

The Moral Health Care Con!

✖ This week I was shocked by the news that a long list of “progressive” ministers came out in support of the administration’s plan. They claim that universal health care is a moral issue. Their belief is based on a very superficial social, moral and economic analysis. Contrary to their assertion, the church has never historically viewed health care as the government’s responsibility.

The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that: The modern concept of a hospital dates from A.D. 331 when Constantine, having been converted to Christianity, abolished all pagan hospitals and thus created the opportunity for a new start. Until that time disease had isolated the sufferer from the community. The Christian tradition emphasized the close relationship of the sufferer to his fellow man, upon who rested the obligation for care. Illness thus became a matter for the Christian church.

Europe’s first medical schools came out of the church. Not surprisingly, most cities still have hospitals that are attached to the faith community. The involvement of people of faith in this arena is both historic and pervasive. The development of hospitals in America followed a very similar path as the Christian community helped establish infirmaries that developed into hospitals. Although no biblical directive about modern health care, many Christians believe that concern about health care falls under the general principle of “loving your neighbor.”

With the community in mind, I would advocate a health care system that responsibly reaches out to the poor and needy. Unfortunately, the administration’s proposals (as it now

stands) would result in lessening the overall quality of care. While this sounds acceptable in theory, it is impractical. The delay or denial of surgery or treatment for some patients would become a death sentence.

Five years ago, a friend of mine named Arnie developed a deadly form of brain cancer. He was given less than six months to live with no real chance of survival. Yet faith, the current health care system, and several of Washington D.C.'s elite surgeons beat the odds. Under what some derisively call ObamaCare, Arnie never would have been given the chance to attempt to beat the odds. Even though Arnie was a dental surgeon in his mid-fifties, his care would not be viewed as a "wise investment."

How moral is it to create a health care system in which the sickest patients, no matter their income, are not tended to? Everyone in the nation will agree that we should help as many people as we can and that there should be realistic limits on how much is spent on a single patient. So why did "progressive" clergy side with the President?

First of all, I believe they wrongly used a broad-brush assessment of a very complex situation. Nowhere does scripture imply that the rich who are sick should not be visited or that the lower middle class sick person should be counted less worthy of help than the abjectly poor. I would argue that Jesus calls us to value all life – not simply the value of the lives of the poor versus the lives of the rich. The question we should be asking is this: "Is my life worth less because I am worth more?" The answer is obviously: no.

The second faulty assumption these clergymen make is that if you live in the right zip code, you can afford whatever the additional price of health services. The president has publicly acknowledged that many people go bankrupt because of health care bills gone wild, but somehow progressive ministers seem to think that rich people can just come up with the

money.

Third under the current proposal, the administration wants to create a Robin-Hood-like health care system. The system will take from the rich and give to the poor. Although the concept works well in speeches, it is flawed. Imagine a 30-year old homeless man receiving a pacemaker that has been paid for by revenue that came from denying my friend Arnie his vital surgery. Our nation cannot place a higher value on one of these lives versus the other.

In addition to the assumptions about the value of rich people versus poor, there is a blatant disregard to the fact that the proposed system will pay for abortions. Imagine a teenage girl that does not have to tell her parents she is pregnant before she gets a “free” abortion – paid for by Uncle Sam. Is it moral to increase the likelihood of abortions by at least a third? In my hometown, Washington D.C., this would mean that one out of two pregnancies will be terminated by abortion. Further, three out four of those dead babies will be black.

Is it moral that every health care premium I pay for my 50 employees will finance abortions, when these monies are coming from the tithes and offerings of people that believe that killing a fetus is murder? Is it moral that elderly people are afraid that the plug will be pulled on them? Can we guarantee them that their lives are worth as much as anyone else's?

The answers to the questions I just posed are obvious. The administration's health care plan is flawed at best. I want to encourage all Americans to challenge their congressmen to vote against the bill as it stands. Let's slow down the Obama express and create reform that we can really believe in!