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To the Editor:

I believe that Kweli Tutashinda, D.C., in his recent papers "D.D. Palmer and the origin of 'tone': a centennial critique" (*Chiropractic History* 1995 [Dec]; 15[2]: 13-4) and "D.D. Palmer: a new look at an old visionary" (*Chiropractic History* 1995 [Dec]; 15[2]: 103-4), has introduced several mistaken ideas concerning Palmer's several theories of chiropractic.

First, Tutashinda suggests that D.D. Palmer proposed that imbalance in tone causes abnormal stresses on the neuroskeleton, which in turn causes subluxation. So far as I know, this is just the reverse of what Old Dad Chiro suggested. The founder of chiropractic instead theorized that the causes of subluxation were three (mechanical stress, toxins and auto-suggestion), that subluxation was an alteration in the neuroskeleton which produced a change in the tension of nerves (i.e., increases or decreases in their vibrational frequencies), and that altered vibrational frequencies (i.e., altered tone of nerves) produced a change in the tone (i.e., neurally mediated homeostasis or health) of the end-organs and tissues served by the nerves.

The differences between Tutashinda's and Palmer's formulations may be represented as follows:

Tutashinda:

_ tone ∅ _ neuroskeleton ∅ subluxation

Palmer:

mechanical stress or toxins or auto-suggestion	∅ _ neuroskeleton (i.e., subluxation)	∅ _ tone (nerves)	∅ _ tone (end-organs)	

For D.D. Palmer, the altered tone of nerves and end-organs did not lead to disease, as Tutashinda suggests, but rather was synonymous with disease (or dis-ease).

Secondly, Tutashinda suggests, mistakenly I believe, that Palmer conceived of tone as "the proper balance between excess nerve excitation and hypoexcitation." Tutashinda suggests also that this "balance" is "analagous to sympathetic and parasympathetic nerve function." I suppose that Palmer's

distinction between the innate nerves vs. educated nerves (later, Innate Intelligence vs. Educated Intelligence) may be seen as analagous to the distinction between the autonomic vs. the somatic/voluntary nervous systems. However, I am not aware that Palmer ever defined tone as a balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems. I suspect that Tutashinda is introducing his own ideas, and attributing them to Palmer. Old Dad Chiro believed that tone or health existed when the Innate Intelligence was free to determine the vibrational frequencies of nerves, and that disease occurred when subluxation produced abnormal tautness or slackening of the nerves, thus interfering with Innate's intended communicaiton with the end-organs.

Lastly, Tutashinda makes a case that the spiritual sources of Palmer's ideas were "primary" and speaks of "imbalanced Innate Intelligence." I hasten first to emphasize that Palmer did not construe Innate Intelligence as capable of imbalance; however, Innate's regulation of tone throughout the body could be disrupted by alterations in the neuroskeleton (i.e., subluxation). Additionally, it may be presumptuous to suggest that Palmer's spiritual ideas were "primary," in comparison, for example, to his search for a scientific/biological explanation of disease. My readings of Palmer's intellectual/theoretical evolution (Keating, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995) suggests that Palmer's metamorphosis from magnetic healer to first stage chiropractic was an attempt to find a mechanical explanation for the clinical improvements that he believed his magnetic methods produced. Certainly, Palmer's earliest chiropractic writings (Palmer, 1897a&b) made extensive use of mechanical metaphors (e.g., he likened the human body to a fine watch). Palmer took pride in having united the physical and the spiritual; in this sense it may not be appropriate to see one as more important than the other.

Sincerely,

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Professor

cc: Bart N. Green, D.C., C.C.S.P., *Associate Editor,* Chiropractic History

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