for Christians, a reminder of the importance of keeping the divine always close in mind. I highly recommend the book for beginning and seasoned social workers alike.

**REFERENCE**


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**The Poor You Have with You Always: Concepts of Aid to the Poor in the Western World from Biblical Times to the Present.**


Coming near the end of Alan Keith-Lucas’ prolific writing career, *The Poor You Have with You Always* represents a welcome contribution to the literature on the history of social welfare, particularly focusing on approaches to poverty. As suggested by the sub-title, Keith-Lucas’ purpose is not merely to describe what has been done (or not done) to help the poor, but rather “to trace the motives and principles of those who have tried, over the centuries, to help, support, and sometimes to control or reform this unassimilated group [i.e., the poor] in society” (p. 1, emphasis added).

It is this focus on the underlying philosophical assumptions that shape western civilization’s approach to those who are most vulnerable that makes Keith-Lucas’ history especially helpful. Of course, helping those in need has always been a values question, but as Keith-Lucas so clearly demonstrates, much of the conventional coverage of social welfare history has been done from within a secular, rational, scientific paradigm that has dominated most social scientific endeavors. Keith-Lucas calls this paradigm Humanist-Positivist-Utopian (HPU), a label that many readers will recognize from his more widely read and influential *Giving and Taking Help* (1994). Keith-Lucas shows that this
viewpoint—despite its claims of objectivity—is just as much shaped by certain assumptions as other approaches (particular religious ones) that HPU rejects.

Although Keith-Lucas rightly notes the dominance of the HPU approach to poverty, his treatment reveals the ambivalence and conflicts that arise from competing paradigms that tend to take a more moralistic and punitive approach to those who are poor. The current manifestation of this paradigm is what Keith-Lucas calls Capitalist-Puritan (CP), and as the name implies, this approach draws on a combination of economic and theological understandings that places the blame for poverty mostly on individual failures, and focuses on solutions that are intended to reward moral behavior and punish so-called delinquency.

Two important insights can be distilled from Keith-Lucas' analysis. First, unlike many of the secular histories of social welfare and poverty, Keith-Lucas takes seriously the significant contributions and influence of Judeo-Christian thought going back to the roots of western civilization. Where many secular historians dismiss early Christian teachings as anachronistic and judgmental (Day, 2000; Jansson, 2005, Trattner, 1999), Keith-Lucas' more nuanced analysis demonstrates the longstanding and active concern that Christian leaders held for the most vulnerable, and their prophetic call not just to individuals, but also to the systems that were implicated in injustice. But Keith-Lucas is not blind to the distortions and misuse of Christian principles that have been used to justify harsh treatment of the poor. Thus, a second insight is the way in which Christian theology, particularly the Lutheran and Calvinist threads that emerged from the Reformation, have been intertwined with classical economic theory and been twisted into the Capitalist Puritan approach.

What is uniquely valuable about Keith-Lucas' analysis is not his identification of the tensions and ambivalence between conservative (CP) and liberal (HPU) approaches, which have been documented by many other authors (see as one example, Jansson, 2005). Rather, Keith-Lucas' characterization of conservative and liberal paradigms gets at the underlying religious values that are at the heart of these different approaches, especially for the HPU perspective. Many HPUers would accuse conservatives (CPers) of being influenced by religion, but see themselves as having advanced beyond religious bias and its limitations. What Keith-Lucas shows, however, is that HPU, which dominated social welfare analysis for most of the 20th century, is no less religious than the CP perspective it derides in the name of progress.
Despite the book’s ambitious claim (as suggested by its sub-title) to cover two thousand years of history going back to Biblical times, most of the emphasis is on recent history, with two out of six chapters alone describing developments in the 20th century. Keith-Lucas draws from both primary and secondary sources to trace the development of approaches to the poor in early western civilization, which is largely concentrated in the history of the early church and influential church fathers such Augustine, John of Chrysostom, and Gregory of Nazianus. However, Keith-Lucas’ suggestion that “there is virtually no writing, for a millennium or more, until the Fifteenth Century” (p. 16) is not borne out by other authors (de Santa Ana, 1979; Mollat, 1986). The two chapters on the 20th century also focus almost entirely on developments in the USA, drawing mostly from social work literature, and at times sounding more like a history of American social work than a history of poverty. While this might make sense for an audience of American Christian social workers, it does so at the cost of missing important developments from other disciplines and other countries.

Keith-Lucas’ history concludes with the conservative “backlash” against the US welfare state under the Reagan administration. Here Keith-Lucas’ intent seems to be to show that there is more to Christianity than the influential Moral Majority and its unabashed support of Reagan’s policies. In that respect, Keith-Lucas succeeds; The Poor You Have With You Always demonstrates clearly that the historical preponderance of Christian approaches to poverty are more balanced than conservative American Christianity of the 1980s would suggest. In that sense, Keith-Lucas’ contribution is valuable for both Christians and non-Christians alike. Non-Christians will perhaps be surprised to discover that there is more depth and conviction to Christian approaches to the poor than what is portrayed in the mainstream media, which tends to stereotype all Christians as CPers. Not only that, but Keith-Lucas’ brief history shows that, despite the secularization bias of the dominant HPU approach, it is virtually impossible to consider western civilization’s historic or contemporary treatment of the poor without referencing Judeo-Christian thought and practice.

For Christians in social work, who are Keith-Lucas’ primary audience, the most important contribution is his explication of the extremes—and limitations—of both the HPU and the CP approaches, and his reclaiming of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Keith-Lucas argues that this tradition yields a worldview not based “on individual texts
taken out of context, but on the whole sweep of the story and nurtured throughout the ages” (p. 146). His hope for “the influx of young Christians into the social work profession” is that “in relation to the care of the poor, the true Judeo-Christian tradition, stripped of many accretions and not a few perversions . . . may be more prevalent in the future” (p. 147).

REFERENCES


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