

November 30, 2015

From: Edwin Noyes

To: Yuri, Sergii, Nadia, Andrew, Lew

I have been tempted to write this letter ever since the medical center has opened and I received copies of the reports of activities, but due to insufficient documentation of the subject I am going to present I hesitated. Although I do have more information than previously I would feel better if I had more, so I write partially from a deep feeling I have had on the subject of *Pilates exercise* practiced at the health center. It is time I shared this feeling and the explanation of why I have concerns. After I express my impression of this discipline I will leave it up to you to decide if it is truly a program that is proper or not for the SDA health message.

I will list below criteria for differentiating proper from questionable healing techniques as listed in Appendix E in my book. These are criteria presented by the Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference in 1987 in their article on the *New Age and Seventh-day Adventists*.

The quotation from the General Conference article:

“Dr. Warren Peters suggests some criteria to assist the Christian in analyzing a given holistic health practice or therapy. We adapt the following statements from his publication, *Mystical Medicine*, 41-42. The Christian should ask:

1. Where did it come from: In other words, what is its source? Does it have psychic roots?
2. What company does the technique keep? Who uses it and what other therapies are included?
3. What is the ultimate direction to which this therapy leads? Am I led toward Jesus Christ or away from Him? Do I still need Him as a Savior, or have I become my own savior? Does the therapy or technique follow the known laws of physiology? It is important to study the physiology or methods of action that have been delineated by those not involved in the therapy itself. The explanation given by the one pushing his technique, who profits from the product or the method, is rarely reliable.
4. We would add this further question: Does a given meditation technique alter my consciousness and close down my rational thought processes to such a neutral, passive state that I would be open to Satanic intrusion? The mind, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is my only means for detecting truth and error. I am never wise to let it slip out of my personal control.

Robert Burrows adds these further suggestions:

Because of the variety of New Age programs, it is impossible to list criteria that would serve as a basis for recognizing the unbiblical world view that undergirds them all. *World view is, however, the key ingredient. Knowing your own is essential for detecting another's....*

Be particularly world-view attentive if a therapy, seminar, or workshop is (1) explained in terms of harmonizing, manipulation, integrating, or balancing energies or polarities, (2) denigrates the value of the mind or belief; and (3) makes extravagant claims—if it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Americans Get Religion in the New Age,” *Christianity Today*, May 16, 1986, 23, emphasis added)”

I will share the points of concern that I have when reviewing Pilates exercises.

1. **Its origin:** Came from an individual who had studied Western and Eastern exercise practices. Incorporated the Eastern into his discipline, see quotes below.
 - a. “Pilates was developed by Joseph Pilates, a physical-culturist^[clarification needed] from [Mönchengladbach](#), Germany. His father was a prize-winning gymnast and his mother a [naturopath](#). He studied both Eastern and Western forms of exercise including [yoga](#).^[5]”
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilates>
 - b. Born in a small town near Dusseldorf, Germany in 1880, Joseph Pilates was a small and sickly child. The son of a gymnast father and a naturopath mother, he began to study the body and its movement in an effort to overcome his frailties. This led to a lifetime dedicated to physical fitness. By the age of 14, his muscles were so well defined that he posed for anatomy drawings.

Pilates went on to become a skilled boxer, gymnast, circus performer, skier and diver. He also incorporated Yoga and Zen meditation with his Western form of exercises.

<http://www.thecorepilatesstudio.com/about/joseph-pilates/>

Pilates’ book makes the following statement: “Mortal perfection is achievable only through bodily perfection.” The author is telling us that his exercises will bring mortal perfection. Jesus Christ as the redeemer does not enter into this equation. It is done by physical action. The author also speaks of a “flow” which occurs with the movements in Pilates exercises. Flow of what? The comment is made flow from one exercise to another, but I suspect a hidden meaning. I have that suspicion because of the vast amount of reading on pantheistic writing I have experienced. The Hindu’s goal is to facilitate the

“flow” of universal energy through the body in an efficient manner so as to reach spiritual enlightenment. It is very likely that this is the meaning behind the word flow as used in the text on Pilates exercise.

2. What company does it keep? This was the first point that bothered me several years past with my contact of the name “Pilates” as it was connected with other therapies and or practices that were without question spiritualistic. I know that that is not always so but commonly it is.

Never have I seen listed in medical literature Pilates as a recommended form of exercise. Brisk walking is almost always the recommended exercise. The medical community agrees that walking is the best form of exercise as does Ellen G. White, see here quote below:

Walking, in all cases where it is possible, is the best exercise, because in walking, all the muscles are brought into action. Many who depend upon the *movement-cure* could, by exercise, accomplish more for themselves than the movements can do for them. There is no exercise that can take the place of walking. Want of exercise causes the bowels to become enfeebled and shrunken. Exercise will strengthen these organs that have become enfeebled for want of use. The circulation of the blood is greatly improved by the act of walking. The active use of the limbs will be of the greatest advantage to invalids. {HR, July 1, 1872 par. 14}

3. Where are the scientific research articles that substantiate the claims made by proponents of Pilates exercise? I could not find any.

4. Does the technique alter my consciousness? I am sure that all who practice and direct Pilates exercises would emphatically answer this question with a loud **NO!** However, we need to review the techniques used for thousands of years to alter consciousness: 1) relaxation and posture, 2) mantra of a repetitive nature, 3) focusing the mind, 4) attention to the breath. Any one or combination of these acts will facilitate mind altering status. By concentration on breathing alone, it is possible to enter a *trance* state of mind. In the text book on Pilates that I have, for each different exercise there are instructions to focus the mind repetitively on the inhalation and exhalation of each breath.

It can be argued that this attention to breathing is only to make certain that an abundance of *oxygen is carried by the blood* to all parts of the body. *With an* exercise style that benefits the physiology of our bodies one does not need to concentrate on the breath as that will take care of itself.

The answers to the above questions point more toward a method to be left alone than one that is wholesome. You decide.

I am presently reading a book published in 2015, by Tufts University, Gerald J. and Dorothy R. Friedman School of Nutrition and Policy. The title is *Achieving Peak Brain Power Through Nutrition*. In addition to nutrition the subject of physical activity and brain size and function is addressed. Many scientific studies on exercise and brain function studies are referred to. Several studies had magnetic resonance imaging done along with the activities. In summation the articles show that aerobic exercise such as walking was far superior to stretching and movement type exercise (yoga, yoga exercise, tai chi chuan, and/or Pilates type exercises) to prevent brain deterioration and to effect repair and improvement in memory and mental function.

In the SDA health programs we want to present the best methods to get the best results. Pilates does not show evidence of this goal. We want to be free of spiritualistic deception in health and healing. Pilates is suspect. Why settle for an inferior program when the "easiest and cheapest way is simply regular brisk walking." (*Achieving Brain Power Through Nutrition*, page 60.)

I am sending two articles by attachment in a second email, one on martial arts and the other on Yoga exercise.

Edwin Noyes