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PROGRESS NOTES
CHRISTIAN MEDICAL FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

SEMANTICS
William Standish Reed, M.D., M.S., Founder and President

John 6:63 “The words that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life.”

Jesus of Nazareth, in the three year period which the Gospels record of Him, did not only a series of wonderful works with reference to people and their often times dire needs, but also He spoke such wonderful and edifying words that they were recorded during the early years of oral tradition and have come down to us to give encouragement to mankind to this very day. There are no people, that we can think, of who would occupy such a marvelous place in the knowledge of man as Jesus has done.

Regarding His words, He states that they are not only truth, but they are spirit and life. How true it is that the words that we speak to our loved ones, to our family, to our patients, and to people in general, are living entities with the potential of conveying either life or destructiveness to those who perceive them. Thus, Jesus instructed His disciples to proclaim the Word indicating that they should not put forth their own intellectual reasonings to those who hear them, but they should be proclaiming the truth and life of God’s Word and His Christ, whom St. John characterizes as the living Word. (John 1:1)

With this in mind, I was contemplating the usage of various words by physicians in describing the states of illness to their patients and to the families of those who are ill. We speak of such things as metastasis, homeostasis, metamorphosis, paranoia, and a host of other rather ill defined terms. In thinking about the term homeostasis, which implies the state of health and the balance of wholeness in the patient, it occurred to me that the word is a combination of homeo and stasis. When I looked up in my Greek dictionary the word stasis, I found that the word means rebellion, insurrection, and even desertion. It apparently has nothing to do with the word status, which is a Latin word and means the state of being of an individual or of his home or government. Homeostasis then, does not actually mean a happy state of being of the individual but means a state of insurrection and rebellion in homo sapiens.

As I’ve seen human beings in my practice during my lifetime, I’ve seen that the average individual coming to the doctor manifests not, in many instances, a state of well-being or wholeness. By contrast, in one way or another, he is manifesting a state of trouble, which might be called rebellion or insurrection at some part in his physical or emotional being. Doubtless, this is part of the nature of the natural, the unspiritual man.

St. Paul tells us in Romans 8:6, that to be spiritually minded is life and peace, but by contrast to be fleshly minded, is death. Thus, the average patient coming to the doctor is in one way or another manifesting the accompaniment in his being, of one form or another, cellular or organic insurrection.

When this occurs as a neoplasm or a cancer and this cancer begins to spread, we talk of metastasis. Here again is the word stasis. The word meta means accommodation or transfer, so metastasis does not just mean spread of a cancer or an infection, but it means the accompaniment or transfer of the state of insurrection or rebellion in the body or mind of the patient. As one studies cancer and metastasis, he finds that this definition is more apt to be valid and true than simply our idea of the word spread or distant involvement of the process in other parts of the body.

Finally, I must confess having a great deal of problem with reference to the word death. I realize that Jesus told Martha that if we live in Him and believe in Him, we will never die. Also in I Corinthians 15, we read that this corruptible is going to be putting on incorruption and this temporary and transient is putting on
eternal life. This must be a process which is going on at the present in the new form of our being which the Holy Spirit is bringing about in our metamorphosis, the transformation or accompaniment of our form or being.

For the Christian then, the word death is something which we should not utilize with reference to the end of this earthly life, in those whom we see having this phenomenon occur in them from day to day in our experience. A better term would be metathesis which means the accomplishment of transference or the accomplishment of transferal. When the end of this earthly existence comes about, the Christian experiences the process of transferal which is, as I see it, a most amazing and wonderful metamorphosis, as well as metanoia with the accomplishment of the wondrous completion of the spiritual aspect of life advancing to completion.

CHRISTIAN MEDICAL FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL, Inc.
730 W. Emma Street
P.O. Box 152136
Tampa, Florida 33684-2136

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