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A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW ISH PRESIDENT

As I assume the Presidency of ISH, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the confidence placed in me by the members of ISH. It was a pleasure to serve 3 years as President-Elect, working alongside Germain Lavoie, and I am now honored to preside over the next 3 years of activities of ISH -- a forum of professionals, dedicated to the scientific study and application of hypnosis.

The highly successful 10th International Congress in Toronto is now history; yet the memories of all who attended the ISH meeting, in conjunction with the associated host societies -- OSCH, ASCH, and SCEH, will continue and remain as a personal, permanent record.

In my address to the 10th International Congress as President-Elect, I tried to project the progression of hypnosis towards the year 2000: I reviewed the concept of just what hypnosis is and where it can be used, both in research and therapeutic areas. It is important to remember always that the practice of hypnosis has to be under the highest ethical standards, as defined by ISH and adopted by member societies. I believe that all member societies must aim at having the highest standards for individual membership, based upon an adequate and in depth education program. Well trained, competent, and ethical members are essential if we are to remain at the forefront of acceptance and be an example in the correct use of hypnosis in therapy or research.

Adequate education will lead, hopefully, to increased membership in National Constituent Societies and an increase in the total membership of ISH. We now head towards the 11th International Congress of Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine to be held in the Netherlands in 1988, sponsored by the University of Leiden; we will have the strength to make this next meeting of ISH an even greater opportunity for the exchange of ideas with colleagues from virtually all countries of the world. In the interim, I will do my best to serve the Society; I value the continuing help of the Immediate Past President, Germain Lavoie, the Secretary-Treasurer, Peter Bloom, and the Newsletter Editor, Campbell Perry.

We will have a new ISH Central Office as of April 1, 1986. At this time of change-over, it is important to recognize the tremendous work done by the present outgoing ISH Central Office, and I would like to thank each and every staff member who was involved in the running of that office.

In all this, I count on you for your support and would appreciate receiving your comments and suggestions.

David R. Collison
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President

From the Newsletter Editor:

The news from Ste. Marthe sur le Lac, Québec, during January was disconcerting. In the chapel of a private home in this small rural town, an icon of the Virgin Mary began to weep tears of blood. Within days, a quite remarkable social phenomenon developed -- long lines of the devout waited outside the chapel for up to 4 hours in near arctic temperatures to obtain a glimpse of the apparent miracle. Archbishops of the Catholic Church took to the media to warn the faithful that a naturalistic explanation was likely. Families within Ste. Marthe sur le Lac became bitterly divided over the reality of this miracle.

The denouement of this particular tale had elements of Hollywood (D-grade). The tears were chemically analyzed and found to consist of lard drippings, beef fat, vegetable oil, and human blood. Then the icon's owner was publicly identified by the President of the Québec Corporation of Physicians as having been convicted twice of practicing medicine illegally during the 1970s. Both convictions were related to his establishing a clinic in Montréal and styling himself as a "hypnologist and sophrologist." But perhaps most dramatic was the confession a few days later of the hypnologist's close associate that it had been a hoax. His defense was that the hypnologist had coerced him to participate while "under" hypnosis.

End of story: the press coverage ceased at the speed of a human hand inadvertently touching a hotplate. There was no discussion as to whether hypnosis could plausibly have caused a man to participate in fraud, contrary to his moral beliefs. In an era of instant everything, perhaps such incidents are inevitable. It says much, however, about how public perception lags behind scientific data that the story ended when and how it did. When it comes to hypnosis, we are still in the 19th century as far as the shapers of public perception are concerned. There is much that needs to be done to alter this perception. But how? We all know that it cannot be done with hypnosis!

Campbell Perry
Campbell Perry
Newsletter Editor

