

## Editor's Note

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A couple of invitations arrived on my desk earlier this year, each offering a steak dinner at one of the better local restaurants along with a \$100 "honorarium." Of course, the sponsors were pharmaceutical companies and attendees would be treated to speakers whose topics were drugs produced by the firms. Perhaps the "honorarium" could be explained away by having the attendees complete a questionnaire or some other simple task, lest the affair lack some pretense at propriety. Yet, no one is under any illusions about the real purpose of such enticements. They are bald attempts at bribery.

The reaction of physicians to such approaches is interesting. Reports of the attendance at the two I was invited to indicated most local physicians had better things to do. Those who attend, however, indicate that they aren't swayed at all by the blandishments of some drug companies. Just who is the fool here? Are the drug companies wasting their money? Or, perhaps, the physicians are naive as to our own reaction to the psychology of the sale.

If physicians were being induced to buy products for ourselves, there would seem to be no ethical issue. There might be a bargaining point, in that the physician-buyer could ask that the seller forego the steak dinner and reduce the product's price accordingly. But, physicians are not generally being induced to buy products for ourselves. Our relationship to patients is similar to that of a purchasing agent to his employer. The purchasing agent may be given the power of deciding which purveyor gets the business, but the money is not from his pocket. We decide what drug our patient will receive, but we don't ordinarily pay the price of the drug.

Is our relationship to drug companies one of the many ethical issues now troubling the house of medicine? Proverbs 15:27 says, "He who is greedy for gain

troubles his own house, but he who hates bribes will live."\*

Dr. Richard Watson of Newington, Virginia, sent us excerpts from a recent issue of the *Linacre Quarterly*, the official journal of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds (850 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove, WI, 53122). Among the numerous interesting items scanned is one regarding a Dr. Richard Wetzel, from the Olive Crest Treatment Center for Abused Children in California. Dr. Wetzel "makes a strong and optimistic case for promoting chastity as the definitive answer to teenager promiscuity. "I am amazed that I can discuss chastity for seven hours with the high risk teens in my classes and have them ask me to come back to tell them more."

Drs. John Custis and Darrell Lockwood of Cresham, Oregon (adjacent to Portland), are looking for a third Board-certified internist to join their practice. In practice there for 14 years, the practice is largely general internal medicine, though one of the partners has a subspecialty in endocrinology. An important feature of the practice is the application of Biblical principles by which the doctors seek to distinguish between spiritual and physical problems in their patients. Influenced by the teaching of Dr. Jay Adams, they minister to patients with spiritual problems in a biblical manner. Internists interested in joining such a practice may write to them at College Square, 3030-F N.E. Hogan Dr., Gresham, OR, 97030-3134.