

Report on the Academy of Orthomolecular Psychiatry

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The need for an Academy of Orthomolecular Psychiatry became apparent in the late '60s as an increasing number of clinicians and researchers were becoming active and involved in this eclectic approach. There were numerous meetings around the country with people involved in this work and papers which they were writing were scattered throughout a variety of Journals. In 1967, the Scientific Advisory Committee of the American Schizophrenia Association was formed and they had their first meeting at the Brunswick Hospital in Amityville, New York, where Dr. Benjamin Stein hosted an all-day symposium to which the psychiatrists on Long Island were invited. The Scientific Advisory Committee grew in numbers and met periodically in various places throughout the United States and Canada and physicians were practicing this new approach.

In April '68, Linus Pauling published in SCIENCE Magazine a treatise which has now become a classic, in which he crystallized the concept of Orthomolecular psychiatry which was of signal importance as a unifying concept which provided a basic descriptive term applicable to the work that we were all doing. At the next meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee in Vancouver, the precise

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relevance and applicability of the ortho-molecular psychiatric concepts and practices were discussed. I was assigned the duty of editing that textbook which has now been published with Prof. Linus Pauling as Co-Editor. The purpose of the book was to fulfill a definite need in that we all were receiving constant requests for reprints and correspondence regarding our form of practice. Because our approach was a composite one which changed and grew in complexity, the number of papers that needed to be presented and read increased and it became increasingly difficult to keep up with each other's work. To fulfill this need, the Journal of Schizophrenia, later changed to SCHIZOPHRENIA, was published by the American Schizophrenia Association and most of the contributors to those Journals later became involved in the formation of the Academy.

By 1970, the need for a formal organization became increasingly apparent and became a matter of discussion. Finally, in 1971, we decided to have our Founding Meeting in Dean's Yard of Westminster Abbey in London where many of us would be gathered to present papers to a joint meeting of the Schizophrenia Associations of the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. All of us contributed names of prospective members who we knew were engaged in this

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work and they were invited to that meeting so that by the time of our first meeting in London, there were 113 charter members of whom 87 were clinicians and 26 were involved exclusively in research, teaching, or administration.

It was agreed that, for convenience, we would have our future meetings the week preceding the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association. A number of prominent researchers in the U.S. flew to London just for that meeting because they felt the formation of this society was of considerable importance and they wished to lend their influence to assist in making certain that this society would be founded in actuality. All participants in that meeting left with a feeling of great encouragement and plans were made for the first meeting in the U.S. to be held in Dallas, Texas, the following spring.

The meeting in Dallas in May '72 was well attended, with over 100 participants, and our Banquet Speaker was Prof. Linus Pauling who was elected Honorary President. At the meeting, 15 papers were presented and discussed and at the Business Meeting, working committees were formed, committee chairmen were elected, there was a formal election of officers, as well as ratification of a Constitution and By-Laws. It was voted to incorporate the Academy and the membership agreed wholeheartedly to the publication of an official JOURNAL. Although we had decided not to solicit memberships, 18 new members were elected at that meeting.

During the following year, considerable work went into the founding of a JOURNAL which is a difficult enterprise at best, with many obstacles to be overcome, not the least of which is financial. This major obstacle was happily overcome by the generosity of the Lanier Foundation which offered financial assistance to establish the JOURNAL as they felt its publication was of overwhelming scientific importance. The Constitution and By-Laws were refined and a brochure describing the aims and objectives of the organization was printed and made available to prospective members.

The meeting in San Francisco on May 4th through May 6th, 1973, was the best organized and well-attended and we elected 62 new members whose applications had been approved by the Membership Committee. Six members

were elected to Fellowship status. Final details for the JOURNAL were worked out, with publication scheduled for later in the year. There were 125 in attendance at the Banquet to hear the Nobel Prize Winner, Dr. Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, give the dinner address. Members of a number of psychiatric institutions and organizations were present at the meeting and many new applications for membership were received.

The next meeting of the Academy is scheduled for May 3 to 5, 1974, in Detroit, Michigan, at the Hotel Pontchartrain which is directly across from Cobo Hall where the meeting of the APA will take place the following week. Members who wish to present papers should kindly communicate with Dr. Abram Hoffer who is Program Chairman for the forthcoming meeting.

During our first few years, we were not particularly interested in increasing our membership until we had a well-functioning, formal organization. At this point, the basic work has been accomplished and we are now interested in encouraging new members to become active and to submit papers both for publication in the JOURNAL and for presentation at our annual meeting where ample time will be provided for discussion and exchange of information. We suggest that members invite colleagues with an interest in this field to request membership applications which can be sent directly to the office of the President.

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