

Bringing a spiritual perspective to daily life

Patients' bill of rights

THERE IS RENEWED DEBATE in Congress these days about the rights and privileges of individuals who participate in managed health care plans. These privileges have been referred to as a "patients' bill of rights."

Briefly, Congress is seeking to enact legislation that will improve the access, cost, and overall quality of health care in the United States. While few people question the need for such legislation, it's helpful to be reminded of the benefits and rights *already* available to us.

Jesus once referred to a Scripture that outlines a sort of universal health care package: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18; see also Isa. 61:1).

There is practical help in thinking about how each and every one of us is under a health plan that is based on knowing our relationship to God. "The Spirit of the Lord" has power to heal, deliver, and set at liberty today.

Health is God's will for us. You could say health is God's law. Mary Baker Eddy, who discovered Christian Science, observed: "If God had instituted material laws to govern man, disobedience to which would have made man ill, Jesus would not have disregarded those laws by healing in direct opposition to them and in defiance of all material conditions" ("Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," pgs. 227-228). Jesus' healing implied that anything bad in our lives – be it sin, disease, or even death – doesn't come from God. And that health and healing do come from God. We have an inalienable right to be healthy because we are made in the very likeness of God (see Gen. 1:27, 31).

These ideas have been helpful to me when I've been sick. For instance, when it comes to colds and flu, most people expect to suffer from these periodically. But considering the fact of God's power over evil, I have come to realize that it's perfectly within my rights to declare that God has created me exempt from such diseases. Jesus taught that we

should be perfect, as God is perfect. I have cultivated, through prayer, a keener trust that my true nature is perfect; it's God's image. I'm part of God's perfect creation; sickness isn't. The confidence and understanding that lie behind this declaration have brought reliable healing to my family and me, as well as less frequent illness.

What about some of the other issues being addressed in the health care debate – issues dealing with accessing and affording quality health care? Getting a spiritual perspective on these questions can clear the air of fear and finger-pointing, and help us find just solutions. Again, we begin by acknowledging that the source of all true health care is God our creator.

There should be no question as to the quality of the care we're receiving when we realize that we are always under the care of God, who is the great Physician. God gives us the wisdom

to make good decisions. He gives us the assurance that He is the healer, and that His healing power is unlimited and complete.

Access to God, our Father and our

Mother, is readily available to anyone and everyone who turns to Him/Her in prayer. Some people see prayer in terms of pleading with God to deliver them from physical or emotional calamity. My own experience has been that the most effective access to health is through the quiet, heartfelt recognition of what God is already doing for us as His children. He knows us; we are the very *reflection* of His being. It is impossible to conceive of a parent – human or divine – turning away or limiting access to a child in need.

Now, what about cost? The book of Isaiah says, "Every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (55:1). God's care is free to everyone.

The day-to-day care we receive from understanding how God creates and maintains us constitutes the most effective, reliable, and affordable physical care available. And it requires no enrollment period, for God has already placed us under its universal coverage.

**We are already covered
under a health care
plan that comes
from God alone.**