

THE PIVOT REVIEW

Joseph B. Strauss, D.C., F.C.S.C., Editor

Volume 21 • Number 2 • January 2006

piv'ot (piv'ut) n. 1. a point, fixed pin, or short axis on the end of which something turns. 3. That upon or around which something turns or depends; the central, cardinal, or crucial factor, member, part, person, etc.

The Pivot Review is a free publication for those chiropractors who desire to be a "central person" in the preservation of the chiropractic principle. No subscriptions are accepted. It is published by the Foundation for the Advancement of Chiropractic Education. If you would like to help defray the cost of this publication, you may send a tax deductible gift to F.A.C.E. at the address below. Please designate it *The Pivot Review*. If this is your first issue of *The Pivot Review* or you do not receive it regularly and would like to, please write us at the address below or contact by via phone or e-mail.

The State of the Philosophy *Reasons for the Anti-philosophical Attitude in Chiropractic Today*

There is no doubt that there is a bias against the chiropractic philosophy within the chiropractic profession. This prejudice manifests itself as animosity and derision at worst and condescension at best. How has a profession which began based upon certain philosophical principles gotten to the place that it is today, in which only a small percentage practice according to those principles and the remainder either ignore them or attempt to eradicate them from the education and the practice of chiropractic? Why is it that the philosophy has reached that point in the develop-

ment of our profession? I would suggest a number of reasons and in so doing set forth the state of the philosophy of chiropractic today.

1. There is a misunderstanding of philosophical beliefs in relationship to reason.

Somehow our antagonists have convinced the profession that our principles have some sort of religious underpinnings, that the philosophy of chiropractic is a pseudo-religious cult system. This is ironic because most of the great philosophers from B.J. to today were, and are not "religious" people.

Our "belief" in an innate intelligence is not based on religion. It is based upon logical, deductive arguments. These arguments came down from ancient peoples, predating Christianity and most of the other religions of the world. Further, our concepts of the immaterial are consistent with universal understanding of the nature of man. We recognize that human beings have an immaterial aspect to them. The medical fields of psychology and psychiatry are also based upon that understanding. Obviously all religions accept that fact as well. Our metaphysical as-

In this issue...

- What's So Bad About Discussing Symptoms?
- What is Objective Straight Chiropractic?
- Vaccination and Non-Therapeutic Chiropractic

sumptions in chiropractic are based upon sound, accepted principles of reason and logic.

2. Separation of science from philosophy.

The idea of separating philosophical constructs from scientific study is a relatively recent phenomena. Historically, scientists were also philosophers and most had strong religious beliefs. They saw no conflicts between the two. On the contrary, they believed that science would give empirical proof to what they knew both by reason and by faith.

They knew what they believed. They understood truth from the absolutes of principles governing the universe and from their religious faith. Science was only there to corroborate the truths they already knew. If there was disagreement, they first looked at their tangible, experiential findings before they questioned what they understood by reason and faith. For they knew that experience and empirically, findings and the knowledge gained from them changed from day to day. Throughout history there were rare occasions when scientists were persecuted by misguided religious zealots who believed that science was undermining their faith. These instances were very rare but they created a schism between science and philosophy and religion. Lines were drawn in the sand and those who stepped over them ran the risk of condemnation. This was and continues to be particularly true of the scientific community which demonstrates considerable antagonism toward philosophy and religion. Those in the scientific community who embrace a strong faith are looked down upon as second-class scientists.

Perhaps partially as a backlash toward the injustices against science by religion and partially because science tends to attract more mechanis-

tically inclined persons, antagonism toward religion and philosophy grew. Eventually this antagonism became animosity and was reflected in a total divorcement from religion. Today court battles are being waged in the public schools (which are supposed to provide a liberal education) against the presentation of an alternative to evolution. We have made great strides in scientific understanding. Unfortunately, that has led to the mistaken conclusion that science has all the answers.

3. A failure to communicate our message.

It is always important to look for a cause within before blaming outside factors. Part of this factor stems from the first two. We have not only failed to communicate the message of true chiropractic but we have miscommunicated what we do. We have communicated the idea that chiropractic is related to musculoskeletal problems and to a lesser degree the idea that chiropractic gets sick people well (the traditional approach). We may do a good job of communicating our message to new people who come into the office (although I am inclined to think that we fail in that regard also) but we definitely are not reaching the masses who have yet to avail themselves of chiropractic and as a result most likely never will. Granted, misconceptions about the big idea have been around for a long time and that is not the fault of the non-therapeutic, objective straight chiropractor. It is true that this philosophically reasonable approach is relatively new to the profession. Still we really are not making an adequate effort to present the principle to the public.

4. Anti-intellectualism in general.

This problem goes directly to our failure to publicly embrace our unique philosophy. We, as a profession (with a few exceptions), are generally anti-philosophical because

we are anti-intellectual. I find it ironic, in fact, if it were not so sad it would be humorous. Those pursuing chiropractic as an intellectual endeavor are looked down upon by the majority of the profession. In a similar way people who embrace strong theological beliefs are ridiculed by the scientific community. I believe it was Frances Crick who said that you had to check your brains at the front door of the church. Yet, in my opinion, an Augustine or C.S. Lewis has impacted more lives for the better than the discovery of the double helix. Somehow we have bought the lie that our philosophy is not an intellectual endeavor. When in fact, just the opposite is true. It is the only intellectual endeavor in chiropractic. We revere the researcher and the technique entrepreneur but how many chiropractic philosophers are advertised as speakers at conventions. We have made efforts in the area of philosophical chiropractic but they are few and far between. Some years back the Foundation started a Journal of Straight Chiropractic. We only produced one issue because no one wrote for it. And it was not even confined to philosophy articles. Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic has sponsored the International Research and Philosophical Symposium (IRAPS) for the past few years. It is a great idea, desperately needed and I have enjoyed it immensely, but philosophy presenters are few and far between, compared to research presenters.

The fact is very few people are writing about or articulating the chiropractic philosophy. No one seems to want to understand the depth and breadth of our philosophy just for understanding's sake. The only efforts made in articulating our philosophy seem to be tied into some practice building idea in order to attract the attention of any straight chiropractor. Our only interest in the

philosophy is for our felt needs. Chiropractic is not about meeting your felt needs. It is about principles. These principles are vital to our health, our life and the well-being of society in general.

Uppermost in our presentation of chiropractic should be truth and reasonableness. If you want to talk about practice building and success in practice, this is where it begins. An intellectual approach to chiropractic is not an explanation couched in terms, phrases and explanations that cannot be understood by the average person. It is an explanation that resonates in truth and understanding on an intellectual level with everyone from a third grader to a PhD. That should be our intellectual endeavor in chiropractic.

5. A failure to engage in public debate.

We have failed to go out to the profession and the public in general and articulate our philosophy. I must give credit to the FSCO in making an effort in this area but it has been limited for whatever reason. But how many of us get into debates with the rest of the profession? I have engaged in public debates only twice in the last 30 years. We have less and less presence on chiropractic college campuses where students are open to new ideas. For the most part, we are considered anti-intellectual, defensive, reactionary, hate straights who are not invited into the professional community to exchange our ideas. I'm not sure many of us would go even if invited. Sure, there is outright animosity toward us but part of the problem is that our understanding of the philosophy is inadequate. Understanding creates boldness whether

it is in practice members or chiropractors. Having a clear strong grasp of our philosophy will give us the courage to go out into the scientific community, into the professional arena and into the public square.

This may sound like a negative article but realizing our failures and our inadequacies is the first step toward making improvements. In the coming year it is my desire to see the Foundation in general and myself in particular begin to elevate the chiropractic philosophy in the minds of the public, within the profession and in my own personal understanding. If you are also interested, drop me a note or send me an e-mail and let's see if we can increase the esteem that we have for the philosophy of chiropractic in the eyes of the rest of the world. Δ

What's So Bad About Discussing Symptoms?

From time to time this question comes up in discussions, especially on the FACE message board. We are not treating diseases, we are enabling the innate intelligence of the body to be better expressed by correcting vertebral subluxations. However, when that happens, people's bodies work better and conditions disappear. People do get well under chiropractic care. So what is wrong with talking about symptoms? Why should the chiropractor not be interested in whether practice members' medical conditions are improving under chiropractic care?

We must establish a few principles before we can answer these questions. First, symptoms are not directly related to vertebral subluxations. If they were, then the absence of a symptom would indicate no subluxation and we would be wasting people's time and money pretending to be adjusting

vertebral subluxations in asymptomatic people. The fact is, subluxations occur in asymptomatic people. That is part of our philosophical assumptions, at least by most of the chiropractic community.

The second issue is that symptoms do not enable us to locate subluxations more effectively. If we were dependent upon subjective symptoms to locate subluxations, we

We are not treating diseases, we are enabling the innate intelligence of the body to be better expressed by correcting vertebral subluxations.

would be at a decided disadvantage because most of the time there are no symptoms and even if there are symptoms, they may be totally unrelated to the subluxated segment or segments which is why we abandon

the non-specific meric system of analysis.

So why would a practice member share their symptoms with us? There is only one reason. They clearly do not understand the unique objective of straight chiropractic. That is more serious than just saying, "I hurt here doc!" If they do not understand our objective they will never follow through with lifetime care and they will miss the real benefits of chiropractic. Neither will they refer their asymptomatic friends and loved ones. Further, the symptoms most people come in with are of musculoskeletal problems.

So those types of practice members are perpetuated. When someone shares their symptoms with you, it indicates that you have done an inadequate job in educating them. Perhaps that is why we want to rationalize their focus on symptoms. We do not want to admit that they really

do not have the big idea. We do not want to admit it because it reflects upon our inadequacy in explaining chiropractic to them. So we somehow rationalize their wrong action (sharing symptoms) to get ourselves off the hook for doing a poor job of practice member education.

Do any of my practice members ever try to share their symptoms with me? Sure. More than I want to (even one is more than I want to). But I do not try to rationalize away their reasoning. I recognize it as a failure to communicate the simple clear objective of chiropractic.

That can be very frustrating. Still, we must make the effort to correct their misconception of chiropractic. Otherwise we have failed the practice member and continued to perpetuate their misunderstanding. Δ

What is Objective Straight Chiropractic?

The term Objective Straight Chiropractic (OSC) was originally used in *Refined by Fire* to distinguish between the periods of time when straight chiropractic practiced the Palmer model of chiropractic and when the non-therapeutic model was developed in the 70's. By non-therapeutic we mean not relating to disease, its cause, or its prevention.

To my knowledge Dr. Mark Romano of Mississippi was the first person to begin to use it to describe chiropractors.

It has come under criticism both inside and outside the straight community. Joseph Keating, PhD, a strong critic of straight chiropractic, in reviewing *Refined By Fire* said that it should be called "purpose" chiropractic because objective has a meaning besides purpose. Others, even within the straight community, say that all chiropractors have an objective or purpose so that it is really lacking as a descriptive term. I agree and have no problem using non-therapeutic or some other yet-to-be-coined term. So, while the term originally was intended to describe the unique purpose of our approach to straight chiropractic, I have come to realize that the concept of "objective" has an even greater and more important connotation unbeknownst to me when I first coined it.

"Objective" as a noun means purpose. That is the way it is usually

interpreted. However, the term's more common usage is as an adjective modifying a noun or another adjective. In this case, it modifies the word straight which describes the word chiropractor. So much for the grammar lesson, here is the applicable part. As an objective, it also means "having actual existence... and uninfluenced by emotion or per-

Our philosophy is founded on the existence and reality of an innate intelligence.

sonal prejudices." I think that clearly describes the OSC chiropractor. Our philosophy is founded on the existence and reality of an innate intelligence. We are not based upon the unrealistic idea that chiropractic cures everything. We are not based upon an emotional attachment to B.J. Palmer, just to the things that he taught that were congruent with the objective (purpose) of straight chiropractic, a purpose that is clear in his writing. Further, we are not based upon "personal prejudices" whether they are against everything Palmer gave us or toward a preference for chiropractic as an approach to musculoskeletal conditions or as an approach to or alternative to the practice of medicine.

"Objective" is also defined as "external or material reality." Our approach is not a subjective one. It

is based upon the reality of a philosophy that is deductive in nature. It is based upon a standard or principle external to our subjective thinking. It does not depend upon what we say but what the philosophy says. It does not change from day to day with our feelings or whim or some kind of internal enlightenment that we have supposedly received from

our inner guide. It is based upon principles that everyone can understand (perhaps not accept but at least intellectually understand). Have you ever met someone whose approach to chiro-

practic has changed again and again? They have gone from a traditional chiropractor to a spine straightener, to a hands only mixer, to a full-blown chiropractic physician. Or they have gone the opposite way and become some sort of spiritualist. They change every time someone comes in the office with a different problem or they attend a new seminar. That is subjectivity. Objective straight chiropractic is not arbitrary or subjective in nature. It is objective. That is what we practice. That is objective straight chiropractic. Δ

Vaccination and Non-Therapeutic Chiropractic

A Different Perspective

Interestingly, both William Jenner and D.D. Palmer come up with their procedures through anecdotal findings. Jenner by noticing that milkmaids who got cowpox seemed to be immune to smallpox. Palmer, while practicing magnetic healing, noted that certain medical conditions were alleviated by moving bones. At the time of their respective procedures there were probably hundreds of other procedures that were being performed to alleviate human ailments, everything from bleeding to magnetic healing, none of which are around today. Most of them we never heard of because they were not noteworthy. They have passed from the scene because they did not work or if they worked they did more harm than good.

Chiropractic has lasted for 110 years because it obviously does something. It has more practitioners than ever before in history, millions of satisfied people for over a century, many of whom come back on a regular basis. All of this despite the fact that very few people understand the objective of (objective straight) chiropractic. The success of chiropractic with a multitude of conditions must mean something. Anecdotal success must have some validity especially when it far surpasses a few milkmaids. Some people would ascribe chiropractic's numerous successes with varied conditions to positive thinking, coincidence, faith or some other illegitimate factor. However, all the different successes with millions of people for 100 plus years has to be something more than coincidence or mass hysteria. Chiropractic had to possess something in order to succeed, despite the opposition of the medical community who

was convinced that no single procedure could be the cure for everything. Millions of intelligent and reasonable people, including legislators and insurance companies, concluded that chiropractic worked on some level.

Along came the objective straight chiropractor who presented a reason why chiropractic "works" for some people and not for others, why certain conditions get well in some and not in others, why chiropractic appears to have had some success with all kinds of medical ailments. They presented the reasonable explanation that chiropractic is not a treatment or cure for medical conditions (which should make the medical community happy). Chiropractic does one thing, it allows the body to work better, to function at a higher level, to be a little bit healthier. That is the reason for apparent success in so many and varied conditions. A body working better has greater potential to heal all types of conditions. It is also the reason for "chiropractic failures." Even though chiropractic adjustments enable the body to work better, sometimes that improved function is not sufficient to enable the body to heal itself. So despite working better, the body cannot heal and either the person must learn to live with a condition or seek relief in the therapeutic realm.

Objective straight chiropractors further reasoned that if the body works better with adjustments in some people, enough to get well from some conditions, and if chiropractic is not correcting the cause of disease, then it must make the body work better in all people, those who do not get well, those who have no problems or conditions and everyone in between. They further reasoned

that a body working better because of no interference will also benefit in other areas of human function besides disease and health. While we cannot measure quantitatively the improvement in a person under chiropractic care, the fact that varied and serious conditions have been known to get well, suggests that the improvement must be of a significant nature. It also follows logically that failure to keep the body free of nerve interference must be a significant factor in the loss of health or decreased ability to function in all areas of life.

This idea was so logical to objective straight chiropractors (and most other chiropractors for that matter) that they began to have themselves and their families cared for on a regular basis. They further determined that if it was good and necessary for themselves and their families, then the idea of regularly checking the spine for nerve interference and removing it when found was good for all of humanity and perhaps there were enough people out there who would agree and want this type of care for themselves and their families. After all there are millions of people who drink bottled water, take supplements, eat nutritionally, exercise regularly and in many other ways take care of themselves for no other reason than because their body will work better. They concluded that if they can find enough people interested in this type of care, they can not only make a living but they can contribute to the betterment of society. That is how this unique approach to chiropractic with its lifetime maintenance care developed.

There are many interesting similarities between vaccination and non-



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FOUNDATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF
CHIROPRACTIC EDUCATION
Box 1052
Levittown, PA 19058



PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
LEVITTOWN, PA 19058
PERMIT NO. 419

therapeutic chiropractic. With all that introduction, here is the contrast that I find interesting. Both non therapeutic chiropractic and vaccination are controversial procedures even within their own professions. Many medical doctors do not advocate vaccination. Both are done to address a problem that is not causing a symptomatic condition. Both procedures are claimed by their advocates to be important to life and health yet both address a rather nebulous problem. Neither achieves permanent results and must be performed again. There is no way of knowing scientifically that if you do not have these procedures done that the quality of your life will in any way be lessened.

Those are the similarities. The contrasts, as I see it, are much more striking. Chiropractic addresses the individual. While everyone needing an adjustment receives one, the result

of that restoration of normal nerve integrity and innate intelligence control is different in every person, depending upon the recuperative abilities and the potentials of the individual. We really cannot say that whatever improvement in the quality of a person's life has occurred that it was the direct result of chiropractic care. A vaccination on the other hand, is designed to achieve the same outcome in every person. Yet we cannot say that the vaccination achieved its objective in any individual person. Perhaps they would never have gotten the disease whether they had been vaccinated or not. The adjustment always achieves its desired outcome (with the understanding that the thrust did indeed result in an adjustment). The vaccination, even if administered properly will sometimes not provide its desired effect. The adjustment

does not have a negative side-effect, the vaccination does.

While the adjustment is a chiropractic procedure and vaccination is a medical procedure, there are similarities in the accomplishment of their respective objectives but there are also major differences. The interesting point is that both came about by anecdotal findings. Neither can scientifically demonstrate a perceptible change in an individual's life. Yet, vaccination, with its possible side-effects is largely accepted by the scientific community and chiropractic with no demonstrated side-effects has yet to achieve any level of recognition. Odd isn't it? Δ