

Part 5: The C.C.E. Changed the Straight/Mixer Debate in the 1950s

“Too often the instruction (in chiropractic colleges) has been taken over by a new generation of younger teachers,...quite unfamiliar with ... classic protests against orthodox bacteriology (by such persons as) Tissot and Speransky. (Tissot followed Béchamp’s theory rather than Pasteur’s) Small wonder that many of these teachers have (made) broad concessions to medical orthodoxy, concessions which need never have been made.”

Verner, Weiant & Watkins, *Rational Bacteriology*, Preface 2d Ed., 1953

“(Does) the immune system... communicate with the nervous system or the brain? Yes. To even hint that the mind might influence the body – well, that reeked too much of mind-over-matter, and only ... out-of-print Russians dared do that, at least in 1984. (The Russian is clearly Speransky!)

Pert C., *Molecules of Emotion*, p. 172 (see also p.190), 1997

Did you ever hear of Béchamp, Tissot, Speransky or *Rational Bacteriology* while in chiropractic College. I know I did not. What happened? I am going to briefly address that question in this article. As most of you are probably aware, Candace Pert (quoted above) is world renowned for her discoveries related to neuropeptides and neuroimmunology.

It is a disgrace that the work of such men as Dr. Watkins has not been better recognized; especially within the chiropractic community. One could argue, and I do, that the development of the whole field of neuroimmunology (add psycho-endocrino if you wish) was delayed at least 40+ years by the combined effects of the allopathic monopoly and the failure of the chiropractic community to stand by such men as Watkins, Verner and Weiant.

Drs. Verner and Weiant are no longer with us, but Dr. Watkins is still practicing as a chiropractor in Thailand. Among many other things, Dr. Watkins helped found Life Chiropractic College and was a clinic director at Canadian Memorial and Cleveland Chiropractic College, Los Angeles. I am proud to call him a friend; thank you Dr. Watkins for all your work on behalf of chiropractors. It is time to reclaim the value of your early work and to re-ignite the flame of early chiropractic. But, how does the straight/mixer issue fit into this? In order to get a grip on this issue the debate has to be divided into pre-1950s and post-1950s.¹

Pre-1950s - Straights/Mixers

The early division between straights and mixers started with B.J. and John Howard, the founder of National Chiropractic College. Both B.J. and Howard subscribed to the primary chiropractic principles that life is the product of an intelligent process and that the body has an innate capacity for self-organization and dynamic regulation. However, B.J. and Howard differed as to the scope of treatment that might be used to address dysfunction arising within the body’s innate regulatory system(s).

Dr. Howard was a Mormon missionary to Germany before studying chiropractic with D.D.. While in Germany, Dr. Howard studied with Father Kneipp who many consider to be the founder of what became known in this country as naturopathy (personally, I don't like this word). The naturopathic materia medica, as described by one California court, includes herbs, homeopathic remedies, nutritional and other substances plus air, water, clay, heat, sound, light, electricity, magnetism, physical movement therapies, massage, suggestive therapeutics and rest.

Although the naturopaths tended to use these substances based primarily upon their clinical effect and without a well-defined pathophysiological model, Dr. Howard combined the use of these substances with the basic chiropractic principle of removing interference with, or enhancing the function of, the body's innate capacity for dynamic regulation. Howard's system included neurovisceral care, neuromusculoskeletal care, reflex therapeutics, general detoxification and the clinically oriented use of all natural substances and procedures.

Dr. Howard's system focused on wellness, prevention and early intervention and added, as a secondary aspect, neuromusculoskeletal care. The primary difference between B.J. and Howard related to whether or not to combine adjustments with a broader view of the use of all natural means to enhance and remove interference with the body's innate functional capacity. At least that is a substantial, worthwhile, debate. But, this straight/mixer debate changed, and became somewhat trivialized, in the 1950s

Straights/Mixers – The 1950s

The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) was founded as an entity within the National Chiropractic Association (NCA) in 1947. (The NCA became the ACA in 1963 and the CCE became a separate, autonomous, corporation in 1971.) The CCE was founded primarily due to the influence of Dr. John Nugent who served as the "Director of Education" for the NCA from 1941 to the founding of the CCE in 1947. Nugent ran the CCE with an iron fist from 1947 to 1959 and changed the future for both straights and mixers.

The changes within chiropractic can be symbolized by the fate of the book *Rational Bacteriology* and the naturopathic materia medica. The fate of *Rational Bacteriology* was decided at a meeting of the CCE on July 28, 1953. The book was "highly recommended **as a reference book**" but was declared "**not sufficient as a text for basic science instruction**". This does not sound too bad until you recognize that "basic science" is exactly what *Rational Bacteriology* is all about. You can burn books or merely put them so far back on the shelf as to allow them to disappear from view. But, Nugent and the CCE went further than that. At the July 28, 1953 meeting a committee was formed to establish a list of **acceptable texts** for use in accredited chiropractic schools. The handwriting was on the wall; allopathic texts would dominate chiropractic education and the principles of the body's innate capacity for organization and dynamic regulation would take second place.

Nugent and the CCE did not stop with marginalizing the basic principles of chiropractic. They also put the skids to the use of the naturopathic materia medica. At the CCE meeting of February 13, 1954 Dr. Budden (then President of Western States Chiropractic College in Portland, Oregon) asked the "Council" whether it had the right to "remove a college from the accredited list if it continued to conduct a naturopathic course". He was informed in no uncertain terms that the Council did have the right to do exactly that. The CCE, at its meeting in February, 1956 reported that Western States, and all other chiropractic colleges, had dropped all naturopathic courses. What did they put in its place?

After the actions of the CCE in the 1950s the primary focus of chiropractic shifted to musculoskeletal (low back) care and the debate between straights and mixers became whether or not to use physical therapy and whether to use it as a treatment itself or only as an adjunct to the adjustment. The chiropractic principles that life is the product of an intelligent process and that the body has an innate capacity for organizing and regulating itself are simply too big and too important for that. It is time for chiropractors to fight the discrimination foisted upon them by allopathy and to reject it from one another. We will discuss a lawsuit about these issues presently pending in California in Part 6.

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¹ In addition, one needs to also consider the impact that a series of prosecutions of chiropractors and naturopaths had on this subject; also the so-called wonder drugs and nuclear medicine. These subjects will, however, have to await another day.