

EDUCATION UPDATE

MARCH 1997

STUNNED BY CONDITIONS AT WALLA WALLA COLLEGE

While three unions and two publishing houses are wondering how best to interpret numbers, the presidents in the Northwest are trying to figure out how to get rid of their religion faculty.

JANUARY 22, 1997 TELECONFERENCE

On Wednesday, January 22, 1997, five days before FER (Family Enrichment Resources) closed its doors (see *Financial Loss in the Columbia Union—Part 1-2 [WM-749-750]*), a national video-teleconference session was held. Included in that visual phone call were Jere Patzer (president of North Pacific Union), George Reid, Angel Rodriguez (GC Biblical Research Institute), Samuel Pipim (African doctoral student at Andrews, author of *Receiving the Word*), and Richard Davidson (Old Testament professor at Andrews).

They discussed a wide range of problems at Walla Walla College. Those problems had been known for several years; but, in late 1996, Jere Patzer had finally become exasperated with the situation. We believe that our tracts last year, revealing the terrible situation existing at Walla Walla (also mailed with an appeal tract to every delegate of the North Pacific Union, just prior to their scheduled meeting), were partially responsible for the transition of six conference presidents and one union president from inaction to openly expressed concerns. (See *Life at Walla Walla College—Part 1-4 [WM-676-679]*, *Northwest Church*

Crisis [WM-680], and *Appeal to Constituency of North Pacific Union [WM-685]*.)

The private teleconference was held to discuss ways and means to deal with the religion faculty at Walla Walla College, as well as with the deepening immorality at that institution. (You will recall that, in those earlier reports by the college we revealed the public support for unrepentant homosexuals and its tolerance—and even publication—of sentiments expressed by those who doubted the Bible, its teachings, and inspiration.)

In that videoconference, Patzer found strong support for his concerns. Earlier, he had spoken at length with each conference president in the North Pacific Union (which comprises six conferences: Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Upper Columbia, and Washington), and enlisted their support.

We thank Jere Patzer for his willingness to try to solve the mess at Walla Walla. He convinced a number of officials that they should unite with him in his crusade to clean up the school.

It was an important phone call, preparatory for an important meeting the next day in Portland. More on that later in this report.

OCTOBER 12, 1996 SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Delegates to the spring North Pacific Union Conference Constituency Meeting had received our appeal and Walla Walla College report.

We are told there was increasing concern among a number of the laity following that exposé.

Despite WWC protests by administration and faculty that all was well at the school, their audacious liberality could not help but show itself in a variety of ways.

At a general meeting for area church members, held in October in Spokane, the Religion Department faculty held a “seminar.” In order to further defuse the situation, they had decided that a good way to do it would be for each of them to stand up and speak for a few minutes—and show how conservative they were.

But, as each of the seven faculty members gave a short presentation on “Why I Am a Seventh-day Adventist,” they had so far drifted away from Adventism that they found it impossible to present Adventist-oriented reasons to match their professions. In the open discussions which followed, the situation was made even worse.

Eventually, liberality exposes itself for what it is. The fruits were already rampant at the college and the words of the teachers did not help the matter.

Following the seminar, nine pastors in the Upper Columbia Conference sent a letter to many church leaders. Thank God for men who will stand for the right!

In that letter, statements by the teachers were mentioned, along with other matters concerning the college.

More and more people were alerted to the situation existing at Walla Walla College.

TROUBLE IS BREWING

SUMMER 1996

By the summer of 1996, Robert Folkenberg had heard enough reports about deteriorating conditions in our colleges and universities, that he decided to do something about it. It may be that his wife, who has a deep religious devotion, asked that something be done; we do not know. Whatever the cause, word reached Richard C. Osborn, head of the Office of Education at North American Division headquarters in Maryland, that Folkenberg was planning to publish a position paper in a forthcoming issue of the *Review*.

Entitled, *Total Commitment to God*, the paper was going to call for an annual assessment of institutional spirituality in each of our educational institutions.

To say the least, this news came like a ton of bricks. Such a shocking review might reduce some of the tuition flowing to our educational institutions! It might chase away prospective students and stifle donations from wealthy alumni. Something had to be done.

But Folkenberg operates like a diesel truck. When he gets his mind on something, he just keeps going forward.

In addition, the GC president had made several critical remarks publicly. Spurred by this, and after consulting with a number of college and university presidents by phone, Osborn asked Folkenberg if a three-day gathering could be convened, so the college and university presidents could discuss the matter with him. Folkenberg was careful to not have room on his schedule for such a meeting until October was past.

FOLKENBERG MAKES DEMANDS

**OCTOBER, 1996
ANNUAL COUNCIL**

When the 1996 Annual Council convened in Costa Rica, Folkenberg presented it with his paper, *Total Commitment to God*; and, in his "This is what I want" style, he asked

that they incorporate it into the GC Working Policy.

It called for a semester/quarterly report on spirituality and doctrinal correctness at each of our colleges and universities.

After a little discussion, the annual council voted to "accept the report"; but, intriguingly enough, they refused to place it in the GC Working Policy, saying that it was not written in the style of church policy statements.

I guess, when the Final Crisis finally bears down on us, church leaders will not accept it unless it has been drafted in a format agreeable to proper parliamentary nomenclature.

DEPARTURE FROM TUCSON

**DECEMBER 6-7, 1996
TUCSON, ARIZONA**

As well shown by his demands at the Utrecht Session, Folkenberg's way is to rule with a heavy hand. He walks in, says this is the way it is to be done, and then leaves.

The previous year, while attending an important board meeting at Adventist Media Center, in Thousand Oaks, California, he told the board members they should move the Center to Collegedale, Tennessee, because the McKee family, and their McKee Bakery Company, had offered to pay \$1 million a year to help subsidize AMC, if it would move its operations to land next to the McKee factories, which would be donated for this purpose.

But, at the time, the AMC board did not want to leave southern California and voted down the proposition. At this, Folkenberg stood up in highest anger and declared, "You have just lost a million dollars!" and stamped out of the room.

When it was learned that Folkenberg was also becoming upset with the colleges, a meeting was scheduled for a time when the busy president would definitely have two days to discuss the matter with top-ranking NAD educational leaders. The

gathering convened on December 6-7, 1996, in southern Arizona. Every college and university president, except one, in the North American Division was present.

Arriving on Thursday night, there were quiet conversations here and there before retiring, and then the next morning the two day conference began.

Folkenberg had earlier let it be known that he wanted the colleges to march like an army in support of standards and teachings, as he viewed them.

Our college and university officials were understandably concerned about such a threat, since their primary concern was to maintain high enrollments rather than tinker with what was taking place on their campuses.

Hence the meeting at Tucson, in the hope of defusing the problem.

For example, officials at Southern College had already said the accreditation organizations would not like it if church officials and their morality superseded the authority of the individual college and university administrations.

This, of course, would place worldly accreditation agencies, their standards and decisions, as ranking more important than the beliefs or practices of the church which financially supports those schools. Yet that is the situation we have come to. Whenever the liberals in our colleges do not like conservative encroachments, they protest that doing such and such will not please their accreditation board.

Kent Hanson, legal counsel for Loma Linda University and La Sierra University, chaired the Tucson meetings.

On Friday, the first of the two-day discussion began with a back-and-forth discussion between Folkenberg and the presidents. The presidents said that there were serious "cultural gaps" to be bridged in teaching modern Adventist youth, and that our educational institutions were doing the best they could.

Instead of several reports a year, college and university leaders at Tucson suggested that, in place of Folkenberg's plan, a better alternative would be for students to "journal" (that is, keep notes) on their college experience and, awhile after graduation, send in a write-up as to how the school helped prepare them for employment success.

That evening (the holy hours of the Sabbath having already begun), the presidents gave reports on the spiritual activities on their campuses. As the third report concluded, one university president asked that Folkenberg might speak and tell the session what he thought of these presentations and whether they were accomplishing all that he thought needed to be done.

—But, when Folkenberg was asked by Hanson to do so, he was not to be found. As he earlier did at Thousand Oaks, he had just left.

It was discovered he had already left on a plane for Maryland. This was remarkable, since this meeting had been long delayed, in order to fit a schedule which Folkenberg could attend from Thursday night to Saturday night.

He had mentioned his departure on late Friday afternoon, to only one or two individuals, before getting on a plane (from the best we can tell, a little before or after sunset).

The educators spent the rest of the evening discussing their concerns.

Then, by mutual agreement, at noon on Sabbath they all left by plane or car to their homes. Our church leaders are busy people, always running around attending meetings. Never mind the Sabbath; that is just another day for committee meetings.

TELLING EVERYONE THROUGH THE *REVIEW*

JANUARY 1997
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

The front cover of the March issue of the NAD edition of the *Review*

shows a guy sitting on a motorcycle, with the cover article caption: "Running with the 24/7 Gang." At this, one has the creepy feeling that it is no longer his "good old *Review*." Opening it, he finds the first article is entitled, "Keeping Ellen White Current," by Kit Watts, a *Review* assistant editor, who explains that we need to retranslate the English editions of the Spirit of Prophecy to remove their "Victorian language," so modern young people can understand them.

Frightened half to death by this time, we thumb more quickly through it, and come to "Sealed at the Height of Perfection" by a retired pastor. What a most beautiful title, expressing a wonderful truth! But the article repeatedly asserts that the holiness is in Christ, never in us.

Farther on, we come to the cover article, about a young man who preferred the freedom of leaving his family and cycling around the country on a Harley.

But not every *Review* is like that. The January NAD Edition had a different kind of article.

It contained Folkenberg's *Total Commitment to God* paper, along with an accompanying interview with Johnsson. In the interview, Folkenberg says that the proposed spiritual assessment plan will help parents and students select the best college. He says,

"I urge every parent/student to secure from the colleges or universities to which your child may be submitting an application (1) a copy of the letter to the board from the independent panel . . . and (2) a copy of the report of the previous semester/quarter's spiritual evaluation." (p. 13).

Folkenberg is skilled at governance, and our college and university administrators and faculty are well-crafted at maintaining the status quo. It will be interesting to observe forthcoming developments.

A few days after the January NAD edition of the *Review* arrived in the offices of our educational lead-

ers, the Portland meeting convened.

CONFRONTATION AT PORTLAND

JANUARY 23, 1997
PORTLAND, OREGON

The day after the teleconference, mentioned at the beginning of this report, a meeting planned for several weeks was held. It was attended by W.G. Nelson (WWC president), the presidents of all six NPU conferences, Jere Patzer (North Pacific Union president), all but one of the seven faculty members of the WWC Religion Department, John Brunt (WWC academic dean), and Manford Simcock (WWC vice president).

During the first two hours, each conference president shared his concerns. Then, after a 30-minute break, the last half hour was devoted to responses by several of the faculty members.

The three-hour meeting began with strong remarks by the union and conference presidents about teachings, standards, and activities at Walla Walla College. Repeatedly, they told stories—some dating back a number of years—about what was going on at that institution.

In response, they were told by the WWC faculty that the problems were not really so serious; and, if they were serious, why had they waited so long to speak up, when they had always held their peace before?

It is a marvel that the college faculty would dare ignore the urgent call for change, but they did, and adamantly so. The presidents had declared that the Bible teachers at WWC were off on the literalness of Genesis 1 and 2, the authority of Scripture, fundamental Adventist beliefs, the workings of divine providence, and the nature of the atonement. The issue of supporting gays on campus also came up.

Throughout the gathering, it was clear that the WWC administration intended to fully back its Religion Department. They would stand or

fall together. If taking the students down to perdition with them is what it takes to hold on to, fulfill, their objectives, they are determined to do it.

The presidents told them that, if they did not wish to conform to Adventism, the teachers should quit their jobs and leave. The thought was expressed that this was the ethical thing to do.

But the administration and faculty sidestepped that idea, and the three-hour gathering ended in a stalemate.

Several conference presidents spoke with passion about their concerns for their own children. We are thankful they are becoming concerned.

But the educators from Walla Walla said they were also concerned for the next generation. We suspect that their concern is that the tuition keep coming in from that next generation.

ANNOUNCING CROSSWAYS

**FEBRUARY 20, 1997
ANGWIN, CALIFORNIA**

As if to apologize for the rapid changes into liberalism which are being made at our colleges and universities, the February 20, 1997, issue of the *Review* was emblazoned in large print on the cover:

"This decade more and more North American Adventist colleges have begun offering alternative worship services. So have many 'traditional' congregations. What are 'Gen Xers' [the current generation of young adults of a preferred worship style] worship needs? And how is Adventism accommodating them?"

The cover article is entitled, "*Crossways*," and details how one of our North American colleges is changing its worship pattern.

Oh, you thought the Celebration church services might be a thing of the past. Not so. Your young people are being indoctrinated into modern Protestant worship services when

they attend our colleges and universities! This is what you are paying for.

Here is a brief overview of this three-page article. It is important, for it opens a window to a startling new development in, what the *Review* says, "more and more North American Adventist colleges have begun" doing:

In January 1992, Pacific Union College gave permission for the students to start a separate Sabbath morning church service. (By the early 1980s, we had heard from friends in Angwin that the regular College Church services were already getting wild; but, by 1992, they had become too tame for the students.)

So the "Connections Church" was born. It met in a different hall on campus; and, according to the *Review*, it had a band, drama, a short student-made video, another brief talk, followed by student fellowship and refreshments.

Within a few months, over 700 students were attending the Connections Church. The main church seemed empty by comparison, but still retained a more quiet worship service.

However, the PUC Church pastoral staff was dissatisfied. The infection needed to be spread. So, in the spring of 1993, they united the two churches in one. Now everyone had the band, the heavy Celebrationism, and videos week after week. Physical action and a "visual format" keep the church jumping all Sabbath morning.

The article goes on to relate how students who have left the campus return to tell how "spiritually dead" the other Adventist churches are.

—Those PUC students have been so trained into Pentecostal patterns, that they can no longer tolerate normal Adventist congregational worship services!

Our colleges and universities are preparing our young people to leave us. Wake up out there! Your young people are being stolen.

Concluding the article is a brief discussion of a sampling of what is termed, "Gen Xers' alternative Sabbath morning services" at Andrews University (called "Sabbath Expressions"), Atlantic Union College, Oakwood College ("Madison Mission"), Southern Adventist University ("Koinonia"), and Columbia Union College ("Community Church"). "Nearby Sligo Church [attended by General Conference workers] has offered a praise-style [i.e., Celebration] early service for years."

COMING NEXT

**MARCH 1997
LOMA LINDA, CALIFORNIA**

Meanwhile, the boiling point of concern over Folkenberg's threatened reforms continues to keep our educational leaders in a stew.

In order to further defuse the tension, so our colleges and universities can get back to business as usual, an international meeting has been scheduled for March. To be held at Loma Linda University, it will be attended by a large number of Adventist educators from around the world.

Humberto Rasi, director of the General Conference Education Department, is planning the session.

Folkenberg's plans will be at the center of the gathering. So far, only a few of the NAD college presidents have declared their intention to attend. Since Folkenberg walked out on their meeting, perhaps they are planning to snub his. Perhaps they are hoping that their non-attendance will set a tone of resistance which will effectively put an end to Folkenberg's hoped-for reports.

Rasi says that Adventist educational institutions in the North American Division are far in advance of the other schools around the world, in their support of Folkenberg's spiritual planning program.

We will see what happens next.

More WAYMARKS - from —
PILGRIMS REST

HCR 77, BOX 38A - BEERSHEBA SPRINGS, TN 37305