elder Wilson: We are pastors and scholars at Andrews Theological Seminary who are deeply concerned for the unity of the church. As Seventh-day Adventists committed to the church and its pursuit of truth, we wish to express our appreciation to you for convening the Glacier View Conference. We have not envied you your difficult task. Nevertheless, because of our love for this church we deplore the rending asunder of Christ's body by what we consider to be the unjust recommendation that Dr. Desmond Ford not be employed in denominational service. This was improper for these reasons:

1) The two consensus statements unanimously voted at Glacier View by his peers were accepted by Dr. Ford. He was therefore in harmony with his brethren.

2) These consensus documents actually af-

firm Dr. Ford's major biblical concerns. For instance they concede:

1) The book of Hebrews pictures Christ going "within the veil," i.e., into the Most Holy Place (not the holy place) at His ascension to be our intercessor. The book of Hebrews does not teach a two-apartment or two-phase ministry.

b) The defilement of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 is not caused by our sins but by the desecrating work of the little horn. In other words, the term "cleansing the sanctuary" in Daniel 8 does not refer to an investigation of our sins but to God's victory over antichrist on our behalf.

c) The year-day principle is not explicitly identified as a scriptural rule for interpreting time prophecies.

d) Under inspiration, the New Testament writers looked for the second coming of Christ in their day. They did not expect to wait 1900 years.

e) Our acquittal in the judgment is based solely on the continued decision we make with respect to Jesus. To have accepted His death on our behalf is to have passed *already* from condemnation to salvation.

3) Church administration has apparently rejected Dr. Ford's willingness to cooperate in restoring church unity. We understand