

Yolanda Jones

Social Work and Christianity

Analysis #9

What does your religious/faith tradition teach about concern for the poor? How has your religious faith tradition influence your choice of social work as a profession, especially as it relates to work on behalf of the poor?

My religion has taught me to be concerned for the poor because we are all children of God. As a Christian, my goal and my purpose is to live by the word of God and treat others how I want to be treated, the Bible is rich in wisdom about God's love for people living in poverty and our responsibility to help. Proverbs 31:8-9 reads "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy". Deuteronomy 15:7-8 reads, "If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need". It is important to me to help all people whenever I can, but the poor and underserved requires more love, compassion and guidance.

My faith is believing that God has placed me in the profession of social work to help others and assist in caring for their basic care needs. To help empower those who are vulnerable and oppressed. To be an advocate for them and provide them with the appropriate resources. My faith has helped me to become resilient, because of the types of cases I am presented with as a social worker. The job has many challenges which isn't always easy. There have been times when I wanted to give up because I felt like I was putting too much time into my clients and their

problems and feeling like I was neglecting my home, but my faith is what kept me; knowing that I can protect and possibly save someone's life.

My religious faith tradition has influenced my choice of social worker as a profession, as it relates to the poor for several reasons. Growing up I was always helping my family and siblings to solve problems. I am the oldest of eight siblings and often had to assist my mom with caretaking responsibilities. My family was not wealthy and we were below the poverty level growing up. I can relate to the clients I serve because they are from a community of which I am familiar with and have been raised in. I don't believe that all "poor" people are homeless or are on welfare, I believe that there are clients who are doing their best to earn a living and be productive members of society but due to their socioeconomic status they are at a disadvantage. Then there are the "middle class families" such as myself who I refer to as the working poor who are a paycheck away from poverty and struggle to make ends meet but are not eligible for any government assistance. I believe the thing that sets me apart from my clients are my coping skills.

I take pride in working with the poor population because I overcame similar obstacles many of them have endured. I am the vessel in assisting them with attaining their goals, overcoming challenges, being resilient and rendering the support needed for them to become productive members of society.