

worker's Christian beliefs and what the profession sanctions as acceptable social work.

That is not always easy for Christian social workers to accept. They may have to think through very carefully how their religious beliefs affect their practice of social work—what to do about their mission to spread the gospel, or their convictions about sin, or the authority of the Scriptures—not to give up their beliefs, but how to integrate them into their practice. What this book attempts to do is discuss these problems and offer, as far as it can, some guidelines on the matter. Its general conclusion is, however, that these are not insoluble problems. A Christian can become not only a good social worker, but one with a clearer vision of what social work can be and how it fits in with God's purposes in the world.

Alan Keith-Lucas

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

The idea of revising the text came from our experience of using it for decades in the classroom. It also was spurred by the influence upon our lives, and our understanding of what it means to be a social worker and a Christian, by the original author, Dr. Alan Keith-Lucas. Leslie Gregory, as a BSW student in 1986, remembers meeting Dr. Lucas (or Keith, as he liked to be called) at the NACSW convention being held in Valley Forge, PA. Keith presented the content of this text in a workshop entitled, "So You Want to Be a Social Worker." Sandy Bauer served on the NACSW Board with Keith and remembers him sharing some very interesting stories about being a social worker in the south.

Many of the ideas and principles from the original text have stood the test of time and enriched the social work practice and faith of students and faculty alike. Understandably, after 35 years, our knowledge of social work has grown and students do not relate to some of the examples and historical events that happened, for some, even before they were born. It was with some hesitation that we began to revise a "classic" text such as this, yet also with deep appreciation for the pioneering work of Alan Keith-Lucas in exploring the connections between Christian faith and social work practice.

All of the chapters are retained in this revised version except for Chapter 2, Social Work and Christian Beliefs. We added Chapter 7, Hope and Resilience, given the increasing emphasis on resilience in the social work profession. Many of the beliefs Keith discusses in Chapter 2 are presented throughout the text. However, we wanted to include several paragraphs in this introduction that are foundational in understanding his theology. Below, are some of the key principles Keith explored in that chapter.

What is meant by Christian beliefs? Christian beliefs, which are fundamental to faith, are shared by most Christians. They include the belief that God created the world and within it, humankind, endowing humanity with the capacity to choose. Humans then exercised their will, which they received from God, and were disobedient, by trying to do without God, and so ultimately fell into sin. God gave them laws, but these were insufficient to reconcile them. So, at a certain historical time God took on flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus' life and ministry revealed God's true nature. Jesus was, however, rejected by the authorities of that day and was executed as a common criminal. In and by that act of submission, Christ forgave humanity's sin and assured them (and us) of eternal life through faith and trust. Three days later Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and remained a short time on earth. The Holy Spirit was sent as a guide and comforter. Christ promised to return at some future date, at which time God's purposes will be fulfilled and a perfect society established under God's authority. These are the beliefs that unite all Christians.

How are we to act on these beliefs? Our faith is both vertical, between us and God, and lateral, between us and those we encounter. It recognizes both our dependence on God and our interdependence with each other. The Old Testament prophet, Micah, reminds us "to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God!" (*New Revised Standard Version, 1952/1989, Micah 6:8*). To draw from our faith as social work-

ers, we remember to do justice and love mercy, while we walk humbly with God.

What do these beliefs have to do with our practice as social workers? The Gospel story is one of forgiveness, encouragement, and grace. Christ died for us "while we still were sinners." (*NRSV, 1952/1989, Romans 5:8*). Many people whom social workers serve are in need of forgiveness, encouragement, and grace. Our faith reminds us to convey these foundational gifts of the Gospel and leave judgments to God. Although God sometimes acts like a judge, this does not reflect the predominant characteristic of God's relationship with us. Faith is both a guide for our own actions and the message we bring those in need, who our society often casts aside or condemns.

This text is attempting to address key questions facing social workers who are Christians, such as: How can I incorporate faith into my social work practice? Can I share my faith with a client? How do I work competently with a client whose choices do not align with my Christian faith and values? How do I hold onto hope when facing obstacles?

We believe this is the lens through which Keith was writing. We hope this sets the stage to help you understand the tone of the book and the heart of the original author.

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