

19th Century Adventist Healthcare Principles in 21st century Adventist Hospital:

Preparing People to be Whole Before God

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Abstract

This qualitative study identified Adventist healthcare founding principles in Ellen White's (EW) early health visions and how current Adventist healthcare (AH) leaders perceive their application. This poster focuses on one principle, the call to AH **to prepare people to be perfect before a Holy God**. We show how this principle has matured and we discuss alignment with it to Adventist teachings on judgment and Adventist work for social healing and justice.

Background

Clarifying an organization's founding values and principles can help it stay focused on fulfilling its mission. Faith-based organizations often work to shore up their governing commitment to safeguard their core identity. Isolating and discussing AH founding values can be crucial for engaging leaders and followers in important identify, mission and strategic decisions. Surfacing conflict or disagreement about a value can help a community work through issues to deeper understanding and fulfillment. Or difference can be left to fester and dilute engagement and dissipate energies, commitments and mission.

Objectives

The study's original research questions related to isolating early principles from E.G. White visions and then vetting those with historians and then discussing their new wording and application with current Adventist healthcare leaders.

This poster reports only on principle number 8, which shifted from White's original wording "Preparing people to be *perfect*" before God" to *holy* to *whole* and *reconciled* to God as a way to show better understanding and modernization of this principle in light of theology.

Methods/Main Findings

Document analysis was used to distill 12 principles from EG 1865 and 1871 recorded visions related to AH. Historians gave feedback on the analysis. Four focus groups with 26 AH leaders from different geographical areas discussed these 12 and their application to hospital work.

The 12 principles were:

- (1) health education and preventive medicine,
- (2) healthcare for Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) members,
- (3) indirect witnessing to non-believers patients,
- (4) sustain financial and administration model despite attention to all social classes,
- (5) unwavering biblical principles,
- (6) wholistic perspective,
- (7) physical activity as part of treatment,
- (8) preparing people to be whole before God,**
- (9) prayer combined with treatment and obedience to the laws of health,
- (10) God-fearing personnel,
- (11) therapeutic nature interaction, and
- (12) altruistic and trusting institutional model.

There was widespread support for most of these principles, some being viewed as now universally practiced in all hospital systems.

There were some principles that raised debate and concern. This principle eight generated diverse responses and insights as leaders discussed what it meant to "prepare people to be whole" or "reconciled" with God.

Discussions

We discuss the theological and social components of this principle as viable for AH practices. We discuss how "preparing people" can be viewed within the growing understanding of the work and role of healing seen in God's work of judgment. "His hour of judgment" can be seen as a healing initiative complete with diagnosis, intervention and change (Isaiah 58; Luke 4:16-19; Acts 17:27-30; Revelation 14:6-12). The deep acceptance and call for change fostered in judgment is core to a healing process that invites people into God's presence. We use disagreement about this principle to identify, celebrate, and promote a new and potentially winsome and sober blend of health and gospel.

Ellen White refers to AH as the "greatest aid" in preparing people to be holy before God. Linking SDA theology of judgment more tightly to AH healing work may foster a deeper redemptive vision for AH mission. **AH restorative work is connected to the great restorative work of salvation.** By taking the patient to the source of healing and knowledge and directing the patient to the teachings of the human body's Creator, they not only understand the natural laws and their importance but are drawn closer to embrace the God behind such healing. AH reconnects individuals to God and thus a reconciliation is occurring. **AH can strengthen a relationship with God in both patients and caregivers around this healing work of God.** In mind and metaphor God's salvation work, especially in judgment, is connect to healing. This amazing work of God to reconcile and restore is seen as a way he "presents us faultless" and "with great joy" into his very presence (Jude 24, 25).

Conclusions

Discussing, even disagreeing, about these 12 founding principles promises to raise a new level of engagement for AH. AH can deepen its theological as well as practical work around these, especially #8 about preparing people to be whole and reconciled before His throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16).

Main References & Video Links

Main Bibliography

Covrig, D. (2003). Institutional integrity through periods of significant change: Loma Linda University's 100 year struggle with organizational identity. In A. S. Iltis (Ed.), *Institutional integrity in health care* (pp. 139-174). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-017-0153-2_9 and https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=k5K_QE_ukMQC&oi=fnd&pg=PA139&ots=J4wPDXWibK&sig=VA_AahWkgLtPppF21Wq8ZHeBCnM#v=onepage&q&f=false

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White, E. G. (1992a). Testimonies for the Church (Vol. 1). Pacific Press. (1868)

Power Point Presentation & Video Links

Power point presentation at the LLU Global Health Conference:

Adventist Healthcare: Founding Governing Principles in 21st Century Adventist Hospitals (<https://ghi.llu.edu/sites/ghi.llu.edu/files/docs/GHC%202020/Speaker%20PPT/Adventist%20Founding%20Principles%20-%20Presentation.pdf>)

Video link from presentations at the LLU Global Health Conference:

- . Video Presentation -English: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXiQDjZEv6U>)
- . Video presentation -Spanish (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3D4ayMkSQ0>)