

THE PHYSICIAN AND SPIRITUALITY



By Archon Kenneth R. Kemp
Gamma Phi Boulé

Considerable controversy exists about the role of spirituality in the practice of medicine. Although many physicians acknowledge that their profession is tremendously affected by spirituality, others would argue that it has no place in modern medicine. Where is the truth? Is there no reconciling these disparate positions on the impact of spiritual belief on the science and art of modern medicine?

This intriguing dilemma deserves further exploration, and it is a cogent issue for Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity because so many current Archons practice medicine. It is even more intriguing when one considers that Sigma Pi Phi has, from the very beginning, included a large number of physicians. Five of its six founders were physicians, and over the years a great number of Archons have had distinguished careers as medical doctors, including Archon Daniel Hale Williams of Beta Boulé in Chicago, who performed the first successful open-heart surgery in 1893.

To explore the question of whether a physician can, or should, integrate both science and spirituality into his or

her practice, one must try to answer whether medicine is a science or an art – an endeavor governed by the scientific method alone or an expedition with no boundaries save the passions of the heart. I would suggest that it is neither of them exclusively but both by necessity. The effective physician must realize that practicing the best medicine requires an extensive knowledge of the laws of biology, chemistry and physics, as well as an appreciation for how that knowledge is artistically brought together to benefit the unique individual. Medicine can no more be capsulated by strict adherence to scientific principle than it can be by blind commitment to the heartfelt.

To be sure, modern medicine has a foundation of sound scientific knowledge. No longer is medicine based on dogma, folklore or expert opinion. The modern era of medical education in the United States was established by the *Flexner Report* of 1910, which was conducted by the Carnegie Foundation at the request of the American Medical Association. This report, written by Abraham Flexner, criticized the previous era's practice of education through apprenticeship and advocated medical education based on the biomedical sciences and hands-on clinical experience. This forever changed the paradigm of medical education throughout the United States and Canada.

Furthermore, advances in modern medicine are now based on vigorous scientific studies. These standards require that all new treatments, medical devices and medications be evaluated in randomized, prospective, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials involving large numbers of subjects. These arduous and expensive scientific studies are conducted to prove that our medical strategies are safe, effective and reliable in a wide variety of patients and under a broad array of circumstances.

So influential is the scientific process on medicine that some have sought to remove any influence of spirituality on the practice of medicine. It has been argued that medicine should rely on a secular philosophy that is neutral with respect to religion. Others have agreed that medicine and religion are immiscible and should be kept separate.

Although no good physician would argue with the assertion that medicine should be based on scientific data, many highly effective physicians also realize that medicine is an art as much as it is a science. One has only to be removed from the laboratory for a few days to recognize that all that works *in vitro*, among the test tubes, Bunsen burners and chemical reagents, will not necessarily work *in vivo*, when applied to a living and breathing patient. Furthermore, what can be proved in a randomized trial may not prove to be true in a complex individual, who has problems that were not addressed or were excluded from consideration in the medical literature. For African Americans, what is published in that literature often does not apply because of the paucity of African Americans included in some studies.

Thus the physician must bring to bear a wealth of knowledge gathered from the lifelong study of science and temper that knowledge with the art of applying science to an individual patient. This application often requires adherence to, and respect for, humanistic qualities that involve the more qualitative disciplines of ethics, philosophy and spirituality. The medical practitioner must balance the quantitative laws and principles of nature with the qualitative tenets that shape our per-

sonalities as human beings. This is truly an art form that requires a healthy respect for spirituality – whether that is defined as organized religion or identification with a higher authority outside of organized religion.

Historically, the practitioner of the healing arts was as much a clergyman as he was a secular physician. A prime example is Luke, the author of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles in the Bible, who was also known as the beloved physician. In colonial times, the role of the physician was combined with the role of the cleric. Whether

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out of preference or out of necessity because of a lack of trained professionals, the physician attended not only to the body but also to the soul. He was regarded as a learned individual whose word was sacrosanct.

In those days medicine was paternalistic, in that what the physician said or prescribed was accepted without question, and the patient had very little say in or influence on health-care decisions. It was not until much later, as the physician's role became demystified, that the profession was separated from that of cleric. By the late 1970's and early 1980's, medicine had become much less paternalistic, and the autonomy of patients in making and influencing decisions about their own health care was given primacy in the physician-patient relationship.

The modern physician in the United States is not regarded as an all-knowing mystic with supernatural power, but rather as a rational and practical health-care provider. For some, this approach to medicine requires that the physician adhere to strict secularism, guided by universal or neutral values that are derived by reason alone. Daniel E. Hall, M.D., M.Div., described this type of thinking as foundationalism. However, he argued that “philosophers reject foundationalism... on the level of formal logic because foundationalism itself is neither empirically demonstrable nor a logical derivative from first principles. Second, and more importantly, because it assumes the need to know *how* knowledge might be possible prior to knowing *that* and *what* one actually knows, foundationalism fails to account for the ways ordinary people actually go about knowing and learning.” While those who look at life from the perspective of secularism reject belief in anything other than rational logic, Dr. Hall argues that secularism is in itself a belief in a particular worldview. This “belief” repudiates spirituality and gives secularism a privileged position in the profession.

I believe that an effective physician must not only respect logical thought but also embrace what emanates from spirituality. Why? Because patients who engage the health-care

system expect their physicians to consider their spiritual beliefs. A 1992 *USA Today* poll revealed that a majority (79 percent) of U.S. adults believed that spiritual faith could help people recover from disease. It has been reported that 25 percent of people use prayer as medical therapy, and 48 percent of hospitalized patients want their physician to pray with them. Fifty-one percent of 177 ambulatory adult patients who completed self-administered questionnaires were religious, and of those, 94 percent agreed that physicians should ask them about their religious beliefs. Forty-five percent denied having religious beliefs but still agreed that physicians should ask about their beliefs. Only 16 percent of all respondents reported that they would not welcome this type of inquiry.

Credible studies have been published in the best medical journals establishing that a patient's spirituality can play a role in ameliorating the sequelae of severe illness. To be fair, much of this research suffers from methodological problems. The studies may be anecdotal or may have been conducted in regions that have large numbers of religious people, thus bringing into question whether the results can be applied to the general population. Some studies did not have matched control groups, so the validity of their conclusions may also be challenged. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that a belief in a power beyond the physical plays a part in how patients respond and adapt to illness.

In light of the considerable evidence that spirituality affects health and well-being, physicians need to be aware of their patients' spirituality. Physicians should also respect their patients' religious or spiritual beliefs and provide spiritual support. This should not be done with the goal of using religious or spiritual thought as a tool or a manipulative therapeutic intervention; rather, it should be done with respect to attending to the whole patient. To that end, physicians must understand that spiritual counseling is at best the purview of specialists such as chaplains and pastors.

Physicians must guard against practicing in an area for which they do not have the requisite expertise and must be careful not to blur the boundaries between medical practitioner and spiritual adviser. Certainly, physicians should be free to practice their own religion or spirituality, but they may not hold up their beliefs as superior to those of their patients; nor are they at liberty to proselytize or attempt to compel patients to convert to a particular faith. A respect for patient autonomy should seek to provide support for spirituality, not to inflict harm through unnecessary angst over conflicting spiritual perspectives.

I am of the opinion that medicine is a profession requiring the human touch, both physically and spiritually. We who practice this grand profession must keep in mind that we attend not only to the human body but also to human beings. Our patients are more than bodies with biochemical reactions, cells, tissues, organ systems and pharmacologic responses; they are human beings who possess that ethereal component called life. To attend to the former and overlook the latter is to do the patient an injustice.

SAVE OUR BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES



By Archon James A. Hefner
Chi Boulé

Excerpted from remarks delivered at the Eighteenth National Convention of the South Carolina State University National Alumni Association in Orangeburg, South Carolina, on July 27, 2007.

I am pleased to have the distinct honor of serving as keynote speaker at this convention of the South Carolina State University National Alumni Association. I am currently writing a book about the black college in the making of America, and the theme for this convention, “Our University, Our Responsibility,” indicates a critical charge that will ensure that our nation’s historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) continue to have an impact on American culture and history. I am also delighted to be here because of your alumni association president, Ms. Patricia Lott. My wife and I met this wonderful woman in Jamaica this summer at a wedding of the son of a mutual friend who was faculty senate president during my tenure at Jackson State University.

I have been asked to talk about “Saving Our Black Colleges and Universities,” a topic I consider extraordinarily important. Every person in this room is keenly aware that HBCUs have been primarily responsible for educating the descendants of former slaves. That importance was brought out more than thirty years ago in a publication known as *Daedalus*. This prestigious journal of the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences invited fifteen scholars to write provocative and thoughtful articles concerning the future of black colleges, and these scholars covered the historical, economic, sociological and contemporary challenges facing these colleges.

As a product of a black college, with more than forty years of experience in higher education, most of which have been at black colleges, I am fully aware that there would not be a black middle class or a black upper class were it not for these schools. The graduates of these institutions have contributed much to the making of America, and that is why I have accepted the call to write my book.

W.E.B. Du Bois said many years ago that white America regards the educational efforts of black colleges as a strange mistake. I hope to show that historically black colleges and universities are central to the fabric of American society and that their contributions to this fabric began as far back as 1837, with the founding of the first black college – so you could say that the emancipation of the African American through education began nearly three decades before Lincoln issued his proclamation. Today we have roughly 104 black colleges, and I daresay that without these schools and their graduates, we would not be the nation we are today. Thus it is unfortunate that black colleges continue to struggle for existence.

Despite the struggles, we all can attest to the nurturing we received from these institutions and from the primacy that our professors put on academic excellence. My most influential professor at North Carolina A&T was Dr. Juanita Tate, who became the first African American to receive a Ph.D. in economics from New York University. Dr. Tate was an elitist when it came to quality. She would say to her students, “I am an elitist without apology.”

During my sophomore year, Dr. Tate decided that I would be her first African American Ph.D. She had been teaching for thirty years and had not produced a Ph.D. economist. For the next three years she required me to visit her at her house, a few blocks off campus, to eat supper and talk economics. As the food was not particularly good at the cafeteria, I viewed our relationship as mutually beneficial.

When I graduated, I was accepted at Duke, Columbia and Atlanta universities, but Dr. Tate decided that I should attend Atlanta University (now Clark Atlanta University) and study under Samuel Westerfield, dean of the College of Business, one of the few African Americans with a Harvard Ph.D. in economics. By the time I arrived in Atlanta, President Kennedy had called a number of Harvard graduates to serve in his administration and had appointed Dr. Westerfield as his ambassador to Liberia. I told Dr. Tate the bad news, but to my surprise she asked me to stay at North Carolina. I completed my master’s degree the following year and accepted faculty positions at Prairie View A&M, Benedict College and Florida A&M. While I was in Florida, Dr. Tate called me and instructed me to pursue my doctoral degree; I had no choice but to listen, and I received my Ph.D. in economics from the University of Colorado, Boulder, just before she retired. She had done what she set out to do. And when she spoke at my presidential inauguration at Jackson State University in 1984, she was enormously proud, for it was she who molded me, requiring me to read a best-selling novel every three months; read *Time* and *Newsweek* every week; read *Look* and *Life* every month; and enroll in a number of music, literature and art classes. I emerged from college with great appreciation for quality, for the liberal arts, and for the importance of my black college – a college among colleges that must grasp opportunities wherever they can in order to survive and thrive.

In Dr. Andrew Hugine's "President's Message" on the South Carolina State Web site, he referred to Nehemiah, who wanted Jerusalem to be the city of its past glorious days. Nehemiah set about to "put in place a strategy of self-help and partnerships," which posited that it was not just the king but everyone in the kingdom who shared in rebuilding and revitalizing the Holy City. Dr. Hugine said that today's HBCUs need their Nehemiahs to energize them, to restore these institutions to their glory and create new avenues for greatness, individually and collectively.

How do alumni rally to Dr. Hugine's call? The answer is simple: by watching over and protecting their alma maters.

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Imagine giving your granddaughter a tour of this campus, saying, "This is my institution," then describing what that institution once was. Our colleges need vigilant alumni with keen eyes, ready minds and attuned hearts to assume proprietary and financial interests in their beloved institutions. Furthermore, they have the duty to cultivate other alumni who may not yet support the institution to their potential with gifts of time, talent and financial resources.

But the HBCU-Nehemiah story does not end here. That is because critics of black colleges and universities would smile politely and nod approvingly at the things I have just said. But behind the false smile and nod would be the question: Why do we have black colleges and universities if racial segregation is illegal in the United States?

According to the Southern Education Foundation, there are a number of reasons, the most important being that HBCUs have afforded African Americans access to educational opportunities, especially in the South, where racial segregation has prevailed in higher education. And even after years of desegregation in elementary and secondary education, and even after the settlement of the three higher-education desegregation lawsuits in the South, America's colleges remain racially identifiable.

As an economist, I am proud of the fact that HBCUs affect our communities in positive and significant ways. The National Center for Education Statistics recently issued a report stating that the initial spending of all HBCUs in their host communities totaled \$6.6 billion. And HBCUs combined would rank number 232 on the *Forbes* Fortune 500 list of the largest U.S. companies. To complement their economic impact, HBCUs also provide educational and cultural programs and public service in their communities.

Black colleges are about access to education for all citizens. From their inception, HBCUs have opened their

doors to people of all backgrounds, leading this "melting pot" nation in embracing its diversity. Students seeking affordable quality education find HBCUs viable options at both the public and private level, where tuition and fees usually are less costly than they are at many similar traditionally white institutions. In 2005, tuition and fees at white public institutions was \$7,500, compared with \$3,400 at black public institutions. For four-year private white institutions, average tuition and fees were \$30,000, compared with \$8,800 at private black institutions.

Frankly, our HBCUs do much with little. The quality of education and related services they provide far exceeds their resources and the number of students who enroll in them (compared with the greater numbers who attend majority white schools). The National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education reports that although only 14 percent of all African American college students in the United States enroll at HBCUs, these schools award more than 80 percent of degrees given to African Americans in medicine and dentistry. In like manner, HBCUs provide undergraduate training for 75 percent of all African Americans holding doctoral degrees; college educations for 75 percent of all African American officers in the armed forces; and college educations for 80 percent of all Af-

frican American federal judges. The HBCUs have trained 50 percent of all black faculty members in traditionally white research universities, and they have a higher retention rate for black students than traditionally white institutions. They lead traditionally white institutions in awarding bachelor's degrees to blacks in the fields of mathematics, engineering, life sciences and physical sciences. Furthermore, HBCUs continue to provide this country with the majority of African American classroom teachers, remaining committed to excellence in preparing those who instruct our children in grades pre-K through twelve.

Historically black colleges and universities also confer about 24 percent of all bachelor's degrees; 13 percent of master's degrees; 10 percent of doctoral degrees; and, most important, 20 percent of first professional degrees awarded to black students. It is clear that black colleges must survive. Indeed, HBCUs have a history of surviving – and thriving – in the face of meager financial resources, ardent racist opposition and limited political influence. It is no small wonder that HBCU alumni include Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, a U.S. Supreme Court justice, U.S. Cabinet members, U.S. congresspersons, corporate leaders, scholars, educators, doctors, lawyers, scientists, health-care providers, pharmacists, college and university presidents, former and current leaders and presidents of foreign countries, theologians and agents of social change. Twelve of the highest-ranking military officers are South Carolina State University graduates who achieved the rank of general.

In support of the communities, the nation and the world they serve, HBCUs are centers of innovative teaching and learning. Examples of such impressive centers are Dillard University's Japanese Studies Program; Morgan State University's Institute of Architecture and Planning; Xavier University's College of Pharmacy; and South Carolina State

University's nuclear-engineering program. They are also purveyors of positive values, promoting black cultural enrichment, identity and welfare, and are the keepers of African American cultural memory. Our libraries and archives preserve the lives, experiences and contributions of the famous and forgotten and the societies they inhabited or changed. Few other institutions have such extensive collections.

The final question is: What must black colleges and universities do to ensure their survival? Scholars have shared several recommendations. I should begin by saying that HBCUs must target a larger percentage of their alumni to invest in their alma maters through annual, capital and estate gifts. According to Henry Drewry and Humphrey Doermann in their book *Stand and Prosper: Private Black Colleges and Their Students*, the recent national giving rate for alumni of traditionally white institutions ranges from 10 to 60 percent, compared with 1 to 10 percent for alumni of black colleges and universities. With alumni leading the charge, HBCUs must raise their endowments to compete more effectively with traditionally white institutions. The HBCUs with the largest endowments – Howard, Spelman, Hampton and Morehouse – are poor compared with their peer white institutions. June Hopps, in “Still Striving: Challenges for Boards of Trustees of Historically Black Colleges and Universities,” published by the Southern Education Foundation in 2006, reports that Howard's endowment (in 2000) of \$308,972,000 ranked 140th on the list of the top college and university endowments, and Spelman's endow-

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ment that year, of \$219,754,000, ranked fifth among endowments of women's colleges, with Wellesley heading the list at \$1,253,385,000. Harvard's endowment of \$28 billion is the largest single endowment of any institution in higher education, larger than the combined endowments of all 104 HBCUs. The same can be said of the single endowments of Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Chicago, Stanford and a number of other top-tier institutions.

Black colleges must continue to demonstrate that they can rank competitively with their peer white institutions in providing students with high-quality programs, curricula and services that emphasize technology. And, to maintain the best faculty to translate those programs and services, HBCUs must insist on bringing salaries into parity with their peers at majority white institutions, as well as providing their faculties with financial support for professional development and allowing them release time for research and smaller teaching loads.

Historically black colleges and universities must increase funding for scholarships for the best and brightest students, competitive laboratories and laboratory facilities.

They must recruit a larger number of high-school graduates with high standardized test scores and high grade point averages. They must also continue to accept average students and those in need of some remediation and to help them develop into extraordinary graduates. In like manner, HBCUs must grow their own faculty. In her study “Overwhelmed and Under Resourced, But Still Striving,” June Hopps asks the question, “Will sufficient numbers of top faculty be attracted to [black institutions] where salaries and perks are substantially less than those at [traditionally white institutions]?” National statistics indicate that the percentage of black faculty is declining at HBCUs, while the percentage of nonblack faculty is increasing.

Hopps also emphasizes that HBCUs must have the capacity to meet accreditation standards set forth by agencies: “The success of HBCUs is instrumentally related to their capacity to meet standards set forth by SACS [the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools].” These institutions must recruit and appoint presidents who are politically savvy; have an impressive and comprehensive knowledge of curricula, planning, budgets, audits, management and information systems; understand and maintain sound enrollment management practices; exhibit proficiency in communications and public relations (beginning with alumni relations!); and operate with an intense appreciation of black colleges and universities overcoming the odds. Presidents and everyone else within our nation's HBCUs must commit themselves

to promoting black cultural enrichment, identity, welfare and intellectualism, and to developing strategies for recruiting African American males, who clearly represent the demographic in our society of individuals who suffer most from lack of education and proper inspiration.

I believe that the real challenge for HBCUs lies in the hurdles facing the public black college – ranging from funding to the politics of governing boards to the multiplicity of constituents who believe that they are

treated differently from public white colleges and that this difference, which does not favor the public black college, is historic in nature and a function of race. But one should not allow race to interfere with excellence. Because HBCUs have learned to achieve much with few resources, they must apply that tenacity to continue to propel themselves successfully into the twenty-first century. African American presidents in these institutions often feel as if they are on a treadmill: They have to run fast in order to stay still. Their challenge is to do the best they can for the young people they serve, knowing that what they do is often not appreciated at many levels. Nevertheless, despite court orders and racist legislators and boards, the job of black college presidents is to serve students and – with faculty, staff and alumni – to move their institutions beyond the expectations of those who view them as a strange mistake.

James A. Hefner is president emeritus and holder of the First Chair of Excellence in economics at Tennessee State University and Non-resident Fellow at Harvard University, in the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research.

MUTUAL FUNDS: A POTENTIAL INVESTMENT VEHICLE

*By Sire Archon Leonard R. Fuller
Xi Boulé*

Various surveys of American attitudes toward savings and investing have shown that black Americans are underinvested in the stock market. This is attributable to a number of economic as well as social and cultural factors, including income disparities, family obligations (support of family members) and lack of investment knowledge. Black Americans typically contribute less per month to their retirement accounts than whites do. According to the Ariel/Schwab Black Investor Surveys, black retirement-plan participants tend to a greater extent than whites to withdraw money from these accounts prior to retirement.

Such trends should be particularly troubling in light of the structural shift in the retirement landscape. Historically, Social Security and employer-defined benefit plans provided retirees with financial safety nets. Employers bore the costs and risks of providing lifelong retirement benefits. Today the long-term viability of Social Security is in question, as government revenues may become inadequate to cover the benefits promised to current and future retirees. At the same time, a growing number of companies are freezing their defined-benefit plans and replacing them with defined-contribution – so-called 401(k) – plans. As a result, personal savings will probably become the primary source of income for many current and future retirees.

To the extent that many black Americans save and invest, they, too, often favor conservative investments such as CDs, savings accounts, savings bonds and treasury bills. I fear that the failure of many black Americans to consider alternatives to these conservative investments will leave many of us far short of meeting the needs for a comfortable retirement.

As a director of a major mutual-fund company, I see firsthand the benefits of long-term investing in mutual funds. Over the past thirty years (as of December 31, 2006), if one had invested \$1,000 in cash (represented by treasury bills), the investment would be worth \$5,810. If the same \$1,000 had been invested in bonds (represented by the Citigroup High Grade Credit Index), it would have increased to \$13,405; it would have been \$33,974 if the investment had been in stocks (represented by the Standard & Poor's 500 Composite Index). Mutual funds are a convenient way to invest in both stocks and bonds.

Whether your goal is saving for retirement, education, travel, a new home or just a rainy day, the information below shows why mutual funds should be given serious consideration in achieving long-term financial objectives.

What is a mutual fund? A mutual fund is a regulated investment company that invests money on behalf of individuals and institutions. Investors in these funds are called shareholders. Investment managers – experienced professionals who monitor your investments on your behalf – use the pool of money to buy securities that in their judgment will help the fund achieve its stated objectives.

Diversification is important, and so is liquidity. Your money is often invested in hundreds of securities. A diverse mix of holdings can reduce volatility, for the effect of one bad investment will typically be offset by better results in the rest of the portfolio. Fund shareholders can generally sell shares at any time at the current market value.

Most mutual-fund companies offer shareholders a range of convenient services, including online account access, automatic investing and withdrawal programs, reinvestment of fund distributions, and exchanges between funds.

In the process of building a college fund or a nest egg for retirement, you can automatically invest a fixed amount to be removed from your bank account on specific dates and placed in a 529 college-savings plan or a retirement account. Withdrawals can also be automatically deducted from your mutual-fund accounts and deposited in your bank account – or checks can be mailed to you.

To help with financial planning, mutual funds provide account statements, shareholder reports, tax statements and in many cases year and average cost statements to help you calculate taxes.

You should choose mutual funds based on your financial goals, investment time horizon, risk tolerance and financial circumstances.


What are your goals? If you are investing for retirement, the younger you are, the longer you have to take advantage of growth-oriented stock investments. But if you need the money sooner, you want your investments to be less volatile and more accessible, making bond funds and money-market funds more appropriate.

It is important to assess your tolerance for risk. It's not good investing in an aggressive growth fund if you're going to panic every time the market drops. Before you invest, try to decide how much price fluctuation you can tolerate.

What are your financial circumstances? Do you have other savings or assets in addition to the money you want to invest in mutual funds? If so, these should also be considered as you make your long-term plans.

In terms of when to invest, the key to long-term investment success is not when you invest but that you do invest. Provided that you have done your homework on a fund, I would suggest that you not be afraid to invest in either an up or a down market.

Many investors need help in deciding which investments fit their needs and circumstances. Indeed, today 85 percent of mutual-fund investors use brokers, investment advisers or financial planners in assisting them. Therefore, do not hesitate to seek help in meeting your investment objectives and do consider mutual funds for your investment portfolio.

The key is to invest something, no matter how small, on a regular basis. 

Archon Fuller is a director of sixteen of the thirty funds of the American Funds family managed by Capital Research and Management Co. With more than a trillion dollars under management, it is one of the largest mutual-fund management companies in the world.