

## Foreword

Surveying the scholarship in chiropractic, I am heartened. The profession is in a stronger position than ever with respect to published studies, and government funding for research is more plentiful now than at any other time in our professional history. Chiropractic colleges and other professional organizations have directed resources to the development of research infrastructure. Even our harshest critics have had to acknowledge our capabilities – though admittedly they do so grudgingly and in a very narrowly defined sphere. But all of these accomplishments have occurred in the realm of basic and clinical studies of the biological explanations for and outcomes of chiropractic care.

Thus, this is an important book. It is important because it represents a full-length treatment of the founder of chiropractic, D.D. Palmer. And it is different because it seeks to do more than simply tell his history or repeat his “philosophy.” It is also important because it represents an attempt to continue the development of a philosophy of chiropractic that is consistent with our historical foundations, but responsive to the demands of a radically different time and an explosion of new knowledge.

Recall for a moment the books that you’ve read about D.D. Palmer – a tough thing to do, isn’t it? By and large, our education and professional socialization in chiropractic provides us with a set of handy facts about D.D. Palmer and what he thought, then moves us right on to focus on his son, BJ Palmer. This is not to suggest that there is no scholarship on D.D. Palmer and the development of his thinking. A trip to the Index of Chiropractic Literature rewards one with an interesting list of publications covering a variety of topics, from what was contained in D.D.’s library to the evolution of his understanding of subluxation. Sadly, I would guess that the average chiropractor

has not been exposed to this literature, and relies on one of two primary descriptions of D.D. One depicts him as a genius who intentionally set out on an exploration of health and illness, finally “discovering” chiropractic. The other suggests that D.D. had a lucky accident (or intentionally plagiarized) when he did something to Harvey Lillard and managed to parley his discovery into a nascent profession – which he was unable to manage.

These descriptions are remarkably flat – not only in the way they portray D.D. as a person, but also in the way they depict his thinking. We’ve told ourselves the same stories about chiropractic for so long that we are often unable to think outside the boundaries we believe were put in place by those who came before us.

Into this professional culture of limited philosophical thinking comes a new perspective on D.D. Palmer. Not only does Simon reconsider some common interpretations of well-recognized historical events in D.D. Palmer’s life, but he also explores D.D.’s philosophical thinking in detail, returning to his definitions of commonly used chiropractic philosophical terminology. In undertaking this project, some of our widely held misconceptions about who D.D. was and what he really said about chiropractic are exposed. For some this will be controversial, while others will likely welcome it like a breath of fresh air in an overcrowded, smoky room. In either case, it represents progress for our profession because it is an attempt to take a scholarly, critical look at the founder and consider the ways in which his thinking has been used and misused throughout our history.

Perhaps even more significantly, Simon does not stop with reconsidering D.D.’s thinking. Instead, Simon demonstrates provocative linkages, placing chiropractic thinking in a broader paradigm of theorizing about not only the body in health and

illness, but also the multiple systems through which human beings live and express, laying a foundation for further exploration and development that benefits not only chiropractic, but also other related disciplines, and indeed all of humanity.

In no way do I wish to draw attention from Simon's work to myself in telling this story, but I remember when I first met him. He was not yet a graduate of Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic, and I had gone to Spartanburg for a philosophy conference. It was exciting to be among others who were interested in exploring the philosophy of chiropractic in a rigorous manner, and I was impressed with Simon's presentation on the history of the mental impulse. I recall speaking with him and encouraging him to turn his presentation into a publication – which he did. I am so pleased that he has continued to think and write and explore...The same care and attention that has been given to our science must be given to the paradigm that informs it. I am grateful that Simon is a fellow laborer in this task.

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