



# How to Integrate the Spiritual into Fitness & Health Programs

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# Health in America

- About 550,000 Americans die of cancer annually. 33% of these deaths are linked to poor diet, physical inactivity, and carrying excess weight. (ACS)



# Health in America (Continued)

- Chronic diseases accounted for 5 of the 6 leading causes of death in 2002 in the US
- 66% of adults are overweight (50% of these are obese)
- 17% of children and adolescents are overweight
- 60% of adults do not get the recommended amount of regular physical activity; and 25% are not active at all (CDC)



# Estimated Preventable Deaths, 2000

2,391,399 Total Deaths

1,159,000  
Preventable (48%)

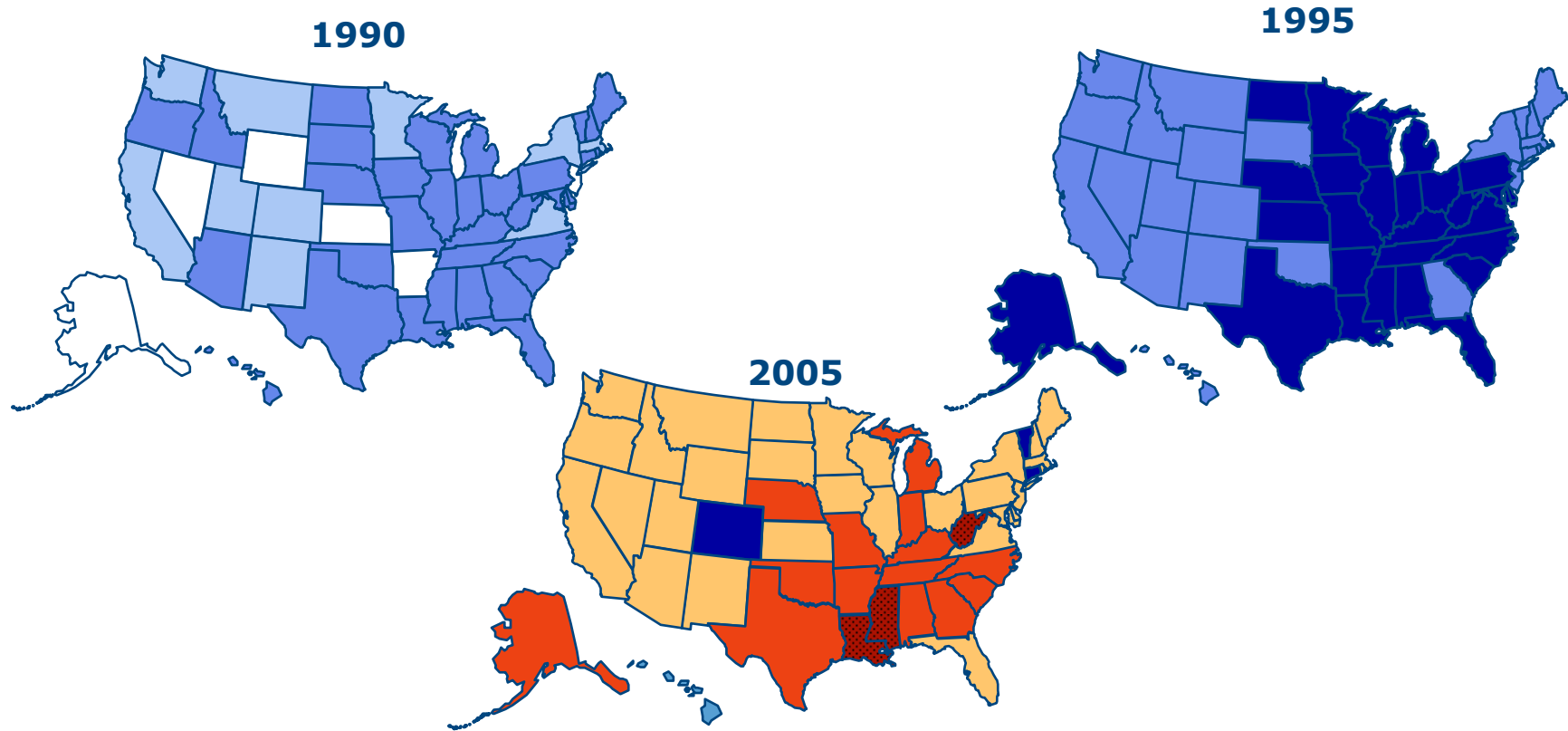
400,000 due to Poor Diet  
and Physical Inactivity (17%)

Source: Anderson, RN. Deaths: Leading Causes for 2000. NVSR 50(16). Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics. 2002; Mokdad, AH, et.al. Actual Causes of Death in the United States, 2000. JAMA 291(10): 1238-1245. March 10, 2004.

# Obesity Trends\* Among U.S. Adults

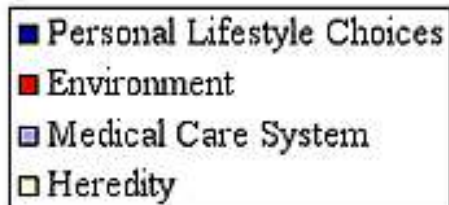
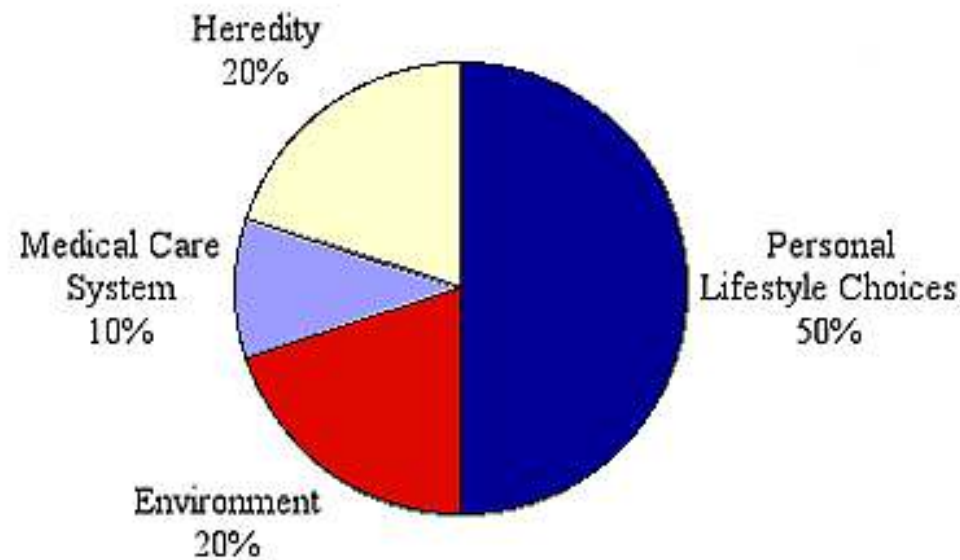
## BRFSS, 1990, 1995, 2005

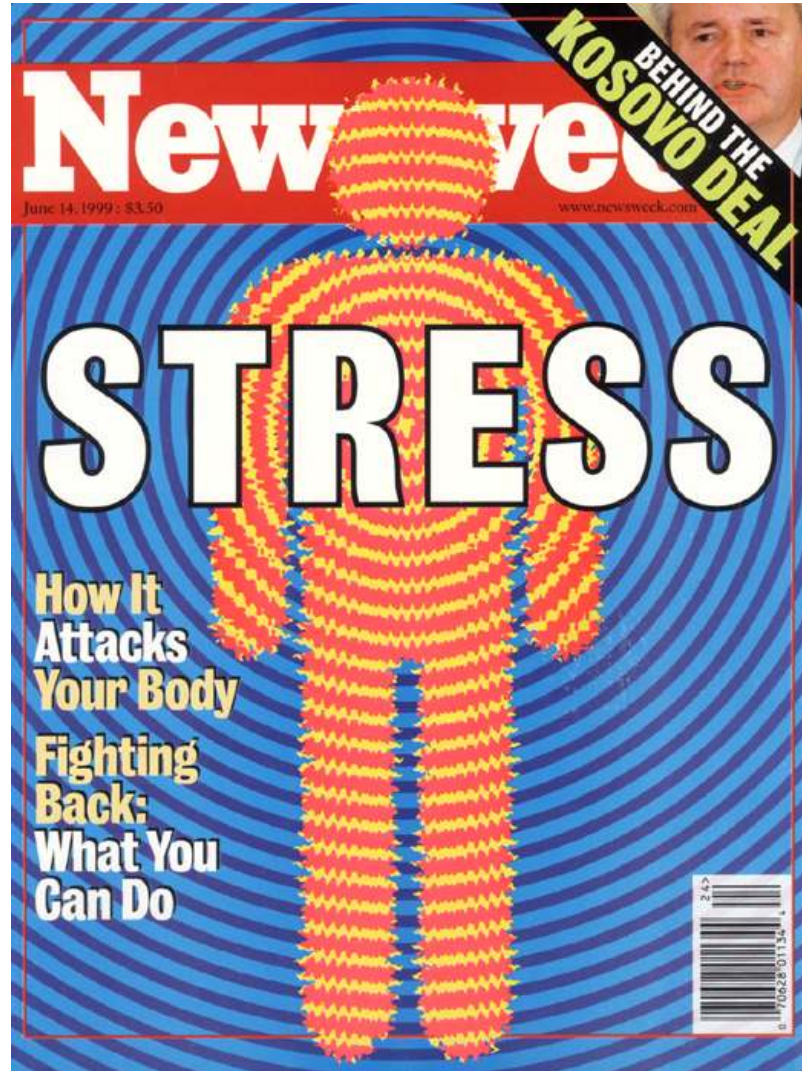
(\*BMI  $\geq 30$ , or about 30 lbs overweight for 5'4" person)



## Factors Contributing to Health

Based on figures from the National Center for Health Services, Centers for Disease Control and National Institutes for Health.







# Stress and Health

75 to 90 % of all physician office visits  
have stress-related components.


American Psychological Association




# Stress and Health

"I find that my patients with the highest levels of stress and anxiety tend to have the most physical problems. A mind weighed down with cares and concerns may be the greatest threat to our health."

Kenneth Cooper, M.D.  
Author, *Faith-Based Fitness*



How do people deal with stress in ways that are not healthy?



How can we more effectively  
cope with the stress in our  
lives and  
live healthier lives?



# Definition of Health

a: The condition of being sound in body, mind, or spirit; *especially* : freedom from physical disease or pain

b : The general condition of the body

Merriam-Webster

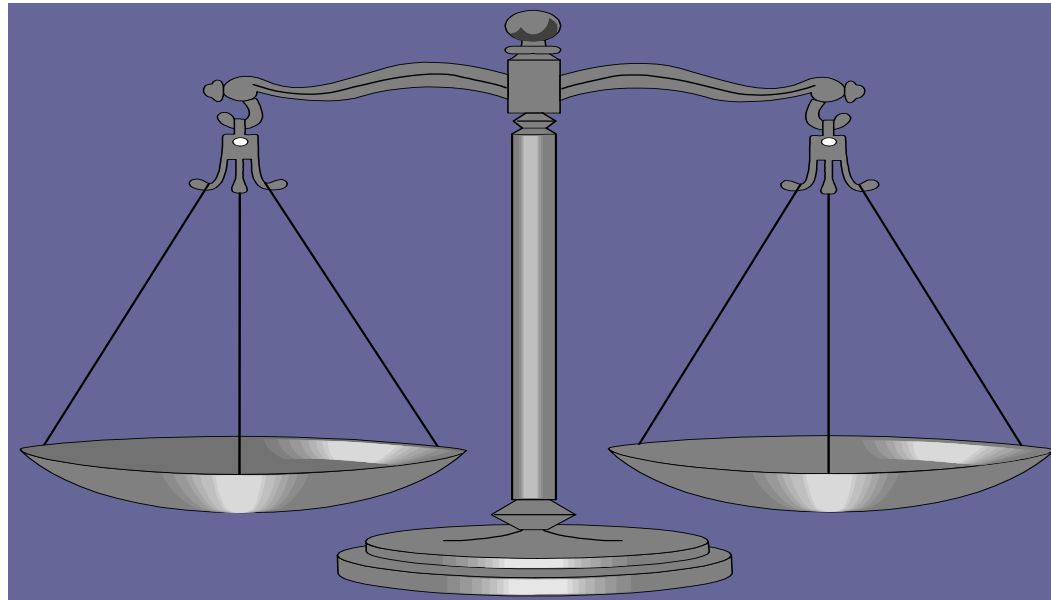


# On Wholeness

*“You ought not to attempt to cure  
the eyes without the head, or the  
head without the body....  
the body without the soul.  
For the part can never be well  
unless the whole is well.”*

**Plato 399 B.C.**

# Achieving a Healthy Balance



- **Spiritual**
- **Emotional & Mental**
- **Physical**



# The Solution

How can we more effectively cope with the stress in our lives and live healthier lives?


- Believers - Get More of God
  - Go Deeper in Our Faith
- Seekers - Get God



# What the Research Shows

Faith impacts positively on our health  
in the following areas:

- Cancer
- Hypertension
- Heart Disease
- General Health
- Longevity
- General Well Being
- Substance Abuse
- Suicide
- Life Satisfaction



"The medical research is clear that the deeper your true spiritual faith, the more likely you are to have a better mental and physical health outcome. You are much more likely to cope well with illness and to recover from disease."

Walt Larimore, M.D.

*God's Design for The Highly Healthy Person*





# Research in Spirituality and Health

## Positive and Negative Religious Coping

- Positive Coping: Patients showed less psychological distress:
  - Seeking control through a partnership with God or Higher Power in problem-solving
  - Asking God's forgiveness and trying to forgive others
  - Finding strength and comfort from one's spiritual beliefs
  - Finding support from spiritual/religious community

Pargament, KL et. al. *J Sci Stud Religion* 1998; 37:710-724  
& *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*



# Research in Spirituality and Health

## Positive and Negative Religious Coping

- Negative Coping: Patients have more depression, more health problems, and poorer quality of life:
  - Viewing God as punishing
  - Doubting God's power
  - Absolute belief in prayer and cure; inability to resolve anger when cure does not occur
  - Refusal of indicated medical treatment

Pargament, KL et. al. *J Sci Stud Religion* 1998; 37:710-724  
& *The Psychology of Religion and Coping*

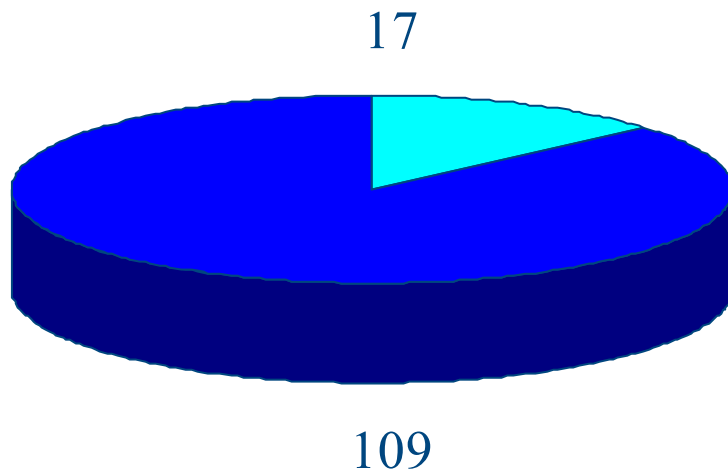


# Polls

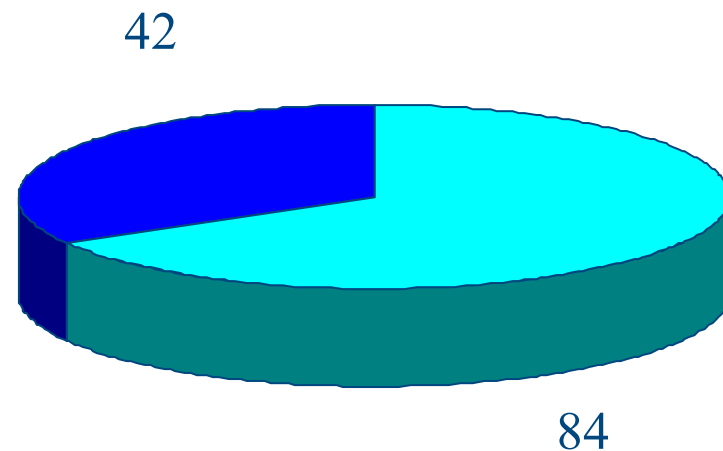
- 99% of physicians say religious beliefs can have positive impact on healing process
- 83% of Americans believe their faith beliefs are closely tied to their mental and emotional health
- 79% of Americans believe faith can help people recover from illness, injury or disease
- 65% of patients want doctors to discuss matters of faith yet only 10% of patients say their doctors have such discussions.

# US Medical Schools Teaching Courses on Spirituality and Health

1994



2004





# How Some Medical Facilities & Practices are Responding

- Taking a religious/spiritual history
- Identifying religious/spiritual needs
- Orchestrating resources to meet those needs
- Supporting religious beliefs patient finds helpful
- Addressing religious/spiritual issues
- Praying with patients



# What Are You Doing

To help your members more effectively cope with the stress in their lives and to live healthier lives?

To *integrate* the spiritual into health, wellness, and fitness programs?



# Spiritual Exercises...

## for a Healthier Life

*“Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness. Physical exercise has some value, but **spiritual exercise** is much more important for it promises a reward in both this life and the next. This is true and everyone should accept it.”*

1 Timothy 4:7-9 (NLT, 1st Edition)



# Why Do People Participate in Physical Exercise?

- Athletic Performance
- Appearance
- Manage Stress
- Health
- Function
- Self Esteem



# Physical Activity Recommendations

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention & American College of Sports Medicine

Every US adult should accumulate 30 minutes or more of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.



# A Definition of Spiritual Exercise & the Benefits

“Any belief or intentional behavior that helps one become more like God, draw closer to Him, know Him better or that follows the principles or commandments of God.”



# Spiritual Fitness Assessment

- Beliefs and Attitudes
- Relationship With God
- Faith Practices



# Spiritual Fitness Assessment

## Considerations

- A Tool to Facilitate Discussion about Spiritual Matters – A Spirit, Mind, Body Approach
- Variety of Settings
- Adjunct to a Fitness Assessment
- Supplement to a Health Risk Appraisal
- Voluntary Participation



# Our Beliefs and Attitudes

- Believe in God
- Believe God Forgives You
- Believe God's Spirit Lives in You



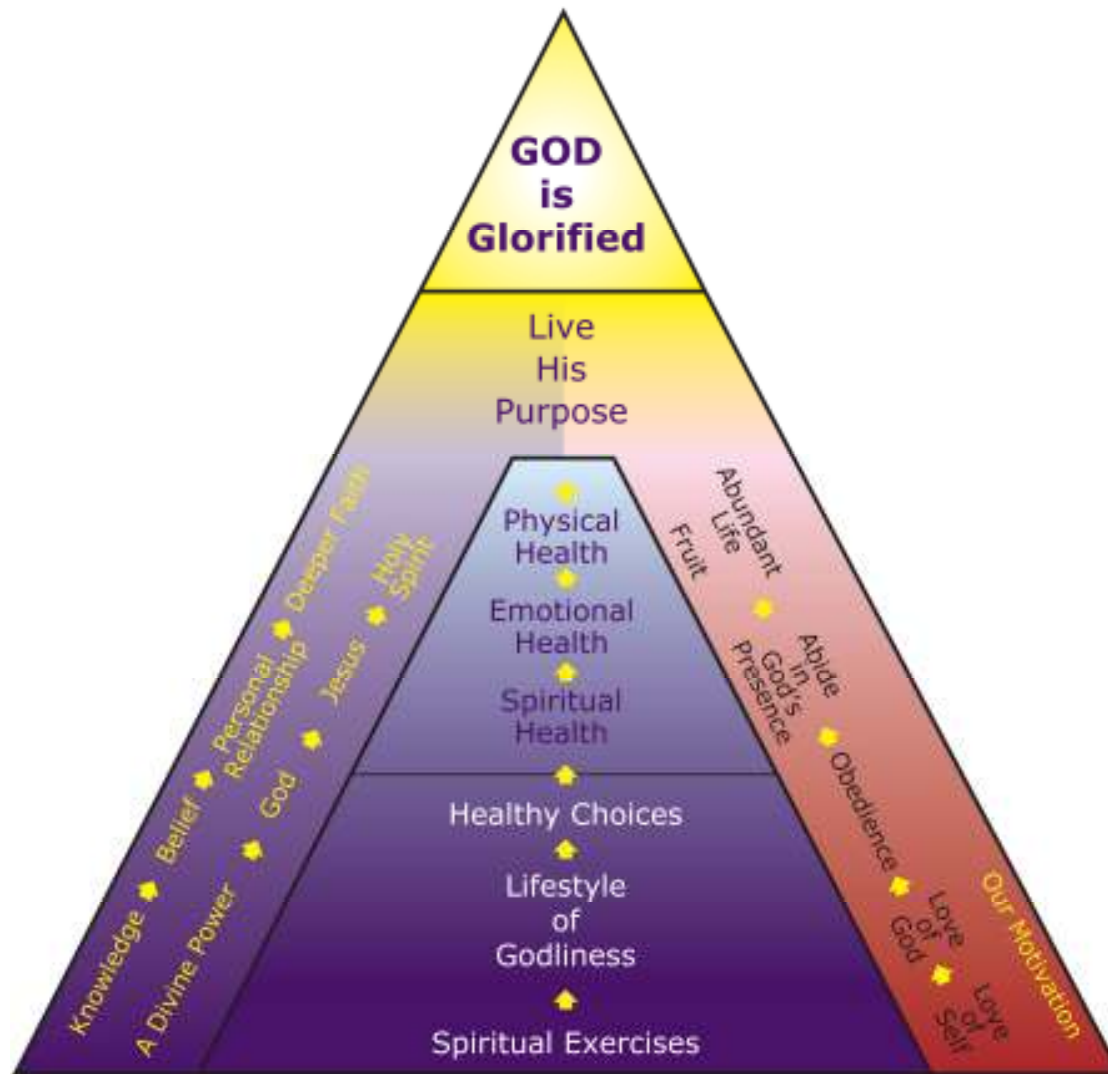
# Our Relationship With God

- Have Faith & Trust in God
- Love God
- Believe In & Receive God's Love
- Obey God
- Read and Study the Bible
- Cry Out to God
- Surrender to God/Let Go
- Pray and Meditate
- Abide in God's Presence



# How We Practice Our Faith

- Be in Community with Others
- Attend Church/Worship with Others
- Love & Serve Others
- Forgive
- Think Spiritual Thoughts/Renew Your Mind
- Confess Your Sins



## Applying The Faith and Health Connection



# Considerations for Using a Spiritual Fitness Assessment in Your Churches & Ministries?

- Be spiritually fit as program leaders
  - Familiarity with the Spiritual Exercises
- Reach seekers by addressing their health issues
- Use of Spiritual Exercise Booklet
- Challenges & Other Considerations

“I believe God made me for a purpose, but he also made me fast, and when I run I feel his pleasure.”



Eric Liddell

Eric Liddell  
“The Flying Scotsman”  
1924 Olympian & Missionary

The movie - Chariots of Fire



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