"Administrative Practices in Religious Organizations"

Thank you for taking part in this home study text-based course. The purpose of this course is to call attention to administrative practices in the context of religious organizations; more specifically, the skills and assets that social workers bring to administrative leadership and management practices in religious organizations. The articles contained in this course address those administrative practices, congregational social work planning, and church-based program planning.

The following text-based course contains five separate readings pertaining to the use of a faith perspective when looking at social work. The articles are as follows: *A Study of Administrative Practices in Religious Organizations* by Gaynor Yancey, Robin K. Rogers, Jon Singletary, and Michael Sherr, *Blessed are the Peacemakers: How Assets and Skills Intrinsic to Professional Social Work are Informing International RAOs and the Work of Inter-communal Reconciliation* by Aaron Tyler, *Developing Community Partnerships with Religiously Affiliated Organizations to Address Aging Needs: A Case Study of the Congregational Social Work Education Initiative* by Jay Poole, John C. Rife, Fran Pearson, and Wayne R. Moore, *The Emergent Journey of Church-Based Program Planning* by Jon E. Singletary, and *Exploring the Role of Research in Evangelical Service Organizations: Lessons from a University/Agency Partnership* by Michael E. Sherr, Robin K. Rogers, Angela Dennison, and Daphne Paul. After completing this course, participants will be able to:

1. List ways in which assets and skills intrinsic to the field of professional social work inform the operational framework of faith-based organizations dedicated to inter-communal reconciliation.

2. Describe the emergent alternative to the rationalist models of planning that are dominant today among contemporary organizations, including congregations and small religious nonprofit organizations.

3. Describe the context of evangelical organizations providing social work services and the unique role of research in those settings.

Upon completing the reading section of this course, please take the 20 question post-test located on the website provided to you when you purchased this course. After achieving a score of at least 80% and completing a training evaluation, you will receive your CE certificate verifying that you have earned 3 continuing education contact hours approved by the Association of Social Work Boards.

Thank you again for your interest in this course, and for your interest in this critical area of social work.

A National Study of Administrative Practices in Religious Organizations

Gaynor Yancey, Robin K, Rogers, Jon Singletary, and Michael Sherr

This study examined the administrative practices of a national random sample of 773 religious organizations. Results indicated consistent use of some administrative practices such as policies/procedures (bylaws, mission statements, and finance policies) and sporadic use of other administrative practices such as fundraising, staff training, record keeping, and evaluation. Social workers are encouraged to understand administrative practices, examine how they contribute to the culture of organizations, and influence the role of evaluation when seeking to collaborate with religious organizations.

In the last decade, the role of religious organizations in developing and delivering social services has gained considerable attention in social work research. As a case in point, the number of publications with the terms "spirituality " or "religion " in the titles has tripled since 1996 (*Social Work Abstracts*, 2006). Despite the increase, social work research on religious organizations is a nascent area of study in need of methodical description before making inferences about effectiveness, best practices, and optimal levels of participation in social service delivery. This is especially the case for administrative practices as a void of articles in this area is evident of the limited knowledge base available to guide social work practice with religious organizations. The purpose of the current study is to serve as a primer on administrative practices and to provide an empirical foundation for future research and practice with religious organizations.

Defining Religious Organizations and Administrative Practices

Based on the work of Sheridan and Bullis (1991), we refer to religion within the broad context of spirituality, meaning a person's search for, as well as his or her expression or experience of that which is ultimately meaningful. A broad view of religion allows for an appreciation of the many spiritual practices traditionally developed within the context of a religion, while recognizing that many contemporary spiritualities are practiced outside the confines of a specific religion. For our purposes, we understand religious organizations to be a specific category of volunteer associations (Sherr, 2008) where individuals and communities engage in broad and diverse spiritual and sacerdotal practices.

Religious organizations range in size and scope. From a systems perspective, Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie (1999) provide a typology of six types of religious organizations based on organizational complexity. They include:

1. **Local Congregations:** "a group of people that has a shared identity, meets regularly on an ongoing basis, comes together primarily for worship and has location of a living or working space, has an identified religious leader, and has an official name and some formal structure that conveys its purpose and identity " (pp. 9-10).

2. **Interfaith agencies and ecumenical coalitions:** "organizations, local congregations from different religions, and denominations join together for purposes of community solidarity, social action, and/or providing large-scale services that are beyond the scope of a single congregation" (p. 32).

3. **Citywide or regionwide sectarian agencies:** "the one most often identified with religious-based social service delivery….Sectarian agencies often employ social workers

as service providers and managers and serve as a placement site for social work students " (pp. 33-34).

4. **National projects and organizations under religious auspices:** "have multiple affiliates or chapters throughout the nation and even the world [and] have become a major force in provision of services to communities " (p. 36).

5. **Paradenominational advocacy and relief organizations:** "serve or advocate for people in need and are concerned with improving educational opportunities for people…although the organizations are not officially affiliated with any religion or denomination, they are based on religious principles and have strong theological undertones in their mission statements. Their goal is to improve the social condition by applying religious principles to a secular world " (p. 41).

6. **Religiously affiliated international organizations:** "the emphasis of today's religiously affiliated organizations is to bring relief and aid to underserved people of the world's poorest nations. In many countries…they are defined as and operate as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); in other countries they take the form of missionary agencies" (p. 43).

We refer to administrative practices as a broad range of practices that support the design and delivery of human services. Such practices can include (but are not limited to) leadership development, fundraising, fiduciary management, supervision, staff management, recruitment and retention, volunteer management, proposal writing, strategic planning, communication with external stakeholders, program development, board development, and management and evaluation. Moreover, we view the role of administrative practices in religious organizations in the context of generalist practice where interventions are directed at enhancing individual well-being, creating positive community conditions conducive to enhancing well-being, and empowering individuals and small systems to be civically engaged and influence the larger systems affecting people's lives (Meenaghan, Gibbons, & McNutt, 2005).

Social Work Literature on Religious Organizations

Social work literature provides minimal information to guide practitioners on working or collaborating with religious organizations. Until recently, only a handful of social work scholars viewed religious organizations as a practice setting worthy of serious inquiry. For instance, Coughlin's (1965) seminal study reported that government resources were contributing to as much as 80% of the budgets of religious organizations providing services. He cautioned that some religious organizations were becoming increasingly dependent upon public funds. During the 1980s, in the aftermath of the federal cuts for human services and President Reagan urging religious organizations to help compensate for cutbacks, Salamon and Teitelabaum (1984) offered another look into the involvement of religious organizations. In brief, they asserted that despite finding large amounts of service activities, in terms of compensating for cutbacks, the absolute impact was quite limited. Netting's research during the same time period focused on the meaning of religion in religious organizations and the impact of the relationship between a religious human service organization and other religious organizations, such as a denominational entity or a similar auspice organization. Theology, staff selection, values, administration and leadership, and service programming are all themes that are relevant in understanding the role of religion in an organization (Netting, 1984).

Shortly thereafter, Wineburg and colleagues put forth a number of studies on religious organizations' contributions to volunteerism in communities (Wineburg & Wineburg, 1986; Wineburg, 1994, 1996, 2001; Wineburg, Ahmed, & Sills, 1997). More recently, a proliferation

of books and articles has examined the role of religious organizations from a number of perspectives including, feminist theology (Tangenberg, 2003, 2005), working with HIV/AIDS (Chambre, 2001), substance abuse (Hodge & Pittman, 2003), the Salvation Army (Lewis, 2003), and the specific role of congregations (Billingsley, 2001; Cnaan, 2002; Cnaan, Sinha, & McGrew, 2004).

In most of the examples above, we posit that scholars focused too soon and too much on examining deductive questions that attempted to evaluate the outputs, outcomes, and consequences of practicing in religious organizations without an understanding of how they function. Social workers need a sound base of observational, qualitative, and descriptive studies that provides the conceptual clarity needed to guide current practice and research that is more advanced. Stated differently, inductive inquiry focused on observing what is there needs to undergird the testing or evaluating of any assumptions about religious organizations (Rodwell & Woody, 1997; Rubin, & Babbie, 2008). At best, rushing to evaluation research too early means that hypotheses are based on anecdotal opinion, and at worst, based on distorted biases without understanding or appreciation for the cultural context of religious organizations. We agree with Thyer's (2007) recent description of research in this area, as being so embryonic that initial designs of what is presently studied and reported is still needed.

Assumptions and Research Questions

We based the current study on the following assumptions. There is very little empirical information about how religious organizations function in relation to developing and delivering human services. Current social work research on religious organizations is problematic in that studies prematurely focus on evaluation of outcomes and not enough on understanding the unique contexts of religious organizations as human service providers. Given the nascent interest in examining religious organizations as social service providers, there is a need in the social work literature for inductive and descriptive studies to build a trustworthy foundation of information for future research. These assumptions led us to examine the following research question: What are the administrative practices of religious organizations that operate social service programs?

Methodology

Phase I

The research took place in two phases. In the first phase, 21 people from four universities in different states engaged in in-depth qualitative interviews with key informants in selected human service programs of faith-based organizations in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Texas, and California. Sixty-four transcribed interviews generated from a purposive sample of fifteen organizations having "promising or exemplary programs" in four urban communities were analyzed using the constant comparison method. Characteristics of promising or exemplary programs were adapted from the work of John Orr, a colleague in the project: (1) being highly successful in delivering services at the local level; (2) exemplifying the power of collaboration in working with other faith-based and community agencies, as well as the public sector to address poverty; (3) being innovative in their strategies, materials, and/or collaborative organizational models; or already functioning as elements of a service delivery system in which public and private programs complement each other; and (4) providing models that might be replicable in other similar organizations and/or showing promise of attracting stable financial support (Orr, Mounts, & Spoto, 2001).

Primary analysis included four rounds of coding and resulted in 232 core codes and 6 core networks of themes for our grounded theory. A second level of analysis resulted in a data set that

includes 166 primary documents (interview transcripts), 1300 codes, and 62 networks that reflect the richness of the data. From this analysis, the research team created a set of 307 potential survey questions. The outcome of Phase I was a 95-item questionnaire that asks administrators of religious organizations about six areas of administrative practices including policies/procedures, fundraising, outreach, staff training, recordkeeping, and evaluation.

Phase II

Phase II involved selecting the sample and administering the survey. Cities from each of the 12 Census Bureau regions were selected for sampling and included major metropolitan areas as well as some mid and smaller-sized metropolitan areas, with a focus on obtaining maximum ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. Sample cities chosen were Providence, RI; New York, NY; Pittsburg, PA, Miami, FL; Detroit, MI; Chicago, IL; Tulsa, OK; San Antonio, TX; Denver, CO; Los Angeles, CA; Richmond, VA; and Seattle, WA.

A multi-stage stratified random sample was used to select religious organizations from each city. First, the sampling frame was developed using a number of sources. Sources included the American church list, the National Center for Charitable Statistics, intermediaries, key informants, and Internet searches. The list consisted of 35,727 religious organizations of which 10,883 were selected by a random number generator for inclusion in the final sample. Analysis with SPSS included frequencies and appropriate correlations to describe the administrative practices. Because of space limitations, the findings in this study are limited to the quantitative analysis.

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Findings

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Demographic Profile of Religious Organizations

Just over 7% (n=773) of the religious organizations completed the survey of which 52.9% (n=409) were congregations and 47.1% (n=364) were from other faith-based organizations (FBOs). We attributed the low response rate to several factors including the requirement that only organizations operating direct social service programs needed to respond, the length of the survey (9 pages), the detailed questions asked about budgets, policies, and evaluation procedures, a number of religious organizations in the sampling frame with incorrect addresses, and some with names appearing religious but that did not consider themselves to be religious organizations.

Religious Affiliation

The sample represents a proportionate distribution of religious affiliations in the United States (The Pew Forum, 2008). A majority of the sample was affiliated with Protestant (63.5%), Catholic (17.6%), or congregations consisting members with different religious perspectives (10.5%). Other religious affiliations included Jewish (2.8%), Independent (1.6%), and Buddhist/Zen (1.2%). Religious organizations from Muslim, Hindu, Jehovah's Witness, Jesus of Latter Day Saints, and other, each represented less than one percent of the sample.

Ages and Budgets of Organizations

At the time of the survey, most of the religious organizations had been operating for at least three years (see Table 1). Over half of the congregations (50.8%) were at least 50 years old and another fifth (21.9%) were in existence for over 25 years. A majority of FBOs (60.6%) were established between 1976 and 2000. A third of FBOs (34%) were in existence for 50-100 years. A small percentage of FBOs (5.5%) had been operating 1-3 years.

Table 1: Age of Religious Organizations

Year Established	Approximate Age of Organization	Congregations	FBOs
< 1800	200+ Yrs	1.50%	0.0%
1801-1900	100 - 200 Yrs	19.0%	5.5%
1901-1950	50 – 100 Yrs	30.3%	13.8%
1951-1975	25 – 50 Yrs	21.9%	14.7%
1976-2000	3 – 27 Yrs	26.0%	60.6%
2001-2003	1 – 3 Yrs	1.3%	5.5%

Congregations and FBOs differ in the distribution of budget size. Congregations spent only 8% of their budgets on social service programs, whereas FBOs spent over two-thirds of their budgets (70%). Moreover, budget sizes were quite different. A third of (34%) congregations had annual budgets of less than $6,000 for social service programs. Another 30 percent of congregations had budgets between $6,000 and $24,000 for programs. A fifth of congregations had budget over $100,000 for programs. In contrast, almost half (47%) of FBOs had budgets in excess of $100,000 per year. In fact, over a quarter (27%) had over $386,000 annual budgets. Fewer FBOs had budgets between $6,000 and $24,000 (12%) and less than $6,000 (13%), respectively.

Participants Served

One-third of the congregations' programs report having no female participation, while one-third report having as much as 60% female participation. About one-fifth of FBOs report having no female participation, while two-fifths report having as much as 60% female participation. Persons age 17 and younger (<17) were enrolled in 53.8% of congregations' social service programs and 60.2% of FBOs' programs. Similarly, persons aged 25-64were enrolled in 57.6% of congregations' social service programs and 61.8% of FBOs' programs. Leaders reported that African Americans enrolled in 57.2% of congregations' social service programs, with Whites enrolled in 55.7%. In FBOs, African Americans enrolled in 69.1% of services and Whites in 65.6%. The Hispanic/Latino population enrolled in 43.6% of Congregations' services and in 57.6% of FBOs' services.

Administrative Practices

Descriptive findings are presented for each of the six areas of administrative practices—policies/procedures, fundraising, outreach, staff training, recordkeeping, and evaluation.

Policies/Procedures

We asked leaders of religious organizations to identify policies and procedures they have from a list of 16 options. A large majority of organizations had Bylaws (85.9%, n=664) and Mission Statements (86.7%, n=670), while three fourths (75.7%, n=585) had finance policies. Over half of the religious organizations (55.2%, n=427) have written program objectives. Over 40% of religious organizations provide staff with employee handbooks, have policies for staff orientation, and continual training, while a third have written policies and procedures that address evaluation, contractual agreements with staff, ethics statements, daily operating procedures, and grievance procedures. A small number of religious organizations (2.7%, n=21) have no written policies or procedures.

Fundraising

Religious organizations raised funds for social services programs in different ways. The most common methods for raising funds were hosting special events (58%, n=448), direct mail campaigns (38.2%, n=295), writing grant proposals (37.8%, n=292), and developing relationships with donors (37.3%, n=287). Thirty percent (n=232) of religious organizations engaged in planned giving programs, and over a quarter (27.4%, n=211) had capital campaigns. Fourteen percent (n=107) had no formal fundraising strategies.

Outreach Strategies

A large majority of religious organizations used informal methods of communicating their services. Almost 90 percent (89.5%, n=692) reported "word-of-mouth " outreach and almost half (48.8%, n=376) reported individual recruitment for telling the community about the services. Although used less frequently, other methods of outreach included phone book listing (39.2%, n=303), referrals from other agencies (36.1%, n=279), and Internet web page (29.8%, n=230). Only 13% of religious organizations (n=99) were affiliated with a United Way. Five percent (n=139) reported having no outreach strategy.

Staff Training

Staff training received inconsistent attention in religious organizations. Less than half of the staff hired (48.3%, n=370) receive any type of orientation. Only a fifth of the leaders send staff to conferences or workshops, provide formal in-service training, or opportunities to earn continuing education credit. It seems that informal on-the-job training is the most common method of ensuring staff preparation and performance (53.87%, n=412). One in 10 religious organizations (10.1%, n=78) provides no staff training at all.

Record keeping

Leaders of religious organizations report sporadic patterns of recordkeeping. Slightly more than 40% of religious organizations keep intake (42.4%, n=325) or attendance (43.6%, n=337) records. Only a quarter of religious organizations keep records of individual clients such as service plans, progress notes, goal attainment, or follow-up. Over a third of the organizations keep demographic records (37.6%, n=288). Eight percent do not record any information about the people they serve (n=62).

Evaluation

Evaluation procedures at religious organizations tend to be informal and provide minimal data for comparative studies with services delivered by other organizations. Almost a fifth of religious organizations (18.1%, n=140) do not even evaluate their services because they are not required to do so, do not think they are important, or do not have the financial resources to conduct an adequate evaluation. Two-thirds of the organizations rely on positive feedback for evaluation (66.2%, n=507), and over half rely on participant satisfaction (55.1%, n=426). Only a third of religious organizations formally evaluate their services (36.7%, n=281), and only a fifth compare their services with other programs (21.9%, n=168) to determine success. The primary method of evaluation is staff observations (60.0%, n=456) followed by reviewing participant records (34.3%, n=263) and conducting interviews (32.1%, n=246). Only 10% (10.6%, n=81) seek outside consultation for evaluating services. Moreover, a relatively small percentage of religious organizations formally communicate the findings of evaluations through annual reports (30.3%, n=244), brochures (24.3%, n=186), or evaluation reports (21.8%, n=167).

Discussion

This study contributes to the literature on social work in religious organizations because it expands the scope to administrative practices. Furthermore, six areas of administrative practices

emerged as important components to examine when seeking to understand the context of practice in a religious organization. Evaluation, though important, provides only one part of the picture, especially in the absence of the other components of administrative practice. Examining policies and procedures, fundraising, outreach, staff training, record keeping, and approaches to evaluation could provide the context for understanding how religious organizations function, how they deliver services, and how to define effectiveness.

Taken together, the findings reveal extensive variability of some administrative practices and patterns of other practices. For instance, although leaders reported a set range of fundraising, staff training, and record keeping activities in qualitative interviews, the survey findings suggest that these three areas receive inconsistent and sporadic attention from religious organizations. In contrast, there is a consistent pattern of policies and procedures and the use of informal outreach strategies. The lack of consistency, however, does not necessarily mean that organizations are ineffective in providing social services. Instead, it may be evidence of the informal nature of delivering services that makes religious organizations unique and appealing in the first place. As Peterson and Hughey (2002) suggest, what is important for social workers is to understand the organizational processes (and not necessarily "fix " them) and work to create a goodness-of-fit to empower the people served by them. In some situations, that may involve focusing on administrative practices as the target systems. In other situations, that may require accepting the administrative practices as part of the culture of religious organizations, focusing instead on micro-level interventions for persons served by religious organizations.

The findings also offer social workers guidance in evaluating services of religious organizations. Religious organizations are often too different from one another to lump them together for deductive analysis. Instead, the findings suggest tailoring evaluation methods to specific religious organizations. Woolnough (2008), a volunteer for an international religious organization and a retired scholar at Oxford University, posits the use of participatory and developmental evaluation methods that "seek to find out what is going on, to get insights into the processes and values involved, and to emphasize improving, rather than proving, aspects of evaluation " (pp. 138-139). Based on our experience of evaluating religious organizations, we agree with Woolnough, adding our recommendation of using case studies of religious organizations with multiple forms of data collection procedures.

Limitations of this study relate to the methodology. The exhaustive efforts to develop an adequate sampling frame and sample a large number of religious organizations created an adequate sample size for the descriptive analysis. The 7% response rate for the study, however, was still not sufficient for generalizing the findings beyond the religious organizations completing the survey.

Another study limitation is associated with denominational affiliation. Although the sample represents a proportionate distribution of religious affiliations in the United States, the findings appear most relevant for Christian denominations. We suggest including an overrepresentation of other denominations in future research and presenting the data on administrative practices for religious organizations grouped by different denominations.

Finally, social desirability bias is a limitation. Given their positions as leaders of religious organizations and the in-depth nature of the questions, it is plausible to assume that leaders who completed the survey may have either over-inflated or minimized the extent in which they carryout administrative practices. The questions did not provide explicit examples of what constituted a certain threshold in order to indicate the use of an administrative practice. Leaders used their own discretion in deciding what constituted an administrative practice.

Implications for Practice and Researchwith Religious Organizations

This research has several implications for social work practice with religious organizations. Administrative practices create the foundation and organizational culture for services delivered by religious organizations. The findings suggest that social workers spend time assessing the various aspects of administrative practices as they seek to work with religious organizations. In the same way, the findings suggest that social workers avoid drawing premature conclusions about the effectiveness of religious-based services.

Instead, we encourage social workers to focus on learning and appreciating the values that motivate service delivery and the process of how religious organizations implement their plans to deliver services. As social workers learn about particular religious organizations and communicate appreciation for them, they will have the credibility to collaborate in areas where social work involvement can improve services.

This research also provides social workers with direction as to the types of collaboration that could be useful to religious organizations. While recognizing the limitations, the findings offer initial evidence suggesting that religious organizations could benefit from social workers assisting with staff training, fundraising, and evaluation. In offering to collaborate, however, it is important for social workers to appreciate the context of religious organizations. For instance, a social worker could collaborate with a grassroots religious organization to help facilitate effective strategies for raising additional funds. As part of that collaboration, the social worker could use facilitation skills to assist the leaders of a religious organization to make informed decisions about seeking funds by federal, state, and local grants or by private foundation. Getting a large grant could increase the number of people a religious organization can serve; however, it could also change the informal administrative practices and lead to the organization's reliance on large gifts in the future. After assessing the situation, the leaders may decide to continue to seek funding by improving their relationships with current donors and creating additional events for development. In this case, the social worker needs to appreciate the desire to remain informal and autonomous.

Social workers can also collaborate with religious organizations on evaluation. On one hand, social workers can practice in the role of educators to explain why evaluation is important, what types of data to collect, how to analyze the data, and how to use the information to improve service delivery. On the other hand, social workers can collaborate with staff to conduct the evaluations. We recommend evaluation studies that focus on in-depth case study designs that use multiple forms of data collection.

Social workers should establish the expectation of evaluation upfront and tailor methods to capture three types of data: 1) The specific administrative practices of a religious organization; 2) the processes of how people's lives changed because of receiving services from religious organizations; and 3) a measure of the expected outcome. Focusing on case study designs does not rule out the use of experimental designs to measure outcomes. When fit, feasibility, and focus are considered, social workers might choose to utilize random assignment, control groups, and multiple waves (at least 3 points in time of data collection) of data collection to measure outcomes.

The main difference in the goal of the findings is to improve the services in religious organizations and not to generalize the findings to all religious organizations. The use of case study findings in refereed journals is important, however, so that social workers can inform their practice and disseminate useful methods at different religious organizations.

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Blessed are the Peacemakers: How Assets and Skills Intrinsic to Professional Social Work are Informing International RAOs and the Work of Inter-communal Reconciliation

Aaron Tyler

This article shows how assets and skills intrinsic to the field of social work inform the administrative procedures and operational framework for the most challenging component of inter-communal conflict transformation: reconciliation. It suggests that religiously-affiliated organizations can provide a notable contribution to this normative phase of conflict transformation. Offering Coventry Cathedral's International Center for Conflict Resolution as an illustrative case study, this article shows how assets and skills intrinsic to the field of professional social work inform the operational framework of faith-based organizations dedicated to the difficult work of inter-communal reconciliation.

Twentieth-century visionary Richard Buckminster Fuller once opined, "Either war is obsolete or men are." Indeed, whether between empires, states, tribes, or villages, violent social conflict has left an indelible print on human history, leaving no generation unaffected.

Since the collapse of the Cold War, inter-communal conflicts between ethnic and religious groups, across and within state borders, have dominated the global landscape of violent social conflict. And, in a world quickly shrinking through interlinking processes of globalization, these inter-communal conflicts are no longer isolated occurrences with only local ramifications. The plight of the embattled Ijaw and Ogoni peoples in Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta has undoubtedly affected the stability of the Nigerian state, greater West Africa, and an oil-dependent global community. Inter-communal conflict in Burundi has exacerbated tensions in the tribally complex and politically fragile breadbasket of Africa. Georgia's sheltering of displaced Chechen Muslim families and rebels has intensified the growing distrust and animosity with its northern neighbor, Russia, aggravating instability in the ethnically and religiously diverse Caucasus. Kashmiri ethno-religious groups fighting for autonomy or secession continue to threaten the fragile peace between South Asia's nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. The regional and global effects of violent tension in the Middle East, whether between Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank or Shi'a, Sunni, and Christians in post-invasion Iraq and Lebanon, are all too obvious. Indeed, violent social conflicts between identity groups continue to proliferate, and the sociopolitical ramifications are often borderless.

Ted Robert Gurr (2007), the founding director of the Minorities at Risk Project, has conducted a brief, yet comprehensive, analysis of inter-communal violence that reveals the magnitude and complex character of organized identity conflict (p. 122).1 He offers compelling evidence demonstrating the numerical significance of violent inter-state communal conflicts over the past two decades. In 2005 the Minorities at Risk Project (MAR) categorized over 284"politically active cultural groups, which represent over one billion people . . . located primarily in sub-Saharan Africa, Eastern Europe, and throughout Asia." The sociopolitical and cultural grievances espoused by these groups are localized and their demands vary widely. Some seek greater civil and economic parity through power sharing arrangements and equal access to resource wealth and labor opportunities, while other groups are making more dramatic

secessionist or irredentist claims that would require the redrawing of state borders and the implementation of new social frameworks and political systems (Gurr, 2007, p. 134).

For the past two decades the multifaceted field of conflict management has struggled to develop conflict resolution paradigms and strategies appropriate to violent inter-communal conflict. Peacemaking efforts between identity groups are often more difficult than those between nation-states. This added difficulty is due to the tendencies of communal identity, whether religious or tribal, to entrench hatreds of the Other through sociocultural processes of dehumanization and exclusion. Rational political interests are complicated by more intractable issues of self-identity and impoverished narratives of the Other. Such embossed animosities make normalization of relationships difficult. When an "us" versus "them" impulse is nurtured through clashing narratives of religious or tribal identity, peace arrangements become elusive and genuine reconciliation unlikely. Despite these challenges, a normative framework of reconciliation must be part of any lasting peace arrangement between ethnic or religious communities that have experienced violent conflict.

This article focuses on the most difficult aspect of conflict management, reconciliation, and suggests that religiously-affiliated organizations (RAOs) can offer a compelling contribution to this often intractable stage of conflict resolution. Moreover, assets intrinsic to the field of professional social work are informing the operational planning and initiatives of international RAOs working in the area of conflict resolution and reconciliation. Following a description of the typical conflict transformation process and a conceptual analysis of the stage of reconciliation, Coventry Cathedral's International Centre for Reconciliation (ICR) will be proffered as a potent illustration of how international RAOs, committed to conflict resolution, are affecting inter-communal reconciliation through a mutually enriching relationship with the field of professional social work. Coventry Cathedral's ICR is a highly respected, faith-based center dedicated to resolving violent conflicts, the integration of spirituality with the practical ministries of reconciliation, and programmatic collaboration with local, regional, and international public agencies and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involved in multi-track conflict management. An examination of ICR's faith-based foundations and operational strategies will give the reader a clearer picture of how the skills and attributes of social work are essential to the administrative and operational initiatives of international RAOs working in the arena of inter-communal reconciliation.

This article concludes with a six-part schema for practical application, offering the ICR's faith-based approach to inter-communal conflict management as a holistic model for integrating spirituality with the pragmatic assets central to the field of professional social work. The ICR's "six R" approach to conflict resolution—Research, Relationships, Relief, Risk, Reconciliation, and Resourcing—will illustrate how a social work methodology, committed to service, understanding, and dialogue, is integrated into the ICR's faith-based mission of reconciliation.

Having already introduced the global landscape of contemporary inter-communal conflict, a brief examination of the archetypal stages of conflict transformation is necessary to illustrate the important place *reconciliation* holds in the work of conflict resolution and how a normative, faith-based framework of intervention is often appropriate. A discussion of the ICR's self-described purpose, planning, and strategy for reconciliation will follow.

Stages of Conflict Transformation

Conflict management has become a convoluted field of study for academics and practitioners interested in the causes of violent social conflict and the processes necessary for peace. It has developed into a multilevel enterprise with a plethora of diverging theories for understanding

inter-communal conflict and a large toolbox of practical approaches to facilitating dialogue, ceasefires, and, ultimately, reconciliation.

Conflict resolution paradigms are helpful for categorizing conflict types and systematizing one's thinking of a particular conflict and how best to participate in peace building. Of course, theorizing on the causes and processes of a conflict and its resolution is fraught with pitfalls. Geopolitical complications, third-party intervention, undulating communal loyalties, and international participation are only a few of the independent variables that can alter the nature and severity of violent conflict. Because of its inconstant nature, inter-communal conflict management requires acute understanding of local historical context and the various actors involved in violence and peacemaking (Ramsbotham et al, 2007, p. 11).

The escalation and de-escalation patterns of communal conflict are not uniform for obvious reasons. Context does matter, and local tribal, religious, and linguistic identities—coupled with historical experience and political geography—are not easily disentangled. Cognizant of such variables, theorizing about communal conflict can be useful, insofar as general patterns may help to classify current tensions and predict future behavior. In Figure 1 Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall scaffold the basic intensification and de-intensification pattern of typical inter-communal conflicts using a simple distribution curve (Ramsbotham et al, p. 11).147

The phases of *difference, contradiction*, and *polarization* are subjective terms that are not easily measured. They may take months, years, or decades to manifest into an "outbreak of direct *violence* or *war*" (Ramsbotham et al, 2007, p. 11). The intractability of many inter-communal conflicts is often due to segregating historical memories and clashing narratives that develop between opposing groups as they pass through the ideational stages of *contradiction* and *polarization*. Importantly, *polarization* often occurs in tandem with *contradiction*; they are not necessarily sequential. Moreover, *violence* and *war* play an important role in deepening *contradictions* and further polarizing opposing groups.

As a community experiences segregation, discrimination, and violence from another group, historical memory is adversely affected, and narratives of victimization and animosity are cultivated. "Vendetta traps" and violent atrocities become more likely in inter-communal conflicts when, through culturally reinforced processes of exclusion, one group suppresses the recognition of and respect for the human dignity of the Other (Glover, 1999). When the moral resource of respect is suppressed or overwhelmed through *contradictions* and *polarization*, dehumanizing stereotypes of the opposing group are facilitated and inter-communal *violence* and *war* become a reality.

Much like the chronological inconstancy across the intensification phases of conflict, the stages of de-intensification are not necessarily realized in an orderly progression. More often than not, efforts toward *ceasefire* and formal peace *agreements* are made simultaneously. However, it is usually necessary for *normalization*, whereby collective security and sociopolitical development are ensured, to precede the normative processes of *reconciliation* (Ramsbotham et al, 2007, p. 12-14). It is this phase of *reconciliation* that is the focus of this paper; for, it is here that Religiously Affiliated Organizations (RAOs) and the field of social work are making profound contributions to inter- communal conflict resolution.

Defining Reconciliation

The Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Policy (2007)*,* which has done much work in the area of inter-communal reconciliation, defines reconciliation, in part, "as the process of repairing social ties and community trust in the aftermath of violent conflict." "Repairing social ties and community trust" between post-conflict communities is a delicate affair in the wake of

unbridled violence and countless stories of victimization. Indeed, lasting peace between communal groups with scarred historical memories requires more than an empirical cessation of hostilities. In Brounéus's (2003) report on reconciliation for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, reconciliation is defined as a "societal process that involves mutual acknowledgment of past suffering and the changing of destructive attitudes and behavior into constructive relationships toward sustainable peace" (p. 12). Reconciliation cannot go before the "mutual acknowledgment of past suffering." For this reason, the engines of reconciliation are the communities affected by the violence. As such, external actors cannot bring reconciliation. Rather, they can become participants in the process, encouraging dialogue, mediating social transitions, and helping to nurture constructive relationships and more humane and inclusive identities of the Other. Ultimately, however, reconciliation between communities must be mutually desired and pursued by those societies engaged in the violence; it cannot be derived or coerced by third-party participants.

Unlike the mechanical nature of *ceasefires* and formal *agreements* between political elites, *normalization* and, to a greater extent, *reconciliation* are grounded on a normative framework that involves restoring the moral worth of the Other and reclaiming a mutual recognition of human dignity between victims and perpetrators of violent inter-communal conflict (Amstutz, 2008, p. 74-76). Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall (2007) are correct to describe *reconciliation* as essential to "deep peacemaking" (p. 12), which encourages a re-imagining of community through grassroots dialogue, intercultural exchanges, trust building, and restorative justice.

In addressing the demeaning, prejudicial narratives perpetrated in the seemingly intractable Arab-Israeli communal conflict, one social psychological study describes "societal level" reconciliation as the only pathway to successful "conflict resolution and a genuine peace process." Such reconciliation must be scaffolded so that the "representation of the enemy" is positively altered through "processes of legitimization, equalization, differentiation, and personalization as well as changes in attitudes and emotions that need to take place in the minds and hearts of the great majority of society members" (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005, p. 19).

Crocker (1999) distinguishes between "thick" and "thin" meanings of reconciliation. From the *thinnest* conceptualization of "simple coexistence" in the face of continued inter-communal animosity to a "principled compromise" where differences and disagreement remain, but a humanization and mutual respect of the Other is cultivated and openly maintained. The latter conception of *reconciliation*, Crocker contends, "may help prevent society from lapsing back into violence as a way to resolve conflict." Crocker offers the truth commissions in Chili and South Africa as examples of conflict transforming forums designed to help facilitate this "thicker" conceptualization of reconciliation (p. 60-61).

Sociologist Louis Kriesberg (2007) argues that the most caustic conflicts are nurtured through dehumanization, mutual accusation, and disavowal of the opposing group's historical memory. In the wake of such "destructive conflicts," Kriesberg offers reconciliation as a "multifaceted," long-term contribution to tempering these destructive characteristics of violent communal conflict (p. 320). According to Kriesberg, the multidimensional process of reconciliation can be stratified into four components:

1. Developing a "comprehensive truth" that involves, ideally, a consensual historical memory of past sufferings and injustices;
2. Remedying past sufferings and injustices through material reparations, legal retribution, and legally instituted assurances of non-discrimination and civil equality;

3. Victim reciprocity, whereby the moral identity of the perpetrator(s) is acknowledged and restored through mutual dialogue and religiously imbued values of forgiveness and compassion; and

4. Security: that is, former enemies are given mutual assurances that non-threatening, perhaps even cooperative, coexistence is an inter-communal desire.

These four dimensions of reconciliation are rarely sequential, "symmetrical," or completely achievable in every destructive conflict (p. 320-22). Indeed, context and timing matter, and every conflict has unique opportunities and limitations for implementing the multidimensional course of reconciliation. Regardless of their potential for implementation, each element is an essential ingredient to convalescing fully from the brutal divisions that result from destructive violent conflicts.

Empirical conflict management strategies focus primarily on coercing peace, and are tailored to local, regional, and global issues of political and economic stability (e.g., power sharing, collective security, resource allocation, etc.). Diplomats, UN Peacekeepers, and the International Criminal Courts play important roles in securing ceasefires and peace agreements, but none is well-equipped to facilitate the normative processes of reconciliation. Religious leaders and faith-based organizations, however, are uniquely positioned to contribute to this complicated but essential realm of deep peacemaking. Behavioral scientist Renee Garfinkel (2004) echoes this contention:

> Most religions are committed to working for justice and peace, and have long-standing and well-established structures or processes for doing so. They may also have religion-specific approaches to conflict resolution, such as guidelines for resolving conflict or rituals for reconciling relationships that have potential application across religious boundaries. (p. 5)

The rituals and belief systems of most religions emphasize the needs of community over the desires of the individual. This more selfless, other-focused perspective can challenge warring groups to expand their conceptualizations of community to include the maligned Other. Religion, which is too often culpable in justifying violent communal conflict, remains one of the most potent sources for inter-communal convalescence and is best suited to succor processes of reconciliation following violent conflict.

Retributive justice—punishing those guilty of egregious crimes against humanity—is central to temporal efforts of peacemaking and conflict resolution. However, conflict transformation, whereby reconciliation is enabled, requires inclusion of restorative justice. Restorative justice emphasizes forgiveness in conjunction with restitution, reparations, and repentance. Importantly, as theologian Harold Wells (1997) points out, "reconciliation does not replace justice." Rather, "reconciliation is the result of justice" (p. 4). Of course, it is always easier to speak of restorative justice as an outsider—as one spared from the violence, unspeakable suffering, and injustices that defined the conflict. However, in most cases, retributive justice must be fastened to efforts of restorative justice if the normative phase of reconciliation is to be realized. Rival historical memories are not easily reconciled. In post-conflict societies, vendetta traps make future conflict more likely. Nonetheless, eventually one group must decide to break this trap of reciprocal hatred and resentment and prefer the difficult but restorative path to reconciliation (Glover, 1999).

Christianity provides a powerful perspective of reconciliation through the restorative process of forgiveness. Hannah Arendt (1958, pp. 138-140) once declared that Jesus' greatest gift to political philosophy was forgiveness. Over the past several decades, a number of Christian

organizations have emerged in earnest to participate in the practical and normative work of reconciliation efforts between communal groups whose wounds of hatred, resentment, and vengeance have made violent action the preferred alternative for inter-communal engagement.

One of the oldest, most respected, and influential RAOs working in the field of international conflict resolution is Coventry Cathedral. Its vision statement calls the "Cathedral Community" to be a taproot of "spiritual renewal" and a global epicenter for inter-communal reconciliation. The capstone of its holistic ministry of renewal and reconciliation is its International Center for Reconciliation (ICR). The ICR's task of reconciliation, which focused on restorative dialogue with Germany in the aftermath of the bombings of England's cities by the Luftwaffe, has evolved into a multidimensional, global ministry that participates in reconciliation efforts around the world, from violent inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts to state-minority hostilities and interstate quarrels. Moreover, Coventry Cathedral's many partnerships with other RAOs and NGOs involved in global conflict management are filtered through the administrative and operational infrastructure of the ICR (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk).

The ICR's faith-based vision and methodology, strategic and operational planning, funding initiatives, collaboration with public agen cies, and partnerships with other RAOs for purposes of reconciliation are worthy of focused attention. The administrative and operational practices of this RAO emphasize the use of social work skill sets in the important work of inter-communal reconciliation. It is hoped this brief investigation into the administrative practices, conflict management programs, and strategic planning and developing initiatives used by this prominent international RAO will provide a more comprehensive picture of how a large international, humanitarian RAO can streamline multidimensional administrative efforts and openly integrate faith with the practical social work practices of resolving violent social conflicts and facilitating reconciliation.

Background of Coventry Cathedral and its International Center for Reconciliation

A Christian community's theology and accompanying practices certainly help to shape its temporal vision of community and ministry. At the same time, geographical and historical contexts provide a reciprocal influence on how a community's theology, rituals, and service are interpreted, expressed, and communicated to God's creation. This is certainly the case with the Anglican community's Coventry Cathedral. A brief history of Coventry Cathedral is necessary to appreciate the formative contextual foundations of this international RAO.

The first cathedral in the town of Coventry was established by a Benedictine community in 1043. In the wake of Britain's sixteenth-century religious tumult, when popes, kings, and queens were violently vying for the allegiance and treasure of England's people, the Catholic See of Coventry was dissolved. It would be almost four centuries later, in 1918, before the contemporary diocese of Coventry was established and its cathedral (the church of St. Michael) named (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/history, 2004). On November 14, 1940, the German Luftwaffe bombarded Coventry through the night with incendiary bombs, setting the city alight. Coventry's Cathedral was destroyed. According to the community's own testimony, the resolve to rebuild was immediate—not as "an act of defiance, but rather a sign of faith, trust and hope for the future of the world" (CoventryCathedral.uk.org/history).

The harrowing experiences of November 1940, transformed the Christian identity and vision of Coventry. In response to its physical destruction, Coventry Cathedral sought to rebuild, not only its corporeal identity of brick and mortar, but also its vision of community, expanding its expression of *caritas* and reconciliation to the greater human family—to include enemies and friends. Reconciliation became a requisite of spiritual renewal for the Coventry Community.

Writing for another notable international RAO, the Institute for Global Engagement, Nate Jones (2007) points to how the historical memory of destruction permanently transformed Coventry Cathedral's ministry of peace and reconciliation:

> Indeed, the community at Coventry Cathedral did not especially emphasize the idea of reconciliation until the cathedral was bombed during World War II. This traumatic experience prompted a re-examination of the concept of Christian reconciliation as Coventry attempted to respond in forgiveness to the Germans who bombed the cathedral. Once freed to understand reconciliation in this way, however, the Anglican community at Coventry began to grasp a broader vision for reconciliation around the world, leading to the creation of the International Center for Reconciliation (http://www.globalengage.org/media/article).

Today, one can walk the haunting grounds of Coventry Cathedral and be reminded of how, from its ashes, the community's vision of peace and reconciliation was reborn. Side by side, the ruins of St. Michael's and the new cathedral (sanctified in 1962) are architecturally harmonized to "create one living Cathedral" devoted to the spiritual and pragmatic support of reconciliation and renewal across the globe (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/history).

As mentioned above, the centerpiece organization created by the Diocese of Coventry for participating in global peace and reconciliation efforts is its International Centre for Reconciliation (ICR), an institutional cornerstone of the visionary recreation begun in 1940. For several decades following World War II, the ICR focused on reconciliation efforts with Britain's adversary Germany and "former communist bloc countries." Today, the ICR's practical work in conflict management spans continents, focusing heavily on violent inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts around the world (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/internationalministry). Examples include:

• Mediation between Christian and Muslims during and following the violent riots that devastated churches, mosques, and communities across northern Nigeria In late 2000.
• "Brokering the *Kaduna Peace Declaration of Religious Leaders* in Nigeria, August 2002."
• "Coordinating the Alexandria Process (the religious track of the Middle East peace process)."
• "Brokering the *First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land* in January 2002, bringing together the key Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders of Israel/Palestine."
• "Helping negotiate the resolution of the siege at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in April/May 2002."
• Through a cooperative effort with the Religion and Peacemaking Initiative of the United States Institute of Peace, the ICR helped to create and cultivate the Iraqi Institute of Peace in Baghdad in 2004. A primary purpose of the IIP was to facilitate interfaith reconciliation and cooperation between Shi'a, Sunni, and non-Muslim minorities.2

In addition to its direct participation in conflict resolution efforts, the ICR also represents the Diocese of Coventry in its transnational, ecumenical partnerships, such as those with the Anglican Diocese of Kaduna in Nigeria, the Syrian Orthodox Diocese in Jerusalem, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME) (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/internationalministry).

The ICR is currently staffed with six employees—its director, two project directors, two volunteer coordinators, and a consultant for Africa. While linked to the spiritual mission and identity of the Church of England, the ICR is not dependant on the Church for fiscal support.

Instead, the ICR's roughly four million dollar annual operating budget is realized through a multilayered schema of financial assistance from government institutions, Community of the Cross of Nails partnerships, charitable trusts, businesses, and individuals. A necessary component of its day-to-day work involves fundraising and fiscal management, ensuring resource support for local and regional projects of reconciliation (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk).

Coventry Cathedral serves as a central hub for hosting dialogue and coordinating strategy, but the majority of its global work takes place in hundreds of locales and on multiple scales, which require adroit project development efforts, volunteer coordination, and cooperative communication at all levels. Its extensive agenda in conflict resolution is maintained through highly coordinated partnerships with dioceses located in conflict areas and a sundry of other international and local RAOs and secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations, all tiers of government, and local community leaders at the grassroots level of conflict zones. With minimal staff, the operational planning and strategic initiatives of the ICR depend heavily on its ability to coordinate support from local, regional, and global organizations.

Its creation and coordination of the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) represents the most pronounced of its efforts to broaden its reach and deepen its healing influence in local conflicts around the world.

CCN Centers

On the night of November 14, 1940, medieval rafters of the inflamed St. Michael's fell from the roof, landing in the form of a cross. Considered "a divine signal of hope and resurrection" the cross of nails has become an emblem or reconciliation for Coventry Cathedral and for embattled, yet hopeful, communities in over fifty countries and on five continents (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk). A replica of the charred cross can be seen in the ruins of the Cathedral today. The geographical and topical breadth and administrative complexity of the Community of the Cross of Nails is emphasized by the Cathedral Community:

> There are now 160 Cross of Nails Centres around the world, all emanating from this early, courageous vision, and all working for peace and reconciliation within their own communities and countries. This has no boundaries: it may focus on issues of politics, race, religion, economics, sexual orientation or personal: it can have broad and far-reaching, national consequences, or it can make just a small—nonetheless significant—difference to peoples' lives. Centres can be churches, reconciliation centres, prisons, NGOs and schools, any body of people who have a heart and a need to pursue reconciliation in their own lives and the lives of others. The Centres in Germany and the USA are administered by national Boards; others range over all continents—from Africa to Australia, Europe to Asia: truly a global network, with Centres being encouraged to support each other—practically and prayerfully (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccnbkgd.html).

Indigenous CCN centers are networked through the ICR, making it possible for Coventry Cathedral to participate in conflict resolution efforts in areas where its presence—because of logistical, financial, cultural, and staff limitations—would be otherwise restricted. A requisite to conflict management and reconciliation is ethnographic fieldwork that seeks an in-depth understanding of the histories and stories that motivate and shape a conflict. CCN centers, and their numerous staff and volunteers, provide Coventry Cathedral and its ICR a clearer picture of local context, enabling it to make a more informed and localized contribution to the work of reconciliation.

The ICR and the majority of CCN centers are unified spiritually through the Christian commission of reconciliation and service and the intangible asset of community prayer. Administratively, CCN centers place significant emphasis on volunteerism, recruiting financial and skill support from within local parishes and community. The ICR serves as a focal point of unity, helping to train local leaders in mediation skills and reconciliation models, coordinate reconciliation efforts between local CCN centers, and encourage funding and technical support partnerships between CCN centers from different parts of the world.3 What is more, the ICR staff may assist local CCN centers by hosting high-level mediation efforts at Coventry Cathedral; generate international attention to the local crisis; coordinate cooperative efforts with local, regional, and international public agencies, as well as other RAOs; and organize and manage participation in local reconciliation projects.

A pithy case study from the Middle East helps to illustrate the operational complexity and strategic partnerships that undergird the reconciliation work of Coventry Cathedral.

The First Alexandria Process

In the geographic homeland of the three Abrahamic traditions, religion and politics are inextricably intertwined. Religious identity remains an inherently public matter and an essential identifier of communities in the Middle East. Diplomacy and subsequent political agreements that ignore the percolating influences of religious identity inevitably fall short of holistic, deep peacemaking. Once religion is manipulated into an instrument of violence, it must be reclaimed as a solution for peace.

In an effort to underscore the necessity of religion's role in the conflict management processes underway between Jews and Arabs in the Levant, "key Jewish, Muslim, and Christian leaders from Israel and Palestine joined forces to promote a religious approach to peace" (White, 2006, p. 9). This interfaith cooperation culminated in the First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious Leaders of the Holy Land in 2002. Canon Andrew White, then director of the ICR, spearheaded the negotiation processes culminating in the Declaration.4The declaration begins by decrying unbridled violence against noncombatants in the name of God as a "desecration of His Holy Name." "The violence in the Holy Land," it continues, "must be opposed by all peoples of good faith." It concludes with an indefinite commitment to reconciliation through regular (monthly) interreligious dialogue in Jerusalem and persistent communication with the political leadership in the region. The Alexandria Declaration has been lauded as an honest forum for peace by local and world leaders, including the former president of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, and then Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon (White, 2006, p. 9).

Significantly, the participants of the Alexandria process refused fiscal support from the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government in an effort to ensure the non-partisan nature and overall integrity of their conflict management work. Currently, funding for the Alexandria process comes from Coventry Cathedral, the Church of Norway, the United States Institute of Peace, and the governments of the United States and Great Britain. Its ability to forgo funding from these local public agencies associated with the long-term conflict—despite the high costs involved—is a testimony to its genuine intentions of unfettered conflict resolution and reconciliation (White, 2006, p. 10).

The Alexandria Process and the reconciliation work of Canon White and the ICR represented a renewal of interfaith dialogue in the Middle East peace processes. The task of the ICR director was to facilitate "real dialogue," whereby competing stereotypes could be gradually replaced by stories of mutual respect, understanding, and even friendship. As made clear by Canon Andrew White (2003), such dialogue goes beyond the niceties of so many contemporary "interfaith

encounters," where "nice people are talking to nice people" over "cucumber sandwiches and cups of tea on the mayor's lawn." Rather, genuine reconciliation is hard, dangerous, risk-taking work that involves "people who are broken by violence—very, very intense violence." Real interfaith reconciliation seeks to stop the killing through enabling and encouraging hardened enemies to sit down with each other in the midst of violent conflict to ask hard questions and give honest answers—with the hopes of gradually softening impoverished narratives of the enemy and re-imagining coexistence (p. 7). The reconciliation work of Canon White and the ICR involved long-term, honest relationship building with individual and communal participants of violent conflict. From these trust-building relationships, White and his team emerged as a neutral, yet compassionate third-party that was well placed to relay the stories and perspectives of opposing sides, encouraging greater understanding between warring communities.

Former ICR Director, Canon Andrew White, offers a helpful illustration of this type of "real dialogue"—that between Rabbi Michael Melchoir, minister for Jewish Diaspora Affairs for the Israeli government, and Sheik Tal El Sader, a former Minister of State for the Palestinian Authority and a founder of the militant, anti-Israel organization, Hamas. Both men were key participants in the Alexandria Peace Process. Before a contentious audience in Europe, Sheik Tal El Sader joined hands with Rabbi Melchoir and declared,

> Rabbi Melchoir is my brother. He is not my friend, he is my brother, and we are going to walk this long and difficult road together. And eventually we will, because my job is to pull up the thorns along this difficult road and plant flowers (White, 2003, p. 8).

The transforming spirit of these two former enemies, states White, is a powerful illustration of how people can change:

> If we just condemn everybody and say, 'It is impossible, they are evil, they are terrorists, they can't change,' then we are saying that the work of the Cross is not all sufficient and that our God cannot intervene and change people's life. (p. 8)

Our work as mediators or reconcilers is constrained by our human limitations, he continues; thus, one's reliance "on the supernatural work of God to change individuals" remains a key ingredient to the faith-based work of reconciliation (White, 2003, p. 8). Expecting God's presence and power in the work of reconciliation, Christian participants can believe that human beings can be spiritually and ideologically transformed. For this reason, White concluded,

> We must not just talk to nice people; in most instances it is not the nice people who cause wars. Our challenge is to engage with some of those who are responsible for the perpetuation of violence or, if not them, then those who can influence them (2006, p. 11).

Coupled with this normative approach to interreligious reconciliation, Canon White and the ICR were tasked to serve as a critical, proactive liaison between religious leaders, diplomats, and politicians, especially before or immediately following a violent encounter between communities. In an interview conducted by the Department of Applied Christian Ethics at Wheaton College, Canon White described the primary role of his team as one of facilitation:

> In the vast majority of the work done within the name of the [Alexandria] process, my team and I actually facilitate—whether that be negotiating with terrorists, trying to get religiously sanctioned cease fires, or whether that be trying to get the European Union

and the American government to take seriously the role of religious leaders within a political peace process (2003, p. 5).

The Alexandria process has provided a religious-track to peacemaking that complements (not circumvents) the political peace initiatives underway in the Levant (White, 2006, p. 10). It is providing Palestinian and Israeli religious and political leaders an "unofficial" forum through which political leaders or community spokespersons can engage one another in a way often prohibited through official channels of diplomacy. For instance, Canon White recounts how, in 2003, he escorted U.S. diplomats to "the place of Lazarus's resurrection" (Bethany) to meet with the prominent West Bank Islamic cleric, Sheikh Taysir Tammimi, at the local Shi'a court. According to White, "Arafat knew about this meeting, and he had given approval for this meeting to take place under the umbrella of the Alexandria process" (White, 2003, p. 5).

Through the Alexandria process, the ICR helped to create a trusting, non-partisan forum for inter-religious dialogue between Muslim and Jewish leaders. In 2002, Yasser Arafat called upon the ICR's director, Canon White, to lead in negotiation efforts to end the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, serving as a third-party intermediary between Palestinian and Israeli mediators (www.frrme.org). Developing deep, trust-building relationships with the leaders and communities embroiled in this inter-religious conflict has enabled the ICR and its partnering RAOs to provide a sturdy bridge of communication between Palestinians and Israelis instead of the alternative dialogical impasse that has too often characterized this inter-communal relationship.

Practical Application for the Field of Social Work

This special issue of *Social Work & Christianity* is dedicated to demonstrating how the administrative practices of RAOs are affected by the field of professional social work. The social work toolbox is essential for international RAOs involved in the work of reconciliation. The conflict management and reconciliation work of Coventry Cathedral's ICR and its CCN centers around the world emphasize the importance of social work skills and assets in international conflict management processes and reconciliation initiatives. Dispute resolution skills are grounded in the field of social work. Third-party mediation, whether between individuals or societies, is a core function for professional social workers. The ICR's strategic planning, volunteerism, and coordination of multilateral partnerships rely on important social work skill sets. The ICR's six-part methodology, designed to achieve its faith-based vision, is indicative of social work's role in this international RAO.

Described as the "6 Rs," the six interlinking phases are put forth by the ICR as necessary for realizing its faith-based mandate of reconciliation. These phases are not necessarily sequential but often occur in unison. The idiosyncrasies of each conflict necessitate a custom-tailored approach to implementing these six stages. Figure 2 illustrates this multidimensional method. Each component merits a brief description.161

Research

Communal conflict resolution seeks to overcome impoverished narratives of hatred and resentment, which are grounded, too often, on misunderstandings and misinformation. Historical memory can be a powerful inhibitor to reconciliation. Remembering and acknowledging past sufferings and persecutions—along with repentance and gradual forgiveness—are part of the reconciliation process. Ultimately, each side must be willing to reconstruct its relationship with the Other, re-envisioning one another as part of the human family, worthy of dignity and respect. This is difficult on an individual level and extremely challenging on a societal level.

The client systems impacted by conflict resolution strategies implemented through ICR efforts vary widely. Thus, this RAO, as an agent of mediation, dialogue, and, ultimately, reconciliation must be cognizant of the multiplicity of cultural, religious, geographical, and historical contexts that will influence operational planning and intervention strategies. Community organizing efforts, volunteer coordination, and target relationship-building cannot precede in-depth research of the contextually contingent circumstances shaping a violent conflict.

The National Association of Social Work's (NASW) Code of Ethics (1999) expects professional social workers to demonstrate a *cultural competency*, which demonstrates a "knowledge base of their clients' cultures" and an ability to provide "services that are sensitive to . . . differences among people and cultural groups" (p. 9). As well, developing a greater understanding via a rigorous research agenda is a responsible measure and critical requisite for efficient strategic and operational planning in international conflict resolution RAOs—especially in cases where religious or tribal identities are complicating peacemaking efforts. Inter-communal reconciliation cannot come before greater understanding. To be effective, third-party participants must endeavor to understand past experiences, current negotiating positions, and the stories of all parties involved in the violent conflict.

One appropriate research-intensive method of conflict resolution is the e*licitive* or *educational* approach. Michelle LeBaron (1997), law professor and director of the University of British Columbia Program of Dispute Resolution, describes the focus of this operational, research-intensive strategy:

> This approach focuses on gathering information from parties to the conflict about processes that make sense in their cultural context. Parties are invited to consider the setting or forum, appropriate procedures, forms of contact or communication to be used, kinds of outcomes that are desirable, and the roles for outsiders or intervenors in the process. The elicitive process is important because it allows for the mergence of a fit between parties, processes, and intervenor (p. 327).

The program initiatives of ICR clearly embrace this *elicitive* approach to conflict resolution, placing research and subsequent evaluation as essential for policy efficiency and effectiveness. Research involving "office-based reviews of articles, reports, bulletins and other background information," as well as "field-based interviews with all parties to a conflict" (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk, 2004), enables the staff at ICR to better understand the identity of conflicting groups; the cultural, political, or religious contexts of said conflict; the past and current stages of violent conflict; the competing stories and stereotypes formed about the Other; religious or tribal rituals or symbols that may affect violence or peacemaking; and important religious, social, or political authority figures who may accelerate the processes of reconciliation. This prefatory research helps ICR implement more dynamic and efficient program processes for intervention and dispute resolution.

In addition to academic research through documentary sources, which may include local and international reports and published accounts from official sources and media outlets (Midgley, 1997, p. 47), *ethnographic* investigations appear to be one of the most important research techniques the ICR staff uses to evaluate local communal conditions. James Midgley (1997) aptly defines a basic ethnographic approach to measuring social conditions:

> The investigator spends an extended period of time in the community and establishes close relationships with local people. These relationships are important to ensure that

in-depth information is obtained. After studying the community, the field notes collected during the study are written up (p. 46).

The research-intensive, ethnographic field work of Canon Anthony White and his ICR team in Kaduna, Nigeria, during the Christian-Muslim violence in 2000-2001 enabled the ICR team to coordinate efforts between the Diocese of Kaduna, local and national authorities, community workers, and local Christian and Muslim leaders. Critical to the Alexandria processes in Jerusalem was gathering information on the grievances and interests of the diverging groups from either the Palestinian or Israeli side of the conflict. Translating the stories of conflicting parties, learning and appreciating "cultural patterns of communication (verbal and nonverbal) of specific groups" (LeBaron, 1997, p. 333), and an ever-growing awareness of cultural- and religious-specific norms appear to be important criteria for the ICR and its CCN centers around the world.

Relationships

The field of professional social work asserts the *central importance of human relationships*. The NASW Code of Ethics (1999) states: "Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process," with an intentional effort "to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being" of their clients. A key criterion necessary for the ICR to realize its international, faith-based vision is human relationships—that is, the "establishment of working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and identification of local partners" (coventrycathedral.org.uk, 2004).

Relationships were emphasized throughout this brief survey of the ICR's work in conflict management and reconciliation. The staff of ICR is tasked directly with creating and maintaining transparent relationships with stakeholders in current- and post-conflict arenas. Through the development of mutual, trust-building relationships, the ICR is able to foster a hospitable third-party framework for addressing past, present, and potential issues of violent conflict. These relationships help create a foundational trust required before *real* dialogue and relationship-building can begin. As LeBaron describes in the *elicitive* approach to conflict resolution, such human relationships—when deployed in conjunction with practical expertise and technical skills in conflict resolution—are invaluable in inter-communal violent conflicts, as they can "spark creative interaction and respectful engagement," creating "an interactive exchange where information is shared, ideas are floated, cultural differences are recognized, and a process that includes input from everyone emerges" (LeBaron, 1997, p. 329-30).

As well, the ICR staff is involved with identifying, initiating, nurturing, and coordinating relationship-building partnerships with local CCN centers and other RAOs and NGOs, thus providing a more amplified contribution to reconciliation. A chief component, then, to this international RAO's commitment to conflict resolution is the cultivation of trust-building, restorative human relationships.

Relief

In the Gospel of Matthew, those faithful to the King inquired, "'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink?" And the King rejoined, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:37-40, New International Version). The lesson from Jesus was clear: when Christians respond to the basic human needs of others, they are responding to Him. For Christians in the vocation of professional social work, one may argue that their selfless commitment to helping those in need is ultimately derived from this faith-based injunction of

Christ to give of ourselves in a spirit of *caritas* and obedience to the creator. The relief work sponsored by the ICR typifies a clear interface between spirituality and the practical work of reconciliation. Such work is wholly grounded on a recognition of the inherent value and dignity of each person—created in the image and likeness of God—and a call, not unlike the professional social worker, to "elevate service to others above self-interest" (NASW Code of Ethics).

While not a large part of the ICR operating budget, financial and humanitarian relief efforts in areas where IRC staff and CCN centers are participating is a critical component of its faith-based work (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk). As an essential ingredient to progress, the ICR and numerous CCN centers are supporting, through monies, volunteers, and skilled professionals, education and humanitarian relief centers in current- and post-conflict areas. The ICR helped construct the Mar Ephraim School in Bethlehem, providing an opportunity for education to children from the Syrian Orthodox community. It is described by its supporters as a hopeful step forward, giving the children "an opportunity to maintain their Aramaic tradition and ensuring their future survival" (www.crossofnails.org:Israel). In 2000 and 2001, the ICR played an instrumental role in helping to facilitate the arrival of medical assistance into pre-war Iraq (www.coventrycathedral.org). St. George's Cathedral in Baghdad, the sole remaining Anglican Church in the country (a CCN center since 2007), is struggling to survive, while, at the same time, quietly managing the distribution of humanitarian assistance to local families and communities.

As a part of their ministries of reconciliation, CCN centers around the world are directly participating in local and international relief work. Global Care, an international Christian children's charity based in Coventry, UK, and a CCN center since 2006, is focused on cultivating and implementing humanitarian relief projects for "very deprived and vulnerable children and young people" in communities from Asia to South America. Its relief work encompasses emergency assistance and innovatory development initiatives that focus on basic human needs assistance and education development efforts (http://www.globalcare.org.uk/aboutus/). Providing a place of physical refuge and spiritual and physical renewal to refugees has been a major focus of the CCN centers in Tbilisi, Georgia (Cathedral Baptist Church) and Bujumbura, Burundi (The Holy Trinity Cathedral). The ICR, in cooperation with groups like Global Care and other relief-focused CCN centers, is able, through obedience to its faith-based mission, to coordinate multilevel intervention efforts, creating a holistic and dynamic approach to conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Resourcing

A fourth component of ICR strategy, as it relates to social work, is resourcing. Through strategic resourcing programs, the ICR seeks to empower local communities with the social work-intensive skills necessary for resolving and preventing violent conflict and affecting reconciliation (www.coventrycathedral.org/vision&methodology). Following, or in lieu of, direct involvement in a conflict area, the ICR endeavors to support and enable CCN centers in their development of conflict resolution workshops, job skills training seminars, and mediation and dialogue hubs. A primary service of ICR is identifying and facilitating partnerships grounded on common concerns toward particular current- or post-conflict communities. Oftentimes, the purpose of the ICR is not to prescribe policy to CCN centers or partner RAOs but to serve as a networking liaison that integrates local and international, secular and faith-based perspectives into an interdependent, broad-based approach to conflict management and reconciliation. It is a critical intercultural associative approach to conflict resolution that acknowledges a plurality of

vantage points and normative preferences, resulting in a multidimensional strategy of intervention.

This networking function of the ICR also involves the coordination of volunteers within its partnering CCN centers. While many of the CCN centers are Christian-based organizations—churches and RAOs—a number of centers are non-religious NGOs who share a common concern of reconciliation with the ICR. This voluntary collaboration offers a dynamic illustration of the ability of RAOs to work in direct partnership with non-religious public or private community organizations committed to similar principles of reconciliation. What is more, the ICR also coordinates volunteer opportunities with Associate Centers of Reconciliation, which are non-Christian RAOs "working for interfaith relations around the world." Fellowship and mutual edification is made evident in the partnerships the ICR proactively maintains with these other NGOs and RAOs committed to a common concern for dialogue and the "healing of wounds" (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/internationalministry).

In addition to its networking function, the ICR seeks to remain an educational resource for reconciliation, hosting conferences and workshops on specific or general issues of reconciliation. In August of 2008, Coventry Cathedral hosted its International Youth Conference, where youth from Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Northern Ireland congregated for five days and participated in workshops designed to provide "greater understanding" on the practical and normative work of reconciliation (www.crossofnails.com).

Moreover, the ICR provides communities a spiritual resource—a locus for prayers and spiritual encouragement. The Litany of Reconciliation, recited each Friday in the Cathedral ruins, symbolizes the foundation of this spiritual resource, saturating the practical work of conflict resolution in a spirit of hope and divine presence. In a Good Friday world filled with violence and despair, the ICR is very much an Easter Organization—one that believes in new beginnings and reconciliation through the power of the resurrection, imparting words of encouragement to communities in conflict and to those workers deeply involved in the normative work of reconciliation.

Risk-taking

The preamble of the NASW Code of Ethics begins by declaring that the "primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human welfare." It continues, "Social workers promote social justice and social change within and on behalf of clients." Such commitment involves risk—risk for social workers, policymakers, and clients. In furthering its ministry of reconciliation, the ICR is committed to taking risks for peace, risking the welfare of ICR personnel serving in zones of violent conflict and risking premature involvement in seemingly intractable violent conflicts where poor timing could be counterproductive and "lead to a deterioration of a conflict situation" (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk, 2004). This core principle recognizes the physical and operational risks that come when identifying and developing relationships, conducting ethnographic field work, participating in relief work, and coordinating volunteers and material resources.

The faith-based approach of ICR and many of its CCN centers helps to undergird such risk with a deeper spiritual purpose. As evinced in its Litany of Reconciliation, risk is to be preferred to indifference. Not unlike the service of the professional social worker, a commitment to the disenfranchised, the oppressed, and the displaced is not risk-free work; rather, uncertainty of one's safety or of a program's success is a reality in the normative work of serving those in need. Whether in ethnographic field work of an ICR team in Kaduna; interfaith dialogue within the context of daily violence in Jerusalem or Jos; or the sheltering of ethnic or religious minorities in

Baghdad, Tbilisi, or Bujumbura; risk is inherent in the work of reconciliation.

Reconciliation

For most Christian organizations, a vision statement is not an end in itself. Rather, a vision statement stands as a dynamic witness to God's faithfulness. It represents a community's freedom to respond to God's purposes of healing and restoration through Christ and his creation. As such, a vision statement is not a static endgame but a reflection of God's unchanging mercy and reconciliation on the ever-changing contexts of human experience. The ICR's reflective vision statement seeks to inculcate the inconstant nature of human conflict with an unwavering expression of God's grace. Integrating spirituality with practice, the ICR's three-part vision statement proffers a holistic approach for conflict resolution: 1) "Apply the Christian faith and unique heritage of Coventry Cathedral to all its practical work"; 2) Actively nurture its role as a leading global center for reconciliation; and 3) "enable local people in conflict areas to sustain effective reconciliation initiatives" (www.coventrycathedral.org, 2004).

The final core constituent of the ICR methodology is reconciliation. As made clear in its three-part vision statement, the ICR commits to integrating its Christian faith and distinctive story of restoration with the practical work of reconciliation (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/vision). The ICR's entire work emanates from this faith-based component. Coventry Cathedral's profound Christian heritage and theology provide a rich normative framework from which deep peacemaking can occur.

Its ministry of reconciliation began in 1940 with the Christian teaching of forgiveness. Engraved on the east wall behind the rebuilt altar and charred cross of the Cathedral ruins are the words "Father Forgive." Prayed each Friday in the sanctuary ruins of St. Michaels and in CCN centers around the world is the Litany of Reconciliation. It is a prayer imbued with the virtue of forgiveness and is recounted here:

All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class,

Father Forgive.

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,

Father Forgive.

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,

Father Forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

Father Forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee,

Father Forgive.

The lust which dishonors the bodies of men, women and children,

Father Forgive.

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God,

Father Forgive.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave
you
(www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/litany).5

Delivering a sermon at Coventry Cathedral on the interdenominational foundations of reconciliation, Alastair McKay, the director of Bridge Builders6, emphasized the transformative power of forgiveness. "Our willingness to forgive," he reminded listeners, "is rooted in our own experience of God's forgiveness." From this faith-based perspective, reconciliation becomes a proactive response of faithfulness through forgiveness (www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/psermons).

Following the racial strife that beset the city of Cincinnati in the spring of 2001, city officials and community leaders engaged in a campaign of healing. Following a racial profiling lawsuit, which "involved the police department, the City of Cincinnati and the Black United Front," the Very Reverend James Diamond, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral (a CCN center since 1975), agreed to host mediation efforts. When asked by the chief mediator, "What is the difference between what I do as a mediator and you do as a reconciler?" Diamond replied, "forgiveness." Indeed, both mediation and reconciliation must play a part in managing any violent inter-communal conflict. Both methods seek "common ground"; but where mediation stops with the pragmatics of compromise, reconciliation carries forward "the spiritual dimension of forgiveness." According to Diamond, a formula for reconciliation might be stated as thus: *Truth + Forgiveness=Reconciliation.*7

Canon Andrew White's words on the role forgiveness plays for Coventry Cathedral and ICR is illustrative:

I think once again we return to the Cross, where the Cross is an extremely radical and difficult form of forgiveness. And I think those who portray forgiveness as something that is easy or something that is for the soft or the weak have totally misunderstood the very nature of what it means to be involved in radical forgiveness. Forgiveness is a theological concept, but we are trying to enable others to realize that forgiveness has profound political implications. This is the heart of what we are doing. . . . forgiveness is the only thing that prevents the pain of the past from determining what the future is going to be. So, I think it is absolutely essential that we look at the issue of how forgiveness can be an instrument of political healing (White, 2003, p. 7).

As discussed earlier, in many post-conflict contexts, forgiveness becomes a necessary but most difficult ingredient to lasting peace. Authentic forgiveness by those who have suffered injustice cannot be coerced by others; neither can it be expected in all cases. The complexity and idiosyncrasies of violent communal conflicts preclude easy prescriptions of "forgive and forget" or "let bygones be bygones" (Wells, 1997, p. 4). The traumatic historical memory in the wake of violent atrocities cannot and must not be proscribed from the processes of healing. Indeed, forgiving the other for past atrocities or current episodes of violence "has little to do with forgetting what took place in the past (Chectkow-Yanoov, 1997, p. 83, Levin, 1992).

In an exposition on social work's critical contribution to inter-communal conflict resolution, Chectkow-Yanoov (1997) highlights the professional social worker's role as "social therapist or healer." A healer, writes Chectkow-Yanoov, is a professional who, working at the local level, "investigates the underlying causes of a continuing conflict" in order to construct an "appropriate kind of treatment" whereby warring communities can encounter each other through empathic

listening and mutual mourning (105-06). Such investigations may require "looking at taboo ideas, overcoming historical hatreds, verbalizing feelings of deprivation or suffering . . . discontinuing behavior that humiliates or victimizes other groups, improving self-understanding, and listening sensitively to the complaints of the other side" (p. 104-05). Through empathy and trust-building—two central values of the professional social worker—a third-party healer can facilitate real dialogue, where active listening can occur and "expressions of regret or forgiveness can eventually be communicated clearly." Third-party healers can foster a "safe environment" where truth-telling and remembering and forgiveness and repentance are encouraged, freeing conflicting communities from the shackles of hatred and the violent consequences of dehumanization (p. 105-06).

Forgiveness is a potent Christian virtue that undergirds the reconciliation experience and ministry of Coventry Cathedral and the practical work of the ICR. The reconciliation work of the ICR clearly evinces how real dialogue and relationship-building are part of the freeing power of forgiveness and how truth and remembering must come alongside any eventuality of forgiveness if lasting peace and coexistence are to be realized.

Not only is spirituality a motivating essence of ICR's work in reconciliation, but familiarity with the spiritual is often an asset when facilitating conflict resolution processes between conflicting faith communities. As discussed above, genuine interfaith dialogue requires an understanding and, more importantly, appreciation for the influences of religious beliefs, institutions, and rituals.

In Baghdad and Jerusalem, for instance, to ignore spiritual issues is perilous to the process of reconciliation. Violence and dehumanization of the Other too often find justification through manipulated religion.

For these reasons, the research, evaluative, and relational processes of the ICR must appreciate and address the spiritual and ritual dimensions of violent conflict between communities. RAOs involved in conflict resolution between religious groups must understand the conflicting parties' cosmology and how their belief systems and ritual sets may help explain historical circumstances and motivations for violence or dialogue. RAOs, because of their religious underpinnings, can approach inter-religious divisions with a deeper empathy for the spiritual arguments proffered by clashing communities, garnering a position of trust from those communities clashing, in part, in the name of religion.

Thus, not only does the ICR implement a faith-based approach to conflict resolution, its operations and networking is framed around a position of humility, which recognizes that competing, spiritually informed perceptions of reality may be at work in a conflict. In such situations, its role is not to judge but to understand, to help harmonize interfaith, cross-cultural values of forgiveness, compassion, and hospitality in hopes of nurturing a restorative approach to lasting peace. In sum, for this international RAO, reconciliation focuses on where the practical and spiritual converge, illuminating the recursive relationship between faith and practice in the healing work of reconciliation.

Conclusion

In a shrinking, globalizing world, local and regional inter-communal conflicts are commanding an international audience. This article makes clear the central part international RAOs like the ICR are playing in the difficult and variegated work of inter-communal reconciliation and how assets and skills essential in the field of professional social work inform its operational planning, program development, and global collaboration efforts with public agencies, CCN centers, and partnering NGOs. The ICR offers social workers a practical, faith-

based model for framing the management, planning, and implementation of conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts for violent inter-communal conflicts occurring on local, regional, and transnational levels.

Social workers employed with RAOs committed to inter-communal conflict resolution must respect the way a faith-based vision of reconciliation informs the practical work of conflict management. Coventry Cathedral's ICR reveals how the practical methods of research, relationship-building, relief work, resourcing, risk-taking, and reconciliation find spiritual sustenance, thus enriching the normative work of reconciliation with the injunctions of faith.

In a Good Friday world that is filled with despair, resentment, and hatred, Coventry Cathedral envisions itself as a resurrected organization affecting reconciliation between communities, advocating new beginnings through a common purpose as human beings. In the words of the Coventry community, while "the vision is challenging and the task is great . . . God is greater." v

Notes

1. See the Minorities at Risk Project (2005). College Park, MD: Center for International Development and Conflict Management. Available at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/.

2. Coventry Cathedral has produced an expansive, updated website outlining past and current ministries of reconciliation through the ICR and the Community of the Cross of Nails. Available at www.coventrycathedral.org.uk (International Ministry). See the United States Institute of Peace for a closer look into conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts underway in Iraq. Available at http://www.usip.org/iraq/programs/violence.html.

3. The cooperative effort between the CCN center of Christ Church in Dayton, Ohio and its partner CCN center of St. George's Cathedral in Sierra Leone is indicative of such cooperation between centers.

4. The negotiations leading to the declaration were co-chaired by George Carey, former Archbishop of Canterbury, and Sheikh Mohamed Sayed Tantawi, the grand imam of Cairo's Al-Azhar Islamic University (White, 2006, p. 9).

5. For the Khartoum Cathedral (a CCN center since 2002), The Litany of Reconciliation, which is now an essential part of this center's local ritual package, was modified slightly to confess another challenge of its local ministry: "For our indifference to the disabled, the HIV/AIDS victims, the widows and orphans, Father Forgive" (www.crossofnails.com).

6. Bridge Builders is part of the London Mennonite Center dedicated to helping Christians better understand intra-Church conflict. It offers intensive mediation skills training for laity and clergy. See http://www.menno.org.uk/node/3.

7. This sermon was preached by the Very Rev. James Diamond, Dean, Christ Church Cathedral, Cincinnati, at the Chapel of the Cross, Chapel Hill, North Carolina on Sunday, January 20, 2002. Available at http://www.ccn-northamerica.org/index.html.

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Developing Community Partnerships With Religiously Affiliated Organizations to Address Aging Needs: A Case Study of the Congregational Social Work Education Initiative

Jay Poole, John C. Rife, Fran Pearson, and Wayne R. Moore

This article presents the Congregational Social Work Education Initiative (CSWEI). The CSWEI is an interdisciplinary social work and nursing field education project that serves members of religious affiliated organizations (RAOs). Helping older adults to remain independent and in their own homes is challenging because many are reluctant to use public agencies for their social service and mental health needs. This project serves people within their congregational environments. Funded by a regional health foundation, the project demonstrates the opportunities for collaboration between professional social work and religiously affiliated organizations and also prepares future social work practitioners to reduce health and mental health disparities among the elderly, and especially elderly of color. Initial project outcomes and implications for replication are discussed.

With the aging of America, there is a need to increase gerontology education for social workers (Council on Social Work Education, 2006). Helping older adults to remain independent and in their own homes is a challenge which often requires multidisciplinary assessment and intervention (Giffords & Eggleton, 2005; Cowles, 2000). However, many older persons are reluctant to use public agencies for their social service and mental health needs (Rife, 2006). Instead, they often turn to their faith communities for guidance or assistance with personal or family issues.

Research from a recent poll indicates that over 65% of older Americans claim to be members of a church or synagogue (The Gallup Organization, 2004). Other research has found that older persons prefer and desire social services from their religious organizations (Tirrito & Spencer-Amado, 2000; Walls, 1992). Unfortunately, studies have also found that many clergy and congregations are often reluctant to provide therapeutic intervention or lack the knowledge to assist families to navigate the complex web of community social service agencies (Polson & Rogers, 2007; Tirrito, 2000; Biegel, Farkas, & Song, 1997; Goldstrom, et.al., 1987).

To address these issues, the Joint Master of Social Work Program, administered by North Carolina A&T State University and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, developed the Congregational Social Work Education Initiative (CSWEI) funded by a regional health foundation.1 The project provides gerontology classroom content and field instruction placements in religiously affiliated organizations (RAOs) for MSW and BSW students who are preparing for professional social work practice with older persons. In concert with the Moses Cone Health System Congregational Nurse Program, which teams a community health nurse with the social work students, the project provides interdisciplinary health and psychosocial assessment, case management, crisis intervention, personal and health counseling, screening clinics, educational programs, advocacy, and care giving assistance to older members of urban and rural congregations in central North Carolina. This initiative demonstrates the opportunities for

collaboration between professional social work and RAOs and prepares future practitioners to reduce health and mental health disparities among the elderly whose point of contact is the local congregation. The purpose of this paper is to discuss this initiative, administrative practices, the educational curriculum, and strategies for replication in other social work education programs.

Literature Review

Professional social work's origins are found in the history of the rise and development of the Charitable Organization Society movement and the Settlement House movement at the turn of the 19th century. These movements were often affiliated or supported by churches or sectarian agencies (Sherr & Straughan, 2005; Day, 2006). Through history, religious organizations have provided social services for members while also acting as a voice for the poor and oppressed (Garland & Bailey, 1990). Faith-based social service delivery has long been an important system of care (Cnaan, Sinha, & McGrew, 2004) and the prominence of this delivery approach has received increased attention in the past decade as a result of Bush administration faith-based initiatives (Kaseman & Austin, 2005; Lewis, 2003).

Despite the importance of RAOs in the delivery of social and health services, professional social work has often missed opportunities to join with these organizations in the delivery of services. While social workers in settings such as hospitals, hospice, and long-term care have been leaders in recognizing the spiritual needs of patients and collaborating with clergy, social workers in child and family settings, mental health, and schools have been less active in this collaboration. As Mantheny (1989) notes, during the modern development of the social work in the 20th century, there has been a drive for professionalization and a separation from volunteerism and religious-based service delivery.

When experiencing personal health or mental health difficulties, individuals and families often seek help from their pastor or church staff. However, church leaders may not always be skilled in recognizing or meeting the mental health needs of members. In addition, church staff rarely make referrals to mental health professionals (Polson & Rogers, 2007). Other research has found that some clergy may deny that social problems, such as domestic violence, are present in their congregation, or feel unskilled to address it (Homiak & Singletary, 2007).

Low levels of collaboration among professional social workers and RAOs and resulting low referral rates have expanded the professional distance between social work mental health professionals and clergy (Paul, Hussey, & Arnsberger, 2002). Social workers have been slow to embrace the importance of spirituality to many clients, while clergy do not always recognize the need for referral. Although there are exceptions (Taylor, Ellison, Chatters, Levin, & Lincoln, 2000), opportunities for collaboration are being missed which result in low levels of service provision to people in need. Given the number of elderly who prefer seeking help in their religious organization (Tirrito & Spencer-Amado, 2000) and an increased interest by social work in faith-based service delivery (Lewis, 2003), there are opportunities for social workers to more effectively meet the health and mental health needs of elders by reconnecting professionally with faith organizations (Sherr & Wolfer, 2003).

The Need for Collaboration

Is there a need for this collaboration? Prior research has shown that clergy are concerned about the health needs of their members. Clergy support for specific programming such as health screenings, prevention interventions, health education, and health-related classes is strong (Hale & Bennett, 2003). This support provides opportunities for effective service delivery, student education, and interdisciplinary practice with older adults in congregations.

While a large percentage of older adults are affiliated with faith communities (Tirrito, 2000), serving older adults is not always a top priority for many congregations (Cnaan, Boddie, & Kang, 2005). Small budgets and lack of organizational structures for service delivery in the church may serve as barriers to direct provision of services (Cnaan, Sinha, & McGrew, 2004). These barriers may be overcome by developing social work education, community nursing, and religiously affiliated organization collaborative models. When serving older adults, a multidisciplinary approach that includes nursing as well as social work can be beneficial. Research has found that multidisciplinary approaches to health and mental health care are the norm and result in better outcomes for patients. As a result, most health and mental health settings now include medical, social work, and allied professionals (Mason & Wood, 2000).

Given the opportunities and potential benefits, which include health promotion and reducing health disparities, collaborations between social work education, community nursing, and religiously affiliated organizations should be explored. This paper presents a case study of one such collaboration.

Overview of the Project

The title of this project is the Congregational Social Work Education Initiative (CSWEI). The project has three educational components: 1) pre-service training in gerontology, health, and mental health; 2) field instruction in religiously affiliated organizations serving older persons; and 3) the use of a collaborative team approach involving social work students, community health nurses, clergy, and other professional disciplines that are affiliated with congregations and/or RAOs served by the CSWEI. Under the supervision of the program director, the initiative offers older adults easy access to a number of services.

Prior to entering fieldwork, students complete pre-service content on the biology and psychology of aging, individual, interpersonal, and social problems related to aging, and health and mental health issues including specific topics such as co-morbid or co-occurring mental and physical disorders. Content on the major developments in treatment and psychological dynamics of major physical illnesses, with specific focus on cardiac disease, dementia, diabetes, stroke, pain, and oncology, is also covered. Additionally, students discuss cultural competence and sensitivity, safety, holistic care, ethical considerations, service documentation, the role of medications and medication management, and risk assessment, including assessment for suicidal and homicidal concerns. Specific attention is given to conducting psychosocial and functional assessments, and service planning in a multidisciplinary environment.

Upon completion of this pre-service education, students are placed in area churches and other RAOs where they complete their field instruction as a member of a nurse-social worker team. MSW students complete one to three semesters of field instruction in this environment. BSW students complete two semesters of field instruction. Using a strengths-based model of intervention, services provided by the social work student-nursing teams include psychosocial and functional assessment, treatment planning, case management, referral, advocacy, education, and evaluation. In addition, students present workshops with faculty and nursing personnel on topics such as physical and mental health issues in older age, community services for older persons, care giving, substance abuse, and healthy aging. Participating students receive an educational monetary fellowship funded by the foundation supporting this project.

Administrative Structure

The CSWEI program director, a licensed clinical social worker and a licensed registered nurse, oversees the learning activities of the students and serves in the dual role of both clinical supervisor and field instructor. One of the principal investigators, a licensed clinical social

worker, supervises the program director. This flat administrative structure minimizes human resource program cost, maximizes program coordination, and minimizes role confusion for the student participants. In its current program configuration, the initiative accepts a maximum of 12 students. In addition, the program is entirely community-based without any office setting. Students are not in an office within the congregations where they work; rather, they are mobile and provide services in the client's environment.

Following successful completion of the required pre-service training, students receive their respective assignments to a local religiously affiliated organization. Students may be assigned to up to five religious organizations depending upon the intensity of service and level of need of the congregants. In the first year of the program, a majority of student assignments were to congregations with a large number of low-income members whose needs included a broad range of health and mental health concerns.

A distinctive component of the initiative is the collaboration between the social work student and the registered nurse. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, the social work student and the registered nurse provide a continuum of care through direct services and referrals to other community-based services, helping to bridge the gaps that often occur as people attempt to navigate complex and complicated social service and health systems. Nurses initiate referrals to the CSWEI, since each RAO has an assigned nurse who is familiar with the congregation and its needs.

Pre-service Curriculum

The 45-hour pre-service training is integral to the success of the initiative. The intensive coursework, coupled with the small class size, enables the program director to assess the skill level and learning needs of each student intern prior to receiving his or her field assignments. Pre-service training also increases students' knowledge base and preparedness, thus increasing the quality of service and competence in delivering health and mental health services.

In addition to those topics already outlined, pre-service offers training in the following areas: intern safety, overview of mental illness and substance abuse, healthy aging, and resource development. Given the unique challenges of a nontraditional field placement, the pre-service training also provides extensive training in these additional areas: ethics, boundaries, confidentiality, and role differentiation, particularly with regard to interdisciplinary team work and practice in RAOs. Information concerning the pre-service curriculum may be obtained by contacting the senior author.

Challenges and Successes

Initial findings suggest that the CSWEI may be a cost effective, high impact program which has provided social work services to a diverse congregant base. Placed in almost 40 different religiously affiliated organizations, social work interns are exposed to great diversity in culture, ethnicity, race, age, religious doctrine, and clinical presentation of people served by the entities. The Greensboro community is home to a diverse population base and this is reflected in the membership of its faith institutions. The CSWEI interns are able to utilize the cross-cultural knowledge acquired in the pre-service training to more effectively serve the local Montagnard and Latino communities. One faith institution recently added to the congregational service list is a newly organized Native American church, which further expands the cultural diversity of the congregants served.

In addition to its service partnership with traditional faith-based institutions, the CSWEI is also affiliated with two community RAOs, the Greensboro Urban Ministry and the Salvation Army. Founded in 1967, Greensboro Urban Ministry (GUM) is an ecumenical outreach agency

supported by more than 200 congregations. Similar in service to GUM, the Salvation Army, a national RAO, provides food, housing, and emergency assistance to local individuals and families in need.

Although each RAO offers its own unique learning opportunities and service challenges, the CSWEI's work with the local churches that serve the Montagnard and Latino populations posed additional obstacles to care. The language and cultural barriers were particularly challenging in regards to the Montagnard population. Greensboro is home to the largest concentration of Montagnards in the United States (University of North Carolina at Greensboro Center for New North Carolinians, 2008). Nevertheless, there is still a shortage of interpreters in the city. Once the language barrier was bridged, however, trust was developed very quickly and this group gained access to many services since, as refugees, their immigration status was not a barrier to care. Conversely, the establishment of trust and access to care remain challenges in the Latino church, since many of its membership may have undocumented legal status, which adversely impacts service eligibility by many community agencies.

The privatization of North Carolina's public mental health system has also presented challenges. This newly fragmented delivery system posed difficulties as students assisted clients in the identification and eligibility criteria of newly created service entities. RAOs with a high membership of indigent, low-income congregants were disproportionately affected, since those congregations required a higher level of service.

Despite these challenges, the CSWEI experienced numerous program successes. At the conclusion of service delivery, each client was invited to complete a brief seven-item survey. The survey included questions about overall service satisfaction, amount of contact with social work student interns, and satisfaction with the intern. Eighteen clients completed the survey. Results indicated high client satisfaction, as did the anecdotal feedback. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest possible score, CSWEI overall service satisfaction scored a mean range of 4.5-4.9. Examples of case successes follow:

- A 76-year-old woman sought case management services following a fall that resulted in a broken right shoulder. A social work intern conducted a comprehensive strengths-based psychosocial assessment in order to link the client to appropriate community services. During the coordination of care process, the intern discovered that the client's husband of 53 years had died 5 months previously. Under the supervision of a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, the student initiated counseling services to assist the client in processing her grief.
- An older Montagnard refugee and his five children are undergoing preventative treatment for tuberculosis. To obtain treatment, he must learn how to access the indigent county pharmacy services program, as well as how to find it in an unfamiliar area of town. The social work student guides him to the pharmacy, escorts him inside, and they meet with the pharmacy technicians so that they will be able to assist him and his family with their next round of treatment. This effort may have prevented a hospitalization of a family of 6, not including other members of the community.

- A referral was received for a 107-year-old widowed female. The client lived independently and was in good health. The reason for the referral was that she was the primary caretaker for her 73-year-old nephew who has resided with her for several years. The presenting issue was coordinating placement planning for the nephew should the client precede him in death. The social worker intern completed a thorough psychosocial assessment and assisted the extended family in developing a placement plan.
- An 83-year-old male has struggled with substance abuse since late adulthood. Following a 30-day inpatient treatment program, the client relapsed in September. Shortly thereafter, the client was referred to CSWEI. To date, the client has been sober since January 16th, a total of 109 days.

Additional Learning Opportunities

The CSWEI student interns had opportunities to engage in both direct and indirect social work practice learning activities. A local community center, located in a low-income neighborhood, was provided support through another local RAO. Since funds were secured to place a congregational nurse in the center, a CSWEI intern was assigned as well. In order to determine the type of services in which the residents were interested, the CSWEI student conducted a neighborhood-wide needs assessment. Fliers were distributed to all 281 households notifying the residents that a survey was going to be conducted. A week later, the intern, accompanied by Center volunteers, distributed the survey to every household. The response rate, though low, represented a significant increase from the previous year when Center staff attempted a similar needs assessment. Support groups for youth, reducing violence, and support groups for parents were listed as the primary needs of the neighborhood. This effort provides invaluable data for both the congregational nurse and the next assigned student. Additionally, the CSWEI student worked with residents to begin advocacy efforts to gain access to the services they desired. This participatory action research project was presented by the CSWEI student intern at the Council on Social Work Education's Annual Program Meeting in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in October 2008.

Student Satisfaction with CSWEI

At the conclusion of the academic year, students were surveyed about their satisfaction with their learning experiences from the CSWEI. On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest possible score, the CSWEI student satisfaction survey responses revealed a mean range of 4.4-4.7, indicating a high level of satisfaction with the program. Additional data emerged from informal focus groups that indicated students' satisfaction with the program and the opportunities it offered. Challenges identified included the costs of transportation (students used their own cars to provide services) and some concerns about direct links to job opportunities, since the program does not have the capacity to hire student interns once they graduate.

Initial Project Outcomes

The initial project outcomes for the CSWEI demonstrate both the need and the receptivity of the community for services delivered under this programmatic model. In its inaugural program year, the interns made over 800 client contacts in a variety of community-based settings including hospitals, homeless shelters, faith institutions, and private homes. The findings from these client contacts resulted in 710 community referrals for services such as food banks, employment resources, transportation, and organizations offering financial assistance. At current North Carolina Medicaid rates, interns provided over $48,000 in services to people in need. Education presentations were made to 2,824individuals. Topics included; *How to Cope with Stress*, *Signs and Symptoms of Dementia*, *How to Find a Job*, *Stress Management, Healthy*

Relationships, Stages of Grief, and *Aging Successfully.* Pre and Post-tests were administered to assess the effectiveness of each presentation. The average percent of change—measuring increased topic knowledge—was 45%. The lowest increase in knowledge was 6% and the highest was 77%. Although each education module was much longer in duration, at current Medicaid rates, a 15-minute education presentation for 2,824individuals represents $36,203.68 in service dollars.

Lastly, a key success for the Initiative was the establishment of relationships among program participants and other faith membership partners. To date, the CSWEI and Congregational Nursing programs have successfully collaborated with religious organizations to provide holistic, no-cost services to congregants. The CSWEI and CNP work as a joint collaborative to meet the bio-psychosocial needs of this area's underserved residents through collaboration with faith-based entities who further serve the spiritual well-being of those receiving services.

Discussion

The CSWEI represents a unique collaboration between a non-profit health service entity—the Congregational Nursing Program, local religiously affiliated organizations, and the public university system. While social work is not a stranger to RAOs, the initiative re-introduces social work to faith-based entities which have, in recent years, been generally estranged from providing professional services in the manner they are addressed through this project.

Service learning has become an important pedagogy in the university environment, and this project stretches the boundaries of learning through service into involvement in a multidisciplinary experience where the delivery of professional services is an integral part of the students' learning opportunities (Sanders, McFarland, & Bartolli, 2003). A streamlined approach to the administrative structure promotes efficiency while relying on close affiliations between clergy, nurses, the CSWEI program director, and students.

A pivotal element in social work education involves the field internship experience. The CSWEI holds as its primary goal the provision of learning opportunities that challenge the students to become more competent as generalist (BSW) and advanced generalist (MSW) social work practitioners. The combination of formal social work education, interaction with community-based religiously-affiliated institutions, community-based registered nurses, and the diverse range of people served offers a unique opportunity for students to engage in a multifac-eted learning system. In addition, students are engaged with learning situations that incorporate the physical, mental, emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the people they serve. Also, students engage in an administrative capacity as they plan, coordinate, and manage services that are appropriate for each congregation served.

Traditional field internships typically place students in existing health, mental health, and social service organizations whose administrative structures are often multilayered and complex. In some cases, students miss an opportunity for exposure to community-based services in the diverse environments where people live. The CSWEI emphasizes student involvement in the environments of the people served, echoing social casework within the realm of clinical social work. Additionally, students in the first year of the program engaged in participatory action research as they worked closely with particular community groups around needs assessment and organizing efforts to support accessing services to address those needs.

Implications for Social Work Practice and Education

Past research has suggested that collaborations between RAOs and social work can be beneficial and productive (Cnaan, Boddie, & Kang, 2005; Sherwood, 2003). The initial findings from this project support this prior research. Specific implications of these findings include:

• Serving older persons in their religiously affiliated organizations has been viewed as useful by the client and social work intern in this project.
• Collaborations between professions such as social work and nursing promote a more holistic service delivery approach.
• Schools of social work benefit by expanding field education opportunities for students while also exposing students to the importance of including client spirituality in service delivery. Evidence from this project indicates that integrating faith needs of clients with social work practice can be effective and desirable.
• Exposing students to social work practice in RAOs helps them to see the importance of spirituality for many clients. This exposure is beneficial to student learning, and is consistent with Council on Social Work Education accreditation standards.

The CSWEI is in its infancy as a program, yet it provides an example of a collaboration that offers many opportunities for service as well as learning. As students engage in the provision of services and education, they develop and refine their knowledge, values, and skills to work with diverse groups of people from religious communities. Clergy engage in a system of identifying resources for congregants, which enhances the lives of those to whom they minister. The Congregational Nursing Program experiences the benefit of an additional dimension of care that was under-represented in the array of services they provide. The university becomes engaged with the community as its students become active participants in providing services to those who may otherwise be served by the private sector, unrelated public entities, or not at all.

The social work profession has long emphasized the ability to assess systems and people in their environments as a way to develop relevant and useful methods of helping people meet their needs and enhance the quality of life for the community at large. The CSWEI is put forth as an example of how innovative collaborative efforts may enable links between RAOs, social work, nursing, and educational institutions to form, flourish, and produce educational benefits for students and service delivery effectiveness for a diverse group of people in religiously-affiliated settings.

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The Emergent Journey of Church-Based Program Planning

Jon E. Singletary

This article presents an emergent alternative to the rationalist models of planning that are dominant today among contemporary organizations, including congregations and small religious nonprofit organizations. The dimensions of emergent program planning presented here are relevant to the nonrational perspective of some church-based service programs, or ministries. After a brief overview of the literature addressing comparative approaches to program planning and the role of these models in congregational planning, I present a specific congregation whose circular notion of "journey inward, journey outward" affirms this alternative to linear approaches to planning. Finally, I present implications for social workers and others who work with congregations and faith-based organizations.

"If you want to build a ship, don't summon people to buy wood, prepare tools, distribute jobs, and organize the work, rather teach people to long for the endless immensity of the sea."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

The Faith and Service Technical Education Network, an organization in which my colleagues and I served as the Research Team, is one among many organizations today promoting a specific approach to human service program planning. " Outcome Based Evaluation: A Training Toolkit for Programs of Faith" (Horn, 2005) is a systematic tool for organizations that seek to " objectively measure the results of their programs" and " clearly identify how their programs make a difference in the lives of people they serve."

This resource is one of many suggesting that organizations will benefit from rational, linear ways of designing and evaluating programs. I have taught this model and, as a part of the Strengthening Congregational Community Ministries project of the Center for Family and Community Ministries, I have created a similar approach for congregations. Based on Kettner, Moroney, and Martin's (2008) "effectiveness-based approach" to designing programs, we entitled our resource " SUSTAIN."

Despite my support of this kind of model in social work education, I often struggle over whether this is the best way for churches and small religious nonprofits to function. Regardless of the fact that church leaders seem to disconnect when we talk about rational planning, it has been difficult to imagine a viable alternative to offer them. This is intensified given the current climate of performance measurement, accountability, and evidence-based practice.

Here is how I have come to understand the matter. Modernity is rooted in a rationality that seems to suggest that all things flow in a linear direction. Most of us know this is not necessarily the case. One of my likeminded colleagues has a golden slinky that she uses as a symbol for the back and forth, yet ever moving processes of life. Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri (2008) use this same metaphor for emergent planning in their new text, *Comparative Approaches to Program Planning*. In it, they quote Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline,* where he describes learning organizational reality as being "made up of circles but we see straight lines" (1990, p. 71). I know that not all thinking has to be linear, but living a circular life in a linear world is sometimes easier said than done.

To make the matter more concrete, a friend of mine struggles to see how organizations, comprised of people, are so often described as mechanistic and bureaucratic. Quoting Margaret Wheatley, she asks, " If we teach families as systems, why not also provide the language of

organizations as living systems?" However, even in our churches, we adopt the science of administration for the work of ministry rather than allowing ourselves to be communities where the Spirit invites us to be artists at play.

Talk of lines versus circles (O'Connor & Netting, 2007), science versus art (Farmer, 1996), and machines versus living things (Wheatley, 2005) may only be semantics to some, but as someone who has felt the tension of walking with organizations as they seek funding and attempt evaluations while remaining flexible and tentative, I find great value in having viable, alternative pathways for organizations that believe their journeys are not dependent on what leaders say about the demands of this world.

Just this year, I was in a conversation regarding evaluation for a small faith-based organization. A consultant and a funder had convinced them they needed to use almost a dozen different instruments to collect data for a single program comprised of less than two dozen volunteers mentoring about the same number of women. I echoed what others had told them, encouraging the use of a logic model and detailed goals and objectives that serve as action plans for all of the services they offer. The organizational leaders expressed dismay when finally I asked if they thought they needed this level of detail and this number of instruments. They were shocked I asked for their thoughts; they looked around at one another and finally said their perspective and that of their participants hadn't mattered; they said they knew that external forces were more important. I stopped to think about what they were saying. This Christian organization was able to repeat back what others were telling them, but these words had almost no meaning to any of their leadership. They said their volunteers and clients didn't get it and didn't care, and while some had dropped out, most of them had become resigned to the idea that 'our' professional approach must surely be the best and only way for them to proceed. My only response was, " I hope not." They sighed in relief and began an amazingly creative conversation filled with the same Spirit that surely led to the formation of their organization years ago. They were seeking to integrate their faith and social work program planning, but had not realized that there may be more than one effective way of doing so.

Articulating measurable objectives, implementing evidence-based practices, and demonstrating effective outcomes all have their place, but the methods of this positivist paradigm are not the only way of doing things; they may not even be the best way (O'Connor & Netting, 2007). There is the beginning of a literature pointing to different ways of being and doing organizational life, and there seem to be plenty of leaders hungering for the language offered within this alternative paradigm (Fauri, Netting, & O'Connor, 2005; Quinn, 1998; Netting & O'Connor, 2003).

The most vivid example of this is in my social work practice with local congregations. Congregations are communities; they are also organizations, but they are not machines. They function to worship and to serve, and more and more are drafting their own mission and vision statements. On the other hand, however, they are rightly resistant to the kind of reverse-order planning (Brody2000) that predetermines goals and objectives and works toward them at all cost rather than relying on the leading of God's Holy Spirit, the voice that must certainly remain central in the life of these *spiritual* organizations. Emergent planning, with its forward-sequence orientation, begins by asking " where one can start rather than what one wants as a final result" (O'Connor & Netting, 2007, p. 67) and our own research identifies organizations with emergently planned programs that have been recognized as exemplary by their local communities (Netting, O'Connor, Thomas, & Yancey, 2006). People of faith are quick to say that only God knows the final result; we can also say that the God who creates and calls will be

faithful to continue the work that God has begun. Or, in the lines of II Timothy 1:12 and Daniel Whittle's 19th century evangelical hymn, I can say that I know not what predetermined goals and objectives we will achieve,

But I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.

Given this alternative way of being in the world but not of it, I would like to present some of the concepts of an interpretive theory that seem relevant to congregations interested and involved in human services, better known as the mission and ministry they offer to their local communities. At first, this approach may sound like I am throwing all we know about planning into the wind, and while trusting the Wind of the Spirit is not always my strength, I do believe that an emergent approach to planning can be as rigorous and effective as a rational model even if based on radically different assumptions.

After a review of the literature on program planning as a field of practice in social work administration, I will present a specific congregation whose journey seems reflective of the concepts of emergent planning. Their approach to ministry is based on the shared yet complex meaning found in the details of their notion of a " journey inward, journey outward" (O'Connor, 1975). I conclude with implications for social workers using this alternative approach to program planning in congregations and faith-based organizations.

Contemporary Approaches to Planning

The question can be asked: Is there one best way to plan human service programs? Given how the question is asked, I would like to say 'no.' I am not someone who believes there is one best way to do much of anything. Yet, when a review of program planning is conducted, it seems that there is not only one best way, but that perhaps there is only one way. Thirty years ago, Hudson (1979) identified five approaches to planning, but the method he described as dominant remains so today. It is a method based on synoptic rationality, which includes a centralized, hierarchical approach to linear decision-making. And, while some may feel it is the one best way to plan, it is not the only way.

Rational Planning

This dominant social work model that has also shaped my view of human service program planning is based on Netting, Kettner, and McMurtry's definition of a program: " a structured set of activities designed to achieve a set of goals and objectives" (2008, p. 329). In his resource on faith-based evaluations, Horn (2006) similarly defines a program as "a series of activities and services leading toward a defined and predictable end" (p. 7). To determine what contributes to success, they suggest that a program must " keep track of what services were prescribed to specific participants and what outcomes the participants achieved" (p. 7). These understandings of programs, from planning to evaluation, being pre-arranged, setting objectives and activities and then achieving them as defined and predicted, and ultimate outcomes tied to detailed, pre-identified services, all assume a rational, linear character.

Rational program planning incorporates what Brody (2000) describes as the reverse-order planning that I mentioned earlier, planning that is based on determining in advance what a program's final results must be and then working in reverse to create and implement the plan to achieve the results. Beginning with a clearly analyzed problem and an assessment of needs, an expert planner can rationally follow a problem-solving process that includes selecting the most

appropriate intervention strategy and designing a logic model of planned activities to implement that intervention (see Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 2008).

This logic model often recognizes how inputs (resources) carry out throughputs (process objectives or tasks) that result in outputs to achieve outcomes with a significant impact (your goal) (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999; McCawley, 1997; Parsons & Schmitz, 2006). Kettner, Moroney, & Martin (2008) refine this process with the use of factors (" if" statements) and consequences (" then" statements) formed into a program hypothesis. With a clearly articulated program hypothesis, they suggest that a planner can create SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-specific) process objectives (based on factors) and outcome objectives (based on consequences) that clarify where a program is going. Even more precisely, they recommend the articulation of immediate, intermediate, and ultimate outcome objectives that point the way to the final, future impact of the detailed program.

Critical Questions of Rational Planning

While there are other approaches to planning, rational models have been promoted in reference to their ability to be based upon evidence, outcome, and performance. Several forces have driven planning that emphasizes these kinds of results in the last several decades. The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (Public Law No. 103-62) and the Clinton and Gore National Performance Review, which became the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, gave a federal mandate to measure program outcomes. Locally, rational models that utilize a logic model can help secure funding and community support (e.g. United Way, 1996). From another perspective, professional standards for clinical practice in social work and other fields have driven a movement toward evidence-based practice.

The challenge, for a wide range of programs, has to do with the question of what is adequate evidence. The best scientific evidence, empirically based with quantitative findings, is privileged in this approach (Gray & McDonald, 2006; Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri, 2008; O'Connor & Netting, 2007; Witkin & Harrison, 2001); however, as Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri (2008) point out, " the pressure to provide evidence of effectiveness and efficiency does not always take into account the complexity of timing, controlling of intervening variables, and the myriad other contextual factors that make evidenced-based practice a particularly challenging undertaking in human services" (p. 98).

These authors and others point out that linear program logic has limitations, as they are unable to take into account issues of power, control, and participation. In the real world of complex human communities where programs are implemented, even the best-designed programs will have doubtful generalizability and replication is never an exact science. The certainty needed to connect inputs, throughputs, and outputs to outcomes in human service programs often fails to exist in practice with the precision shown on paper.

Logic models still have great value and for the unforeseeable future will remain the central approach to program planning in social work and beyond. Rational planning gives structure for assessing human needs and defining social problems, offers accountability for inputs, suggests a clear approach to implementation of a plan for addressing needs, and helps capture data that allows for comparative and summative evaluation. These models may not always live up to the logic of their rationale, but they go a long way toward assuring accountability. Utilizing these models requires a planner who embraces linear thinking and can see the whole picture, someone who is patient, detail-oriented, and organized. This planner must envision scenarios in advance, identifying possible outcomes and consequences, and must see oneself as an expert in order to

carry out the plan as described and be able to justify any changes to the plan (Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri, 2008). Yet, there are other planners who operate in other ways.

An Alternative Logic: Emergence

Because not everyone operates based on this approach to logic, there are other ways to plan human service programs. Because some people see the future as a moving target and work well with uncertainty and ambiguity, there are approaches that emphasize adaptability, change, and paradox. They see unanticipated consequences as the norm rather than as something to avoid and they know relationships matter more than expertise.

And not only because of these mindsets, but also because there are other ways to interpret our communities, our needs, and our responses, program planning can occur in other ways. The best planners know that their preferences and mindsets should matter less than being responsive to and competent about the culture of a community. In some situations, planning should be rational, in others it happens best via emergence.

One such approach that has been recently re-presented along these lines is that of Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri (2008). I say it is re-presented because Margaret Wheatley and Byron Kellner Rogers (1996; Wheatley, 2005) describe that such an approach may be seen as a very old story of organizational life, one that is as old as living systems themselves. They write:

> An emergent world asks us to stand in a different place. We can no longer stand at the end of something we visualize in detail and plan backwards from that future. Instead, we must stand at the beginning, clear in our intent, with a willingness to be involved in a discovery. The world asks that we focus less on how we can coerce something to make it conform to our designs and focus more on how we can engage with one another, how we can enter into the experience and then notice what comes forth. It asks that we participate more than plan (p. 73).

Being emergent means being attentive to time and context throughout the processes of planning and implementation. This approach recognizes relationships with multiple stakeholders as key for providing information about how change can occur. Here, we learn the process of engaging stakeholders and valuing their perspectives for what is an adaptable, ever-changing approach to serving others. With change as the norm and not the exception, the notion of successfully carrying out predetermined objectives and activities falls aside and allows emergent, incremental implementation to serve as a viable alternative to the logic model of contemporary rational planning. This " logic of emergence" is not based on predicting the future, but on a contextual embeddedness in the present (Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri, 2008, p. 133).

While Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri (2008) have articulated more detail than most in their alternative logic, they build on predecessors such as Charles Lindblom (1959) and the incrementalism of his "science of muddling through" . More recently, Peter Senge's (1990) idea of the learning organization and Karl Weick's (1995) concept of sense-making also take us in a different direction from rational planning. The suggestion made by these and others is that you can only describe a process after the actual product is at hand (rather than the idealized product of outcome objectives), in part because the unexpected learning and making sense as you go is so influential in the process.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) articulate several elements as part of their effort to re-present this subjugated logic: the only constant is change, life's so-called messes are full of possibility, what works is more helpful than what is right, there are always new possibilities and opportunities, living entities work for order as a buffer to change around us, identity offers meaning and meaning offers order, interdependency strengthens our creativity.

Continuous interaction in the midst of ever-changing contexts fosters creativity. This creativity helps us order our lives in the midst of uncertainty. What emerges is something that works, which can be more vital than working towards what is right. Being effective is less about achieving outcomes in the end, for programs are not means to an end, but rather means to new means in the ever-changing process of life.

Dimensions of Emergent Planning

Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri (2008) offer four dimensions to an emergent logic that can be useful for social workers engaged in program planning. Successful emergent planning and implementation of a program includes an ongoing process of *engagement* with multiple stakeholders, *discovery* through full participation in context, *sensemaking* of what is being discovered, and the *unfolding* of options that are being continually revised. These are not linear steps, as you can imagine, but dimensions of continual interaction in what is a much more circular process.

Entry into emergent planning begins with the engagement of multiple stakeholders in their context. Relationship-building, based on mutual respect, is a strategy of the engagement phase that helps stakeholders more fully understand the complexity of a situation. Stakeholders are encouraged to utilize multiple sources of data as they seek to be attentive to strengths and struggles.

Discovery relates to understanding subjective and objective dimensions of a context rather than the rational, scientific approach to analysis that seeks to reduce a complex situation to a simplified problem statement.

Validity of information is considered given the multiplicity of data sources. There will surely be contradictions, corrections, and conflict in the process. Stakeholders seek to understand what they are discovering and to make sense of their situation. Sense-making is a dimension that demands compromise and consensus-building rather than expertise in decision-making.

Unfolding is described as process and product. What emerges as a human service program may not be what was anticipated and it will likely change over time. Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri (2008) compare the unfolding of emerging planning to the results of a meeting where the result surprises the participants: " the engagement of viewpoints and the synergy of thoughts and ideas actually results in something you could not have possibly predicted" (p. 151).

In being attentive to these four dimensions, consensus-building and compromise allow stakeholders to make a decision about a program option that, for a point in time, best fits the situation. Ongoing engagement and discovery, sensemaking and unfolding may result in a different option at another time, which is what can be expected when we approach planning as continual learners in contexts of continuing complexity.

Accountability in Emergent Planning

In the same way that Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri (2008) present the four dimensions of emergent planning, they also provide four approaches to documenting these processes for the sake of accountability. Because emergent programs are not linear, evaluation is also quite different. Compromise and consensus are central to planning and they also play a large role in the " social responsibility" of emergence. Because effective change is still the goal, both formative and emergent evaluation methods are possibilities (rather than summative evaluation which is not consistent with this approach to planning). Formative evaluation, as in rational planning, offers a record of decisions made, lessons learned, and can be recorded through the use of contact and process logs. Emergent evaluation emphasizes the documentation of what is learned in the process. Planners are encouraged to keep reflexive and methods journals, and a

mutually agreed upon (by all stakeholders) " intervention design document" which details each of the dimensions of the process (see Netting, O'Connor & Fauri, 2008, p. 159). Even with a move away from measurable outcomes, the data gathered in emergent planning can be both quantitative (including possibly audits of budgets, surveys reflecting satisfaction and lessons learned) and qualitative (reflecting interviews with stakeholders, observations, and content of the logs and journals kept).

Like the cyclical model of praxis, which suggests that action leads to reflection and then back again to more reflective action (Singletary, 2005), emergent planning " sets a course, moves to action, and relinquishes the idea that the outcome can be controlled" (Netting, O'Connor & Fauri, 2008, p. 155). Action that seeks to be change-oriented is no less important, even if the accountability takes a very different approach.

Planning Approaches and Congregational Implications

Both approaches described above have relevance for congregations. To understand this relevance, it is important to clarify what comprises a congregation. Too often, the discussion of faith-based social services does not distinguish between the various organizations with some religious content or connection that provide human services (including religiously-affiliated organizations, faith-based organizations, and small religious nonprofits) and religious congregations that choose to offer programs serving their communities but who do not likely see this as their primary purpose. Both are often referred to as " faith-based organizations," but congregations differ from other faith-based organizations in many respects: their primary mission, staffing (professionals providing service vs. volunteers), funding, and organizational structure. Certainly, they are often integrally related to one another, but there are important distinctions.

Understanding Congregations

A congregation is defined as " a body of people who regularly gather to worship at a particular place" (Wind & Lewis, 1994). There are four basic elements of this definition. First, a congregation requires a body of people; there can be no congregation without the group. Second, the congregation is not an occasional or ad hoc meeting but requires intentional, regular assembly. Third, the people who gather regularly do so for worship. Finally, the group of people that convenes regularly for worship does so at a particular place (Wind & Lewis, 1994). Congregations engage in a variety of activities in response to their understanding of their mission. One of these activities is volunteering in or otherwise providing service programs in response to the needs of persons in the congregation itself and in the larger geographic community.

Congregations face similar community issues as other human service nonprofits, but often provide a more narrow range of services (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1993). Therefore, they are often informally involved in collaborative relationships with nonprofit organizations as a means of providing services (Clerkin & Gronbjerg, 2003). In fact, the most typical pattern of congregational involvement in social service activity is supporting programs and activities operated by other organizations (Chaves, 1999a). Congregations often provide volunteers, but also share space, financial resources, or staff and supplies as a way to offer such support.

Occasionally, congregations develop services as the result of an experientially based sense of need or because of the availability of special resources to which they have access (Cosgrove, 2001). Meeting immediate, short-term needs of individuals is more typical of the service programs provided by congregations than is sustained involvement to meet longer-term social goals (Boddie, 2003; Chaves, 1999b; Indiana Family & Social Services, 2003; Woolever & Bruce,

2002). According to Wineburg (2001), short-term, well-defined tasks often yield the best partnerships for small faith-based organizations and for congregations.

During the 1980s, the federal government retreated from social spending in many areas. Religious congregations stepped up their involvement in support to both individuals and to community human service networks (Wineburg, 1990). With the passing of Charitable Choice legislation a decade ago as section 104of the Welfare Reform Act (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, Public Law 104-193.104, 1996), congregations and small religious nonprofits received newfound attention in the private and public sector (Cnaan & Milofsky, 1997). Religious and political leaders proclaimed the benefits of services offered by faith-based organizations and congregations (Carlson-Thies & Skillen, 1996; Dudley, 2001). Research promoting (Sherman, 1997), evaluating (Cnaan & Boddie, 2006; McGrew & Cnaan, 2006), and comparing (Garland, Rogers, Singletary, & Yancey, 2005) faith-based and secular services has been made increasingly available since the mid-1990s and shows no signs of slowing down.

Several writers have promoted the value of congregations in their local communities (Cnaan, 1997; Dudley, 2001; Johnson, Tompkins, & Webb, 2002; Sherman, 1997, 2002), but few have been able to demonstrate their effectiveness (McGrew & Cnaan, 2006; Monsma, 2006). When criticism for a lack of outcomes and evidence arose, public entities (through White House and state-based Offices for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives) and intermediary organizations (sometimes through private money and sometimes through Federal " Compassion Capital Funds") were encouraged to develop the capacity of small religious nonprofit organizations and congregations (Boddie & Cnaan, 2006; United Way, 1996).

Encouraging Rational Planning in Congregations

When seeking to strengthen congregational community ministries, we need to know how congregations go about planning their efforts to meet human needs. There is a growing body of literature promoting rational program planning for congregations in an attempt to help them identify outcomes (Fagan, Horn, Edwards, Woods, & Caprara, 2007; McGrew & Cnaan, 2006). Streeter (2001) argues that churches must utilize rational planning if they are to transform charity "from an intention-based, process-focused framework to one that is results based." Thyer (2006) and Fischer and Stelter (2006) state that in order for faith-based programs, including those of congregations, to benefit from policies such as Charitable Choice, they must demonstrate their effectiveness, implying a dependence upon rational planning. In the same publication, Zanis & Cnaan (2006) encourage the recognition of cause and effect relationships, making clear the reliance upon planning from a positivistic perspective.

Evaluation consultant Mark Maines (2005) entitles this approach "planning the work and working the plan" and describes the rational process of setting targets for the performance and execution of action strategies for congregation-based ministries. Unruh & Olson (2006, p. 1) attribute the same quotation to Barbara Skinner and go on to describe the planning and working in this way: After your church has discerned a specific direction for outreach mission, the next important step is to develop a concrete ministry proposal based on this vision statement. A ministry plan indicates what action steps are required to carry it out, who will do the work, when it should be completed, and how the leadership will follow up on the progress of the plan. They continue to offer a planning process that is quite thorough and informative for churches desiring a rational process that at least acknowledges the value of emergent principles (such as the continued engagement of multiple stakeholders and the adaptability of what unfolds in ministry) (Unruh & Olson, 2006).

The Heritage Foundation has published a Special Report on program planning and evaluation for faith-based organizations, but they mention the relevance of their work for congregational programs (Fagan, Horn, Edwards, Wood, & Caprara, 2007). They present an approach to outcome-based, or results-based as they sometimes say, evaluation that is not process-based. Their approach is both summative, evaluating program outcomes, and formative, evaluating changes to program implementation, but they suggest doing this in a way that does not evaluate program processes. It is not clear how an evaluation that ignores the processes of program implementation is able to help an organization "refine the work they do and thereby begin a cycle of continuing improvement and greater success" (p. 4). The authors are clear in suggesting a rational approach to program planning, but then they ignore the link in a logic model between throughputs (processes), outputs, and outcomes. Kettner, Moroney, & Martin (2008) state that if planners want to evaluate outcomes, or program consequences, then they must consider the factors that lead to consequences, or program processes. Fagan and colleagues are clear that program processes must be in place, but that evaluation need not consider processes or outputs, which they deride as "counts and amounts," and only consider outcomes. They write, "Conventional calculations of the number of clients served or volume of services provided cannot capture the magnitude of the impact of these transformations. In contrast, outcome-based evaluation can give a fuller understanding of what has been achieved" (Fagan et al, 2007).

Fagan and colleagues are not suggesting an alternative approach to planning. They believe outcomes follow a logical, linear path back to program development. They just don't believe you need the dependent variable (processes) to measure the independent variable (outcomes). The question I raise here is not whether congregations are able to plan and evaluate in this way, but is such an approach the best approach for congregations? Is the process of Fagan *et al* best? Is that of Kettner *et al* best? Must congregations even use a rational approach for planning their ministries?

Emergent Planning in Churches

Congregations often plan in a way that, to some, seems irrational. I believe that the planning engaged in by churches is not irrational, but rather that it follows an alternative logic described above. As a result, emergent planning can offer congregations a viable nonrational approach to designing ministries that serve their communities. Congregations often report to supporters with stories that relate their mission of transforming lives (Sherman, 1997). Two national surveys (Saxon-Harrold, Wiener, McCormack, & Weber, 2000) found that congregations felt their biggest challenge to evaluating results was that some of their results are intangible. Many congregations also felt that the success of their work can best be described by how it fulfills their spiritual calling. These issues may be less a matter of lacking knowledge or skill and more a matter of worldview. It may be that churches live by an alternative paradigm where planning and evaluation is more circular than linear, more emergent than rational.

Resources focused on emergent planning are not yet available for congregations, but there are references to the nature of congregations that suggest an alternative approach can be of value. The closest I have seen is a second ministry planning guide from the Congregations, Community Outreach and Leadership Development Project. Heidi Unruh (2008) has designed an "action-learning process of ministry development" that includes a spiral as its symbol for planning. Like the slinky, this symbol suggests the circular nature of action and learning. Unruh (2008) describes four main stages to this action-learning process: *prepare, act, learn,* and *grow*. The stages can be sequential, but there may be overlap and repetition between them. Furthermore, Unruh states, "Movement toward a ministry vision is not a straight line but a spiral—we take one

step, which leads to growth and change, which opens up new doors of opportunity that we might not have otherwise envisioned" (p. 3)

Unruh (2008) responds to the question: what kind of planning might take this shape? Her responses not only reflect characteristics of emergent planning, but more importantly they reflect the nature and purpose of congregations. She writes that the big picture of ministry is more about facilitating transformation (spiritual and social) than about accomplishing tasks: "We don't just want to *do* ministry; we seek to *become* change agents" (italics added) (p. 3). She adds that we are not required to be experts, but must function as transformational teams intentional about learning, reflecting, and building relationships; as a result, we must expand and experience the gifts of the wider church and community. Unruh (2008) writes:

> Few ministry teams have a clear vision in mind initially of what they want to do, much less a detailed road map for getting there. The action-learning cycle allows a team to get started acting on what it discerns as its calling, even without having the big picture. Guided by the theological principles and core values of transformational ministry, a team can plan for cycles of immediate activity designed for long-term impact—on the church as well as the community (p. 1).

Furthermore, as a final trait suggesting a difference from their earlier "planning the work and working the plan" approach, they write, "we learn in order to take action and then we learn from what happened so we can take more effective action" (p. 3). Again, similarities to Christian praxis as an approach to reflective social action can be made (Singletary, 2005).

While Unruh feels that her work is still rooted in a traditional approach and while she has not compared her approach to that of Netting, O'Connor, and Fauri, there do seem to be similarities that can be of value for congregations. The models both emphasize context and appreciate the complexity that can exist when congregations are involved in planning social ministries. Both emphasize multiple, diverse teams of stakeholders who participate fully in the process of planning. Learning and reflection are central concepts in both models, implying continual change and responsiveness to context.

For churches, this also means an openness to reflecting on where God is leading. While rational planning encourages working toward a predetermined big picture, I believe an alternative approach to planning is more open to the continual discernment of where God is calling a congregation, and to the changes that take place, often midstream, when people respond to live out that call.

I now turn to a specific example of a church that demonstrates an emergent approach to planning, even though they didn't call it by such a name. The openness to change at each point on the journey, constantly looking inward for next steps and then taking those steps outwardly, is what makes their ministries a picture of nonrational, emergent planning.

A Congregational Example of Emergence:CrossTies Ecumenical Church

Five years ago I met the members of CrossTies Ecumenical Church and knew their engagement in their community was different, but I had no idea how to describe it. Comprised of six members, this ecumenical Christian congregation has been in existence for 21 years and has never been larger than it is today in terms of membership. In terms of community outreach, they offer concrete interventions as well as advocacy and organizing, and in many ways they are just getting started.

In addition to the general ministry of the church to its congregation, CrossTies offers four other ministries, all of which function as formal programs, though none of these are traditional,

at least not in terms of planning and administration. Broadly speaking, two ministries focus on spiritual formation and two focus on human services. Spiritual formation programs include the Silent Retreat Ministry, offering two retreats a year and functioning as the least complex, and the Servant Leadership School, offering two semesters each year of ten-week evening courses in theological education for clergy and lay people alike (core courses include Servant Leadership, Community, Call, Prayer, and The Nature of Divine Power).

The human services programs include the Gospel Café, a three-day-a-week, high-quality lunch program, and the church's most complex ministry, Talitha Koum Institute, a mental health therapeutic nursery for infants to six-year-olds along with a summer swimming program in Talitha Koum's junior Olympic size pool. " Talitha koum," which is Aramaic for " My child, get up," are the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. At present, Talitha Koum's primary focus is the early childhood Nurture Center program. Other components include community building, parent training, and case management.

Mission groups lead these four ministries; church members comprise those groups. The mission group of Talitha Koum has enlarged that governing body to include non-member stakeholders, calling the newly formed group " Covenant Partners," always preferring language that does not cause assumptive leaps regarding structure. For example, Covenant Partners is not, as are most " boards," a voting body, but, like CrossTies, operates out of consensus-based decision-making.

Rooted in the tradition of The Church of the Saviour (COTS), a grouping of churches in and around Washington, DC, that were started by Gordon and Mary Cosby in the 1940s, CrossTies is a church that emphasizes the characteristics seen in these ministries: community, contemplation, and compassion rooted in the stories and experiences of Jesus as the Christ. To demonstrate these core values of their faith, CrossTies Church and other COTS congregations practice what has become known as the " Journey Inward, Journey Outward." These words, based on a book by the same name authored by long-time COTS member, Elizabeth O'Connor (1975), suggest an inner spiritual journey of discerning whom God calls a person and a community to be and an outer journey of learning to live out that calling.

This inward/outward journey offers similarities to emergent plan ning and the Action-Learning guide of Unruh. Unruh (2008) suggests a spiral of preparation, action, learning, and growth. Likewise, Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri (2008) describe emergent planning as a spiral of engagement, discovery, sensemaking, and unfolding. The journey inward and the journey outward reflect each of these characteristics. The journey inward is a process of preparation and learning; it is a process of discovery and sensemaking. The journey outward is about action and growth; it is about engagement and unfolding. There is a not a one to one match between these various processes of ministry, but each seems to point to ministry planning that is flexible and participatory, contextual, and nonrational (Netting, O'Connor, & Fauri, 2008).

Congregations are not all alike, and while different models work in different contexts, these dimensions are evident in the approach to planning by CrossTies Church and the community where they minister. CrossTies began as an experience of an inward journey. At a contemplative retreat outside of Washington, DC, one member of a large, traditional church and one person disaffected from the institutional church both felt called to do a new thing. They were intentional about discerning this new thing and did not rush in with a preconceived plan of action. While their planning was anything but linear, they did have a plan, which was to be guided both by the Spirit of God and the mentoring of COTS. Foundational to their plan was to engage in one hour of silence and meditation each day (a discipline they hold to today) and a collaborative process

of building consensus among multiple, diverse stakeholders in a particular low-income, violence-ridden community. In time, they came to discover what was for them and their community a new approach to church and ministry.

Another woman joined the two women who had been to the retreat and, two years into their formation as church, they bought a house across the street from public housing. The "ministry of hanging out" stretched across eight years of building trust with their neighbors. Along the way, they made decisions that may have been mistakes, started some ministries, stopped others, and sought to make sense of each step by listening to God's calling and working toward consensus in each decision. In time, as ministries unfolded, they expected ministry to be ever changing and they always maintained a firm commitment to community. Because emergent planning is not a one-time launch of a multi-year intervention, the members of CrossTies have adapted over and over again; they have even changed patterns midstream.

As an example, for six years they offered Peacemakers, a youth group based on principles of nonviolent conflict resolution, only to realize that conflicts evolve more than resolve. They learned from stakeholders, the adolescents themselves, schoolteachers, administrators, and other neighbors, that the beginning of the evolutionary process of the violence of poverty was at the beginning of life on these streets. Susan Cowley (2008), a member of the church, later put it this way, "After years of ministry in one deep pocket of multi-generational urban poverty, we'd attended more teenagers funerals than high school graduations. It was running three to one—gravesides to grads."

Their sensemaking process included a recognition that they loved the teenagers with whom they were working; however, as these young people either went to jail or had children of their own, a vocational transition for the church into a ministry of early childcare began to emerge. One stakeholder, a local play therapist, made the suggestion, "begin a therapeutic nursery." They had never heard of such a thing, but other leaders had told them that mental health was a significant determining factor as these children entered school. They continued to engage others and organize their thoughts as things began to unfold.

With two years of planning and the interest of hundreds of stakeholders turned volunteers, they were encouraged to buy a local building that could be used for early childhood education and care. With only a vague sense of what the future might hold and without process or outcome objectives in place, pieces came together for what was a unique, mental health therapy approach to childcare. They began what has become a vibrant ministry in a community that has attracted key community funders and national attention (including child development experts, such as Dr. T. Berry Brazelton). Their emergent planning included rational components; they discovered effective models, leading to the adoption of the High/Scope Curriculum, but at the same time they maintained an ongoing process of discernment and consensus-building. Talitha Koum Institute, as the ministry has been named, has truly been a place where children are learning "to rise up" from the all-too-negative experiences of their surroundings.

For CrossTies and the Talitha Koum ministry, a commitment to maintaining the openness of continued emergence is central to who they are. The journey inward and the journey outward will remain interconnected for them, as well as the emphasis on consensus and community. They know they have the expertise to utilize the logic model and outcome-based planning, but an emergent approach seems more genuine to the sense of community this congregation feels called to be.

Implications for Social Work Practice with Congregations and Faith-Based Organizations

I believe that, as social workers, we need to appreciate and broaden our paradigms of how we approach planning and administration with congregations and faith-based organizations. Even if we have high regard for rational planning and work with organizations that also appreciate this approach, there can be value in recognizing an alternative approach and the meaning it may have for others. I suggest social workers think of emergent planning as another resource for our 'toolbox,' our repertoire of social work practice models and skills. There is a place for social workers to employ rational planning and emergent planning, each as best fits the context where an intervention is considered.

One of the most common responses I have heard from social work colleagues is for a combination of these approaches to planning. While elements of each can be used with the other, there are some paradigmatic issues to be considered for practice. These approaches are rooted in paradigms, or worldviews. If social workers see the world as linear, they may incorporate a feedback loop into their design, but the goal will be to move forward in as straight a line as possible. Likewise, social workers who plan by emergence can be open to a future-oriented plan, but if the context suggests remaining in the present, the push toward predicting outcomes can simply be ineffective. Just as someone cannot approach the world subjectively and objectively at the same time, so too the differences between emergence, rooted in an interpretive paradigm, and rational planning, rooted in a positivist paradigm, do not allow a simple combination of these approaches. When this is attempted, the assumptions of one approach tend to dominate the other.

This does not suggest that one model is correct and the other is not. Both have their place. Social workers utilizing rational approaches have a more traditional planning role. They will be seen as experts and will offer dynamic leadership in their efforts to design, fund, implement, and evaluate a program in which they are involved. In an emergent approach, we see social workers taking a different role. With less emphasis on demonstrating expertise in program design, we see an opportunity for macro social workers to engage in reciprocal practice, serving as leader and team member, teacher and learner. Social workers are not leading in the traditional sense, but participating by recognizing the role of power and politics, of culture and meaning, and of fair and authentic representation of multiple stakeholders.

Conclusion

CrossTies Church offers one example of how emergent planning has led and continues to lead one congregation on a journey of engagement in a community with diverse stakeholders, of discovering where God is calling them in light of their community's context, of sensemaking as they seek to understand how to live out this calling, and of a rich unfolding of ministries that are meaningful and for the lives of the people they serve.

This paper paves the way for future research that considers the scope and extent of emergent planning in congregations, and that compares approaches to planning for congregational ministries. While that is not the agenda of this paper, I do believe that recognition of multiple approaches to planning and a discussion of one particular alternative can serve to encourage congregational leaders and social workers working with congregations and faith-based organizations. My hope is that this paper strengthens leaders on their journey of ministry as they embrace fully the spirit of their community and the Spirit that guides them on their way. ∇

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Exploring the Role of Research in Evangelical Service Organizations: Lessons from a University/Agency Partnership

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Amid the continuum of different types of religious organizations and the growing interest of religion in the social work literature, we put forward an article that focuses on evangelical organizations. Our goals in this paper are threefold. First, we examine the context of evangelical organizations providing services and the unique role of research in such settings. Second, we present our findings and experiences from a recent research partnership with an evangelical organization. Third, we set forth recommendations for future university/agency partnerships with evangelical organizations.

A **large range of religious organizations** based on size, focus, and complexity, provide services to people in need (Cnaan, Wineburg, and Boddie, 1999). For instance, a small congregation operating a clothing closet and an international missions group providing disaster relief are both religious organizations. Some are religious in name only, looking and operating as any other human service agency familiar to social workers. Others, however, are explicit in developing and delivering services that are consistent with sharing their religious beliefs. We seek in this article to examine the context of evangelical organizations providing services and explore the unique role of social work research in such settings. It is our premise that evangelical organizations deserve the cultural sensitivity and appreciation social workers give to other client-systems. To that end, we present our findings and experiences from a recent research partnership with an evangelical organization and conclude with recommendations for future university/agency partnerships with evangelical organizations.

Conceptualizing Our Role as Social Work Researchers with Evangelical Organizations

As with any client system, we see our relationships with evangelical organizations as being built on principles of reciprocity, cultural sensitivity, and appreciation for their desire and motivation to serve people in need. Often our research involves studying and disseminating information about social issues and social work practices that are generalizable, focus on measurable outcomes, and contribute to building replicable models of practice in religious settings. We have learned to adapt, however, when working with evangelical organizations. Instead of focusing exclusively on the services delivered or measurable outcomes, we conceptualize our role as helping organizations assess the extent to which they are developing and delivering programs that make their services the most authentic expression of their faith possible. In addition to assessing outcomes, the results of our research often lead to questions that help evangelical organizations refine their focus, contemplate new directions, and adjust administrative practices. We present our work with Crossing-The-Journey (CTJ) to highlight our experiences.

The Organization and Partnership

Crossing The Journey (CTJ) is a stand-alone non-denominational organization that collaborates with congregations to establish spiritual families in a mid-size city. The organization began nine years ago when a wealthy owner of a fortune 500 company decided to retire, sell his company, and use his resources for full-time ministry work. He used his network connections to develop an affluent board that funded the start-up costs and still provides a substantial portion of their funding today. CTJ currently has an annual operating budget of roughly $219,000 funded by board member contributions, grants from private foundations in the local community, and two annual fundraising campaigns. All of the people that participate in spiritual families are volunteers and there are no fees for people coming to CTJ for help. The staff consists of the executive director and two social workers on staff located in the CTJ office. Four other social workers are on staff and located in religious congregations. The six social workers all have their independent clinical licenses. There are approximately 38 spiritual families based in 18 different congregations.

The program uses an innovative Triangle-of-Care model (TCM) to match clients with a support group of people in a Christian congregation. As the name implies, the model includes three elements— a spiritual family, a neighbor, and a Christian Licensed Professional (CLP). Spiritual families consist of 8-12 people who are members of the same congregation that make a commitment to work with potential clients. Neighbors are individuals, couples, or families that go through a screening process and are placed with spiritual families. CTJ prefers the term neighbor rather than client to reinforce the reciprocal nature of the relationships within the spiritual families. As groups meet over time, neighbors are often seen simply as another member of the spiritual family. Christian Licensed Professionals are licensed clinical social workers (LCSWs) that identify themselves as Christians.

The intervention process takes approximately a year and a half. Potential neighbors first go through an extensive screening process where they meet every week with a CLP for two or three months. The screening process assesses the readiness of a potential neighbor to begin working with a spiritual family. The CLP uses two main criteria to make this assessment. First, the CLP must determine that potential neighbors are at a point where they are ready to make a significant change in how they are living their lives. Evidence of readiness is determined by the use of a risk assessment inventory (RAI) and behavioral actions congruent with such a change. For instance, potential neighbors who are dealing with issues associated with alcohol or drug usage must demonstrate that they are not actively using and are attending recovery meetings. Second, the CLP must determine that God (as understood in Christianity) is active in potential neighbors' lives—in fact, active in such a way as to lead neighbors to seek assistance with CTJ. The CLP makes this determination through conversations where neighbors are able to connect past and present circumstances and events as evidence of God being active in their lives. If both screening criteria are met, the CLP then places neighbors with a spiritual family at a local congregation that will meet once a week (in some cases every other week) for at least one year. During the duration of a spiritual family, the CLP remains involved in the process as a consultant. Specifically, the CLP assists with referrals for services from other agencies, educates spiritual families about group processes, and helps families stay focused on following the Unity Exercise.

The Unity Exercise is the practice method developed by CTJ to guide the process of spiritual family meetings. The Unity Exercise assists spiritual families to arrive at "family unity" before taking any action. Family unity occurs when everyone in the spiritual family, including the neighbor(s), agree on a course of action. The Unity Exercise involves several steps. Meetings

begin with a specific prayer designed to invite God to be present and lead the group. The group prays this with a trust in God and a belief that God will be present and will answer their prayers. Next, the group reviews prayer requests from previous meetings to keep track of when and how God is answering their prayers. Then each member presents needs (described by CTJ as life burdens) for "healthy family discussion." Healthy family discussions involve an honest sharing of thoughts and concerns. The premise being that healthy families do not keep secrets; instead, they provide safe environments where people can be authentic, express feelings, and know that everyone is supported and not judged. It is important to note that the spiritual family can discuss and pray about needs for anyone in the group. The only stipulation is that neighbors have an opportunity to present and discuss their issues first. Family discussions end in one of two ways. The discussions can end with spiritual families being in unity on how to proceed. In this instance, the spiritual family meetings end in a closing prayer as they prepare to carry out the solution. The belief is that the group can take confidence from knowing that if everyone is in agreement, they can feel assured that God is leading them to a certain course of action. The discussion also can end in disagreement. When spiritual families disagree, no action is taken. Rather, they continue to pray for God's guidance and unity. The belief is that disagreement is a good thing, so long as all spiritual family members are searching for God's position. When there are prolonged disagreements, CLPs often facilitate discussion that helps spiritual families identify the root issues that neighbors need to address and remind them to put aside personal agendas and focus more on being attuned to what God wants for them so they can arrive at "family unity" before taking any action.

The executive director of CTJ contracted us to conduct a formative evaluation, collect initial summative data, document program implementation, assess initial outcome measures, and provide recommendations for improvement. The evaluation consisted of a review and analysis of written materials, an initial pre and posttest analysis of scores from a risk assessment inventory (RAI), and a series of focus group interviews with spiritual family members, neighbors, and key informants (i.e., CTJ staff, members of the board of directors, and CLPs). In the next section, we discuss the outcome and process findings in conjunction with the subsequent questions that emerged from our partnership.

Findings and Questions

Quantitative Outcome Data

Preliminary quantitative data and data from two group interviews provided initial support for the triangle of care model as an innovative approach that has the potential to provide transformative care for neighbors, spiritual families, and congregations. At the time of the evaluation, 26 neighbors had completed a Spiritual Family cycle. Over two thirds were female (n=18) and the other third male (n=8). A large majority was Caucasian (n=20), with a few African American and American Indian. Marital status was more dispersed with eight being single, seven divorced, three dating, three married, three separated, and one widowed. Most of the neighbors had at least a high school education and over half had completed some college. Only two neighbors had not finished high school.

Of the 26 neighbors that completed the pretest RAI, only eight completed the RAI at posttest. The outcome data, therefore, was limited to the eight neighbors. As we shared with CTJ, the small sub-sample prevented us from using any inferential analysis techniques. At most, the current data could only lend descriptive support for the need for future evaluation. The pre and posttest comparisons provided this support.

Table 1 and Table 2 present a summary of the pretest/posttest comparison for the two scales used in the RAI—Religious and Spiritual Coping (RSC) and Brief Symptom Screen (BSS). Higher scores on the RSC suggest increased use of religious and spiritual methods of coping with major problems in life. In contrast, higher scores on the BSS indicate more pervasive life stressors that can negatively effect social functioning. Lower scores on the BSS, however, indicate less stressors and enhanced social functioning.

Table 1:

Religious and Spiritual Coping Pretest/Posttest Comparison

Neighbor	Pretest	Posttest
1	18.00	18.00
2	12.00	17.00
3	19.00	17.00
4	13.00	13.00
5	17.00	16.00
6	13.00	16.00
7	11.00	11.00
8	7.00	15.00
Mean	**15.00**	**15.38**

Table 2: Brief Symptom Screen Pretest/Posttest Comparison

Neighbor	Pretest	Posttest
1	37.00	7.00
2	.	26.00
3	25.00	33.00
4	98.00	27.00
5	50.00	29.00
6	42.00	25.00
7	24.00	28.00
8	37.00	14.00
Mean	**32.75**	**23.63**

The comparison of the scores indicated mixed results. On one hand, the changes in RSC scores from pretest to posttest were negligible. Three neighbors (#2, #3, and #8) reported increases reliance on religious and spiritual coping strategies. In addition, the change in overall mean for the group was very small. On the other hand, the change in the overall mean for the BSS indicates a reduction in life stressors and symptoms for the group. Five neighbors reported decreases in symptoms. Three had slight increases.

Qualitative Outcome Data

The limited quantitative data was only part of assessing outcomes. We also conducted outcome interviews with two groups—neighbors completing one spiritual family cycle and a limited number of church leaders in whose congregations spiritual families functioned.

Neighbors reported extremely positive outcomes at three different levels of social functioning. First, the tangible and behavioral reasons that caused neighbors to need CTJ have become more manageable. This finding confirms the decrease in the BSS scores. Neighbors shared how their presenting issues have dissipated or they have developed the patience and life skills to manage them. Second, neighbors shared stories of spiritual transformation. Their spiritual transformation consists of several important elements that include feeling loved by God

that gives them a sense of self-worth, feeling a sense of accountability because of God's love for them, feeling appreciated and relevant because God can use them to minister to others, and learning to seek and rely on God's will to manage daily life events. Third, neighbors reported an expanded social network for genuine friendship, support, and accountability. Moreover, their social networks consisted of people from different demographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. As they participated in their networks, they learned to see themselves as contributing and ministering to their spiritual family members as well as receiving support.

Interviews with church leaders revealed at least one additional positive outcome. Although there are many variables that determined how a church assimilated CTJ spiritual families into the rest of their worship and ministry (e.g., church size, location, denomination, pastoral staff), it appears that when churches completed one successful spiritual family cycle, the impact was far-reaching and substantial. Church leaders shared that over time CTJ spiritual families transformed the culture of how their congregations thought about and ministered to those in need. Church leaders indicated that CTJ spiritual families helped members of their congregations become more comfortable being vulnerable, gain a renewed perspective about people dealing with tragic situations (prison, sexual abuse, addiction, poverty, homelessness) and learn to see such people as their "equals" in God's Kingdom. In other words, members of these congregations learned to see their relationship with people in tragic situations as reciprocal—being ministered to by them as much as they minister to them.

Process Data and Questions

While the initial analysis of the outcome data was promising, several questions about administrative practices emerged regarding how CTJ functioned as an agency and how the Triangle-of-Care Model (TCM) was implemented.

How Should Congregations Apply TCM? When we asked key informants (i.e., CTJ staff, members of the board of directors, and CLPs) how they implemented the TCM in the life of churches, they gave inconsistent responses. In the first interview, key informants discussed TCM as a model for working with potential neighbors. In follow-up interviews and phone conversations, a few key informants spoke of applying the model with leaders of congregations. Instead of the spiritual family consisting of a leader, family members, and a neighbor, they shared that the triangle could consist of the pastor, church leadership, and a person of passion (POP)—a layperson willing to shepherd the implementation of the model. Some informants even talked about training church leaders to implement TCM, and then having them use the unity exercise to help congregations decide on adopting the model as a form of ministry.

It seemed that our question uncovered two competing visions for marketing and implementing the TCM with congregations. As a result, we recommended that CTJ staff and board members develop internal consensus on applying the TCM model before engaging in further strategic planning and fundraising to replicate the model widely. We also recommended being cautious about extending the application of the TCM. Although we understood that it appeared reasonable and tempting to apply the model with clergy and lay leaders of congregations, we were concerned that it could dilute the focus of what CTJ was doing well, namely to create transformative ministry for families with congregations.

Does the model use a CLP or a SFC? At the outset of our partnership with CTJ and our analysis of written materials about the program, we were intrigued by the use of Christian licensed professionals (CLP) in the model. Using professionals as trainers and consultants enabled laypeople to be active in the helping process by assuring spiritual family members that a mental health professional was available to provide ongoing guidance and supervision when

needed. The CLP was also available if neighbors were in a crisis. For instance, the spiritual family could call the CLP to assess and make referrals if a neighbor expressed suicidal ideation or engaged in destructive behavior (i.e., self-mutilation, binge drinking, or violence towards others). During our interviews and subsequent conversations with different CTJ staff and board members, an emerging debate became evident as to the necessity of using CLPs in every spiritual family.

Although using CLPs was a major component of the original concept of the TCM, CTJ eventually realized that it was harder for congregations to adopt the model if they needed to have a professionally licensed social worker or counselor. For some congregations, especially smaller churches with modest budgets, it was nearly impossible to find a CLP willing to volunteer or work with them. For some key informants, using a spiritual formation coach (SFC) instead of a CLP was the solution. A SFC was a layperson or a church leader with the specific focus of overseeing all of the spiritual families in a congregation. The SFC would receive training from the social workers at CTJ. The key informants that suggested the use of SFCs envisioned the triangle model being the same and the change away from CLPs as a minor adjustment to the program. From our perspective, we interpreted the suggested change as a major shift in the vision of CTJ and the implementation of the model. This proposed shift led us to ask CTJ staff if they were prepared to offer a different model to congregations. In our final report, we shared that this decision could sacrifice the integrity of the program for the sake of expanding the number of congregations collaborating with them to offer the triangle model. We stated:

> Be cautious about the move towards an SFC replacing the CLP. Although using SFC makes it easier for congregations to begin providing CTJ programming, the outside/objective element of the triangle is important for bridging what happens in spiritual families with other resources and services in the community. More importantly, spiritual family members and neighbors were unanimous in expressing a need for someone trained in understanding group process/dynamics and recognizing patterned behavior. We recognize the desire to make the model adaptable; however, having someone included that is professionally connected to outside services is what gives the triangle of care model part of its distinction for congregational ministry.

How large should CTJ become? Behind the discussion of using SFCs, was the crucial question about the eventual scope of CTJ. Over the past decade, CTJ developed into a modest agency with a core group of congregations collaborating with them to provide the TCM. Up to this point, the scope of influence for CTJ was geographically limited to one city. The executive director (the original owner) and some of the board members, however, are interested in offering TCM on a national level. Recently a group in Ohio began working with CTJ to offer TCM for churches wanting to work with people re-entering the community after incarceration. They even garnered state funding in support of their efforts. The executive director is also meeting with congregations in Texas, Illinois, and California. In an interview, he shared that his vision is to have 100,000 churches collaborate with CTJ nationwide. Nevertheless, a key staff member (a licensed social worker with a Master of Divinity degree) and a few board members did not share this expanded vision of CTJ. They were concerned that congregations would not implement the model with any consistency. They were also not in favor of substituting the SFCs for CLPs even if it meant having fewer congregations to collaborate with CTJ.

The difference in visions eventually led to the social worker and a few board members leaving CTJ to begin their own agency—The Father's Family. At the time of our final report, CTJ continued to pursue a vision for a larger influence, while the other agency developed their program keeping the original model. It is important to note that the split was quite amicable. Although their vision for implementing the TCM differed, both groups shared a motivation to give churches a method for helping people in need through relationships centered on sharing and being transformed by belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In fact, both groups have come to interpret the spin-off of The Father's Family as part of God's plan for CTJ.

Discussion

We recognize the limitations inherent in case study research. The lack of a representative sample or a comparison of other evangelical service organizations makes it possible that our experiences with CTJ are only relevant to this one collaboration. We posit, however, that case study designs may be the most appropriate methods for capturing the nuances of these unique organizational cultures. Our work with CTJ consisted of a combination of outcome data, multiple focus groups, reviewing printed material, and countless informal conversations by phone and in person. The outcome data by itself did not provide insight into the practices of the organization. Instead, the relationships we developed and the ongoing interactions with staff, neighbors, board members, and church leaders provided us with insight to understand how CTJ was attempting to help people in need. The credibility we developed through these relationships also allowed us to ask difficult but meaningful process questions—questions that led to in-depth dialogue and to an eventual decision by a few key members to go in a new direction.

Recommendations for Future Research Collaborations with Evangelical Service Organizations

Based on our experiences with CTJ and collaborations with other evangelical service organizations, we offer the following recommendations for future collaborations with evangelical service organizations:

- Be prepared to invest the time—Developing research collaborations with evangelical service organizations takes time. At the beginning, it is important to develop trusting relationships with agency leadership. Leaders of evangelical agencies will want to make sure that the social worker(s) doing research appreciate their motivations. Data collection also needs to occur at different times and from multiple sources to assess the consistency and implementation of policies, procedures, and practices. Collaborations with evangelical organizations can exist for years. Our relationship with CTJ occurred over six years and we continue to be in contact with them.
- Use a cyclical comparative method of data collection and analysis—One of the benefits of a longer relationship for research is the possibility of triangulating and re-evaluating data. Instead of collecting, analyzing, and reporting findings at one point in time, let data collection and analysis lead to further questions or check the reliability of the data by follow-up collection. Early in our collaboration with CTJ, we were frustrated because each time we collected and reported our findings things would change. At first, we were concerned that we were not going to be able to provide CTJ with a reliable and valid evaluation. As our research continued, however, the ongoing changes became one of the most important findings. In fact, the constant change led to the process questions above and uncovered the competing visions for implementing the Triangle-of-Care model. We posit that the culture of evangelical service organizations (especially small grassroots programs) are inherently dynamic and that the expectations and practices of social work researchers

need to adapt in order to participate in relevant partnerships. Using a cyclical comparative approach to data collection and analysis is one necessary adjustment.

• Define effectiveness "with" and not "for" the agency—At the outset of collaboration with an evangelical service organization it is important establish how the organization conceptualizes effectiveness. In fact, social workers may need to rethink how they define the construct of effectiveness. Effectiveness with evangelical service organizations may involve more than measuring change in the outcomes of the people the agency is attempting to serve—although that is part of the construct. Instead, it is an examination of how a group of people works together to serve people as an expression of their faith and how that work impacts their faith, the faith of others, and the community where they are serving. We posit the concept of effectiveness as reciprocal when applied to evangelical organizations, being of benefit to the agency and the people providing services as well as the people they are serving. For instance, CTJ influenced the people served, the people volunteering to participate in spiritual families, the spiritual life of entire congregations, and the staff working for CTJ.

Conclusion

Evangelical service organizations are one group of religious organizations that provide social services to people in need. These organizations also represent an area of service providers with minimal recognition in social work literature. Given the growing interest in religion in social work practice, including research, it is important to acknowledge and document the efforts of evangelical service organizations. As Christian social work scholars, we also believe it is important to appreciate and support the efforts of people who desire to express their faith and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ as they provide human services. At the same time, we believe it is important to help these organizations maintain ethical practices as they provide services. Our hope is that the current article will spark other Christians in social work to participate in collaborations with evangelical service organizations and document their experiences so that a body of literature can help inform this area of practice.

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Developing Programs that Integrate Faith and Practice

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This article encapsulates my experience as an administrator in the Salvation Army and other faith-based agencies in which I successfully integrated faith and social work practice. My hope is that this article will be useful for social service administrators and direct service personnel who wish to develop creative methodologies that enable integrative environments to thrive.

Am I a Christian doing social work, or am Ia Christian social worker? Perhaps this is just semantics, but I believe that there is a difference. For me, it is easy to be the former, but not as easy to be the latter. For example, if I were an engineer working for a company that makes widgets, the fact that I am a Christian would have no bearing on the way I design the widgets. I can also practice social work because it is a good thing to do, but have no impact on the faith life of the people I serve. However, I consider myself a Christian social worker and wonder if doing a good thing is enough. William Booth, the founder of The Salvation Army stated it this way over one hundred years ago:

> Now, the real object that The Salvation Army exists is to save men, not merely to civilize them. That will follow. Salvation is the shortest and surest cut to civilization. Not merely to feed them, that is good, very good, so far as it goes. It is true that in our Social Work we feed the starving and house the homeless, but it is only a step towards the purpose we wish to accomplish. The object is to save men from sin and hell. To bring them to God. To build up the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth. The end of The Salvation Army is to convert men, to change their hearts and lives and make them good saints of Jesus Christ (1904).

This article focuses on how I integrate faith and practice as a Christian social work administrator. As a social worker for 27 years and an administrator for 20, I have developed a six step relationship-based process to cultivate an agency environment that promotes faith integration. I begin the article with a brief history of the Salvation Army to provide context for how I understand integration of faith and practice.

The Salvation Army began in 1865 when William Booth, a London minister, gave up the comfort of his pulpit and decided to take his message into the streets where it would reach the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

His original aim was to send converts to established churches of the day, but soon he realized that the poor did not feel comfortable or welcome in the pews of most of the churches and chapels of Victorian England. Regular churchgoers were appalled when these shabbily dressed, unwashed people came to join them in worship.

Booth decided to found a church especially for them—the East London Christian Mission. The mission grew slowly, but Booth's faith in God remained undiminished. In 1878, he gave this mission its current name, and over time it became a denomination itself.

Today, most people think of The Salvation Army as a social service agency, but it remains a denomination with ordained ministers. The members of the church are Salvationists. They all wear a uniform to represent that they are in the Army of God. The social service centers are the

ministry branches of the church. The mission is very evangelistically-based and integration of faith and practice is not only accepted but expected.

The Six Steps of Relationship-Based Integration

Step 1: Hiring the Right Staff

When I began my current position, my purpose was to make change. The former program directors and supervisors of the programs had, over time, lost sight of the meaning of the mission. When a new Area Commander was appointed to the region, he wanted to bring the spiritual side of the mission back to the programs. He re-structured the leadership and hired me to bring it back into focus.

To begin making this change, I included staff at all levels. I began with what they thought was working and what was not working in the way in which the program was running. From this, I identified initial weaknesses and began planning ways to strengthen them. It also gave me the opportunity to get to know the staff and know where they stood on the future of the agency. I had to decide who should stay, who needed to leave, and who should change positions. At this time, Jim Collin's book, *Good to Great* (2001) was published. In this book, Collins compared companies who went from good companies to great companies with companies that just stayed good or even became worse. One factor that he found worked was to determine which of the staff should stay on the bus, which should get off the bus, and which should change seats on the bus. Over an 18-month period, 90% of the staff got off the bus, and several changed seats on the bus.

I found that bringing in new staff was the easiest way to change the culture of the agency. It is important not to just change staff for change's sake. Often, in a social service agency we settle for mediocrity or worse, poor performance, out of fear that we may not find someone better who will accept the salary that we can afford to pay. If the wrong staff are on the bus, they will create havoc for all of the bus riders. I know, because I have experienced this. However, as the Collins group looked at the great companies, they found a number of things. One was that "the right people will do the right things and deliver the best results they are capable of, regardless of the incentive system" (p. 50). The great companies also found that "in determining the right people, they placed greater weight on character attributes than on specific educational background, practical skills, specialized knowledge, or work experience" (p. 51).

I believe that staff need to be mission-focused. They need to have a passion for helping people. Often, I have found that staff who have family systems with drug and alcohol addiction, incarceration, or even homelessness, have the most compassion for the people we serve. Yet, at the same time, some of these individuals carry their own baggage or do not have the education, certification, or professional experience. This creates another managerial challenge. Yet, because of this mission-mindedness and personal history, they are the ones most comfortable with people of similar backgrounds and can break down the walls that many clients put up.

I prefer to hire only Christians. When I question applicants during the interview, I have them read the mission statement of the organization. Then I ask if they are comfortable working in this kind of environment where faith is an important part of the job. This leads them to start talking about the church they attend and their beliefs. I can then interject more into the conversation and assess where they stand in their faith and belief system. I have had many potential employees respond with enthusiasm and even say, "I have wanted to work at a place like this!" Some have expressed their strong beliefs and desire to work in a setting such as this but also say that they have not had such an opportunity and do not know how to do this, because they attended a secular university where they were never taught it. When I get these responses, I know I have

something with which to work.

If the interviewee, after reading the mission statement, just responds by saying "I have no problem with that," and appears to be guarded or even standoffish, I know that they will pose potential mission mindedness problems in the future. There have been many times when very qualified applicants have answered in this way. They may have had an LCSW with excellent experience, but I hired someone with a bachelor's degree with limited experience. However, the people I hired had the right professional, personal, and life skills and have become the most dedicated, hard-working, and long-term staff I have.

Hiring the right staff requires that I ask certain questions during the interview process. I use clinical questioning skills combined with an employment interview technique called behavioral interviewing to try to grasp the spiritual and experiential will of the applicants and obtain the desired information without asking if they are a Christian. This information will be revealed during the interview through self-disclosure. However, according to federal guideline for the Faith-Based Initiative, it is perfectly legal at a Christian agency to ask applicants about their belief system. I must remember throughout the hiring process that it is important to not be pressured by the demand of being short-staffed when the number of people who need to be served is great, when I am exceeding the caseload size specified in the contract, or even when I am being pressured from above because being short-staffed is creating overtime. As Collins (2001) points out, one of the important principles in being rigorous in a good-to-great company is "when in doubt, don't hire—keep looking" (p. 53). This is not as easy as described above, and I have hired out of necessity and regretted the hires. I have to keep focused on the end goal at all junctures, hiring being the first.

Step 2: Creating a Corporate Culture

I view corporate culture as the personality of the organization. As an administrator, I am responsible for developing the corporate culture or milieu, which in turn fosters the way my staff think, act and feel. I want my staff to view our agency for what it *is* rather than what it *has*. In other words, I want them to share a deeper understanding of the beliefs, attitudes, values, and experiences that make our organization unique. I believe it is important to recognize that this culture, milieu, or work environment is there whether I want to recognize it or try to influence it. So, I think why not work strategically to influence it?

My Process of Visioning and Creating a Corporate Culture

I view the visioning process as the overall course of action that helps staff to see the big picture and think outside the box. Visioning is picturing excellence in integrative practice. Scott, Jaffe, & Tobe (1993) say that "Visioning lays the foundation for breakthrough improvements by allowing the mind to break free of its assumptions about how things are done and looking differently at what can be done and how" (p. 6). I observe that this is often difficult, not only for program supervisors and directors but also for line staff, because of the daily stresses and demands of the job. These here-and-now burdens often cause my staff and me to remain reactionary. I strongly believe that we must be proactive, not reactive. This process helps us to think about where we are currently and where we want to go.

I have found that it is important to begin by conducting monthly All Staff meetings. There are two main purposes for doing this.

First, it brings everyone together every 30 days, following the Nehemiah Principle. This principle refers to the way in which Nehemiah pulled his troops together in the Old Testament to be of one mind and purpose in rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Nehemiah had to recast the vision of this rebuilding project every 40 days. I believe that it is important to recast the vision

about once a month. Since I run a 24-hour facility, it is difficult to get everyone together at one meeting, but I have found that the best time is the first payday of every month from 2:00 to 3:00 PM. This is the time of a shift change and the best time for most of the staff. I have also found that this helps to keep everyone on the same page. The second purpose for these meetings is for me to teach about developing mission, vision, and values statements, and for us to put them together.

The SWOT Analysis

I like to begin this process by conducting a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis. That is discussing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to our program. I like to define these as follows:

- **S**trengths can be seen as attributes of the organization that are helpful to achieving the objective.
- **W**eaknesses are attributes that are harmful to achieving the objective.
- **O**pportunities are conditions that are helpful to achieving the objective.
- **T**hreats are conditions which could do damage to the agency's performance.

Strengths and weaknesses have an origin that is internal to the organization, and opportunities and threats have an external origin. Strengths and opportunities are helpful to achieving the objectives, and weaknesses and threats are harmful to achieving the objectives. I think that during this process, it is easy to get focused only on professional operations or clinical outcomes. However, I want to be sure that I keep in mind where the program is spiritually.

In the sections below, I describe how I used the results of the SWOT analysis as I led the staff at the Social Services Center through the process of developing mission and vision statements for our program.

Developing a Program-Specific Mission Statement

After identifying these areas, I laid the foundation for the program by writing a program-specific mission statement. As for all organizations, there is a mission for the entire organization. However, depending upon the size and scope of the organization, that mission statement, although very good for the big picture, will, to some degree, be vague and general. That is why over the years, I have always created program-specific mission statements. I have found that this really helps programs to focus on their purpose.

As stated above, I like to conduct this process in the All Staff meetings, because it is important to involve staff at all levels. This makes them part of shaping the direction of the operation and also creates a natural buy-in. Because staff members were involved with writing it, they are committed to seeing it fulfilled.

I define a mission statement as what we are, why we exist, and what we do. This is where the SWOT process ties in. Through the SWOT process, we identified where we are really good and not so good, and have clarified areas of agreement and disagreement. I ensure that we reach a common understanding. Then, to create the mission statement, I did the following: 1) led a brainstorm about each of the SWOT topics; 2) divided the staff into small groups, and had each draft a statement; 3) had each group share their written drafts with the large group; 4) developed a rough draft together through group consensus; and 5) then wrote the final version.

The result was this mission statement: "The mission of the Social Services Center is to create an environment where positive change will occur; resulting in useful, holistic lives for those we touch." Note that there is no *Christianese* in it, so it is acceptable to anyone, yet at the same time, we know what holistic means.

I believe that it is important for my staff to be clear about our mission and not allow mission creep. *Mission creep* was originally coined as a military phrase, and is the expansion of a project or mission beyond its original goals, often after initial successes. My intent is to protect the Social Service Center's program-specific mission evolving from a doable, supportable mission to a somewhat different, larger one requiring more and more donated dollars. Many of our clients come to us with a vast array of problems. Because the staff members have big hearts, we desire to help clients with every issue. This leads to discussions about expanding services, often into areas that do not necessarily fit our program's mission. As the administrator, I have had to help staff to remain focused on our primary mission and purpose. When clients have other needs, I need to have an immense array of referral resources to enable me to provide them with a continuum of care.

Vision Statement

I think that a vision statement should describe in a vibrant way how we carry out our program operations. I have found that while there are differences in wording by various staff members, our vision statement has helped us to focus our discussions around core issues and concerns.

Scott, Jaffee and Tobe (1993) define a vision statement as an image of how we see our purpose unfolding, a picture of the future that we seek to create, and an answer to the question 'What do we really want?' (p. 73). I have found that when writing a vision statement, I need to be sure that it is realistic, yet ambitious; challenges but does not overwhelm me; is the result of the head *and* the heart working together; and is reality-rooted but future-focused. I want the vision statement to motivate and inspire, while moving those with whom I work toward greatness. To do this, it needs to be clear, concrete, and achievable, while being a stretch. Also, it needs to fit with our highest values and be easy to communicate.

The Vision Statement that we developed is: "Bettering the community one life at a time." Again, this is highly acceptable to any audience, but our staff understands that history has proven that Christian societies are blessed.

Developing a Program-Specific Value Statement

The next step that I guided my staff through was to develop program-specific values for our operations. ProgramProgram-specific values are important because they are central to the organization's culture (McNamara, 2007). I believe that values represent what is important to us as an organization and are the foundation for our department's philosophy and culture. Additionally, values are an important part of strategic planning. I think they drive the direction of the plan.

Scott, Jaffe and Tobe offer some questions to use when discussing value statements with staff: "1) What do we stand for? 2) What behaviors would mirror these values? 3) How do we treat our clients? (4) How do we treat each other? 5) What do we mean by ethical behavior? and 6) How do we want to be seen by the community?" (p. 27).

The values that we developed are effective support, unconditional love, holistic care, spiritual support, dignity and respect, compassion, safe environment, encouragement, empathy, consistency, needs-based services, best interests of the person served, high quality.

The Process

After collectively writing each of the above statements for the Center, I took them up the ladder for approval by the regional man ager and the Board. Once this approval process was complete, I had a firm foundation on which to stand. I then printed them on nice paper, framed them, and hung them above the copy machine, a place where most everyone goes. This way,

while staff are waiting for their copies, they may be reminded of the guiding principles of the operation.

Strategic Planning

Once we had accomplished these steps, I took one step further and developed a strategic plan for each department. These plans were built upon the program's mission, vision, and values. This was a slow but worthwhile process. Each month, I took a section of the mission, vision, or values and divided the staff into small groups to come up with ways in which they could put feet to each in their respective departments. The value became the goal and how they would do it became the objectives. Since the focus all the way through was melding together professional practice with Christianity, the strategic plan was naturally integrated as well.

Devotional and Prayer Time

I firmly believe that integration cannot successfully occur without incorporating prayer into the culture of the organization. For that reason, I open every meeting with prayer. I have also begun a weekly voluntary prayer time for staff during lunch. The primary reason is for focused, planned, and specific intercessory prayer. I take prayer requests and always include issues related to the operations of the Center. This has included praying for more clients to come to us. We pray specifically for the right clients, those who are ready to change and those who are seekers open to the gospel. This may sound ridiculous or even wrong, but why not? Over the years of praying like this, there has been a notable and significant difference in the client population. I am not saying that I refuse or even favor certain segments of the client population; I cannot do that. A good majority of my client population is court ordered and mandated, and the only way I can refuse them is for serious medical conditions that we are not equipped to handle. I cannot overemphasize praying, because when we have clients who are ready to change, it makes all the difference in the world. Just by virtue of that, positive outcomes have increased. I do not believe that anyone enters the program by mistake. God controls who comes and who does not. So, why not ask?

Step 3: Education

I also have provided staff with education about how to integrate faith and practice. The trainings have focused on professionalism, helping skills, and so forth. What I want is for clients to feel that this place is different when they walk through the front door of the agency. For this to happen, there needs to be a corporate culture or milieu of faith. This can easily be communicated in social work terms such as dignity and respect, kindness and compassion. I encourage the staff to know, understand, and live out in the workplace the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. This contributes to creating a culture of integration.

We attempt to do this by treating people correctly from the minute they walk through the front door. How I answer the phone, how I greet someone at the front desk, how I treat people, what I say to people, how I act towards them will communicate the love of Christ. We have to be conscious about compassion. Remember WWJD, What would Jesus do? It could also read WDJD, What did Jesus do? In other words, when Jesus was hanging out at dinner parties with "sinners and tax collectors," how did He treat them?

I have conducted this educational process in staff devotionals and in-house seminars. The topic has been determined by the current climate. At times, it has also included staff-specific topics such as unity, submission, gossip, and other topics mentioned throughout this paper.

Step 4: Change of Vocabulary

Over the years, I have seen wording changes occur in the field. Although they may have been for politically correct purposes, I think a change in vocabulary is instrumental in the advancement of a culture change in the organization. In other words, it changes mindsets, which changes attitudes, which changes a culture. To give an example, when I arrived at the Center, two of the programs were contracts for residential services through the Department of Corrections. One of the programs was a prison diversion residential treatment program for convicted felons. Both programs were for probationers, offenders, or inmates. The staff that spent most of their day with them were called monitors, who had a mind-set something like prison guards. In fact, their supervisor was a former prison guard. When the offenders did something wrong, they received infractions or sanctions that were punishment-based. That was the culture.

The language changes I made were to discontinue calling them offenders and call them residents. I changed the title of the monitors and called them resident assistants or RAs. I changed the position description to include more of a mentoring role. When residents broke a rule, they received consequences of an educational nature that were relevant to the disciplinary problem, so they would hopefully learn something from their mistake.

Lastly, I am always aware of avoiding the use of any Christianese. It is easy for us as Christians in our Christian circles to use terms we understand but that are vague to unbelievers. I encourage staff to stay away from terms such as *born again* and asking clients if they are *saved*. I encourage staff to replace such terms with the phrase *spiritual awakening*. Also, rather than using *the Lord*, just say God. I don't think that this waters down the message; it is simply phrasing things in such a way that helps prevent someone from shutting down quickly and not paying attention.

Step 5: Structure

Whenever I hire new staff, I have found that it is imperative to provide them with the same training as others before them, so they understand the milieu in which they work. This begins with new staff orientation and extends to in-service trainings on the main topics. Training is conducted at varying levels, since I have non-clinical staff in areas such as maintenance, housekeeping, and kitchen. When I conduct training in a manner that relates issues to their jobs, the support staff appreciate being part of the corporate team and understand their role as being significant in the big scheme of things.

As mentioned earlier, weekly staff devotionals are held in our Chapel. This is a voluntary time when any staff member can join me for a short time of targeted, specific prayer for the programs. I also include prayer in the weekly administration meeting on Monday morning. This is a good time to review any occurrences over the weekend and to plan the week. I always pray for staff unity and for love and compassion, as we reach out to the individuals to whom God has called us.

As can be seen throughout, prayer is an important part of the corporate culture, because it changes things. I incorporate prayer into the monthly All Staff meetings, which also include a devotional. Whenever there is a need, I have prayed and an answer has come. An example is when I wanted to increase faith opportunities for the clients and residents by offering Bible studies throughout the week and church services on Sunday morning and evenings. I prayed for help from church groups, and they came. Also, there were times when I knew something was going wrong, but was not sure what it was or who was doing it, or perhaps I had a hunch but not enough evidence to prove anything. In those cases, I prayed for staff to leave or that God would expose evil, and it happened. Then, when I had a vacancy, I prayed for the right new staff, and

they came. When I needed to fill empty beds, I prayed for clients who wanted to change and were seeking, and they came and asked for prayer. Then I empowered staff to use verses and Bible lessons in their treatment. Many of the residents we serve have addictions. I pray with those who have a desire for deliverance to be set free from their addiction. I believe this is a key factor in helping them overcome.

Every month, three of us as administrators conduct a new-client orientation. Each of us takes a little different perspective on it. I come more from a global perspective and want to instill hope in the new residents that this is their opportunity for a "do over" or a second chance in their life.

Every morning, on their own, the residents conduct a morning meditation. This is a time to help them begin their day on the right track. I have a box placed next to the elevator on the first and second floors. Residents may place suggestions or prayer requests in them. I will then pray for their needs.

Step 6: Client Activities (Volunteer driven)

I think that client activities are important. It is during client activities that I see their faces light up. I want the Center to be as family-oriented as possible. When clients are offered the privilege of going on an outing or partaking in a special in-house event, it makes them feel special, and they come back refreshed and renewed. Naturally, these are all voluntary, but we usually end up with a good-sized group who wishes to participate.

A few examples of client activities are listed below:

- **Spiritual Track**. It is a special voluntary track that the residents may take during their six-month stay in the Center. It includes a thorough Spiritual Assessment, which then leads the facilitators into personal healing prayer and counseling with the residents to assist them in dealing with any negative spiritual backgrounds that they may have experienced, such as the occult. The curriculum consists of thirty-four lessons, including areas such as definition of the Trinity, how to pray, what worship is, and what the 10 Commandments. It also includes Bible reading and reading of Christian books. If residents have difficulty reading, they may listen to the Bible and sermons on compact discs.

- **Celebrate Recovery**. This is a Christian-based support group, similar to Alcoholics Anonymous, designed for alcoholics, codependents, people struggling with eating disorders, sexual addictions, anger, and those dealing with past or current physical or sexual abuse issues. In short, it is for anyone dealing with any kind of hurt, hang-up, or habit. Since it is Biblically-based, it comes from the perspective that God and His Son Jesus is the only higher power. Many churches around the country offer these groups.

- **Father Hunger and Father's Blessing**. Many of my clients have had a negative experience with their earthly fathers. This presentation discusses the fact that all of us have a desire for an earthly father who loves and protects us. If that was not the case, they often view God, the Father, in a negative light. This program helps them see themselves as God sees them, and then they individually receive a "father's blessing" from one of the facilitators. This kind of spiritual healing also heals emotions and can cut through a lot of built-up anger.

- **Marital Mentorship by Lay Volunteers**. This is not marriage counseling but mentorship from a Christian couple who have been married over 25 years. Something as simple as observing and hearing positive communication between spouses has a huge impact on both genders. Men begin to understand how to treat women in a loving, respectful manner, and women begin to raise their expectations of how they should be treated.

- **Building Life on a Solid Foundation Class**. This is a six-week class led by a couple from a local church. It is a basic discipleship class for new believers. It teaches them how to be a Christian and is a good supplement to the treatment components of the program. The class includes teaching on developing a relationship with God and with the Holy Spirit, communion, obeying God, living a life of faith, and living an overcoming life.
- **Mentoring Program (one-on-one discipleship).** This is something that has not yet gotten off the ground. But, the best way to describe this is similar to Big Brothers/Big Sisters. The volunteers will be mature and grounded Christian believers who want to spend one-on-one time with someone for personal discipleship.
- **Soup Kitchen and Game Nights**. We have a soup kitchen where we serve hot dinners to homeless individuals. I have many church groups who volunteer to serve clients. Some bring part of their worship team with them; others bring their pastor who offers a brief devotional. I have recently begun Game Nights that are focused on the unsheltered homeless. A local young-adult church group does this. The clients love it! The focus of both of these outreach ministries is to build relationships, treat the persons served in a loving manner, and witness by example. This often opens the door for a kind word to be spoken over a client and prayer. In other words, it is love evangelism.
- **Support for Pregnant Women and New Mothers.** At times, I have pregnant women who are homeless come into the shelter. When the babies are born, church groups host baby showers and provide mentoring for the young mothers. Healthy family systems have mothers, grandmothers, or mothers-in-law who can help the new mother learn how to care for the newborn infant. The program provides this kind of support for those who have none. In addition, my wife has been the birthing coach for several young ladies who otherwise had no one who could be with them during the birth.

Summary

As a Christian social worker, I believe I have the ability not only to help people with their earthly life difficulties but also with their eternal life. I can do this in a way where I am not beating people over the head with my Bible or pushing my religion on them. If I just approach people in the way Jesus did, they will be attracted to me and want what I have. Once the door is opened by the person served, I can enter by explaining my faith and my relationship, not religion, with the true and living God. In this respect, no world religion can compare.

I believe that I must provide social services with purpose. I don't think that the Center is just a social agency. Jesus was a social service expert, but it was with purpose. He went around healing all those who were oppressed, because God empowered Him to do it. God has empowered me, too. I cannot stop with just case management or counseling. I have to let my service go deep into the heart of the matter. I must bring in the spiritual dynamic and not be afraid to do it, because the situations that I deal with are not just carnal, they are spiritual, and have a root and a past. My approach to service will unlock the door that is going to allow the power of God to reach people and bring them to the place where they can receive the fullness of God. They will come in weaklings, but I will release them as warriors. So, I have to do exactly what God called me to do, work in the area of social justice, social restoration, and social reformation; and I know that I am doing it with a purpose to plow up and to tear down demonic oppression and the lies under which people are living.

My job as an administrator is to create this environment, this culture, this milieu. The right staff members are excited when they learn about it and flourish in it. I have seen our program's outcomes and rate of success increase. This is more than just numbers; it is changed lives.

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