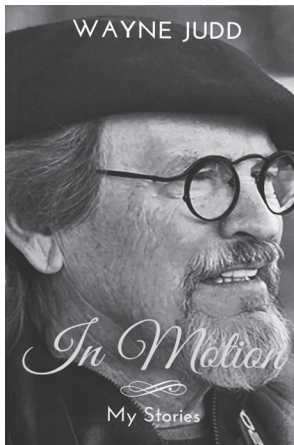


# Des Ford, Music,

# AND ME

An excerpt from Wayne Judd, *In Motion: My Stories*.  
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By Wayne Judd



“Wayne, I don’t see any reason why we shouldn’t bring Desmond Ford in as a guest lecturer, do you?” Pacific Union College president Jack Cassell said to me one day. Adventist Church leadership in Australia had approached him, requesting relief from a major Australian theological debate. The controversy had created two highly polarized factions in the country with Desmond in the middle.

“We’re pretty secure here at PUC,” Cassell added. “Let’s give the Australians some time to cool down.”

When Ford arrived, I knew in our first handshake that the college was in for a rough ride.

## The Australian Debate

“Hello, Wayne” (it sounded more like “wine” because of his Aussie accent). “I’ve appreciated reading your articles and papers.”

I responded that I was pleased to meet him, too. And I was. I liked Des, and we became good friends.

“You Americans are far too congenial,” he commented, an unusual thing to say on our first encounter. I didn’t respond but took note, aware that the Aussie scholars are fighters, clinging fiercely to their “positions,” as they called their approaches to theological and biblical studies.

The polarization immediately invaded the Pacific Union College campus, and in fact much of the West Coast of the United States and beyond.

What Cassell had apparently overlooked in his confidence that the college could provide relief for the Australians was that Des’s presence on the West Coast would create an even greater need for it in America. Cassell had also missed another cue. One of the leading religion teachers on the PUC campus was an individual who had himself crossed swords with Desmond Ford in Australia. Erwin Gane had fiercely opposed bringing Des into PUC’s religion department, even though it was billed as a temporary arrangement.

Gane told the religion department chair, Larry Richards, that Ford's presence would destroy the department. Early on, Larry shared Jack Cassell's optimism. But it wouldn't last.

At the time I hosted a two-hour call-in radio show on Friday nights on the powerful KANG college radio station. We received calls from as far away as Redding, Sacramento, Oakland, and San Francisco. I determined to give both Ford and Gane a hearing on my talk show. But to my dismay, Ford always said yes to my invitations while Gane always rejected them. So, because I hosted Des without the counter theological positions, I quickly became labeled as a "Fordite" by those who feared that not only the PUC religion department, but also the entire Adventist Church could collapse as a result of Ford's ideas.

Then I did another thing that elevated the already sizzling theological temperature. It seemed to me that it would be a good idea to have dispassionate conversations among a few scholars on the competing theological positions. To present Ford's and Gane's positions would fill a book, but I'll include a paragraph or two here for those unfamiliar with a debate.

To perhaps oversimplify the controversy, Gane and traditional Adventism took a more Methodist perspective of living a holy life ("sanctification") in response to justification by faith. On the other hand, Ford declared that salvation was an act of grace on God's part, appropriated by faith without good works.

Irwin Gane fought hard to maintain the historic position of the Adventist Church, which insisted that faith was incomplete without good works. Too much grace, in his view, would lead to a crumbling of institutional authority and a compromise of the traditional focus on getting ready for Jesus's soon to return to earth, which naturally included good behavior.

To be sure, the most contentious elements of the debate centered around understanding what happened when William Miller's prophecy of Jesus's return to earth on October 22, 1844, failed. But the real challenge Des Ford presented to the church was strong his emphasis on grace, forgiveness, and the completed work of Jesus on the cross without the necessity of exonerating God through the lives his people on earth lived.

Convinced that Pacific Union College was one of the havens in Adventism for authentic academic freedom, I asked two good friends to join me in forming a chapter of the Association of Adventist Forums on campus. The organization existed largely outside the approval of many denominational leaders, billing itself



*Charles Scriven (left) and Wayne Judd (right) commuted to Berkeley, California, together for two years attending doctoral seminars.*

as providing access to enlightened conversations among "thoughtful Adventists."

Adrian Zytkoskee and Charles Scriven agreed that it would be a good idea to organize a chapter of the forum at PUC. So we did. The college administration responded with a barely visible frown, but we moved forward, inviting Desmond Ford to speak on the topic, "The Investigative Judgment: New Theological Truth or Historic Necessity?" I knew Desmond Ford had been revisionistic on the doctrine and that it had become a polarizing issue in his native land.

### **The Moment**

Ford accepted our invitation to speak at the forum, and we scheduled his presentation for October 27, 1979, with obvious proximity to October 22, the "Great Disappointment" date.

Many versions of the succeeding events below have been written. Those I've seen all contain errors. No doubt mine will too, but I was there, right in the middle of it all, start to finish, so here it is.

We reserved a classroom that seated 25 people upstairs in the Paulin Hall music building on the PUC campus. The small size of the venue indicated my complete ignorance of Des Ford's star power.

Twenty-five people soon filled the small classroom. Out of the classroom window we saw hundreds more streaming toward the music building. Quickly we shifted to the Paulin Hall Auditorium.

In just minutes several hundred people had filled the auditorium with hundreds more still arriving. My plan

that a dozen or so scholars would hear Ford's ideas, then have a quiet discussion, completely derailed. We had not promoted the event widely, and at the moment we were far too busy trying simply to find seating for the hordes to ponder the overwhelming response to our meeting.

The answer was not complicated. We had inadvertently found ourselves in the midst of a major moment that was already unfolding in the Adventist Church. One that would belong to the masses, not to the scholars.

Once again, we transferred the meeting, this time to the historic Irwin Hall chapel, which seated 1,000 people. The audience filled almost all the main floor and wrap-around balcony seats. A handful stood around the periphery of the chapel.

We had asked Eric Syme, PUC's church history teacher and a somewhat outspoken Brit, to give the response to Des's presentation. On one occasion, after facilitating a closed department meeting in which Ford and Gane stated their positions, he had emphatically declared, "There's not dime's worth of difference between the two of you." Still, Syme agreed to do the response.

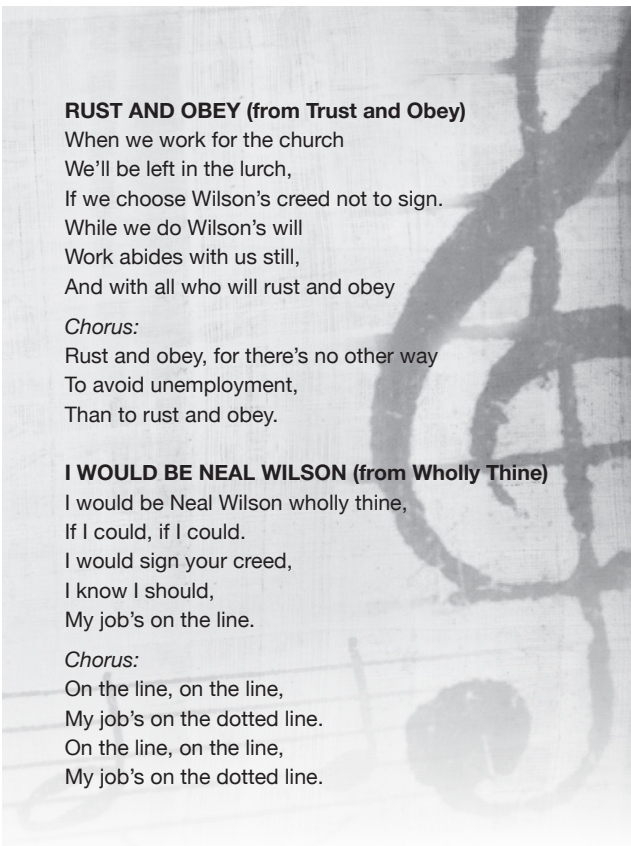
Finally, Adrian, Charles, Eric, Des, and I walked onto the historic stage, surrounded by elaborate old wooden beams, pillars, pulpit, and a wonderful display of organ pipes overhead. Ellen White had stood at this very pulpit many years before.

I followed directly behind Des. As we entered, I heard him say quietly, "It's time. It's time" — only with his Australian accent, it came out "It's tawym, it's tawym." Aware of what he was doing, he realized that his presentation would violently rock the denominational boat.

And he knew beyond doubt that the audience contained as many detractors as disciples. St. Helena, eight miles down the hill from PUC, was a coveted retirement destination for Adventist ministers and leaders, many of whom had showed up for the Forum meeting.

About halfway through Des's presentation, Adrian Zytoskee scribbled a quick note and handed it to Eric Syme, then gave it to me after Eric read it. Adrian understood the historic dynamic

much better than I did. He wrote: "Eric, there are some fairly powerful people who are prepared to crucify Des on this issue and drum him out of the church! If there is any way in your response, even if you disagree strongly with his interpretations, that you can demonstrate your solidarity with scholarship in the church and your support of him personally so as not to give aid and comfort to those who want to push him out, it would be helpful. The only reason I am writing this is to let you know the intensity of his opposition,"



**RUST AND OBEY (from Trust and Obey)**

When we work for the church  
We'll be left in the lurch,  
If we choose Wilson's creed not to sign.  
While we do Wilson's will  
Work abides with us still,  
And with all who will rust and obey

*Chorus:*

Rust and obey, for there's no other way  
To avoid unemployment,  
Than to rust and obey.

**I WOULD BE NEAL WILSON (from Wholly Thine)**

I would be Neal Wilson wholly thine,  
If I could, if I could.  
I would sign your creed,  
I know I should,  
My job's on the line.

*Chorus:*

On the line, on the line,  
My job's on the dotted line.  
On the line, on the line,  
My job's on the dotted line.



Adrian was one of the most skilled politicians I ever knew. His note was an important prompt. Syme, though convinced that this Australian debate was a tempest in a teapot, obliged and gave a favorable response. Unfortunately, that outraged Ford's detractors even more.

When the floor opened for discussion, I was in still in shock at the attendance and intensity of the event. The topic quickly became much more a can of worms than a teapot. When Adventism was in its creative youth, with doctrinal and cultural definitions emerging in its fledgling institutions, the leading voices frequently disagreed. Now, the raised voices shouting their disagreements in the old, historic Irwin Hall Chapel, seemed a historic re-enactment of the early days. I thought it was wonderful.

At the time I was excited that, although the meeting was something of a brawl, it seemed that new ideas could still be debated. Believing that Ford was destroying the church, they directed their anger at him during the discussion following the presentation and response. To me that was a healthy thing, especially in an academic institution. Such Forum meetings employed a pattern of feedback and discussion. Believing that Ford was destroying the church, they directed their anger at him during the discussion following the presentation and response. And as news spread of the meeting church leaders at the General Conference would have none of it.

### **Aftermath**

The rather large and noisy cohort of Ford disciples, along with the need to display at least a semblance of justice, nudged church leaders to go through the motions of hearing Des out in more congenial settings. Ford wrote a massive document stating his positions. The church scheduled a major conference to address the issues at Glacier View Ranch in Colorado, August 10-15, 1980. Ford supporters viewed this "Sanctuary Review Conference" as a trial. One hundred and fifteen international Adventist Bible scholars and church administrators attended the conference and plowed through the issues. In the end, a secret ballot stripped Ford of his ministerial credentials. He was defrocked.

Beyond firing Ford, the Glacier View conference accomplished nothing. Congeniality went out the window. Both sides in the debate and its aftermath were guilty of absolute intransigence. Although Ford was himself a most congenial individual, his followers were not, often making strident and schismatic proclamations that would negate any chance that the

two sides could achieve any reproachment. In Ford, they found hope that the church could transition from its historic emphasis on grinding obedience to the law to a life lived freely under liberating grace. They longed for denominational reform and were willing to fight for it.

The traditionalists were equally determined. Although I was not squarely in either camp, during the conflict that followed it was the traditionalists who turned against me. The so-called "Fordites," even when I refused to support them in their schismatic actions, never attacked me.

What did change was that Ford, now stripped of his ministerial credentials and banished from the realm of Adventist higher education, set off to build his own version of what he thought Adventism should be. Calling his movement "Good News Unlimited," his emphasis was on faith, grace, and the completed salvific intervention of Jesus on the cross.

Independent congregations sprang up around the country, led by disillusioned Adventist pastors who believed Ford was correct in his viewpoints. Ford himself launched his counterculture with headquarters in Newcastle, California, 32 miles east of Sacramento. Many younger Adventist ministers and religion teachers defected to join his movement, believing that at last someone within the Adventist tradition had discovered the full and liberating meaning of the gospel.

Because I had been identified as a friend of Ford, some of those individuals phoned me for advice on what they should do. My response was always the same: "You can withdraw from the church and start your own congregational fellowship, but you should know that your efforts will likely be one-generational at best." Adventism had been already defined as a sectarian withdrawal from mainstream denominations, which meant that the Ford offshoots would be sectarian withdrawals from a sectarian withdrawal. Without structure and institutional support, the odds of long-term survival were against them. While sympathetic and marginally supportive of the disillusioned preachers, the futility of their plight, along with my own world view, dissuaded me from any significant involvement. Still, let me share how and where I fit into those troubled times after October 27, 1979.

### **The Singing Incident**

When Ford had settled into his new location in Newcastle, I decided to slip away from Angwin on a Saturday morning to visit him and his second-in-command, Smuts van Rooyen, a former seminary

colleague of mine and powerful preacher in his own right.

Knowing that they shared my affection for Des, I decided to invite three other professors to join me, Adrian Zytkoskee (behavioral sciences), Eric Anderson (history) and Bill Price (auto mechanics). Not surprisingly, they all eagerly said yes. Adrian had just purchased a new Volkswagen Jetta, so we nominated him to drive. As the three arrived to pick me up, I impulsively grabbed a church hymnal off our piano, hopped into the left side of the backseat, and we were on our way, as we agreed, “to cheer Des up.”

Our drive to Newcastle was 103 miles. It would take us one-and-one-half hours. Time enough to have some fun creating parodies from the hymnal to bring at least a few smiles and maybe a laugh or two to Des, Gillian, Smuts, and Arlene. The parodies gushed out of us without effort. We drew on hymns that would be very familiar to any Adventist and most other Christians. Filled with insider allusions, they captured the anguish of those who thought the General Conference president, Neal Wilson, had seriously abridged justice in the Des Ford case.

Another reference in the songs was to Gerhard Hasel, appointed by the General Conference as dean of the Adventist Theological Seminary to the dismay of at least 22 leading seminary professors.

At Des’s new headquarters, I slipped into a back office and typed out the lyrics to our parodies. Des and Smuts were delighted with our doggerel. So were we. When we returned to PUC that Saturday afternoon, we went to Bill Price’s home where he had recording equipment. Gathering around the mic, we recorded the parodies on a cassette tape. Later, I placed a label onto the cassette: “*The Sudden Sound Singers*, from Keene, Texas, in an attempt to obscure the actual origins of the parodies if the tape ever got out.”

But we still were not finished. Jumping back into Adrian’s Jetta, we drove over to see Kent Seltman, chair of the English department and a good friend. We performed our songs for him—more, I recall, to our delight than his, although he chuckled a restrained approval. I believe now that he had foreseen that our parodies would cause trouble, given the polarized atmosphere around Desmond Ford’s concepts.

Then we piled back into the Jetta and sang for Walter Utt, chair of the history department, then Fred Veltman, religion department professor. Caught up in our enthusiasm, we finally headed to Larry Mitchel’s house to serenade him. Larry was a fellow religion teacher with

an emphasis in Old Testament. It was a balmy day, so his windows were open, which meant that our voices wafted across the yard into the neighborhood. Having thoroughly contained our irreverent actions up to this point, we trusted Des, Smuts, Kent, Walter, Fred, and Larry to keep our cathartic performances confidential.

### Detection

But the sound from Larry’s open windows caught the ear of the very conservative college registrar, Howard Hardcastle, as he walked out of Larry’s next-door neighbor’s house. We didn’t know we’d been discovered, so we went our separate ways assuming that we had achieved our objective of employing satire to ease the burdens of two very good men, along with releasing some of our own accumulated frustrations.

The next Monday we were hailed into the college president’s office. “What’s this I hear about your singing sophomoric parodies at Larry Mitchel’s house?” he asked. He told us that Hardcastle had reported what he had heard in terms that could not be misunderstood.

Hardcastle, upon hearing the singing, had sneaked into Larry’s yard, hid in the bushes, and noted the identity of the four men who exited the house. Later, Hardcastle told me, “I couldn’t have been more shocked and offended if you men had been engaged in devil worship.”

“This could be very bad,” President Cassell observed. “This Ford business has already given the college a bad name.” We explained that we were simply using satire and humor to ease the stress from the whole Ford controversy. Also, we assured him that the incident would be contained. Cassell knew that a large segment of leading faculty members was dismayed at the treatment Des had received at the hands of church authorities. However, we did *not* tell Cassell or *anybody* that we had written and sung the parodies in Newcastle to cheer Ford. In fact, we somehow escaped ever having to face that aspect of the incident. Had the administration and board found out the real purpose of our parodies, we conjectured that we would all have been fired on the spot.

That weekend Larry Geraty visited Angwin. An archaeology professor at the seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, he was one of the 22 scholars there distressed by the appointment of Gerhard Hasel as dean.

In my presumptuous role as something of a chaplain to my teaching colleagues, I decided to send not only the sheet with the lyrics back to the seminary with

### WHAT? NEVER THINK AGAIN?

(from *What Never Part Again?*)

There is a land of pure delight,  
A place where there is no sin.  
A place where there are no bright lights,  
And scholars never win.  
Oh there was a time,  
Yes it was sublime;  
And it's coming back  
If enough are sacked,  
And soon we will be scholarless,  
And never, never think again . . .

Chorus:

WHAT, never think again?  
NO, never think again.  
WHAT, never think again?  
NO, never think again.  
And soon we will be scholarless,  
And never, never think again.

### WHAT A DUD WE HAVE IN WILSON

(from *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*)

What a dud we have in Wilson,  
Every member hoped for more.  
Now we're filled with lamentations,  
As we're writhing on the floor.  
Can we stand this any longer?  
Will our spirits never soar?  
Only if we can dispense with  
Andrews' hermeneutic whore.

### ONE FOUNDATION

(from *The Church Has One Foundation*)

The church has one foundation,  
'Tis Ellen White of old,  
And she has always told us  
There will be scoffers bold,  
In the last days before us  
Omega will arise,  
Unless dear Olivera (a church leader who  
deplored the "cancer" of liberalism)  
The cancer doth excise.

### A MIGHTY SCHOLAR

(from *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*)

A mighty scholar is Gerhard,  
His orthodoxy never fails.  
He plagiarizes where he can,  
While gospel workers he impales.  
And now he will clean house,  
The fires of error douse.  
He'll exegete his way  
To calling all fair play.  
Gerhard! The Seminary hails!

Larry Geraty, but also a copy of the cassette tape. Larry was sure the parodies would provide cheer to his disappointed colleagues who met in Fritz Guy's home in Berrien Springs. When the seminary professors saw the lyrics and heard the songs, one of them declared that the four PUC singers should be fired, not for the lyrics, but for the singing itself. Our out-of-tune quartet would never perform together again.

Geraty promised that the cassette tape would be returned to me, which it was, and that copies of the lyrics would all be collected and destroyed, which they were not. No doubt, though, he did his best to keep that vow. But he couldn't have.

I was more than surprised to learn that their spouses had come along with the disheartened professors to join the gathering. I thought I had made it clear that our parodies were for the professors alone, minimizing the vulnerability of the PUC singers.

All heard the cathartic songs and left. So did a copy of the lyrics. Fritz Guy reported that one of the professor's spouses had absconded with a song sheet, which, because it so delighted her and others, demanded circulation. The lyrics went far and wide and naturally fell into conservative hands. Eager to prove that PUC was a den of dangerous liberals, one of those individuals greatly multiplied the number of sheets in circulation, now with the added heading, "Circulated by Wayne Judd."

During the next few years, I collected several file boxes of documents relating to this period of my life. As I leafed through them, I was stunned again, now 43 years later, at the vitriol and fear that consumed the conservative wing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. I had no trouble deflecting the hostility that was directed toward me at the time, because I had amazing support from my students, colleagues, and family.



But the full implications of those events extended into the next five years of my tenure at PUC.

### **Backlash**

By the time 1981 rolled around, the Ford debacle was consuming my professional life. I continued to chip away at my research for my dissertation, but the assaults from my detractors became difficult to ignore. I still had abundant support from students and colleagues, all of whom became aware that I was on thin ice professionally.

Almost daily I received hate mail from frightened right-wingers, although I rarely saw them. Audrey, my wife, intercepted and destroyed the hate letters before I got home to see them. I rather wish we had kept a few, but as she was my rock of support throughout these years, I cannot begrudge her protective spirit.

Our sons, Ken and Kris, were aware of the grinding conflict in my professional life, although we never discussed it with them. But they tell me now that they realized what was happening.

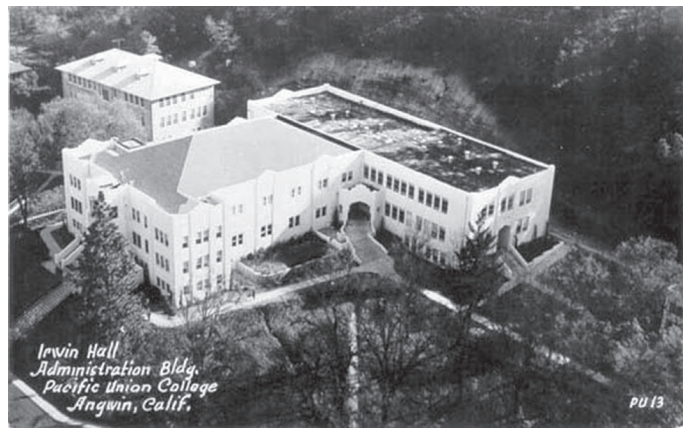
One consequence of the conflict was that neither of them, then at the age when their friends were becoming baptized members of the Adventist Church, never once expressed any interest in being baptized or joining the church. I honored their autonomy. And they never did become Seventh-day Adventists.

One Wednesday when I came home from work, Audrey announced to me that we had not received any hate mail that day. Deciding that a no-hate-mail day deserved to be celebrated, we drove down the mountain into St. Helena and ordered pizza.

### **Aloha**

In the middle of the Pacific Union College theological debate, I received an invitation to go to Hawaii for a two-month stint to teach a college extension course to Hawaiian Mission Academy senior class students, along with two additional courses for 40 elementary and secondary school teachers in Hawaii to meet their credentialing requirements. They were two of my favorite months of my teaching career. The Hawaiians made it clear that the aloha culture was not a tourist trap, but rather a description of who those people were.

I preached every Saturday for two months in eight different Adventist churches in Oahu, with a satisfying level of support. My classes were also received with appreciation. The gentle people cared little about the issues that had divided mainland Adventists. Hawaii provided a needed respite. While there, it seemed to me that chocolate covered macadamia nuts and the aloha spirit were more relevant than theological debates.



ABOVE:  
Irvine Hall, Pacific  
Union College

Audrey and our two sons, now entering their early teen years, joined me for two weeks in the middle of my stint in Hawaii. I had fallen in love with the state and its people and suggested to Audrey that we should move to there to escape the political intrigue at PUC. I could do that, she replied, but it would turn out to be a very long commute for me. She made the same speech years later when I had a couple opportunities to join the Castle Medical Center executive team on the windward side of Oahu.

Finishing my two months of teaching in Hawaii, I resumed my classes in Angwin. The students received me warmly, the administration tentatively. The ultra-conservative Adventist constituency of the college wished that I had not returned at all. These were not only outside critics—sometimes lay people, other times retired ministers—who felt threatened. A few faculty members and a handful of theology students also opposed my presence at PUC.

The aloha culture of Hawaii had deceived me to some extent. I wondered why liberals, moderates, and conservatives in the PUC world could not just decide to love each other rather than continuing the furious theological debates. My own values, my observations of Adventist church history, and my doctoral work in Berkeley informed my growing awareness that Adventist culture and theology were in serious transition.

### **The Times They Are a-Changin'**

One of my colleagues in the religion department of PUC, Dennis Priebe, with whom I had attended the theological seminary, had positioned himself fervently against Desmond Ford and his alleged heresy. Ironically, Dennis and my other colleague, Erwin Gane, who both promoted a very traditional view Adventism and therefore should have been safe, were fired, not for heterodoxy, but rather for insubordination after their public attacks on the college administration for not dealing with the religion department liberals. In a series of hard-hitting religion departmental “group therapy” sessions led by Terrence Roberts, a psychology professor at PUC and one of the Little Rock Nine students who integrated Little Rock Central High School in 1957, it became clear that there would be no reproachment within the department. That became another reason for the two dismissals. The college administration felt it could not have a religion department at war with itself.

Some more liberal-minded teachers at PUC considered the firing of Gane and Priebe to be some

sort of victory. It wasn't—it was a shame. Taking no joy in it, I had hoped all along that when the dust settled, we could resume our friendships. I liked Desmond Ford a lot. But I also appreciated Erwin Gane and Dennis Priebe. They were good men driven by deep convictions and a compelling sense of their calling.

I invited Dennis to my office to review our circumstances and relationship, which had previously been positive. He had promoted what he and other conservatives called “historic Adventism.” Greatly simplified, this position translated essentially into several components. First, Jesus was the example of how to live a perfect life, an illustration of what God's people in the “last days” should emulate.

Second was the notion of “salvation by character.” Ellen G. White wrote, “When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in his people, then he will come to claim them as his own.” (Years ago, I even wrote a book under the title *You Can Still Believe*. The Pacific Press Publishing Association book editor, Herbert Douglass, wrote in his rejection notice, “Your book does not contain enough salvation by character.” (The manuscript lies buried somewhere in my computer.)

Third, the “remnant” or chosen believers, would continue toward perfection until they proved to a watching universe that God's ways were best.

And finally, the work of Jesus on the cross was not all-sufficient. The “atonement” (bringing God and humanity together, or “at one”) was not completed at Jesus' crucifixion. Only when God's remnant people lived a holy life, thus vindicating God's character, could the atonement be considered complete.

Ironically, much so-called “historic Adventism” can be found in the radical Unitarian creed. Both focused on the “ability of man” in actualizing salvation. Having spent a good deal of time digging around in American religious history, with particular emphasis on Millerite and Adventist history, I thought it appropriate during my visit with Dennis to quote the nineteenth-century Unitarian creed: “The fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus, salvation by character, and the progress of mankind onward and upward forever.”

Seeming more puzzled than interested in my observation, Dennis concluded our visit by saying, “Wayne, the church is changing. And it's clear to me that it's moving in your direction, not mine.” His studied perception of denominational transitions was in fact prophetic, though many continue to fight relentlessly to preserve and protect such church traditions and leadership authority.



## The Talk

Back from my halcyon months in Hawaii, I walked squarely into another buzz saw. Actor Robert Blake, recently the star of the TV series *Baretta* (1975-1978), had accepted an invitation to address the student body of Pacific Union College. I never found out how Blake or *Baretta* fit in with the student body of a faith-based college. His presentation was to take place shortly after I returned home from Hawaii. Two days before Blake's scheduled talk, his agent notified the college that he was unable to come. The college administration scrambled to find a speaker and landed on me.

I said yes, as I did to all such invitations. Although I had loved Hawaii, I had also missed my students back at PUC. So, with the warm glow of aloha in my heart, I quickly prepared my talk, with the goal of addressing the divisive polarization that afflicted the Adventist community in Angwin and beyond.

Building a case for moderation, I declared that most of us were not far left or far right, but rather moderates. I addressed what I called "positionolatry," in which the two sides in the ongoing theological debate become guilty of worshiping their *positions* rather than the God they claimed to represent.

The old Irwin Hall chapel, same site as the Ford presentation, was filled with students, faculty, and administrators. Also present was Ronald Numbers, who, visiting PUC from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, had himself experienced rejection by the Adventist Church for writing a book that was seismic in Adventist history. Published in 1976 by Harper and Row, *Prophetess of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* revealed that Adventist pioneer and founder Ellen White had used multiple sources for her extensive writings. Numbers' retired minister father, who had also endured denominational chagrin because of his son's activities, was sitting with Ron in the crowd that day.

Ron Numbers and I had collaborated in a learned conference in Killington, Vermont, in which 11 scholars read papers to an assembled group of 20 on nineteenth-century premillennialism and the Millerite movement that launched the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Most of the scholars were not Adventists, but they reflected a broad interest in the Millerite movement. Indiana University Press published the material in 1987 under the title *The Disappointed*. I wrote the chapter on William Miller. The conference and the book were to honor Vern Carner, who had been tireless for decades in promoting early Adventist history.

Because of our common interest in American

religious history, Ron and I found ourselves attending history conferences, where we always intersected. At the end of one of those sessions, as attendees exited the convention center, I was standing at the bottom of a long, crowded escalator waiting for him to descend. Throughout the conference we had heard scholars congratulating one another on the wonderful papers and books they had published. Numbers had just published his watershed work on Ellen White. At the bottom of the escalator, I looked up as he descended.

"Reverend Judd," he shouted down to me in greeting as others on the escalator and down below turned to discover what the outburst was all about.

"Dr. Numbers," I said back. "I read your book."

"Good," he responded.

"It was *shoddy*," I shouted.

Historians buckled over with delight. "Best one-liner of the conference," one said as he walked past me. Ron later handed me an autographed copy of the book with the note, "To Wayne Judd, the shoddiest scholar I know, Ron Numbers."

After the release of his book on Ellen White, Ron was no longer welcome in Adventist culture. So, he went to the University of Wisconsin where, as Hilldale Professor of the History of Science and Medicine, he became a leading voice in his field, retiring after 38 years.

At the *Baretta* talk, I spotted Ron as I began my speech. "I'd especially like to welcome Ron Numbers who is with us today," I said. "Ron's presence here reminds us that we still have not learned as an organization how to deal with our heretics."

The student body applauded vigorously. They knew Ron Numbers' story, largely because I had shared it in my classes in the context of Adventist history and how church authority was built around the writings of Ellen White. The students also sensed that I was probably not far behind Ron in my own future relationship with the denomination.

During those turbulent times, someone would record almost all my public presentations, then circulate them within the right wing of the Adventist culture. The *Baretta* talk was one example. In it I "professed" to have received my testimony from God as Ellen White had done for her massive writings. "I was shown" was her typical launch into her testimonies.

In my testimony, I condemned extremists on the right and the left in favor of a more reasonable, moderate theological stance. "Most of us here today are not conservatives or liberals," I explained. "Most of are moderates, and it's time for us to find our voices."

I identified contemporary “brothers” and “sisters,” much as Ellen White did in her testimonies, as “Brother A,” or “Sister B.” My allusions to warriors on the right and left, were often not difficult for the students and faculty to identify.

The students, who by now were weary of the debate that divided the college, cheered my talk. But I heard from them that one of the conservative religion professors wept over my presentation in the class he taught immediately after the assembly.

### **Defendant**

As it became clear that my future as a college professor was severely at risk, I began to spend less time working on my PhD and more sitting in on business and communications classes that would point me toward an MBA. I took courses in marketing, management, publication design, communications, and fundraising from my teaching colleagues. By now I realized that I needed a backup plan. False rumors continued to circulate about my heresies. My presentations in and out of classes continued to be surreptitiously recorded. A neighbor told us that they had seen someone rifling through our garbage cans early one morning, no doubt hoping to find some evidence of non-compliance with the church’s conservative lifestyle. They found nothing but garbage.

Reports circulated that I had been seen walking with Des Ford, and that I had attended his meetings. While I did walk with him, I never went to any of his meetings, not because I was worried about guilt by association, but because I became less and less interested in dogma and other sectarian elements in Adventism.

An organized group of conservatives who called themselves “The Friends of PUC” published newsletter reports to the college constituency condemning the administration and board for not dealing with the blatant heresies of the religion department. One piece in their newsletter declared,

“The PUC Board of Trustees in their Sept. 22 meeting approved the request of the Administration to promote Wayne Judd and Larry Mitchel of the PUC Department of Religion. Both men have been highly critical of the church’s fundamental stance on

### **I SAW ONE WEARY**

(from early Adventist hymn, I Saw One Weary, Sad and Torn)

I saw one weary sad and torn,

Who’s frock no longer could be worn. (Des Ford)

He smiled a friendly smile at me,

But Lewis Walton said to flee. (Author warning against liberalism)

I gasped and gaped and with a shout

I asked him, “What’s this all about?”

He said, “My friend, what can I do?”

“I went on trial at Glacier View.” (Desmond Ford’s denominational demise)

doctrine, and were involved in the infamous singing incident, in which church leaders, doctrines, and Ellen White were ridiculed. These two men are strong supporters of the revisionistic tendencies prevalent in current Adventist theological circles. They operate under a smokescreen of conservative sermons and statements designed to allay fears of the conservative wing of the student body and church members.”

### **Fact-finding Committees**

As the pressure continued to increase, the college administration responded with a fact-finding committee of the board that interviewed me and others to evaluate departmental orthodoxy. I prepared a notebook for each member of the committee, indexing my alleged heresies with responses to each. I also played excerpts from cassette tapes that students had made of key lectures that the rumor mill had misrepresented.

One of the legitimate accusations that I faced was that I had accepted an invitation to audition for the role of King Arthur in a *Camelot* production of the Napa Valley Fine Arts Productions organization. When I was cast in the musical, the college president and academic dean called me into the president’s office and said, “We cannot have a religion teacher on stage as King Arthur right now.”

In reply, I stated that for years I had urged my students and colleagues to become engaged in their communities, rather than to isolate among the faithful. I added that King Arthur stood for right, honor, and justice, nothing that conflicted with Adventist religious principles. Also, I told them that the Napa drama group had changed two Friday night performances to Sunday matinees to accommodate my Sabbath tradition. Furthermore, I even chose as a stage name, Reuben Williams (my middle name and my grandfather’s first name) to slightly obscure my identity in the Napa press.

The fact-finding committee was largely supportive of my work and my influence on the students, so nothing came of the three-hour interrogation. I believed I had been cleared of the accusations.

But I was becoming more than a trifle exhausted by the relentless assaults of the conservatives. Then, just as I had hoped the dust had settled, I had another call from the college president’s assistant.

“Wayne, the president and board want to call you back for further questions.” She gave me the time and place. Hanging up the phone, I wept. It was the only time throughout those years of conflict that my emotions completely overwhelmed me.

Once more I spent another two hours before the fact-finding committee. Again, most of the committee members were on my side. But Bill Penner, a dentist who was a conservative board member from Sacramento, had come under the influence of The Friends of PUC. In fact, a group of physicians and others in the Sacramento area who had pledged a sizable amount of money to build a new science building on the PUC campus decided to hold their money hostage until the college administration dealt appropriately with the liberals. The great metal beams rusted on the abandoned construction site as the debate raged on.

Now Penner did his best to put me on the grill, though I can remember only one of his questions. “Do you believe in Ellen White?” he asked. I said I did. She was a very real historic figure, and a founding mother of the Adventist tradition. Easy to answer. How could I not believe?

When Penner finished his questioning, it was clear that the committee believed I had passed the round two test of my five-hour interrogation. Our wizened financial VP, Bill Strickland, who was anything but outspoken, turned to Penner and barked, “Do you still think he’s a heretic, Bill?”



Years later, in 1995, Audrey and I moved to Roseville and occasionally attended the Carmichael Adventist Church in Sacramento where Bill Penner was a member. Now he was altogether congenial, even apologizing and inviting us to his home for a Sabbath lunch. Still hurt, I was not able to accept his apology or his lunch invitation. Character flaw? Maybe.

But to me, such repentance was way too easy. Simply erasing the sin and allowing sinners to trudge happily forward in life, while the consequences of their actions continued to impact the innocent, makes no sense to me. I decided during my experience at PUC that forgiveness, although it has therapeutic value for the confessor, is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer would call “cheap grace.” Wanting none of it, I didn’t feel guilt for refusing to forgive those who stole from me the thing I loved most in my professional life: the college classroom.

Moreover, formulaic repentance struck me as an act of self-interest by the offender, who was more concerned about shoring up his own record in the divine courts than in assuaging the pain of the offended.

Although I passed the second fact-finding committee interrogation, knowing that the conflict was far from over, I attempted a proactive approach. I urged, even begged, the administration to form an independent judicatory body to judge my worthiness, indicating that I would gladly subordinate to the decision of such a committee. But I told them I would not bow to the demands of the frightened conservatives, who knew that the church was changing and assumed that teachers like me were going to undermine the sacred traditions. But nothing came of my request for authentic justice. And the shrill voices on the extreme right continued their harangue. By now, the college president and academic dean were themselves facing professional risk. Something would have to be done.

Eric Anderson, one of the hymn parody singers, stood his ground within the Adventist academic world, remaining in the PUC history department, later becoming president of Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, then briefly president of PUC to clean up a later crisis of leadership. Now retired in Angwin, Eric is the director of the PUC archives. He provides a first-person account of the next development in the drama:

“The ‘singing incident’ returned with a vengeance in the spring of 1981. College administrators assumed that they had heard the last of our hymn parodies, but the episode suddenly got new attention when an Adventist ‘offshoot’ newsletter published the lyrics

(in slightly garbled form). Cassell and Madgwick felt betrayed, since we had assured them, after the first explosion, that the recording of the songs had been secured and circulation ended. The singers (plus one unlucky listener, Larry Mitchel) were again called into the president’s office.

“We knew what to expect because we had been tipped off by a colleague. Richard Hughes, physics professor and a shirttail relative of Cassell, had learned the night before what the president’s plan was. The sole religion professor in the quartet, Wayne Judd, would be fired. The others would face lesser penalties.

“The five men ‘on the carpet’ seized the initiative, declaring that we knew what the plan was. I said that if Judd was fired, the other three of us would make so much fuss that we would have to be fired too. I added that such a result would, in turn, bring down the president and academic dean as well. Adrian Zytkoskee seconded the motion.

“This ambush was so successful that President Cassell denied that he had any such plan, though he did not venture to suggest what the board might do. “A particularly memorable moment came when Larry Mitchel protested the violation of his privacy.

“Speaking directly to Cassell and Madgwick, he said: ‘I feel like you held me down, while Howard Hardcastle raped me.’ Afterward, “news quickly spread across campus that Wayne’s job was in danger.”

### **Protesting Students**

Cassell did, in fact, tell me before I left his office that the board would fire me the next day. That was indeed the plan. Despair and hopelessness filled me as I left the meeting.

My sister’s daughter, Susan Chaffee, had come from Minnesota to Angwin to attend PUC. I told her after leaving the president’s office that the board would terminate me the next day. She was dating a leading senator of the student association. Bob Logan was an activist. Without my knowledge, he and Sue went into the dormitories and announced to the students my expected fate. They collected hundreds (I was told) of notes and letters from students protesting the firing. I suspect that there actually may have been scores, probably not hundreds. By the morning the collected student letters were in the hands of the president and board chair.

In addition to the letters and notes, once the student body learned of the danger that I was in, they sent me many notes of support, which I greatly appreciated,

while at the same time believing strongly that students should be immersed in their academic and social lives, not taking time to defend a teacher who mistakenly believed in academic freedom.

### The Verdict

Late on the afternoon of the dreaded board meeting, I received a call from the president's office indicating that I would not be fired. The support of my colleagues and the response of protesting students frightened the board and administration more than the perceived heterodoxy of Judd. Instead, the administration offered me time off to complete my doctorate, which was already moribund. Now planning my future outside academia, a degree in American religious history would have minimal value. I wanted an MBA. But I wasn't ready to leave the college yet.

Consequently, I declined the offer of time off, certain that it was intended as a way to get me off campus to appease the critics without alienating the students further. Academic dean Gordon Madgwick, asked me why on earth I would not take advantage of their generous offer.

"Because I believe that it is in fact a half-way house on the road to unemployment," I said—not unlike Desmond Ford's "time off" after his October 1979 lecture. Des never returned to the classroom.

Word that I would not be fired spread quickly throughout the community. Audrey and I received a phone call from Karen Trivett, wife of Terry Trivett, a microbiology professor. "We have about 15 couples gathering at our house to celebrate the good news," she said.

We walked into the crowded house where the women were gathered in the kitchen and the men in the living room. The women were crying, the men laughing. Because Adventist culture forbids alcohol, we gorged on ice cream to celebrate.

On the way home I asked Audrey, "Why were the women crying when we arrived?"

"Oh, they told me that their husbands had



declared that if you were fired, they would all quit their jobs and leave PUC."

I stayed on for two more years, teaching and chipping away at classes that would advance me toward an MBA.

### Exits

By 1984 Jack Cassell and Gordon Madgwick had resigned. The polarizing conflict at PUC had pushed the board into making a major change in the college administration.

Despite all the hubbub over my role at PUC, I never was fired as many people believed. In fact, the new academic dean, Charles Bell, urged me to stay on. "Wayne, you are the sort of teacher this college needs for its students," he told me.

Malcolm Maxwell, the new president, equivocated. Phoning me one day, he suggested that I should stay on at the college, although not in the classroom. He said he thought I would do a good job in student recruitment. The next day he rescinded his tentative offer. Someone had gotten to him.

I received an invitation to give the 1984 summer commencement address in the college's outdoor amphitheater. President Maxwell, who would introduce me, was one of the very few who knew that it would be my last presentation as a PUC professor. The next day I would head south to Burbank to take up my new healthcare career in Adventist Health System/West's Glendale office, later moved to Roseville, California, where Audrey and I landed in 1995, 11 years later.

"Malcolm," I said just before we went onto the platform, "you cannot announce that I'm leaving."

Somewhat puzzled, he asked, "Why not?"

"Because, Malcolm, I want to finally control the narrative after all that has happened. And I don't want to receive fraudulent declarations of regrets from those who are no doubt happy to see me gone," I added. The next day I drove down the mountain humming the doxology.

WAYNE JUDD retired from his strategic planning and mission management roles for Adventist Health in 2010, and now lives in Southern California, where at age 80 he wrote his memoir, *In Motion: My Stories*.