

Three Authors Link Health and Religion

by Juli Cragg Hilliard, Religion BookLine -- Publishers Weekly, 1/17/2007

Readers looking in the New Year to unite diet and fitness programs with their spiritual lives can select from a menu of new religion-based books.

Jordan Rubin, of *The Maker's Diet* fame, zeroes in on female needs in *The Great Physician's Rx for Women's Health*, written with wife Nicki and family practitioner Pancheta Wilson. Released Jan. 2, it's his 11th book on biblically based health and nutrition principles and the eighth in his Great Physician's Rx series published by Thomas Nelson. Only 31, Rubin has his own show on Trinity Broadcasting Network and founded the health and wellness company Garden of Life and the online Biblical Health Institute.

"The main difference is that the book is solely on women's health," said Rubin, a Messianic Jew. It focuses on breast cancer prevention, maintaining bone mass, chronic fungal or yeast infections, and hormonal balance issues. Rubin is promoting the book on most major evangelical Christian TV networks and speaking to churches, health food companies and women's conferences.

Six other condition-focused The Great Physician's Rx books due out in 2007 will cover heartburn and acid reflux; arthritis; high cholesterol; high blood pressure; depression and anxiety; and chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia.

In *Faith & Fitness: Diet and Exercise for a Better World* (Augsburg Books, Oct. 2006) physical therapist/athletic trainer Tom P. Hafer calls on people to realize that many health problems come from simply having too much. The book is loosely connected to a proposed wellness series from Augsburg, as the press's program becomes more oriented to the general trade and liturgical bookstore markets, said senior editor Gloria Bengtson.

Hafer, active in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America denomination that owns Augsburg, said, "I have been in the fitness industry for almost two decades, and I have realized almost all publications on health and wellness, even in the religious line, are directed toward the self." This book, for all Christians who have a deep concern for social justice, advocates better self-care for the purpose of caring for others and the planet, Hafer said.

In medieval times, Jewish scholar Maimonides of Spain was widely read by people of many religions, and today his work is well-studied by Orthodox Jews in particular. "Many of his writings are astoundingly up-to-date," said David Zulberg, who is Orthodox Jewish and bases his forthcoming *The Life Transforming Diet* (Feldheim, May) on Maimonides's health ideas.

Maimonides was an early believer in the mind-body-spirit connection. Though he advised against refined grains and fats, his main counsel was not about what to eat but about quantity of consumption, eating habits and exercise.

"He felt that it's necessary to be healthy in order to bring out the spiritual aspect of a person," Zulberg said—a philosophy with which Rubin and Hafer would no doubt agree.

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