

DD PALMER'S THEISTIC SPIN ON BIOLOGY AND THE MODERN EFFORT TO HIDE IT

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Introduction

'Let's hijack the other guy's thought
And tie it all up in a knot
And contend that his buzz
Was not what it was
But something we know it was not'

'Every important chiropractic idea that I have advanced has been bitterly assailed, yet, although somewhat discouraged at times, I have not turned from that which I knew was correct.'

DD Palmer

This essay will take a wide-open look at one of the more controversial subjects in the original portrait of the philosophy of chiropractic painted by our esteemed founder, Daniel David Palmer. That subject is God, or at least his repeated use of the word God in association with what he believed holds the universe and life in organised existence. What follows is tailored to those members of the chiropractic profession with an interest in our original philosophy, and how its arguably theistic overtones have been handled over time.

Palmer wrote about a Universal Intelligence (UI) he said the Christian world calls God. He placed UI atop his philosophy of chiropractic and then went about the fascinating business of describing how this 'All Wise' intelligence is distilled down into the physiology of the body. Given his overview of reality, and the words he used to describe it, the original philosophy of chiropractic is arguably blended with theism, which at this juncture can be briefly defined as the belief in a created universe, and a creator, often called God, that is in some form of active, ongoing relationship with it.

I will explore how this way of thinking was applied by Palmer to his early 20th century philosophy of chiropractic, and why as an ontological approach, it creates a unique and valid theistic motif. I will then review what I consider to be a well-intended,

... a large hunk of our profession continues to fracture away from subluxation-based care. Medically minded chiropractic educators sneer at the work of our founders and poison the minds of fledging chiropractic students using straight chiropractors' alleged belief in vitalism and other non-material constructs as part of their constellation of arguments against the validity of the science-end of subluxation. Why should we keep handing them that card?'

Quick Tap or Scan:



but rather careless effort started in the mid-20th century by certain modern revisionist chiropractic philosophers to overwrite, and fundamentally alter the meaning of DD Palmer's theistic terminology. This overwrite was arguably designed to keep God or a spiritual first cause out of the philosophical discussion, while attempting to leave the rest of the framework of Palmer's metaphysical model intact.

One can certainly understand how a healthcare philosophy with something we might call God overtly sitting on top will not fit everyone's modern worldview, so in this sense, their efforts may be viewed as reasonable, though their methods, as I will go on to illustrate, are questionable. Some revisionists have gone a step further to allege there was no theism in the philosophy to begin with, or that God cannot be fit coherently within the full context of the philosophical language and terminology DD created. That is an allegation I will endeavour to prove is not reasonable at all. Finally, I will explore what value or detriment DD Palmer's authentic brand of integrative thinking may bring to chiropractic in the 21st century.

Background

There can't be many healing arts more contentiously fragmented than chiropractic. Our profession is divided along every line imaginable, from clinical techniques, to scope of practice, to philosophical approach. We even have factions within factions, as our basic human nature compels us to endlessly individuate. This essay looks inside the faction we generally call straight chiropractic, and how one major tenet of our original philosophy has resulted in a bit of intellectual chaos and splintering at the root of our original philosophical approach.

On a personal note, I have 34 years' experience as a fire and brimstone, bone-thumping, straight chiropractor. I've never been a professional theologian or a chiropractic historian, but I have a keen interest in how these two subjects overlap. I also have a rather odd sentimental attachment to DD Palmer and his thinking through his grandson David Palmer, the third president of my *Alma Mater*, Palmer College. DD's grandson took the sport of rugby under his wing at the college, and were it not for this, I would likely not be a chiropractor today. Therefore, on behalf of the late David Palmer, I am going to take a flying tackle at defending the validity of one very particular thought his grandfather brought with him in creating our profession. I take this head-first lunge knowing well this is a subject written on rather extensively by better credentialed chiropractic historians and philosophers than I. However, having read and discussed much of their work, I find some points in defence of DD's portrait have gone missing.

Sources

All of what you will read here is based on my personal study of the philosophy of chiropractic as recorded by DD Palmer and his contemporaries, my personal study of Scripture and comparative religions, and many years of rather '*spirited*' on-line debate with prominent members of what I would call the modern revisionist camp. Unless otherwise indicated, I will quote DD Palmer from a single source throughout this essay entitled *The Moral and Religious Duties of a Chiropractor* which I believe was written by Palmer somewhere between 1911 and the time of his death in 1913. The only other chiropractic author I will quote is R.W Stephenson from *The Chiropractic Textbook*, published in 1927. Stephenson's text is regarded by many as the consummate treatise on the philosophy of chiropractic, one which in my opinion clearly reflects how fourteen years after his death, DD's efforts to bring the first cause of the universe directly into the functional biology of all living things was still operative in the teaching of the philosophy of chiropractic.

Theism in Biology

The concept of theism is more appropriate to this discussion than theology, as theism tends to narrow the dialog to belief in the prime qualities of God; creator of everything, all-encompassing supreme knowledge, infinite power and goodness, worthiness of worship. Definitions vary, but these qualities seem common to most. This discussion of theism will be primarily directed to the ongoing absolute existential relationship between creator and creation that DD applied to his philosophy.

Unlike theism, theology works toward revealing the totality of God's qualities as they apply to religious behaviours, most of which are not central to this discussion, though there was some discussion of religion and its role by DD that I will address later. To add even more specificity for use in this essay, I will use the term bio-theism, which I propose to mean the belief in a creator that is directly involved in orchestrating the physiology of living things from one moment to the next, a relationship I will demonstrate as a central theme of DD Palmer's philosophy of chiropractic.

In reading the writings of DD Palmer as well as those of his chiropractic contemporaries, his integration of the physiology of the body with a spiritual realm first cause of all things becomes apparent in his philosophy of chiropractic. In a nutshell, he spoke of how a non-material 'All-Wise' intelligent entity manifests the physical realm. Where human life is concerned, through the creation of intangible mental impulses converted into tangible nerve impulses via a metaphysical process, this infinitely intelligent entity directs the processes of human physiology. Heavy stuff.

His philosophy of chiropractic in its authentic form has been handled differently by the many factions within our profession. Today's more medically oriented chiropractors are typically ignorant of our profession's philosophical roots, or simply dismiss the philosophy, calling it antiquated or irrelevant. This dismissiveness can go as far as to label it as a pseudo-religious embarrassment, or even alleging it is merely a political ploy thrown together to keep chiropractors immune to accusations of practicing medicine without a license in our early days.

What I find fascinating is how on the other side of our professional rift, those chiropractors who may classify themselves as being aligned with the original philosophy are divided by contrived differences in what DD's philosophy actually appears to imply. Ironically, it has been factions within the body of traditional or sublaxation-based chiropractors (hereto referred to as 'straight') that have gone to the greatest lengths to overwrite, or even denounce DD's bio-theistic language. As such, this essay will not bother exploring the medically oriented chiropractic faction's largely uninformed, out of hand dismissal of DD's philosophy. Instead it will focus on the validity of assertions by certain straight factions.

Looking at a concept like bio-theism, one might ask from an academic perspective if it is a valid paradigm at all, let alone one appropriate for a healing art like chiropractic. Those who view life from the rigid, purely reductionist POV may have no taste for such an idea. Others who have trouble walking and chewing gum at the same time may see the disciplines of biology and theism as strictly non-overlapping matters that should only be studied in isolation. And then there are those folks who don't mind getting chocolate on their peanut butter while entertaining an integrated approach to both.

These pages will seek an understanding from the perspective of the early philosophy of chiropractic as to whether DD's specific brand of integrated worldview is indeed a valid theistic ontology, one worth retaining intact for those who can appreciate it, rather than giving it what may be viewed as a rather careless overwriting by modern revisionist chiropractic philosophers. Whether or not DD's spin on theism in biology is a useful calling card for modern straight chiropractic is a debatable topic. What is not debatable as I will attempt to prove, is the error

revisionists made in fundamentally altering the definition of UI rather than coming up with a whole new framework and lexicon that cleanly keeps theism out of the discussion.

The All Wise and Infinite Universal Intelligence

To begin with, any suggestion that DD's philosophy did not attempt to incorporate a brand of theism is impossible to defend given the man's own words. He placed atop his philosophy of chiropractic an All Wise, Universal Intelligence (UI) that was defined as being both of the spiritual realm, and causative over the ongoing existence of the material realm. In his turn of the 20th century words:

'I believe, in fact know, the universe consists of Intelligence and Matter. This intelligence is known to the Christian world as God. As a spiritual intelligence it finds expression through the animal and vegetable creation, man being the highest manifestation.'

DD created a narrative that demonstrates how this All Wise intelligent entity is invested in the ongoing operation of a living being via what he called Innate Intelligence (II):

'That which I named Innate (in born) is a segment of that Intelligence [UI] that fills the universe. This universal All Wise, is metamerized, divided into metamers as needed by each individual being.'

Following his death, his theistic motif on first cause remained operative in the early teaching of the philosophy of chiropractic as we see explicit in the writing of R.W. Stephenson:

'It [UI] occupies all space and distance. It has existed always. It is older, wiser, greater, stronger and better than anything in the Universe. It created everything and must have been first and indefinitely superior in order to do it. It must have been and is VERY intelligent. Having these virtues it must have never made a mistake and therefore is always right. Being always right is always good. Being infinitely good is God. (See Webster for definition of God.)'

In his text, Stephenson defined the first of 33 deductive principles for the philosophy of chiropractic as follows:

The Major Premise: A Universal Intelligence is in all matter and continually gives to it all its properties and actions, thus maintaining it in existence.

Given both DD and Stephenson's association of UI with God, the Major Premise becomes akin to a statement of how the first cause of the universe remains operative in the ongoing process of existence. Stephenson's second principle identifies the relationship this clearly theistic premise has with life.

The Chiropractic Meaning of Life: The expression of this intelligence [UI] through matter is the Chiropractic meaning of life.

Given the above there appears to be no way to avoid the fact that the original philosophy of chiropractic carried a strong theistic overtone, a quality that one faction within straight chiropractic has worked vigorously to obscure and invalidate.

Revisionists

I am not aware of the precise time and origin for the mid-century revisionist approach that has attempted to overwrite and invalidate the theistic intent in our traditional philosophy, however I can say with reasonable certainty that well-intended, highly respected educators on the straight side of our profession like Reggie Gold and Joe Strauss, as well as the philosophy department at *Sherman College* have had quite a bit to do with it. At some point decades ago individuals like those mentioned above began to refer to UI and II as individual laws or principles of organisation. More specifically, metaphysical constructs non-material in nature offered as something

completely non-theistic. I believe this revision was done with good intent; presumably to shelter the philosophy of chiropractic from accusations of pseudo-religion, while allowing the philosophy to retain a degree of metaphysical inference.

However, for some modern revisionists, it was not enough to try and detach the theism from the philosophy. Some have gone to great lengths to try and invalidate DD's brand of integrative thinking, alleging a faulty theology, and an overstepping of the acceptable boundaries of philosophical inquiry. Via my personal observations, I can say with reasonable certainty that individuals like those described above have done an excellent job programming the minds of a high percentage of philosophically oriented chiropractors to accept this overwriting of DD's intent, even to the extent that some have been led to believe the authentic meaning never existed in the first place. Well-meaning or not, this reworking of DD's expressions creates at least four problems:

1. It is not what DD meant. UI is his proprietary term with a specific meaning and intent, one which from the perspective of intellectual and historical honesty should not have its definition fundamentally altered;
2. Changing the definition of UI as they have done while leaving its original descriptions intact in the written work of DD and others like Stephenson creates contradictions, and issues with the basic meaning of words;
3. Re-classifying UI and II as independent metaphysical laws that somehow from the non-material realm hold animated and inanimate matter in existence while giving to it all of its properties is simply creating a peculiar metaphysical belief system with careless word association, and unlike the concept DD produced, this revised belief-system has no concordance with any of the standard motifs on what manifests the universe found in western monotheism, or any number of other religious belief systems that identify non-material deities or entities at cause over matter. Though presumably the creation of these new definitions were superimposed over what DD intended as a way of keeping God or a first cause out of the discussion, the exercise actually creates the opposite of what it was intended to do by producing ontological conflict with age-old, well established monotheistic belief systems, while leaving the door wide open to other religious ideas that are non-monotheistic in nature; and
4. There are no fatal flaws in DD synthesis theistically, theologically, or philosophically.

Let's look at each of the four above in greater detail starting with the first.

UI was arguably DD's god-equivalent expression before he ever formalised the philosophy of chiropractic. More commonly referred to as Infinite Intelligence, it is the god of Spiritualism, which DD had as his personal religion. UI as a first cause, or what DD described as what the Christian world would see as God in the act of manifesting the universe is precisely what the expression means. Giving UI a drastically different ontological structure, like a law of organisation, is no more defensible than redefining any other proprietary term used in philosophical discussions. In addition, re-defining UI and II as separate metaphysical laws does not track at all with what DD intended. II in his philosophy was simply that portion of UI devoted to animating matter into what we call an individual life.

In relation to item #2, referring to intelligence as a law or a principle is the matter of questionable use of the English language. Intelligence is the quality of an intelligent agent or entity. Laws described in the context of the natural world are simply the words we attach to our observations of repeated, immutable patterns. Intelligence is not laws, and laws are not intelligent entities. The modern phenomenon of Artificial Intelligence (AI) may appear as an exception to this, however volumes have been written on whether AI is actual intelligence, or just

a reflection of the intelligent person who programmed it. DD could have started his philosophy off by identifying universal laws, or something equivalent to a program, but instead he chose to start it with an All Wise law-giving programmer.

In his '33principles', Stephenson goes to the trouble of teaching DD's ideation of how reality as we observe it begins with a non-material intelligent creator that through a metaphysical process generates forces that give ongoing form to matter and life. The revisionists have decided to redefine that intelligent entity as two laws associated with a metaphysical process. That simply makes no sense in the context of the language used by DD and Stephenson to describe what UI actually is.

In 2017 world famous theoretical physicist and co-author of string theory, Michio Kaku, raised the eyebrow of the reductionist academic world in stating the following:

To me, it is clear that we exist in a plan which is governed by rules that were created, shaped by a universal intelligence and not by chance.

Aside from his very interesting choice of expressions, note how he structures the language of this comment. There is an intelligence, and there are rules, the former not being the latter—the former being responsible for the latter. Substitute the word 'rules' in Kaku's quote for 'laws of organisation' and his meaning remains the same. The intelligence is not the rule, or law, or principle, or program.

The revisionists have seen fit to take the structure of a thought like Kaku's, and DD's, and imply that somehow the intelligence is the rule, or law, or principle. I believe their intent here was to create some sort of buffer between the idea of a non-material component that manifests and organises matter, and the concept of God or first cause. In this way, perhaps they thought the philosophy would no longer explicitly carry God or first cause on its back, but rather suggest that something other than the direct action of God, or possibly something created by God does all the metaphysical heavy lifting. The intent was okay. The error was not producing brand new words and terminology associated with their intent.

All of the above leads us to item #3, wherein the overwrite of UI and II as non-material laws that hold all matter in existence simply produces a made-up metaphysical argument never uttered by DD; namely that two non-material laws or principles other than God, or arguably made by God but somehow separate from God exist as the masters of all motion in matter that give rise to the universe and all life contained therein. Naturally, we are all entitled to our own ontological spins on reality. The problem here beyond those issues described in #1 and #2 is that this revision not only conflicts with the authentic intent, but also conjures up no less supernatural wu wu than the concern over identifying an All Wise spiritual entity or God does. (The Urban Dictionary defines wu wu as excessively new-agey ... nonscientific; religiously, or mystically inclined.)

The overwrite simply creates its own supernatural condition in relation to the manifestation of the universe, one arguably encumbered by a misuse of basic word meaning, and also one that stands in conflict with biblical monotheism, whereby it is only God Himself that is ever alluded to as having the qualities of manifesting and maintaining matter in existence. That is something that chiropractors who are of any of the Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) need to give sober consideration to when they speak as though UI and II as though they are actual metaphysical laws or principles other than God Himself in the act of manifestation. Meanwhile, keeping God out of the party, and inviting two made-up, nondescript, non-material laws leaves the philosophy in a condition no less contentious than the idea of a non-material first cause alluding to God.

How so?

Let's look at the concept of vitalism. That term has been used quite a bit in association with chiropractic of late in modern straight circles, and in the strict sense it is a decent match for some of the fundamental elements associated with UI in both its authentic and overwritten definition. Not to be confused with vitality, vitalism in the strict sense identifies that life is dependent on a non-material element. The online Oxford Dictionary defines vitalism as:

'The theory that the origin and phenomena of life are dependent on a force or principle distinct from purely chemical or physical forces.'

The revisionist 'law of organisation' overwrite seems to fit that description nicely, a principle whereby some non-material force is at work in organising life. However, this term comes with its own heavy wu wu baggage. Sadly the majority of academics view vitalism as a defunct and discredited theory, and anyone who uses the term in association with chiropractic needs to understand that in the academic sense, this term is arguably no less contentious for some than an idea like the word God connected with biological control mechanisms. Deleting allusions to God in favour of supernatural laws causative over matter simply substitutes one potentially contentious metaphysical subject for another.

The fourth item in the list above suggesting there are no fatal flaws in DD synthesis will be covered in detail in the following section.

Revisionist Defenses

Steadfast defenders of the 'law of organisation' revision attempt to justify the idea using various philosophical and theological arguments as well as pointing to isolated language within Stephenson's 33 principles. One of the first arguments you may hear from revisionist scholars is that DD violated the tenets of philosophical inquiry by overstepping into the realm of theism. It may be argued by some that these are largely separate disciplines, philosophy being the process of applying rational thought to the nature of existence through contemplative observation, versus the acceptance of various doctrines based upon faith in the existence and alleged dictums of a deity. The problem with this argument is that DD's concept of UI is highly compatible with the established discipline of philosophical theism. Philosophical theism is the belief in a creator or God by simple virtue of observing organisation in nature and deducing there must be a supreme intelligence or God at work. Philosophical theism does not seek to understand the concept of a creator of the universe or God beyond what appears self-evident through observation. There is no further theological or religious treatment of the subject. To suggest that philosophy and theism are entirely immiscible does not really hold water, as may be argued by individuals such as Aristotle, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Abraham Lincoln, all of whom may be looked upon as having beliefs either compatible with, or tangential to the concept of philosophical theism.

Another revisionist defence is that UI as defined by DD and Stephenson, if equated to God, is limiting God to something that merely organises matter. Such a suggestion completely misses the boat in terms of what DD must have intended. When he spoke of UI being what the Christian world has seen fit to call God, he must have meant God in the act of manifesting matter. His position was not designed to suggest that UI is all that God is for anyone else, but simply that UI is doing a thing that the Christian world attributes to God. To suggest that DD was in the business of having Christians or any other religious group abandon their personal, full theological understanding of God and accept a limited creator instead does not track at all with his following statement:

'A person may be a devotee to any theological creed and yet be a strict, upright, exalted principled practitioner of chiropractic.'

It should be noted that in the Judeo-Christian Bible, there are many names for God in the act of performing one of His likely innumerable qualities. Here are a few:

Jehovah Rapha – The Lord that heals
Jehovah Jireh – The Lord that provides
Jehovah Shalom – The Lord that is peace

Just for fun, we could conjure up the term *Jehovah Synestemi*, Greek, for consist, the Lord in whom all things consist. That would be the proper way to look at UI in relation to God as laid out by DD and Stephenson, not a relationship that limits God but one that simply points out one of God's qualities or actions, if not the most essential quality of all. And if one were to question if there was any scriptural basis for such an illustration, consider the following attributed to the Apostle Paul:

'And He [God] is before all things, and in Him all things consist.' Colossians 1:17 NKJV

Another common revisionist's argument that UI as described by Stephenson cannot be God is the 'no solicitude' argument. At face value it is a rather good point of contention, being based on the language of Stephenson's principle #11:

The Character of Universal Forces: The forces of Universal Intelligence are manifested by physical laws; are unswerving and unadapted, and have no solicitude for the structures in which they work.

Clearly if UI produces 'universal forces' that have no solicitude for the structures in which they work, then that could not be God in the act of manifesting the universe, as God is commonly conceived as being permissive and supportive of life. However, this point of contention is merely an example of cherry picking a bit of poor wording by Stephenson. Recall Stephenson's principle #2:

The Chiropractic Meaning of Life: The expression of this intelligence [UI] through matter is the Chiropractic meaning of life.

How can something be the meaning of life and also have no solicitude for it? All one need do is read the narratives by DD and Stephenson to see that Stephenson simply worded this principle poorly. UI is described as being responsible for universal forces and innate forces, the former being those that are at work with the inanimate, and the latter at work with the specialised purpose of organising life. If one might prefer to stick by the 'no solicitude, no God' argument based in the wording of #11, then #2 must be wrong, and what is alleged to be a deductive chain of 33 principles falls apart before it even gets started.

Revisionists may also argue that DD's UI cannot be a theistic construct because it would have to then be given a full theological and religious extrapolation, complete with moral codes, ethics, religious rituals, etc. I have already dispelled this posture with the example of philosophical theism. Furthermore, such a suggestion at face value is again looking at DD's intent backwards, as though he was working to create a substitute religion for chiropractors to buy-in to. Here is his quote shown earlier with some added context:

'I do not propose to change chiropractic, either in its science, art or philosophy into a religion. The moral and religious duties of a chiropractor are not synonymous with the science, art and philosophy of chiropractic. There is a vast difference between a theological religion and a religious duty; between the precepts and practices of religion and that of chiropractic. A person may be a conscientious devotee of any theological creed and yet be a strict, upright, exalted principled practitioner of chiropractic.'

A careful reading of DD's *Moral and Religious Duties of a Chiropractor* leaves little doubt about how he felt regarding religion and chiropractic. The moral duties he spoke of were part of what he called subjective religion, the generalised obligation of any individual to serve the suffering and in

so doing serve their creator. UI was not identified as a full substitute for one's theological creed, only the identification of a first cause for the matter we interact with as chiropractors.

Yet another argument posed by revisionists is taken from the precise wording of Stephenson's Major Premise where UI is described to be in all matter. Such language would seem to challenge the common belief that God is transcendent. The concern is that if God were to be in matter, then we are supporting the notion of pantheism, and the belief that the universe and God are the same thing, or that the universe is all that there is, or more drastically, that the universe itself is intelligent with no need for a creative, transcendent God at all. Yet look at this quote from DD:

'God is indwelling in the universe, everywhere present; He occupies every part thereof; likewise, the spirit permeates every part of the body in which it dwells. God does not rely on the universe for His existence, neither does the spirit rely on the body for its continued manifestations.'

From this we can derive that DD's chosen motif on theism was actually more specifically a subset of theism referred to as panENtheism (capitals added for distinction from pantheism). PanENtheism is the belief in a God that is both transcendent and intimate with the substance of His creation. In the world but not limited to it. Everything in God, though God transcends everything. Such a motif on theism is not entirely without support from scripture as illustrated earlier in a verse like Colossians 1:16-17.

In an essay entitled *Vitalism and Developmental Biology* (1961) Professor of biology and noteworthy Christian author Robert C. Frost, PhD wrote:

'The Christian man of science recognizes that natural law as it applies both to the animate and inanimate has a supernatural basis in its origin and in its perpetuation. Our sovereign and omnipotent God is both the creator and the sustainer of the universe for His own purposes. Herein we see both His transcendence to, and immanence in, the realm of nature.'

In this statement we find Dr Frost comfortable with the concept of a transcendent God who is also perpetually operative within nature. And again from the Apostle Paul:

One God and father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all. Ephesians 4:4 NKJV

Christian panENtheism is a motif on scripture promoted by theologians like Phillip Clayton who are quite comfortable with building a scriptural model for God as being both indwelling in the very substance of what we observe as reality, and also transcendent. PanENtheism finds concordance with the ancient concept of panpsychism, an idea now championed by modern quantum consciousness aficionados. This motif on reality suggests that immaterial consciousness is the ground substance of all being, that there is a mind behind everything without which there would be nothing. In his book *Consciousness and the Existence of God* JP Morland defines the 'eleven arguments' for panpsychism. Here is #6:

'Theological Argument: God is mind and spirit, and God is omnipresent, therefore mind and spirit are present in all things. Or, all things participate in God and thus have a share in spirit.'

World class quantum physicist Amit Gaswami lectures on how quantum science supports a consciousness or mind at first cause behind all manifestation. He tells us:

Consciousness comes first; it is the ground of all being. Everything else, including matter is a possibility of consciousness. Consciousness chooses out of all these possibilities all the events we experience.

Given the next quote, chances are good that Gaswami might say consciousness in this context is what the Christian world would call God in the act of manifesting the material realm:

'The idea that consciousness is the ground of all being is the basis for all spiritual traditions.'

The final theological justification attempted by revisionists I will identify comes specifically from certain chiropractors who are also Christians. They have understandable concerns about chiropractors who may have interpreted DD's language as somehow offering a substitute resolution for the disconnect of original sin. DD has indeed stated that chiropractic reconnects *'man the spiritual with man the physical.'* It is possible that some may have run with all that in the wrong way, but if they have it is not the fault of DD Palmer. One must recall that he viewed physiology and intellectual life as having their origin in the spiritual realm, and the chiropractic adjustment was designed to ensure that connection, with no inference that doing so was a substitute for Christ-based salvation or another way to buy a ticket to heaven.

Moving away from strictly hermeneutic matters, we find the revisionist argument of inclusiveness. It has been argued by revisionists that having God or equivalent floating around at the top of the philosophy will scare-off folks who don't have any affinity for deities, or who simply cannot stomach theism and biology on the same plate. While there is certainly no way for any ontological treatment of reality to accommodate everyone's taste, you can see from the following quote by DD that he made an effort to handle this for us upfront with the following quote from a compilation of DD's writings called *The Chiropractic Adjuster*, published in 1921:

'To express the individualized intelligence which runs all the functions of our bodies during our wakeful and sleeping hours, I chose the name Innate. Innate—born with. And so far I would not change it except to replace it with the name of that individualized entity which really is a part or portion of that All Wise Almighty, Universal Intelligence, the Great Spirit, the Greek's Theos, the Christian's God, the Hebrew's Helohim, the Mahometan's Allah, Hahneman's Vital Force, new thought's Divine Spark, the Indian's Great Spirit, Hudson's Subconscious Mind, the Christian Scientist's All Goodness, the Allopath's Vis Medicatrix Nature, the healing power of nature.'

It seems clear that DD's thinking allowed for pulling out UI and plugging-in just about any spiritual/non-material/supernatural causative entity you liked. You can indeed argue that this laundry list may exclude the beliefs of stone-cold reductionists, however the *'law of organisation'* overwrite will repel those folks as well if the law is defined as non-material.

Finally, there is the revisionist argument that chiropractic terminology definitions have been constantly changing from the start, which may be true for some, and so ... no big deal, right? However as stated at the outset of this essay, DD's theistic definition of UI and II remained intact after his death in 1913 and at least through to the publication of Stephenson's text in 1927, and as such, all of the early icons of our philosophy including BJ Palmer repeated the theistic overtones up until the midcentury revision appeared. That is hardly something that has changed from the start.

Concessions?

When all else fails, revisionists have a wildcard they can play found in the following by Stephenson.

'Let us, in this step of our study, look upon Innate Intelligence less romantically and more scientifically. Not as a little god coldly aloof somewhere in our bodies; whom we personify with a capitalized name and whom the more conceited of us think we must chastise occasionally; but as a mathematical law of nature.'

Revisionists, when pressed by the issues outlined in the above sections and in need of a lifeline have used this quote by Stephenson as a justification for the *'law of organisation'* overwrite. The problem with this justification is that does not really match what Stephenson appears to be up to.

His suggestion appears to merely recommend a change in focus during an academic exercise, and not an overwriting and expulsion of the actual meaning of II or UI otherwise we would have to derive by extension that he believed God is a mathematical law, and there is no evidence for such a thing in the bulk of his work, so honestly, no concession here.

Meanwhile, we can pull Dr. Kaku out from under a rock again to add some spice to this bit of clarification. He once stated:

'The final resolution could be that God is a mathematician. And when you read the mind of God, we actually have a candidate for the mind of God. The mind of God we believe is cosmic music; the music of strings resonating through 11-dimensional hyperspace.'

Kaku does not appear to suggest that God is a mathematical law anymore that what Stephenson may have meant in his suggested mental exercise. In each case, each thinker alludes to how our search for the infinite intelligence which manifests the universe can follow theorised and observable organisational clues.

As an interesting aside, DD spoke at length about aberrations of normal tone in the nervous system as being the critical measure of subluxation; nerve fibres, not unlike strings, missing their normal range of vibration. Fascinating how Kaku envisions the fundamental nature of matter as vibrating strings. Also fascinating is the modern alternative model for the nerve impulse called 'soliton theory.' Offered as a solution for a thermodynamic problem the action potential model presents, soliton theory likens the nerve impulse to a mechanical sound wave-like propagation along the axon. Is it not indeed fascinating how DD's turn of the 20th century spiritualistic perspectives can be mirrored in the models of modern cutting-edge theoretical physicists?

DD told us that he got much of his model for chiropractic through inspiration—a connection to another mind within the spiritual realm:

'The method by which I obtained the knowledge of certain physical phenomena, from an intelligence in the spiritual world, is known in biblical language as inspiration. In great measure The Chiropractor's Adjuster was written under such spiritual promptings.'

There are certainly other great thinkers who have credited their innovations with some form of spiritual inspiration or intervention. The idea of a confluence between the finite mind of man and the infinite mind is nothing new, which brings us to the next and final search for a concession to give the revisionists.

While DD did largely limit his inclusion of theistic language in his philosophy of chiropractic to a simple declaration of an All Wise first cause and its connection to physiology, he did toss in one arguably religious obligation outside the bounds of what he called subjective religion.

'The cumulative function pertains to intellectual growth, whether sane or insane. As we retain our mentalities and carry with us to the great beyond only that which we mentally gather, it is necessary, in fact, it is a religious duty to so care for our physical beings that our intellectual attainment may be of the very best.'

If you read DD's entire essay, his meaning here becomes fairly simple. He believed in an afterlife where our individual identities and mentalities persist, where everything gleaned from this world is taken with us as spiritual beings into the next. Nothing is uncommon about that belief system, however he also believed that our process of intellectual development could be hindered by the disconnect of subluxation. He believed subluxations would not only short-change individual development, but also because each individual is merely a segment of UI itself, adjustments of the neuroskeleton to correct subluxation was an obligation not only to the individual human intelligence, but to the infinite intelligence as well. This kind of obligation is admittedly a bit hard to shoe-horn into the confines of philosophical theism, however it can be

viewed to fall under the rubric of ethics, one of the four branches of philosophy, and so I would call this one a draw with the revisionists who may cry out-of-bounds. It is also fascinating to consider that DD's obligation described above may at least in part fit within the bounds of philosophical discussion as it may in fact be an observable experience we all eventually have.

How so?

In his book, *Evidence of the Afterlife, The Science of the Near-Death Experience*, oncologist Jeffrey Long MD outlines the results of his detailed forensic investigation into the recollections of a very large sample of individuals who spent a period of time in clinical death and were subsequently revived. What he derived is that our self-awareness can be operative independent of, and at distance from the brain itself, and that a full sense of personal identity goes with us as we transition into whatever comes next. Of course, Dr. Long's work has been heavily maligned by reductionists in his own profession.

So what?

Concluding Thoughts

In my opinion, DD produced a thoughtful, fascinating, and valid way of envisioning the first cause of the universe behind the wheel in directing the physiology of the body, complete with its own proprietary terminology. It could be argued that DD's way of thinking was a product of his time, in an era just prior to the pendulum of cultural authority swinging aggressively in the direction of reductionism, and a strict segregation of spiritual and scientific thought.

Modern revisionists with no taste for what DD implied have argued a need to walk his philosophy back and away from overt first cause inferences. Their error was overwriting his ideas while attempting to keep them attached to his proprietary terminology. One of the problems plaguing our profession is our careless way of producing conflicting definitions for the same terms within the lexicon he created. The overwrite explored in this essay is one of many unfortunate examples. Inter and intra-professional communication and our profile with the public suffer from this. If modern revisionist philosophers are concerned about the 'G word' getting loose out in the world in association with our clinical constructs, then the proper solution is to simply write out a new philosophical treatment with different terms that don't conflict with the original ones.

Another error that could be argued in the revisionist approach is walking back from theism, but stopping short at the non-material and digging their heels into something congruent with vitalism, a subject no less contentious in association with a healing art than theism may be for many. What if modern straight chiropractic revisionists produced a brand-new philosophical framework that stays well south of the non-material? As an example, consider the following:

1. Observation of the natural world reveals evidence of complex organisation in the various states of matter;
2. Fixed and repeating patterns observable in the organisational states of matter are identified as natural laws;
3. Living matter demonstrates observable patterns of organisation identified by natural laws that are distinctly different from those describing inanimate matter;
4. Natural laws describing living things identify potent self-regulating, self-healing, and self-replicating properties that differentiate the living from the non-living; and
5. Chiropractic is a healing art that recognises and works exclusively with those natural laws distinct to life as they apply to the human organism. (And so on. You get the idea.)

All of the above language would appear to get the point across without identifying or alluding to any sort of intelligence-oriented metaphysics, or non-material organising constructs like

vitalism, or supernatural laws, or supremely intelligent entities, like God. A modern chiropractic philosopher could simply ask a patient if they believe there are natural laws worth abiding when it comes to their health and work the chiropractic angle from there. The word 'intelligence' need never enter the discussion. UI and II, with their authentic connotations can be tucked away intact as a unique and historically significant ontology, while showing proper respect for the man without whom we may have all ended up in a less rewarding line of work. That in my opinion is one intellectually honest approach.

Or ...

If non-material allusions are integral to straight practice, modern chiropractic philosophers could simply get comfortable with the fact that for some folks, God in the act of manifesting the universe is the only non-material thing that UI can be. And if that is not the case for them or anyone else on a personal level, they can simply pick from the smorgasbord DD pointed to over one-hundred years ago:

'All Wise Almighty, Universal Intelligence, the Great Spirit, the Greek's Theos, the Christian's God, the Hebrew's Helohim, the Mahometan's Allah, Hahneman's Vital Force, new thought's Divine Spark, the Indian's Great Spirit, Hudson's Subconscious Mind, the Christian Scientist's All Goodness, the Allopath's Vis Medicatrix Nature, the healing power of nature.'

UI need not be God for revisionists who cling to keeping metaphysics within the dialog, but in my opinion, they have no logical, philosophical, or theological grounds to assert that it can't be God for anyone else—and in my opinion, they also can't logically call UI a law of organisation, as I've gone to great lengths to point out.

As I see it, revisionists have two cleaner choices than the one they have settled on:

1. Let UI/ II be what DD said it was and let folks have the option to plug in their own idea of a first cause or non-material intelligence that manifests and organises matter, including God.

Or ...

2. Write out a new philosophical treatment without any non-material causes of matter implied.

In concluding this essay I'll take a stab at exploring which of the two suggestions above may be best for straight, sublaxation-based chiropractic going forward. The major difference between the two approaches is the inclusion or exclusion of a non-material intelligence in the language. Looking at the inclusion of such a thing, a couple concerns come to mind.

Is part of the professional objective of straight, sublaxation-based chiropractic to identify and invite the public to believe in non-material biological control mechanisms, and if so, how does that foster greater acceptance of our service by the public? Also, what added clinical value does the belief in non-material biological control mechanisms afford the chiropractor and his/her patients?

The Intelligent Design (ID) movement is a model for looking at how an organisation whose sole objective is promoting an intelligence behind nature is critiqued by the academic community. The Discovery Institute is the organisation out of which a growing number of scientists provide evidence for ID in nature. While I find their work logical, admirable, and ontologically valid, these scientists conduct their investigations and present their conclusions under a continual negative bombardment by orthodox reductionist scientists who profile their efforts as a mere front for dragging creationism, God, religion, and 'pseudoscience' into the scientific arena. Sound familiar? They have a rather heavy public relations cross to bear, one that unfortunately must subtract from the public's perception of the value of their research. Unlike chiropractic, their only objective is

proving a purely metaphysical argument that unfortunately gets vocal pushback from the bulk of authoritarian scientists. Unlike the ID movement, straight chiropractic is not limited to purely ideological or ontological goals in its objective. We present it as a service with an art, science, and philosophy. What if a part of that philosophy has the potential to detract from the service, art, and science?

One of the most prominent well-intended revisionists, Reggie Gold, tried to address the matter at hand by declaring that chiropractic is defined by its objective, the location and correction of vertebral subluxation (LACVS). Assuming for the moment that this is a worthy model, how does the belief in, or identification of a non-material component integral to life assist that objective? The process of LACVS is conducted via material assessment of the patient, and the subsequent application of material force. I would argue that a person with no belief in non-material biological control mechanisms can be trained to LACVS as well as any dyed-in-the-wool vitalist or bio-theist. Whether or not you believe God, or some non-material law of organisation provides you a universe to experience has no bearing on the value or process of LACVS.

Some may argue that LACVS minus the metaphysics relegates us to mere technicians. I've been yet to see a single argument in absolute support of such an accusation. The best argument I have seen for the inclusion of this brand of metaphysics is that it will shape our clinical judgment in a way that seeks to give our inner wisdom the first 'crack' at restoring health. In other words, if a doctor believes there is more to life than just matter, and something supremely intelligent is at work in expressing life, then the doctor is bound to the goal of first seeking to restore that expression. The problem with that assertion comes from lengthy bloody-knuckled debates over the validity of bio-theism and any other form of vitalism I've had with reductionists. There are reductionists who believe life is entirely the result of materialistic neo-Darwinian mechanisms, but also believe that millions of years of 'blind' evolution has produced potent auto-regulation systems in the body that should be relied upon and supported as a first approach to the restoration and maintenance of health. Modern terms like salutogenesis, autopoiesis, and homeostasis can be used by such folks to designate biological '*laws of organisation*' with zero attached non-material wu wu.

Many moons ago BJ Palmer recorded a fascinating audio about the phenomenon of divining or dowsing for water, and how the same process can or should be used by the chiropractor to assist with the location of subluxations. Just as the search for water in this process involves tapping into something immaterial to guide the search, BJ believed his father's idea of an All Wise intelligence could be tapped into to help guide the chiropractor's hand. There are indeed straight chiropractors who add this belief to their practices by '*listening to their innates*'. Personally, I find this potential add-on, or even up-grade to a chiropractor's routine valid. However, we should keep in mind that BJ also went to great lengths to develop a science-based analysis for subluxation using material realm guidance such as detailed x-ray studies and thermographic analysis of the spinal column. Clearly, he had confidence that these material methods could pinpoint the right spot and advised us to use them. Electing to grab ahold of a bit of divine guidance to assist us in our daily occupational efforts is obviously not unique or proprietary to chiropractic, and clearly it is not critical to the LACVS.

If openly carrying the cross for a belief in something non-material integral to life is not critical to the delivery of our service, and such a belief has the potential to profile our profession in a negative way with a segment of the outside academic community and consumer population, why should we keep openly shouldering it? Additionally, a large hunk of our profession continues to fracture away from subluxation-based care. Medically minded chiropractic educators sneer at the work of our founders and poison the minds of fledging chiropractic students using straight chiropractors' alleged belief in vitalism and other non-material constructs as part of their

constellation of arguments against the validity of the science-end of subluxation. Why should we keep handing them that card?

I am a firm believer in DD's brand of thinking when it comes to duality in physiology and what I call bio-theism, but I stopped including all of that 'vitalistic' stuff in my overt lay-person educating years ago. If I have someone on the table who I think may have an affinity for all that, I may mention it while I'm engaged in the LACVS. Otherwise I leave it in the same box as my political beliefs. In my opinion certain modern chiropractic philosophers should consider giving up their efforts to bury or bend DD's UI into a shape it can't logically assume in the name of avoiding allusions to the big guy in the sky. They should just put it all, including its implied vitalism, in a jewelled box, intact, and let it say what it said for those who want to open the box and understand it. Let folks take it or leave it at face value. As an alternative, new terms and language can be constructed that cleanly describe the philosophy and objective of straight chiropractic within the margins of observable, natural laws, and folks can take or leave that as well.

In Closing

Three highly trained, seasoned EMTs are working skilfully to stabilise an injury victim at the scene of an accident. One believes his atoms, and those of the victim, and those of the tools of his trade are held in existence by a non-material intelligence he calls God. The next fellow never gave thought to such an effect on his existence or the process and materials of his labor. The third fellow is an atheist. As they respectfully chat amid the chaos about their varied beliefs in this regard, they extend the life expression of the man on the gurney, never once assuming their differences effect the quality of their work. Can we do that too?

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