

# PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MEDICINE IN THE VISION OF DR. VICTOR GOMOIU

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**ABSTRACT:** *THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE IS AN AREA OF STUDY THAT TURNS ITS ATTENTION BOTH TO THE EVOLUTION OF MEDICINE AS A SCIENCE AND TO THE VARIOUS PERSONALITIES WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO ITS DEVELOPMENT. THE MAIN ARGUMENT OF THIS WORK IS THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING A DIALOGIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENCE AND FAITH, WITH IMPORTANT PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES, NAMELY THE STRENGTHENING AND TOGETHER THE WORK BETWEEN MEDICINE AND RELIGION. MEDICINE, EVEN IF IT IS A SCIENCE THAT HAS BEEN LEFT TO US BY GOD, NEVERTHELESS, IT HAS ITS LIMITS, LIKE THE HUMAN BEING.*

*THE MEDICAL ACT, BASED ON FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH, LEADS TO OVERCOMING THE SITUATIONS OF CRISIS CAUSED BY BOTH BODILY AND SPIRITUAL DISEASES. FALSE KNOWLEDGE AND FALSE FAITH INCREASE CRISIS SITUATIONS, ALIENATING AND ISOLATING THE PERSON SUFFERING FROM THE TRENCH OF RECEIVING RECOVERY AID.*

**KEYWORDS:** *MEDICINE, RELIGION, SOCIETY.*

## INTRODUCTION

Last century, in the USA, during the period of the '60s-70s, begins to develop a new phenomenon, previously encountered only in medical ethics: *Bioethics*. The term *Bioethics* can be explained by: *Morals of science in general and medicine in particular, which prohibits the commercialization of the human body and organ trafficking.*<sup>1</sup> We know that *Bioethics* debates and exposes solutions to several problems concerning human cloning, artificial fertilization methods, organ transplantation, genetic and cellular engineering, embryonic selection, medically assisted suicide, etc. As we can tell, *Bioethics* has developed and is working in the immediate vicinity of medicine. Among the factors that led to the emergence of *Bioethics*, however, there are other phenomena that are not related to the field of medicine and that are of a social, political, economic, cultural and religious nature.

## CHURCH AND MEDICINE

Described by some researchers as the second wealth of mankind, health takes on a central importance within states. With the help of state apparatuses, more and more money is being invested in the medical field, so that medicine ends up being accessible to almost all

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dicționarului explicativ al limbii române, <https://dexonline.ro/definitie/bioetic%C4%83> (accessed on 05.09.2022)

social categories, ceasing to be a good of its own only to the financially potent. This has brought with it problems that begin to require, at certain times, the selection of those who will benefit from medical services such as hemodialysis or organ transplantation. Descended with a deep moral disorder of societies in full social, financial and political development, these factors, to which others are added, lead to the emergence of "a newborn": bioethics. Its mission is to take the place not only of the individual, confused consciousness, but also of the public, divided consciousness.

The problems facing the world we live in are growing. Calming and solving many of these problems, requires a continuous dialogue between all those who have something to say and do to overcome critical situations and heal the wounds that cause pain both in the life of the person and in the life of society.

The need to associate with the clergy in order to succeed in implementing the medicalization programs of the Romanian society is not an individual project, based on the personal beliefs of a doctor in a type of Christian social medicine. Secularization is not a historically constituted derivative of the process of modernization, but a telos assumed in a policy of modernization. Thus, a critique of the implicit neutrality with which the thesis of secularization operates as the evolutionary resultant of a historical sequence is required. Religion itself is a historical category and a concept emerging from the project of building Western secular modernity.

In the Romanian interwar period, we want a recultivation of the original relationship between medicine and religion, based on the common goal they pursue: "a longer, quieter, happier life – both seeking to protect us from the shortcomings that lurk at every step".<sup>1</sup> If medicine emphasizes especially the bodily part of life, the Church wants to make man understand that much more important than his bodily side is undoubtedly his soul, which, unlike the body, is eternal, therefore, invaluable to man.

However, we must say that the biomedical model leads "to the divorce between the social experience of the actor and his capacity for symbolic integration" by deprecating the popular sciences in favor of medicine.<sup>2</sup>

Considering the representatives of religious cults as doctors of the soul, scientific medicine hopes to find in their religiosity and devotion, a collaboration as effective as it is precious. Thus, it is wrong to confirm<sup>3</sup> that there is total opposition in medicine and the priesthood.

The dialogue between medicine and the church, between doctors and priests proves to be viable and necessary, because in their concerns and some and others meet with the suffering man, with the sick man bodily and spiritually, with the man who in the trials he goes through struggles with suffering, seeking the sources of restoring health not only in science and medical practice, but especially with God.

Dr. Gomoiu pleads for imagining structures that would allow a systematic collaboration between the medical body and that of the clergy. It counterposes scientific medicine to religion, but the two are not based on radically distinct plausibility structures, but coexist on the basis of a guiding principle: "to have compassion and devotion to your neighbor." So, the medical act is a proof of love for our neighbor, being exactly what religion speaks to us<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Gomoiu, *Biserica și Medicina*, Ed. Tipografia Presa, Brăila, 1940, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> David Le Breton, *Antropologia corpului și modernitatea*, Trad. Doina Lică, Ed. Amarcord, Timișoara, 2002, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Victor Gomoiu, *op. cit.* p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem* p. 17.

The collaboration for which doctor Gomoiu insistently militates does not mean an interference of church in medicine or the violation of medical rights, but it is only about finding the way in which, fulfilling the duty imposed on them by their mission, the priests to help the doctors and, of course, to be helped by them, so that, together, they can respond more easily and completely to the noble goal that both apostolates pursue, by the means at their disposal. The establishment of the medico-religious domain, a point of convergence of some spheres presented and often perceived in the epoch as being antinomic and conflictual, would perform a series of adjuvant functions for the legitimization and development of the medical professional field.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Medicine is one of the sciences discovered to man to care for certain diseases, which are generally the consequence of sins. In his primordial state, man did not know the disease. Paradoxically, even though many people will not be able to agree with what we are saying next, God accepts that man will suffer, but, as we will see further, this happens for a reason that exceeds the comprehension of the human nature, which is affected so much by the consequences of his fall into the primordial sin of Adam and Eve. God allows suffering because it is a state in which man can draw near to both his fellows and Him. Things should not only be seen in the perspective of this life, but also in the perspective of life beyond death. From this perspective, assuming suffering without much anger or rejection is a factor that brings man closer to God, makes him turn his face to Him.

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