

THE PIVOT REVIEW

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Volume 22 • Number 2 • January 2007

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.

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Chiropractic Philosophy—So What?

It is frustrating to a philosophy teacher to hear someone offer a variation on the "so what" theme. Perhaps because we live in such a pragmatic society or because new practitioners have loans to pay back and bills to pay, they want to know the purpose of learning chiropractic philosophy. What is the practical use of this philosophy of chiropractic? Many see no need for it at all. Of course most of those people are learning to be second-rate physical therapists or third-rate physicians. For them, the chiropractic philosophy is of no value. Still, others who maintain they practice straight chiropractic

seem to have little interest in it. Attempts by Palmer and Sherman to develop postgraduate studies in the philosophy have met with minimal involvement. Investigations and discussions into the philosophy are rare and published papers are even more rare. Most of what is presented as "chiropractic philosophy" at seminars or conventions is simply practice building techniques or worse, motivational talks. Not that these things are not valuable or needed but they are not chiropractic philosophy. Many of the broad scope practitioners believe that our chiropractic philosophy is just a snake-oil

pitch to get people into the office and they say and write as much.

There is a story of Euclid, the father of mathematics, who, after giving a lecture on mathematical theory, was questioned by a pupil, "But what shall I gain by learning such things?" Euclid turned to one of his servants and said, "Give him a coin since he must make a gain out of what he learns." The study of truth, I would suggest, is itself a reward. Do we have to be monetarily rewarded for expanding our mind?

There are theologians who do nothing but study doctrine, hermeneutical principles, and learn the

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isagogics of ancient languages just to know their theology better. They have enriched their lives by doing that. They have received a reward, although not a monetary one, and over the centuries they have ultimately enriched ours.

Most of us have long forgotten the “wow” moment when we heard or read some aspect of chiropractic philosophy that changed our thinking and as a result changed our lives.

Did we say, “Wow, that little truth is going to put hundreds of thousands of dollars in my pocket over the course of my career.”

No, we said, “I’m a better person for having learned that. My professional and personal life

is going to be richer, fuller, have more meaning, more purpose, more definition.” Are we so wrapped up in the material things that come to us through chiropractic that we cannot enjoy and appreciate the truths of chiropractic which enable us to grow and be better human beings? The big idea in chiropractic is not a bunch of phrases and ideas that will get people to come to us every week for the rest of their lives. It’s about a wonderful principle that organizes and animates the world. Will you

come and hear that if we throw in some practice building tips on how to get referrals? Will you learn about it if we let you put some letters behind your name so you can feel as important as the DACBRs and DABCOs? I’m not putting down any seminar that has practice building principles. Heaven knows we need them. And I’m not belittling the postgraduate courses that give us a diplomate or other titles. The point is that we should not have to be

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Here’s another thought. How much do we teach our practice members about the philosophy, about the principles that will give them an ADIO viewpoint and enrich their lives? “Chiropractic gets sick people well” is not philosophical chiropractic, it is a pragmatic approach to chiropractic. How about giving them some understanding not so that they’ll refer but because its something they should know. People

study mathematics so they can look into space and learn what it is like at the other end of the galaxy. So what? What does that get them? They will never go there. It gets them understanding. It gets them knowledge. It is its own reward. So what about our chiropractic philosophy? Think about how much richer your life is because you heard it and I don’t mean your bank account.

So here is the challenge. How about making an effort in the new year to become more knowledgeable in your philosophy and how about imparting some of that knowledge to the people who come into your office? Do it, not because you

will be rewarded but simply for the sake of knowledge, for the sake of putting that “wow” in your life and in the lives of your practice members. You may be surprised on a number of fronts.△

Is Intelligence a Product or an Entity?_____

The above question was the topic for a panel discussion at a recent International Research and Philosophy Symposium (IRAPS) conference at Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic. I am not sure that the panel (which included myself) answered the question but I found it an interesting question and worthy of further consideration.

A product is defined as “something produced by human or mechanical effort or by a natural process.” An entity, on the other hand,

is defined as “1. Something that exists as a discrete unit.” The fact that we have this discussion means that there is disagreement on the subject and likely indicates that intelligence, particularly universal and innate, have characteristics of both a product and an entity. The issue is further complicated by theological and naturalistic arguments that tend to impinge upon our chiropractic philosophy.

The historical Palmer view is that universal and innate intelligence

are entities. In fact, the Palmers actually personified those entities in much of their writings, ascribing to them the qualities of deity. That is some indication of the difficulty in describing intelligence. The phenomena is recognized by both science and theology and they both seem to present it as a product. Science uses the term “viz medicatrix naturae,” which is a way of explaining the “natural process” of evolution. It is the present result of random evolutionary change. Anything else is not accept-

able to the scientists as it would be unscientific. Theology also attempts to explain it as a product. Intelligence, whether universal, innate or even educated, would be considered a creation of the Creator. Anything else would not be acceptable to the theologian as it would be blasphemous.

The problem is not unique to us. Science has their differing viewpoints. Is light a particle or a wave? Sometimes it acts as a particle; sometimes it can be best described using a wave explanation. So light can act as both, which means it is probably neither. Take your best guess. Theology has a similar problem. God is said to be transcendent, that is He is over and above His creation. Yet He is omnipresent, which means He is everywhere even in His creation. He is also immanent, i.e., He can be found in a burning bush and in the unique Man of the universe. Theologians, unlike scientists, do not argue over this issue. They say God is both! They accept this on faith, a luxury the scientist and the philosopher do not have.

Product or entity need not be a heated discussion. After all, as chiropractors we easily accept the idea that chiropractic is philosophy, art and science. Of course the reductionists in the world, especially those within the health care community, cannot understand this idea. They must reduce everything to its simplest part and throw out everything else. This creates much of the inadequacy of medicine.

In order to help explain these difficult phenomena, we use language of accommodation, terms and phrases which are not entirely accurate but help describe the indescribable. Science uses language of accommodation in trying to explain light. It is neither a wave nor a particle but they are qualities that we understand and that can help us to understand the character of light. Theology uses language of accommodation in describing the character of God. "He's got the whole world in His hands" is language of accommodation called an anthropomorphism, ascribing to God a physical attribute He does not have. God does not have physical hands but when we hear that song, we understand that it is explaining the control, the care, the love that God has for His creation.

The use of the terms universal intelligence and innate intelligence are really language of accommodation. From an intelligence standpoint both terms describe the same thing—a principle of organization. However, from a matter standpoint, they are different, one form of matter manifests signs of life, the other does not.

So what is intelligence? Is it an entity or a product? We use entity terminology at times to best explain intelligence. We say that innate intelligence is selective, that it "chooses" with regard to assimilation and excretion. Yet, we describe it as a product when explaining it as the law of life. This creates a problem. Some have suggested that we need to find an altogether new term to de-

scribe these chiropractic constructs. I am all for that if I thought it would solve the problem. But I am not sure any term would be less problematic. In all likelihood, the term would describe a product, an entity or both.

So what is this thing we call intelligence? Is it an entity or a product? I would suggest that it is neither. It is a unique, inexplicable concept. We are talking about something we really do not understand. We merely catch a glimpse of its expression, manifestations of it. What we are seeing is an entity, the living human body, and products of it, the signs of life. Expressions and the creator of those expressions are not the same thing. Nothing adequately describes this intelligence since there is nothing like it, nothing can be used as an analogy for it. There is nothing analogous to it, any more than there is anything analogous to light. So where do we go from here? Well, we just keep trying to understand it better by better understanding its expression and we are thankful that deep down inside everybody understands that there is something, some phenomena existing within all matter that gives to it its properties and maintains it in existence.△

It's Not All in the Genes

When the genetic code was cracked some years ago, the naturalists and the mechanists were overjoyed that they would finally be ending the argument with the vitalists. They believed that they had found the answer to this phenomena

that we call life and that it was purely physical, the matter of the body made up of genes, patterns that formed blueprints for the creation of the human body. However, they now know that what they discovered were only blueprints, not the architect nor the

builder of the body. While many still do not acknowledge it, there is greater evidence today that there is something more. Something unseen by the microscope that makes organisms alive. The genes may determine the color of your eyes but they do not

build the eyes. Something else designs the blueprints and carries out the plans. Some pretty amazing things are happening in the field of genetics that support our vitalistic tenets.

Some years ago, in fact many years ago, when I built my office I had an architect design the building. The builder built the structure according to his specifications. However, when it came to

hanging the door to the powder room we ran into a problem. The way the bathroom was designed and the door was hung as specified by the architect, you literally could not get out of the bathroom! As you opened the door, you became trapped behind it unless you were eighteen inches high and could squeeze between the toilet

and the sink! The young carpenter who was hanging the door realized very quickly that the design was wrong. (By the way, he became a practice member at the time and 34 years later still comes in weekly to

The body is not totally dependent upon the construction of the genetic

have his spine checked). So he hung the door to open in the opposite direction. It opens fine and no one has ever been trapped. Here's the point, the blueprint may have flaws. The genes being matter, have limitations. There are many things that can affect the matter and cause damage to the genetic structure of the body. Sci-

ence is constantly finding universal forces that can damage the blueprints and cause the door to be hung incorrectly. The builder, the innate intelligence of the body, can adapt to those deficiencies and even repair them. It

can make changes in the genes and repair damaged genes. The body is not totally dependent upon the construction of the genetic structure. We don't have to be stuck in the bath-

room. It's nice to know we are not limited by our blueprint. We can compensate because there is something greater than just the blueprint. Our philosophy has been saying that for 100 plus years. Science is now finding it out. Δ

The Portland, Oregon Meeting

Once more the "traditional chiropractors" have decided to get together, to unite in defense of what we might call straight chiropractic, that which was given to us by the Palmers. There is no question that it is under attack, that there is a concerted effort by the progressive aspect of the profession (those interested in mixing medical procedures with a traditional Palmerian approach) in getting rid of the Palmer approach altogether. They seem to control the vast majority of the colleges, the accreditation process, the leadership of the state boards, the largest national organization, most state organizations and, well, just about everything else within the profession.

Those leaders with whom I spoke who attended the Portland, Oregon meeting came away excited and enthusiastic about the prospects of making changes, securing the

freedom of chiropractors to practice in the B.J. model and hopefully in the end dividing this profession into two separate professions. I hope they are successful and truly wish them well. I have been there myself over the past 35 years and would not want to rain on their parade or in any way squelch their enthusiasm. I did not attend the meeting so I am speaking only from second-hand knowledge of what went on. My thoughts may be totally off the track but I would like to share them anyway.

The ultimate intention I believe is to split the profession in two, the traditional chiropractors and the progressive chiropractors, and let both groups peacefully go their separate ways. I think that is probably the only feasible option for the survival of chiropractic as I know it. By the way, this idea is not new and has been suggested by both sides. The first obstacle is to convince the pro-

gressive chiropractors that it is to their benefit to do that. I'm not sure that is possible. The Portland groups' intention is to first of all protect the rights of chiropractors to practice their approach to chiropractic, however the members of this group perceive chiropractic to be. I think they can be successful in doing this and I wish them well. It will be a tough state-by-state battle. It seems like the battle line at the moment is formed around keeping Sherman College from having to teach physical therapy in the school to meet state requirements. If every state requires chiropractors to have certification in physical therapy, it is only reasonable for the accrediting agency to require it of the colleges. That is the the most pressing issue. But there will be other issues. As these issues become more and more apparent, it will seem like a good idea to divide the profession. There is a ma-

major problem with dividing the profession. There is no upside for the progressive chiropractors and a real downside. A split will cause them to lose any control they now have over the straights. If there was a downside, a threat to them, they may want to disassociate themselves from us but there is not. If they truly thought they would be better off without us, they would have pushed for a split years ago. History has shown that the straight schools had larger enrollments, their practitioners bigger practices, and they impacted the public to a greater degree. But even with that the progressives control the profession. I personally think that the progressives are afraid of having to compete with our approach to chiropractic in the market place of ideas. Most chiropractors accept the vertebral subluxation. The majority recognizes an innate intelligence and have no reluctance in communicating that concept to the public. Since the majority want to practice some degree of traditional chiropractic and always have, the progressive chiropractors (isn't that a much more euphemistic term than mixers?) have tried to control the politics of chiropractic and have been very successful at it. A split would remove that political power and no doubt eventually put the power in the traditional camp,

which in no way can be good for the progressives.

There is one more difficulty in this splitting the profession into two professions. We do not have two professions. We have three at this time, actually we have a least three. What the Portland meeting has referred to as traditional chiropractic is really a combination of Palmer chiropractic and what I have labeled objective straight chiropractic and others have called non-therapeutic straight chiropractic. Semantics aside, we must realize that the traditional approach that B.J. espoused got "sick people well," corrected "the cause of disease." If you are

care. You cannot have it both ways. If you are going to talk about disease, that you help people with certain diseases, you are practicing a form of therapeutic chiropractic. The Palmer model does, objective straight chiropractic does not.

If we are going to separate ourselves from the progressives, if we are going to establish a new entity, we must make sure that we are defining that entity and that we are all on the same page. That is the first priority. Knowing the people who were in Portland, I know they represented at least two different groups. It is easy to think that politically we can band together to fight a common

enemy. The communists and the United States did that in WWII against Nazi Germany. But they are still separate,

If you are going to address the cause of disease or getting sick people well, then you need to diagnose because of limitations of matter.

going to address the cause of disease or getting sick people well, then you need to diagnose (because of limitations of matter). You need to make a prognosis (determine whether that person can reasonably expect to get well under care). Once you do that you are becoming progressive (ly) more medical. That has always been the criticism of the Palmer approach by the progressives. Traditional chiropractors addressed sick people to correct the cause without determining the safety and appropriateness of

rate, they continue with separate ideologies that are at odds with each other. If we are going to establish a separate profession then we need to identify it, not by what we don't do, e.g., physical therapy, but by the principles which we hold to. If we do not do that we are bound to repeat the mistakes of chiropractic history once more. Δ

All practices left to themselves eventually drift away from consumerism, (what the practice member needs and wants) and toward what the practitioner wants. We must have a continual mentality of service to prevent that self centered tendency.

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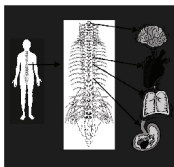
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