

Sponsorship Roots and Tensions

Recently, while reading in *Ministry & Meaning*, Christopher J. Kauffman's 1995 book about Catholic health care in this country, we were struck by the author's account of the origins of the "sponsorship" concept.* As it applies to the ministry, the phrase is relatively new; it is a development of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

But sponsorship's theological content goes back much further, according to Fr. Gerald A. Arbuckle, SM, PhD, whose "Sponsorship's Biblical Roots and Tensions" (p. 13) is the lead article in this issue of *Health Progress*. In fact, Fr. Arbuckle writes, sponsorship "has been a vital reality in the church's life since apostolic times." In his reading of The Acts of the Apostles, Fr. Arbuckle traces its development to the first Christian community, led by Saints Peter and Paul.

Also in this issue is the second article by Sr. Patricia A. Talone, RSM, PhD, on the "2006 CHA Mission Leaders Survey" (p. 17). In Part 1, which appeared in our July-August issue, Sr. Patricia described mission leaders' current views concerning support staff, relationships with executive staff, leadership development, and other issues and compared those with the views expressed in a 1993 survey. In Part 2, Sr. Patricia reveals mission leaders' views on academic preparation for the role, salary, benefits, and similar matters.

Among other interesting topics explored in this issue of *Health Progress* is male circumcision, discussed by Fr. Peter A. Clark, SJ, PhD, in his article "To Circumcise or Not to Circumcise" (p. 30). Fr. Clark challenges the widely held assumption that male circumcision is a routine, minor but medically necessary procedure requiring little comment. He presents a thorough, convincing alternative perspective, and we think readers will find his article fascinating.

*Christopher J. Kauffman, *Ministry & Meaning: A Religious History of Catholic Health Care in the United States*, Crossroad, New York City, 1995, pp. 288-295