

Integrative Paper

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Purpose and Meaning of Life

When reflecting on this journey to become a social worker, I have come to realize that my perspective of the purpose and the meaning of life has changed. I believe that being a Christian has contributed to how I see others, and my desire to help and be there for others has become stronger. As a Christian social worker, I see life as a precious gift that God has given us to live it to the fullest and get to know His mercy and goodness. I believe that every person in this world was created in the image of God and deserves to be treated equally and fair. To me, the meaning of life is to be able to love, be happy, give to others, teach, and learn. As a social worker, I believe that since we live in a world that is filled with hate, unfairness, and sorrow, my goal is to show the love of God to others through my service.

Integration of Personal Christian Faith with Social Work

As a Christian social worker, I believe I have the advantage of seeing people from a different lens. The way that I integrate my faith in the field of social work is very simple, I pray. To me, the biggest thing about being a social worker is that I get to go to the Lord with prayers on behalf of my clients. I don't get to pray with my client because my agency is secular and it is against its policy, but during my own time, I take time out of my busy life and dedicate it to coming to the throne of God and praying for them. Another way that I integrate my Christian faith into social work is by showing my clients that I genuinely care for them. I believe that having Jesus as an example of how we should serve others has taught me to aim to be more like Him in this field. Jesus met people where they were, and with his gift, he gave those that were the most in need a purpose to live. Like Jesus, I want to be able to help those that come to me without seeing them with indifference and showing them love and compassion.

Relationship Between Christianity and Social Work Practice

To be able to understand the relationship between Christianity and social work practice we first need to know the mission of social work practice. “The primary mission of social work is to enhance human well-being and help meet basic and complex needs of all people, with a particular focus on those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.” (NASW, 2019) As Christians, we are at the forefront of service because, throughout the Bible, we are instructed to serve others and take care of those most vulnerable. Jesus, our greatest example, walked on this earth dedicating his life to the servanthood of others by healing the sick, feeding the poor, and many other acts of service until his last breath on the cross.

Furthermore, the origin of social work can be traced back to the 19th Century. During the 19th, churches were the main organizations to address poverty and other social problems within a community. Also, the settlement house movement was influenced by the church's social welfare practices. One example is Jane Adam’s Hull House, which like the Charity Organization Society, was the biggest model of social work. Both were a great part of what social work is about. According to Scales and Kelly (2020), “ Like the COS movement, the SH movement spread to the United States from England in the late 1800s in the midst of immigration, industrialization, and urbanization.” (p. 23)

The NASW Code of Ethics (2021) has six core values that align with what the Bible teaches us about serving others and the way that we must. These core values consist of “ service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationship, integrity, and competence.” (NASW, 2021) Just like so, the Bible instructs us to love and care for others specifically the needy and oppressed. An example of service in the Bible is mentioned as “Faith

without deeds is dead” (James 2:14-17). Also, the Bible instructs us to “speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed. Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless and see that they get justice.” (Proverbs 31, New Living Translation (NLT) | the Bible App, 2015) This is only a small example of the compatibility if the ethics and values with the scriptures. The only difference in applying these principles is that as Christians, we are called to do the aforementioned with the greatest reward of closeness to God and salvation. Where non-believer social workers, do so not only because it is the right thing to do for others, but also because if they fail to do so, they cannot succeed as social workers.

In addition, as a Christian social worker, there may be chances of confronting ethical dilemmas. To me in particular would be when the topic of abortion surfaces with a client and having to show support to someone that wants to have an abortion will be difficult because my faith strongly influences my view on abortion. I believe that the way I would handle this is first praying for God to give me the wisdom to be of good help to the client. I would also do my best to put aside that belief and be more understanding of what the client is going through and to also see that some lack the knowledge of the fact that we are made in the image of God and that abortion is wrong, so this is where I would use my God-given wisdom and not let the client’s decision affect my service to them.

My understanding of Competent, Compassionate, Catalysts in Christ

Through this journey, I have learned that compassion is like the motor of social work. I have learned that to be able to understand a client’s needs and struggles, we must have compassion. In Christ, I learned that we are called to show compassion to others and that He is our ultimate example. To see how Jesus sat with sinners and healed and gave to those that were rejected by society is such a humbling example and it motivates me to do my best to be

competent at what I do. I believe that the greatest act of compassion that Jesus showed us was giving His life on the cross to pay for our sins so that we can have eternal life.

References

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