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President's Page

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Perestroika
(Restructuring)

Recent events in Europe and South Africa are enough evidence that Perestroika (or “restructuring”) is going on at a rapid pace which no one expected nor dared to anticipate. Since the world seems to be rearranging itself, and apparently all for the better, it may be an occasion for us to consider a Perestroika of our National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds (NFCPG), with the objective of improving our effectiveness in promoting Catholic medical ethics.

At the last meeting of NFCPG, several suggestions were made in regard to increasing membership in our organization. One thought was to restructure representation for our Board of Directors and have one or two representatives from each state, instead of two from each of the nine districts. This would automatically increase our Board of Directors and should provide more effective communication with the guilds at local levels. Changes in the bylaws would be necessary; however, I believe this move would be worthwhile.

Another phase of increasing our membership is to solicit young people for NFCPG. Dr. Angelo suggested making it possible for medical students and residents to become members of our organization, possibly associate members. Several methods of contacting and arousing interest in these groups were suggested, such as writing to the AMA Student Membership, contacting the President of each medical school class, and notifying Directors and Chief Residents of Residency Programs. The possible use

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of the *Linacre Quarterly* for reference in the teaching of medical ethics was also mentioned. Dr. Peters suggested a survey of the service medical schools of the Army, Navy and Air Force, because potentially there are many Catholic students in these schools. Additionally, the suggestion was made to approach the military Chaplains to identify the Catholic physicians servicing the Army, Navy, Air Force and veterans' hospitals, and to organize physicians' guilds in these locations. Col. Richard Watson, M.D. was appointed for this task and steps already have been taken with the strong support of Bishop Joseph T. Dimino, Vicar General, Archdiocese for Military Services, to organize Catholic Physicians' Guilds in the military.

I believe all these approaches are valid and should be tried. To me, it is imperative that we interest our young people in the NFCPG. This is especially important in these days of rapid development of medical technologies, since it will be primarily our young physicians who will be faced with the decision to utilize the high tech procedures, some of which may or may not be permissible within the magisterial teaching of the Church.

Dr. Paul Byrne was appointed chairman of the By-Laws Committee at the last meeting in Houston, Sept. 21, 1990. I have requested that he study these considerations and propose them at the next Directors' Meeting for some action by the Board of Directors. In the meantime, data should be obtained from the various sources to see if any or all of these means should be implemented. Even data at the local level can be encouraging for Catholic action. For example, in Houston, our pastor, Rev. Vincent M. Rizzotto of St. Cecilia's Church, recently pointed out that 23-24% of Harris County was Catholic population; and that 40% of all of our Harris County college graduates were Catholic. This data should inspire all of us for a renewed effort, utilizing the local data for support.

The end of my year as president of NFCPG is imminently at hand, and I will leave its stewardship under the very capable direction of my successor, Dr. Robert Barnet. He will be challenged to evaluate these ideas and possibly include them with his other goals during his term of office.

It is my hope that each of us will do his or her part and that restructuring our organization will yield beneficial results for the NFCPG to have a Perestroika of its own.

— Joseph A. Lucci, Jr., M.D.  
President, NFCPG

References


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