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Health Reform

EVENTS ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO THAT STARTED A WORLD WIDE HEALTH MOVEMENT

STUDY GIVEN BY J. D. HENRIKSEN, M.D.

BATTLE CREEK TABERNACLE

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One of the features in the Advent Movement that creates the best public relations and attention is our health and medical work. Millions of non-Adventists read our health magazine and books, while millions more visit our sanitariums, hospitals, clinics, treatment rooms, and the offices of thousands of S.D.A. doctors, dentists, etc. Other millions appreciate our health food products which are sold from grocery stores all over the world.

Seventh-day Adventists are acknowledged to be one of the most healthy groups of the population. Research has shown that because of their healthful living, (no cigarettes or alcohol) they have less cancer than the general population. Recently statements have been used that they have less tendency to heart attacks and strokes than the average citizen; undoubtedly due to their predominantly vegetarian dietary habits. Many people who are acquainted with S.D.A. standards respect the church members for their interest in healthful living. At the same time, however, they expect them to apply these health principles; a number which have only recently been generally accepted by the medical world and the public.

When we look back over the history of the Advent Movement we find the origin of this health movement essentially centered around events one hundred years ago. Before 1863, when the first General Conference was held and organized in Battle Creek in May, the minds of the pioneers were more or less confused concerning health. Only a few understood the great value in accepting certain rules of healthful living.

#### EARLY EVIDENCE OF HEALTH INTERESTS

First in line among those few health minded pioneers was Captain Joseph Bates who gave up the use of alcohol in 1821, tobacco in 1823, tea and coffee in 1836, and meat and rich foods in 1843. In 1827 he led out in organizing one of the first Temperance Societies in America.

Another was Mrs. Ellen G. White, who first called to the minds of Adventists the dangerous effects of tobacco, tea and coffee in 1848. In 1854 she revealed other thoughts about the effects of physical cleanliness, control of appetite and advocated against the use of rich food and grease.

THE HEALTH REFORM OUTLINED IN VISION.

It was on Friday, June 6, 1863, that Mr. and Mrs. White invited a few friends to join them in a trip to Otsego - 28 miles from Battle Creek for a Sabbath visit. Mrs. G. W. Amadon, who was in the group has written the following report of what happened: "Friday evening we found ourselves all assembled at Brother Hilliard's home for family worship. About a dozen being present, a chapter was read and Mrs. White led in prayer. Brother White was kneeling across the corner from her. Her burden in prayer was for him and while she prayed and still on her knees she moved over to him and laid her hands on his shoulder and prayed until she was taken in vision. This lasted for three-fourths of an hour. At this time she was given the light on the health reform. Brother White was also greatly blessed and encouraged and he was relieved of the burden he had been carrying."

THE FIRST REPORT GIVEN DR. LAY

About two weeks later on June 23, the White family was called to Allegan where they visited the home of Dr. H. S. Lay, an Adventist practicing physician. Also attending was William, a son of the White's, who related the events in the following words:

"After dinner we were invited in the parlor for a visit. I, a boy nearly 9 years of age, listened interestingly to the conversation. A few minutes were spent in general conversation and then Dr. Lay asked Sister White to relate what had been revealed to her in her recent vision in regard to disease and

health and the reforms that were called for. Mother responded very reluctantly to his request. She said she was not familiar with medical language and that much of the matter that was presented to her was so different from the commonly accepted views that she felt she could not relate it so that it could be understood completely. Dr. Lay said 'Try and tell us what you have been shown and we will try and see if we can understand it.' Then mother told in simple language what she had seen. She said that pain and sickness were not ordinarily as we commonly supposed due to a foreign influence attacking the body; but that in most cases they were an effort of nature to overcome unnatural conditions resulting from the transgression of some of nature's laws. She said that by the use of poisonous drugs many bring upon themselves life-long illness and that it had been revealed to her that more death had resulted from drug taking than from any other disease. She condemned the use of stimulants and narcotics speaking particularly of alcohol, tobacco, tea and coffee. She spoke in detail of the evil of meat eating and of the serious danger of contracting disease thereby, because of the increasing disease of animals. She gave in detail the harmful effects of over-eating and of eating too frequently. She emphasized the importance of cleanliness regarding the person and about the home. She emphasized physical exercise and the immediate value of water treatment, pure air and sunshine." This conversation in Dr. Lay's home continued for two hours. It covered comprehensively the value of the great truth that led to our Health Reform Movement. Dr. Lay was profoundly impressed by the accuracy of the principles of Physiology, Hygiene, Diet and Therapeutics that lay at the foundation of what Mrs. White related as being shown her in vision. He knew that her knowledge of these principles had not been acquired from human sources of information. Later he gave up his practice in Allegan and acquired more information about the use and benefits of natural remedies and was the first

physician at Western Reform Institute when it was founded in Battle Creek in 1866.

PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES TEST THE HEALTH PRINCIPLES

The test of the health reform soon came to the White family. The later part of 1863 *James White taking a working vacation and Mrs White doing* found the family traveling in the Eastern States, *and revealing a great deal of results* ~~to the churches the health principles as presented to Ellen G. White in vision.~~

This trip was interrupted by a severe case of pneumonia in the eldest son, Henry. The family doctor was called and the usual drugs of that time were given. Despite the medication given the boy died, to the great sorrow of the White family.

Shortly afterward in the early part of 1864 the second son, Willis, was suddenly and violently brought down with lung fever. In SPIRITUAL GIFTS, page 151, chapter 40, Ellen G. White described the situation in this way: "We decided that we would not send for a physician but do the best we could with him ourselves with the use of water and entreat the Lord in behalf of the child. The next day Willie was very sick. We continued to look to God in his behalf and to use water freely on his head and a compress constantly on his lungs and soon he seemed as rational as ever. He suffered severe pain in his left side and could not lie upon it for even a moment. This pain was subdued with cold water compresses, varying the temperature of the water according to the degree of the fever. We were very careful to keep his hands and feet warm." After watching over the child day and night for a few days, some friends came in to take-over at night and Mr. and Mrs. White went to bed to sleep.

Mrs. White could not sleep for anxiety. She felt pressed for breath. At last she arose and opened a door into a large hall to allow fresh, cold air to come in and then she fell into a quiet sleep. During the sleep she dreamed that an experienced physician, who was standing at her side said "that which gave you

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relief will also give your child relief. He needs air. You have kept him too warm. Heated air coming from the stove is injurious and were it not for the air coming in from the windows it would be poisonous and destroy life. The child's lungs have been weakened by the room being kept too warm. Yet it most cases air and light have, like a dangerous enemy, been excluded from the sick room at the very time when needed." Next morning she followed this advice and soon the boy appeared quite well and improved rapidly.

#### HOW MRS. WHITE IMPROVED HER HEALTH

Mrs. White relates her personal experience this way: SPIRITUAL GIFTS, volume 4, page 153 - "Since the Lord presented before me in June 1863 the subject of Meat Eating in Relation to Health, I have <sup>left the use of meat</sup> ~~not used meat~~. For awhile it was rather difficult to bring my appetite under control. Formerly I had but little relish, but by persevering I have been able to do this. I lived for two months on two meals a day. I applied myself to writing most of the time for more than a year. The brain has been constantly taxed and I have had little exercise, yet my health has never been better than for the past six months. The former faint and dizzy feelings have left me. I have been troubled every spring with loss of appetite. This spring I have had no trouble in this respect. Our plain food eaten twice a day is enjoyed with keen relish. We have no meat, cake, or rich food upon our table. There is no lard, but in its place milk, cream and butter. We have our food prepared with but little salt and we have dispensed with spices of all kinds. We eat breakfast at 7:00 and our dinner at 1:00. Seldom do I ever have a faint feeling and within 8 months have lost 25 pounds of flesh. I feel better without it and I have more strength than I have realized for years."

About this time Elder White became acquainted with the writings of Dr. J. V. Jackson of Danville, New York. In August 1864, Elder and Mrs. White

spent three weeks at the institution directed by Dr. Jackson. At this time Dr. Lay from Allegan was also a member of the Medical staff at Danville Institution. He was there because his wife's health had been poor and he felt that she needed restroation by natures methods of healing. This institution

used water therapy and a reformed diet advocated by Sylvester Graham. *After several*  
*those weeks when Elder White continued on to the East where*  
*they held some meetings and at each place they stopped they spoke*  
*upon the subject of health. The people listened with deep interest.*  
THE ILLNESS OF ELDER WHITE  
The next year Elder White was elected President of the General Conference.

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The increased responsibility, strenuous traveling weakened him and in the middle of August 1865 he was stricken with paralysis. In answer to earnest prayer, partial physical restoration was effected. For five weeks everything possible was done for him at the White home in Battle Creek without much indication of improvement. He was then brought by Elder Loughborough and Uriah Smith to Danville, New York, where he spent three months under the treatment of Dr. Jackson.

Following their return to Battle Creek, Elder and Mrs. White bought, in the spring of 1867, a small farm in Greenville, Michigan. With the help of her son, Willie, and with her own hands she planted, hoed and pruned and was gratified to see, on her husband's part, an increased interest in her project and a sharing of the work. When haying time came their grass was cut with a machine and Elder White decided to ask some of his neighbors to help get it in. Mrs. White stalled him and visited the neighbors first and learned that although they were pressed with their own work, they would help the White family. However, when she explained her plans and her reasons she obtained their cooperation. When the call for help was made by Elder White they all told him it would not be convenient for them to leave their own ~~work~~ for they would suffer a loss thereby. Elder White was bitterly disappointed that they would ~~go back~~ *seemed as if they* ~~to his needs~~ *seemed as if they* on their word, but Mrs. White cheerfully suggested that they do it themselves.

She said, "let us show our neighbors that we can attend to the work ourselves. Willie and I will rake the hay and pitch it on the wagon if you will load it and drive the team. As they were new farmers they had no barn and Mrs. White volunteered to build the stack if her husband would pitch up the hay while Willie would be raking for another load. Thus the hay was gathered and stacked and with great pleasure they surveyed the results of their labor. Shortly after in September of '67, Elder White was invited by Dr. Lay to speak to the patients and many others at the new Health Institute in Battle Creek giving his own experience. He spoke mainly upon the evil result of inactivity during the first part of his sickness, and of the beneficial result of active life which he had personally experienced.

#### THE HEALTH REFORM ACCEPTED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

In SPIRITUAL GIFTS, volume 4, chapter 39 on Health, Ellen G. White gives a complete revelation of the vision shown her in Otsego, Michigan, June 6, 1863. It is interesting today to read these 33 pages which give a comprehensive explanation of most of the health principles that have since been accepted by the Seventh-day Adventist church. They were first endorsed by the General Conference in 1866 in a resolution which stated that "we acknowledge the Health Reform as set forth in a testimony of Sister White as part of the work of God encumbered on us at this time, that we pledge ourselves to live in accordance with these principles and we will use our best endeavors to impress their importance upon others." This is quoted from THE REVIEW AND HERALD, May 22, 1866. Mrs. White's outline of her vision was written down in June and July of 1863. It deals with intemperance as the cause of the entrance of sin into this world. It consists of warning against liquor, tobacco, tea and coffee. It advocates plain food, probably eating two or three times a day, warns against dangerous drugs such as strychnine, opium, mercury, calomel



and quinine. Claiming that the habit of cleanliness will much improve the family's health, it also acknowledges the importance of fresh air and light, outdoor activities in yard and field and condemns the eating of unclean foods as specified in the Bible.

CRITICS ANSWERED

Everybody must agree that these ideas are the foundation of our health teachings today one hundred years later. Yet some of the people today, just as in the beginning, do not see the value of these rules for healthful living and doubt their divine origin. Ellen G. White answered her critics in THE REVIEW AND HERALD, October 8, 1867 in this way: "It was at the house of Brother A. Hilliard, Otsego that the great subject of Health Reform was opened before me in vision. As I introduced the subject of health reform to friends where I labored in Michigan, New-England and the State of New York and spoke against drugs and flesh meats and in favor of water, pure air and the proper diet a reply was often made, 'you speak nearly the opinions taught in the LAWS OF LIFE, published by Dr. Trell, Jackson and others. Have you read that paper and those works?' My reply was, 'I had not, neither would I read those until I had fully written out my vision lest it should be said that I received my light upon the subject of health reform from physicians and not by the Lord.'"

From these early beginnings until her death in 1915, Ellen G. White, both through the written and the spoken word gave evidence of her belief in health and temperance, and the healing principles of sunshine, fresh air, exercise, water treatment and proper diet. Now approximately one hundred years later we see the great result of this century of health building, planning and all the benefits people have received from the special healing methods of the church as practiced in our institutions all over the world.

## THE TEST OF TIME

Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, in The General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 8, 1897, page 309, expressed his great belief in these principles and their durability in this way: "It is a very interesting fact that the Lord began giving us this light 30 years ago. Just before I came to the Conference I had a talk with Dr. Lay, and he told me of how he heard the first instruction about Health Reform way back in 1860 and especially in 1863. While he was riding in a carriage with Brother and Sister White she related what had been presented to her on the subject of health reform and the principles that have stood the tests of an entire generation. Since this was spoken 70 more years have revealed the lasting value of their teaching. Observance of the Centennial year of the Health Message given to the Advent people has meaning only if the light given at that time still is acceptable to the people and that they and others may receive the blessings as a result of following the laws of nature which are the laws of God.

The medical missionary work carried out with these principles has been called the entering wedge as it brings people in contact with our message of faith and truth. The health message has been likened with the right arm of the body because of its importance in the physical as well as the spiritual well being of men and women.

God wants human beings to preserve their health. He gave our first parents a complete prescription of nutrition. He gave Israel hygienic laws and promised to keep the diseases of Egypt away from them, if they would follow his statutes (Exodus 15-26).

Jesus used the medical work as a means of reaching others (Luke 4:18, Math. 4:23-24) and He stands forevermore as the Master Physician. The apostles taught the first church temperance and the importance of health. When the

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church was organized in 1863, God revealed to them the light of health principles. When we look around today we see clearly that these principles have brought many blessings to the Adventist people and has given impetus to the growth of our world wide movement.

May we rededicate our lives this centennial year, to a full committal of our habits to the will of God, and concentrate more of our efforts to the expansion of our medical missionary contacts which as we have been told, will finish the work.

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