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Moderator's Message: God Needs You

Kenneth P. MacKinnon

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Moderator's Message

GOD NEEDS YOU

Prior to World War II a pamphlet appeared bearing the above title and was addressed to doctors. The layman's role in the Church was not so clearly defined in those days and the pamphlet was an exhortation for doctors to become involved. "God needs you" was the statement of an older surgeon to a younger one, as together they worked over a patient whose life hung in the balance. For any who might be hesitant to fill a needed post it is a challenging phrase, surely as compelling as St. Paul's: "I exhort you, therefore, brothers . . . do not conform to this world's way of life, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may investigate the will of God — ALL that is good, ALL that is acceptable to Him, ALL that is perfect."

Leadership for all Church-oriented organizations is a growing need, one which cannot be side-stepped without serious hurt to the Church. The Physicians' Guilds are no exception. A necessary work, poorly done, or left undone by a well-intentioned layman, and eventually completed by a priest, is the wrong method of problem solving, as far as the extension of the Kingdom of God is concerned. The development of leadership techniques in a formal teaching environment seems to be a better solution to the need.

Because of his intimate working with God's greatest creation, the human person, it should be possible for every doctor to develop the *self-confidence* necessary for effective leadership. In his dealings with his patients he daily exercises self-trust in those independent judgments by which he seeks to lead them back to good health.

The physician, to be effective, must be *sensitive* to what needs correcting, improving, and encouraging in the individual patient. How easy to transfer this sensitivity to the larger life of an organization or the Church herself.

The doctor, to understand and help his patient, must be an *attentive listener*, and be able to *speak with such conviction and clarity* that the patient will be stimulated and moved to act upon his medical advice. So, too, must the lay leader in the Church develop this skill to communicate so clearly and enthusiastically, that those listening will respond with promptness to his stated objectives.

And, finally, where would medicine be today without the *creativity* of outstanding doctors, past and present? Just as the health of the world has improved because of the leadership of these men, so will the Church grow and be strengthened by a lay leadership that is open-minded, flexible, original, constructive in its ideas, and willing to *take* the initiative, not just be *prodded* into it.

The constructive and truly apostolic leadership of many of our doctors in the areas of faith, morality, catechetics, missionary effort, and social welfare gives promise that, to an increasing degree, our medical men are aware of the truth that, for His works to be fulfilled on earth, God "needs" them. It will be the herald of a "Holy Year" for all our doctors if, in 1966, they heed the call of the Church to active leadership — a leadership that will seek out "ALL that is good, ALL that is acceptable to Him, ALL that is perfect."

Best wishes for a happy and fruitful Holy Year!

REVEREND KENNETH P. MACKINNON