The Spirituality and Ethics Underlying the Affordable Care Act

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A. The Spirituality of Interrelatedness
B. The Ethical and Political Theory of John Rawls
C. The Affordable Care Act
A. The Spirituality Of Interrelatedness

THE SHIFT IN CONSCIOUSNESS

From: 17th-18th century Cartesian-Newtonian *Dualism*

To: 20th-21st century *Interrelatedness* of Einstein and colleagues
The Shift In Consciousness

- Solidarity vs Alienation
- Oneness vs Isolation
- Systems vs Fragmentation
- Holism vs Parts
- Interrelatedness vs Separated
- Interconnectedness vs Not-Connected
- Organic vs Inorganic
- Evolutionary vs Static
- Process vs Fixed
- Wholeness vs Fractured
- Interdependence vs Independence
Spirituality is always about what is real.

Spirituality is always about our life
our culture
our world
our awareness.

Spirituality today is about the 21st century consciousness of interrelatedness.

Here all the Gods live and move and have their Being.
B. The Ethical and Political Theory of John Rawls (1921-2002)
“John Rawls is perhaps the greatest political philosopher of the 20th century… he wrote, A Theory of Justice, that placed our rights to liberty and justice upon a strong and brilliant new foundation of reason. Almost singlehandedly, John Rawls revived the disciplines of political and ethical philosophy with his argument that a society in which the most fortunate helped the least fortunate is not only a moral society, but a logical one. Just as impressively, he has helped a whole generation of learned Americans revive their faith in democracy itself.”


Remarks by President William J. Clinton at presentation of the National Humanities Medal to John Rawls. Washington, DC: White House Office of the Press Secretary.

A principled reconciliation of liberty and equality

An attempt to solve the problem of distributive justice

Belongs to the “social contract” tradition of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant, who contributed to the following:

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

— The Declaration of Independence, §2 (July 4, 1776).
John Rawls’ Principles of Ethics

1.) The Theory of Distributive Justice
2.) Fairness to the Least Advantaged
3.) Social Contract
4.) Economic Fairness
5.) Equality of Opportunity
C. The Affordable Care Act

- The climax of a 66-year effort from President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1944, to President Richard Nixon in the 1960’s, to President John F. Kennedy, to President Lyndon Johnson, to President Bill Clinton, and finally President Obama in the 21st century.
“While the explicit ethical justification is that health reform is decisive for the nation’s future prosperity, health coverage is above all an ethical issue; at stake are not just the details of policy, but fundamental principles of social justice and the nation’s character…What we face is above all a moral issue; at stake are not just the details of policy, but fundamental principles of social justice and the character of our country.”

— Edward Kennedy (1932-2009), U.S. Senator from Massachusetts
Lack of Access to Essential Health-Care

Percent of Americans who say they or a family member have done each of the following in the past year because of COST:

- Put off or postponed needed health care: 34% (Women), 26% (Men)
- Skipped a recommended medical test or treatment: 31% (Women), 24% (Men)
- Did not fill a prescription: 29% (Women), 22% (Men)
- Cut pills or skipped doses of medicine: 25% (Women), 18% (Men)
- Skipped dental care or checkups: 38% (Women), 31% (Men)
Insured Pay Higher Health Insurance Premiums

- **INSURED**
  - High Premiums

- **UNINSURED**
  - Lack of Routine & Preventative Care
  - Costly Treatment

- Pay High Premiums
- Become Uninsured
- Get Sick
- $$ $$ $$
One percent of the U.S. population is responsible for about one-fourth of the nation’s health-care spending and the top 5 percent accounts for half of spending.
Wasteful Spending

- Overuse and misuse of treatments
- Regulatory processes that add costs without adding value
- Behavioral practices of patients
- Smoking
- Safety and quality errors
- Needless administrative costs

$1.8 of the $2.8 Trillion in Health Care Costs

64% Health Care Costs = Wasteful
First Principle: Universal Health Coverage

- All U.S. residents have an equal claim to access health coverage
- The means to access this health-care claim must be the same for everyone
- Each person is free to select the health-care system and providers for their health-care
- Health-care-providers are guaranteed to receive fair value for services provided
Second Principle: Pooled Health Risks

- Inequalities brought about by the inability to pay fair value for health-care are permissible if the following two conditions are met:

  - Health-care must be accessible to all U.S. residents based on fairness; in other words, access to essential health-care must be based on medical need and equality of opportunity (by which the health-care provided must be of a minimum quality)

  - The greatest assistance to access health-care must be given to those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, or the least advantage
Timeline for Implementation of the Affordable Care Act

- New Consumer Protections
- Improving Quality and Patient Safety
- Decreasing Wasteful Spending
- Increasing Access to Affordable Care
- Holding Health Insurers Accountable
- New Health-Care Taxes
DISCUSSION

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