



[Jeremiah 31:15](#)

*Thus says the Lord,
“A voice is heard in Ramah,
Lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
She refuses to be comforted for her children,
Because they are no more.”*

Many years before Jesus was born, Jeremiah prophesied Herod’s genocide of the males that would die at the time of the Savior’s birth. There is scriptural precedent for the national outpouring of grief and lament we are seeing in the United States. Hence, God’s people are uniquely situated to understand the pain being expressed collectively and called upon to answer the call to be a beacon of light in a very dark time in our nation and world.

Furthermore, as social workers, we are acquainted with the powerful depths of emotion that accompanies the loss of a loved one. The grief that accompanies the loss of a child is inconsolable. The fear and pain being expressed is something we can understand based upon our training and experience; yet, we know it’s hard and a test of faith during this challenging time for our African American brothers and sisters.

Kubler-Ross posited a five stage cycle of grief: Denial/Avoidance, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance. The anger being displayed on our streets, while decried by many, might be recognized as a predictable aspect of grief. As Christian social workers, versed in community practice by our educational training, we recognize and understand the frustration, irritation and anxiety being felt by our African American brothers and sisters who have long experienced marginalization, discrimination, lack of access, and historical inequality; it comes from unprecedented years of overt injustice.

Jeremiah also instructed God’s people to seek the Shalom of the place where they were planted (Jer. 29:7). In this context, Shalom meant both peace and human flourishing. We cannot expect peace in a context where many are marginalized and treated unjustly. We must

stand with our African American brothers and sisters, be allies, express our commitment to be better and support the call for social, economic, and environmental justice. This is our call and charge as believers in Christ.

The preamble to the NASW Code of Ethics calls social workers to:

“enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.”

It is our duty to assure universal human flourishing, both as Christians and as Social Workers.

Thus, NACSW adds its voice to those calling for Shalom in our nation. We join the national lament about the unequal treatment of people of color. We recognize that peace requires conditions under which all people can flourish, and where there is equal justice for all. We understand the grief being enacted collectively on our streets and we pledge to work diligently as individual social workers and as an organization to bring Shalom, both peace and prosperity, to the contexts in which we serve.