



DYNAMIC

Steward

the power to live to submit to abide to give to serve

January-March, 2005

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Volume 9 Number 1

Turkish Delight vs Lentils

From the staff of Dynamic Steward

In his classic Christian series for children of all ages, C. S. Lewis tells how the White Witch of Narnia meets Edmund, one of the four children who accidentally enters Narnia through the wardrobe, and puts him under her spell.

Edmund's appetite is his downfall—for he becomes the witch's captive when he greedily eats a whole box of Turkish Delight and begs for more. In the original *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the artist clearly captures what one might look like after devouring a whole box of sugary candy.

This illustration puts me in mind of another story on the effects of diet. Four bright, young men were offered what was considered the best food and wine around—taken directly from the table of the king himself! But Scripture says, Daniel stepped out, determined that he would not defile himself by eating this rich fare [Dn 1].

Instead, he and his friends requested a ten-day trial of simple food and water. Depending on the translation, the food has been called pulse, lentils, or vegetables. You would think that such a short time might not do the trick. But "at the end of the ten days, they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food" (Dn 1:15). Not only did the lads pass this short-term test, but after the three-year training period, they proved to be far superior to their peers in knowledge and skill—in both books and life.

In this issue of *Dynamic Steward* we take up the topic of health and reflect on its relationship to stewardship. We know that how we care for our bodies—both physically and emotionally—shapes the quality of life we possess.

In order to live a life to the fullest and serve God faithfully, we need a balance of healthful practices in our lives—fresh air, sunlight, moderation, rest, exercise, proper diet, pure water inside and out, confidence in His power—all of these are remedies for optimal health (*Ministry of Healing*, p 128).

Magic spells aside, perhaps "Turkish Delight verses Lentils" is no way to title this writing after all. For there is room for most things, in moderation. But health, with a strong emphasis on balanced, wholesome living, is a non-negotiable for stewards of the Kingdom.

Application

Evaluation: Wholesome Food Intake

*Stoy Proctor, Director
Health Education
General Conference Health Department*

We appreciate Elder Stoy Proctor providing us with this guide to help you evaluate how well you are doing on your healthy food intake. It is easy to fall into a pattern of eating without taking a good look at how you are actually nourishing your body!

*Check out this
nutritional self-
evaluation to see
how you are
doing!*



Check how often you eat the following foods (columns A, B, and C), indicate the number of servings daily

Food Category	Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D		
	Less than 1X per week	Less than 1X per week	Less than 1X per week	Daily		
Grains 1. Whole grains, breads, crackers 2. Whole grain cereals (cooked – oatmeal, wheat, rye, etc.) 3. Whole grain cereals (dry – shredded wheat, Cheerios®)						
Vegetables 1. Deep green leafy vegetables (broccoli, cabbage) 2. Dark green salads (romaine, endive, red leaf) 3. Pumpkin, winter squash, sweet potato, carrot 4. White potato, turnip, parsnip						
Fruits 1. Citrus (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit, kiwi) 2. Papaya, mango, apricots, peaches 3. Apples, pears 4. Berries (strawberries, raspberries, blue or blackberries) 5. Raisins, dates, prunes, figs						
Legumes, Nuts and Meats 1. Beans (pinto, red, black, white) and peas (black-eye) 2. Soy protein entrees 3. Fish, lean chicken 4. Nuts (peanuts, walnuts, pecans, Brazil nuts, almonds) 5. Seeds (flax, sunflowers, sesame, pumpkin)						
Fats/Oils 1. Olive, canola, walnut, flaxseed oil 2. Margarine (no trans-fatty acids)						
Dairy 1. Dairy (low-fat, non-fat milks) 2. Plant milks (fortified with B ₁₂ , calcium, vitamin D) 3. Yogurt						
	Whole Grains	Vegetables	Fruits	Legumes	Fats/Oils	Dairy
My Intake						
U.S. Guidelines	6-9	3-5	2-4	1-2		3-4

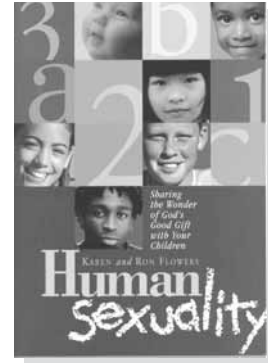
Human Sexuality

The new book, *Human Sexuality: Sharing the Wonder of God's Good Gift with Your Children*, is a welcomed and refreshing resource for Christian parents, educators, and leaders. The volume is a comprehensive curriculum framework for sexuality education, written from a Christian perspective.

If you have been looking for a guide to help you talk to your children with ease and wisdom, this book is a must. It will not sit on the shelf collecting dust, but will be a resource you will refer to again and again. In it, you will not only find the developmental or age-appropriate information you need to share, but wisdom to help you communicate this vital information in an acceptable manner. The authors have a way of upholding Christian values in a non-judgmental style.

"Six key concepts form the backbone for this framework," say authors Karen and Ron Flowers, directors of the Family Ministries Department at the Seventh-day Adventist World Headquarters. The broad conceptual areas include: 1) Human Development, 2) Relationships, 3) Personal Skills, 4) Sexual Behavior, 5) Sexual Health, and 6) Society and Culture. The book covers sexuality education beginning with infancy and moves through to grade 12 (approximately age 18).

About Narnia: A new single volume of C. S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia is available from Harper Collins Publishers. Also included is an essay by Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children." US \$29.99



By Karen and Ron Flowers
Department of Family Ministries

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Health ...

quotes

Our prayers should be for a sound mind in a healthy body.—*Juvenal*

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.—*Psalms 147:3*

He who has health has hope and he who has hope has everything.—*Arab Proverb*

I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.—*3 John 2*

Half the spiritual difficulties that men and women suffer arise from a morbid state of health.—*Henry Ward Beecher*

God may forgive your sins, but your nervous system won't.—*Alfred Korzybski*

Make each day useful and cheerful and prove that you know the worth of time by employing it well. Then youth will be happy, old age without regret, and life a beautiful success.—*Louisa May Alcott*

People who soar are those who refuse to sit back and wish things would change.—*Charles R. Swindoll*

Miracles may be denied, but healings are not ... Christ produces a sound faith, and faith has a therapeutic value. —*John H. Gerstner*

The Third “T”

*Elder Jean-Luc Lézeau, Acting Director
General Conference
Stewardship Department*

For a long time stewardship principles were presented as “the Four T’s”: Time, Talent, Temple and Treasure. By doing that, we were paying “lip service” to the notion that stewardship covered different aspects of our lives. This being said, most of the material developed by the stewardship department between the ‘70’s and the ‘90’s was reduced to the fourth T: tithes and offerings.

Although the results were quite striking at the beginning of this emphasis and there was a remarkable growth in tithe, there followed a constant decline in giving patterns. Unfortunately, our denomination has followed the same trend as any other Christian church: George Barna’s research on the matter speaks for itself (See www.barna.com).

Few stewardship leaders felt the need to present, let alone develop, material on the other three dimensions, although one could question if stewardship is really limited to four T’s. What, for instance, about our responsibility toward the environment? Was it not the first task God gave to Adam?

The Stewardship Council of the Franco-Belgian Union worked for years to develop material on spiritual gifts, then on time management, and finally on “the temple principle.” It took them over two years to decide what approach to take. It was out of the question to write another health book, although they reviewed dozens of Seventh-day Adventist health manuals to figure out what did exist. They were not in competition with the Health Department.

Besides, they had no qualifications to write more volumes on health, and our church already had an abundance of material. But in their investigation, they discovered that an important aspect of the Christian life was missing in all our literature—the topic of mental health.

The only way to grow

As Church leaders, how can we explain why some of our members have nervous breakdowns and why some think about committing suicide? What kind of faith can one have, to go to that kind of extreme? We may wonder, “Where is God?” and “What role does God play in the life of a Christian who is about to commit suicide?” Why isn’t the assurance of salvation transforming his life? If this is not the case, what is wrong with his real belief?

In Ephesians 4:13, Paul describes the goal of a Christian: “to be mature, as Christ was mature.” In other words, God’s plan for man is that he should develop *all* aspects of his being: the physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, and spiritual. They are all interrelated. Just like the body of Christ; when one part is hurting, all are suffering. To be able to do this, the first task of a steward is to connect to the only source of knowledge and strength that will allow him to grow and be like Christ. That is Christ Himself!

A needed ministry

But man does not live in a void. He is and was created to be in relationship. First, with his Creator, and, secondly, with other beings. The Bible does not promise us that interpersonal relationships, Christian or not, will be without problems. In fact, there is no promise that Christians will be spared the difficulties of this world. Most of the time we find the opposite to be true: as soon as a new believer decides to follow Christ, problems arise. And when those problems come, the type of relationship a person has with God will determine his response to the problem he has to face.

This is why the Council felt it necessary to develop materials to minister to the emotional health of church members. And for the same reason, I am not going to talk about formulas or physical training you should follow to stay healthy; our good doctors of the Health Department are better equipped than me to talk about that! But talking about our inner equilibrium is just another way to study character development or to consider how we may integrate God into all aspects of our lives. To help follow the thread of this kind of spiritual growth, the biblical character of Joseph was chosen. This is how the seminar “Joseph’s Journey into Egypt: Learning to Walk with God” came into being (“Itinéraires de croissance” Vie et Santé).

Is blind and naked good?

We learn much about Joseph’s character when his brothers plan to do away with him and he has to face the hard realities of life. First of all, he is deprived of the only item that showed him to be different from his brothers—his colorful coat. All of his distinction is gone and he is like everybody else—almost a non-entity. Next, he finds himself at the bottom of a pit. From the light of day to a dark-bottomed pit! He must have felt nearly blind. These two events, being naked and deprived of everything, and being blind, are metaphors of what one has to go through in life in order to find God. Some have to go through that experience several times before finding true meaning in life.

Joseph's coat represented all of his childish dreams as his father's favored son, his advantage over his brothers, his selfish dream of power, and his being the probable heir of his father's estate. It represented his plan for his life: "I have enough stored away for many years to come" (Lk 12:16-20). Isn't this the tragedy of our postmodern world? Showing off, relying on our own merits, and on the material things we have?

Ready to grow

In their blindness, Paul and Samson had to go through the same experience as Joseph for them to realize that the essentials in life are invisible. As long as we have not personally experienced the invisible presence of God, we are not ready to grow, and we are missing a fundamental ingredient in our life. We are not ready to walk with Him (See *Courageous Leadership*: Zondervan, Bill Hybels, p. 102).

It is when Joseph is broken, naked, and blind—when he relies entirely on God—that he is ready to grow in his relationship with Him. Not a word of complaint comes out of his mouth. He is ready for his journey with God. He is ready to learn and to face the trials that lay ahead of him.

I believe each one of us should undertake this kind of journey so that we may have a relationship with Him that will see us through the tests of this life. Are you ready for ?

It is when Joseph is broken, naked, and blind—when he relies entirely on God—that he is ready to grow in his relationship with Him.

stewardship

window news from the desk of
Enock Chifamba ...



Stewardship Seminars Held in SID

The Indian Ocean and Mozambique Unions were recently blessed by the ministry of Elder Jean-Luc Lézeau, Associate Stewardship Director of the General Conference. On July 20-23, all conference/field stewardship directors, treasurers, two pastors from each field, and pastors in the vicinity, gathered at the Union office in Madagascar for a stewardship conference.

Pastor Lézeau presented two seminars entitled: "Biblical Stewardship Foundations" and "Strategic Budgeting." He pointed out that tithes and offerings brought by unwilling hearts cannot be blessed of God. "Stewardship" Lézeau said "starts in the heart and not in the pocket." At the end of the seminar fifty-five leaders received stewardship certificates and pins.

The attendees were thrilled with the seminars—especially as they were conducted in French! Pastor Charlin Rabenamana, Stewardship Director for IOM said, "If my memory serves me right, this is the first seminar held in this territory given in French, without any need of translation."

Pastor Rabelohatdona, district pastor in Madagascar commented: "The concept of stewardship as a lifestyle and not just tithes and offerings was an eye-opener to me. I was also awakened to my role as a model for my members in the area of stewardship."

In Mozambique Elder Lézeau presented a seminar on a holistic approach to stewardship. Stewardship lessons were drawn from the life of Joseph. Elder Lézeau stated that Joseph was a good steward because he had a sense of the Divine. "One of the most important secrets of self-management is the sense of the Divine in your life," he said.

We are indeed grateful to have heard about stewardship as a lifestyle, and to have such inspiring seminars in our territory.

Supporting One Another

Dr. Kathleen H. Liwidjaja-Kuntaraf
Associate Director
General Conference Health Department

One day a man walked into a dentist's office and asked, "How much will it cost to extract a wisdom tooth?"

Bargaining at what cost?

One day a man walked into a dentist's office and asked, "How much will it cost to extract a wisdom tooth?" "\$130," the dentist replied. "That's a ridiculous amount," the man exclaimed. "Isn't there a cheaper way?"

"Well," said the dentist, "if I don't use an anesthetic, I can knock it down to \$100, but it would be very painful." "That's still too expensive," the man said.

"Okay," said the dentist. "I can save time if, instead of using my normal surgical procedure, I simply rip the tooth out with pliers. I could get away with charging \$50."

"Nope," moaned the man, "it's still too much."

"Hmm," said the dentist, scratching his head. "If I let one of my students do it for the experience, I suppose I could just charge you \$25."

"Marvelous," said the man, "book an appointment for my wife next week!"

What kind of support do we give our spouse? What kind of support do we give our children? Our coworkers in the office or our counterpart in the field?

Two blessings by one action

Matthew 7:12 says, in everything do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Jesus Christ admonishes that we follow His golden rule—a rule that is so simple and practical, but this principle is so often ignored. We expect other people to support us, but we do not apply the same rule to them. It is important to realize that whatever the Lord advises us to do is always for our own good.

In *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 534, we read: "Those who ... engage in the work of doing good to others by giving practical demonstration of their interest in them, are not only relieving the ills of human life in helping them bear their burdens, but are at the same time contributing largely to their own health of soul and body."

The effects of kindness and support

There are many studies done that show the positive impact of doing good and being kind to others. One such interesting study was conducted by Dr. David Spiegel and reported in the British journal, *The Lancet*. Initially the goal of the study was to disprove the study of Dr. Bernie Siegel, author of several books which proposed that psychological and social factors could prolong life in cancer patients.

Here is what Dr. Spiegel did. He randomly divided women with metastatic breast cancer into two groups. Both groups received conventional medical care—radical mastectomy surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and medications. One of the two groups was asked to meet together for ninety minutes, once a week, for one full year.

Each cancer patient in this group was encouraged to express her feelings about her illness and its effect on her life within a supportive environment. Each felt safe enough to express what she was feeling, including the fear of disfigurement, fear of dying, fear of being abandoned by her friends and spouse, and so forth.

This support group was led by a psychiatrist or social worker and a therapist who had breast cancer in remission. The therapy group patients visited each other in the hospital, wrote poems to each other, and even had a meeting at the home of a dying member. Five years later, Dr. Spiegel looked at the data and he said "he almost

SCRIPTURE:
John 13:35

fell off his chair.” Remember, his main purpose for the study was to disprove that psychological and social factors could prolong life in cancer patients.

Here are the results: The women who met in the weekly support group lived an average of *twice as long* as the other group of women without a support group. All of the women in the latter group were dead after five years. The only women still alive were those who had received the weekly support sessions. Also, the interval from the first metastasis to death was significantly longer in those who had received the weekly support.

Lower mortality?

So many studies reveal the impact of doing good to others. And these studies show the positive impact that doing good has on our immune system. Let me share one more such study. The Roseto study was published in the *American Journal of Public Health*. Roseto is an Italian-American town located in eastern Pennsylvania that has been studied intensively for over fifty years. When compared to Bangor and Nazareth, other nearby communities, the population of Roseto was found to have had a strikingly low mortality rate from heart attacks during the first thirty years it was studied.

It is interesting to note that risk factors for heart disease such as smoking, a high fat diet, diabetes, et cetera, were at least as prevalent in Roseto as in Bangor and Nazareth. All three communities were served by the same hospital facilities, water supply, and physicians.

The researchers could not understand why the incidence of heart attacks was so much lower in Roseto. They wondered if Roseto’s stable structure, its emphasis on family cohesiveness and the supportive nature of the Italian community that migrated there from southern Italy, may have been protective against heart attacks and conducive to longevity.

Roseto shifts

To their amazement, they were correct. In the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, Roseto shifted from three-generation households with a strong commitment to religion, relationships, and traditional values and practices of supporting one another to a less cohesive, fragmented, and isolated community. People started to live more individualistic lives, with little support for one another. This loosening of family ties and weakening of the community in Roseto was accompanied by a substantial increase in deaths due to heart attack. In fact, the mortality rate rose to the same level as that of Bangor and Nazareth, the neighboring communities.

This study again demonstrates the positive impact of supporting one another. God loves us, and when He advises us to lovingly support one another, *it is not only for the good of the receiver, but also for the good of the giver.*

“One another” commands

The question is, “How can we genuinely support one another?” By looking at the cross. Because at the foot of the cross, the ground is level. There, there is no uneducated or educated person, poor or rich, low or high ranking, black, brown, yellow or white. We all have the same value—the blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we need to support one another, including our spouse, our children, our coworkers, and our counterparts.

Love one another—Jn 13:35
Forgive one another—Col 3:13
Accept one another—Rm 15:7
Pray for one another—Jm 5:16
Comfort one another—1Th 4:18
Fellowship with one another—1 Jn 1:7
Be kind to one another—Eph 4:32
Show compassion to one another—IP 3:8
Be hospitable to one another—1 P 4:9

In the New Testament, there are seventy-five verses that are known as the “one another” commands. If we only lived according to these commands, what a heavenly environment we would experience. Not just in our families, but in our workplace and community. “The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love” (*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 415). Jesus says, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn 13:35).

When we love God and have a strong and healthy vertical relationship with Him, it will automatically produce a strong and healthy horizontal relationship to others. We do not have to worry as to what to say or what to do, because as the branch is connected to the True Vine, it will automatically bear the fruit of supporting one another in the form of accepting one another, forgiving one another, praying for one another, encouraging one another, and helping one another in the spirit of love.

As we serve the Lord today, may we continue to be connected to the True Vine, genuinely supporting one another from our hearts and become a blessing to others as well as to ourselves.

Bought With a Price:

The Stewardship of Health and Our Christian Journey

*Dr. Peter Landless, Associate Director
General Conference Health Department*

“Doctor, come immediately!”

The operation had gone smoothly and a healthy baby was delivered by Caesarean section. But the distressed tone of the voice on the telephone shattered my peaceful, yet busy pace of seeing patients in the office. “The patient is bleeding. Come immediately.”

A variety of causes and case scenarios raced through my mind—almost as rapidly as the speed I was driving to the hospital. Our mission office was situated in a rural setting and there was no blood bank.

As I entered the hospital, I remembered that my blood type and my dying patient’s were the same. After some persuasion, the staff took a unit of my blood, and we infused it into the pale and shocked body. The bleeding subsided and we transferred her to a center where blood was readily available.

A few days later she was back in the office, hale and hearty, with a beautiful baby girl and unending gratitude for the gift of my blood. This presented me with the golden opportunity of sharing the wonderful story of our Savior, who gave His blood to save us all. As I looked into her lovely brown eyes, glistening with tears of gratitude, I understood more clearly than ever before—we are “twice-over” Christ’s possession—made by Him, and purchased back with His blood.

Stewards of health

Paul exhorts us to do *all* to the glory of God (1 Cor 10:30). On at least three occasions he refers to the human body as the temple of God and tells us that God’s Spirit dwells in that temple (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16). This resonates with Jesus’ reference to His own body when He said, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days! ... But the temple He had spoken of was His body” (Jn 2:19, 21).

All our behaviors and attitudes should pay homage to God, because we are bought with a price. When an article is paid for, it belongs to the one who has paid the purchase price. We understand this when we get something for which we have planned, saved, and budgeted. We usually take care of our purchase with the same care and effort as the value we place on it.

God has given us wonderful instruction to enhance our stewardship of health. This concept does not fit with postmodern thinking which, on the one hand, proposes that if it tastes good, eat it; if it feels good, touch and experience it, regardless of the consequences. Yet early in the Old Testament, God gave His people instructions for healthful living, including diet, cleansing, and sexual behavior. These instructions were to be preventive and distinctive. While Jesus was here on Earth, He healed physical and mental diseases, linking forgiveness of sin with well-being and abundant life, and with a definite emphasis on emotional and mental health as well.

Wasted heartbeats?

Are there proven benefits to the stewardship of health? After all, life has only so many heartbeats—why “waste” some on exercise? Shouldn’t we eat, drink, and be merry, for who knows what will happen tomorrow? God has given amplified instruction through the counsel of Ellen White. Throughout her life, she was the channel of information which fashioned the church’s philosophy of health and spirituality. She spoke on many issues with prophetic insight, and science continues to confirm the revelations given her. She spoke out on the dangers of smoking and alcohol,

SCRIPTURE:
1 Corinthians 6:19, 20

discouraged the use of stimulants and flesh foods. She promoted a lacto-ova vegetarian diet. Does following these principles in the stewardship of health make any difference?

The “Adventist advantage”

In October 1966, *Time Magazine* reported the positive outcome of the first Adventist Health Study, and described the results as the “Adventist Advantage.” There was a reduction in most cancers and cirrhosis of the liver. Subsequent studies have shown a significant increase in longevity in those living the Adventist lifestyle. The results of follow-up studies and statistical analyses have been so compelling that the United States National Institutes of Health has allocated almost \$20 million for the conducting of Adventist Health Study II.

The scientific literature is replete with the benefits that accrue from a healthy lifestyle. We often talk about diet, but do we emphasize the benefits of exercise? Exercise has been proven to be a preventive measure in 1) high blood pressure, 2) coronary artery disease, 3) stroke, 4) type 2 diabetes, 5) osteoporosis, 6) controlling blood fats, 7) delaying the time to onset of Alzheimer’s, 8) diminishing the recurrence rate of some cancers, and 9) depression.

Exercise is not only preventive, but also beneficially influences the outcomes of hypertension, coronary artery disease, stroke, diabetes (types 1 and 2), Alzheimer’s disease, emotional stress, and depression. These outcomes are compelling as we see the benefits of being good stewards of our health. But that is not where it ends!

“Housesitting”

In his book, *It’s Not About Me*, Max Lucado uses a striking illustration to describe two nightmare scenarios of house-sitters who might take care of your home in your absence. The first sitter redecorates your home—totally different to your tastes—and uses the reason that the house needs to express his tastes accurately! Your immediate response? “It’s not yours!” The second situation depicts neglect. No dishes are ever washed, no trash removed, and the beds are never made. The house-sitter’s reason? It is a temporary arrangement! Both house-sitters make the same mistake: they act as if the dwelling is their own to do with as they please. How could they? How can we? We are bought with a price, and yet so often we act as if we belong to ourselves.

Does stewardship of our health give benefits? Of course it does. How do you do as far as rest is concerned? Do you take time to recover, to “sharpen the axe,” as the saying goes? If we lived with a greater consciousness of the stewardship of health, we would be more effective tools in the Master’s hands. Peterson’s *Message Bible* summarizes the point so well: “Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever” (1 Tim 4:8).

Wholeness in brokenness

We can also enjoy wholeness in our brokenness, as we practice a conscious stewardship of health. Many people are subject to disabling and debilitating disease processes. By taking adequate rest, eating healthfully, exercising to whatever capacity possible, quality of life can be improved. The story is told of a water carrier who had two pots—but one had a crack in it. The cracked pot delivered only half the amount of water as the undamaged pot. But when the damaged pot felt downhearted about

The distressed tone of the voice on the telephone shattered my peaceful, yet busy pace of seeing patients in the office. “The patient is bleeding. Come immediately.”

being inadequate, the water carrier tenderly pointed out the beautiful flowers watered by the cracked pot on its daily journeys to collect water. The carrier purposely scattered seeds on that side of the road, knowing the benefits the leaking pot would bring to the seedlings. And then he explained even further that, because of the dysfunction of the cracked pot, beautiful flowers decorated the master’s table!

God owns the temple of our bodies. As “house-sitters,” we need to be faithful and caring stewards. Our opportunities will hold us accountable as to how we use them.

“Have faith in the Lord your God, and you will be upheld; have faith in His prophets, and you will be successful” (2 Chr 20:20).



Life in Balance

*Jonathan Duffy, Director
Adventist Health Ministries
South Pacific Division*

*“The Spirit of God has
made me; the breath of the
Almighty gives me life”—
Job 33:4*

All this and much more

Stewardship. The mention of the word more often than not evokes the image of money and giving, but stewardship is this and much more. A steward is someone who has been entrusted with something of value on behalf of someone else. As God’s stewards, we are accountable to Him for how we use His valuable gifts (See Matthew 25:14-18).

When I was about seventeen, my father bought me an old Austin A40 motor car. I drove it around for a while and then gave it to my brother for him and a friend to use while their cars were off the road being all “souped up.” I think there may have been an offer of some payment for the car, but it was never forthcoming.

They only used the car for a few weeks. It wasn’t until some months later that I saw my little A40 sitting in an empty lot next to the house where my brother’s friend lived. It sat there rusting and deserted, not being used as the gift it was intended to be. I felt a little hurt, as I could still be driving around in that car. But instead, there it was, just sitting and rusting, wasting away.

The gift of health

If we are convinced of the fact that God is the giver of health and indeed life, then how do we respond to His gift? Do we treasure the gift of good health and value it? Do we do everything in our power to maintain it, or do we just take it for granted and let it erode away?

Traditionally as Seventh-day Adventists, when we talk about health we tend to focus on nutrition and exercise, but health is far broader than that. Certainly, modern science has shown the links between exercise and improved cardiovascular health and has demonstrated that plant foods are the most protective for the body. Being good stewards of health requires us to eat a balanced diet and to exercise regularly, but those things, important as they are, are not an end in themselves.

Another important aspect

Sleep is an important part of health, yet for many people, it is sacrificed in order to try and fit more things into our busy schedules. Our sleep comes in one and one-half hour cycles. The first and largest part of the cycle is for physical recuperation. While this is very important, we tend to have less physical exertion in our day than we did in the past.

The second part of the cycle is the dream cycle, where we mentally recuperate from the stresses of the day. In the first one and one-half hour cycle, the dream cycle is very short. The dream cycle increases with each one and one-half hour cycle of sleep. In order to gain the maximum mental recuperation from our sleep, we should sleep a total of nine hours per day. Unfortunately, many of us do not get adequate amounts of sleep, and this leads to other health complications.

Stress takes it toll

Being overstimulated also has health implications. Even good stresses take their toll on the body. Many of us live a hectic life, chasing one event after another with increasing frequency. The body needs time to rest, to recuperate, to rejuvenate, and to spiritually refresh. Periods of busy activity need to be followed by periods of

SCRIPTURE:
Mark 6:31

I hope that when we come toward the end of life, we don't look back and say, "I wish that I had been a better steward of my health. I wish that I had taken the time for health before I was forced to take the time for disease."

stillness and recovery. Unfortunately for many of us, the struggle to meet the mortgage and pay the bills keeps us busy at work all day. And evenings are taken up by home duties and children.

Stewardship is about seeking balance—a balance between work, rest, and play, with time also given to spiritual recuperation. Christ Himself knew the value of rest, even amid the extremely busy demands around him and his disciples: "Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest'" (Mk 6:31).

Less guilt, more action

I am not writing this to give us all a "guilt trip." But rather to challenge us to continually question ourselves as to whether we are good stewards of the gift of health that God has given us.

I wish I could go back and reclaim my Austin A40 in its condition, before it was left derelict. It is probably old enough these days to be considered a "cool" car. I hope that when we come toward the end of life, we don't look back and say, "I wish that I had been a better steward of my health. I wish that I had taken the time for health before I was forced to take the time for disease."

Professor Archibald Hart, a "burnout expert" from Fuller University, challenges our thinking when he states, "God is more interested in you finishing well than what you accomplished along the way."



The Christian and Mental Health

*Dr. Allan Handsides, Associate Director
General Conference Health Department*

Introduction

Broken! My wife had just purchased a set of very fine glassware which she asked me to wash before putting away. Yes, before there was a chance to use the glasses, I dropped one. Now it lay broken.

I wonder how God felt that evening in Eden when visiting Adam and Eve. He found them broken. Listening to their excuses—"the serpent," "the woman," anything but a full and open confession.

Different kinds of brokenness

For many unfortunate individuals, a "broken" mind is the result of inborn errors of brain metabolism. These people require help in the form of medications that can alter "secretion rates," "uptake rates," to modify the internal milieu of the brain. Often, with this medication, psychotic patients can return to a degree of normality. Something like gluing the pieces of a broken vessel together, the medication, though not a normal part of the brain function, does permit fairly normal functioning.

For most of us, our brokenness is not quite as obvious, yet we may struggle with many other types of disorders. Our struggles often center around our relationships. These too bear the scars of our brokenness. We react to those near us in ways that lead to unhappiness, grief, despair, anger, and commonly, anxiety and insecurity. Out of these feelings, we invent even more warped ways of achieving at least some sense of balance. Some of us become "control freaks." Others become obsessive over detail as a way of reassuring themselves. And still others procrastinate, not wanting to confront reality—at least not right now!

How do you cope with flaws?

When we really get to know another person, we find all kinds of little character cracks and flaws. If we think these foibles are tolerable, amusing, or quaint, we might laugh and label the individual a "card," a "character," or an "eccentric." But often we are not so generous with others and roll our eyes or talk about them behind their back.

A few years ago, when I was visiting a church in a part of the world where Adventism is relatively new, I was asked a strange question: "Do you think we should disfellowship people who are depressed?" The question made *me* depressed, and I felt how poorly we had taught the love of Jesus.

The thinking behind the question was that if we really trusted the Lord, how could we be depressed? Such reasoning does not take brokenness into account. Then again, there are those who suggest our attitudes have nutritional basis and that it may be that we need to eat more healthful foods. Guilt is easy to inflict! Several of my family understand my capacity to "guilt trip" them. Is this really the way to behave?

Mental health and conscious thought

Most authorities agree that our attitudes are a result of choices we make. We choose to be optimistic or pessimistic, gracious or curt, to frown or to smile. But if mental health is modified by conscious thought, surely Christians will be better adjusted than those who have no religious base! If religion has something to add, that value ought to be measurable. Is this really true?

SCRIPTURE:
Matthew 11:28

Interestingly, several studies have been conducted. Aristotle (384-322 BC) argued that happiness was the “supreme good” and that all else was merely a means to achieving it. If this were the case, it would seem that a sense of “well-being” might be a good measure of success. Like many perceptions, well-being is not an “all or nothing phenomenon,” but covers a spectrum of feelings from depression to elation and ecstasy. Does religious faith give a sense of well-being?

Does faith make a difference?

Studies indicate that many factors play a role in “well-being”: health, education, self-esteem, marital status, age, and religion all play a role. Interestingly, income and wealth are not good predictors of happiness. People who feel they possess choice and control in their lives tend to have more well-being. At first it may seem religious people with a dependence on God would feel they had less internal control. In fact, studies have shown that religious people feel more internal control.

Religious people are more likely to have intact, stable families, less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, enjoy less hypertension, fewer strokes, less cancer, and live longer. Optimism is more frequent among fundamentalists than liberal religious people. Hope is also more prevalent among those who are devout. A sense of purpose and meaning in life was also found in persons of strong faith. These studies substantiate the healthy role played by religion in our lives.

Anxiety disorders, ranging from generalized anxiety to specific situations such as phobias or panic attacks, may relate to events in early childhood. On the whole, religion tends to buffer against anxiety, especially in the presence of medical disease.

The most important aspect

If we incorporate our religion into our daily life and yield to the Spirit, then the “fruits” of the Spirit are made manifest. We all know people who bear the fruits of love, joy, patience, meekness, and temperance. These fruits not only bless the person who bears them, but everyone they come in contact with.

Of all the aspects of mental health, attitude is most important. This is something we can consciously choose to make positive. For some, this choice comes easier than to others. A positive attitude of kindness, helpfulness, and peace is something true stewards need to practice. Children should be taught that moodiness, pouting, negativism, and antisocial behaviors, are *chosen* and under their own control.

Paul’s advice: “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Php 2:5 NKJV) is very good therapy. John tells us “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment” (Jn 4:18).

On the path to healing

Clearly we are broken and subject to emotional and mental health problems. But thank God for the “Comforter,” the Spirit of Truth that Jesus sends to dwell in us. Through His Spirit He calls to us, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

Our communion with Jesus will prepare our minds for heavenly thoughts and wholesome and meaningful relationships. With joy we can say, soon this “corruptible will put on incorruption” and “this mortal immortality” (1 Cor 15:53-54). Until then, let us be positive in our hope, joyful in our confidence, and content in Him.

Our struggles often center around our relationships. These too bear the scars of our brokenness.



book reviews

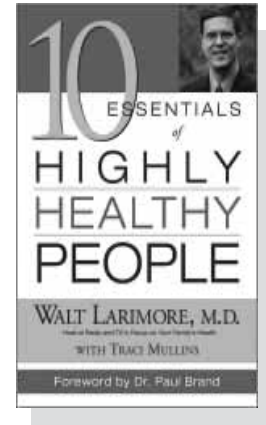
10 Essentials of Highly Healthy People

*Reviewed by Claire L. Eva, Assistant Director
General Conference Stewardship Department*

Walt Larimore, well-known host of radio and television's "Focus on Your Family's Health," shares from a wealth of the latest medical research and experiences of physicians and patients worldwide in this new volume. Through his research and his own medical experience, Dr. Larimore has discovered ten essential principles that are necessary to become a highly healthy person.

The book moves a little slowly in the first few pages but then picks up "full speed" as you move to the self-evaluation which helps you to see how you are doing healthwise in four important areas: the physical, emotional, relational, and spiritual. Of course, Seventh-day Adventists are well acquainted with this quartet of important areas of life! Among Larimore's ten essentials are balance, self-care, forgiveness, relationships and more.

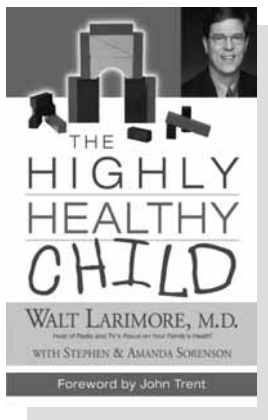
The author speaks so meaningfully about how the inner life affects physical health, and he shares wonderful stories of personal struggles to regain personal health. The book is replete with resources and information to help you along your way to being a highly healthy person. A great resource to have!



by Walt Larimore, M.D.
and Traci Mullins
Zondervan Publishing
Grand Rapids, Michigan
2003 US \$19.99

The Highly Healthy Child

*Reviewed by Claire L. Eva, Assistant Director
General Conference Stewardship Department*



by Walt Larimore, M.D.
with Stephen and Amanda Sorenson
Zondervan Publishing
Grand Rapids, Michigan
2004 US \$19.99

Dr. Larimore says, "I've written this book for moms and dads who want to raise highly healthy children." This volume contains advice, interesting stories, and experiences of many physicians and patients. It also contains pertinent research, a health assessment for parents to take to determine how they are doing with their children, and health-related principles from Scripture.

As with his book geared toward adults, the doctor shares a list of ten essentials for raising highly healthy children. On the list are: being proactive in preventing physical disease, ensuring proper nutrition, providing adequate protection for your child/ren, nurturing family relationships, instilling a balanced self-concept, et al.

There is so much packed into this book for parents, and it probably covers most of the questions you have about the health of your child—from a physical, mental, relational and spiritual perspective. A wonderful resource to have on hand.

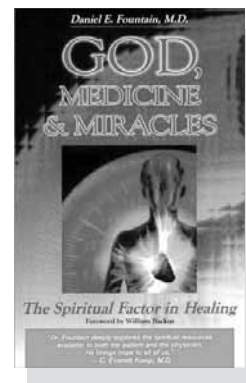
God, Medicine, and Miracles

*Reviewed by Eileen Lézeau, Administrative Assistant
General Conference TRIPS Department*

Daniel E. Fountain's forty years as a medical missionary in the Congo and his many case studies have given him ample proof that faith and hope in God and prayer have a positive effect in healing the sick. In his book, *God, Medicine and Miracles*, Fountain emphasizes the importance of building right relationships with God and with others.

His kind of medicine doesn't just give you a prescription, a five-minute pep talk, and send you on your way. He is interested in treating the whole person—body, mind and spirit.

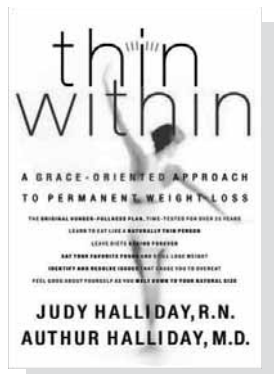
He writes about how positive attitudes lead to positive thoughts, which in turn can have a positive effect on the immune system. Though not all diseases are curable, Fountain believes a positive attitude through faith will give the person inner peace. This is an inspiring and helpful book written in a simple and practical way and well worth reading. The appendix provides helpful advice on how to treat the sick and dying.



by Daniel E. Fountain, M.D.
Shaw Publishers
Wheaton, Illinois
2000 US \$12.99

Thin Within

*Reviewed by Rachel J. Child
Project Coordinator, Adventist Review*



by Judy Halliday, R.N.
and Arthur Halliday, M.D.
W. Publishing Group
Nashville, Tennessee
2002 US \$22.99

In this age of trying to look good by being thin, comes another book on the subject of weight loss. This book is different though. It is thoroughly centered on the grace of Jesus Christ.

The author deals with conscious eating and trusting our body's signals for food. By listening to our bodies' clues for food, we will only eat when necessary. Much of "overweightness" comes from emotional eating and overeating. The premise is that by God's grace, we can overcome all bad eating habits, and be the uniquely created being that God intended.

The book covers how to respond to the temptation of making unhealthy choices by using a power greater than our own. Through prayer and conscious eating, we will release the extra weight and become the wonderful being that God created.

There are questionnaires, charts, and food logs to help you realize your food habits. Throughout the volume, the author brings you back to your need of a relationship with Christ, so that you can be your best for Him. And with that relationship in tact, the weight will stay off.

NIV/Message Parallel Bible

Zondervan US \$34.99/59.99

Zondervan has just published an excellent new resource, *The Message: New International Version Parallel Bible*. This Bible, which can be purchased in hardback or in bonded leather, is just the right combination of devotional and study Bible all in one! Each page is divided into two columns, with the *NIV* translation on the left and the *Message* paraphrase to the right.

The publishers do well to keep the two texts in close alignment, making it easier to compare biblical passages—an important element for identifying verses in the *Message*, which are not referenced.

If you want to have an excellent study Bible in the *NIV*, closely connected to the devotion language of the *Message*, this is an excellent resource—a double blessing!

editorial

*Claire L. Eva, Assistant Director
General Conference Stewardship Department*

Aunt Pauline was fighting a terrible battle with breast cancer, and it was difficult to see who would win. Both breasts had been removed by radical surgery, a total hysterectomy performed, and the disease had metastasized. I was worried, to say the least. I prayed for her continually and felt convicted by the Holy Spirit to give her a copy of *Ministry of Healing*. But I had some reservations.

My aunt knew about Jesus, but was not an active church member. Along with that, she was married to my Jewish uncle, Izzie. I worried that she might “trip” over some comment in the book that would offend her or her husband.

But conviction dimmed my fears, so I stepped up to her at our annual family picnic and handed her the volume. I forget just what I said. I know I was nervous. But I haven’t forgotten her words. I was surprised and moved by them: “Is this for me? Oh, thank you! Thank you so much, Sweetheart!”

Later, she told me how that book and the *These Times* subscription I sent were her allies during many dark nights.

This experience, along with others through the years, has firmed up my belief: we are stewards of health. First, we are stewards of our own health. God has a plan of optimal health for each of us, if only we will cooperate with Him. And, we are stewards of the message of health that we embrace.

A steward is wise in investing the Master’s wealth. We cannot and dare not force any message, no matter how much we value it. As a good friend and scholar once put it, “Virtue ceases to be virtue when it is forced upon another.”

But we *can* live and share principles of good health. So here’s to a long and healthy life and many healthy new years!

DYNAMIC Steward

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Exploring partnership with God

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