

## THE BRANSON REPORT

W.H. BRANSON'S REPORT ON ACCREDITATION Delivered at the Autumn Council October 30, 1935 On Presentation of the Report of the Survey Commission on Education

### **Elder Branson [vice-president of the North American Division]:**

Brother Chairman [Elder C.H. Watson, president of the General Conference], it was in 1931 at our Autumn Council in Omaha, the question of accreditation our schools was given consideration, at which time it was decided we should enter upon an accreditation program for our educational institutions.

Authorization was given at that time for junior and senior colleges to seek accreditation, although certain restrictions as safeguards were thrown around the action, I think it was all-inclusive so far as authorizing to proceed along this line. I think that all the brethren who were present at the Omaha Council, when this action was taken, entered into the proposition with fear and trembling and many misgivings; even those who were most favorable to the plan recognized that it was confronted with great danger, and that probably we would find that there would be some losses along the way.

It was described at that time by one of our leading workers as being a war measure. It was stated in the action itself that it was an emergency measure. The reason for the emergency seemed to be the fact that we were facing a situation, as we understood it, that would make it all but impossible to go on with certain lines of training unless our schools were accredited. This is true of the [AMA approved] medical work. They stated that it would be impossible for the College [of Medical Evangelists] to receive students from junior and senior colleges unless these colleges were accredited with regional accreditation associations.

It was also stated that we had reached the time when teacher training could not be carried on in any unaccredited school in a satisfactory way. Such requirements made necessary, they said, the accreditation of schools for the training of our teachers.

Then there was also a number of us that thought it was necessary, in some places, that the pre-nursing work be given in accredited schools. So we felt under great pressure, as in council when we studied this question four years ago and arrived at the conclusions I have already stated.

I think it should be mentioned in the beginning of the introduction to this report, which we bring you today, that it was not our educational men, at least not as a group, who brought this pressure upon us at the council; but it seemed to be the general conviction of the leadership of the movement. We went into it together; no one group of workers can be singled out as whom we can point the finger and state that they led us into it. It was said that we went into it unitedly, believing that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances.

There were certain safeguards. After the action authorization of the schools to receive accreditation, we passed these recommendations, with which we endeavored to minimize the danger we knew would attend an effort of this sort. I would now

like to read them to you.

“Whereas, we know full well, from observation and repeated warnings from the Spirit of Prophecy, that by sending our teachers to the universities of the world for advanced degrees, we are exposing them to great dangers; it is evidenced by the number of our men who have already in this way lost their hold upon God; we realize that there is great danger to our system of Christian education through the molding influence of these worldly schools on our teachers:

“We recommend that, in the selection of teachers to attend the universities, only persons of outstanding Christian experience and who have been successful in Christian work should be chosen—persons whose faith in the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy is well grounded, and who realize that in attending the university they are being exposed to subtle and almost unconscious influences of infidelity—persons who believe with all their hearts in the superiority of Christian education.”

These are the safeguards the Council of 1931 endeavored to throw around this plan. It will be noticed that it was definitely and frankly recognized that we were facing the danger of placing those seasoned, solid ones who would be chosen to be sent to the university, along certain lines, in great danger. In discussing the action it was stated that a number of men had already lost their hold upon God as the result of an endeavor to secure standing by getting worldly degrees; and yet, understanding the fact, it seemed as though the pressure was so great as to make it almost absolutely necessary for us to accredit; and it drove us to the place where we felt we should have to take some steps, and so the brethren joined in agreeing that we would authorize our schools to seek accreditation.

Four years have gone by since that time. These have been years in which we have gained a great deal of experience. We were launched at that time upon an uncertain course. No one knew much about what was involved in accreditation. Some thought they knew a great deal about it, but it has been discovered that some of the information that we had was not accurate. Some of it may have been more or less accurate, but we have gained an experience. We have revised our plans and our ideas a good many times along the way during these four years. We have spent a great deal of money—much more than some supposed would be necessary—in securing the accreditation we received. It has been spent along a number of lines—common among these, teacher training. As it was authorized at the time, our colleges have been sending their teachers to outside universities during this time of transition. The teachers were not able to go unsupported; it has been necessary, in the colleges, to help support them to get this training, and also to pay the expenses of their tuition while attending the university. Most of this has been done during the school year making it necessary to substitute teachers to take the place of those who are in training.

Expense was also incurred in putting up more buildings and adding other necessary equipment that was demanded by the representatives of the accreditation board. In some places, this has become a large sum. Then other things came to the attention of the board. There should be an endowment, an income, in our schools, or in lieu of that, some guaranteed in-

come above the students' tuition and above anything we had planned upon or provided for in our schools before. In some instances, the subsidy required was at least double the amount that had been coming to our colleges before. It was also necessary that our schools should be out of debt; in order to accomplish that, it has been necessary for conference organizations to assume large indebtedness held by these institutions. In order to relieve the institutions, and the conferences took over the burden of paying this indebtedness.

During these four years, two of our six colleges have reached the goal and became accredited. These are two schools in the West [PUC and WWC]. None of our other senior colleges have reached the goal, and some of them find that they are far from reaching it yet—just how far no one knows. Just what may be required in them if they seek accreditation, we are not able to discover. Representatives of the colleges' accreditation bodies will not tell us. They will make suggestions of this and that and say you failed here or there, but they will not tell us definitely what we must do; and when what they have said has been done, we think surely we will be accredited. But we have still been groping in the dark. We have been trying to find out what is necessary, but we find other things necessary; so we go on year after year.

The struggle became so great in the spring of this year, when two of our colleges in the central West were turned down for the second or third time, that their boards, after some joint council, decided to appeal to the General Conference committee for counsel as to what they should do next. Whether or not both of these schools, fairly close together and in the same territory, would continue to seek for accreditation has been discussed. They asked that study be given to this by the General Conference, through some commission appointed for this purpose. It was also requested that we carefully study the whole question of our educational situation in the North American field; so, at the time of the Spring Council of this year, a commission, which is to report this morning, was brought into being.

This commission was given full power, so far as study of our educational work is concerned. In our consideration of this question of accreditation, the committee was asked to take up for consideration the present trend in our educational work. What modifications should be made in our educational program? I would like to say that our report this morning will not cover so wide a field as the authorization would warrant. The reason for this is given in the report itself.

During the many months that have passed since the Spring Council, the commission has been at work practically all the time in one way or another. We had the first meeting before we left Washington after the Spring Council had made the appointment. At the time we proceeded to appoint a fact-finding committee of five men, including Brother Conrad who was at that time in South America; this committee was asked to visit all of our senior and junior colleges in North America to glean certain information the commission desired to have before it in many lines, and to bring their report to the meeting of the educational commission to be held prior to this council. Brother Conrad was recalled from South America.

The committee has spent a great deal of time going from school to school and setting down a careful survey on the situation of each and every institution, we have the benefit of the large array of facts which they were able to secure. We believe, Brother Chairman, as a result of our study of this situation, that the safeguards that we tried to throw around the policy of accreditation four years ago, when we entered upon this course, have very largely broken down. Therefore we entered upon a course that we did not plan on, and we know that things have gone further than we anticipated. We were facing dangers and perils, in this matter of accreditation of our colleges, that were little dreamed of at that time, when this action was taken four years ago.

Instead of a few teachers being selected carefully by college boards as was recommended (that is, teachers who would present outstanding Christian experience, be successful in their Christian work, and have fidelity to the Bible and Testimonies that is unquestioned), we have found that a large class of very young and immature people have been finding their way into the universities, believing that it was a highway to appointment in our institutional work. They have not waited to gain these years of Christian experience—the experience that comes through years of Christian service. They have not waited to be chosen by some board that would carefully weigh the question of whether or not this or that individual should go to the university. Scores of these young people have been going from the graduating classes of our colleges into the universities, believing that this would facilitate their going into our work or finding employment in an educational institution.

Our commission brought us information that, from one college alone, thirty had gone into the university for further training during these years. We are told that, for a social evening in one university, there was a get-together of our Seventh-day Adventist students attending there; forty present of these were at that social, and not all were reached by invitation. We might multiply facts like this which indicated to us, as we believed, that this thing has gotten out of hand. It has gone way beyond anything the denomination planned, and the by-products of this are found in the schools where boards have been pressed by the accreditation body to put men on their faculty who have advanced degrees; they did not know where to turn for men of experience and outstanding integrity to fill the positions. They have felt obliged to take some of these immature men who have not been selected but who have pushed their own way into the university, secured their degree, and presented themselves for employment.

We believe, Mr. Chairman, that in this we face one of our greatest dangers; for instead of careful selection, we have come to the place where we have been forced to take men who otherwise would not have been chosen for the responsible places to which they were called.

I do not think this has been done to any large extent as yet, but we find the tendency growing in college boards as more and more the pressure is brought to bear by accreditation bodies; and the boards find themselves at their wits' end to know what to do to build up a faculty that will commend themselves to these organizations.

We believe, as a result of what has taken place, the wrong emphasis is being placed on certain things in our work. We believe that undue emphasis is being placed upon the idea of securing degrees from worldly institutions rather than training our youth for spiritual service in the cause of God. I suppose many of us could testify honestly that we have been hearing more during the past four years about degrees, accreditation, and universities than we have heard in our lifetime before. Some of us have had to learn a new vocabulary, in the language, in trying to fathom what this is all about and what it means. I remember a few years ago we didn't hear such things as we are talking about now; the emphasis now is being placed upon the importance of worldly studies and degrees, and this is having a mighty influence. Scores of teachers believe it is alright for them to be trained in outside universities, as a result of denominational sanction and encouragement in advising them to do so. Many will be lost, lose their hold upon God, and will not fill a position of responsibility in this cause that it was designed of God that they should fill. If they should fill positions of responsibility, many of them would bring into the denominational work influences that would lead further and further afield from the original purpose that was in the hearts of the men who established this work.

Your commission believes, therefore, that, as a denomination, we are drifting; that it is entrusted to us at this Autumn Council, of 1935, to endeavor to call a halt, to retrace our course, to drive down new stakes, and determine by the help of God that we will rectify anything that is wrong in what we undertook to do four years ago.

As was pointed out by our General Conference president, [C.H. Watson] in his address that was read yesterday morning [Review, November 21, 1935, pp. 3-8], other religious bodies have passed this way before us. As a result of their efforts to secure worldly recognition, we know they made shipwreck of their faith. There are exceptions in individual cases, but this statement is almost universally true. I think I would like to emphasize that fact and read, from an article, some quotations that Brother Wilcox wrote in the *Review and Herald*, which I think sets the situation clearly before us as [well as] any statement that we may choose to read. This is from Andrew D. Harmon, the president of Transylvania College, an article which appeared in the *Current History*, December 1930:

"The hitherto undisputed claim that the church college carried a more wholesome moral and spiritual atmosphere has been a compelling argument in its favor. But this claim is seriously questioned today. The requirements of standardizing agencies have compelled church colleges to shift their emphasis from morality to scholarship. This has changed the whole mental pattern and modified the spirit of church colleges. They have not developed, in recent years, along lines that express the urge and soul of vital Christianity. They have given up their natural element of greatest strength (religion), and taken up the tax-supported institution's element of greatest weakness (standardization) . . .

"The forces that terminate institutions have a long drift, but they move inexorably. Usually the change is at hand before society is aware. The passing of the church college is now tak-

ing place, and most of its devotees are looking upon the transition; some are even players in the drama, and do not recognize it." [Review and Herald, October 24, 1935, pp. 3-4]

I wondered, as I read this, whether Seventh-day Adventists were included in the last remark of this statement, The passing of the church college is now taking place, and most of its devotees are looking upon the transition; some are even players in the drama and do not recognize it. We have been in the period of transition for a period of four years. We recognize, on every hand, that there has been a shift of standards, a shift in the ideals, a shift in the emphasis, till many of our people throughout the churches of this land are becoming alarmed. We hear it on every hand. There is alarm, and that alarm is in the hearts of our best leaders and laymen that make up the membership of our churches. Since, as this man states, other denominations have passed along this way, the universal result has been the passing of the church college, dropping the ideals of the founders in the establishment of these schools. It seems to us of this commission that we need to restate whether or not we are able to follow the same course they have been following, follow it to its conclusion, and yet stand against the tide that has swept them off their feet. Can we maintain our ideals in their purity and yet reach, to the fullest extent, the recognition from the world and agree to being standardized by the world, which means that we must be under the domination of these worldly organizations?

I hold in my hand here a report that was rendered by the representatives of one of these accreditation organizations—a recent report that was made concerning one of our colleges. This college was being surveyed, by representatives of the accreditation board, to ascertain whether or not their application for accreditation would be granted. In the very outset of the report, we find the following statement was made:

"The original articles of incorporation in this particular college definitely state that the college was organized to provide special opportunity for men and women to become acquainted with the mission fields and to have education in branches and methods for the same. The school was a part of the missionary program of the church. That ideal has persisted to a considerable extent and has affected the spirit of the curriculum and methods of the college; but a change in emphasis has slowly taken place, and now education as a preparation for various careers and, most of all, for the art of living is the dominant ideal."

So we are commended here by representatives of the accreditation board; the comment was because of the fact that we have changed our ideals, are farther away from the idea of training men and women for the mission fields of the world, and are coming to the place where we train them for the various careers and the art of living. And what has been said of that school may possibly be observed in some of our other institutions. I am reminded of this earnest appeal in the eleventh psalm, the third verse, where he says in speaking of the drift in his day: "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

I want to present this question to you [1] in the light of what we have seen happen to other churches, [2] in the light of the accreditation board, and what they say of the drift in our

own institutions, [3] in the light of what we see in the way of scores of apostasies. I want to bring this appeal from the commission that if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? And some of us were very much afraid of what was going on, by our own inauguration, four years ago; that is, to some degree (God only knows to what degree), destroying the foundations of this denomination and bringing in to us and our work an element that is altogether unsafe—if our doctrines are to remain pure, if we are to remain loyal to the ideals that led to the establishment of this denomination and our institutions in the beginning.

I think of the words to ancient Israel, spoken by a prophet who was trying to speak evil concerning Israel; the Lord made him to speak a blessing instead of a curse. And Balaam spoke these words, "From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."—*Numbers 23:9*.

This has been God's program all through the ages. Israel shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations. And I believe that has a very definite application to the Israel of God here in this last generation, as He endeavors to convert the people and to take them to heaven. It seems to me that Israel needs to be free from the government of worldly organizations that know not God in these times.

I read in *6 Testimonies*, 145:

"Though in many respects our institutions of learning have swung into worldly conformity, though step by step they advanced toward the world, they are prisoners of hope. Fate has not so woven its meshes about their workings that they need to remain helpless and in uncertainty. If they will listen to His voice and follow in His ways, God will correct and enlighten them, and bring them back to their upright position of distinction from the world."

I wonder if we have drifted step by step backwards since the years when this earnest appeal was made to us, whether we would not have to admit that we have drifted far from that state. Oh, I hope it is still true that we are only prisoners of hope! I hope there is a way back to God's plan and original purposes that the founders of this faith had in their hearts when they started out to train men and women into Christian service; and if we will listen to God's voice and follow in His way, God will correct and enlighten us. I hope God will give us the correction that we need at this time. We do not profess to know what ought to be done, but we have suggestions. But somehow we know the foundation underlying this great educational system of the Seventh-day Adventists' must not be disturbed. It must stand if we, as a people, are to stand in our responsibility of carrying a peculiar message to the world preparing for the coming of Christ. Worldly standards are becoming more and more apparent. No one person is to blame, but we are to blame, for we have done the thing that has led to the situation that we find ourselves in. There is grave danger that our colleges will be turned away from their original design.

Ellen G. White says in *Counsels to Teachers*, 86:

"There is danger that our college will be turned away from its original design. God's purpose has been made known—that our people should have an opportunity to study the sciences, and at the same time to learn the requirements of His word.

Biblical lectures should be given; the study of the Scriptures should have the first place in our system of education." (also in *5 Testimonies*, 21 [1881])

On page 532 of the same book:

"God has revealed to me that we are in positive danger of bringing into our educational work the customs and fashions that prevail in the schools of the world. If teachers are not guarded, they will place on the necks of their students worldly yokes instead of the yoke of Christ. The plan of the schools we shall establish in these closing years of the message is to be of an entirely different order from those we have instituted."

*6 Testimonies*, 142:

"We need now to begin over again. Reforms must be entered into with heart and soul and will. Errors may be hoary with age; but age does not make error truth, nor truth error. Altogether too long have the old customs and habits been followed. The Lord would now have every idea that is false put away from teachers and students. We are not at liberty to teach that which shall meet the world's standard or the standard of the church, simply because it is the custom to do so. The lessons which Christ taught are to be the standard. That which the Lord has spoken concerning the instruction to be given in our schools is to be strictly regarded; for if there is not in some respects an education of an altogether different character from that which has been carried on in some of our schools, we need not have gone to the expense of purchasing lands and erecting school buildings."

And, from page 534 of *Fundamentals of Education*, I read:

"There is constant danger among our people that those who engage in labor in our schools and sanitariums will entertain the idea that they must get in line with the world, study the things which the world studies, and become familiar with the things that the world becomes familiar with. This is one of the greatest mistakes that could be made. We shall make grave mistakes unless we give special attention to the searching of the Word."

From page 535:

"Light has been given me that tremendous pressures will be brought upon every Seventh-day Adventist with whom the world can get into close connection. Those who seek the education that the world esteems so highly, are gradually led further and further from the principles of truth until they become educated worldlings. At what a price have they gained their education! They have parted with the Holy Spirit of God. They have chosen to accept what the world calls knowledge in the place of the truths which God has committed to men through His ministers and prophets and apostles. And there are some who, having secured this worldly education, think that they can introduce it into our schools. But let me tell you that you must not take what the world calls the higher education and bring it into our schools and sanitariums and churches. We need to understand these things. I speak to you definitely. This must not be done."

As a result of the study the educational commission has given these matters, as we have reviewed them personally and collectively—this instruction that is upon the record books for us, that chartered our course in establishing our institutions—it has become a profound conviction with us that we are drift-

ing and that we have departed far from the blueprint that God gave to this people in the matter of establishing and operating our schools. We therefore have been led to the conviction that it is not necessary for this denomination to accredit six senior colleges. We do not believe the pressure we seemed to be under four years ago was all actual. Part of it, we believe, was unreal. And we believe some of the pressure that did exist at that time has been lessened.

We have come to a time, in carrying forward our medical work, when the accreditation boards governing medical college work have now reduced the number of medical students that can be received by the college annually to a hundred or less. Some of those who are accepted by our medical college come from outside institutions not of our faith. Some come from private Seventh-day Adventist schools. Eighty percent come from our denominational schools, making a group of some eighty that can be received annually into our medical college. We do not believe that it is necessary to have a large number of educational institutions accredited by worldly organizations in order to prepare such a small number of premedical students.

We find, according to our investigations, what seems to be accurate information, that many of our schools can go on with teachers' training work by maintaining what they have already accredited with State Departments of Education and with local educational institutions. And the question of teacher training does not loom up so large as it did four years ago. We feel that the question of training nurses is not so acute. The number taking pre-nursing work is not so acute that it requires wholesale accreditation of our Seventh-day Adventist schools. But, with the accreditation of our junior college departments and our junior colleges, as such, in certain localities—and few of them—we would be able, at least for the present, to take care of the need of having some of our schools standardized and recognized in certain courses in order to do preparatory work.

Therefore, we believe that we should take steps, very definite steps at this council, looking toward a very definite effort to minimize the dangers that we face and the perils that we are facing on every hand as a result of the step we took four years ago. We believe that if two senior colleges in North America [PUC and EMC] were to secure accreditation of their senior work, it would furnish us ample facilities for giving courses where senior college accreditation is necessary. And if that is true, then, as a people, we should set ourselves to the task of operating the rest of our institutions without seeking for worldly recognition. We believe we ought to send out a clarion call from this council—a call to our youth who are seeking a training in worldly institutions to come out of these institutions and endeavor to help them find places of responsibility in the cause of God where they can gain experience that will fit them for a life of missionary endeavor.

We are ready to admit that in our action of four years ago we went too far. We find that we made a mistake. We believe that authority was given that gave too wide a range to the plan of our institutions seeking for accreditation from these organizations. And if it was a mistake, we believe God will forgive that mistake and lead us back to the right plan, only as we are willing to face and acknowledge the mistake and turn our faces

toward the truth and find the way out.

We believe that we should endeavor to change the emphasis that has been placed on worldly standards and degrees; that we should begin to turn the emphasis in our educational work upon training young men and women to go out and preach this message with power. We need young women as Bible workers, who will also teach this message with power. We need to train young men and women to go to the mission fields in the world with strong abiding faith in God and this message, without having that faith lessened or in any way minimized by contact with worldly schools and organizations that do not believe in God and this message. We should train them in our own schools and ignore standards of the world to a large degree—to the degree that their standards modify the standards of Seventh-day Adventists. Therefore I think we are prepared at this time to bring you the findings that our commission has prepared.

Professor [W.E.] Nelson (president of PUC, 1921-1934, and the secretary of the General Conference Department of Education, 1933-1936), with your permission, I am asking to come forward and read these recommendations to us. Accordingly the following report was read by Professor Nelson [as published in the *Review and Herald*, November 28, 1935, page 6]:

(INSERT XEROXED SHEET ATTACHED)

#### EXTRACTS OF THE DISCUSSION WHICH FOLLOWED ELDER BRANSON'S REPORT

Professor [W.E.] Nelson [Secretary of the Educational Department, General Conference]: Mr. Chairman [C.H. Watson], I move the adoption of this report . .

#### **The Chairman:**

The question is on the motion to adopt.

#### **Elder Branson:**

. . Just a few words by way of explanation. In choosing Pacific Union College and Emmanuel Missionary College as the two colleges designated here for the securing and maintenance of accreditation by the accreditation boards, we did not make this choice because we feel that they were superior to the others. It was just largely a matter of geography. One on the west and one toward the east and situated in about the center of the constituency of our people in the East and the Western States.

In suggesting that the other four colleges [UC, AUC, WMC, WWC] should continue their work as senior colleges without accreditation, we did not believe, nor do we believe now, that we are doing them any injustice in any way or crippling them in the matter of securing student attendance more than at the present time. Our colleges that have not succeeded in securing college accreditation are full to overflowing. It seems to have made practically no difference in student enrollment of these schools . .

We believe that the report of this meeting and the feelings of our own people throughout the field will result in training a

large number of young people to these [unaccredited] institutions that seek especially to train for our own work, and which do not undertake to give a special training for the professions .

**W.A. Nelson, [President] of New Jersey [Conference]:**

I am speaking as a father of four children. I have a boy in the second year of college and a girl starting in the academic course, and other children coming on, soon ready for their academic work. I have been concerned by the large agitation concerning accreditation. There has grown up a spirit among many of our colleges to be accredited. This influence is not good upon our young people. For the sake of my boys and girls, for the sake of the other young people in this movement and for the future of this cause, I am thankful to the Lord for the note of reformation sounded here this morning, giving them the imprint of our schools and leaving that imprint upon the rank and file of our people.

I was riding on the train with a Baptist director for the State of Wisconsin who has charge of one hundred and fifty-six Baptist churches. He told me he had eliminated every fundamentalist preacher out of those churches except three, and he expected to clean them up within the year. That is what a Baptist university did for the Baptist denomination. The Chicago University is almost entirely responsible for what has happened to the Baptist churches of America.

My answer to that man was to tell him what God has done for my soul. It was an argument he could not answer, and when he left me he took my hand and thanked me. I gave the one argument that will answer modernism—the converting power of God on my soul. I believe we started on the same road, the highway that will head to the undermining of the foundations of this movement.

I believe God is at this time calling for repentance and for us to turn about face and to take our stand and escape the consequences and turn to the right. The Lord has counseled us not to be connected by so much as a thread, and yet some of our schools are so bound to worldly systems that we cannot cut the rope. It will take a decided attitude on our part to save them. I would feel terrible if, as a denomination, we would have to travel the same desert road that the other Protestant denominations have been traveling and, as sure as we start on these roads, we will turn out in the same way.

I believe we are men that can face a crisis. I believe we can face it, and under God take a stand that we should take. I know that brethren connected with our colleges are wondering what this is going to mean to them. I imagine they can see serious difficulty if these resolutions are adopted, as I think they will be. I do not believe we should counsel our fear. I think we should counsel the guiding of the Lord. As individuals we are supposed to take our stand. When we hold [evangelistic] meetings, men who have families take their stand and face the peril of losing their jobs. Shall we as a church refuse to face problems? I think we should march forward irrespective and surmount the difficulties and the burdens the Lord has laid upon our General Conference president to take a stand, and I am sure God's hand will be with us.

**Elder Watson:**

I think we all felt, in 1931 when this matter was brought to us, that we were discussing a very important thing. I believe those men who voted "yes" as well as those who voted "no" understood that, and that they had a sense of their definite responsibility. We have all been observers of that vote since 1931. I am glad to have the opportunity of meeting so many leaders of the Work. I personally believe the vote we took at that time was in the wrong direction. I have been instructed by the Word and the writings of Sister White very definitely about this since that time. The instruction is so definite. It seems to me that we have to choose what has been so plainly stated, whether or not we will not enter upon a course and compromise. It seems to me that we should recognize this as we come to a discussion of these recommendations. We now face a real choice as the brother has quoted to you from the Testimonies that have helped to instruct and bring me to a decision that is so very definite . . .

I just want to say to you, Mr. Chairman and to the delegates, it is in my heart to know that the voice of God is speaking to me in that instruction. I think we entered upon a course wrong in principle in 1931. We committed ourselves to a program of education that, as we have followed it, is turning more and more the control of that program into the hands of worldly men; I do not see how we can maintain the ideals that God has given to us, [while] following their program. So I believe the report of this commission calls us to the right side. If it may work out, I feel sure this report is getting quite a ways from wrong to right, and I believe you and I feel before God that we should support influences that have been brought to us from the work of this commission. I believe God has placed before us very definitely the standards that we have, and we do not have to go to the world to inquire. I think we have been mistaken in accepting standards from the world in education and in other standards . . .

**Elder [S.A.] Ruskjer [Canadian Union Conference]:**

I believe that the entire future of the youth of this denomination is dependent upon maintaining, in the institutions of education, the educational policies of this denomination, right principles and clinging to the blueprint God has given to us.

Not very long ago I had the privilege of visiting with the man who stands at the head of the schools of an entire denomination. During the course of our conversation, he said that he was deeply concerned over the trend of his denomination, stating that his denomination was rapidly losing its youth, and I know his statement is correct. He stated that it seems to him the way schools at the present time, colleges and seminaries, are drifting in a worldly direction, years from now they will cease to exist if we continue to drift in this direction. I asked him why he made such a statement; he pointed out to me that since schools had reached out, affiliated with the universities, and employed teachers who have been trained in non-Christian universities, they have come back into the schools, brought to the school-room a spirit of unbelief in the Book of all books, and we are drifting.

As a member of this denomination, I do not want to be a party, in that direction, in any plan that will make it more difficult for our youth to hold true to the fundamentals that God has given to us. I do not think that we are throwing any halo of

glory upon the two institutions that we are recommending to maintain accreditation. I think we should pray earnestly for these two. Decidedly, I think we should eliminate these from the accredited class if we can.

I believe we are beginning to realize the difficulties and to come back to the right way.

**W.A. Nelson:**

I am thankful, too, that we have found out our mistake. It increases my faith in the leadership of the movement. I am very thankful for the new trend that has been started in our midst yesterday morning and again this morning. The resolution makes recognition of two colleges that are to have accreditation and be supported and maintained by the denomination.

Four colleges are disappointed, evidently, because each one is not among the two. It is no better for one college to be disappointed than for another. I believe we must have accredited colleges, and two is altogether sufficient for the needs of our small denomination . . .

I believe the underlying motive that is promised in this reformation is the value of our youth and not the cost in money to our denomination. We are burdened for the salvation of our boys and girls and their place in this movement. We are burdened to finish the work. We are not so much concerned with the cost as the value of these boys and girls. I wish we could have changed the introduction to these resolutions to that effect . . .

**Elder [F.M.] Wilcox [editor of the Review and Herald]:**

Four years ago I stood very decidedly against the accreditation in any form. I stand on practically the same ground today. I was a member of this commission, and I united with my brethren in presenting this report because it seems to me it was the best under the circumstances.

I am confronted in all my thinking on this question with two or three very positive statements in the Spirit of Prophecy. Sister White says our union schools, our colleges, should be prepared to furnish our medical schools [FE 489-491; CT 479-481]. This is emphasized again and again. I must recognize this, and I must take it and balance it up with the other instruction that has come from her. When I read this statement, I have been led to consent to any form or degree of accreditation of our schools. This would require at least junior accreditation on the part of some of our schools. It does not require senior accreditation. I believe that the educational policies that the world has fastened upon the denomination is like a great octopus. Its tentacles reach out to every school; and, in this report of the commission, we are merely clipping some of the tentacles of that octopus, and I hope in God that the time will come when we can take our students clear away from worldly things in our schools.

When we took our stand four years ago in favor of accreditation, while I opposed it, I believe my brethren who favored it were just as honest as I, and I was glad when we took the stand that we were being safeguarded; but, just as Professor Nelson said in his last speech, our schools threw their whole heart and soul into it—as we do with Harvest Ingathering.

In the last few years there has been a university bias. I tell you how I think we can protect that. I think we should enunciate the principles we have heard from this desk, to return to our

old paths; and, in our personal influence as workers, to turn the hearts of our parents and children away from the wrong way. I believe it would go much further than any resolution that we can pass here . . . While I favor this report, it is a compromise; I favor it as a compromise, and I hope there will come a time next year when we can return free from these influences all about us.

**President Andersen:**

I feel perplexed and confused. I cannot quite harmonize the speech of yesterday by Elder Watson [Review, 11/21/1935] and the speeches today in favor of accreditation. If we do not accredit our medical schools, we fear what can happen to us, we are today told. We were told yesterday to exercise faith. I do not honestly see how I can go back and repeat your speech, Elder Watson; and, when the brethren ask me, “Are we tied by a thread?” say “Not a thread.” How can I harmonize that by what we are doing today when we authorize accreditation for all our academies, for all of our junior colleges, and for all?

And now we think we have saved the cause from these wicked things by eliminating three from accreditation. I am afraid we will rue this day if we go ahead with this program.

Four years ago we did make a mistake. We made a mistake, as you say. I stand for accreditation. I don’t want you to misunderstand that—for the kind of accreditation the Testimonies speak of, and it is right to accredit to meet the medical standards; and if these are to be based in the future on a three years’ course, then we must be ready. We cannot blow hot and cold.

I do not see, Brother Watson, how I can go home and stand for your speech to adopt and accept the motion today.

**Elder Rice:**

Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to appear opposed to this resolution, but I remember four years ago when I was talking to Elder McElhaney about this matter when the vote was taken. He said we will see the day when we will rue what we have done. Now we have accredited two senior colleges [PUC and WWC]. Now we propose to recommend that another college be accredited, and that all junior colleges proceed with caution. If this is wrong, how can it be right to recommend to accredit another? If we should not be tied by so much as a thread, why not cut loose?

**Elder Watson:**

We have a medical college that is giving the Cause wonderful service. I think I shall say nothing that is not already known when I say that the medical college has received criticism from time to time because of this and that, but it has an encouraging record both of the work it does and the results of that work. When I go to the mission fields and observe there the medical missionary work that is being done and the influences that have been generated by that work and the place and play of those influences in the light and in the scope of our missionary work in those places; we are bound to recognize the service that has been rendered in that work is a service that could not possibly be rendered by any other class of workers.

Continued on the next tract

We have to consider the special value of this work to this cause generally. Now, we recognize that very much of the urge of accreditation for educational work has come from the medical college, for it can only carry on its [regular] work on that basis, the basis allowed by the American Medical Association. That we have met with friendliness toward our medical college has been something we have recognized as being brought to us under the influence of God. No matter what the character of the men might have been, they have manifested and expressed that friendliness; and we have recognized that God had certainly brought it to us in His own way and by His own knowledge of our needs.

Unless we decide to wholly discontinue that [regular] medical college, there has to be accreditation of the schools that prepare students for entrance to the courses in the college. There is no other way of having them enter there. There has to be certain specialized training of at least some of the teachers that prepare students for entrance to these schools in which that training is given, and these schools in which that [regular] training is given must be accredited. These must be at least junior colleges. That is why the report holds to accredit to the status of junior college except in the cases of two institutions.

**W.E. Nelson:**

(Answering a question propounded by Elder Verner Johns) Item number two [of the recommendations] does not make it obligatory for any school to have any recognition. This has placed a maximum and not a minimum on accreditation which leaves every school free. It leaves Pacific Union College and Emmanuel Missionary College free not to get it. It says they may. It does not say they shall. So it is not necessary, by mandate of this body, that Emmanuel Missionary College and Pacific Union College or the Lake Union go to all that expense. It may if it wishes. I think that must be taken into consideration.

I hope if these should feel that they don't want to accredit their schools, the schools for which they are responsible, they will have faith enough to stop it and show how it can be done.

**H.H. Hamilton:**

Mr. Chairman, I think it should be defined here what accrediting really is. I cannot read anywhere in the Testimonies that, in order to meet state requirements, we shall have to join up with the North Central Association or the Middle States Association or any other regional body, for these associations have no state recognition. They are not known by the state. They have no legal sanction or status.

If we are obliged to accredit our schools at all, as some seem to think, to meet the requirements of the statements in the Spirit of Prophecy [*Medical Ministry*, pp. 57-58, *Councils To Teachers*, pp. 480-481] (if this is the real interpretation), why cannot we get state recognition instead? Personally, I do not believe in any accreditation at all from outside sources. If we are going to come out of Babylon, why not come altogether out, and not have two or three schools in?

**Dr. [P.T.] Magan [president of CME]:**

Mr. Chairman, I am not rising to discuss in any way the entire question. I have not been here. I only got here late last night from Toronto where it was my duty to attend a meeting of the Association of AMA colleges, and . . . the proposal was put

forth that the medical colleges should be obliged to go on a three-year pre-medical basis, and that means a three-year accredited basis. That is not the law yet, but that was brought up by Dr. Paterson, the president, in his annual address; and it seems to have met with practically universal favor. In all probability by another year or so, you will see that rule . . . I am stating this to you because as sure as medical schools are obliged to go to a three-year basis, then within a year or two years junior colleges are out of the list . . .

**W.A. Nelson:**

Carrying out the instruction given Monday morning by Elder Watson and the counsel given yesterday morning by Elder Branson, I think we will be altogether unfortunate, Mr. Chairman, to tear down anything already built up. The value of the past two years in educational work has been wild agitation for accreditation, giving publicity to accreditation in our schools, and educating the minds of our young people toward accreditation.

There is nothing wrong in high attainment. That is held up in the Spirit of Prophecy—very high attainment. I am altogether opposed, as I expressed yesterday afternoon, to this wild seeking for accreditation and publicity attending the same . . .

**Elder Watson:**

The facts involve us in the consideration of whether or not we will continue with an educational program that has become more and more worldly or whether we will start an educational plan that is in harmony with the instruction we have received from God. The plan of accrediting our schools, adopted four years ago, has been a very strong contributing factor during these four years to our educational program becoming more and more worldly in its character, in its aim, in its determination to meet the requirements of outside accreditation bodies . . . These accreditation bodies have not only shown their determination, they are determined to control the program of our educational work and also the methods by which that program shall be carried out. There is no doubt about it.

**Elder Branson:**

It seems to members of the commission that we are shut up to three courses of procedure. All of these three views have been agitated on the floor of the council. One is that we do nothing to try to turn back the tide of worldliness flooding our schools, do nothing to meet or quiet the fears of those who think we are in the wrong way . . . We cannot conceive of this council taking a stand of that kind. It seems to us that something must be done. It is imperative that something should be done to turn the tide back again, and to turn the great number of our young people, in our churches who are in the universities, into the general denominational endeavor rather than have them in the outside universities.

We feel, on the other hand, that a great number of suggestions have been made that go to the other extreme—to sweep aside altogether this plan for accreditation of our schools. We think these suggestions would be premature. It may come to that. It may come to the place where we shall have to close the [regular] medical college, but I join the president of the General Conference and say that, if it is necessary to do that to stem the tide of worldliness, I would be favorable to it.

I do not believe that this denomination must be led into a worldly position by any institution in our ranks. I do not believe that it is the desire of the medical college; yet it has been the urge that has come from the medical college, to urged us to accredit this thing four years ago; and it will be the urge from that school to continue on as is. I don't believe that we should be hasty in an action to brush aside accreditation; that would mean closing the [regular] medical college, closing all [regular] teacher training.

I believe in the plan suggested by the commission, that which adequately provides for the meeting of every need of the medical college for the present. We do not have a three-year preparatory course yet. We do not know that it will ever be a three-year course. If it ever comes to a three-year course, we can accomplish that without accrediting all our colleges, and can go on as we have . . .

**W.E. Howell [Secretary of General Conference Educational Department, 1918- 1930]:**

As a member of this commission, I am for the report. I opposed the accreditation for so many years, guided by the teaching of the Spirit of Prophecy as I believed them, and still believe them, though I find it difficult to orient myself to the present situation without analyzing it a bit. I believe in the integrity and loyalty of our college men in the matter of accreditation. They have set about to do well what they are authorized to do. They were faced with a problem new in kind and in experience, and were compelled to feel their way as they went. Authorization to accredit removed considerable restraint in the matter of resorting to worldly centers of education; college administrators were under much pressure to over-step proper bounds, and in spite of the fact that bounds were set up in the authorization act. We must be careful, and not be critical of our college leaders. I believe in the principle of accreditation, but with limitation . . . [Unfortunately, Elder Howell, along with the rest, failed to see that these counsels require that a special [*Medical Ministry*, pp. 61-62; *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, pp. 534-536; *Loma Linda Messages*, pp. 899-903] education should be given to those who desire to "practice as regularly qualified physicians."]

**Elder [J.F.] Piper [Union College board chairman]:**

This whole issue is revolving around EMC and Union College. I think I am correct in saying that, for we have been concerned. I think this question is perhaps one of the most important that has been considered by this body since I have been meeting with it.

The policy provided, in 1931, that we only select teachers with definite Christian experience to enter upon graduate training in the universities of the world. Experience has taught us that this is impossible, for the moment we set the standards for teaching efficiency, with a university training, that moment every young man and young woman who seeks to reach the highest in teaching feels forced to enter upon the training that will bring him to the highest place, and we have not been able to control it. We have such a situation here. As a result of that action within the last four years, forty of our young people were in one university at the same time seeking training to help them reach their objectives in education. If you can continue this program, which destroys our own denominational ideals of true educa-

tion, then we are wasting our time by discussing the report of this commission. It gives some of us a burden, for it has shown itself to be beyond the control of the policy adopted in 1931. The medical college was at one time the chief urge for accreditation. It is a large part of the urge today; and, if it comes to a choice between whether we continue the [regular] medical college or go worldly, my vote shall be that we shall not continue our [regular] medical work; and, as a leader in the denomination, I am calling upon you, in the fear of God, to take this step to keep the principles of true education from being lost to us. That is my appeal. It is silly and useless of us to go to the world with any statement that God has given us, the principles of true education, and then take steps that will head us toward a total ignorance of these principles in the very near future. These are the steps that we have taken in the last four years. We are urged to chose between certain things. The training of educators in the service of this denomination requires that our students shall be fitted, whether we shall keep the doors of our [regular] medical college open or close them.

**Elder [Herber H.] Votaw [Religious Liberty Department]:**

I think Brother Watson's talk just now has risen to the height of his Tuesday morning talk, yet we are preparing to send boys to hell in three of our schools. If this is the plan, we have no right to set up two colleges [PUC, WWC]—already set up, going to set up a third one [EMC], and do the very thing that we ought not to do. I cannot see any difference between two and six for the whole system of schools. If this accreditation is wrong, it is wrong altogether. It is wrong in two of them. I cannot bring myself up here to find any agreement between the speech of the president of the General Conference and the report of this commission. The commission says you have only two schools already in. They are accredited schools. We are going to keep one accredited and are not going to take the other out without wrecking many of our other schools. Let us face the thing—do one thing or the other . . . I cannot see it any other way, between sending boys and girls to hell from three schools or six. If it is wrong let us quit it.

Oh, but you say that we are not ready to do that. Our commission does not recommend it. I do not know how to say this without it sounding wrong. I wish I did because I admire these men. I love them; but, when men with definite convictions came before the commission and pointed out the same thing, they could not see a single place where they could alter this report. I wonder if they had their minds made up. They all talk just alike. I believe in the manifest difference of opinion. We had better take more time to study before we vote. I cannot see any connection between any speeches as the president of the denomination has made and the report of this commission. One says it is wrong, and the commission says we will do it for three schools. If this comes up for a vote I am going to say, "No," long enough for my vote to register "no."

I feel that it is a question that has far-reaching influence. I want to say that I do not believe that we are relieving this situation by cutting the dog's tail off by an inch at a time. I believe the Spirit of God has led this people. The Spirit of God has spoken to us in different ways, and we have been able to see our course and retrace our steps. I consented to it [accreditation] in

my mind, but my heart was not with it, for it was hard to see how it was necessary to conform to the ways of the world, the plans of the world, and yet not be of the world.

Yesterday as I listened to that elegant address, my heart was in tune with it. I felt then and I still feel that God spoke to this people in that message; but it is perplexing to me today. I want to say this, that I have all confidence in this commission, and I believe that they are men of God; but I must say my own conviction, that, if the discourse that we listened to yesterday had been delivered in the hearing of this commission weeks before, we might have had a different report.

I am, of course, speaking my own convictions; but it is perplexing me a bit to know how we can carry out the resolution of yesterday morning in the face of having that wonderful address printed and sent to all of our people [in the *Review*, 11/21/1935 pp. 3-8], then print the report that is brought by this commission today, and have that given to the people [*Review*, November 28, 1935, p. 6]; for our people are just as intelligent as well as we, and I do not see how we can be consistent in sending out that wonderful address and this report of compromising with one or two schools.

I am the president of the Union College board. My interests are there. I am glad if this is the proper way to do—by accrediting EMC and PUC. I am glad they have your accreditation and recognition; but, brethren, I cannot yet see the consistency of this. I appreciated the remarks Elder Watson made. He has clarified the situation some. Maybe it is necessary for me to go on and allow the world to direct our movement, in connection with fitting our young men and women for medical work. Possibly that is so, but I do not see light in compromising with the world in any degree; I am ready to cast my vote contrary to this recommendation because I do not see its consistency. I do not see light in the proposition.

I would like to move that it be referred back to this commission again for the purpose of being allowed to interview the commission.

[A motion carried by the council that the report of the educational commission be referred back to the committee for further study, in order that individuals who desire to do so may come and offer suggestions or make objections. The statement following by Elder Branson is in the meeting after these individuals had interviewed the committee.]

[Next Day]

**Elder Branson:**

Last night we called a meeting of the educational commission, and we had planned not to run during the whole evening, but found it necessary to do so; for we had invited individuals who wished to do so, and we wanted to give them ample opportunity to present any matter they thought should be given consideration by the commission . . .

I might say that, after our meeting [last night] and during our meeting this morning, after careful study of all the representations, the committee was also of an unanimous opinion to return its report without any material change . . . We find it impossible to change this report and yet carry out the very definite convictions of the entire membership of the educational com-

mission.

**Elder E.K. Slade [Walla Walla College board chairman]:**

Mr. Chairman, I do not intend to take the position that accreditation can be abandoned now. I wish that it might be. We went into it in a way that was not wise, and I am not taking the position that we can abandon it now, advisedly. It seems to me we should not be hasty in reaching a position here . . . It would not be wise for the commission, the chairman of the commission, to force upon this delegation something that is not clear to us. It would be unfortunate to have a vote here on which we are divided so seriously. We cannot afford to make a mistake. We have made mistakes. We might have made other mistakes in 1931, but we don't want to make another mistake now by hastily voting something here that we feel is not agreeable to all.

I think of Walla Walla College. Last year its enrollment was the largest. I suppose it will be large this year. Good work is being done in this college. We sought accreditation because it was voted. I think every member of our board and faculty thought this is the General Conference policy; we want to be true and fall in line without being hasty in the matter . . . We, of the northwest, have visited our own people and the educational people of the state up there. I don't know what they will think of us or what they will say if we go back and say we have changed our minds; we don't want accreditation any more.

Really, Mr. Chairman, we are placed in an embarrassing place if this recommendation passes. I believe in our medical school . . . I do not believe we would be warranted in coming here and saying that we must abandon our medical work. I believe it would be another big blunder for this delegation to vote here to have Walla Walla in an embarrassing condition that this recommendation will leave us in if it passes.

Your vote, the majority vote, will place us there; we could not help ourselves. We would have to go back and bear it and get along the best we can.

Mr. Chairman, I propose an amendment that would place Walla Walla in number one with Emmanuel Missionary College, Walla Walla College and Pacific Union College, and that number two be changed to harmonize with it. I would like to make that as a motion to amend . . . [The end of our copy of Branson's report.]

“The design of our colleges has been stated again and again, yet many are so blinded to the god of this world that its real object is not understood. God designed that our young men should there be drawn to Him, that they should there obtain a preparation to preach the gospel of Christ, to bring out of the exhaustless treasury of God's Word things both new and old for the instruction of the people. Teachers and professors should have a vivid sense of the perils of this time and the work that must be accomplished to prepare a people to stand in the day of God.

“Some of the teachers have been scattering from Christ instead of gathering with Him. By their own example they lead those under their charge to adopt the customs and habits of worldlings. They link the hands of the students with fashionable, amusement-loving unbelievers, and carry them an advance step

toward the world and away from Christ. And they do this in the face of warnings from heaven, not only those given to the people in general, but personal appeals to themselves. The anger of the Lord is kindled for these things.

“God will test the fidelity of His people. Many of the mistakes that are made by the professed servants of God are in consequence of their self-love, their desire for approval, their thirst for popularity. Blinded in this manner, they do not realize that they are elements of darkness rather than of light. ‘

Continued on the next tract

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