

Heritage of Madness

Richard Tyler, DC

The strange thing about this profession is that it has members who defy reason. They are locked into some kind of religious fanaticism that rivals that of a Middle Eastern zealot. There is no reasoning with them. Even if you were able to prove that they were wrong, their faith in their false doctrine would remain unshaken. It's as if they turned you off.

This is called human nature, I suppose, and we see examples of it every day. Just look at some of the actors or politicians who do all manner of rotten things and still remain the idols of millions.

So it is with the super straights. This would all be rather quaint if it weren't for the fact that our profession deals with the maintenance of public health, and we and the public we serve can ill afford the madness we've apparently inherited from that master chiropractic showman, B.J. Palmer.

As you might imagine, I get all kinds of irate letters from the Holy Rollers of chiropractic with just about every editorial. One of their favorite themes is that we aren't qualified to diagnose, use physical therapy modalities or give nutritional advice. There are always those out there who are better trained than we are. We should stick to old-time chiropractic and spend our four years in chiropractic college adjusting and learning philosophy.

Why on earth should we need more than one or two courses in chiropractic philosophy? After you've been told about "innate" and "universal intelligence" a thousand times it's enough already. It's obvious that the chiropractic theologians live in fear that the outside world will corrupt their students if they don't drum the same message into them over and over again. The result is seen in typical letters that I receive all the time.

Recently one arrived via innate delivery. The writer claimed that all we needed to know was chiropractic philosophy and how to detect and correct subluxations. That's it -- four years of those subjects to become "ordained." According to the writer, all that physical therapy modalities do is make the patient "feel better." Since the writer proudly knew nothing about physical therapy, how does he know this is all they do? Personally, I use galvanic current to relieve congestion and aid in the dissolution of calcium deposits, sine wave to relax spasmed muscles, and ultrasound to project soothing emollients into irritated tissues. The list could go on but the fact remains that physical therapy does more than make the patient "feel better" unless the writer can prove that adjusting the atlas can dissolve calcium better than iontophoresis.

Physical therapy has been taught in our schools since 1914 -- before physical therapy became a profession. It's almost as much a part of our history as the subluxation. You don't need four years of nothing but physical therapy (PT) to learn it -- it's not like chiropractic philosophy. Chiropractic physicians also have the advantage of being members of the only healing arts profession to train diagnostic physicians to use physical therapy modalities -- a distinction we should be proud of.

The writer then goes on to pout about how we should leave nutrition to those more qualified. Well, who is more qualified? The MDs? The self-appointed nutritional gurus in a health food store? Again

we are the only profession that spends as much time as we do teaching our physicians therapeutic nutrition -- so in the vast majority of cases we know more than most. This doesn't mean that we know enough about this vital subject and it's my hope that eventually we will increase our hours of study to include a sophisticated course in homeopathy.

From past experience I know that what I've written will have little impact on the writer of the letter. His mind has become a lump of lead between his ears and he will go on muttering incoherently about B.J. and innate until he is planted. He, and others like him, tolerate no expansion of therapeutic parameters. You must think, feel and eat like B.J. or you are not a chiropractor. You must constantly go to seminars to reinforce these beliefs or you will be seduced by that "devil" known as common sense.

We are about to enter the 21st century. Great scientific marvels await us. Even medicine, with its chains of bigotry, will drag itself through the process. Are we going to be the only healing art shackled to the past by those who have been taught so little in the schools they attended? Are we to be imprisoned by this inherited madness or shall we be the leaders in progressive natural health care and an example for others to follow? It's time for us to sever the cancer of fanaticism from the body of our profession so that we may become physiciANS as well as chiropracTORS.

RHT

MAY 1991