

WCSW


Congregational Social Work: Research & Findings



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WCSW

We thought we knew . . .




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WCSW

So why do research?

- See beyond
- Learn from those doing it
- Describe the path



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The Path

The Story of Moses

"We make the path by walking it."

Exodus 33:13 "Show me your ways."

Exodus 13:21 "Follow this cloud."

Calling

' "*Calling*" is the sense that God or some other presence beyond oneself compels one to take a particular direction; the direction is not simply a matter of choosing based on one's own motivations and preference' (p. 210).

They Did Not Know Where They Were Going

- ▶ These social workers did not know they would be in a context of practice that was called congregational social work.
- ▶ They understood their calling by looking back to the path they had already walked.
- ▶ *"This is what God has called me to do."*

A Spiritual Sense of Calling

- ▶ "Locus of inspiration" -- being inspired to become social workers
- ▶ Being called to a Christian vocation
- ▶ Social work as a vocational Christian calling -- NOT
- ▶ *"God called me."* (providential?)
- ▶ Experiences at youth camp or service activities
- ▶ Being a client

Calling Confirmed by Evidence

- ▶ **The right place** - *"I've been called to this work, and God has chosen me"* (p. 216).
- ▶ **The right gifts** - *"God equipped me personally. He designed me to be a social worker"* (p. 217).
- ▶ **Other paths** - "calling" reflects a call to their work and may not be centered in spiritual language.

Unfolding Paths

- ▶ Social worker in other settings
- ▶ From congregational leadership in other than social work positions
- ▶ From congregational membership
- ▶ Congregational path to readiness – *"pastors hired them with lots of hope but little understanding of what they could do" (p. 222).*

Professional Preparation

- ▶ Departments/schools of social work
- most had no preparation for working in congregations
- adapted what they were taught
- felt prepared for generalist practice & the wholistic nature of social work was an asset
- "I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing if I hadn't had that field placement" (p. 224).*

Professional Preparation

- ▶ Continuing education
- ▶ Mentoring and consultation
- ▶ Preparation not received
 - Little or no focus in social work classes on congregations
 - Wish there had been, or had more, opportunity for discussion about congregational contexts
 - Expressed the need for more integration of spirituality/religion in social work education.

Resources for Congregational Social Work

- ▶ Mission of serving
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Financial support
- ▶ Network of colleagues—religious leadership
- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Prayers
- ▶ Integration—personal faith w/professional practice

Challenges

- 1) Professional isolation
- 2) Lack of safety measures
- 3) Devaluing by the social work professional community
- 4) Time constraints
- 5) Managing multiple roles
- 6) Maintaining confidentiality
- 7) Differing views on policies and practices
- 8) Deciding when to attempt change (p. 231)

Being a Congregational Social Worker

- ▶ Beliefs and values shaped by their work

- ▶ Sense of belonging


- ▶ Gives fulfillment—the right “fit”

Design the research

- Numbers or words – or both?
- Interview & transcribe
- Two databases

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Louisville Institute





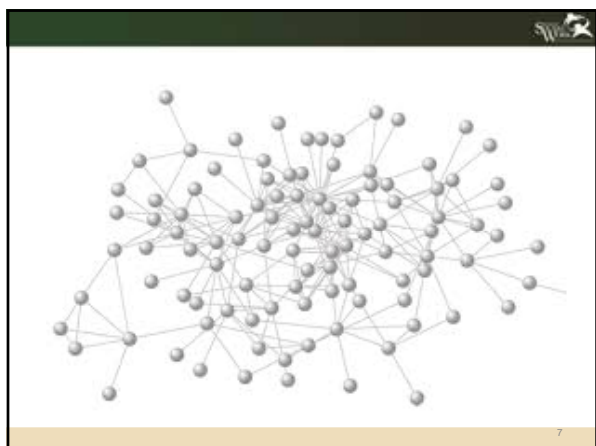
- \$16,000 in student stipends
- [\$33,000 BU tuition]
- \$4,800 conference travel
- \$1,500 office supplies
- \$2,230 general expenses

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Subjects

- BSW and/or MSW degree





Location of 51

25 states, Canada, and South Africa

- 13 Texas
- 6 Indiana
- 3 Ohio
- 2 Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Tennessee.

Florida, Arizona, Connecticut, Virginia, Nebraska, California, Mississippi, Kansas, Kentucky, Vermont, New York, Michigan, Louisiana, Missouri, Idaho, North Carolina, and Alabama

17 Christian Denominations & Religious Groups

16 Baptist	<i>One of each:</i>
7 Nondenominational Christian	Assemblies of God
5 Catholic	Church of Christ
4 Church of God	Evangelical Free
4 Methodist	Full Gospel Independent
3 Presbyterian	Interdenominational
	Full Gospel
	Lutheran
	Orthodox Jewish
	Missionary
	Salvationist
	United Church of Christ

Data was missing for one subject.

University of highest practice social work degree (BSW or MSW):

<i>Not religiously affiliated = 31</i>	<i>Religiously-affiliated =20</i>
University of Texas, Arlington (3)	Baylor University (6)
Indiana University (3)	Carver School of Social Work (6)
University of Illinois (2)	Anderson University (2)
Washington University (2)	Boston College (2)
Arizona State University	Ablene Christian University
Aurora University	Augsburg University
University of Kansas	Loyola University
Case Western	Northwest Nazarene University
Hartford	Roberts Wesleyan College
Houston	
Kansas State University	
New York University	
Ohio State	
Southwest Texas (Now Texas State)	
Syracuse	
Temple University	
University of Georgia/ University of Louisville	
University of Oklahoma	
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	
University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa	
University of Maryland	
University of Toronto	
University of Texas, Austin	
Western Michigan	
Wright State	

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47%
theological education in addition to social work



Gender, age, ethnicity

Gender:
Female = 37
Male = 14

Age:
Mean – 46 years
(2 subjects did not provide age)

Ethnicity:
African-American = 1
Hispanic = 3
Jewish = 1
White = 45
(1 subject did not provide ethnicity)



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Length of practice

Years in SW practice
Mean = 17 (Range = 2 – 41)

Years working with congregations
Mean = 12 (Range = 1 – 35)

Years in current position
Mean = 7 (Range = 1 – 26)

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Their Position Titles

“Social Worker” (3)

“Director” (23) case management, community ministries, senior adult ministries, special ministries, volunteers, social service ministries, congregational care, and children and youth programs

“Pastor” (9) senior pastor, associate pastor, and pastor of care ministries

“Minister” (4) benevolence and ministries, community ministries, youth

Other titles (12) consultant, therapist, counselor

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Social Work License?

Yes = 34 (77%)

No = 9


Expired license = 1

We didn't ask and could not contact later = 7

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24 Questions

- When did you come to your current role in working with this congregation?
- What is your title? How does it fit you and what you do?
- What does a "typical day" look like?
- How do you see the relationship of social work and ministry?



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"Grounded" theory

- 530 codes that we developed
- 4287 "quotations"

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- F: COMMUNITY CODES
- Program: Activity groups
- Program: Befriending
- Program: Burial
- Program: Camps
- Program: Christian community care
- Program: Intergenerational activities
- Program: Making connections between persons or groups
- Program: Mentoring
- Task: Boundary setting
- Task: Building relationships
- Task: Community engagement
- Task: Conflict management
- Task: Cultural competence
- Task: Friend/community member--being
- Task: Groups: Support
- Task: Helping other staff
- Task: Home visits
- Task: Organizing
- Task: Pastoral care
- Task: Safe conversation creation

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Putting Congregational SW in Context

... What it is and what it isn't

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Terms


- Church Social Work
 - Church (group of congregations and their agencies, e.g., denominations, nondenominational networks)



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Terms

- Church Social Work
 - Church
 - Religiously-affiliated organizations (RAOs aka FBOs)



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Terms

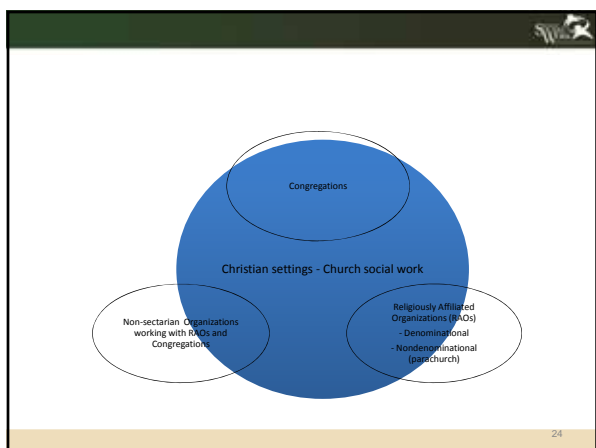
- Church Social Work
 - Church
 - Religiously-affiliated organizations
 - Congregations



Terms

- Church Social Work
 - Church
 - Religiously-affiliated organizations
 - Congregations
 - Public Agencies

TEXAS CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
The Adopt-A-Caseworker program creates a support system between the community and CPS by matching a local organization such as a church, school group, or business with a caseworker. The adopting group helps meet the special needs of that caseworker's clients. The support may include tangible donations like clothing or baby supplies as well as emotional support



WHAT WE LEARNED

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Some of the Practice Fields

- Health and mental health
- Child and family services
- Aging services
- Substance abuse and addictions
- Economic and social development
- Criminal justice
- Immigration
- Child, Adult, and Vocational Education

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Practice methods

- Individual, family, and group direct practice
- Crisis intervention and referral
- Developmental and prevention services
- Support and educational groups
- Volunteer recruitment and supervision
- Community development
- Advocacy

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Functions of congregations

- Worship God



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Functions of congregations


- Worship God
- Be a community for congregants




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Functions of congregations

- Worship God
- Be a community for congregants
- Education




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Functions of congregations

- Worship God
- Be a community for congregants
- Education
- Missions



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Where I have been wrong

- Role – leading community ministries
- Congregations as “host settings”
- Title – Social worker

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Unique Social Roles

- Minister/pastor
- Friend/community member

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Qualifications

- Can lead from within
- Bi-lingual and culturally competent
- Creative thinker
- Flexible
- “Called”

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Garland, Diana, and Yancey, Gaynor (2014). *Congregational social work*. NACSW.

Pictures

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Slide 5: <http://www.magnetaracademy.org/wp-content/uploads/Money-Tree.jpg>

Slide 7: <http://connectedthebook.com>

Slide 11: <http://www.theologynetwork.org>

Slide 16: <http://mbahighway.com>

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