"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life, and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." Deuteronomy 30:19-20.

Life is always full of choices. Certainly this is very true in the practice of medicine and it seems that the choices become more complex and more difficult as time goes on rather than simpler. One should think that science and the progress that has been made in medicine would make decision making simpler. However, this is not the case and man continues to have more and more complex and difficult problems as life goes on.

There was in my acquaintance an excellent surgeon from Wales. This man, Dr. Griffith Evans, was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and wrote extensively concerning Christian healing in Great Britain as well as scientific writings back in the 1940’s and 50’s. After World War II, Great Britain established its experiment of socialized medicine. A number of physicians and surgeons in England, at that time, felt that the injection of the government into the care of the sick was not an ethical solution to the problems of caring for those who are ill. It was Dr. Evans’ feeling that there would be a deterioration in patient care and in the general health of the public. As a result of this, it was Dr. Evans’ election to drop out of the practice of medicine and surgery and to spend the rest of his days working with the Presbyterian Church in Wales and across Great Britain in the area of spiritual healing. The option of Dr. Griffith Evans was to leave the system.

In Ontario today there is a problem between the Ontario government and the physicians who practice there. One option available to the physicians is to drop out of practice. They conceivably, also, could go elsewhere to practice abandoning their patients to the care of others and thus not doing anything to combat the problem. Another option is to strike against the system taking care of only those patients who have emergency type problems. This latter option, apparently, is the pathway that most Ontario physicians have chosen.

A number of years ago, this was the option of the physicians in Alberta. There also have been physician strikes in Los Angeles and in Israel. In general the problem has to do with the interference of governmental agencies with the traditional doctor-patient relationship which has been, to the present time, considered almost sacred. The degrees of interference between the doctor and his patient, in both the dominion of Canada and in the United States, have been of an increasing degree in the past decade. In these various systems the time comes when thinking physicians, for the welfare of their patients and not because of any economic consideration, have to take a stand in one way or another to combat the lowering of patient care standards. In reading press releases from Ontario, it is apparent that the gentlemen of the press point fingers of accusation against physicians and lawyers and state that they are the most wealthy capitalists in Canada. This, of course, is a glitering generality which is just not true. There are many doctors in Canada who work long hours for little pay and although there are a few physicians who are well-to-do this is not the common situation.

Doubtless whenever there are these kinds of problems to solve, it would be best to suggest that physicians and representatives of the government and also patient representatives should have the opportunity to sit down in Christian love and pray the matters to a solution. Unfortunately, in our society, many physicians and people in general have relegated God to the Church structure and rarely consider Him in their decision making processes. In the Scripture quoted above, it is apparent that life and blessing are a result of our choice. If we choose God we will be blessed and we will continue to have life and the privilege of dwelling in the land in which the Lord has given us. In Deut.30:8-10, it states, "And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all of His commandments which I command thee this day. And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers: If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul."
It is apparent to thinking physicians in both Canada and the United States that the answer to the increasing problems which face us daily in every aspect of life and practice lies in a willing return of those of us who have been blessed so much by God to God our Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ. This, of course, has been the battle cry of Christian Medical Foundation from its beginnings. We are delighted that there is C MF of Canada and that this organization of physicians and nurses and allied professionals across Canada is growing in numbers and in influence. As these doctors who are willing to seek God for His answers to the dilemmas facing us increase in numbers and in influence their impact will be felt across Canada for good. This is our prayer.

Hopefully, there will be such a resurgence of Christian medicine and nursing in Canada that the impact of this resurgence will be felt in America and will be the catalyst allowing the development of vital Christian medicine in both Canada and the United States. It is not the time to abandon ship or to abandon our patients. If a standing together of physicians to take care of only emergency problems would seem to be the answer in order to demonstrate unity and to bring action, it does not seem to be an alternative which should be criticized as long as patients who have needs are taken care of. There is admonition in the Scripture in Eph.6:13, "...in the evil day, we must stand and having done all, to stand." No doubt, the time for physicians and Christians in general to stand is upon us and we must begin to stand for Christ in these difficult days not counting the cost.

William Francis Reed M.D.

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The Guild Inn
October 24-26, 1986
Scarborough, Ontario
Christian Medical Foundation of Canada Presents
"THE PHYSICIAN AND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE"

Statement of Position of Christian Medical Foundation:

As Christian physicians we unreservedly uphold the sanctity of human life from conception to the time of death.

We believe man is created with spirit, soul, and body, and that life begins at conception with personal awareness and direct involvement with God the Creator.

We believe that all human life regardless of any imperfections is precious in the sight of God. Any affront or assault on that life by whatever means is contrary to scripture and to be condemned as inhuman.

We believe that the Christian physician is committed to protect life and minister to the spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional needs of his patients.

Topics of discussion:

* Invitro Fertilization and Embryo Transplantation
* Abortion and the Family Physician
* Surgical Intervention for Multiple Handicapped Newborn
* Life in the Balance
* Ethics of Organ Transplantation
* The Impact of the Canadian Charter of Rights
* Suicide Trends in the Teenage Years

Dr. and Mrs. Donald Denmark
Dr. Denmark is Vice President of C MF of Canada

Dr. and Mrs. Rod Davison & Dr. and Mrs. Bill Reed
Dr. Davison is President of C MF of Canada