

Editorial Preface

The decision to write this book was endorsed by the 2018 AATA Forum delegates following a recommendation by the Association's leadership. What you hold in your hands is a product of collaborated effort and tenacious work that consumed countless hours by various individuals. Four compelling reasons were at the core of producing this book. First, an ardent desire to immortalize information as intellectual property that can be accessed by all. Forums come and go, unless the essays presented are peer reviewed and published, they fail to reach their full capacity. Second, the need to avail current, contextualized information on the health subject in response to the exponential church growth taking place in Africa. A strong health delivery system, a continued church response to health needs in Africa is a must. The newly baptized membership need nurturing by the church, and materials in the form of books to help achieve this objective. Thirdly, sound Bible based dialogues on current health issues are needful to abet festering extreme practices neglect of the Bible based health principles. Fourthly, the health message is an integral part of the gospel commission. Scholarly and research based findings are essential for the church to reach out to thousands who have not embraced the message of salvation as believed and taught by the Seventh-day Adventists. A diversity of stakeholders who include but not limited to; adherents of other churches or denominations, the secular world, non-governmental organizations, the state and its various organs, the corporate world, academics, church members etc., must be reached with the health message. This is mission in Africa.

The essays in this book, written around the theme "Health and Wholeness for Africa," aptly echo a critical quest for mission in Africa as in other parts of the world. Africa is blessed to have many resources to exploit for economic and social betterment of its peoples. However, challenges emanating from health and lifestyle issues, service delivery systems, are a serious threat. The essays, authored by mission experienced individuals, who are academics in their own right, are lucid with practicalities of health issues, which arise from the current and on the ground realities highlighted above.

Furthermore, the essays represent a fair spectrum of health felt needs of Africa and denominational organizations such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Michael Sokupa discusses the import of a preferred worldview for a Bible based health and wellness response for Africa. Such a worldview takes into account value formation, the historical development of the Advent movement, and is pillared on biblical principles. He challenges us to scrutinize indigenous and borrowed

rituals that pivot on our worldview, using the Scriptures. John Appiah dares the church in the 21st century to take biblical models in our quest for healing ministry in Africa. He accomplishes this through an exegesis of Matt 12:9-14, using a text-centered approach. He encourages the church to focus at sustainable community health education, establish health service centers, and have its members practice a healthy lifestyle.

Godwin A. Aja identifies the plight of many who find it difficult, if not impossible, to afford medical care/treatment due to prodigious medical costs. He proposes health response strategies that are implemented by community based health educators. Aja's scheme is built on advancing the mission of the church through community health program implementation, with all stakeholders on board. Dióí Cruz takes a mission perspective, and looks at inner healing as a health and wholeness approach to accomplish mission in Africa. He explores his discussion by drawing attention to emotions and spirituality as components of inner healing before he gives a biblical foundation for it. Stella Appiah draws our attention to the need of educating communities on sicknesses that are often responded to by communities with great misconceptions. She focuses at the Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), and conducts a quantitative research on a designated Senior High School in Ghana. The results show that most respondents are not aware of their SCD status, and have misconceptions regarding SCD management. Besides, they believe that those with SCD should not get married.

Evelyn V. Almocera tackles Christian and Muslim beliefs on HIV and AIDS regarding prevention and treatment among some African communities. She draws some lessons for the church to learn in its mission. Bangwato Sikwa Ramabu makes a contextual review of Ellen G. White statements on the use or no-use of medicines. This is occasioned by contentions this subject has spawned in the church among members. She concludes that White's statements may seem contradictory, however they are not when read and comprehended in their context. Ramabu observes that White advocates and encourages physicians to educate patients on prevention of disease but in no way is she opposed to medicinal intervention when necessary. Furthermore, she notes that White's statements promote a healthy lifestyle that is consistent with biblical principles. Petronio M. Genebago utilizes a historical reflection on the meaning of temperance in the 19th century. He reviews how Ellen G. White participated in temperance movements, while upholding biblical health principles in a holistic manner. Genebago pleads us to view temperance in light of White's emphasis—abstinence from alcohol, tobacco, and drugs; health eating, modest in dressing, work and rest, part of the three angel's message, and it glorifies God.

The editors contend that anyone pursuant of proclaiming a salvific message to a needy world, embraces the message of wholeness and health as part of the gospel that glorifies God (Rev 14:7-12; 1 Cor 6:20). The gospel calls all to be in good health (3 John 1:2). Jesus came that humanity might have the joy of wholeness and health (John 10:10), and He calls all to uphold health principles (1 Cor 10:31; 6:19-20).

— It is our prayer and ardent desire that the essays contained in this book, though not exhaustive of the subject on wholeness and health, the laity, church leaders, community or social workers, and academics will find them invaluable in their field of work. Regarding wholeness and health, it is both a corporate and individual responsibility. We hope that Africa's different stakeholders, will find this book simulative enough to—continue the good work where health mission programs are already in place, do more capacity build on areas that seem to be under threat, champion health and wellness initiatives where nothing seem to be happening, and uphold a healthy lifestyle based on biblical principles implemented in consideration of the practicalities of the African context.

Editors