

Health is a treasure

**Is Health
Ministry
Important?**

by Fred Hardinge, DrPH, RD

In Matthew 13, Jesus told about a farmer who sowed his seed on different kinds of ground. The rains washed some away, the heat of the sun withered some, the birds ate some that had fallen on hard ground, and some got choked out by weeds. Only that which had fallen on good ground grew and produced a rich harvest!

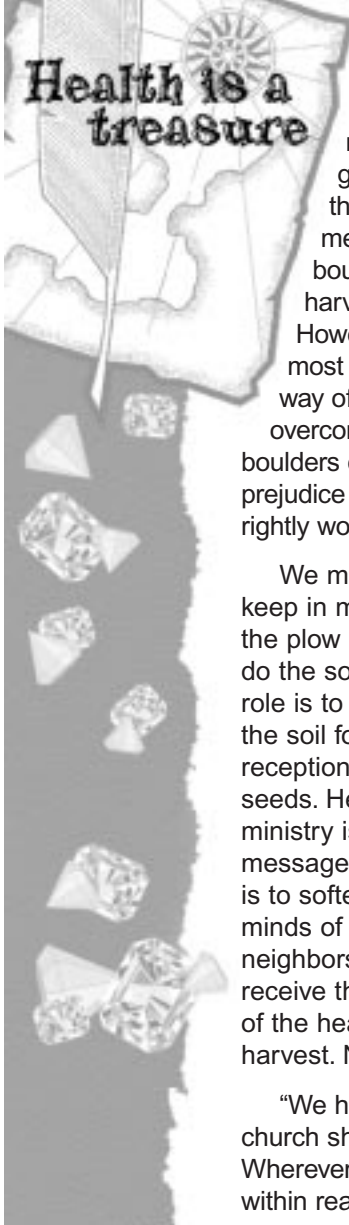
Anyone who has grown a garden can identify with this parable. It is essential that the ground be prepared for the seed! If the ground is not ready the seed goes to waste or the harvest is meager. The same is true of our spiritual outreach. When we sow the Gospel seeds in hearts and minds that are beclouded and enfeebled by crippling lifestyle habits, we should not expect a rich harvest because the ground was not adequately prepared.

The Lord has given to Seventh-day Adventists the message of health reform, not only for our benefit, but also that we might more effectively prepare the minds of our neighbors and friends to receive the seeds of His love! "When connected with other lines of gospel effort, the medical missionary work is a most effective instrument by which the ground is prepared for the sowing of the seeds of truth, and the instrument by which the harvest is reaped." MM 204

Like the farmer's plow, the message of health as it centers in Jesus love, will break up the hardened soil of the heart and prepare it to more willingly allow the Gospel message to grow in the hearts and lives of our neighbors and friends.

Today there has been a general hardening of attitudes toward religious thought and experience. Yet at the same time we are witnessing an unprecedented interest in health! This should spur us on to evangelistic methods that capitalize on this manner of preparing the ground. "Health reform will reach a class and

Of all temporal possessions health is the most precious. Wealth, learning, and honor are dearly purchased at the loss of health. None of these can secure happiness if health is lacking. CDF 20



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has reached a class that otherwise would never have been reached by the truth.” CM 134

In preparing a garden there is no magic way of removing the weeds and stones to soften the ground! It takes faithful, hard work and effort to make the soil for the seed. Likewise, health evangelistic methods hold no magic that will instantly result in a bountiful harvest.

However, it is a most powerful way of overcoming the boulders of prejudice when rightly worked !

We must also keep in mind that the plow does not do the sowing! Its role is to prepare the soil for the reception of the seeds. Health ministry is not the message. Its work is to soften the minds of our

neighbors and friends so that they will more willingly receive the gospel truth. There must be a proper blending of the health ministry with the gospel ministry to see a rich harvest. Neither can be as effective without the other.

“We have come to a time when every member of the church should take hold of the medical missionary work... Wherever you are, you can begin at once. Opportunities are within reach of everyone.” 7T 62

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