



Media Spotlight

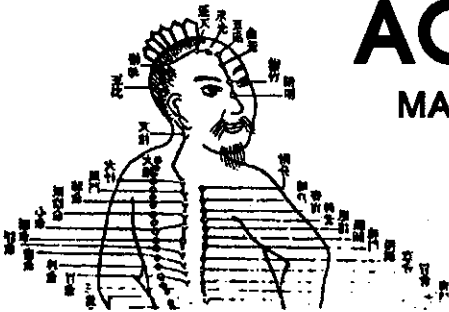
A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

ACUPUNCTURE

MAGIC OR MEDICAL SCIENCE?

by Albert James Dager



Acupuncture, though enjoying a growing acceptance in the West only since the early part of this century, has been practiced in the Orient from 3,000 to 5,000 years (depending upon whose history is accurate). According to the late historian and metaphysicist Aldous Huxley, news of acupuncture was first brought to the West by Jesuit missionaries whose glowing accounts spurred the curiosity of western medical practitioners to further investigation.¹

The idea that by inserting a needle into the foot one can cure a disease of the bladder is certainly cause for curiosity. But the fact is that acupuncture is being learned by doctors in the West who see it as a viable supplement to their traditional medicine in the treatment of many disorders.

But what, exactly, is acupuncture? And how is it purported to work where other methods fail?

THE THEORY

According to practitioners of acupuncture (Latin: *acus* [needle] + *punctura* [puncture]), "the body is lined with invisible energy channels called meridians," which are related to various organs of the body. In classical Chinese medicine there are fourteen major and eight special meridians. Twelve of the major meridians correspond to the twelve major pulses: lung, large intestine, stomach, spleen, heart, small intestine, bladder, kidney, liver, gall bladder, circulation-sex and triple warmer (nervous energy and warmth).²

The remaining two major meridians are the Governing Vessel, and the Conception Vessel. The first is said to run upwards from the base of the spine over the top of

the head, ending at the middle of the roof of the mouth; the second starts near the perineum, goes up the middle front of the body, and ends at the top of the tongue.³

The meridians form a network called *Ching-Lo*. *Ching* refers to the vertical meridians; *Lo* refers to those that go around the body and intersect the vertical meridians at specific points.⁴

The connection between the diseased organ and the particular part of the skin in which pain is registered is said to be due to both being supplied with nerves from the same nerve segment. According to the theory of acupuncture there are about a thousand points in the skin, approximately a tenth of an inch in diameter. When an organ is diseased the corresponding points become tender under pressure. These acupuncture points essentially form twelve groups aligned along the meridians running along the major parts of the body (trunk, head, arms, and legs), terminating at the tips of the fingers or toes.⁵

By stimulating the points along the meridian connected to the ailing organ, it is said that the acupuncturist causes a nerve impulse to be sent directly to the brain. The brain then interprets and acts on that impulse, affecting the inflicted part of the body through the central nervous system.⁶

Besides the use of needles there are a number of ways to stimulate these points including electricity, moxa (heat), laser, injection, and finger pressure (acupressure).⁷

The theory of acupuncture appears to be in harmony with medical science. However, it's the philosophy upon which this theory is based that presents a problem.

THE PHILOSOPHY

According to acupuncturist and author James B. Howland, "We tend to think of acupuncture as a very focused, technical treatment, perhaps something akin to flipping on or off tiny electrical switches with

fine needles. Yet more important than the complex technical details of the needle-work itself is the philosophic overview which guides it."⁸

Acupuncture originated in Taoism, an eastern religious philosophy which perceives the universe as activated by two principles—the Yin and the Yang. Yin and Yang are said to be evidenced in dark and light, night and day, cold and hot, sweet and sour, left and right, up and down, female and male. These two principles are represented in the Tai Chi diagram—a circle with intertwining elements of black and white, each with a dot in the center to represent an androgynous nature.

Yin and Yang—though different from each other—are said to be cohesive in the sense that each creates the other. It represents a circular or cyclic understanding of the universe, as opposed to the linear western concept of forces in opposition to each other. Neither, whether good or bad, is to be avoided, but understood in their constant change from one state to the other.

The Force of *Star Wars*, is an example of Yin and Yang at work. The Force is comprised of both a dark side and a light side, each the complement of the other, and each necessary for the existence of the other.

In terms of human, animal and plant life, Yin and Yang finds expression in the so-called "life-force"—the "god within" to which eastern metaphysics directs its adherents in meditation. Thus, the same principles that guide the oriental martial arts practitioner also guide the oriental healing arts practitioner.⁹ Both are closely related; both attempt to achieve balance in the state of being for the whole person.

The eastern philosophy of medicine differs from the western in that the eastern is based on a monistic concept of the universe, whereas the western is based on a dualistic concept. That is, western philosophy sees each element of the universe as working together to form the whole, yet separate in nature and in kind. Eastern philosophy is based on the Taoist view of the universe, seeing reality as one unitary, organic whole with no independent parts. Thus, God is nature and nature is God. In this sense, man is perceived as part of God, and God as part of man.

Tao means "Way." Not a way, but the Way—the Way of Harmony. We see the Taoist concept of a universal life-force in today's holistic (or wholistic) health practices which purport to treat the patient as a

single organism—body, mind and spirit. Taoism does not recognize a distinction between these three, but insists that none can be treated apart from the others.

This is why meditation is integral to oriental medicine. In order to achieve desired harmony and maintain a proper balance between the Yin and the Yang of the Tai Chi (life-force), the patient must achieve a state of self-realization—or realization of self as God. This is just a slight variation of the poison that found expression in Satan's temptation of Eve in the Garden (Genesis 3).

In view of acupuncture's apparent ability to ease pain and effect a cure, we may ask, "How is that possible if the philosophy from which it sprang is false?"

WESTERN SORcery & EASTERN MAGIC

The body is a wonderful mechanism, designed and created by God to function in a marvelous way. Although the biochemical process of physical life was to some degree understood by the ancients, they perverted God's truth by subjecting their sciences to false religious systems. The ancient mystery religions, through which knowledge was passed by initiation, held a satanically inspired view of life on both the physical and spiritual planes. The phenomenal technology of the ancients was a result of inspiration by demons, and resulted in medical practices steeped in sorcery and witchcraft.

In the West we have a form of medical practice based on ancient alchemy which treated sickness primarily through drugs and potions. Such means, while aiding in the healing of the body and/or the elimination of pain, has often resulted in chemical imbalance and dependency upon synthetic substances foreign to man's physical makeup, and in complications that often are worse than the original illness.

The eastern counterpart is shamanism. The former is methodical, operating in measured and somewhat predictable circumstances by the combining of different elements which, together, provide a hybrid, synthetic form of medicine. The latter is largely intuitive. Instead of synthetic drugs and potions, eastern medicine utilizes herbs, exercise, and guidance from spirit forces through meditation.

Since both medical philosophies are based on the ancient mystery traditions which were associated with false religious systems, then which (if either) may be used by Christians?

THE ROOT CAUSE

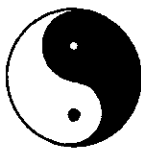
The answer rests in an understanding of the reason for sickness in the first place. Plainly stated, man is under the curse of death due to sin (Genesis 2:17, 3:19; Romans 6:23).

Both the occidental and the oriental medical approaches sprang from ancient man's attempts to circumvent the curse without acknowledging the need for repentance from sin. In order to do this it was necessary for medical practitioners to arm themselves with knowledge gleaned from the mystery religions. These provided some knowledge of the secrets of life, but the knowledge was perverted by spirit entities in rebellion to God.

For example, there is no denying that electrical energy is at work in our bodies. But the ancient religious philosophies equated that energy with God.

Today's "holistic" or "wholistic" practitioners wish us to believe that theirs is the proper approach to natural healing and health. And as far as the body goes, there is much validity to their approach of using herbs and the eating of proper foods.

But there is one extremely important ingredient missing in holistic medicine: a



The Tai-Chi, representing the flow of energy in the universe through the constant interchange between Yin and Yang.

living faith in Jesus Christ—the only source of true "wholeness."

This important truth, often overlooked by Christians who think of holistic medicine as viable, is based on the fact that there can be no healing of the whole person (body, mind and spirit) without faith in Jesus Christ. It is only through faith in Jesus that the Holy Spirit quickens the dead spirits of men. True unity of body, mind and spirit is possible only through obedience to the Father in thought, word and deed, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Many people, though deceived into thinking otherwise, find in holistic health an avenue for demonic oppression and even possession. This doesn't always result in aberrant behavior, but often manifests itself by spiritual blindness to the necessity for repentance from sin and surrender to the will of the Father.

All this understood, in a practical sense how do we cope today with bodies weakened by generations of improper living and years of personal abuse due to ignorance of God's laws?

A REAL DANGER

There is no danger in treating physical illness with remedies that work well in the body. In acupuncture's case, inserting a needle into an ear isn't necessarily going to have adverse spiritual or physical effects.

The real danger of acupuncture lies in the philosophical system. Acupuncturists generally adhere to Taoist philosophy, and prescribe eastern metaphysical meditation techniques and yoga-like exercises. These open the patient's mind to receive from the spirit realm. And where faith in Jesus is not active, any spiritual influence from metaphysical techniques will be demonic.

For this reason, acupuncture in all of its various forms, including acupressure, should be avoided by Christians.

But what about Christian acupuncturists? Surely they would hold no danger.

There are many today posing as Christians who hold an eastern mystical concept of God, and a humanistic concept of Jesus. And there are many psychological and medical practices masquerading as "Christian." All acupuncturists have learned their art by submitting to eastern religious thought. So beware of those who blend eastern thought with Christianity.

The reason for caution is simple: when we place ourselves under the care of another person we are usually mentally prepared to trust them completely. It would be very easy to be led into spiritual error by mistakenly assuming that the advice we receive will not harm us.

NOTES

1. Felix Mann, M.B., *Acupuncture: The Ancient Chinese Art of Healing* (New York, Random House, Inc., 1963), p. vi.
2. James B. Howland, *Acupuncture Principles and Your Health* (Santa Rosa, CA: Auricle Press, 1981), p. 31.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. *Acupuncture: The Ancient Chinese Art of Healing*, p. 10.
6. *Acupuncture Principles*, p. 37.
7. Pedro Chan, *Finger Acupressure*, (New York: Random House, Inc., 1975), p. 9.
8. *Acupuncture Principles*, p. 10.
8. Ibid., p. 23.

Illustration from *Acupuncture: The Ancient Chinese Art of Healing*, by Felix Mann, M.B.



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