

THE TOTAL MAN IN MISSION: THE HEAD, THE HEART, THE HANDS, AND THE HABIT

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Abstract

The success of any missionary lies behind the concept of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) philosophy of mission, which embraces the thought of totality in man: the head, the heart, the hands, and the habit. Being a missionary oriented movement from its inception to the present time, the SDA Church philosophy of mission predestines to be holistic. The equipping of their teachers, pastor, and laymen in readying and producing missionary for God's cause is of vital prominence and occurrence. The preliminaries in posting off (foreign, local) missionaries is rewarding for His work. However, not all missionaries whether local or foreign are felicitous in the mission field, to numerate but a few: adapting, fitting, acclimate, be familiar with, and become acclimatized to variegated cultures is not for all. Therefore, this paper stimulates and gives incentives to any personage (laymen, pastor, local, or even oversees) who desires to be successful in his/her mission field. Thence, the SDA philosophy of mission, which encapsulates the concept of totality in man: the head, the heart, the hands, and the habit are approached.

Keywords: *Missio Dei*, Head, Heart, Hands, Habit, Asian Churches, Passion, *kruptos*, work, Megachurches in Asia, Estonian Proverb, and William A. Feather.

1. Introduction

As we consider missions many questions arise, such as, what is the mission? How am I going to adjust to different cultures and situations? How am I going to be able to speak the language....etc? Almost every missionary has his or her experience in mission fields. The sole purpose of this article is to portray the concept of holistic mission as carried out by the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) church, which involves an Asian understanding. During the past years, "the church in Asian countries has

grown in quality as well as in quantity.”¹ It has contributed to an enormous degree in developing indigenous leaders, pastors, teachers, and in turn, articulated contextualized theologies, and in establishing of the assortments of varieties of missions; such as hospitals, and training institutions.

The word “mission” is defined by Noah Webster’s dictionary as: “being sent or delegated by authority, with certain powers for transacting business; commission; as sent on a foreign mission.”² Also, the Latin Christian Theological term ‘*missio Dei*’³ gives us the source of mission. It indicates that mission first and foremost begins with God who sends out missionaries. Referring to the sphere of mission Stefan Paas aptly says, “we must not limit ‘mission’ to countries far away.” In other words “mission should not be defined by an address or geographical location.”⁴

In order for any missionary: pastor or elder to be successful in the mission field; the ‘total man’- composed of the head, the heart, the hands and the Habit must be involved in missions. If these four things: (i) the heard, (ii) heart, (iii) hands and the (iv) Habit are involved in missions, our attitude towards missions will never be the same again.

2. Missions Must Begin in the Head

The head is where the brain or the mind is. That is where your cognizance is. That is where your thinking takes place. For you to believe old time religion you must take it into your mind.⁵ In relation to Asian countries including national leaders, such as M. K. Gandhi have faced challenges in the engagement of the mind as sole purpose of the gospel. They were ready to accept Christian humanitarian services in the variegated aspects of the mission except confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. Yet, the ‘good works’ carried out by missionaries and Christians have always been understood to be an expression of their love and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Asians have by and large been willing to receive the former,

¹ Samuel Jayakumar, “The Work of God as holistic mission: An Asian Perspective.” *Evangelical Review Of Theology* 35, no. 3 (July 2011): 227-241.

² Noah Webster’s Dictionary, 1828, s.v. “Mission.”

³ “‘Mission of God,’ or the ‘sending of God.’”

⁴ Stefan Paas, “Prepared for a Missionary Ministry in the 21st Century Europe,” *Journal of Theology*, 20 no. 2 (2011): 119-130.

⁵ Few thoughts are taken from the Sermon: “The Head, the Heart, and the Hands” by W. Alderman.

but many have rejected the latter, saying: "we have our own saviours."⁶ With regard to the two exceptional missionary leaders of the twentieth century, J.R. Mott, and D.A. McGavran, who made an immense effect on the minds of the Asian Christian lay leaders, especially in India. Mott's ideas of mission initially come from the Enlightenment,⁷ being influenced by the well-liked evangelist D.L. Moody, whereas McGavran's ideas emanated from his three decades of missionary work in India. Both persons insisted on implementing the Great Commission.

The apostle Paul says in Philippians 4:7: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."⁸ The apostle admonishes the reader that the peace of God surpasses and excels above "all understanding." The word understanding is the Greek *nous*, the classical Greek word for the mind. This word refers to the ability to think, to reason, to understand, and to comprehend. It also depicts the mind as the source of all emotions.

In Greek, the word "mind" represents the inner power of a person and thus the place from which a person rules and controls his environment and the world around him. The Greek word emphatically depicts the mind as the innermost control center for a human being.⁹ Therefore, it was understood that the condition of the mind has what determined the condition of one's life.

Commenting on the significance of the mind, Ellen G. White says: "When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. "Acquaint now thyself with Him" (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind."¹⁰ This simply means that a posi-

⁶ Graham Houghton, 'The Foundation Laid by Christian Missionaries', Bishop M. Ezra Sargunam (ed) *Christian Contribution to Nation Building* (Chennai, Mission Educational Books, 2006), 2.

⁷ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990), 173.

⁸ *The Holy Bible : King James Version*. electronic ed. of the 1769 edition of the 1611 Authorized Version, (Bellingham WA: Logos Research Systems, 1995), S. Phi. 4:7.

⁹ Rick Renner, *Sparkling Germs from the Greek: 365 Greek Word Studies for Every Day of the Year to Sharpen Your Understanding of God's Word* (Teach All Nations: USA, 2003), 751.

¹⁰ Ellen G. White: *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1911), 126.

tive attitude toward God will affect and influence our thoughts, our feelings, and the way we behave or do things.

With this, one may pray as King David, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Ps 119:18) or as David also prayed, "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart." (Ps 119:34). This verse introduces my next thought. Once you have the mind to receive it, then may it go to your heart.

3. Missions Must Go to the Heart

The heart is the seed bed for the emotions. It is where you begin to feel and anticipate what you believe. It is where the Word of God has begun to do its faith work. We should remember that "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Some will have you to believe that faith is so sterile and that there is only a mechanical application of Truth. It is not quite, for faith will affect how you feel, but how you feel should not affect your faith; there is a great difference.

In other words, a missionary must have a passion for mission. As you study the Word of God in regards to missions, you should develop strong feelings or might I say convictions about the importance of missions or literally the planned program of going after souls according to the teachings of what we call the great commission. For instance, the primary motivation for the mission in India cuddled: the spreading of the gospel and the growth of churches. In the 1950s and 1960s, although Christian mission for evangelicals was the mission of saving the souls, it never lost sight of human misery¹¹—it had a passion for mission. Therefore, the definition for passion according to Webster's Dictionary is: "The impression or effect of an external agent upon a body; that which is suffered or received. A body at rest affords us no idea of any active power to move, and when set in motion, it is rather a passion than an action in it."¹² According to Siegfried H. Horn passion is a term frequently means, "a strong emotion or desire."¹³ Cassell's Concise English Dictionary comes with a similar view that passion is an "intense emotion overpowering affection of the

¹¹ Samuel Jayakumar, 227-241.

¹² Noah Webster's Dictionary, 1828, s.v. "Passion."

¹³ *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev.ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980), 841.

mind," and an "ardent enthusiasm (for)."¹⁴ Thus, passion is intense, driving, or overmastering feeling or conviction.

When the apostle Peter wrote to wives in 1 Peter 3:4, he instructed them to give special attention to the "hidden man of the heart." The word "hidden" is the word *kruptos*, which describes something that is hidden or veiled from the eyes. The word "heart" is the Greek word *kardia*, which is the Greek word for physical organ of the heart. The heart is the central, core, and vital organ of the body. Although it is invisible to the natural eye, the human body cannot live without it. The heart has a great impact on every single part of the human body as it pumps blood through arteries and many miles of blood vessels. Therefore, it influences the person's ability to live and function. The apostle Peter is giving the reader a powerful insight regarding the human spirit.

Similarly, the ancient Egyptian believed that: *"Every divine word has come into existence through the heart's thought and tongue's command..."*¹⁵ Here the Apostle Peter, as well as the Ancient Egyptians, used the word heart figuratively to refer to the inner person, the seat or source of feelings that drives our actions. In other words, if a person's heart is filled with the life of God, it will pump life into every part of that person's being. Therefore, whatever is in the heart is exactly what will be reproduced in a person's life and conduct.

This is precisely why the apostle Peter urges wives to take time and care to develop their spirits, which he calls "the hidden man of the heart." Because the human spirit is the life-force of any person, he emboldens women to not only fix their hair and their faces but to also beautify their spirits, even though the spirit man is invisible to the natural eye. The apostle declares that this "hidden man of the heart" is "incorruptible" in First Peter 3:4a, which refers to *something that is incapable of decay or something that is incapable of suffering the effect of wear, tear, and age.*¹⁶ The word "incorruptible" may suggest that the "hidden heart of the man" will never grow old or experience the effect of aging as a result of sin. As Ellen G White cogently observes, "Everyone in whose heart Christ abides, everyone who will show forth His love to the world, is a worker together with God for the blessing of humanity. As he receives from the Saviour grace

¹⁴ Classell's Concise English Dictionary: Etymological and Pronouncing (London, UK: Cassell and Company, 1589), 300.

¹⁵ http://www.cosmic-mindreach.com/Egypt_Part1.html

¹⁶ Rick Renner, 751.

to impart to others, from his whole being flows forth the tide of spiritual life."¹⁷

The state of our hearts will also influence our social lives, which is, how we relate to other people as we carry out our mission. The greatest accomplishments have happened when the SDA church has been "united." On the other hand, our (SDA) greatest defeats have happened when we were divided due to our inner state, the heart. The "civil war" "segregation," "adultery," "fornication," "uncleanness," "lasciviousness," "idolatry," "witchcraft," "hatred," "variance," "emulations," "wrath," "strife," "seditions," "heresies," "envyings," "murders," "drunkenness," and "revellings" (see Gal 5:19-21) are great examples of this. Christ also had this to say: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt 15:19). All these are done to the next person and they destroy our mission and unity.

The SDA church is a mission oriented church. No wonder Ellen G. White, calls the church's attention to unity and not division. She admonishes us as a church to:

Strive earnestly for unity. Pray for it, work for it. It will bring spiritual health, elevation of thought, nobility of character, heavenly-mindedness, enabling you to overcome selfishness and evil surmisings, and to be more than conquerors through Him that loved you and gave Himself for you. Crucify self; esteem others better than yourselves. Thus you will be brought into oneness with Christ. Before the heavenly universe, and before the church and the world, you will bear unmistakable evidence that you are God's sons and daughters. God will be glorified in the example that you set.¹⁸

One of the greatest stories about unity in action comes to us from Russell Brownsworth who tells the story of Lord Nelson of England. Lord Nelson of England was about to enter an important battle. He heard that two of his officers were at odds with each other. He called them in and said, Gentlemen, give me your hands. The two captains put their hands in the Commander's hands, and he squeezed them with a tight grip. Men, he said, Remember the ENEMY is OUT THERE!

¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1911), 13.

¹⁸ Ellen G. White: *Counsels for the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific, 1991), 290.

This is a great story about the power of togetherness and the power of unity in action. Therefore, the question of mission is: is our mission onto action/unity? This is to follow Christ, proclaim Christ, and find Christ for the salvation of the whole world. In order not to lose direction in the mission, it will be of a major necessity for Christian worship, faith, and theology to be deeply rooted, and not diffused down. This, in turn, will lead some Christians at one point in time, to come out of cultural backgrounds, psychological buffers, and institutional protection, to preach Christ and Him crucified in action – to be a sermon in shoes. This must be done out of faith in the absoluteness of Jesus for the mission to be followed and discovered in all spheres. Moreover, this mission may involve one to get out in seeking men of different faiths and commitment according to the great commission of Matthew 28:19.

4. Mission Must Go to the Hand

The hands symbolize action. There are very few things that we do without our hands. We work with our hands, we talk with our hands, and we minister with our hands. We even fight with our hands. We use our hands to sign contracts, to adjust the microscope or play the violin and the piano. We use our hand to show joy or disgust. A child, for instance, can see his/her mother in his/her mind now dropping her hands in disgust after he/she is bringing her disappointment.

I wish to return to the thought that, “The hands symbolize action”. When the head is right about missions, and the heart is right about missions, then the hands need to be right. A good example of this is the emanating tendency in the Asian church growth is the rise of mega-churches in cities. In fact, the whole world is witnessing a mega-church movement. S. Gramby-Sobukwe and Tim Hoiland say, “Mega-churches are changing the global makeup of Christianity to the extent that some scholars are characterizing them as the harbingers of ‘The Next Christendom’ and the ‘African Century of Christianity.’”¹⁹ As we are acquainted with, Asia has the largest mega-church in the world—in South Korea (the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul led by David Yonggi Cho.),²⁰ and many other mega-churches have sprung up in China, Malaysia, India, Indonesia, and

¹⁹ S.Gramby-Sobukwe and Tim Hoiland, ‘The Rise of Mega Church...’, *Transformation* 26.2 (2009), 105-106.

²⁰ For a deeper understanding of Mega-churches, see, Clinton Wahlen in his article, “Do We Need Adventist Megachurches?” *Biblical Research Institute Newsletter*, 2010, # 32, p. 1, 3-6.

Singapore. The Asian mega-church movement to a certain extent is a result of following the Great Commission to preaching, and evangelizing, hence, it advocates against idleness.

We need not be idle. We should use our hands, signifying our working with the whole body. This is the heart of community service in which we assist other people and ourselves with our physical labors. We should not wait for conditions in order for us to act in mission; it was the great American publisher and author, William A. Feather, who said: "Conditions are never just right. People who delay action until all facts are favourable do nothing." The Estonian Proverb militates against idleness saying: "the work will teach you how to do it." Above all, Ellen G. White has it right when says:

In our labor we are to be workers together with God. He gives us the earth and its treasures; but we must adapt them to our use and comfort. He causes the trees to grow; but we prepare the timber and build the house. He has hidden in the earth the gold and silver, the iron and coal; but it is only through toil that we can obtain them....Notwithstanding all that has been said and written concerning the dignity of labor, the feeling prevails that it is degrading. Young men are anxious to become teachers, clerks, merchants, physicians, lawyers, or to occupy some other position that does not require physical toil. Young women shun housework and seek an education in other lines. These need to learn that no man or woman is degraded by honest oil. That which degrades is idleness and selfish dependence.²¹

5. Mission Must Continue With the Habit

The idea that the totality of man in doing mission should also incorporate another crucial letter – H, which means the **habit** of the pastoral leader or the missionary. While the Bible does not particularly speak of "habits" as such, yet, much is said concerning the gist of the word: "a thing done often, and hence, usually done easily; an act that is acquired and has become automatic." It is "a settled or regular tendency or practice."²² The word is further defined as: "a tendency or disposition to act in a particular

²¹ Ellen G. White: *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific, 1952), 214-215.

²² Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 345.

way; established custom, usual practice.”²³ In other words, we become what we repeatedly do.

We all have habits, whether good or bad. Even newborns may come into this world with the habit of already sucking their thumbs. Conversely, for the Christian, the whole of their lives is one of being transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom 12:2). This entails exchanging old (bad) habits for new (good) ones, in order to please the Lord. For instance, “Do all things without grumbling and complaining” (Phil 2:14) may stipulate a new-fangled habit on our part. We may need to develop a whole new blueprint of thinking, from negative to positive as “we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Cor 10:5). With regard to the significance of attitude, Ellen G. White said: “Your attitude, your words, your spirit, are constantly making an impression upon those with whom you associate.”²⁴ Thus, in mission one needs to have “the attitude of a learner,”²⁵ in other words, habits are shaped by the repetition of particular acts, habit is overcome by habit.

While the Holy Writ states “Do not steal” means that we must cultivate the habit of being honest in all things. This may require a whole new habit for some. It is the “putting off” of our old nature and “putting on” of the new nature we are given when we are born spiritually into God’s family (Col 3:9-10). This is not an effortless thing to do and is, in fact, unfeasible in our individual vigor. But Paul reminds us, “I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13).

The habits are the customary things missionary do that makes up his character. Spiritual character to me should be the sum total of what the Christian head, heart, and hands do. The head, heart, hand without being connected to the Christian habit and character is in vain because habits determine destiny. It was Mahatma Gandhi who said: “As Your beliefs become your thoughts, Your thoughts become your words, Your words become your actions, Your actions become your habits, Your habits become your values, Your values become your destiny.” Then, I like to echo the words of **Samuel Langhorne Clemens**, better known by his pen name **Mark Twain**, was an American author and humorist, who said, “Nothing so needs reforming as other people’s habits.” Therefore, it is wise to say

²³ Collins English Dictionary., Previous Ed.: 2005.; Formerly CIP., 8th ed., Complete & unabridged ed. (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2006).

²⁴ Ellen G. White: *Christ Triumphant*. 1999. (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 1999), 198.

²⁵ Ellen G. White: *Christian Leadership*. (Washington, DC: Ellen G. White Estate, 1985), 13.

that your attitude determines you altitude in the mission. Most importantly, we are told, "And whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

6. Conclusion

We must hold onto a balanced understating of the mission, one that is seen to involve (i) the head, (ii) the heart, (iii) the hands, and (iv) the habit. If you have truly learned what God's will is about missions, you will have a passion or conviction to do something about it. You will either be going if you already or not, or be helping with your prayer and finances to help those who are going. The desire of preparing Asian hearts to be totally committed to God's concept of missions is in line with fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:19, 20). Consequently, in order for someone to be successful in mission; the total man: the **head**, the **heart**, the **hands**, and the **habit** must be involved in mission. This great truth can be summarized, as someone has penned this remarkable saying: "Let the one who would worship God open his mouth in praise, his **heart** in receptivity, his **mind** in contemplation, his purse in dedication, his **hand** in fellowship, and his habit in reform."

This **total man** in the mission, which is composed of the **head**, the **heart**, the **hands**, and the **habit** is all about love. Love is not just action. Love is sacrificial action. Love always pays a price. Love always costs something. Love is expensive. When you love, benefits accrue to another's account. Love is for you, not for me. Love gives; it does not grab.