



# Why Investigate Walla Walla Now?

The North Pacific Union president discusses scrutinizing Walla Walla's religion faculty; the special commission reports.

## From the Board Chair: A Statement

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of former students, parents, pastors, constituents, and church leaders voicing concern regarding the theology department of Walla Walla College. When I came to this office in the spring of 1996, the files validated what I already knew—that my predecessor had been addressing what by then had become a serious situation. Concerns regarding issues that most mainline Adventists considered basic and non-negotiable were being raised, including—but not limited to—a literal, six-day Creation week; eschatology; atonement; inspiration; and the authority of Scripture.

Upon the recommendation of President W. G. Nelson and myself, the college board voted to establish a commission to address the current situation and make recommendations to the board (see interim report, below).

While we recognize that we cannot resolve all the theological issues in the church at large,

we do have a responsibility to foster the re-establishment of credibility as it relates to our constituents in the Northwest. We are optimistic that upon the completion of this process the college, the North Pacific Union, and our membership at large will be in a stronger position for having invested considerable energies to address these issues.

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President, North Pacific Union Conference

## From the Commission: An Interim Report

September 8, 1997

The WWC Commission was established by the College Board on May 5, 1997, to examine and assess the growing tensions arising out of concerns expressed by some graduates, parents, pastors, and others regarding the Theology Department.

The Commission has met four times during

the summer. Two meetings were held in Portland and two were held on the WWC campus. The last three have each involved meeting over a two-day period. All members of the Commission have been present for all the meetings. An additional teleconference was held more recently.

The Commission, after long deliberation, decided against electing a Chairperson, choosing rather to appoint Bryce Pascoe as facilitator to handle logistic and organizational concerns, and David Thomas as Secretary to record process and findings. Chairmanship of meetings has been shared by various Commission members.

The Commission understands its task to be that of identifying various issues related to the constituent concerns and, after assessment, to make recommendations to the Board as to how resolution can be found and relation-

ships and confidence restored.

To this point the Commission has forged itself into a cohesive working unit, displaying various and independent points of view. It has interviewed approximately half of the theology faculty, and is scheduled to interview the other half in September. The Commission is in the process of listing the elements contributing to the tension that it has found to date and expects to be able to provide a list of recommendations at the time of the November 10 meeting of the College Board.

Two more meetings of the Commission are planned, one for September 27 and 28 on the campus of the College, and one for November 1 and 2 off-campus, which hopefully should conclude the meeting of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,  
David E. Thomas, Secretary