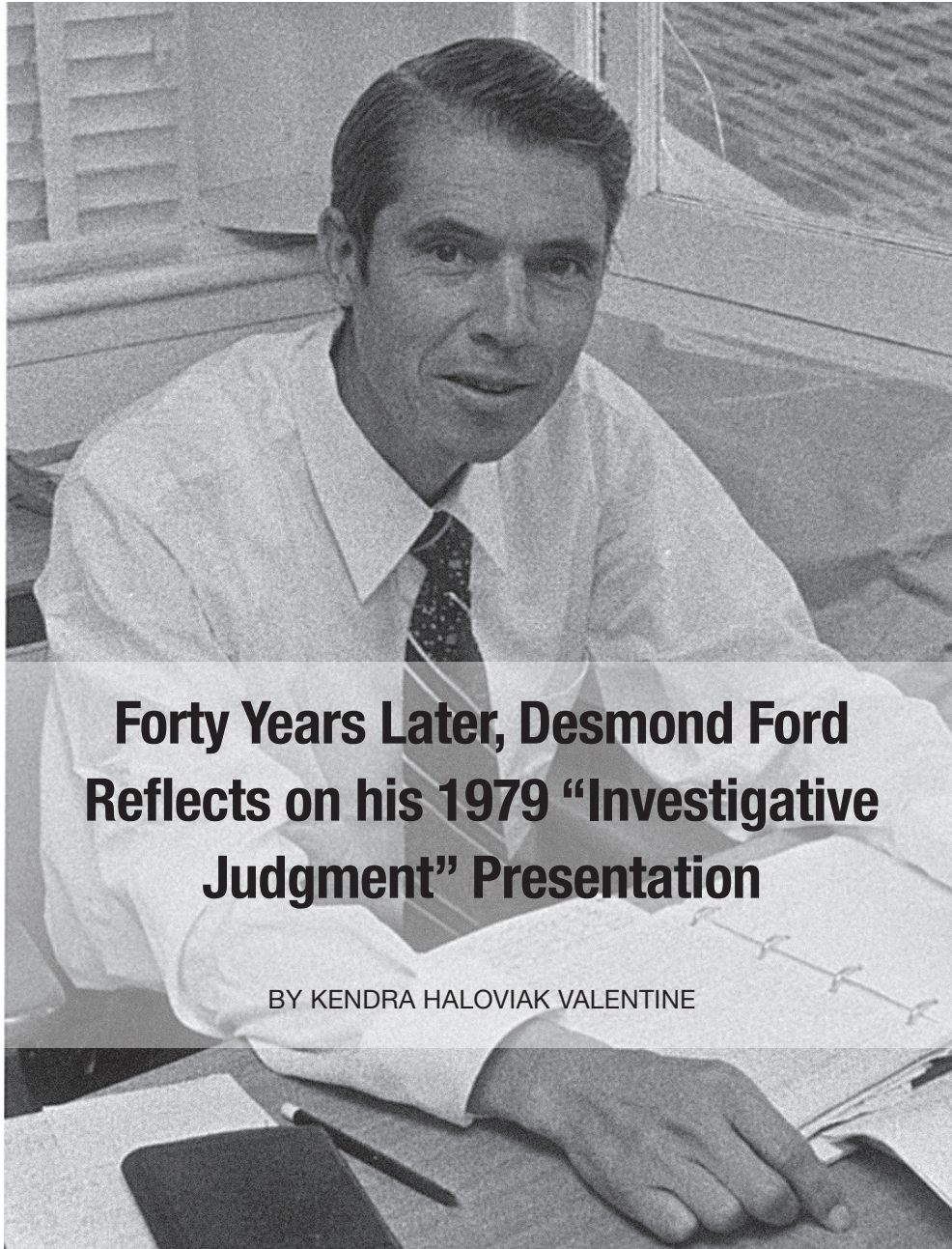


KEYWORDS: Desmond Ford, Glacier View, sanctuary doctrine, “restored” rather than “cleansed”



Forty Years Later, Desmond Ford Reflects on his 1979 “Investigative Judgment” Presentation

BY KENDRA HALOVIK VALENTINE

Desmond Ford, photo courtesy of Adventist Heritage Centre, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia

Introduction: 1979 in the Light of 2019

In between his responses to some interview questions earlier this year, and my later reporting on them to a group of religion-teacher colleagues, Dr. Desmond Ford died. He died on March 11, 2019, thirty-seven days after turning ninety, and was buried in a private ceremony in a cemetery near his home in Caloundra, Queensland, Australia. Approximately three weeks later, on March 30, the Avondale College community, where he taught from 1961–1977, celebrated his life in a memorial service.

Initially, the memorial service was planned for the Avondale College campus church, a plan approved by a very strong majority vote of the college's governing council members. In a subsequent action after the college council meeting, however, and just two days prior to the memorial service, the use of the church for the occasion was revoked by division officers, apparently in response to strong conservative agitation. Denial of church access was apparently processed through a committee holding legal ownership of the building. This forced those planning the event to relocate it to a lecture hall at the nearby University of Newcastle. One of Dr. Ford's former students said about the forced change in venue: "It is an act which is both appalling and self-defeating. There are a number of ex-Adventists and ex-ministers who are planning to attend . . . [some of whom] for many years have not darkened an SDA church door. They won't be given the opportunity now!" Even after the change of venue, church authorities attempted to prevent the live streaming of the service because it had been advertised as connected with the name of the college. Even non-controversial articles, reflecting on Ford as a teacher, disappeared from the college webpage.

The Griffith Duncan lecture hall at the University of Newcastle had no organ or grand piano like the Avondale church to provide appropriate music for the occasion. But worship host Lyell Heise, accompanied by Gabriel Ontanu (viola), did a masterful job on the portable keyboard, and the voices of the nearly 800-present, filled the lecture hall, singing "Amazing Grace" and "It Is Well with my Soul."

Once again, and without even being present, Desmond Ford caused extremely divergent reactions: on the part of some, animosity and political maneuvering to minimize a feared posthumous influence; on the part of others, a call to worship and a celebration of the God of grace.

This paper explores Ford's recent reflections concerning the 1979 Forum presentation that so publicly

precipitated the extreme reactions to his ministry. It begins with a brief summary of the presentation and then seeks to assess Ford's reflections on it and its consequences—reflections he shared in what turned out to be the last few days of his life. The paper will conclude with some suggestions on whether, and if so, how, the Seventh-day Adventist church or Dr. Ford might have changed during the four decades since 1979.

The presentation on October 27, 1979, on the Pacific Union College campus was entitled, "The Investigative Judgment: Theological Milestone or Historical Necessity?" and it turned out to be a milestone in its own right. Scheduled initially to take place in the music building's

Paulin Hall, it quickly became clear that a larger venue was required as more and more people filled the space. After a larger interim location, the almost 1,000 attendees would eventually make their way up the hill to a third location, the much larger Irwin Hall auditorium. Wayne Judd, one of the organizers of the event, remembers walking onto the platform with Ford and hearing him repeat under his breath: "it's time . . . it's time." As Ford spoke that Sabbath afternoon, Judd remembers an energy and excitement like he imagined took place in early

Adventism—frank, honest, public wrestling with theological ideas and biblical passages. Ford's presentation was followed by a response from PUC religion and history professor, Eric Syme, and then there was a question-and-answer time that involved the gathered audience.

The Presentation: "The Investigative Judgment: Theological Milestone or Historical Necessity?"

Ford's presentation started biographically as he told of studying Scripture as a teenager and one day, at about the age of fifteen, wondering about Hebrews 9 and some of the claims of Adventists. He told his audience that the questions he was raising that autumn day in 1979 were questions he

Understanding inspiration as "mystery" but not "inerrant" was, he suggested, the way forward in understanding Ellen White because she never claimed to be "the inspired commentary on Scripture."

had wrestled with for thirty-five years. He also expressed his gratitude to be part of a church that encouraged research and Bible study.

Ford then began to allude to earlier Adventists like A. F. Ballenger, as well as contemporary Adventists—even key church leaders—who had expressed concerns about the correctness of the biblical exegesis that undergirded the traditional understanding of the sanctuary message in general, and the investigative judgment in particular. He read a sampling of letters from Adventist members and clergy pleading for guidance and adequate biblical support for these Adventist beliefs. He then summarized some of the most challenging questions from the letters: What do we do with passages in Hebrews that have Jesus returning to God immediately after his ascension? What do we mean when we say a “heavenly sanctuary”? How do we get the idea of a year-day principle? Where do we find in Scripture a “cleansing of the sanctuary” beyond Christ’s ministry on earth? How can Jesus say to the dying thief that he has eternal life, if the investigative judgment has not yet occurred?

At this point in his presentation, Ford seemed to realize the political danger of the questions he was raising and remarked: “Now because this tape will be used in some rather nefarious ways, because it will be strained and every syllable will be weighed and measured, added thereto or truncated, let me state my convictions, my personal convictions, before I go any further.” Ford then made it clear that he believed in a pre-Advent Judgment; that the Day of Atonement applies to Christ’s last work; that the Seventh-day Adventist movement was raised up in 1844 by God to do a special work; that the gift of prophecy was a genuine gift given to this church in the person of Ellen White; and, that Daniel 8 was not completely fulfilled through Antiochus Epiphanes.

But he also wanted the church to look honestly at some serious inadequacies in its exegesis of key passages. He then clarified the key issues, while also suggesting possibilities for recasting Adventist theology. Ford believed he was actually defending the church by considering the sanctuary message in terms that could be supported by Scripture. He outlined his positive suggestions as follows:

- The “apotelesmatic principle” (which, elsewhere, he cited as coming from George McCready Price) was a way forward beyond a fixed, one-time-only application of the year-day principle.
 - Considering anew the context of Daniel 8 and that it was the little horn defiling the temple, pointed the way forward beyond the problematic Adventist interpretation that it was the saints doing the polluting.
 - Adopting a more accurate translation of Daniel 8:14 as “restored” rather than “cleansed” suggested a way forward given the linguistic challenges and problematic links to Leviticus 16.
 - Understanding Jesus’ work in Hebrews 9 as entering the most holy place (“within the veil”) once at his ascension was a way forward

in understanding Jesus’ ministry. (He quoted Ellen White in support of this understanding.)

- Considering the Day of Atonement within the framework of an “inaugurated eschatology and consummated eschatology,” was a way forward to being able to embrace both Calvary and the “end” of time application. Ford stated: “Adventists have seen the second and denied the first. The worldly churches saw the first and denied the second. Ellen White has both.”
- Imagining a question that the audience might have in the light of all this he asked: “So, what

It is the attitude we take to the blood of Christ shed on the cross to substantiate the law. It’s the attitude we take to that, that seals every man’s destiny in the Judgment. And that, my friends, is our message to the world.

- Desmond Ford

happened in 1844?” Ford’s answer to the question, he suggested, was a way forward: “God brought this church back to apostolic privilege, brought it back to the place where it could see the significance of the cross, brought it back to that place where if it would lay hold of the gospel, symbolized by the sanctuary . . . it would spread to the world and Jesus would come.”

- Shifting to the ministry of the Spirit of Prophecy, Ford argued that seeing Ellen White’s ministry as leading the reader to Christ was the way forward rather than seeing her writings as taking the place of Scripture or ruling over how Scripture should be interpreted. Ellen White actually guides us to a more careful reading and study of Scripture.
- Understanding inspiration as “mystery” but not “inerrant” was, he suggested, the way forward in understanding Ellen White because she never claimed to be “the inspired commentary on Scripture.”

Nearing the end of his presentation, Ford returned to Daniel 8:14 and 1844, explaining that to apply Daniel 8:14 only to 1844 “is to misunderstand it entirely.” Even Ellen White, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, he pointed out, “explains the cleansing of the sanctuary” as “the cleansing of the earth and the whole universe from sin at the very end of time.”

Ford concluded his presentation with a pastoral appeal typical of his revivalist preaching.

Here’s the most important thing this afternoon: What is the meaning of the Adventists’ stress on the most holy place? It is this, my friends. God wants us to look at what’s there. That holy law, which must be sustained and was sustained by the cross. . . . But above it is a mercy seat. . . . So look at the mercy seat. Better still, look at the blood drops there. [God] means us to see Calvary, my friends. We are meant to see the law, the mercy seat, the blood, the cross, and then see that every man’s destiny is sealed by his attitude to those things. It is the attitude we take to the blood of Christ shed on the cross to substantiate the law. It’s the attitude we take to that, that seals every man’s destiny in the Judgment. And that, my

friends, is our message to the world. And when we preach it, instead of preaching celestial geography, Jesus will come.

The Response: Tapes and Tensions

Although the Fords would be accused of circulating the audiotape made that Sabbath, they did not. Gillian Ford would eventually discover (twenty-eight years later, in 2007) that St. Helena Hospital physician, Dr. Dean Jennings, made eight copies and distributed them to friends. And Don Croxton probably sent out hundreds of tapes, nationally and even internationally. Other people copied and sent a tape here and there. The latest audio-copying technology was utilized to duplicate and distribute the tapes quickly, but typically not with malicious intent. Within days, controversy erupted.

Lawrence Geraty, then a teacher at Andrews University, remembers a conversation with his parents, Tom and Hazel Geraty, who had attended the Forum meeting. His parents were surprised by what they had heard. They had been attending Ford’s Sabbath School class on the PUC campus and Hazel had experienced an assurance of salvation for the first time in her life. They deeply appreciated Ford’s Christ-centered preaching and teaching, but the Forum meeting took them by surprise. When their son heard the tape, he recognized immediately that its contents would bring on “an earth-shaking time.” Larry Geraty remembers thinking that Ford’s insights, “while helpful in the long term, would be difficult in the short term.”

John Brunt heard the tape with members of the Walla Walla College community. He remembers one colleague, Gerald Winslow, immediately responding, “this is going to cause big problems.” And then elaborating his instantaneous reaction by sharing, “every community has its story of origin, a story that establishes the community’s identity. This is Adventism’s story of origin.” The discussion among gathered friends noted that while some had not heard sermons about 1844 in a while, and that it might even be on its deathbed, since Ford tried to euthanize it, people would come forward and say “no you won’t!” Gil Valentine recalls a similar reaction while listening to a tape of the Forum presentation with friends at Andrews University. This is “Adventism’s foundational story,” he recalls thinking. What will happen when the foundational story is threatened?

It wasn't long before the Fords found out. Ford was given a six-month leave of absence from PUC in order to relocate to Takoma Park, Maryland, where he could use the resources of the General Conference headquarters, especially the Archives and White Estate, to address the questions he had raised and to find ways to harmonize his understandings with church doctrines. During the next few months, Ford would write a 991-page document, entitled "Daniel 8:14, the Day of Atonement, and the Investigative Judgment."

Recently retired vice president of the General Conference, Richard Hammill, was asked by General Conference president, Neal Wilson, to oversee Ford's stay in Maryland, to chair what would become known as "The Ford Guidance Committee," giving feedback on each chapter of the manuscript as Ford developed it, and to organize what became known as "The Sanctuary Review Committee," to assess the issues laid out in the document. The committee would convene at the Glacier View Ranch in Colorado in August 1980. As Ford was in the process of writing his document, from December 1979 until August 1980, the *Adventist Review* published twenty editorials and articles defending the church's traditional sanctuary doctrine. While some scholars protested what they saw as the *Review's* campaign against Ford, Wilson defended their decisions to write articles on fundamental Adventist doctrines.

In a letter to Robert Pierson on February 4, 1980, Wilson gave away his own understanding of Ford's task and what he saw as the core issue:

Des Ford is working hard on the assignment we have given him, but basically the whole matter revolves around his understanding of the role and work of Ellen White. He unfortunately does not consider Ellen White to be authoritative in the areas of doctrinal theology, and does not consider that she has teaching authority comparable to prophets that are in the Scripture. We hope that he will be able to adjust his thinking and to see that it is impossible to limit Ellen White's inspiration and accord her something less than that which is intended when the Lord chooses a human vessel to be an extension of his self-revelation. He needs our prayers.

The Sanctuary Review Committee: Glacier View

Out of the 125 members appointed to comprise the Sanctuary Review Committee (SRC), 114 attended the meetings at Glacier View the week of August 10–15, 1980. In a recent conversation, one of the members of the committee and then-seminary-professor, Fritz Guy, observed that occasionally places become better known as events. He cited Pearl Harbor as an example, and then mentioned Glacier View. Over the years, others who were there expressed similar sentiments. Guy recalls that,

after seeing the "charade" that took place there, that it really was a political event and not an attempt to discover new truth, I had to decide if I could keep working within the Adventist context. I decided that I could be more useful inside the church than outside it. And I have no regrets.

In the opening meeting at Glacier View on Sunday evening, Neal Wilson explained: "Dr. Ford was not on trial but that his ideas were." Wilson also admitted publicly that the "bottom line, of course, is the role of Ellen White in doctrinal matters." Each day, morning sessions were given to working groups of sixteen to eighteen, each tasked with studying set questions and to work toward a small-group consensus statement. In the afternoon sessions, the various consensus statements were shared with the entire larger group. In the evening sessions, selected papers were summarized and discussed. (In addition to Ford's manuscript, fifteen papers had been prepared for Glacier View). While at first it was intended that Ford would not address the group publicly, only be present in order to listen to the discussion, by Tuesday evening, in response to numerous appeals to the chair, Ford was permitted to reply to questions.

In preparation for the final meeting on Friday morning, a group of three participants—Gerhard Hasel, Fritz Guy, and William Johnsson—had prepared a fifteen-page, overarching consensus statement integrating the reports of the small groups. This consensus statement had two parts: "Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary," and "The Role of Ellen G. White's Writings in Doctrinal Matters." The two-part document was presented to the entire SRC and the group studied it and endorsed it, line by line, as accurately reflecting the agreement of the committee. The consensus statement affirmed the sanctuary and the role of Ellen

White, while also expressing an openness to study and to learn. Committee member John Brunt, considering the important work that was reflected in the consensus statement they had voted on noted, “this could have been a theological milestone in the church.”

However, after approving the consensus statement, committee members were then read a further document. (Hard copies were not distributed since Wilson considered this additional document to be only “preliminary.”) This further document, produced hurriedly overnight by a small group of six, was a ten-point critique of Ford’s position as understood from his 991-page paper. It was publicly stated that this was not the view of the Sanctuary Review Committee, but was a “working document.” When Brunt spoke from the floor against the publishing of such a statement, since it had not been seen by the whole SRC nor ever discussed in the small groups, Wilson ignored the concern about publication and challenged Brunt directly for raising the concern. Guy asked if “orthodoxy would be determined by the 10-point critique.” Wilson responded, “no, the document would not be used in that way.” As Brunt feared, the ten-point critique was indeed published in church papers as a summary of the Glacier View meetings and in fact placed in prior position to the agreed-upon consensus statement. And, as Guy feared, the document was used to determine orthodoxy for Ford and other Seventh-day Adventist ministers.

My own recollections of Glacier View are those of a thirteen-year old. My mother, Mary Haloviak, was the administrative assistant to Vice President Richard Hammill at the time. Her office made arrangements for using Glacier View Ranch and the many other details involved in such a set of meetings, including duplicating and mailing the prepared papers in advance of the meetings. Since some authors did not meet their deadlines in a prompt manner, the

turn-around was tight, and several times after school, my brother, Brent, and I helped Mom by collating the papers and putting them into individual stacks for each delegate. I remember my ten-year-old brother looking at one paper and asking, “what does ‘blood and ought sacrifice’ mean?” Of course, he was referring to Dr. Gerhard Hasel’s paper, “Blood and OT Sacrifice.”

Since our dad, Bert Haloviak, would be presenting one of the papers and our mom also had to be there, Glacier View became a family vacation for us. Brent and I, along with Ford’s youngest son, Luke (age 14) were the only young people at the camp during that week. This meant that the entire Glacier View Ranch—with its horses and swimming

pool, trails and lake—was ours to enjoy and explore. I remember one day as we were playing around in the pool, Dr. Bill Shea began sunbathing nearby. He must have been skipping one of the meetings because everyone else was in the lodge. Dr. Shea looked over at us and said, pointing to Brent and me, “you’re the Haloviak kids, I recognize you two, but,” and then he looked at Luke Ford, “who are you?” Without a second’s hesitation, Luke responded: “I’m the son of the man you’re going to burn at the stake.” The conversation went quiet.

Recently, I shared some reflections in a presentation during our campus week of prayer (January 2019) of how at Glacier View my own journey took a particular turn. I explained that there was a line—with twists and turns, of course, but a direct line nevertheless—from that week at Glacier View to my being, today, a New Testament professor in an Adventist university. Seeing grown men weep as they walked and anguished their way around the lake at Glacier View between meetings and during lunch breaks impressed upon me that there was something deeply important about “sanctuary” that I needed to understand. Somehow that week I began to sense a call to ministry. After our January week of prayer

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was over, I decided to contact Des and Gillian Ford. We had not seen each other since a too brief, year-end visit to their home while last in Australia (November 2018). I wanted to share some thoughts with them from my presentation. Also, as we entered into 2019—forty years after Ford’s presentation at PUC—I wondered how they might reflect on it from the perspective of four decades later.

Gillian told us of recent health challenges Des had experienced since our last visit. She related that he was willing, however, to answer some questions if I sent them to her via email. I did, and on February 2, Ford’s ninetieth birthday, I received responses to the questions I had sent—very brief responses because of his rapidly declining health.

My Questions, Ford’s Responses, and Some Observations

Haloviak Valentine (HV): In 1979, you began the presentation briefly discussing your conversion from Anglicanism to Adventism as becoming “Adventist by conviction.” Are you still an Adventist by conviction? And, if so, what do you mean? What is most important to you about your Adventism?

Ford: Yes, Adventism is still very important to me, by which I mean the predominant truths of the return of Christ, and the obligation of the Ten Commandments, including the fourth.

Anyone who knows Des and Gill knows that they have continued to be Sabbath-keeping Adventists, and conservative ones at that. In recent times, they attended the local Adventist church where Des would sometimes lead out in Sabbath School classes. Ford’s embrace of the health message was, well, legendary. Smuts van Rooyan, in a recent article about Ford, asserted: “he exemplified the very best of the institution that rejected him.”

HV: Do you still maintain that Ellen White was open to learning and discovery? As you keep learning and studying and discovering, do you see yourself as within the tradition of Ellen White?

Ford: I see Ellen White as a paradigm for those who continue to learn Bible truth from Bible study.

This response was not a surprise. It reminds one of the beginning of his 1979 presentation, when he quoted Ellen White in *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, page 37: “We have many lessons to learn and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think they’ll never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion will be disappointed.”

HV: In your 1979 presentation, you seem to anticipate that the tape of the meeting would be used in “nefarious ways.” Even with that intuition, did the fallout take you by surprise? Do you wish that the tapes had not been circulated—that the paper had been only for colleagues?

Ford: I rejoice that the tapes have been circulated because I still hold to all that was said in that meeting.

It should be noted that, in a letter to Neal Wilson on December 12, 1979, Ford apologized several times for the stress his Forum presentation had caused administrators in the church. In an interview with Adrian Zytoskee, on September 23, 1980, just after Glacier View, Ford regretted that people had been hurt. But following the presentation and throughout the lead up to Glacier View, Ford seemed to maintain almost a sense of relief that the problems he raised—which were problems for so many who remained silent or who left the church quietly—would finally have a public hearing. He saw the

To his dying day, Ford wished that his church would deal with these questions in what he felt was a more persuasive way, true to Scripture. He did not believe in setting aside the doctrine of the sanctuary; he wanted to reinterpret it in ways that were in harmony with the gospel.

earlier Daniel Committee of 1960–66 as wrestling with the issues without producing any material for ministers and lay people. He witnessed church leadership respond in silence to Robert Brinsmead’s challenges. He knew that students and pastors and people at camp meetings had questions. Perhaps the church would now deal with the questions.

To his dying day, Ford wished that his church would deal with these questions in what he felt was a more persuasive way, true to Scripture. He did not believe in setting aside the doctrine of the sanctuary; he wanted to reinterpret it in ways that were in harmony with the gospel.

HV: In his recent (2017) biography of Martin Luther, Eric Metaxas observes that the controversy over Luther’s Ninety-five Theses did not occur because he nailed the document to the castle church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. Instead, it was the copies Luther sent to a few friends. One of those copies found its way to printer Christopher Scheurl who, without getting permission, reprinted it in his town of Nuremberg. Thanks to the printing press, the “speed with which Luther’s theses spread was simply unprecedented in the history of the world.” Luther wrote to Scheurl in March 1518:

[N]ow that they are printed and circulated far beyond my expectation, I feel anxious about what they may bring forth: not that I am unfavorable to spreading known truth abroad—rather this is what I seek—but because this method is not that best adapted to instruct the public. I have certain doubts about them myself, and should have spoken far differently and more distinctly had I known what was going to happen.

Can you relate to Luther here?

Ford: No, I have no regrets about the Forum meeting, even though Luther had some regrets about the publication of his early writings.

HV: Was there any particular moment during the two years [1979–80] that you felt became definitive of the outcome even before the Glacier View Conference was concluded?

Ford: I did not feel any concern about the period of time that people had to think about what was offered to them in the material given in the first talk (the Forum). I

was very happy that what was given that first day remained available for two years and longer.

HV: Looking back on the sequence of events, is there anything that you wished that you had done differently?

Ford: Anything that I would have done differently would have been to emphasize that the scholars of the church knew that what I was saying was correct, and that they should have been backing me to the hilt.

This was a repeated theme in conversations with the Fords over the years. As Gil and I sat with them from time to time in their living room, most of our conversation would be catching up on our families and friends, sharing about books we were reading or writing, and sharing news about various Adventist happenings. Des would often ask how the sanctuary message was currently being addressed. He maintained a keen interest in the topic for he felt that the teaching on the sanctuary was vital gospel truth. But he wanted to see it corrected and clarified—not just for it to wither away.

HV: Is there any particular outcome for you personally that you felt particularly blessed by?

Ford: Yes, I rejoice in the fact that all around the world people who read that Forum transcript rejoice in its accuracy.

HV: How would you like the church to remember the entire episode?

Ford: I would like the church to be led to read minutely [carefully] the Scriptures that were used in my talk.

What, for many Adventists, is no longer a living doctrine of the church, continued to define Ford’s theology during the last days of his life.

HV: After the Glacier View meetings, when you, Gill, and Luke got into the car that would take you down the mountain, my family stood near our cabin and waved goodbye to you. My mom, holding back tears, said something like, “we’re not just driving them down the mountain, we’re driving them out of the church.” Do you recall what your feelings were at that time?

Ford: Our feelings were full of rejoicing that the truth was out and that everybody could now study it for themselves from Scripture.

Concluding Thoughts: Adventism after the Forum Presentation and Glacier View

In his recent articles reflecting on ways in which Desmond Ford changed the Adventist church, Loren Seibold recalls an Adventist church in the late '70s and early '80s as a church anxious about the delay of the Advent, and the necessity of church members becoming perfect in order to prevent any further delay. Ford changed that, he suggests. "Because of Des, the rest of us went on to preach the gospel he'd taught, even as he faded into semi-obscurity." Seibold then suggests a variety of other ways in which the church changed. For example, he recalls that for himself and his generation of young minister colleagues, for quite some time after Glacier View, discussion of any "present truth" perspectives on "Adventist theology went underground."

As a teenager, it was a little different for me after Glacier View. Church and its theology became front and center to daily life. Sabbath afternoons became energetic conversations with people visiting from all over the US and from around the world asking tough questions, having jobs threatened, trying to get access to Ellen White Estate files, and making what seemed like daily discoveries in the church's archives. While my teenage peers might have found church boring, I sure didn't! I remember starting to study on my own at that time because I, too, wanted to believe in something so important that I would put job security on the line for it.

On one of those Sabbath afternoons, Dr. Ford sat on the floor of our living room and, when in animated discourse leaned against the curtains, they fell down on him. My mom was mortified. Others who were crammed into our living room helped put them back up. If anyone made a comment about "Des making the house fall down," he remained gracious and good-natured, quick to laugh and doing his part to keep the "Aussie insults" going. Another Sabbath afternoon, during one of those energetic conversations, I spoke up for the first time with a question I no longer recall. But I remember that the room suddenly became quiet—too quiet. In my nervousness the silence seemed to go on for a long time. Then I heard Dr. Ford say: "that's an excellent question, Kendra." And, in some ways, his affirmation of a thirteen-year-old that day launched my own journey of theological exploration.

Adventism, for me, became a grace-oriented church with a focus on righteousness by faith. "Grace" and its

implications for church life became so generally desired that by the time I attended my first pastors' meeting in 1989, how to have more grace-oriented churches was the subject of the meetings. Seibold notes that while the "last generation theology" folks are gaining momentum with what seems to be a renewed focus on sinless perfection, there are far more grace-oriented Adventists today who would resist a "standing without a mediator" theology. If that is so, the church has Desmond Ford to thank for much of that.

I was able to grow up in an Adventism where Ellen White was no longer the only source for sermons and Bible study guides. Because of this new location for Ellen White, there seemed to be more of an openness to fresh ways of reading prophecy and apocalyptic with faithfulness and integrity. When, fourteen years after Glacier View, I began a doctoral program with a focus on reading the book of Revelation with the help of Mikhail Bakhtin, no one seemed to find that a problematic endeavor. I am grateful for those changes.

In his last sermon, on December 1, 2018, Desmond Ford pleaded with his listeners:

there is only one ambition that is worthy of our pursuit: that we should be a very happy person on judgment day. . . . Dear friends, do you have Christian assurance? Do you know you are right with God? Do you know He loves you?

He concluded with this prayer: "Grant us Lord, this sweet assurance that we may rejoice whatever happens knowing that it is not our hold on Jesus but his hold on us that saves us today and forever. Amen."

The theology in that prayer had not changed in forty years.

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