

The Christian Chiropractor

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THE CHRISTIAN CHIROPRACTORS ASSOCIATION

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Ethics

“the science of right conduct.”

An article, “Food for Thought,” in the February 12th issue of *Dynamic Chiropractic*, page 19, by Dr. Douglas Anderson was excellently written and deeply troubling. Dr. Anderson reflects on a Gallup poll done in 2006 regarding ethics among health care providers. Chiropractors came out at the bottom of the list.

In perceived honesty and ethical standards, the respondents to the poll ranked the professions as high or very high:

Nurses	83%	Dentists	61%
Veterinarians	68%	Psychiatrists	38%
Medical Doctors	68%	Chiropractors	31%
Pharmacists	67%		

This means that less than one third consider the chiropractor as having high or very high ethical standards. We can hope that they did not question the patients of Christian Chiropractors. This, of course, we do not know. Nevertheless, it hurts to know that our profession is viewed in this way by the respondents to his poll.

We wonder where the poll was conducted. Was it nation-wide? Was it on a medical college campus? Was it conducted among hospital patients only? A similar poll was conducted in 2003 in a telephone survey of 1000 people across the nation. In that poll, many other professions were included and chiropractors were somewhere in the middle.

Ethics, according to Dorland’s dictionary is “*the science of right conduct.*” This brings up the question of “*What is right?*” Webster defines ethics as “*1. the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation; 2. a set of moral principles and values.*” Is there any way either of these definitions can be properly fulfilled without biblical understanding? Can we not as Christians agree with ethics as defined by these sources?

It would seem logical to assume that as secularism has taken over our society with its slogans, “*everybody else is doing it,*” “*if it feels good it must be okay,*” and “*I don’t see anything wrong with what I am doing,*” the world has set its own authority based on expediency with total disregard for ethical standards set down in the Word of God. Situation ethics are the rule of the day in which we live. As long as what is done is within the standards of the majority thought for today, even though that may change by tomorrow, that is all that matters. Ethical and moral values can be changed by society at any time. Sad to say too many of our theological leaders have bought into this secularization of our former biblical standards. The Bible says, “*There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*” (Prov. 14:12)

Robert Orr, M. D., has some interesting things to say regarding ethics in the text. *Bioethics and the Future of Medicine.* “*The practice of medicine has involved moral decision-making since the time of Hippocrates. Medical professionals have been adequately addressing the ‘can we’ questions for thousands of years. But the ethics questions (of today), the ‘should we’ questions, are new to our practice.... Al-*

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Ethics, concluded, though it was theologians who were first to ask these questions, secular philosophers were quick to embrace the new frontier of medical ethics. Medical ethics was developed by secular philosophers, and theological voices became less prominent.” He quotes, Leon Kass, “Perhaps for the sake of getting a broader hearing, perhaps not to profane sacred teachings or to preserve a separation between the things of God and the things of Caesar, most religious ethicists entering the public practice of ethics leave their special insights at the door.” Dr. Orr continues, “This diminishing of the theological voice in medical ethics is lamentable. Christian physicians, patients and pastors should demand the return of a theological perspective to discussions of medical dilemmas, and Christian ethicists should proclaim their special insights rather than hide behind a cloak of secularism.”

What Dr. Orr says is probably truer in our profession than the medical profession. We have let the world (secularism) proclaim our standard of ethics. *“Every man does that which seems right in his own eyes.”* (Judges 21:25) This was not always true in the health care professions. Is it managed care that takes the blame? Is it insurance companies? Is it high debt to income ratio because of student loans?

So we agree that we as Christian Chiropractors are expected to be doing things rightly, with a set of good moral principles and values. These are set out for us in Scripture. But what does this include, and how do we put this into practice?

In our care of the sick patient, are our decisions made based on the need of the patient or on the insurance program and how much it will pay? Because the insurance company does not pay as much as we charge for a visit, do we add unnecessary services to increase the bill? If we can do it, does that mean we will do it or should do it? Because that particular insurance company unfairly decreased our last bill, do we have a right to pad the next bill to them? Should we add services that we did not perform in order to make up for what we lost last time?

Are we honest in our own limitations? Do we knowingly mislead a patient into believing we can correct a problem when we know we cannot do it? Do we refer a patient to another D.C. or M.D. if we know the other doctor could help more than we can? Do we examine a patient thoroughly enough to really know what is the best course of care for the patient? Are we willing to admit the problem is more than we can care for?

Can we always find something good to say about the doctor (M.D. or D.C.) who the patient had been seeing before coming to see us? Do we find fault and criticize the work of the other doctor?

Is our recommendation for care reasonable and honest? I had a patient come to see me a few months ago who had been going to another D.C. who diagnosed her problem with every chronic disease possi-

ble and said she needed three treatments per week for 18 months. She was sold a number of braces, belts, pads, and other devices at high cost. All this was far beyond the needs of the patient. How common is this practice? Can it be justified by our Christian ethical standards? As far as that patient was concerned, a careful examination, about twelve adjustments over a two-month period, a heel lift, and the patient was well on the road to recovery and is maintaining once a month chiropractic adjustments to stay well.

We do not have to use unethical practices to keep our office full and maintain a good income. Following sound biblical principles and good office procedures based upon those principles, we can have an honest, successful practice. I still believe that there are thousands of people who are looking for this type of a practice.