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Christian Care and Social Work: Textbook Makes the Connection

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- When Dr. Michael Sherr, professor and chair of the social work department at Cedarville University, co-authored his first textbook in 2014, he had no idea it would become one of the most widely used textbooks in postsecondary social work education in the United States.

Now, six years later, the second edition of the textbook, "Introduction to Competence-Based Social Work: The Profession of Caring, Knowing and Serving," co-authored with Dr. Johnny Jones, former professor and chair of the social work department at Southeastern University, will be released September 12, 2019.

In the textbook, Sherr wanted to present Christian values to a non-Christian audience, while still making the textbook appealing to students. He wanted to emphasize that social work is a way of caring — far more than just a scientific field or an objective method to attain.

"Social work is rooted in values that come from the gospel," explained Sherr. "No matter how much science plays into social work, as servants of common grace, God calls social workers to serve the parts of communities that no one, even the church, wants to go to."

Originally, Sherr was unsure about writing a second edition to the textbook. However, the publisher, Oxford University Press, convinced Sherr the first edition was widely accepted, and now was the time to produce another edition.

One major change in the second edition was adding 16 new case studies, bringing the total to 41. Sherr describes case studies as a virtual room where students enter to view what life is like in different areas of social work. The new case studies added diversity to the existing ones, including international cases and online counseling cases.

"My joy is that the kind of scholarship that this book represents is what Cedarville University can bring to the world," said Sherr. "To have a thoughtful book accepted by secular and Christian universities around the country that is so connected to ministry is the largest joy I get from this."

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,193 undergraduate, graduate and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.