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Why I Am a Social Worker: 25 Christians Tell Their Life Stories

Diana R. Garland

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Why I Am a Social Worker describes the rich diversity and nature of the profession of social work through the 25 stories of daily lives and professional journeys chosen to represent the different people, groups and human situations where social workers serve.

Many social workers of faith express that they feel called to help people - sometimes a specific population of people such as abused children or people who live in poverty. Often they describe this calling as a way of living out their faith. Why I Am a Social Worker serves as a resource for Christians in social work as they reflect on their sense of calling, and provides direction to guide them in this process.

Why I Am a Social Worker employs a narrative, descriptive approach, allowing the relationship between faith and practice to emerge through the professional life stories of social workers who are Christians. As such, it provides a way to explore integration on personal, emotional and practical levels. Why I Am a Social Worker does not varnish the difficulties and struggles of this integration journey, but if you want to understand what social work is and how Christians live their faith from the experiences of actual social work, this book is for you.

Why I Am a Social Worker has three main objectives:

1) To describe the path of Christians into social work, how their work is an expression of their faith, and how their faith motivates, sustains, and is challenged by their work.

2) To sample the breadth of social work as a profession, from public to private and from nonsectarian to religious congregational settings, and how faith finds a diversity of expressions.

3) To serve as a resource for exploring the ethical integration of faith with professional practice.

Why I Am a Social Worker addresses a range of critical questions such as:

a) How do social workers describe the relationship of their faith and their work?

b) What is their daily work-life like, with its challenges, frustrations, joys and triumphs?

c) What was their path into social work, and more particularly, the kind of social work they chose?

d) What roles do their religious beliefs and spiritual practices have in sustaining them for the work, and how has their work, in turn, shaped their religious and spiritual life?

Why I Am a Social Worker will provide you with a realistic view of the gritty realities of a profession that is at the forefront of serving those Jesus described as the least of these (Matthew 25).

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