

Ellen White's Concepts On Mental Health Compared With Psychology And The Health Sciences

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Abstract

The unique features of Ellen White's writings are that they are over 100 years ahead of her time. Her writings contained information not known by the scientists and psychologists of that era and as such, many people have asked, "How could information written so many years ago have value today"? The truth is that many of the principles presented by Ellen White have stood the test of time and have been verified by science in remarkable ways. This paper makes an attempt of comparing some of the writings of Ellen White on mental health with psychology and the health sciences.

After presenting a brief biographical sketch of Ellen White, the author clarifies the concepts of: Mind, Health, Mental Health and Mental Disorder. He then presents the modern perspectives on psychological disorders and makes a comparative study of the relationships of the body and mind by Ellen White and the Psychologists and Psychotherapists of our time. The article briefly covers certain aspects of mental health and emotion illnesses and warns Adventist teachers of Psychology of the growing dangers in their own and allied fields. In conclusion the author presents views on the integration of faith and learning and affirms that a study of the life and writings of Ellen White makes it obvious that her source of information was from God.

Introduction

Brief Biographical Sketch of Ellen White

Ellen Gould Harmon was born at Gorham, Maine, in the north-eastern part of America on Nov. 26, 1827. Her parents, Robert and Eunice Harmon, were devout members of the Methodist Episcopal Church who had the joy of witnessing their eight children accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

When Ellen was nine, on her way home from school, she was seriously injured when she was struck on the nose by a rock thrown by a schoolmate. Severely traumatised by this incident, she remained unconscious for three weeks and grew very weak and frail. With time she did recover but the injury prevented her from being able to continue her education.

Ellen Harmon was moved by the Holy Spirit to study the scriptures diligently, to live a simple life and to wait upon the Lord for His directions. On August 30, 1846, Ellen Harmon was united in marriage to Elder James White who had enjoyed a deep experience in the advent movement. Regarding her marriage, she says, "Our hearts were united in the great work, and together we travelled and laboured for the salvation of souls" (White, 1855-1909, vol. 1. p.75).

In the autumn of 1846 Ellen and James White began to observe the Bible Sabbath, and to teach and defend it. Together they travelled, preached and wrote with great zeal and energy for thirty-six years. However, owing to three strokes followed by paralysis, James White's health failed him and he passed away leaving Mrs. White to complete her mission and to 'fight the battle' alone.

Arthur L. White, one of the seven grandchildren of James and Ellen White, summarises the achievements of this great founder of the Adventist Church in the following manner:

"In brief, she was a woman of remarkable spiritual gifts who lived most of her life during the nineteenth century (1827-1915), yet through her writings she is still making a revolutionary impact on millions of people around the world. During her lifetime she wrote more than 5,000 periodical articles and 40 books; but today, including compilations from her 50,000 pages of manuscript, more than 100 titles are available in English. She is the most translated woman

writer in the entire history of literature, and the most translated American author of either gender. Her writings cover a broad range of subjects, including religion, education, social relationships, evangelism, prophecy, publishing, nutrition, and management. Her life-changing masterpiece on successful Christian living, *Steps to Christ*, has been published in more than 140 languages. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Mrs. White was more than a gifted writer; they believe she was appointed by God as a special messenger to draw the world's attention to the Holy Scriptures and help prepare people for Christ's Second Advent. From the time she was 17 years old until she died 70 years later, God gave her approximately 2,000 visions and dreams. The visions varied in length from less than a minute to nearly four hours. The knowledge and counsel received through these revelations she wrote out to be shared with others. Thus her special writings are accepted by Seventh-day Adventists as inspired, and their exceptional quality is recognised even by casual readers. The writings of Ellen White are not a substitute for Scripture. They cannot be placed on the same level. The Holy Scriptures stand alone, the unique standard by which her and all other writings must be judged and to which they must be subject" (White, 1855-1868, vol. 1. p. 1).

Statement of Purpose

The unique and outstanding feature of Ellen White's writings is that they are over 100 years ahead of her time. Her writings contained information not known by the scientists and psychologists of that era and as such, many people have asked, "How could information written so many years ago have value today?" The fact is that many of these principles have stood the test of time and have been verified by science in remarkable ways. This paper makes a humble attempt of comparing some of the writings of Ellen White on mental health with psychology and the health sciences.

Concepts of the Mind, Health, Mental Health and Mental Disorder

The mind is a very complex bioelectric supercomputer. The mind has both hardware and software. The hardware refers to the actual physical components from which a computer is built. The hardware that forms our mental computer is the brain tissue with its billions of neurons. However, the computer cannot function with only the hardware. It must have functional software which is the operating system like Microsoft Windows. This system gets installed during childhood and constantly undergoes modifications throughout life. In general our culture which includes, the language we speak, the God we worship, our beliefs, values, morals, how we play and interact with others are part of this complex operating system. The hardware and software mentioned above are still not enough for a computer to work. It must also have a faultless energy source. The energy source for our brain is the oxygenated blood that brings nutrients and takes away waste. If something interferes with a reliable and consistent blood flow or if the blood itself is unhealthy, then the function of the brain suffers. Thus, a healthy lifestyle is pertinent for a healthy mind (Jennings, 2007, pp. 9, 10).

The World Health Organization states that "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 1947, vol. 1, p. 29). From this definition it is very clear that health is a holistic phenomenon which integrates our body, our mind and our social interactions with our fellow men. Some people blame their genes; they say they have inherited bad genes from their parents and that is why they are suffering. Here is what Neil Nedley, in his CD ROM entitled *Proof Positive* has to say to such people, "The good news is that even though we cannot change our genetics, we can change our lifestyle. Those lifestyle choices can prevent or forestall the development of diseases for which we are genetically predisposed." Regarding the most common diseases, Dr. Lamont Murdoch of Loma Linda University School of Medicine has put it aptly: "faulty genetics loads the gun, lifestyle pulls the trigger."

Way back in 1888, Friedrich Nietzsche said, (2000, Thompson) "Health and sickness are not essentially different, as the ancient physicians and some practitioners even today suppose. One must not make of them distinct principles or entities. In fact, there are only differences in degree between these two kinds of existence."

Despite the fact that there is no universal or comprehensive definition of mental health, people in the health sciences and other helping professions seem to agree that mental health is a positive state in which one is accountable or responsible, displays self-awareness, is self-directive, is reasonably worry free, and can cope with the usual daily tensions. Such individuals function well in society, are accepted within a group, and are generally satisfied with their lives (Shives, 2005).

Menninger (1946, p. 2) says, "Let us define mental health as the adjustment of human beings to the world and to each other with a maximum of effectiveness and happiness. Not just efficiency, or just contentment, or the grace of obeying the rules of the game cheerfully. It is all these together. It is the ability to maintain an even temper, an alert intelligence, socially considerate behaviour, and a happy disposition. This, I think, is a healthy mind." This definition is important in that it brings into consideration the relationship of the individual and society. In an extended description of individual mental health, Soddy, (1950, p. 72) suggested, among other points, that the healthy mind can meet with ease all normal environmental situations and that the healthy minded person has the capacity to live harmoniously in a changing environment.

"The American Psychiatric Association (APA, 1994) defines mental illness or mental disorder as an illness or syndrome with psychological or behavioural manifestations and/or impairment in functioning due to a social, psychological, genetic, physical/chemical, or biologic disturbance. The disorder is not limited to relations between the person and society. The illness is characterised by symptoms and/or impairment in functioning."

It has been aptly said by Hinkle (1973, p. 43) that, "to be alive is to be under stress." Mental disorder, as we understand it today, is essentially the result of the influence of multiple dynamic forces. It includes a wide range of abnormal states of mood, thought, and behaviour, ranging from mild anxiety and tension to severe disorganising psychosis (Kurian, 1981, p. 1). Mental health and mental disorder are like the two sides of a coin. Mental health is the goal to be attained and mental disorder is the problem that needs to be eradicated from the world we live in.

Perspectives on Psychological Disorders

A general view of the perspectives on psychological disorders will make the present essay clearer. There are several psychology books that discuss these views at great lengths, however, only a summary taken from Feldman (2008, p. 452) has been presented below:

- 1) Medical perspective: assumes that physiological causes are at the root of psychological disorders.
- 2) Psychoanalytic perspective: argues that psychological disorders stem from childhood conflicts.
- 3) Behavioural perspective: assumes that abnormal behaviours are learned responses.
- 4) Cognitive perspective: assumes that cognitions (people's thoughts and beliefs) are central to psychological disorders.
- 5) Humanistic perspective: emphasises people's responsibility for their own behaviour and the need to self-actualise.
- 6) Socio-cultural perspective: assumes that behaviour is shaped by family, society, and culture.

The picture within the walls of mental hospitals is saddening. Great numbers of the mentally ill still live shut away behind walls by the prejudices and incomprehension's of society. The efforts of the most advanced psychiatrists to have the mentally ill treated as other sick people, who can be cured, are likely to remain fruitless as long as the irrational fear of "madness" is not conquered.

Today the battle for mental health is being fought on many fronts. The psychiatrist has ceased to be merely a “doctor for the insane.” With the help of his colleagues from other disciplines like genetics, biology, medicine, psychology, anthropology and sociology, he now tries to disentangle the multidimensional mental syndromes to bring about relief to the suffering millions.

Body and Mind Relationships

Mental Health and Mental Disorder Propounded by Ellen White

In some of the statements presented below by Ellen White, I strongly believe that God truly gave her insightful and discerning words of wisdom which she wrote down for the benefit of mankind. She expounds on several areas of the mind and body relationships. She admonishes all by saying that nine tenths of diseases originate in the mind; that in order to have a healthy brain one needs proper nourishment; that disease is greatly aggravated by one's imagination; that a cheerful, unselfish heart works against the otherwise ruinous effect of anger, discontent, and selfishness; that some people are sick and will remain sick as they lack the willpower to combat disease; and that the development of a sound mind in a sound body is of the greatest importance.

Ellen White talks of a mysterious interrelationship that exists between the body and mind. She says (White, 1855-1909, vol. 3, pp. 485, 486), “Between the mind and the body there is a mysterious and wonderful relation. They react upon each other. To keep the body in a healthy condition to develop its strength, that every part of the living machinery may act harmoniously, should be the first study of our life. To neglect the body is to neglect the mind. It cannot be to the glory of God for His children to have sickly bodies or dwarfed minds.”

Today it is a known fact that the body and mind are closely related. When one is affected in any way, the other sympathises. Psychologists tell us to avoid reading letters when you are having a meal with the view that if there is distressing news in the letter, it would affect the digestive processes. Way back in 1872 Ellen White said something similar (1872, v. 3, p. 184), “A great deal of the sickness which afflicts humanity has its origin in the mind and can only be cured by restoring the mind to health. There are very many more than we imagine who are sick mentally. Heart sickness makes many dyspeptics, for mental trouble has a paralysing influence upon the digestive organs.”

Modern psychiatric problems were referred to as sickness of the mind or abnormal behaviour in the past and this is prevalent everywhere. Literally, the word abnormal means, “away from the norm”. All societies have certain standards of acceptable behaviour. Behaviour that deviates from society's notion of normal behaviour is often considered to be abnormal. In traditional psychiatric texts, the terms ‘neurosis’ and ‘psychosis’ are commonly used. People suffering from neurotic disorders, by and large, were believed to retain insight into their everyday thoughts and functioning. They could, however, experience intermittent or constant anxiety or depression. Psychosis on the other hand, was a term used to describe disorders such as schizophrenia and manic depression, where the symptoms experienced by the sufferer were not like those that a normal person would experience (Thompson, 2000).

“Nine tenths of the diseases from which men suffer from have their foundation in this area. It may have started as a small problem at home that appears like a little sore, eating up the energy and weakening the body. Guilt caused by sin sometimes undermines the physical condition which leads to instability of the mind” (White, 1885, p. 59).

The state of the mind affects the health of the physical system. If the mind is free and happy, from a consciousness of right doing and a sense of satisfaction in causing happiness to others, it creates a happiness that will react upon the whole system, causing a freer circulation of the blood and a toning up of the entire body. The blessing of God is a healing power, and those who are abundant in benefiting others will realise that wondrous blessing in both heart and life (White, 1890, p. 13).

The brain is the central and chief organ of the mind, and it controls the whole body. If the other parts of the human system are to be healthy, the brain must be healthy too. If the brain is to be healthy, then the blood also must be pure. By practising correct and healthy habits of eating and drinking the blood can be kept pure and in turn the brain will also be well nourished (White, 1932, p. 291).

"The influence of the mind on the body, as well as of the body on the mind should be emphasized. The electric power of the brain, promoted by mental activity, vitalizes the whole system, and is thus an invaluable aid in resisting disease. This should be made plain. The power of the will and the importance of self-control, both in the preservation and in the recovery of health, the depressing and even ruinous effect of anger, discontent, selfishness, or impurity, and on the other hand the marvellous life-giving power to be found in cheerfulness, unselfishness, gratitude, should be shown" (White, 1903, p. 197).

Ellen White says, (1932, p. 106) "In journeying I have met many who were really sufferers through their imaginations. They lacked willpower to rise above and combat disease of body and mind; and, therefore, they were held in suffering bondage. Good health, sound minds, and pure hearts are not made of the first importance in households. Many parents do not educate their children for usefulness and duty. They are indulged and petted, until self-denial to them becomes almost an impossibility. They are not taught that to make a success of Christian life, the development of sound minds in sound bodies is of the greatest importance".

While giving admonitions to ministers, schoolteachers and students Ellen White emphasises the need to exercise all parts of the body and not just the mental faculties. Here is what she says (1855-1909, vol. 3, p. 490), "When the minds of ministers, schoolteachers, and students are continually excited by study, and the body is allowed to be inactive, the nerves of emotion are taxed, while the nerves of motion are inactive. The wear being all upon the mental organs, they become overworked and enfeebled, while the muscles lose their vigour for want of employment. There is no inclination to exercise the muscles by engaging in physical labour, because exertion seems to be irksome." How true this is when we look at our administrators and teachers who live a sedentary life-style by spending most of their time in their offices and in committees. They hardly spend time out of doors to exercise and give support to the circulatory, respiratory and all the other vital systems of the body.

Ellen White (1905, p. 241) says, "The condition of the mind affects the health to a far greater degree than many realize. . . Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust, all tend to break down the life forces and to invite decay and death. Disease is sometimes produced, and is often greatly aggravated, by the imagination. Many are lifelong invalids who might be well if they only thought so. . . Many die from disease, the cause of which is wholly imaginary. . . 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."

Mental Health and Mental Disorder Propounded by Psychologists and Psychotherapists

Psychology as a discipline has become a popular field of study in many colleges and universities today. A large number of students graduate with psychology majors. Some of them specialise in Counselling or Clinical Psychology and enter the teaching profession. Others become counsellors and offer their services in educational institutions, industries, and institutions for the handicapped. Those with a strong background in Clinical Psychology could work in general hospitals or in institutions that take care of psychiatric or behavioural problems.

Psychologists and Psychotherapists support the view that "Mental health is a condition which permits the optimal development, physical, intellectual and emotional, of the individual, so far as this is compatible with that of other individuals. A good society is one that allows this development to its members, while at the same time ensuring its own development and being tolerant towards other societies" (Soddy, 1950, p. 72).

There are many psychologists and psychiatrists who support the position of Sigmund Freud, who describe belief in God as a "societal neurosis" and call for intellectual understanding to remove the need for such a belief. Others, who identify themselves as neuropsychiatrists, consider mental illness as a result of chemical imbalance in the brain and try to find medicines that would correct the imbalance (Jennings, 2007, p. 11).

Floyd L. Ruch (1948, pp. 176-177) says, "Strong psychological components often are found in such respiratory illnesses as asthma; heart and circulatory disorders as high blood pressure and neuron-circulatory asthenia which is weakness of the nervous and circulatory systems and skin ailments as urticaria. Medical men estimate that about half of all patients going to physicians have illnesses precipitated largely by prolonged emotional disturbance".

Aspects of Mental Health and Emotional Illnesses by Ellen White compared with Psychologists and Physicians

Anger

Anger is an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage. Psychologists tell us that like other emotions, it is accompanied by physiological and biological changes; when you get angry, your heart rate and blood pressure go up, as do the levels of your energy hormones.

Anger can be caused by both external and internal events. You could be angry at a specific person, like a fellow worker or supervisor or it could be an event, like a traffic jam or a cancelled flight. It could also be caused by worrying or brooding about your personal problems. Memories of traumatic or enraging events can also trigger angry feelings.

Psychologists also tell us that some people are more "hot-headed" than others are; they get angry more easily and more intensely than the average person does. There are also those who don't show their anger in loud spectacular ways but are chronically irritable and grumpy. Easily angered people don't always curse and throw things; sometimes they withdraw socially, sulk, or get physically ill.

Here is what Ellen White (1889, pp. 92, 93) had to say about anger. "If we indulge anger, lust, covetousness, hatred, selfishness, or any other sin, we become servants of sin." "No man can serve two masters" (Matthew 6:24). If we serve sin, we cannot serve Christ. The Christian will feel the promptings of sin, for the flesh lusts against the Spirit; but the Spirit strives against the flesh, keeping up a constant warfare. Here is where Christ's help is needed. Human weakness becomes united to divine strength, and faith exclaims, "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57)."

There are many people in prison who are serving a life-term as their anger led to the murder of their close kin, friends or neighbours. Here is what Ellen White (1977, vol. 2, p. 519) advised regarding violent anger. "The giving way to violent emotions endangers life. Many die under a burst of rage and passion. Many educate themselves to have spasms. These they can prevent if they will, but it requires willpower to overcome a wrong course of action. All this must be a part of the education received in the school, for we are God's property. The sacred temple of the body must be kept pure and uncontaminated, that God's Holy Spirit may dwell therein."

Guilt

Psychologists and Physicians tell us that Guilt is the inability to forgive oneself for a perceived wrongdoing. Perceived wrongdoing means that you believe you have done something wrong. The wrongdoing may or may not have had negative consequences for yourself and/or others. If others were involved, they may or may not still be angry or hurt by the wrongdoing. A perceived wrongdoing may be an action, a thought or a feeling. If the wrongdoing was an action, you probably

think of it as a mistake. You feel guilty for the wrongdoing because you cannot forgive yourself for it. You cannot let it go. If you cannot forgive yourself, you will not overcome the guilt.

It is sin that causes guilt and Ellen White (1956, p. 19) tells us that through a close communion with God one can ask for forgiveness of the sins and God will free us from the burden of guilt.

Grief

In a BBC presentation, (Jan. 21, 2008) Dr. Trisha Macnair said, Bereavement is an immensely stressful event that can take a huge toll on the body, causing all sorts of physical problems, including exhaustion, uncontrollable crying, sleep disruption, palpitations, shortness of breath, headaches, recurrent infections, high blood pressure, loss of appetite, stomach upsets, hair loss, disruption of the menstrual cycle, irritability, worsening of any chronic condition such as eczema or asthma, and visual and auditory hallucinations.

This statement is well supported by Ellen White (1977, vol. 2, p. 461) when she wrote to a certain brother. She said, "Your wife was the subject of disease and death. Your grief was just as intense as all your other troubles. You hugged the grief to your bosom, you loved to dwell upon it, and you allowed your mind and thoughts to be selfishly occupied with your grief, and as a consequence your health suffered. Then your daughter's death was indeed a sad blow, but others have passed through the same under more trying circumstances. You allowed this affliction to unman you; you dwelt upon it, you talked of it, you aggravated your soul over a matter you could not change or help. It was a sin to take any of these afflictions as you have done. I know whereof I speak. If the mind is permitted to be clouded with grief, the food is not digested and as a result the system is not well nourished." Ellen White (1977, vol. 2, p. 458) also talks about how the circulatory system is affected by grief and sadness. She said, "Sadness deadens the circulation in the blood vessels and nerves and also retards the action of the liver. It hinders the process of digestion and of nutrition, and has a tendency to dry up the marrow [interior substance] of the whole system".

Worry and Anxiety

In a study conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health in the US, it was reported that 16% (over 19 million) Americans suffer from anxiety disorders (Nedley, 2005, p. 125). There are several people in the world today who get worried and anxious about performing even normal duties at home, school or at work. Ellen White tells us that anxiety tends to cause sickness and disease. I have personally come across individuals who were not able to organise their duties when they were given multiple tasks that needed to be performed within a specified time. Very often they would get angry, tense and even develop headaches. Ellen White says, (1905, p. 229) "When wrongs have been righted, we may present the needs of the sick to the Lord in calm faith, as His Spirit may indicate. He knows each individual by name and cares for each as if there were not another upon the earth for whom He gave His beloved Son. Because God's love is so great and so unfailing, the sick should be encouraged to trust in Him and be cheerful. To be anxious about themselves tends to cause weakness and disease. If they will rise above depression and gloom, their prospect of recovery will be better; for "the eye of the Lord is upon them" "that hope in His mercy" (Psalm 33:18)."

Psychologists and Psychotherapists tell us that many diseases result from mental depression and this is well supported by Ellen White (1868, vol. 1, p. 702) who says, "A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul. Nothing is so fruitful a cause of disease as depression, gloominess, and sadness." She also says that "Many of the diseases from which men suffer are the result of mental depression" (White, 1905, p. 241).

A careful study of the above emotions brings to light the fact that they could easily appear in anybody but a lot depends on the individual's personality and upbringing for the way he or she handles these emotions. With God's help, all things are possible. Daniel Goleman (2006, p. 83) who

is a specialist in Social Intelligence says, “All emotions are social, . . . you can’t separate the cause of an emotion from the world of relationships—our social interactions are what drive our emotions.” Warren Shipton (2007, p. 79) says, “Developing social and emotional skills is part of the rich framework that we acquire through learning. The basic elements of such learning are the ability to understand and reflect on our own emotions and appreciate and respond to the feelings of others. These competencies enable us to work through social and emotional issues.”

Adventist Teachers of Psychology and Mental Health

Need for a Firm Foundation in the Bible to Withstand the Growing Dangers

Adventist teachers of Psychology and related fields do realise the fact that with the advance in technology and especially the internet, we are in an age of information explosion and we need to be careful in the selection of the materials that we use in the classroom. It is very easy for us to divert the tender minds of the students to that which may appear to be very new and interesting but if it is not carefully and prayerfully presented, it may cause more harm to the students than good and this calls for a solid and firm foundation in the Holy Scriptures.

To support the above view, consider the discussions in some psychology books on the values of hypnotism and psychic healing. Ellen White clearly warns physicians and teachers about it and tells us that we should not subject our minds to hypnotists as our minds will become weak and in turn we could be easily controlled by Satan. About this growing false science Ellen White (1977, vol. 2, pp. 713, 714) gave a warning to a Physician who favoured hypnosis. She said, “I am so weighed down in your case that I must continue to write to you, lest in your blindness you will not see where you need to reform. I am instructed that you are entertaining ideas with which God has forbidden you to deal. I will name these as a species of mind cure. You suppose that you can use this mind cure in your professional work as a physician. In tones of earnest warning the words were spoken: Beware, beware where your feet are placed and your mind is carried. God has not appointed you this work. The theory of mind controlling mind is originated by Satan to introduce himself as the chief worker, to put human philosophy where divine philosophy should be. No man or woman should exercise his or her will to control the senses or reason of another so that the mind of the person is rendered passively subject to the will of the one who is exercising the control. This science may appear to be something beautiful, but it is a science which you are in no case to handle. There is something better for you to engage in than the control of human nature over human nature. I lift the danger signal. The only safe and true mind cure covers much. The physician must educate the people to look from the human to the divine. He who has made man's mind knows precisely what the mind needs.”

Most of the psychologists are well accepted in society but there are certain schools of psychology like the humanist who believe that man should be the measure of all things, with no need for belief in a Supreme Being. We would call such people atheists who are interested in comparing the behaviour of human beings with animals and would stay away from anything spiritual or religious. This throws out our fundamental belief in a Supreme God who created us and the universe, one who shed his precious blood for our sins on Calvary’s cross and the one who has promised us eternal life if we follow the guidelines He has given us in the Holy Scriptures. We need to warn our students of such theories that are gaining ground.

Many of us are intrigued by the scholarly writings of Sigmund Freud, known as the founder of psychoanalysis and a significant figure in the field of Psychology. His influence permeated the educational field in many ways. However, it is to be noted that Freud was an atheist who contended that religion is but an “illusion.” He argued that early man did not understand the material forces of nature and thus personified the forces of nature and became animists. John Dewey and B. F Skinner were both signatories of the infamous Humanist Manifestos which utterly repudiated faith in God. Carl Rogers known for “client-centred” therapy was religious in his early years but later we see that

he turned to skepticism and doubted religious principles. Scholars may have their own views but when we, as teachers, present matters pertaining to the field of Psychology and the study of the brain and its functioning, we need to give our Creator due respect and praise. We need to be watchful of the teachings of Humanistic Psychology which is the basis of virtually all modern psychology as it does not support God, our Creator and the Saviour of mankind.

There are other Psychologists like Charles H. Judd (1939, p. 15) who support Darwinian Evolution by saying, "If . . . psychology is to gain a complete understanding of human nature, it must take into account the findings of the science of biology, which traces man's bodily structures and some of his traits back to remote origins in the lower forms of animal life." Eugene Linden (1974, p. 41) says, "Darwin has provided the basis for a paradigm that might explain both human psychology and human behaviour in terms of man's continuity with the rest of nature." According to Raymond Surburg (1959, p. 184) "A lengthy comparison of the mental powers of man and the lower animals was made by Darwin, who believed that animals showed evidence of imitation, curiosity, imagination, and even of reason. Darwin's genetic approach was extended to the study of animal, child, and racial psychology by a number of psychologists." From the above views, it is quite evident that modern Humanistic Psychology is grounded in Darwinism which is totally in opposition to Creationism as presented in the Word of God and accepted by all Adventists around the world.

The Integration of Faith and Learning

As Adventist teachers some of us are very conscious about integrating faith and learning in our schoolrooms. If "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," (Ps. 111:10) we should never be afraid to incorporate the Biblical perspectives into the educational process. This is to be carried out very diplomatically especially in schools and colleges which have students of varied religious faiths and beliefs. As we commence with our class session it is perfectly alright to invoke the Holy Spirit through prayer to be in our midst and to help and direct us with the discussions. I have done this in my classes and sometimes I even call upon non-Adventists to pray and they are happy to do it. Many of them are even pleased with the thought that the teacher does not support any sort of discrimination in his class.

Next to the study of the Bible, the study of nature is vital for all Adventist teachers. Being a Biology teacher, whenever possible, I take my students on a journey and present to them the vastness of God's universe, the unfathomable number of stars, planets, and constellations, the multitude of living creatures, the symmetry and perfection in organisms, the marvellous functioning of the human body and a host of other areas that tell us that these things just did not come into being spontaneously or through the course of evolution but was designed by our Creator God.

In all curricular and co-curricular activities in the school or college we need to inculcate in the students Christian beliefs and values. When the students graduate and face the unknown world, they will be sensitive and committed to share the truth which only comes from God. Even after being employed, I have had students from other faiths telling me that they miss the College where they learnt wonderful truths from the Bible and some of them even request you to pray for them. Sometimes I have had the privilege of meeting my non-Adventist graduate's boss in town and they tell me that the students from your College are so different and so understanding. This kind of a testimony from their boss makes you feel so good and you have this inner satisfaction that you do play an important role in moulding the life of your students.

The training given in our schools and colleges should testify to the fact that "Teachers and students acknowledge that all truth is God's truth, and every field of study can broaden and deepen their understanding of truth as revealed in Jesus, the Bible, and nature" (Rasi, 1998).

The admonition given by Ellen White (1977, vol. 1. p. 39) is to be taken to heart by all teachers. She says, "Take no glory whatever to yourself. Do not work with a divided mind, trying to serve God and self at the same time. Keep self out of sight. Let your words lead the weary and

heavy-laden to Jesus, the compassionate Saviour. Work as seeing Him who is at your right hand, ready to give you strength for service. Your only safety is in entire dependence upon Christ."

While talking about the qualities of a teacher, Ellen White (1977, vol. 1. p. 14) says, "The habits and principles of a teacher should be considered of even greater importance than his literary qualifications. If he is a sincere Christian, he will feel the necessity of having an equal interest in the physical, mental, moral, and spiritual education of his scholars. In order to exert the right influence, he should have perfect control over himself, and his own heart should be richly imbued with love for his pupils, which will be seen in his looks, words, and acts. He should have firmness of character, and then he can mould the minds of his pupils as well as instruct them in the sciences. The early education of youth generally shapes their characters for life. Those who deal with the young should be very careful to call out the qualities of the mind, that they may better know how to direct its powers so that they may be exercised to the very best account."

Adventist teachers are sometimes swamped with their work. However, it should be noted that if we place Christ in our classrooms above our educational achievements, we will receive the vitalising force which comes only from the love of Christ. Ellen White (1905 p. 115) so beautifully presents this thought. She says, "The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalising power. Every vital part--the brain, the heart, the nerves--it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are aroused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life-forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy--joy in the Holy Spirit--health-giving, life-giving joy."

Failures in life brings discouragement and pain; nevertheless, as Adventist teachers we should keep in mind that every failure is a stepping stone to success. We should always look to our Master Teacher who brings healing to the broken hearted. It is interesting to note that God's healing power runs all through nature. If a tree is cut down, if a human being is wounded or breaks a bone, nature begins at once to repair the injury. Our bodies are truly "fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalms 139:14) for even before the need exists, the healing agencies are alerted and are ready; and as soon as a part is wounded, every energy is bent to the work of reconstruction and restoration. So also it is in the spiritual sphere. Before sin created the need, God had provided the remedy. Every soul that yields to temptation is wounded, bruised, by the adversary; but wherever there is sin, there is the Saviour. It is Christ's work "to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised" (White, 1903 p. 113)

Conclusion

In his well-researched book, *Acquired or Inspired?*, Don S. McMahon (2005, p.142) presents these important findings which I quote as they are related to this paper:

1. Ellen White did make medical statements that have not been backed by today's medical research, but these were mainly in the explanations of the lifestyle principles rather than in the lifestyle principles themselves.
2. Because a few lifestyle statements are as yet unproven does not mean all her lifestyle statements should be rejected.
3. It is interesting to note that her earliest writings in *Spiritual Gifts* are the best source of recommendations for a healthy lifestyle.
4. A large core of accurate lifestyle statements are in close accord with modern thinking. In these she was more than 100 years ahead of her time.
5. When the knowledge of the mid-19th century is taken into consideration, it is impossible to exclude inspiration from Ellen White's writings. Ellen White's writings should not be rejected; it is essential they be carefully studied and appreciatively implemented.

In full support of the integration of faith and learning Ellen White says, (1855-1909, vol, 4, p. 417) "The harmonious healthy action of all the powers of body and mind results in happiness; and the more elevated and refined the powers, the more pure and unalloyed the happiness. An aimless

life is a living death. The powers of the mind should be exercised upon themes relating to our eternal interests. This will be conducive to health of body and mind."

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Although men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own misdeeds and wrong actions, He considers them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him (White, 1905, p. 115).

A study of the life and writings of Ellen White makes it obvious that her source of information was from God. Most of her admonitions had no scientific support during her lifetime and were not accepted by the medical community; some were in direct contradiction to common medical knowledge and practice of her day. However, as we study her guidelines on diet, exercise, temperance, rest, sunshine, hydrotherapy, and fresh air, we find that most of what she said has been verified scientifically. She has truly given to the world valuable information on mental, physical and spiritual health and invaluable counsel on how we may prepare ourselves not only for this world but for the world to come.

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