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**SCIENCE, RELIGION AND HEALING:  
A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF WHOLENESS**

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to propose the broad contours of a Christian philosophy of wholism. It seeks to present a conceptual framework for understanding the nature of health and of the healing ministry, based upon the principle of harmony between science and Bible religion. It is hoped that this study will serve as a stimulus for discourse and further elaborations and as a safe guide for educators, learners, and practitioners of the health and healing arts.

### **Justification**

The subject of this essay is important to Seventh-day Adventist Christians for several reasons. First, health and its relation to salvation is still very much misunderstood and contentious in much of the Adventist world. It is often understood in legalistic terms and presented in authoritarian ways. The subject has generated both fanaticism and deliberate indifference.

Second, in certain parts of the Adventist world, the centrality of the health and healing motif to the ethos of Adventism has never been recognized beyond the very rudimentary — even among leaders. In general, its richness as a subject for serious and sustained theological elaboration, discourse, and writing appears to have been lost on leading Adventist theologians.

Third, there are more than enough well-intentioned and influential individuals who continue to draw lines of radical distinction between science and religion, between healing by medical intervention and healing by faith. In drawing such radical lines, the impression is created that to be scientific in one's general approach to life and in one's particular vocation is to be secular-minded and materialistic, rather than spiritually-minded. Such dialectic is a major barrier to understanding the unity of truth and encourages professional polarization.

A fourth, compelling reason this study of wholism is important is that Adventist educators have the unfinished task of integrating and harmonizing science (both pure and applied) with the religion of scripture. The awesome power and challenge posed by secular notions of science in the contemporary world may have dissuaded or overwhelmed many educators unprepared for such a challenge — or stunned them into silence, or worse. This unfinished task has crucial impact on the way the health and healing professions are perceived.

A further impact is on Adventist youth who have studied the sciences. Many are adrift and must face the challenge in the quiet struggles of their souls — alone. This was an important issue for Ellen White, foremost educator and philosopher of health within the church. Nearly a century ago she declared that the "college at Battle Creek was established for the purpose of teaching the sciences"(1948, p. 274). But important as the teaching of science itself was, she set an even higher educational objective, declaring that: "The great object in establishing our college was to give correct views, showing the harmony of science and Bible religion" (p. 274).

These reasons will not be covered in this paper as particular topics. They are outlined here briefly to establish that the Adventist Church has a critical need for clear understanding of the subject dealt with in this essay.

## **DILEMMAS AND DEFINITIONS**

In seeking to establish harmony between science and Bible religion, as a core construct of wholistic philosophy, one inevitably encounters dilemmas and the need for adequate definitions. This is so because of the nature of the historical relationship between scientific truth and authority on the one hand, and religious truth and authority, on the other hand. Those relationships have been always uneasy, frequently contentious, and sometimes adversarial. There is also ambiguity in the understanding of health and healing and need for a comprehensive definition. The subject of faith, foundational to Bible religion, has always posed dilemmas both in understanding and practice; it, too, needs clearer definition. Clearer working definitions in these three areas constitute the critical points of departure in the exposition of the subject of wholism.

### **Dilemmas and Definition of Science — First Point of Departure**

Should science be subservient to religion? Should it dominate and be the judge of religious truth? Or should it be simply independent of all religion? Should science itself function as a religion? History has not provided unambiguous answers to these questions. How does science define itself? and how should mankind view science vis-a-vis religion?

During the middle ages Western religious authority exercised virtually absolute control of scientific endeavors. Explorations in nature were regarded as valid only as they were granted ecclesiastical imprimatur. From the time of the renaissance, as more and more scientists (such as Copernicus, Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton) began to gain confidence in their empirical findings, the scientific discipline began to distance itself from established religion and from religious authority. The discipline was pushed to such a stance, not so much by its own desires, but by the cold indifference shown by religious authorities toward its findings or their heated rejection of them. The tensions that arose from these encounters often forced scientists to go underground, deny their findings, escape to "safe" countries, or endure more severe forms of persecution in their own lands.

This attitude of the religious establishment toward the scientific resulted in a tidal wave toward full independence of science from religion. Thus, by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, much of society, as well as the scientific establishment itself, came to view science and religion as separate realms of reality — as incompatible and mutually exclusive. According to Philip Johnson (1995), at the end of the twentieth century this irreconcilable dialectic view has permeated almost all levels of American society (p. 196).

Some representatives of the scientific community, in fact, have gone much farther, asserting that particular scientific theory must be considered the ultimate criterion for all truth. Such assertion leads to the belief in scientific absolutism. That is to say, the only truths and only realities that are ultimately real are those available to and explainable by scientific theory and reasoning. Richard Dawkins, eminent Oxford zoologist, in his book *The Blind Watchmaker* denies the reality of God and anything transcending scientific naturalism because such categories of thought are inconsistent with Darwinian evolutionary theory. "It

is absolutely safe to say,” he is quoted as asserting, “that if you met someone who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid, or insane” (Behe, 1996, p. 250 ).

Not all scientists define their discipline in such stark opposition to Bible religion. In reviewing the issue Michael Behe (1996), biochemist at Lehigh University, declares that there are many excellent scientists in the scientific community who think that there is something beyond nature, as well as many excellent scientists who do not. Thus, there is nothing intrinsic to science, as such, that compels one to reason that claimants to religious truth which transcends scientific observations and experimentations must, by definition, be denied.

What is needed is a definition of science that can accommodate all excellent scientists. Such a definition, at the same time, would be sensitive enough to sharply distinguish between authentic scientific thought and honest endeavors, on the one hand, and the personal beliefs, exaggerated claims, biases, and fears associated with scientists, on the other hand.

According to George Abell (1964), astronomer at the University of California at Los Angeles, such a definition exists. In his *Explorations of the Universe*, Abell defines science as “a method, not a subject”. He elaborates as follows:

The purpose of science is to find order in the chaos of natural phenomena. Science attempts to represent nature as simply and accurately as possible with natural laws—descriptions of how nature behaves. Note that science describes the *how*, but does not explain the *why* of nature; it makes no attempt to establish the true and absolute “nature of things.” (pp. 4-5)

Such a definition of science does not preempt religion; it leaves plenty of room for philosophy to work with, without vitiating science itself. Because it leaves unexplained the very large question of the why of nature, the definition allows for at least the possibility of harmony between science and Bible religion. By limiting itself to describing how nature has behaved in our past experience and how we might expect it to function in the future, science complements religion as religion seeks to provide significant answers and explanations to the question of “why” and to the desire for purpose.

To be consistent with its purely rational methods of observation and experimentation, science may very well make observations and experimentations on various aspects of religion; but when it touches the large question of why and purpose, science steps out from the circle of its purview where its methods apply and can only offer speculative notions and theories.

Science, then, neither dominates nor serves as the judge of religious truth. Nor is it to function as a religion. It is the handmaid of biblical religion as it explores the mechanisms and wonders of the Natural universe — a universe that the Bible declares was made by a great Designer for purposes that are good and meaningful.

#### **Dilemmas and Definition of Faith — Second Point of Departure**

The religion of the Bible is grounded on the principle of faith, without which, we are told, “it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6). Further, the Bible indicates that certain forms of healing are predicated upon specific acts of faith (Jas 5:14, 15). If one hopes to formulate

an adequate philosophy of healing and health, therefore, one must reckon with the Christian notion of faith.

Very frequently faith has been understood as a way of knowing ultimate truths or reality that is separate and distinct from reason. A simple but common definition is that “faith is a leap in the dark.” One implication of this view is that acts of faith have no more sturdy foundation than the inner voice of one’s “heart” and conviction — devoid of objective knowledge and rational input. On such terms faith, unlike science, comes to conclusions about reality without requiring rigorous intellectual discipline or content. So that one can say, “I have faith because I do not have any rational knowledge or clue about ultimate reality.”

Is this really and truly so? Must one set aside rational knowledge in order to exercise faith? Is there something inherent about reason and reasoning that renders them incompatible with faith?

This paper submits, no. Those who abandon this type of faith in order to hold to reason are probably justified in so doing. The faith expected of rational human persons involves the whole being. It is a lot more surefooted than a leap in the dark that is independent or defiant of reason. Rather, faith may be properly understood as a responsible movement toward the light — even when, at times, the light may seem dim and flickering.

In the classical scriptural definition of faith two important human experiences are linked together: *substance* and *conviction* (Heb 11:1). Substance may be translated as assurance and conviction as evidence. That is to say, the conviction about things we cannot see which propels one to act derives from convicting or convincing evidence that must be available somewhere. A noted Bible scholar observes that when God invites us to trust Him, “He is not asking us to take a chance” (Maxwell, 1967, p. 81). Instead, He first reveals Himself through the world of nature about us, through scripture, and in many other ways. God’s only desire is that we consider the evidence so amply provided and make up our minds. “For this kind of faith there is surely sufficient reason” (p. 86).

In her inspirational writings, Ellen White also observes that “God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant” (1958, p.105).

This linking of assurance with evidence, belief with reason, enables us to revise the common notion of faith and define it in surer terms. Accordingly, the essence of faith may be defined as an honest and willing choice — a choice to believe and act in relation to God’s existence and trustworthiness and in relation to truth, with deliberate affirmation. Such a choice is guided, not by feeling or fancy nor by empirical determinants and demonstration alone, but by various evidences that appeal to reason and conscience.

Since the possibility for doubt and denial accompanies the occasion for an intelligent faith, to affirm faith in God will always be a free and personal act which transforms the character. It appears to be God’s plan that moral man must will to act on the basis of sufficient evidence before he could come to experience the peace and freedom of a personal knowledge of God and deepest fellowship with Him. Although the God who made the world and everything in it may not be far from anyone of us (Acts 17), yet he does not allow Himself to be vainly and casually comprehended — lest we make of Him in idol. We truly

find Him when we search for Him with our whole mind and heart and will — with the entire self.

It is this kind of intelligent faith that protects against human foibles, fables, and superstition. It enables us to believe that things which are visible, tangible, audible around us were made by an intelligence which does not appear. That is to say, an invisible reality, not identified or identifiable by science and scientific proofs, is responsible for the very visible realities that is the domain of science. Like science, such a faith is not based upon nonsense. It is the highest function of reason to hold it — even in the absence of empirical proofs — for there is abundant evidence to sustain it.

The kinship of science and Bible religion resides in our definition of faith as predicated upon an appeal to reason. Science searches for and organizes rational evidence to sustain hypotheses about how natural phenomenon works: religious faith acts upon the weight of evidence that points to intelligence behind such visible realities. For an adequate apprehension of reality, we need both science and Bible religion in close partnership.

#### **Dilemmas and Definition of Health — Third Point of Departure**

As with science, so with health: there is a need for a clear definition to serve as a point of departure in formulating an adequate philosophy for the health sciences. This need is all the more urgent as one comes to recognize both the value and the obvious limitation of the most universally accepted definition of health — that proposed by the World Health Organization: "Health is the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not the mere absence of disease or infirmity."

This definition is probably the best possible for a world as diverse as ours. It does acknowledge what health is not — the mere absence of disease. And that is significant conceptual progress when one considers even 19<sup>th</sup> century understandings. Further, the definition recognizes the multidimensional nature of health by stipulating mental, physical, and social components. Such categories may be limited but the principle captured is crucial.

From both a scientific and a religious perspective the weakest aspect of the definition is its assertion that health is a "state" of completion. This betrays a deficiency in understanding or expressing the dynamic nature of human personhood — even his physiological dimension, to speak nothing of his dynamic social interactions. The notion of complete state suggests final attainment and a certain static condition which is not recognizable in human beings. It would seem that health, so defined, is a dream unattainable and inconsistent with the realities of human existence.

Moreover, the definition, with all its universally acknowledged categories, seems to exclude human limitation, pain, and suffering as values having anything to do with health. It does this even though we know that all humankind inevitably experience such conditions. Can a person who experiences suffering know health in any meaningful way? Probably so.

In his excellent analysis of historical conceptions of health and disease, Kenneth Vaux (1976) presents an emergent philosophy which embraces the Traditional view, the Experimental view, and the Renovation view. In the *Traditional*, man is microcosm. He is integrated with nature and represents in himself both natural and supernatural forces at work in "the great drama unfolding in the cosmos" (p. 16). This self-understanding is the essence

of the medical wisdom of the Greeks. It is found in primitive medicine, in modern folk medicine, and in the religio-medical perceptions of Judaism and Christianity (p. 16).

In the *Experimental*, the human body is viewed as a machine which must be kept alive and well at whatever cost. The medical sciences, understanding its physiological and biochemical functions, have developed means to intervene and keep the machine going. Human distinctiveness from nature is questioned but the experimental “stresses man as master, not as microcosm” (p. 57). Healing is manipulation done primarily by external authority. By such manipulations, disturbance is removed surgically, pharmacologically or by other means, and balance is restored.

The *Renovation*, currently in process, represents a convergence of views. Man is neither purely microcosm nor purely master. He embodies both. As microcosm, he is part of nature, subject to her laws, and experiences the agonies and incongruities to which the entire cosmos is subjected. As master, he transcends nature and transforms suffering into hope and joy. Health therefore involves a synthesis of the natural and the transcendental, a blend of some aspects of the traditional and the experimental. Vaux believes that “a new sense of disease and health is emerging wherein the profound spiritual and moral dimensions, the environmental factors, the genetic predispositions, and the specific etiological agents all seem to interplay, forming a wholistic context” (p. 97).

With this comprehensive background understanding, this paper now proposes a definition of health as an essential conceptual point of reference for further thought and action. It is as follows:

Health is the process and the product of applying correct principles of life to maintain integrity within the human system; to secure adequate relationships; to constructively interact with the environment; to engender trust in divine grace; to foster development of one's capacities; to cope effectively with anomalies and limitations in the human condition; and to activate the whole person to live in efficient accord with the divine purpose.

## CONTINUITY AND WHOLENESS

Two sets of principles constitute the foundation of an adequate wholistic philosophy. These are *Anthropological Principles* and *Cosmological Principles*. In this paper the former is referred to as the Nature of Personhood and the latter as Natural Law and Life. These constitute the first building block of education in health science and healing ministries.

### **Nature of Personhood — Anthropological Principles**

Human beings are distinct from other known biological entities in one fundamental regard — they are persons. According to Scripture, to be a person is to bear in one's nature the image of God (Gen 1:27). Many distinguished theologians, including Tillich, Berkhouwer, Barth, and Rice have discussed this concept at great length, depth, and persuasiveness. This paper presupposed there is general familiarity with their thoughts on this subject.

This section presents a restructuring of the concept of personhood. It seeks to do this so as to incorporate the finest theological understandings, sharpened by insights from other disciplines, and organized in a way that is relevant and responsive to the healing arts.

Accordingly, personhood may be understood as a dynamic, multidimensional and integrated unit consisting of the following interlocking dimensions:

1. **The Essential Person.** By this is meant those attributes which occupy the core of one's being and provide guidance toward a meaningful existence. In a fundamental way they are definitive of what is crucial in making human life truly human and provide the structure through which ever-expanding horizons of growth is possible. By the same token their misuse or abuse may result in the contraction and degradation of the whole person. To speak of the health or healing of persons, therefore, is to take into account the well-being of these core essential attributes, to begin with, and whatever impinges upon them.

These attributes include *rationality*: the ability to perceive and think cognitively in harmony with truths and facts; *volitionality*: the capacity for willing endeavors, for self-determined choices and actions; *morality*: the innate capacity for valuing, for perceiving, and desiring what is right; *emotionality*: the capacity for experiencing various shades of well-being or ill-being, which may or may not be influenced by objective facts or truths; *creativity*: the capacity to imagine, visualize and create novel objects and ideas. These attributes are not to be viewed as independent in themselves, but as interconnected and interacting.

2. **The Corporeal Person.** This is the most obvious dimension of personhood - the visible, audible and tangible. Here size, shape, symmetry, as well as movement are distinct and identifiable. In addition, the coordinated physiological functions of macro organ-systems, such as the respiratory and cardiovascular, are integrated with micro-organelles and structures of the cell, such as the mitochondria and DNA. Here lies the ability for physical and mental work and play. One special function is the capacity for biological procreativity.

Through neurological, hormonal; and other connections the corporeal person is integrated with the essential person as an interdependent whole, each responding to and mirroring the conditions of the other. When the Psalmist exclaimed how man is "fearfully and wonderfully made" he clearly included this corporeal structure and function (Ps 139:14).

Moreover, it is to this concept of integration of the essential and corporeal Ellen White referred to when she observed that "the body is the only medium through which the mind and soul are developed for the upbuilding of character" (1942, p. 130) Hence, she says, whatever weakens the body weakens the mind also. That is, whatever weakens or damages the corporeal person, weakens or damages the essential person.

3. **The Relational Person.** Human beings were made to function in relationships and the image of God can be expressed only thus. This is not an optional, but an absolute need derived from God's inherent nature, and mirrored in mankind's incessant drive to form adequate relationships. Scripture affirms this dimension explicitly when Paul observed that "no man lives to himself and no man dies to himself (Rom 14:7,8). Although Paul is referring to a particular relation (with God), it is clear throughout Scripture, human history, and the observations of the social sciences that the qualities at the core of one's being (the essential person) as well



as one's very material body (corporeal person) become meaningful and purposeful only through relationships. From infancy through old age, the person may identify with other persons and objects far removed in time and space and the quality of those relationships, whether near or infinitely removed, may be crucial determinants of his well-being (Knutson, 1965).

Among the relationships most important for a fully functioning person are: (a) relationship with one's self; (b) relationship with one's spouse, the "helper fit for him," (Gen 2:18); (c) relationship with significant others; (d) solidarity with the community and with humanity. These relationships are assumed in scripture and constitute the context in which the second great commandment has been given - the command to love one's neighbor as one's self. (Matt 22:39)

4. The Worshiping Spiritual Person. This dimension of personhood involves the capacity within persons for self-awareness in relation to the self-transcendent. That is, the capacity to know God, appreciate His character, communicate with, and worship Him. This is not just a capacity; it is also a need, a "hunger and desire" that is not limited to the rational. It is specific but also pervasive.

In Athens, Paul lectures to philosophers who could not rationally comprehend or know God; but who, notwithstanding, desired to worship whatever is judged to be worthy of worship; and they built an altar dedicated to the "Unknown God" (Acts 17:22,23). As God's own offspring, humankind has been made to "feel after him" (verse 27). A measure of faith has been given to everyone (Rom 12:3). The mystery of who He is can be solved on a very personal level for each is made with the capacity, not only to perceive him in the things that have been made (Rom 1:20), but also to respond to His own initiative in fellowship and worship. Spiritual capacity does indeed dwell in every person, but effective spirituality is possible only as man the creature discovers personally a Creator whom he can worship "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23-24).

Spirituality, therefore, is healthy as the whole person is linked in fellowship with, and worship of the mysterious One who has revealed Himself to the human spirit as the Lord God, the very one "in whom we live, and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). This spiritual bonding between the person and God is a very special expression of the image of God. It is directly grounded in the moral nature within the essential person and is the basis on which the first and greatest commandment has been given: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind" (Lk 10:27). It is hardly necessary to indicate that a positive response to this fundamental law of human personhood is vital in order to enter into life and health and wholeness. Indeed not to do so must be viewed as a pathological condition requiring healing.

#### **Natural Law and Life — Cosmological Principles**

Another major component crucial to a philosophy of wholism concerns the basic principles of the universe. Of first importance is the Christian concept that the universe above us, beneath us, around and within us, is a *cosmos and not a chaos*. The evidences for this are abundant both in Scripture and in the sciences. That is to say, the reality that we know through personal observation, through scientific discoveries, and through Scripture is not in essential conflict with itself. It is a universe and not a multiverse. There are coherent

laws and principles through which natural processes are organized and sustained. The diversity and complexity observed is harmonious. As noted above in our definitions the purpose of science is to find law and order in the complexity of natural phenomena.

The second concept, which justifies this view of the universe, is the biblical assertion that God is creator and from Him all life proceeds. Things visible and invisible, material and non-material, according to Scripture, derive their being and value in Him (Col 1:16). That is what it means to be God. Authentic and valid Godhood is inseparable from creatorship. Just as God is one — a unity and not a dichotomy — so the universe is one, not a multiverse.

The third crucial concept is that the Creator is actively involved in the continuing operations of the laws and processes by which natural life is sustained. Not only did He create in the beginning of time, but also there is a sense in which he continues to give creative life in the here and now. Ellen White (1942) points out that the hand of the infinite One “is perpetually at work guiding this planet. It is God’s power continually exercised that keeps the earth in position in its rotation” (p. 416). She emphasizes the constancy of the divine presence and action in the details of His creation:

The God of the universe is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears, and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies to God. These little things so common around us, teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing too small for His attention. (1948, pp. 260-261)

Such involvement of the Creator in His creation, however, does not compromise His transcendence, His personhood, or His objectivity. He is both personal and transcendent, contemporary and Creator. What such continuing involvement does emphasize is that there is a **profound sacredness and awesomeness to natural life** — for God is at work there. In *God is With Us*, Jack Provonsha (1974) crystallizes the essence of this wholistic concept well, writing that “God as Creator ties everything together. Every part of the universe is in some way related to every other part through God who is its unifying principle.” Continuing he points out:

There are no radical or categorical separation between independent levels of reality. The Hebraic-biblical sense of unity is thus in sharp opposition to every dualistic separation between spirit and matter, or between the supernatural and nature. It rejects the two-or-three-storied universe of the pre-enlightenment world view. The Bible sees God as dwelling on all floors! All is His. He is the creator and He is one, uniting everything with His own unity. Those amazing continuities, the electromagnetic spectrum and the periodic table, are visions of God! (p. 62)

Thus, to engage in the processes of the material world in the natural or health sciences is to engage in processes which are fundamentally religious and sacred. It is to think God’s thoughts after Him and to enter into sublime partnership in His creative and sustaining endeavors. This is particularly true when dealing with the human person and its many functions. Ellen White states poignantly that “the mechanism of the human body presents mysteries that baffle the most intelligent. . . The beating heart, the throbbing pulse, every

nerve and muscle in the living organism, is kept in order and activity by the power of an ever-present God" (1942, p. 417).

Teachers of health science and all who work to preserve and promote the well-being of persons in partnership with the ever-present Creator cannot be doing secular duties. They are called to a sacred task, whether or not they recognize it as such. For this reason, if for no other, **natural laws and natural life have moral and spiritual significance.**

This relationship of the Creator to the cosmos, however, is not popular in our time. There is a great deal of ambiguity on the personal level, even among theists who believe in some form of creation. On the level of theories, concepts that deny the value of the natural world, such as spiritism, or that reject the reality of God and creation, such as scientific naturalism, are the most influential at various levels of society, including the system through which many Christian youth obtain their education for life.

Of all the various theories and beliefs about God and the universe, scientific naturalism is the most daring. While spiritism and pantheistic views may be quite subtle, naturalism openly challenges the notion of a designer and dismisses with casual contempt the idea that there could be any other way of knowing reality apart from what scientists propounds. In his influential book, *Reason in the Balance: the Case Against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education*, Phillip E. Johnson (1995) describes naturalism as a theory that relegates the supernatural to the realm of human fantasy, "reduces reality to physical particles and impersonal laws, portrays life as a meaningless competition among organisms that exist only to survive and reproduce, and sees the mind as no more than an emergent property of biochemical reactions" (p. 197). Such a theory absolutizes nature, but it is a nature devoid of any rational or worthy origin, driven to a purposeless end, and controlled in the here and now by blind forces. Authentic science cannot, by definition, subscribe to these surmisings regarding the purpose and value of natural phenomenon observed. What truly scientific facts are there to sustain such notions?

On the other extreme is the theory of spiritism which sees the material world as of no consequence or significance, except as an impediment to the full realization of the spirit life. Spirit then becomes absolute reality. Greek Gnostic thought is the foundation of both extremes as it proposes a radical dualism of the universe and a trichotomy of human personhood.

The wholistic conception of the universe stands over against these opposing views. To summarize, that concept asserts that ours is a universe, not a multiverse, under the ever present care of a Creator who, though unseen and supra natural, has made his voice heard so clearly in the natural world that those who, having ears, have not heard Him are "without excuse" (Rom 1:20-28). His footprints and fingerprints are everywhere. And the evidences appeal to intellect, reason, and the needs of the whole person. Authentic faith is therefore possible and reasonable.

### **Moral Law and Life**

As noted above, natural law has moral significance for very fundamental reasons. The fact that God is present and at work through nature and its laws is enough to foster a moral response to nature. But moral law is not simply an extension of the laws governing the material world, linked together through they are. Moral laws involve internal structures or

right and wrong that are etched on the soul and mind of man. Hence they are another branch of natural law.

The presence of such laws has been self-evident and consistent through time. According to C. S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity*, the evidence forces us “to believe in a real Right and Wrong. People may be mistaken about them, just as people sometimes get their sums wrong; but they are not a matter of mere taste and opinion anymore than the multiplication table” (1952, p. 18). We have already noted that the two basic branches of the moral law — love to God and to the neighbor - are means of guidance and expression of the relational and the worshiping dimensions of personhood. Those laws may fulfill this purpose, according to Paul, even when we do not know them in a cognitive sense, as in the case of Gentiles who do by nature what the law requires, even when they do not know the law (Rom 2:14).

In the final analysis, the internal realities of moral law and the external realities of the laws of the material order are inseparable. They interact at every point in defining and guiding function and meaning in the entire universe, including human life. Ellen White puts their inseparable relationship very well when she states in *Christ's Object Lessons* (1941),

God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is the author of moral law. His law is written with His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty, which has been entrusted to man. And every misuse of any part of our organism is a violation of that law. (pp. 347-348)

We conclude this section on Congruity and Integration by observing that no one can break the divine law — whether physical or moral. But we may break ourselves. As to physical law and life one may kick the universe, so to speak, but it will kick back. As to moral law and life one may deny or disregard them - disregard one's own nature — but such denial or disregard always produces unpleasant consequences. As to the Creator, one may deny one's own worshiping, spiritual personhood; but the price of alienation one inevitably pays may be devastating to the whole person. It is to these matters we now turn.

### DISCONTINUITY AND PATHOGENESIS

The principle of self-determination is the fundamental *modus operandi* of intelligent life in the universe. This principle is the basis of authentic being and becoming. Character is matured and expressed by responsible self-determination. On the other hand, by its misuse existence itself may be put at risk. There is thus enormous value and a certain precariousness in self-determination, due to the free nature of the will. Several postulates derive from this principle.

First, human existence and destiny are not indetermined, predetermined, fatalistic or capricious. Man has been give the ability to be or not to be - an attribute which the Creator designed, protects, and respects.

Second, a Sovereign Creator has put limits upon Himself by creating human personhood with this capacity. God is thereby asking man to define his own character and destiny. The ability to say “no”, even to God, is crucial to moral living and being.

Third, there are rational alternatives available which provide the conditions for self-determination. One may responsibly exercise one's volitionality in harmony with the "weight of evidence." One may be confronted with a difficult choice, even a dilemma. One may cowardly or indifferently avoid making a choice when confronted with live options, and thus, by default, choose. Or one may choose in opposition to one's best judgment. In all four instances of volitional action or inaction, it is the self that has governed and determined its own response to the alternatives available. One may not desire the consequences, but they are inevitable, for better or worse, in all moral actions. On this basis, incongruities may be introduced into an orderly and harmonious universe. And incongruities lead to brokenness and disintegration.

### **Pathogenesis of Brokenness**

It would be redundant to seek to prove that human personhood, as we now know it, is flawed — broken. Instinctively, we know we are strangers to our finest selves. Individually, we have handicaps of one sort or another. Our communities know various degrees of incongruity and conflict. All of us grieve the brokenness of those with whom we specially identify, and we ourselves get sick and expect to die.

In order to bridge the chasm between this flawed existence and our ideals of true personhood (that is in order to move toward wholeness) it is crucial that the basis of our brokenness is understood. Is it a cause and effect situation or is it bad luck? This paper submits the former: sickness and all destructive incongruities have a fundamental cause and secondary causes. In this regard, the primitive story of Adam's fall is instructive. Ellen White analyzes the issue with profound insight, observing that the essential cause did not reside in yielding to appetite. Nor was the forbidden fruit poisonous. Rather, "It was distrust of God's goodness," an unwillingness to believe His word and a "rejection of His authority" as Creator God which did us in (1903, p.25). Ultimately, the mechanism was volitional, but the "sin" was relational at its core. A relationship with the transcendent was denied — a relationship of trust and worshipful fellowship.

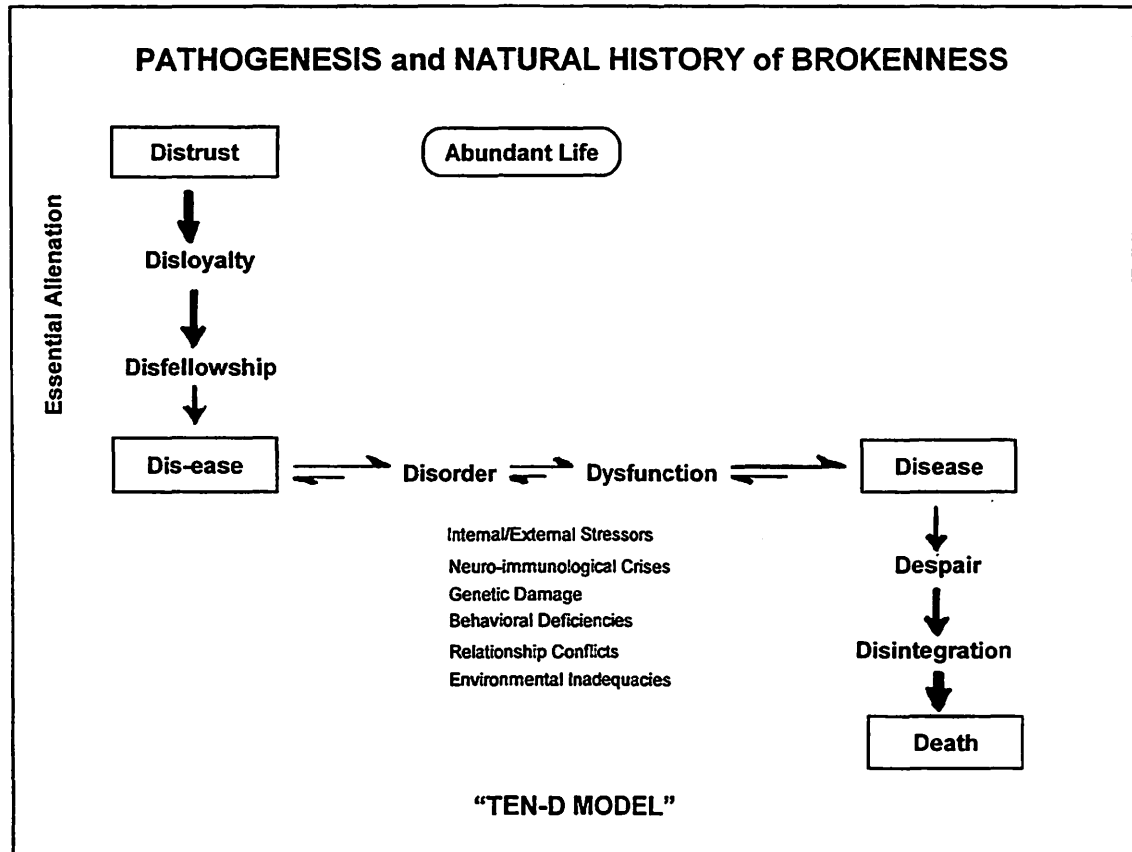
There can be no spiritual worship without a sense of the transcendence and infinite. Furthermore, the connection between man in the image of God and God Himself is grounded forever and always in trusting confidence. Here is where both Eve and Adam, yielding to a rather creative alternative, committed a gross moral failure. They violated the first and great commandment to love the Lord God with all the heart, mind and strength. They acted freely but against what should have been their best judgment, accepting the suggestion that they themselves would be as God. They chose to distrust their Creator and Father thereby breaking the deep mystical bond and violating their own spiritual and moral nature.

The consequence was traumatic — alienation or disfellowship. That is a bitter pill for human beings to swallow. Indeed, disfellowship so profound can only lead to one thing, disintegration and all that is associated with it. As White puts it, from the Creator "all life proceeds. Only in harmony with Him can be found its true sphere of action" (1903, p. 99). It follows, then, that to be alienated from Him is, *ipso facto*, to lose one's essential wholeness and identity, to be out of harmony with one's true self and with the universe.

Disease and suffering are thus the excruciating response of the entire person, not just the physical self, to the sum total of stresses to which the person has been subjected. The signs and symptoms which the behavioral or medical scientist observes are the coded lamentation

of the soul. When fully decoded those signs and symptoms explain the history of humanity's soul, as well as the individual's deepest struggles to adapt and cope with his existence.

The "Ten-D Model" synthesizes the natural history of the decline and fall of personhood.



### Structures of Evil: Further Brokenness

The Old Testament book of Job speaks to us of another dimension of brokenness - the problem of evil. It reveals a conflict between the Divine and the Demonic in which human beings participate, knowingly or unknowingly. Such conflicts, largely unrecognized in modern times, may take many forms. It may be on a massive scale or on an individual level. In it human lives, including children and the innocent, are bruised and broken — as it was with Job and his family.

In *The Demonic and the Divine* (1990), Daniel Day Williams observes that the “prologue to human history is the war in heaven” (p. 4) and that human life “moves within this inescapable conflict” (p. 6). The evil that “erupts with destructive fury” (p. 4) as well as “social and political structures which lead to the destruction of personhood and persons” (p. 11) are among the demonic manifestations.

Evil may become institutionalized in laws, policies or traditions that are destructive of human personhood in general or specific ways. Institutionalize prejudices or hatred, for example, may produce a South African apartheid, the sadistic barbarism of Nazism, or the brutality

and butchery of the tribal massacres of Rwanda. In all these cases millions of human lives who already shared in humanity's "soul-sickness" were deliberately brutalized and left broken or eliminated.

Moreover, the Creator Himself is broken, for, as Isaiah reminds us, in all our afflictions "He was afflicted" (Isa 63:9) That is to say, God suffers with humanity. This is one of the challenging realities the cross of Christ was to reveal. For He, the Word, by whom all things were made, was the lamb slain "from the foundation of the world" (1 Pet 1:20)

To fully engage in an authentic healing ministry one must truly understand the pathogenesis, as well as the natural history of human "dis-ease" and dysfunction.

### **TOWARD REINTEGRATION: MODES OF INTERVENTION**

Discontinuity, alienation and evil, suffering and death, are, in one sense, the natural state of being. This is so because such conditions are not arbitrarily imposed, but rather the consequences of moral and natural causes. (The behaviors of the fathers may be clearly moral, but their consequences are visited on themselves and their sons through natural mechanisms.) In another sense, however, they are unnatural states of existence in that they do not represent the inherent structures and purposes of creation. Rather, they are painful derangements of nature's innate harmony and mankind's integrity and vitality. But, whether natural or unnatural or both, the human condition of brokenness has all the earmarks of self-perpetuation and self-destruction.

The overriding divine purpose, according to Bible religion, is to bring about reconciliation, reintegration, and healing. Nothing is more important or more urgent than this purpose. New Testament theology declares that the "creation waits with eager longing" for this to happen to the sons of God. The very creation itself, now subjected to the futility of brokenness and disease, "will be set free from its bondage to decay" (Rom 8:19-21).

That process of liberation or healing requires definitive intervention into the natural history of the derangement. This paper proposes a divine/human intervention as the remedy. (Otherwise, the self-perpetuating condition will end in self-annihilation.) Both primary and secondary, moral and natural, causes are directly addressed. The Adventist concept of "medical missionary work" is the historic term that encompasses the essence of this divine-human intervention. The primary or moral cause is distrust. The secondary and natural cause is rooted in disorder.

#### **Divine Intervention — Trust and the Christ Event**

The focus of divine intervention is the Christ event. God anointed Jesus as a unique God-man to be humanity's physician — to bear its sicknesses and diseases and to be healed, as the Old Testament puts it, "by His stripes" (Isa 53:5). In His life, His death, and His resurrection are portrayed the magnificence of Christ's character and mission. The total event was intended to overcome the virus of distrust. In doing so He would deal with brokenness at its primary source and thus create a radically new vision of God and perspective of self.

New Testament theology refers to this Christ-event as the gospel, which simply means the good news. In essence that gospel provides evidence of a God of grace who is capable of

healing mankind's most chronic condition, including death itself, and is therefore worthy of trust. Trust, which is a core aspect of faith, cannot be commanded or demanded; but it can be awakened by discovering someone who is absolutely trustworthy. Jesus presents Himself to humanity as just such a one, "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1:14). And He says to the alienated and the broken, "if you have seen Me you have seen the Father," for "I and My Father are one" (Jn 14:9).

According to Ellen White, in this one gift to humanity, "God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air, which circulates around the globe." She goes on to make the point that "all who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live" (1958, p. 68).

In the New Testament this concept of living by breathing the atmosphere of God's grace is called salvation. The good news is the power of God unto salvation; and salvation (soteria) means healing, deliverance, among other things. When faith (trust) in the Great Physician is awakened, there is a sense in which significant healing of the whole person, including mind and body, begins.

The following pivotal statement declares this primary healing to be a reality. It is presented here for analysis and reflection and as a hypothesis which scientists and other investigators in human health and behavior are urged to test. It may be called the *Grace Prescription*.

When the gospel is received in its purity and power it is a cure for the maladies that originated in sin. The sun of righteousness arises "with healing in His wings (Mal 4:2). Not all that this world bestows can heal a broken heart, or impart peace of mind, or remove care, or banish disease . . . The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part — the brain, the heart, the nerves — it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. . . It implants in the soul. . . health-giving, life-giving joy. (White, 1909, p. 115)

This definitive statement, rightly understood, presents ramifications of health and healing that are astounding. It may very well crystallize, if not explain, the essence of some of the observations being increasingly discovered about the positive relationship between spirituality or intrinsic religiosity, health status, and certain disease risks (Larson, 1994).

The statement may also provide clues as to how and why psychoneuroimmunological observations seem so fruitful a science in understanding mechanisms through which healing and health may occur. Whatever the scientific mechanism or pathway, scripture is clear that the gospel of God's grace occupies the core of the divine mode of intervention into fundamental human illness. That grace is summarized in Christ's words of invitation, "Come unto Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28), which, according to Ellen White, "are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills" (1942, p. 115). Whatever else they may do, professionals involved in the healing ministries are to be representatives and mediators of grace.



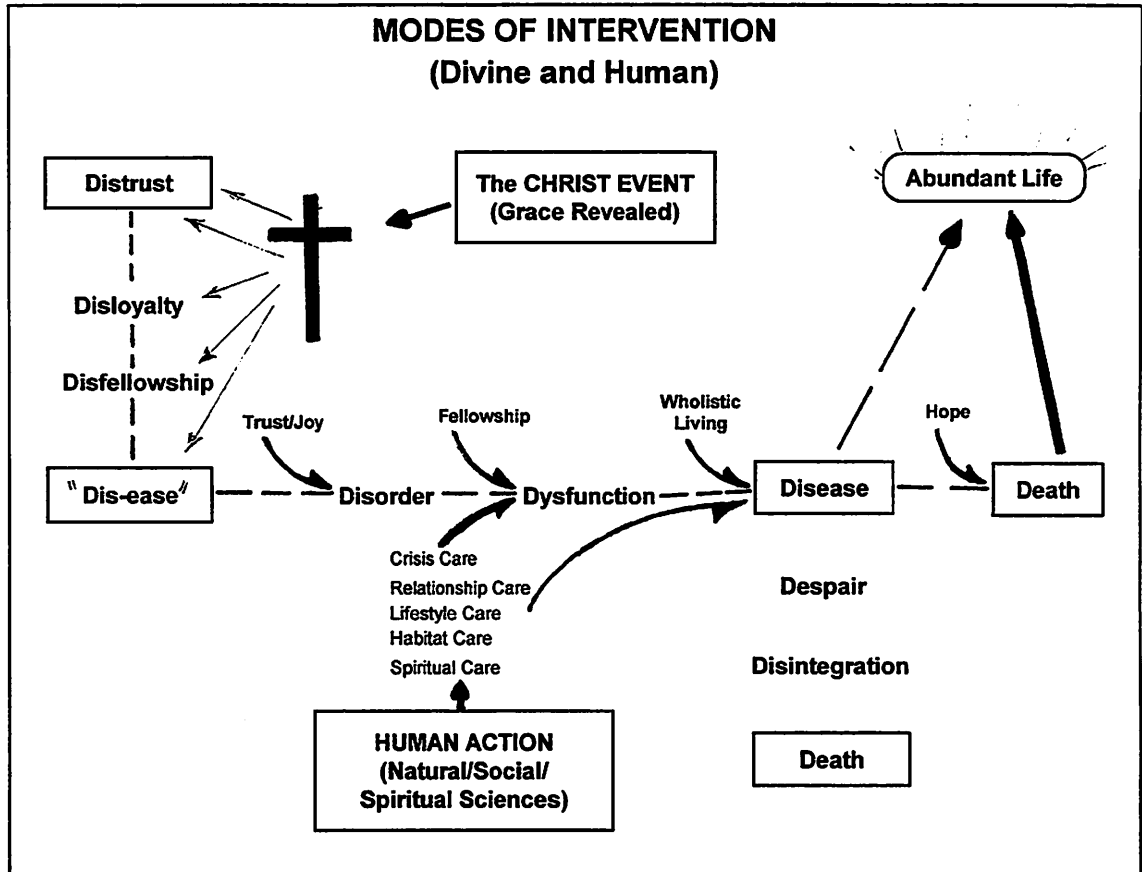
### **Human Intervention — Natural and Scientific Endeavors**

Closely linked with the divine act of intervention in humanity's condition and in that of individual persons is human actions of intervention. Though this is not fundamental in the same degree as the divine act, it is usually more concrete, specific, and recognizable both on the cognitive and affective levels and therefore crucial as an extension or initiation of divine healing. Here is where a knowledge of natural law, scientific expertise, and skill in the medical and social arts play a direct hand in confronting brokenness, suffering, and disease and in fostering wholeness. The human personality as agent, human relationships as process, and human talent and skill as instruments — operating in the context of grace — is the essence of human intervention.

The divine can and does use human agents to bring healing even when such agents are unaware of divine influence and grace. However, the Adventist concept of medical missionary work envisions a community of faith, educated, active and aware, moving out into humanity's "dis-ease," disorders, and despairs, to engage in Christ-like work for the body and Christ-like work for the soul, in disinterested benevolence.

Although scientific means through personal and social action may be the most valid method by which human beings participate with the divine in the healing of persons, one should not assume that miraculous interventions are outmoded. However, it does indicate that, in the contemporary world, God works most of His miracles in unmiraculous ways. Probing into natural law and life, discovering new relationships and facts, isolating the health-promoting properties of nature's resources — whether found in cold or hot water, Chinese herbs, penicillin, proton beams, radical surgery, counseling therapy, diet therapy, health education, a merry heart or a smile — are sacred complements of the divine action in reintegrating human personhood.

Thus, every educational institution which is dedicated to research and training for this quality of professional care is helping to define and actualize authentic wholeness. It authenticates a key objective of higher education — that of showing the harmony of science and religion. And, further, every church that establishes a school of health on sound principles, as mandated, also helps to define and authenticate the concept of wholeness (White, 1942). All such entities will seek to integrate science and faith and will foster wholistic living and wholistic mission.



### APPLICATION

This philosophy of wholism is useful because it seeks to provide a comprehensive framework for systematic thinking, planning, and acting.

1. It provides the raw material from which fruitful discussion of the relation between science and salvation may occur — in the classroom, the laboratory, or the sanctuary.
2. It provides a rational basis for intelligent commitment to wholistic living which returns to primary principles rather than meandering through the forest of dogmatism and fanaticism, or legalism.
3. It presents a vision of the healing ministry which is inclusive, science-friendly, but gospel oriented, Christ centered, and efficient.
4. It can inform the process of curriculum planning. The need for specific courses or programs of study which truly come to grips with issues of science and salvation available to a wide spectrum of students is implied.

5. The philosophy has a special relevance to Asia and the Oriental world. Much of the cultures of Asia has been shaped by religions of mysticism. However, the contemporary youth are being shaped by a world view of science and the technological fruits it bears. If it can be shown that the religion of Christ is not pure mysticism and that the cosmology of the Bible is consistent with scientific reasoning, perhaps a door might begin to swing open for the entrance of the Gospel of God's Grace.

### **CONCLUSION**

Recognizing the contentious nature of the debate between science and religion and the need for a clearer definition of the relationship, the paper proposed the outlines of a philosophy which integrates science and salvation as applied to the health and healing of persons.

The study sought to present broad principles, rather than narrow views, which can serve as a general framework for learning and doing. It deliberately sought to indicate the indispensable role of the divine, as well as the crucial roles of the human, linking their modes of intervention to heal humanity's brokenness.

If it is true that the direct presence of the Creator guides and sustains natural law and natural life upon which we constantly depend; and if this Creator is just like Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth; if it is true that the good news of His grace is a prescription for healing the whole person; and if it is true that human intervention, whether sophisticated or simple, are extensions of the divine grace in healing - then engaging in the task of education for this ministry is an absolute necessity and is well worth the cost. And it is well worth going to the ends of the earth, as so many have done (often at great risk to themselves, their fortunes, and their families) to represent such a ministry of healing to the millions who are broken, but do not know why or how to find wholeness.

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