

## Essay by Remi Cadoret, MD

On the day of my induction into the Iowa City Hospice, I was offered the professional services of a nurse, a social worker, a music therapist, a chaplain (not including a spiritual advisor of my own faith), and a massage therapist who was qualified to treat using a variety of “holistic” approaches to medical conditions. Now, I have always been interested in holistic approaches to medical conditions and the treatment of the entire person in his unique environment. What many people here and in my past have been unaware of was my interest in a holistic approach. In my early days of medical experience, this would have included what was considered by my peers and certainly by many of my teachers as an unhealthy interest in psychic healing, and in accompanying phenomena such as clairvoyance (for diagnostic use in determining causes of medical conditions) and psychokinesis (or the effect of thoughts and wishes for physical outcomes in systems such as life processes—for example, healing of specific conditions such as bleeding disorders—by application of thought). Methods also included the “laying on of hands” and “anointing with oil,” both with a long history in healing.

By the time of graduation from medical school in 1953, I had more or less committed my career to research into psychic healing as it was understood in those days. Following a medical internship and the necessary two years of obligatory service in the armed forces, I became a research assistant to Dr. J. B. Rhine at the Parapsychology Laboratory of Duke University, where for the next two and a half years I studied various healers and their methods, and was greatly stimulated by contact with Dr. Smiley Blanton, a New York City psychoanalyst who had been analyzed by Sigmund Freud and who was currently investigating spiritual healing in a clinic sponsored by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale at the Marble Collegiate Church on 5th Avenue.

At this point in my life I was fortunate to be a happy, if harried, father of three children. However, problems of future research support needed to be addressed as well as family support (as an MD, I was grossly underpaid in my non-medical position). This problem was solved by my accepting a position in the University of Winnipeg (Canada) as a teacher with the medical school physiology department, where my salary improved healthily in spite of the poor currency exchange rate at that time compared to the United States.

It was here in the far distant province of Manitoba that the stage was set for the drama that astonished me here in my initial contact with the Iowa City Hospice. In the course of my

Manitoba studies of “psychic healing,” I was asked to work with an investigator from McGill University who had developed a way to demonstrate the effectiveness of psychic healing in a then-unique way by using mice that were treated by a human healer who held the animals in a cage between his hands. The investigator’s name was Bernard Grad and his approach was very simple; he cut a dime-sized piece of skin from the back of each mouse (under anesthesia, of course), and allowed some mice to be treated by his healer, whereas the control mice were treated by a number of volunteers who did not claim to have healing abilities. His healer claimed he had “energy” which, in passing from one hand to another through the part needing healing, speeded up the healing process, which could be measured by how swiftly the wound filled in with healthy skin.

Bernard Grad, Dr. G. I. Paul, and I conducted this study (1), and to make a long story short, we found a significant increase in the healing rate due to the treatment by the healer, and were able to publish this result in 1961 in a scientific journal. Bernard returned to McGill University, and I remained at Manitoba where my interests were more and more attracted by psychiatry, in which department I by now had a part-time appointment. There was a lack of local healers, and more emphasis on traditional reasons for the causes of psychiatric illnesses and their cure.

After four more years of indifferent research achievement I determined to change work once more by taking a psychiatric residency and seeking new and different research interests. So, in 1965 I moved with my family to St. Louis, Missouri, where I began the three-year residency program, putting behind me one of my most dramatic and significant contacts with paranormal healing experiments with Dr. Grad and his healer colleague.

During my years at Washington University, and my later 30 or more years at the University of Iowa, I had hardly remembered this early experiment with Dr. Grad and his healer and had turned my attention to studies of genetic and environmental factors that influence important outcomes such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, conduct disorder, and depression and other adult problems including alcoholism and drug abuse. My work involved a potent force, which has already markedly changed science. This force is that of molecular genetics, which has transformed almost every biologic branch of study ranging from the beginnings of life, to influencing the development of embryos from eggs to infants and

guiding future adult outcomes. Psychiatry, psychology, and other behavioral sciences have begun to benefit from this molecular genetic approach to conditions such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. It is these findings of the effect of genetics and environmental factors upon adult human behavior that my work in the past 30 years has concentrated upon.

When I met the massage therapist, I made small comments to indicate my previous and long ago interest in psychic healing and cited the experiment Grad and I had done and published in 1961, and I gave her a reprint of the study. Imagine my reaction when the following week she brought in a bag filled with books on alternative medicine. One of the books (2) from 2002 went into elaborate detail on Bernard Grad and his 1961 experiment including data published from later experiments by Grad that expanded the scope of the healing effect by showing that the healing effect could be transmitted through water. Another chapter in the book described how a nursing professor at Columbia University named Delores Krieger, by studying properties of water treated by Dr. Grad's healer (which led to improvement of health and health indicators such as higher blood counts) was inspired to develop "therapeutic touch," which has become a widely used treatment modality (at least among the nursing profession).

Needless to say, I was overwhelmed by a variety of emotions by this discovery of my unwitting involvement in a therapeutic movement which has led to federal government support by providing grants for studying "healing." Nor was the irony lost upon me of having been in on the ground floor, so to speak of an important finding and yet not being involved in its scientific development, but instead having followed a totally different research pathway that led to the study of the effect of environmental interaction and molecular genetic factors on the development of medical problems in adult adoptee populations.

In future years, I would like to see my legacy and Dr. Grad's serve to guide the empirical validation of all of the underlying concepts that I have worked with—genetic, environmental, and energy aspects of human development. One potential application of this line of research, which integrates all the areas of interest of my work, would be the study of manipulation of gene-environment interactions by means of purposefully directed energies. This could be demonstrated in nonhuman processes such as "microbial growth, specific biochemical reactions, or the function of inanimate objects" (2). Additionally, although some people may have difficulty accepting this concept, one of the intriguing types of empirical research that my work has led me to has been the studies of what is called "non-local mind"—defined as "prayerful, compassionate, healing intentions of humans (to) affect biological functions of remote individuals who may be unaware of these efforts" (2). This is one of the challenging frontiers of future research.

The "force" is still out there and awaits younger hands to take up its study. In this essay I have tried to express my frustrated feeling after finding out about the recent Grad studies and other applications of energy medicine. My other findings on the effects of genetic and environmental factors on unhappiness in the world are available, and can be taken up by younger hands to complete our understanding of the human condition. This understanding must somehow include the possible spiritual elements strongly suggested by my early work.

## REFERENCES

1. Grad B, Cadoret RJ, Paul GI: The influence of an unorthodox method of treatment on wound healing in mice. *Int J Parapsychol* 1961; 3: 5–24
2. Dossey L: Spirituality, prayer, and medicine: What is the fuss really about? *Am Med Asso J Ethics* 2005; 7(5)