



Where's the Beef?

By Eric Russell, D.C., L.C.P. (Hon)

A recent television show about classic commercials recently caught my eye. I remember vividly the picture of



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an elderly lady walking up to the counter and demanding to know where the beef was in her hamburger. Her determination to receive her perceived value of beef was expressed without limitation. In perspective, my question concern-

ing chiropractic philosophy is, "Where's the beef?"

As a chiropractic student, the science, art and philosophy must be mastered to prepare the student to be successful in practice. Often, a pursuit of technique knowledge will predominate and the art pretty soon becomes the philosophy. As a chiropractic student, I fell into the trap of valuing my technique above all else chiropractic. It is a constant struggle to maintain proper bal-

ance with this triune and it is extremely easy to experience personal in-coordination. According to Stephenson's Chiropractic Textbook, "The Art of Chiropractic consists of skill in analysis, palpation and adjusting vertebrae, most of it requiring dexterity with the hands." This is contrasted by the definition of the Chiropractic Philosophy, "...the explanation of Chiropractic. It explains 'the why' of everything Chiropractic. The explanation of cause and effect."

Many of our technique seminars are taught without regard to chiropractic philosophy. The application of "how" to adjust and to be proficient in your adjusting skills is certainly very important. The more specific the force that is introduced to the body, the more efficiently it will be utilized for constructive purposes. But, the chiropractor becomes just a mere skilled technician when they are devoid of philosophy. This will lead to an interference with the practitioner's understanding of why you should adjust, and an understanding of the cause and effects relationship of the

body. It is up to the individual to pursue the information on their own as the technique gives us the art, but where do we get the philosophy?

So, now the chiropractor understands they have a limitation in their educated mind of the philosophy of chiropractic. Therefore, they quickly sign up for every philosophy seminar they can find. This is the next pothole in the road to understanding. Many of these "philosophy" seminars consist of feel good, cheerleading sessions that motivate and uplift. The study of traits of successful people or any other personal development is important, however, it is not chiropractic philosophy. Walking on fire is not the same as understanding the five signs of life. The seven steps of a successful person are not the same as understanding the 30 steps of the Normal Complete Cycle. Personal affirmation is important, and maybe it removes interference with your educated mind that allows for growth to take place. But to truly KNOW chiropractic, you must be a student of its philosophy.

Chiropractic philosophy sets a stronger foundation that allows for an intra and interprofessional dialog to take place. With this understanding, we can discuss politics, educational standards, research, and scope of practice issues. I have often heard that we need to advance the philosophy of chiropractic, but in order to do so we must first add on a common base of knowledge of the subject. I am amazed at the deep level of understanding that early chiropractors learned philosophy in school.

Chiropractic philosophy is at times

distorted into feel good relationships, or degraded as a distraction to real scientific inquiry or even displaced in favor of technique or the practice of chiropractic. Yet, what many of us overlook is that chiropractic philosophy is the "beef" that sets us apart and is the essential ingredient in our practice. Who would eat a hamburger that was all bun and nothing else? In chiropractic, we tend to leave philosophy to be misunderstood or not be understood at all. We need to devote the time and effort necessary to realize our philosophical roots and the "beef" or substance and foundation it provides for our chiropractic science and art.

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