

Health Promotion NEWSLETTER

Health Ministries Department of the Euro-Africa Division

<http://health.euroafrica.org/>

EDITORIAL

Dear colleagues and friends:

I remember that when I was in secondary school we never were quite sure if the next year would come or not. In every major event we saw a sign of Jesus' imminent return. Today - some 50 years later - we face even greater events but we get so used to them that they may be considered almost as "normal". This promotes a kind of sleepiness instead of alertness. The Bible urges us to be on guard and to be alert, because we don't know when that time will come (Mark 13:33). And the apostle Paul continues saying "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed" (Rom 13:11).

We don't know what 2005 shall bring to each one of us. However, since we are serving the Lord who knows the future, we believe His guidance will lead us every step of our lives. Let us always remember that, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassion never fails. They are new every morning; Great is your Faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22).

With this assurance we wish you God's blessings and guidance as you plan and implement the different activities in health evangelism during this year.

There is a growing awareness that the "spiritual" dimension plays an important role in human health. However, spirituality is often confused with psychological factors and some religions even allow an impersonal god constituted by some kind of universal energy. This fact is another imperative to proclaim the message to worship the Creator of heaven and earth (Rev 14:6,7). For this reason we continue to address the matter of spirituality in the present issue.

Since we all agree that health is more than the mere absence of disease, we should also agree that restoring health is more than merely removing a disease. Restoration of total health (wholeness) is the aim of the real gospel.

Yours, for better health

J. Hawlitschek

EUD - Health Ministries Department

BODY, MIND AND SOUL

The Bible considers clearly three dimensions of the human being: body, mind and soul (1 Thessalonians 5:23). We all agree that the **body** is the physical part of our organism. But when it comes to differentiate between the mind and the soul we may run into problems. It is accepted that *discrimination, judgement, self-control* and *willpower* are mental/moral faculties located in the frontal lobe of the brain (M. Hardinge, A Philosophy of Health, p. 138). These faculties (intangible) are the expression of the functions of the physical brain cells (tangible). With this in mind let's now examine the following quotes from Ellen G. White:

"Intemperance of any kind benumbs the perceptive organs and so weakens the *brain-nerve power* that *eternal things* are not appreciated, but placed upon a level with the common. The *higher powers of the mind*, designed for elevated purposes, are brought into slavery to the baser passions. If our physical habits are not right, our *mental* and *moral* powers cannot be strong; for great sympathy exists between the physical and the moral." (Temperance, p. 12)

"*The brain nerves which communicate with the entire system are the only medium through which Heaven can communicate to man and affect his inmost life.* Whatever disturbs the circulation of the electric currents in the nervous system lessens the strength of the vital powers, and the result is a deadening of the sensibilities of the mind." (Temperance, p. 13)

It is evident that the mental faculties located in the frontal lobe are intimately coupled with the moral

qualities of the character that sometimes are associated with the concept of *soul* and *spirituality*. However, not every mental process is necessarily spiritual. In medical research on 'spirituality and health' it seems that there is some overlapping between the influence of mental (psychologic) factors, e.g. positive thinking, and spiritual (religious) factors. The latter are difficult to individualize and to measure. The separation between mental and spiritual in the following lines is therefore somewhat artificial.

The influence of **mental factors** upon health has been clearly demonstrated, either in a positive or a negative way. "The relation that exists between the mind and the body is very intimate. When one is affected, the other sympathizes. The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. ...In the treatment of the sick the effect of mental influence should not be overlooked. Rightly used, this influence affords one of the most effective agencies for combating disease" (Ministry of Healing, p. 241). Here is an area where every individual can do something to improve his/her health by cultivating positive thoughts and feelings. This can be achieved by carefully selecting the topics our mind would dwell upon. The apostle Paul recommends: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things" (Philippians 4:8). And Ellen G. White continues by saying that "Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings – as much a duty as it is to pray" (Ministry of Healing, p. 251).

The beneficial effects of positive thinking can be physiologically explained through the release of endorphines and neurotransmitters that boost the immune system. In fact, because of such intricate relations, the new name is *psycho-neuro-immune system*.

The matter becomes more complicated when we try to individualize the influence of **spiritual or religious factors** because the effects may be partially explained by mental components on one hand, and because spiritual factors escape human measurements on the other hand. In practice it doesn't matter too much because we know that both are important and may work in conjunction. One thing is clear, there are supernatural influences upon human life, either from God or from Satan. Although the Bible gives indications on how to differentiate between true miracles through God and pseudo-miracles through Satan, it is usually hard to convince non-believers.

The ultimate goal of spiritual help is not only to improve physical or emotional health, but overall to achieve complete healing, that means salvation of the whole (entire) individual - sometimes called *soul* in the Bible (Ex. 1:5). In this regard it is important to know that "salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" than the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

But, how can a therapist help the spiritual needs of a patient without being "religious" or without proselytizing? Leading a person to trust in Christ, his Savior, is not the same as to teach doctrines. Here is where many zealous Christian therapists become impatient. They think that in order to be *saved* the individual must know all the basic doctrines and believe in them.

Sebastian Kneipp (1821-1897) was a Catholic priest and one of the great pioneers of natural medicine in Germany. He is specially known for his cold water treatments, but he also emphasized exercise, herbs, good nutrition and the importance of mental/spiritual factors ("Ordnungstherapie" in German). By the way, he is the one who invented the "cereal" substitute for coffee. Father Kneipp was a careful observer and very detailed in the description of his clinical histories. After many years of experience he confessed that "Only when I began to bring order into the souls of my patients, I was successful." He certainly understood that an orderly lifestyle and peace with God are essential factors for health. It is worthwhile to read his books "Meine Wasserkur" (My Water Cure) and "So sollt ihr leben" (This is the Way you Should Live).

Nobody can negate the importance of spirituality as a factor for health. The great differences lie in the interpretation and application of spirituality in the medical practice. This may vary greatly according to each one's world view and religion.

Ellen White states clearly that "Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death.... Courage, hope, faith, sympathy, love, promote health and prolong life. A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. 'A merry [rejoicing] heart doeth good like a medicine.'" Proverbs 17:22 (Ministry of Healing, p. 241)

Now think about this. The problem of guilt, as a result of sin, cannot be resolved by any "natural" healing method that deals with impersonal energies, neither can such provide forgiveness, hope and love. Only Jesus Christ is the solution for the human needs. There is an intimate connection between mental (psychological) factors and spirituality. However, God's intervention in human life – in our case, by healing diseases – cannot be manipulated, or bought (Acts 8:17-21). Nor can it be achieved through special rituals (magic) or even through forced prayers (faith healers). Here is the point where the intervening physician comes to his limits. "God alone can give us the victory... But He cannot work in us without our consent and co-operation. The divine Spirit works through the faculties and powers given

to man. Our energies are required to co-operate with God... Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted." (Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 142)

Let's examine one more **example** about God's intervention found in the book of Genesis. *Infertility* is a well described medical problem with different causes and corresponding treatments. Abimelech's wife and all women in his house could not conceive because of Abimelech's sin. "Then Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife and his slave girls so they could have children again, for the LORD had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household because of Abraham's wife Sarah." (Gen 20:17,18) In this case, the effect of prayer could be clearly measured, but it was up to God's desire to heal or not. Even more, God promised to protect the Israelites from infertility if they would be willing to obey Him. "He [God] will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land... You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young... The LORD will keep you free from every disease." (Deut 7:13-15)

The relation between spirituality and health is absolutely evident and measurable. God does fulfill His promises! However, there is a danger to look at spirituality/religiosity merely as another tool for treatment of diseases. We as Christians should know how to lead our patients to Jesus, how to speak to them about God and the future, and when and how to pray with them. We should be wise in this matter.

For further reading:

- E.G. White, Ministry of Healing
chap. 16 "Prayer for the Sick"
chap. 18 "Mind Cure".
- E.G. White, Mind, Character and Personality
chap. 2 "The Christian and Psychology"
chap. 4 "Spiritual Influences and the Mind"
chap. 8 "Religion and the Mind"
chap. 42 "Mind and Health"
chap. 43 "Mind and Spiritual Health".
- Journal of the American Academy of Family Physicians, January 2001, "Spirituality and Medical Practice..."
www.aafp.org/afp/20010101/81.html

REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Bhutan Bans Tobacco Sales, Public Smoking

By Wasbir Hussain, The Associated Press

Gauhati/India, 29.11.2004/AP "The tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan has gone to extremes to protect its pristine environment, its ancient culture and the well being of its citizens. The country's forests are strictly conserved. Television was banned until a few years ago. And only a few thousand tourists are allowed in each year.

Next month, this idiosyncratic Buddhist nation of 700,000, nicknamed Shangri-La, will become the first country in the world to ban all smoking in public and all sales of tobacco.

The royal National Assembly passed a resolution in July to bring about a total ban on tobacco sales across the country and the government has decided to enforce the ban beginning Dec. 17, Lily Wangchuk, a Bhutanese Embassy spokeswoman in New Delhi, told The Associated Press by telephone.

It will be illegal to buy tobacco, sell it or smoke anywhere in public. The fine for breaking the rules: \$225 - an enormous sum in an impoverished nation. The World Health Organization's Web site says Bhutan is the first country in the world to enact such legislation.

Individuals will be allowed to bring tobacco into the country for personal consumption, but only after paying 100 percent tax on the cost price. They can smoke it only at home.

But if the new law sounds draconian, it apparently won't affect many.

Kinley Dorji, editor of Bhutan's Kuensel newspaper, said only about 1 percent of the population is thought to smoke.

'The decision to ban tobacco sales may not have any great impact,' he said.

Still, plenty of people are upset about it.

'I wish there was a ban on alcohol, which is a more serious problem in Bhutan. Smoking, after all, is a personal habit, and a ban will be difficult to enforce,' said a trader who identified himself only as Sonam, speaking by telephone from the town of Samdrup Jongkar near the Indian border.

Some worry the ban will simply increase smuggling.

Few places are as singular as Bhutan, tucked into the mountains between India and China. There are no political parties, few newspapers and hunting is almost unheard of in the pacifistic monarchy. The

country is so resistant to the outside world that it rarely let in a foreigner until recently. Even now only about 6,000 tourists a year are allowed in - and only on carefully supervised tours to protect the environment and ancient culture.

King Jigme Singye Wangchuk has shepherded the poor but beautiful country gradually toward modernization, cherry picking what he wants from the modern world. He has famously proclaimed "gross national happiness" more important than gross national product.

The environment in Bhutan is fiercely protected. It has some of the strictest rules in the world to protect some of the planet's last great remaining forests. The national assembly declared in 1995 that 60 per cent of the country must be forested, including 26 per cent that is set aside as protected areas.

The Himalayan nation boasts some of the world's most beautiful mountains but climbing is not allowed in order to preserve the forests that cover most of the country.

Such policies earned the country the nickname Shangri-La, the name of the Himalayan utopia invented by James Hilton in his classic 1933 novel 'Lost Horizon.'

No matter what, change is slowly coming to Bhutan.

In recent years, the king has devolved more powers to his ministers and plans to bring a new Constitution that will place more authority in the hands of people's representatives.

People are increasingly staying up late to watch TV, first introduced only in 1999. And they are 'mimicking' fashion, art, and behavior they see on TV, said a February report from the Bhutanese Ministry of Information and Communication."

LITERATURE & MATERIALS



- In response to the many requests from the fields for more information and materials about **Health-EXPO** we have added a new page to our website <http://health.euroafrica.org/>. You are welcome to look at it.

- **“Spirituality, Health, and Wholeness:**

Comment: “A good introduction to the theory and practice of the field of spirituality and health. I really appreciated the chapters on how to put into practice the principles of spirituality, health, and wholeness. The chapter on the basic principles of spiritual care is a real gem. The 12 principles outlined are an excellent guide for clinicians and should be adopted by everyone who wants to integrate spiritual care into their medical practice. The writing is superb, and the cases are extremely helpful in illustrating the principles. The chapter on spiritual care of the dying and bereaved is also extremely useful. The author's review of religious, spiritual, and cultural issues is one of the most succinct I have ever read. She does a marvelous job, addressing the core realities of integrating spiritual care into clinical practice. This should be required reading for all health care professionals.” Dana King, MD, Associate Professor of Family Medicine, Medical University of South Carolina; Author of Faith, Spirituality, and Medicine.

Available at www.amazon.com/

- **Smoking puppet** - The “Ligue Vie & Santé” in France developed an attractive puppet in various formats that smokes. The smoke passes through a filter that gets stained and smells terribly. This is a very objective tool to demonstrate the effects of smoking to young people (and adults). The cost is Euro 89,- plus shipping. More details at www.chez.com/lvsnet/

CONVENTIONS AND SEMINARS

Annual Assembly German-Swiss Conference:

Date: 12-13 March 2005

Place: Zürich

Topic: “I am the Lord who heals you”

Speaker: Dick Tibbits, USA

Medical Congress, Germany:

Date: 4-8 May 2005

Place: Horn-Bad Meinberg, Germany

Important topics: Spirituality in Medical Practice, the CELEBRATIONS concept, and Health-EXPO.

Information: +49-711-4481950

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School of Health Evangelism - Switzerland

The intensive health evangelism training course during 2004 in the beautiful mountains of Switzerland was very appreciated by all students. This encouraged the organizers to repeat it in 2005 from 15 May - 21 August. You will find all details at www.stanet.ch/school-of-evangelism/

Health Seminar with Dr. Neil Nedley

Date: 20-23 October 2005

Place: Darmstadt

Topics: - Sick and no chance?
- How to achieve optimal physical and mental fitness.
- Depression - the way out!

AMALF

Date: 11-13 November 2005

Place: Alsace, France

Topic: Le soignant face à l'Adolescence

Info: www.amalf.org/

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

"The effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption".

Steps to Christ, p. 79

The *Health Promotion* NEWSLETTER is a quarterly report about new health promotion materials, conventions, important addresses, working strategies, etc. For best effectiveness we kindly ask you to share such information with your co-workers and also to supply to our department pertinent information to be published. Let us unite in the proclamation of God's health message!

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