

The Tablet: U.S. bishops risk losing the moment

Dennis Coday | Aug. 14, 2009 NCR Today

The Tablet, the London-based Catholic newsweekly, has an editorial in its Aug. 15 issue with the headline: [U.S. bishops must back Obama](#) [1]. The editorial says in part:

President Barack Obama's health-care reforms are in deep trouble. ... It is unfortunate that the one body that could turn out to be a decisive strategic force in his favour, the US Catholic bishops, have so far concentrated on a specifically Catholic issue ? making sure state-funded health care does not include abortion ? rather than the more general principle of the common good. ...

This is indeed a Catholic matter. Few government proposals have had "preferential option for the poor" stamped over them more clearly. ... The church's teaching is clear: health care is a basic right, derived from the right to life itself. Of course abortion is important, but the Catholic bishops have not put anything like equal stress on these other social justice dimensions of the health-care debate. Though some grass-roots Catholic lobby groups have mobilised to support the Obama reforms, without episcopal support they will remain marginal to the debate.

Read the [full editorial](#) [1] for a lesson drawn from British Catholic history.

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[1] <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/13499>