

DIOCESAN HEALTH PLAN RESOLUTION: RESOURCES FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION AND PRAYER

The church is not just another voluntary fellowship of kindred spirits – legally organized for a charitable purpose – any more than her compensated servants are mere employees. Among its many charges, the church has been commissioned by Christ Himself to proclaim, pursue and demand just, fair and equitable relationships among all God’s creation.

To be sure, the church lives and bears witness in a world with real challenges, real constraints and real consequences. The cost of health care and the insurance which mitigates its impact on individuals and families is significant. So, too, are the consequences of unaffordable or inadequate health insurance coverage for employees and their families, employers, health care providers, government and the larger society.

To begin to address the competing claims and pressures inherent in any discussion of employer-sponsored health insurance and the response proposed in this Resolution, it is essential that we reflect on the nature of the church, her mission and her ministries. The following selections from Scripture, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the work of generations of Christian theologians may prove helpful in establishing a context for the prayerful consideration of this Resolution.

Scripture

- **Romans 12:1-8:** I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophesy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

- **2 Corinthians 6:3-10:** We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Book of Common Prayer

- **From the Baptismal Covenant (pp. 304-5)**
Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
I will, with God's help.
Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
I will, with God's help.
- **Prayer 11, "For the Parish" (p. 817):** Almighty and everliving God, ruler of all things in heaven and earth, hear our prayers for this parish family. Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent. Grant us all things necessary for our common life, and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*
- **Prayer 38, "For the Right Use of God's Gifts" (p. 827):** Almighty God, whose loving hand has given us all that we possess: Grant us grace that we may honor you with our substance, and, remembering the account which we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Anglican Theologians

- **Richard Hooker:** "So natural is the union of religion with justice, that we may boldly deem there is neither, where both are not."
- **Frederick Denison Maurice:** "The church is, therefore, human society in its normal state; the world, that same society irregular and abnormal. The world is the church without God; the church is the world restored to its relation with God, taken back by him into the state for which he created it."
- **William Temple:** "We are obliged to ask concerning every field of human activity what is the purpose of God for it?"

Books

Avis, P. *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (2nd Ed.). Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark LTD, 2002.

Borg, M. J. *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004.

Coffin, W. S. *The Heart Is a Little to the Left: Essays on Public Morality*. Hanover, New Hampshire: Dartmouth College Press, 1999.

Meeks, M. D. *God the Economist: The Doctrine of God and Political Economy*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1989.

Schmidt, R. H. *Glorious Companions: Five Centuries of Anglican Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002.

Williams, R. *Anglican Identities*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Cowley Publications, 2003.