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Richard L. Egan

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# The Need for Catholic Medical Schools

RICHARD L. EGAN, M.D.

Medical education in the United States has historically shared the pattern of our dual system of public and private ownership of educational facilities. Although each of the medical schools in this country offers the student a similar curriculum, each school has significant and unique characteristics. Approximately half of the schools are public or tax supported, and approximately half are privately sponsored. Of the latter, five are divisions of Jesuit universities, which are "church related" but not church supported private universities. Are the "Catholic" medical schools sufficiently important to justify their existence as a part of Catholic education?

In a practical sense, the Catholic medical schools contribute a significant number of graduates to the supply of physicians. These schools are numbered among the fewer than ninety medical schools in this country. There is general agreement that twenty additional medical schools are needed to produce a sufficient number of physicians for our increasing population. It seems apparent that the education of an essential number of future physicians is contingent upon all of these existing schools.

Relevant to the question of need for a specific type of medical school are both a description of present day medical education and some projection of its future. It is only in this present and future pattern that one can seek the uniqueness of the Catholic medical school.

The contemporary medical school is much more than an organization for the training of potential physicians. Graduate students in the basic medical sciences and resident physicians in the clinical specialties may equal in number the undergraduate medical stu-

dents. More significant, the activities of the faculty have changed what may be called training to a system of education that recognizes the scientific basis of modern medical practice. As part of the academic faculty, the medical school teacher has accepted research and service as activities which cannot be separated from his functions as a medical educator.

In the future it is expected that medical education, without lessening its concern for the development of biological science, will develop the behavioral and social sciences. Medical education must reflect the concern of the future physician for the patient not only as a person but as a member of society. The application of ever more complex and varied scientific disciplines to medical practice may be expected to complicate the ethics of medicine. Medical ethics in the future may be related either to a natural or a supernatural base. As the faculty applies various sciences to the analysis of the characteristics of man, awareness must develop of the need to define with the philosopher the nature of man.

This definition when made by church-related schools, including the Catholic medical school, will usually differ from the definition made by the corporate faculty of the secular school.

Since the reform of medical education early in this century, the medical school has been a part of the university. As a part of a larger educational organization the medical faculty has become a part of a larger community of scholars. Medicine has joined with law and with theology to again constitute a dynamic replica of the original universities. Certainly the association of these three disciplines, one of which

is theology, suggests a unique potential for the private Catholic university and its medical school. Recent interpretations of our Federal Constitution make this cooperation difficult for the tax-supported secular university.

Another reason for the Catholic medical school is a tradition which is older than the inclusion of medicine as a part of the university. For centuries the Church has evidenced concern for the sick both as an apostolate and as an expression of its practice of the virtue of Charity. As the hospital has become complex, compared to its early beginnings under the guidance of the Church, so the care of the sick as a professional responsibility has become complicated. Concern for the sick should and now does include the discovery, diffusion, and application of knowledge relevant to the health sciences. This is as synonymous with the accurate description of the functions of a medical school as research, teaching, and service.

The recent advances of medicine as a scientific discipline have caused a widespread concern for the availability of effective medical care. Health is now so highly valued that it seems imperative for the Church to evidence not less but more concern for the health of the body and mind of man. The training as well as utilization of health personnel and especially the physician are apostolates of significant value considering the importance which society attaches to the pursuit of health.

The need for the educational component of the Catholic medical school is consistent with the purposes of a Jesuit university. St. Ignatius included in the dedication of the order which he founded, the goal of producing leaders to leaven society for good. Medical publications abound with editorials urging the physician to evidence the leadership which society expects of the physician as an educated man.

Educational institutions in general attempt the development of educated men and of graduates who are leaders. But if we have need for Catholic education at any level, we must recognize the unique opportunity for the leader whose education and therefore his leadership may include Christian motivation for the application of medical sciences. In our view, only such motivation can lead society to its ultimate goal for the greatest good.

The school of medicine shares the purposes and capabilities of the university. The need for a Catholic school is similar to the need for a Catholic university. Newman, in opposition to some of his contemporary commentators on education, described the essence of the university to be a seat of literature and science. He thought this essence of a university to be independent of its relation to the Church. But he added that practically speaking the university to fulfill its object must have the assistance of the Church. "The Church," he said, "was necessary for the integrity of the university."

The university and its medical school have among their primary goals the seeking of truth. A basic science such as biochemistry includes the same facts and theories in a Catholic as in a secular medical school. The basic scientist and the clinician seek knowledge regarding their respective scientific disciplines. It is in the application of knowledge that a difference is to be expected between the secular and the Catholic medical school. It is in the application of knowledge that the Catholic medical school may evidence the integrity mentioned by Newman.

The Catholic university and its school of medicine perform the proper work of the Church, leading mankind not to health alone but to health and to God. The Catholic medical school is unique in its ability to seek scientific knowledge not as a secular end but as evidence that man exists under God.