RECONCILIATION RECONSIDERED

ADVANCING THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON RACE AMONG CHRISTIAN SOCIAL WORKERS

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Alan Keith-Lucas Lectures
North American Association of Christians in Social Work
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ALAN KEITH LUCAS
1910-1995
Social Work, Religion and Academia (1981)

Two sorts of social work, two religions:

- Religion of Grace
  "... provides the proper approach to social work because it emphasizes God's love for undeserving sinners"

- Religion of Morality
  "... sense of pride, a doctrine of salvation by works, and the repression of those who disobey God's law"
  "... capitalist-Puritan work ethic which saw financial success as a sign of election and poverty as a sign of sin"

Theology and the Helping Process (1981)

"... the most important ingredients in a Christian approach to social work are a Christian view of man and the ability to express kindness"

"... see that love comes first, respect choice, not push one's own solution too much, emphasize responsibility, recognize that suffering is a part of growth, refrain from judgment, and avoid a negative diagnosis that the client is beyond help"
So you want to be a social worker: A primer for the Christian student (1985)

It perhaps does not need saying, but yet should always be kept in mind, that the most effective Christian witness is not talking about religion but treating people in a Christian way oneself. And perhaps one should add a word of warning to the worker who, in his or her desire to share his or her experience of God, makes a personal testimony. The most dangerous of all helpers is the one who has solved his or her own problem and has forgotten what it cost.
Median wealth, by degree and race

Doom to those who pronounce wicked decrees, and keep writing harmful laws to deprive the needy of their rights and to rob the poor among my people of justice; to make widows their loot; to steal from orphans!

Isaiah 10:1,2

“Quit your worship charades. I can’t stand your trivial religious games: Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings—meetings, meetings, meetings—I can’t stand one more! Meetings for this, meetings for that. I hate them! You’ve worn me out! I’m sick of your religion, religion, religion, while you go right on sinning. When you put on your next prayer-performance, I’ll be looking the other way. No matter how long or loud or often you pray, I’ll not be listening.”
And do you know why? Because you’ve been tearing people to pieces, and your hands are bloody. Go home and wash up. Clean up your act. Sweep your lives clean of your evildoings so I don’t have to look at them any longer. Say no to wrong.

Learn to do good. Work for justice. Help the down-and-out. Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless.

Isaiah 1:13-17
KNIGHTS of the KU KLUX KLAN
and
WOMEN of the KU KLUX KLAN
Their Principles and Ideals

1. Truth and Christian Religion
2. Establishment of the Constitution of the United States
3. Sovereignty of our State Rights
4. Integration of Church and State
5. Religious Liberty
6. Freedom of Speech and Press
7. Compulsory Education in State Public Schools
8. Preservation of Our Past, Present, and Future
9. The Right of Peaceful Assemblies
10. The Vote for all Rightful Citizens
11. The Administration of Justice
12. The Right of All People to Safety and Liberty

This organization is not anti-Jew, anti-Catholic nor anti-Negro but we do restrict our membership to native born white, Protestant, Cautious, American citizens. In exercising this right we do not become "xenial" in any respect. Consider the fact that the Jewish people have their B'nai B'Rith, the Catholics their organizations known as the Knights of Columbus and the Daughters of America. Consider also that every organization in the United States places some limitations on its nature or another upon its membership.

ARE WE NOT ENTITLED TO THE SAME PRIVILEGE?
This is the kind of fast day I’m after:
   to break the chains of injustice,
    get rid of exploitation in the workplace,
     free the oppressed,
      cancel debts.
What I’m interested in seeing you do is:
   sharing your food with the hungry,
    inviting the homeless poor into your homes,
     putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,
      being available to your own families.

Do this and the lights will turn on,
   and your lives will turn around at once.
Your righteousness will pave your way.
   The GOD of glory will secure your passage.
Then when you pray, GOD will answer.
   You’ll call out for help and I’ll say,‘Here I am.’
“If you get rid of unfair practices,
quit blaming victims,
quit gossiping about other people's sins,
If you are generous with the hungry
and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out,
Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness,
your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight.
I will always show you where to go.
I’ll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—
firm muscles, strong bones.

You’ll be like a well-watered garden,
a gurgling spring that never runs dry.
You’ll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew,
rebuild the foundations from out of your past.
You’ll be known as those who can fix anything,
restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate,
make the community livable again.

Isaiah 58:6-12
Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious— the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

Phillippians 4:8,9