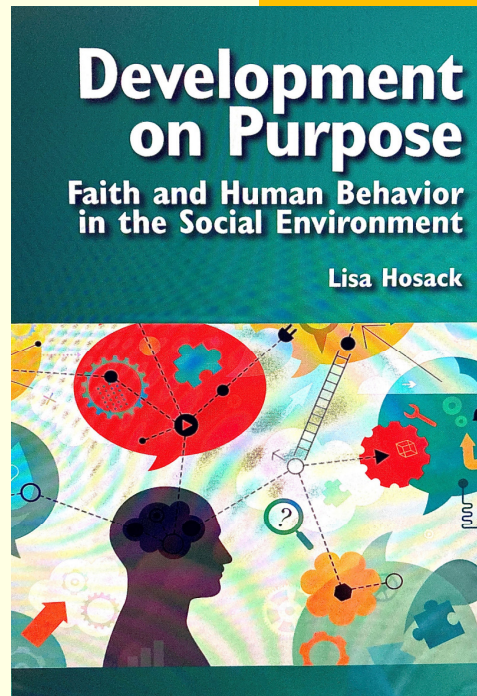


# Chapter One

Biblical Themes to Guide Us



1

## Theme One:

Humans are  
relational



2

Relationships  
are, of course,  
a key  
component of  
*social* work

Yet the Bible  
implies that  
relationships  
are core to our  
very being.

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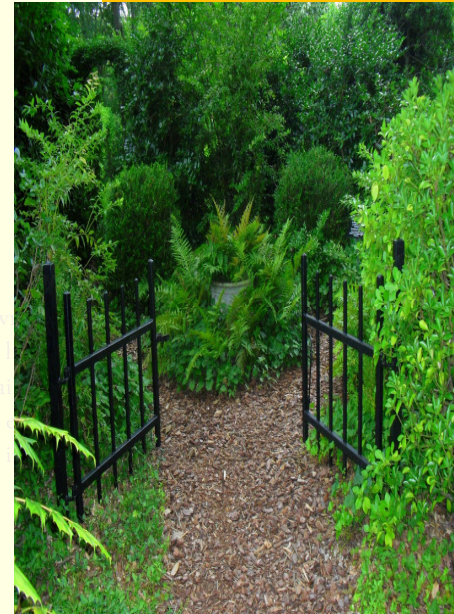
Formation in  
God's image  
means that **we**  
are relational  
because **God**  
is relational.

God's relational  
nature is best  
modeled in the  
**Trinity**.

4

## What does our core relational nature imply about our efforts in social work?

- That helping people with relationships is central to our work
- That people require healthy relationships to thrive
- That we were created for relationships with God and each another
- That the characteristics of God's relationship with us are a model for life-giving relationships
- That the image-bearing nature we hold in common is the basis for managing our differences



5

## Theme Two:

Persons sin and need redemption



6

Social workers  
regularly deal  
with sin and  
its destructive  
effects

Sin is not only  
found within  
individuals,  
but in every  
family, group,  
community,  
institution,  
and government

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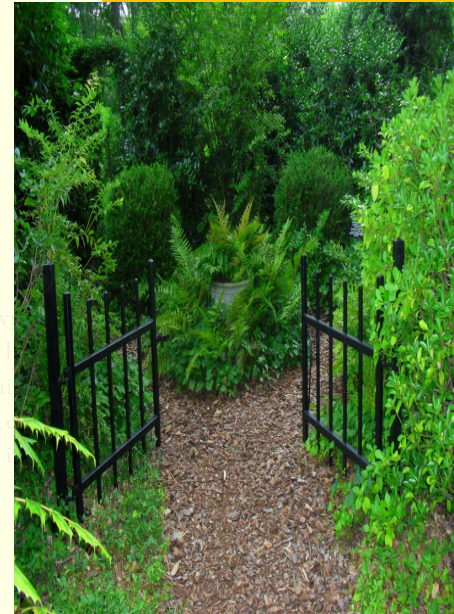
Our goal is never to judge, shame,  
or condemn, but to help people  
find freedom from sin and its  
negative effects in their lives

8



## What does acknowledging our fallen nature imply about our efforts in social work?

- That sin is at the bottom of many, if not all, of the situations in which we engage
- That sinful choices inhibit human freedom
- That sin (our own and others' which has harmed us) can prevent us from seeing ourselves as we truly are
- That the fallen nature we hold in common means we cannot judge or see ourselves as superior
- That doing so helps us to identify root problems and a route to freedom even when our clients are not persons of faith



9

## Theme Three:

Creation needs  
restoration



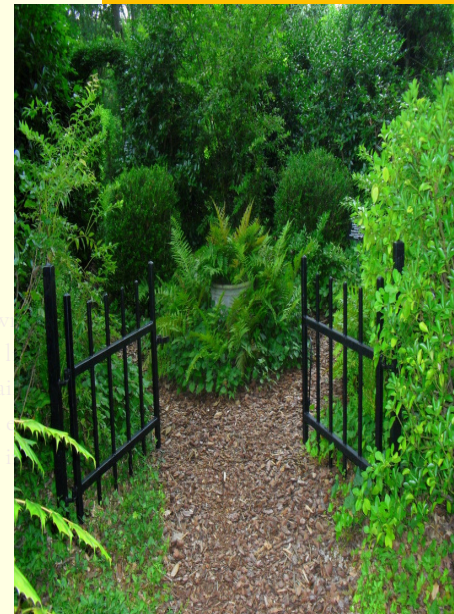
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God is working to  
restore creation on the  
micro, mezzo, and macro  
levels.

11

What does God's restorative action  
imply about our efforts in social work?

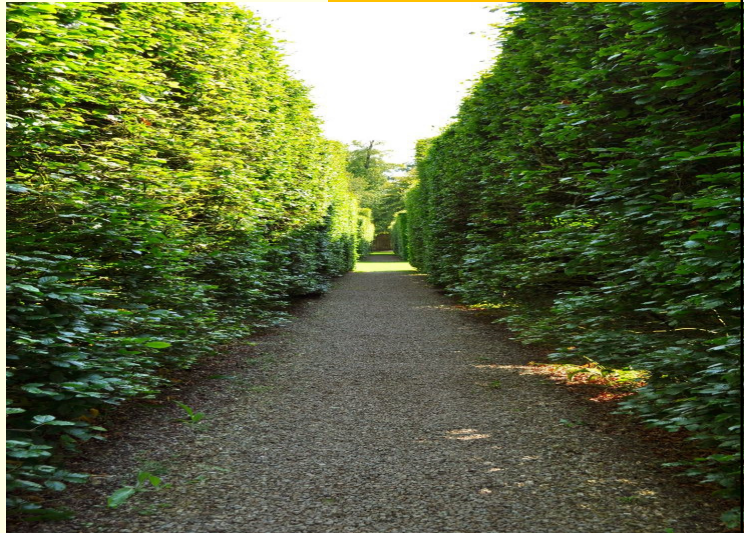
- That we should ponder what restoration would look like in the context in which we work
- That while healing belongs to God, He wants to use us
- That wherever we work, God is already working
- That we are responsible to be faithful to our calling, but not for change



12

Theme Four:

Humans have  
Rich organic harvest in one click  
 agency



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*Agency* is the ability of a person to make choices and to act within a particular environment

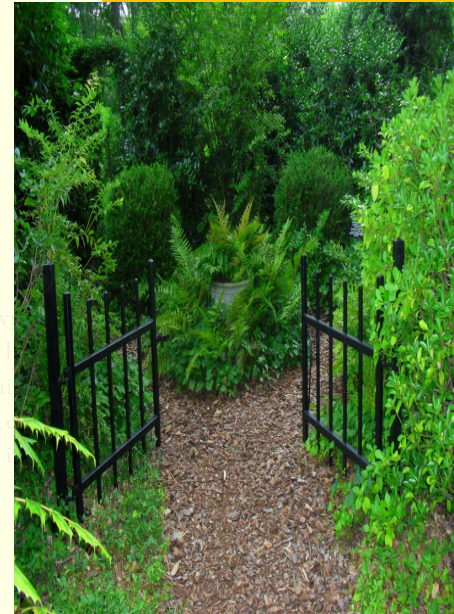
Agency can be limited by “structure” or realities that limits someone’s choices such as . socioeconomic status or job skills.

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## What does human agency mean for our efforts in social work?

- That persons need a healthy amount of autonomy (on the micro-mezzo-macro levels) to thrive
- That persons also need boundaries to thrive
- That restricting agency is problematic because it violates a core aspect of our created nature
- That many problems in relationships are rooted in an absence or excess of agency
- That while agency looks different at different ages, it is needed throughout the lifespan



15

## Theme Five:

Humans are embodied



16



Our physical bodies are sacred and require stewardship and care

We rightly prioritize embodiment when we attend to people's need for things such as food, safety from harm, shelter, and medical care.

17

There are different views on whether the body and soul are separate (*dualism*) or components of the same thing (*monism*).

Whatever view one has, we ought not overemphasize or underemphasize our physical selves. Both extremes can be problematic.

18

## What does embodiment imply for our efforts in social work?

- That Jesus modeled the importance of our physical bodies by assuming one (His incarnation)
- That while Christians take different views on the body and soul, people should always be viewed holistically
- That some behaviors or conditions originate in the brain, making them impossible or resistant to change
- That many people need assistance in “rightly” viewing and prioritizing their physical selves

