

Interview with Drs. Alec and Nejla Burton

by Jerry Deutsch

Jerry Deutsch recently traveled to Sydney, Australia, to attend the “One In All In” Charity Ball which was held on March 24th in support of the Australian Cancer Research Foundation and the Nutritional Research Project. Jerry was honored to attend the Charity Ball with Drs. Alec and Nejla Burton, the directors of Arcadia Health Centre. The Centre, which is located just outside of Sydney, specializes in Hygienic health care and lifestyle education. Jerry had the opportunity to interview these two dedicated doctors . . . and we are happy to share his interview and photos with you.

Alec Burton, M.Sc., D.O., D.C.

Dr. Burton, can you tell us a little bit about how the Arcadia Health Centre got started?

It was always my dream when I came out of college to establish a Hygienic institution. Now what do we mean by that? We mean a place where people can be under supervision and experience the major components of Hygiene.

Obviously, the body has certain needs and these needs are broadly air, water, sunshine, rest, sleep, food, exercise, etc. — everything that impinges on the organism. By the manipulation of these various factors we can exploit the self-healing properties of the organism of the body. So that is why the Arcadia Health Centre was established in the first place — to provide a place where Hygienic care can be applied.

And now that you have been doing this for a number of years, how many patients have you seen — tens of thousands?

It would be tens of thousands — probably somewhere between 35,000 and 45,000 I think over the years because, of course, my experience goes back to England. I worked in institutions there, one had 180 beds, and we had seen a lot

of people. Of course, here in Australia, we started off small and we've been more inclined to maintain a certain integrity with the institution. There are a lot of people who we could get here, but it is our belief that we really should only take those people that we believe we can help.

How many people can the facility hold at any one time?

The maximum we have had here is probably around 17 or 18 people. Maybe once or twice we reached the number of 20. We usually take in 10-15 people.

When you have the 10-15 people here, over the years what is it that most people come here for and what results do they get from being here?

It is very difficult to say what they come for. We have people coming here with a wide range of diseases for which they have been troubled maybe for months or years and failed to get a recovery by various treatments of different kinds. If you take what problem people have you'll see they are broadly chronic diseases — diseases which have no natural tendency to recover. We also get a fairly significant number of people who are not only chronically sick, but they have already been up and down the streets of Sydney seeing many, many specialists. They have had lots of treatment. They have had virtually the latest in surgical care, the latest in drug medication, and the latest in general medical care and they haven't been successful in recovering their health.

So in many cases, if not most cases, people come here after they have tried everything else and this is almost their last chance?

This was virtually the case almost exclusively, until the last few years. When we started here nobody would be here unless they were really against the wall, unless they tried everything that was out there without success. But nowa-days, there is an improved awareness of health. Not only an awareness of health, there is an improved awareness of doing things, shall we say more naturally than there used to be. Consequently, at the same time, we have also seen a greater development in the exploitation of drugs and medications. Nearly everyone you

speaking to is on some medication for some reason or another. We don't like this idea. We think that the human body is self-constructing, self-defending and self-repairing. What we have to find out is what we should do to get that natural ability to recover health working.

Would you say that this increased awareness of the natural world — trying to do things more naturally — has made it easier for patients here or has it made it more difficult?

I think it has made things easier for people. First of all, there is no opposition to doing what is natural, except in one area. When I first came to Australia my first duty was to get good legal advice and I saw Queen's Counsel who read through the health legislation. I asked him to tell me what I could do and what I couldn't do. A justifiable one is cancer. It is illegal in Australia to give any advice, service or attention to someone suffering from cancer. One is not allowed to treat cancer. When this lawyer looked at every-thing I did, he said everything there is perfect, except for one thing — fasting. He immediately said that this is a dangerous area. So I explained to him the care to which we did everything, the examinations we performed, the tests we conducted, and he finally said if you're doing it to that extent and taking care of people to the limits that you are, then I see no problem. So here we are 40 years later and we're still conducting fasts as we always were. It has been a little bit trying at times because the general authorities, the medical profession, don't seem to understand fasting and resting.

Do you think they ever will?

No. Medicine unfortunately is a system of therapeutics based on pharmacology and that's the way it's going to remain.

Over this time period, has there been any things that have surprised you or that you have not expected that have occurred as people go through their healing process?

I would say absolutely. I am surprised almost daily. What the body accomplishes, what it does, and so on. So it is not a surprise to me whatever happens. People usually get well if you provide them with the conditions of health.

And those conditions are?

Food, air, water, sunlight, exercise, rest, sleep, etc., but what we believe, as I said earlier, is that the body is self-constructing, self-repairing and self-defending. We have to find out what is necessary to get the body to heal itself. It does heal itself. If you place obstacles in its way, we try to remove those obstacles. Are they exercising, are they getting fresh air, are they stressed out, are they demanding, are they overeating, are they eating the wrong type of food, are they not getting enough rest and sleep? There are so many things that come into it. And that's what you have to investigate in the individual person. What is it that they are doing that is inhibiting the body from getting well?

I want to move to a little more specific question now. Over the past few years there has been this tendency to recommend these low-fat diets and recommending that people stay away from nuts and seeds and all oils. You see this in all the popular diet books. What do you think about this?

It is a mistake to think that fat is an unqualified evil. They are essential fatty acids — which as the words say — they are essential. Human beings should eat a varied diet. They should have fats, protein, carbohydrates, minerals, vitamins, all of these things. But they should have them in combinations which are usable or going to give the most benefit to the individual. But it is ridiculous to be against fat. It is a vital nutrient. The only thing is, along with everything else with regard to food, is that people will eat too much on occasions. Certainly one doesn't think very well of people eating a lot of, say, fried foods where the fat has been subjected to enormous heat temperatures and that alters the fat. It converts what might be a nutrient into what is definitely a toxin.

What are healthy fats? What foods would you recommend people eat in order that they get their requirements of fat satisfied?

What are healthy fats? First of all they should not be heat treated so the idea of frying food or cooking with fat is something we would not encourage or condone. Well, what are healthy fats? Natural fats as they occur in natural foods — uncooked, raw nuts, seeds, and those things.

Do you recommend avocados as part of a healthy diet?

Yes, avocados are a fine food, but it doesn't mean that they can't be eaten in excess which is the case with many things. Nuts are another example. It's very easy to sit down and eat far too many. We are not recommending a diet of excess.

What would be adequate or a recommended amount of nuts for a person to eat on a daily basis?

This is very difficult to say. First of all, it depends on the type of person they are, what their appetite is like, what their exercise and activity are like, whether they are thin — or not so thin. Obviously that is very important. I would say that if a person has a hand full of nuts every day they would be getting enough nuts.

If someone came to you and was severely underweight, who needed to gain weight, would you recommend adding nuts and seeds to their diet?

It is interesting that you mention this because I remember a case of a lady who was in her 70s. She had been a severe sufferer of asthma for many, many years and was pumping Ventolin and other agents into her body and eventually got down to a mere 70 pounds. I was called out to see her because they were concerned about this weight loss and the fact that she couldn't seem to develop any appetite. Naturally enough, all of the attendants and family were shocked when I suggested fasting.

One of the things about fasting is that it enhances and stimulates your appetite. Even a person who hasn't had any desire for food, hasn't had any appetite at all, will fairly quickly, if you take food away and put them on water, feel hunger to some degree before very long.

This lady was 70 pounds and she went down to 64 pounds after a relatively short fast of about 8 days. At the end of that time she said to me, "I'm a bit hungry." I said, "Good we have plenty of food available but you have got to use it. It is no good feeding you if you have no appetite." She said she had a desire to eat and I said good. So we got out a little bit of watermelon and presented her with it. She gobbled it down very quickly.

Within a month this lady put on six pounds. She had been down at the 70 pounds for many, many months. After that this lady said she never ate without an appetite. That was a result of my instruction, my teaching. Wait upon appetite. If you wait upon appetite, you will use the food. Eat without appetite and the food is not much use to you.

What will it take to allow physicians to understand this philosophy that you are talking about? Is there an opportunity for them to come here and learn and study and see for themselves what happens?

There is in fact. We already have had over the last 30 years a sort of a graduate program where physicians and osteo-paths and chiropractors and so on have spent a period of time with us, usually a minimum of six months, in order to see the use of Hygienic agencies in action.

Is that program still available to new or young doctors coming out?

Yes, it is available, but they have to be dedicated — they have to be serious — they have to realize that the normal state of the body is health. Health is the natural state of the organism. You can't make people healthy. It has to revolve as a result of the exploitation of their own reserves — their own energies.

But if physicians are interested in coming and doing an internship here all they need to do is contact you at the Arcadia Health Centre?

That is correct. Yes, that is all they need to do. But they must be serious about it because it is not a therapeutic system. It is an educational system. We are teaching people how to live and how to get the best from their bodies in health, vitality and general efficiency.

Are there any closing words that you can give to the future healers of our world — what they need to do going forward in the future from your experience of which you have seen in all your years of practice?

As a final word, it is not possible to explain in just a few sentences. We need a thorough revolution in health care, in health education and less dependence upon drugs, surgery, medicines of all types, and get back to the naturals — food, air, water, sunshine, rest, sleep, etc.

Nejla Burton, M.Sc., D.O., D.C.

Dr. Burton, how would you describe Hygienic care as different from ordinary or traditional care?

I'm personally very interested in setting people free. We emphasize individual care and I personally would like to see a person take care of themselves by being responsible for their own health care. The education is geared to make them independent as far as possible for the rest of their lives.

How can a patient, who visits the Arcadia Health Centre, expect to be treated?

The hallmark of our Centre is that it is different from the regular health care establishment. What we try to emphasize is that the person must be prepared to change. As a matter of fact, I often tell people there is an invisible word when they arrive at the gates of Arcadia Health Centre and that word is change. They must be prepared to change. How? They must be able to identify some of the known causes of their problems and eliminate some of the debilitating part of the

causes of their problems and secure the needs of their body for the rest of their lives. The change is not some petty reform, but a revolutionary change and that has got to be for the rest of their lives.

Change is a very difficult thing for human beings, even small changes, like giving up cigarettes, are difficult for human beings. How do you encourage them to make such a radical change in their lives when they come here?

The change has got to be total. You cannot change just their stress levels. They have to change the way they feed, the way they rest — a re-philosophy of life. They must change not only the way they feed, but their view of life.

So what you do here is really teach a new philosophy or a philosophical change in people?

I happen to have a brother who is a professor of philosophy. He is an Aristotle professional philosopher.

And you have degrees in psychology?

I do have degrees in psychology. But the philosophy is behind the change. In other words, the values of that person have got to be working for their best interests. They cannot hold erroneous values that are destroying them and expect to be well.

Do you think that this might be one of the problems that the health movement has had — that they are trying to make people change the way they eat without understanding that a significant change in philosophy is necessary?

Absolutely. You are quite right. Unless a person looks at every element that is infringing on their body, they are going to be diminished in their recovery.

And now that you have been here and worked with thousands of patients, what do you see for the future of humanity with this knowledge of Natural Hygiene that you're imparting here at the Health Centre.

Elements of this approach are slipping into all health care systems but it is not a total system. Some health care professionals are emphasizing diet, others are emphasizing stress reduction, and others are emphasizing exercise. Our approach is a total approach to everything that infringes on that sick person's body.