

**Integration of Faith and Practice Paper Part II**

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**Brief Introduction**

This second part of the paper introduces experiences with faith and how it was implementing and or how it was helpful and challenging throughout social work as a whole.

**Interview**

I had the opportunity to interview Social Worker, Maria Malca, she has her BSW in social worker and has worked for Latino Youth High School in Chicago, Illinois for eight years. Maria Malca explained that she choose her career because she wanted to help people and because even her own religion emphasized on caring for others and treating every one equally. As a Latina herself, she was able to really relate and communicate with students that do not speak English very well.

As a Social Worker at Latino Youth High School she had experienced many different experiences with kids and families that were not of the same faith of hers. Often times, these experiences were hard to deal with. It was especially hard when I first started working, but overtime I got a little more comfortable with it. However, she mentioned that it really never is that easy, because every case is a different situation.

When Maria encountered situations like this at first she would just test the waters and she what the client was comfortable with she did not want to force any type of religion on the clients she had. As a social worker she was not suppose to. However, she would pray at home for som of her clients and their situations. She was not able to disclose a lot of information because of her position, but she did mention that she lead by example and a lot of clients and co-workers noticed the difference in her. In the agency where she was located, religion was not a major thing. Most of the population that came to her from that area and even her co-workers, did not believe in anything religious really. Because of this it was hard to share and be open about this at

first. Throughout her journey, she was able to become more comfortable, but was still careful with it. She ended up starting a support group and emphasized what would be mentioned in the support group through advertising and flyers around the school. Through this is how she was able to share the gospel and also through her own example. The kids were able to see her Christian character through how much she cared for them. Overall, she said she had a positive outcome through her support group and kids opening up and sharing they wanted to learn more.

### **Plan for Future Integration of Faith and Social Work**

I am a Seventh-Day Adventist and I believe it is our calling to be able to help everyone and reach out to everyone. My belief system has contributed almost completely to who I am today. My parents helped with supporting this religion and guiding me through it as a child. I do believe that if I have a talent or resources that I could help others with, than I should use those talents and resources and not just let it go to waste. We need to make sure we do not take things like that for granted. Sometimes we get blessed with certain things others may not have and we have to remember to be thankful and also become self-aware. It is important to not let it get the best of us. As a Christian, I think it is important to not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk.

I think that social work values go hand in hand with Christian faith principles. I also believe that Jesus was the first social worker. He worked hard to make change and do the right thing. I think that the social work value of service is the most obvious value that relates to the faith of Christianity. Both in Christianity and in social work the primary goal is to give great service through helping people that are in need. This is the time where we put our selfish desire and interests aside to help this person that needs it. Another value that relates well is the dignity and worth of each person. In Christianity, this is emphasized a lot. We need to be respectful and mindful of what is going on and of the person. In social work, this is a big issue with a lot of the

problems that go on today. These were just a few examples, but I could relate most of the values to Christianity. This is why it is important to do everything effectively.

### **Potential Challenges and Opportunities**

There are challenges everywhere I go through every day, no matter where I am. One of the challenges that I would face would be doing things on Sabbath. The agency that I work at has events on Saturday sometimes and with my faith it would be difficult to attend. Another challenge is that when I hear certain situations and scenarios, my automatic instinct is to pray about it. I cannot just do that and assume that the person is religious. I have to be mindful of what the person believes in and what is their reality of things.

One way I could implement things is by leading through example. I believe that if you walk in the footsteps that you preach, people will see that and the light will be shown through you. I believe that I could always be kind and never judge anyone and be a good Christian example. I also think that I could start a volunteer support group for those who are being challenged with their Christian walk and faith and need extra support through their daily life at work and school. I think Christianity is a good way to remind me that there is more out there and people are capable of change with God's help. Because of my Christian faith, I still have hope and that will help me in the long run to burn out less. I will also use my faith as a support tool, not only for my clients, but for my co-workers as well.

I believe that I will grow a lot through my job as a social worker and with my faith. I believe that as a social worker, I will have to be patient and learn to become more patient. This could help me grow in my Christian faith. I should be understanding, patient, and kind to everyone. I think it could also help me value more of what I have and remind me how much I need my Christian faith to stay sane and have peace in my own life.

I think that it could also open opportunities for me to be able to relate to people who may be struggling with their own faith and for ones that believe in the same thing as me. There are many people that cannot relate and sometimes that can help, as long as you know how to separate biases and focus on what is important.