

NACSW Convention 2016 in Cincinnati!

The Convention 2016 Planning Committee is pleased to announce several exciting preconvention institutes and keynote speakers sure to inspire and stretch you at our 66th Annual Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio from November



Linda Darrell



Virginia Todd Holeman



Carla MacDonald

17-20, 2016. Focused on the theme, “Building Bridges: Fostering Healing and Connections in our Communities,” our convention features keynote speakers Dr. Joy Fagan, Dr. Trina Shanks, and Major Kendall Mathews, as well as three outstanding preconvention institutes.

On Thursday, November 17th, Dr. Virginia Todd Holeman will present a full day preconvention institute entitled **“Fostering Healing and Connections through Forgiveness.”** Forgiveness is one



effective approach that social workers can use to facilitate healing. Using lecture and participation activities, this

workshop explores the factors that facilitate or frustrate forgiveness for many individuals, families, or groups.

“Building Intercultural Competence in Social Work Practice: The Basic Steps towards Acquiring Proficiency”

led by Dr. Carla MacDonald, will be a half day preconvention institute which examines the connection between social workers who have received preparation and training on the topic of intercultural competence, and their self-assessment processes for providing services to diverse cultures.

A third preconvention institute, **“The Intersection of Faith and Racial Justice: Addressing Race and Diversity from a**

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NACSW’s April 25th, 2016 Audio Conference Webinar

NACSW is pleased to announce that it will be offering its next audio conference webinar entitled “One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: From Poverty to Self-Sufficiency” on Monday, April 25th from 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm Eastern Standard Time. This session will be co-presented by Pam Crawford, LCSW, and Kimberly Rainey, LMSW.

Open Table is a growing movement of ministry in the United States wherein a faith community collaborates with the community to create a partnership of accountability with what the model terms a “brother” or “sister” in poverty. It is a model that utilizes both social and financial capital to empower a family who has the motivation



Pam Crawford



Kim Rainey

to commit to a one-year plan that will improve their lives and help move them toward self-sufficiency. This audio conference webinar will illustrate the Open Table approach, while describing the experience of a group of Christians who

have struggled with poverty walking alongside a sibling group while assisting their move from poverty to self-reliance.

Pam Crawford is a Social Work graduate of Baylor University and holds a LCSW with the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners. Pam has been employed by Presbyterian Children’s Homes and Services for 15 years and is the Regional Director for the Texas Central Region supervising four diverse program sites. She and Kimberly have enjoyed working together on community projects that promote collaboration between agencies and provide better services for client families. Pam is a former adjunct professor

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Convention

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Christian Social Work Perspective,” will be presented by members of NACSW’s Racial Justice Member Interest Group and will be coordinated by Dr. Linda Darrell. This session will feature a powerful experiential component.

At the convention opening session on Thursday evening, November 17th, **Dr. Joy Fagan** will speak on the topic of *“Social Work and Kingdom Impact: Embracing the Fruitful Tensions.”* **Dr. Trina Shanks** will be this year’s Alan Keith-Lucas lecturer on Friday morning, November 18th, presenting on *“Faith, Stewardship, and Wealth Creation: Envisioning a Role for Churches in Asset Building Initiatives.”* At the evening banquet on Saturday, November 19th, **Major Kendall Mathews** will present *“Let’s Pull Some Weeds – Time to Meet Your Inner Gardener (John 15:1-10).”*

NACSW also offers a variety of opportunities for faith-based organizations to make connections with convention



Joy Fagan



Kendall Mathews



Trina Shanks

participants and get the word out about their programs and ministries at NACSW’s Convention 2016. Several of these opportunities include:

1. *Exhibiting:* Reserve exhibit space in our convention exhibit hall for just \$370 if you are a non-profit, or \$430 if a for-profit — and 50% off these rates if you are a current organizational member of NACSW!
2. *Advertising:* For just \$110, we will “stuff” your brochure or some other promotional item in the convention bag that all participants will receive at the registration desk.
3. *Event Sponsorship:* Your organization can make a major contribution and/or sponsor a specific convention event — in exchange for enhanced visibility with our 350+convention participants.

You will find additional detailed information forms for all three of these

promotional options by visiting our website at www.nacsw.org/Convention/2016Promo.htm.

And, while you are in the Cincinnati area attending the NACSW conference, there is a great deal to do in the third largest city in Ohio. The convention will be held at the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza, in downtown Cincinnati. There are lots of places to visit in the area including The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (<http://freedomcenter.org/>), Great American Ball Park, Paul Brown Stadium, Aronoff Center for the Performing Arts, Contemporary Arts Center and Taft Museum. Check out www.cincyusa.com for additional information about the city.

Most of all, mark down on your calendar and plan to join us for Convention 2016 in Cincinnati, OH from November 17th -20th!

CATALYST

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Publication in *Catalyst* in no way implies endorsement or certification of the authors’ qualifications, ability, or proficiency to practice social work, or to integrate faith and practice. Similarly, publication of an advertisement in *Catalyst* does not imply endorsement by NACSW of any services or products advertised. *Catalyst* articles may be copied or reproduced for personal use, but appropriate credit to *Catalyst* should appear on all copies made.

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NACSW E-Publishes Its Convention 2015 Proceedings

For the 13th year in a row, NACSW has published convention proceedings comprised of representative papers and materials from workshop and poster sessions presented during its Convention 2015 in Grand Rapids, Michigan from November 12-15, 2015. Online access to these proceedings are now available at no cost to NACSW members and friends by clicking on the “Convention Proceedings 2015” link at:

<http://nacsw.org/Convention/Proceedings2015.htm>.

A wide range of materials from full-length papers to detailed presentation outlines were submitted for inclusion.

Since NACSW’s goal is to make these materials available as quickly as possible, except for some very basic formatting, submissions have not undergone a formal editing process.

NACSW’s hope is that this proceedings will significantly extend the impact and reach of the materials presented in Grand Rapids, 2015!

NACSW T-Shirts, Mugs, and More!

In response to requests we’ve received from our members, NACSW, in conjunction with the online store, CafePress, is now offering t-shirts, mugs, bags, sweatshirts, baby clothes, water bottles, magnets, ipod cases, and more with the NACSW logo!

Check it out by going to:
www.cafepress.com/+nacsw+gifts

Racial Justice: Being a Part of the Conversation

A few months ago, my (predominantly-white) church in Newtown, Connecticut started holding weekly vigils on our front lawn (our church sits on Main St. in our town) during which time we have been holding up signs that read, “Black Lives Matter,” “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere,” “Remembering Tamir Rice,” and so on. We call our vigils “Moral Monday Vigils” since we meet on Monday afternoons/evenings, and because of resonance this name has with the Moral Monday movement active in a number of major cities in the US. Our vigils are very simple (maybe 10-15 people, sometimes a few candles), and they are silent. They are mostly intended to create conversation within our town and to keep the topic of racial justice on our mostly-white community’s radar.



Rick Chamiec-Case

Many who drive by during our vigils give us friendly honks of support or a thumbs up – although some extend fingers other than their thumbs toward us (!), and a group of pick-up trucks often drive by and blow black exhaust smoke on our group (a practice I have since learned is called “rolling coal”). Probably the most common push-back we get, though, is people rolling down their windows and calling out angrily, “Don’t you know that all lives matter?” or “Police lives matter, too, you know!”

Several weeks after we started holding our vigils, we received our first written response from a community member, a doctor in our town. It was addressed to our pastor. Here is an excerpt from that email (note: it might be helpful to keep in mind that at the time the email was written, our town of Newtown was bracing for the 3rd anniversary of the tragic shooting of the 26 students and teachers in our Sandy Hook school back on 12/14/12) :

Reverend:

Black lives matter. But: white lives don't matter. Asian lives don't matter. Syrian lives don't matter. Veteran lives don't matter. Animal lives don't matter. Because --black lives matter more than all these other lives, because this platform is a popular grandstand. But as a minister: you should be ashamed for jumping on a grandstand, while ignoring the rights of everyone else.

Why are you bringing a divisive message to our community by focusing on only one nationality/color/whatever you want to call it? Are you having fun? Haven't we had enough divisiveness in Newtown? Do you remember the color of the children, teachers and administrators who died in Newtown a few years ago? They were white. But please. Don't get excited about that. They weren't black, and black lives matter, so obviously, Reverend, white lives don't matter. And we all need to focus on black lives. Because that's your platform.

Your “demonstrations” in Newtown are unwarranted, divisive and truly painful for all of us in this community. Maybe you should find yourself some other place to demonstrate.

Because our Moral Monday vigils have been a lay-led ministry in our church, my pastor (who, often joins us for our vigils, and, incidentally, has been an incredible support to the entire community as the town has grieved the loss of the children and teachers killed in the Sandy Hook tragedy three years ago) asked if I would respond to this community member’s email. Here is an excerpt from my email response (I have left the names out for confidentiality’s sake):

My name is Rick Chamiec-Case. I am a parishioner at Trinity Episcopal Church in Newtown, one of the lay leaders of a group at Trinity which has been working to begin a conversation in our parish about the issue of racial justice and equality in our society. . .

Please know first of all that we greatly appreciate your taking the time to express your concerns about our weekly vigils. One of our group’s primary goals has been to generate conversation with the community about

issues of race and justice in our society. We hope that this email exchange will be the start of a conversation with you that will help our group learn how to interact more effectively with community members. We are very new to this (our group only formed this spring), and so we have lots to learn. Feedback like yours is especially helpful as we seek to find our way.

Please also know that we feel terribly that our vigils have felt divisive to you (especially during this extremely sensitive time in our community as we approach the 3rd anniversary of the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook School). Our goal in starting these vigils has been quite the opposite. Through these vigils we have been advocating for our community to unite in a shared commitment to fair and just and compassionate treatment for all people. Like you, folks in our group believe passionately that all lives matter - Asian lives, Syrian lives, the lives of officers, the lives of veterans - all lives with no exceptions. So when some of us have been holding up signs that read “Black Lives Matter,” we have not meant to suggest (by any stretch) that Black lives matter more than any others. Rather, we are trying to lift up people of color whom we believe are often treated by society as if their lives matter less than the lives of others in many insidious ways.

We believe that the inequities experienced by people who are Black in our society (whether in terms of income and wealth disparities, unequal access to health care, housing, and quality education, or comparative levels of incarceration – not to mention the fear of being targeted or harmed by some law enforcement officials based on the color of their skin) are staggering, and we feel that our faith calls us to stand in solidarity with those who are most vulnerable and are being treated the most unfairly in our society. An article that probes this tension between believing that all lives matter, while still trying to recognize and advocate for those who are being treated as if their lives matter less, can

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Racial Justice

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be found at: <https://sojo.net/articles/blacklivesmatter-why-we-need-stop-replying-all-lives-matter>. This article has really resonated for me, although I realize we might not fully agree on some of the points in this article.

I hope you noticed that while a couple of the signs we hold up during our vigils read “Black Lives Matter,” many of the other signs speak about issues of social justice as they apply to persons of any and all races, ethnicities and backgrounds. For example, some of our other signs we have been holding up read:

- “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
- “Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.”
- “Good schools for everyone’s children.”
- “We stand for a just society for all.”
- “Fight institutional racism”

I would like to close this email by reiterating our appreciation for your having taken the time to provide us with your feedback, and by inviting you meet with some of our group’s leaders in person so that we can come to better understand your concerns, continue to learn from you, and share more of what we hope to accomplish through our vigils. We are quite open to suggestions from you and others in the community about how we can best meet our goal of advocating for a shared commitment to fair and just and compassionate treatment for all, especially those who are being treated unjustly. Would you be open to meeting with us at a time and location (perhaps at a local coffee shop?) that is convenient for you? Let us know what you think - thanks!

The group in our church met to discuss how we might make adjustments in our vigils to be responsive to this community member’s concern. We struggled a good deal with this. Here are a couple of the things we decided:

- There was agreement that the Moral Monday Vigils had been at least somewhat effective in “getting folks’ attention” and generating some conversation (some positive, some critical) about the topic of racial justice outside of just our group. We decided to use this “attention” to invite people from the wider Newtown community to

engage in more in-depth conversations with us – at meetings which would be held at a more “neutral” site within the community (perhaps the public library). We discussed submitting a public invitation to participate in these meetings/conversations via our local town newspaper.

- Our group decided that we should select one of the many issues associated with racial justice (for example, mass incarceration; inequity in access to education; issues related to unequal access to housing, etc.) and get behind some concrete, practical strategies to address racial justice in at least one targeted area.

I share this personal experience about my church’s Moral Monday vigils not to suggest that NACSW specifically endorses (or should endorse) this or any particular strategy for addressing racial justice issues in our society. I am aware that there are members of NACSW who have different views about how to tackle racial justice in general, as well as the Black Lives Matter movement in particular; we are a diverse association in terms of the ways our members understand and live out our faith and our social work practice. Rather, I share this experience to raise an important question for NACSW: what role can and should NACSW be playing to support and inform these kinds of conversations - and actions - within congregations and faith groups in our communities? How could NACSW become a more vital resource for congregations like mine struggling to find our way on this critically important issue (and on other issues of similar importance)?

One such way for NACSW to be a vital resource for the Church is through the development of strong, vibrant NACSW member interest groups which focus on generating and sharing resources, ideas, and best practice examples related to issues and topics of interest to Christians in social work. Over the years, a number of member interest groups have evolved within NACSW which have enabled members to wrestle with how to best integrate faith and social work in specific areas in which those members are especially experienced and passionate.

Toward that end, a number of members of NACSW have banded together to form a new Racial Justice member interest group. One of the first things this

group did was to recruit about a dozen workshops on the topic of racial justice for our Fall, 2015 convention in Grand Rapids. Then at the convention, NACSW invited the presenters of these workshops, as well as Saturday evening keynote speaker Lisa Sharon Harper (a national leader on this topic from Sojourner’s), to brainstorm about possible ways this member interest group could both make a contribution to the professional literature on this topic (from a Christian and social work perspective), as well as become more active in racial justice issues.

Currently, NACSW’s racial justice member interest group is working on three projects:

1. Continuing to recruit workshops on racial justice for NACSW’s Convention 2016, and working toward a special issue of the journal on this topic within the next couple of years
2. Developing a full day preconvention institute for NACSW’s Convention 2016 that includes structured discussion on a range of racial justice topics, an experiential exercise designed to help participants become more self-aware of their perspectives on race and diversity, and possibly a site visit to Cincinnati’s Underground Railroad Museum (www.freedomcenter.org) – or perhaps even holding the entire preconvention institute on-site at this museum.
3. Exploring ways to become more active in the area of racial justice by selecting one of the many issues associated with social justice (for example, mass incarceration, inequities in access to education, housing, or healthcare, voter rights, and so on) and get behind some concrete, practical strategies to address racial justice in at least one targeted area.

To keep the momentum of their initial work at the convention moving forward, this new member interest group has launched a listserv and started bi-monthly conference calls to continue their work on these three projects. Please don’t hesitate to contact the NACSW office (info@nacs.org) if you would like to subscribe to the racial justice listserv and/or become a part of this member interest group. We would welcome your ideas and energy in support of this new interest group’s commitment to better understanding, addressing, and supporting the efforts of churches and faith communities related to this crucial issue of racial justice in our communities!

Newest Trainings Added to NACSW's Online Continuing Education Program

NACSW is pleased to announce that since the last issue of Catalyst, we have added several new trainings to our online continuing education program at <http://nacsw.org/CEU>. New trainings recently added to our program (which now has 95+ trainings) include the following:



Darla Coffey

community to community hearing stories and letting our hearts be broken open. In the process we discovered that sharing stories leads to hope. Hope leads to community. Community leads to action for the common good...i.e. justice. This presentation features the stories Sister Simone heard about economic equality that moved her being to fight for economic justice.

• Working Together to

• Christian Roles in Social Movements for Social Justice by *Jon Singletary, PhD*; video-based training; 5.0 CEUs; Working with Groups and Communities; focus on cultural competence.

How do people of faith see the role of social justice in social movements? This workshop explores how faith inspires social justice in social movements and includes several recent examples. Participants will consider theoretical and theological insights that inform this arena of social work practice as well as biblical insights on social justice and social change.

• Nuns on the Bus: The War on Poverty by *Simone Campbell, JD*; video-based training; 1.0 CEU; Policy.

Justice comes before charity. Everyone has a right to eat, and therefore there is a governmental responsibility to ensure everyone's capacity to eat. On the bus, our Sisters of Social Service moved from

Promote Spiritual and Religious Competency in the Profession by *Darla Spence Coffey, PhD, MSW, Angelo McClain, PhD, Michael Sheridan, PhD., MSW, and Rick Chamiec-Case, Ph.D., MSW, MAR*; video-based training; 1.0 CEU; Social Work Ethics, Values, and Professional Relationships; focus on cultural competence.

Leaders of four major professional social work associations, NASW, CSWE, NACSW, and the Society for Spirituality and Social Work, discuss ways that each of their associations work to equip their members to provide services that are sensitive to and respectful of the religious and spiritual beliefs and values of their clients. This included addressing questions such as: a) Is religiosity and spirituality a natural fit for social workers? If so, what do our associations do to highlight and encourage this fit?; b) What do our organizations do to support



Angelo McClain

the development of knowledge, values, and skills in the area of spirituality?; c) What changes have our organizations seen in the evolution of attention to religion and spirituality in social work, and what key issues appear on the horizon? The workshop concludes with a discussion

about the ways these four associations could work together more fully to support spiritual and religious humility, sensitivity, and competency in the social work profession.

Online continuing education through NACSW offers easy, "on-demand" access to a wide array of high quality training options sensitive to the thoughtful integration of faith and social work accessible via computer or mobile device. All trainings included in this program provide CEUs accredited by the Association of Social Work Boards.

On-line trainings cost between \$15-\$20 per CEU hour. Members of NACSW with receive a 20% discount on all courses, and additional discounts are available for alumni of program partners (<http://www.nacsw.org/CEUPartners.htm>) as well.

For a full catalog listing, go to: www.nacsw.org/CEU.

NACSW Online CEU BOGO Offer for March

In celebration of social work month in March, NACSW is pleased to announce a special "Buy One Training & Get One Free" promotion for NACSW's online CEU program. This special arrangement makes it possible to access double the number of our online trainings for your dollar throughout the month of March!

To participate in this special "Buy One Training & Get One Free" promotion, any time between March 1st and 31st, you can do the following:



1. Register and pay for any online training offered through NACSW's online CEU training program at <http://nacsw.org/ceu>.
2. Send us an email to info@nacsw.org with the title of a second training (of equal or lesser CEU value) that you would also like to take, and we will register you for this second training at no cost. Please make sure to include your license number in this email.
3. NACSW will send you a confirmation email with your log-in information for this

free training within 24 hours (it will take a little longer on weekends).

All 95+ online CEU trainings are "fair game" in this special promotion. Feel free to "Buy One Training & Get One Free" as many times as you wish throughout the month of March.

Don't hesitate to contact us at info@nacsw.org with any questions you might have. Take advantage of this special offer to stock up on CEU trainings (approved by the Association of Social Work Boards) sensitive to the thoughtful integration of Christian faith and social work practice!

The Ministry of Listening

“When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I’ll listen.” Jeremiah 29:12, MSG

As a Stephen Ministry lay leader at my church, I was recently asked to teach a segment on listening skills. I enjoyed every minute of reviewing and preparing for



Shaina Blair

his two and half hour session. Could there be a more perfect topic for a Christian Clinical Social worker to teach?

I was confident as I approached the preparation for this topic. After more than a decade in clinical work, this was like slipping on a pair of comfy jeans, I thought. However, as I dug into the familiar content, I began to realize that in my familiarity with this material, I had been remiss in remembering that listening

- the kind of listening where we really enter others’ human experiences- is both powerful and restorative, a means of healing in itself (Haugk, 2000). On the days where I feel utterly powerless to affect the circumstances of others, I am reminded (as I often need to be) that I can do this one purposeful thing: be present.

I thought about the listening presence of God in my life, His intimate attentiveness. Yes, He hears my petitions and my requests, but more than that, He intuits the meaning of what I’m not overtly saying. He sees my body language, and sits with me in the silences and the experience of my emotions. When I began to reflect on God as Listener, I was soon humbled to remember that I have much still to learn.

In our relationship with God and others, the ministry of listening is layered. We are ministered to by a personal God who hears, who is fully present and who is active in our lives. We then minister to others by reflecting Christ through skilled listening and presence. Yet what blessed me the most was seeing once again that I

can minister to God by listening to Him - being present with Him, being attentive to His Words, reflecting content and mirroring emotion back to him through praise and in prayer.

I invite you to consider how these familiar skills, this ministry of listening, might deepen the meaning of your presence in the lives of others and equip you in drawing nearer to the heart of God.

Listening Lord,

With grateful hearts we remember your faithfulness to listen, to know and hear our hearts. Thank you that you are ever present with us in the reality of our human experience and that you never leave. Help us look to you in our pursuit of being effective instruments in the ministry of listening. May we bless others and bless you, Lord, by following in your likeness. Amen.

Reference:

Haugk, K. C. (2000). *Stephen Ministry Training Manual*. St. Louis, MO: Stephen Ministries.

Social Work Educators Gather in Grand Rapids

On Friday evening, November 13, thirty-four gathered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the 31st Annual Social Work Educators Forum, held in conjunction with NACSW’s 65th Annual Convention and Training Conference. Twenty-six colleges and universities were represented, including 21 Christian and 5 secular schools, from 18 states and Canada. David Sherwood and Ed Kuhlmann moderated the forum.

After introductions and “shameless announcements,” the ensuing discussion was (as usual) all over the map, and

it is almost impossible to summarize. NACSW stands neck-deep at the turbulent confluence of the secular mainstream of social work and its Christian tributary. And one theme of the forum that stood out for me was the ongoing need for Christians to continue to take active steps to be “a vital Christian presence in social work.”

Opportunities for active involvement take the form of:

- maintaining membership in NASW, CSWE, BPD, and all the specialty organizations of the social work profession

that apply to one’s areas of expertise;

- regular attendance at the annual conferences of these organizations;
- participation in ongoing discussions at the conferences as well as on the listservs,
- serving as a site-visitor for the Commission on Accreditation,
- making oneself available for appointment or election to committees, task forces, commissions, boards of directors, and so forth.

Ed Kuhlmann

Member Interest Group Leader

Audio

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at Baylor and a member of NACSW since graduation.

Kimberly Rainey is also a Social Work graduate of Baylor University and holds a LMSW license with the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners. Kimberly has been on staff at Northside Baptist Church as Minister of Benevolence and Missions for the past six years and has been instrumental in providing Community Development leadership and direction as United Way Board President and social

services and churches in Navarro County. Kimberly has also been a member of NACSW since graduation.

Audio conference webinars have been designed so that any person or group can participate simply by calling a telephone number provided by NACSW from any telephone. In addition, interested participants may simultaneously log on to these sessions from their computers or mobile devices to follow the presenter’s PowerPoint presentation on-line, and engage in interactive chat during the session. For additional information (including session learning objectives),

and/or to register on-line, go to NACSW’s website at <http://www.nacsw.org>.

Current NACSW members and staff working for NACSW organizational members may participate in this audio conference and earn CEUs at no cost. Friends of NACSW may participate in this session for just \$26 (or \$16 for fulltime students). Participants are eligible to earn 1.25 continuing education contact hours approved by the Association of Social Work Boards by receiving a score of 80% or better on a short twelve-question quiz based on the material covered.

MEET THE BOARD

Eleanor Uribe Speakes

"You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

You discern my going out and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways."
Psalm 139:1-3

Psalm 139 is a beautiful reminder of what an awesome God we serve.

He knows us intimately and desires to have a personal relationship with us. At the age of 13 I was invited to a charismatic church by my junior high friend. Not knowing how to respond to the loud, expressive music and clapping, I found myself weeping. Little did I know that the Holy Spirit was preparing my heart for Him. As I continued to attend this church, I came to realize the power of God's love, forgiveness, and redemption for me. It was here, in this urban church in Boyle Heights that I asked Jesus into my life, to be as my personal Savior. Little did I know the journey He had planned for me even before I knew Him, and how His faithfulness would be shown throughout my life. My decision to follow Jesus has been the best decision I have ever made. Being the first person in my family to make this commitment has been a walk of faith during which I have benefited immensely from the encouragement and support from fellow believers.

My name is Eleanor (Uribe) Speakes. I live in Fresno, California with my husband, Scott, and our five-year old son Cristian. I was born in Los Angeles, California to Mexican-American/Latino parents with three siblings. We were raised in a close-knit, working class family.

I went to college at UCLA where I majored in Sociology. By God's grace and provision, I was the first in my family to graduate. While attending UCLA, I also enjoyed sweet fellowship with dear sisters and brothers on the campus, especially with University Christian Fellowship



Eleanor Uribe Speakes

(UCF)/Chi Alpha and Intervarsity Christian Fellowship.

After graduation, I was able to work with people that were homeless and struggling with mental health concerns. I went on to get a MSW from California State University, Fresno after which I worked fourteen years with families involved with Children Protective Services (CPS). This opportunity taught me the importance of being able to work with diverse individuals and families in often sensitive and critical situations.

Currently I work at California State University, Fresno as a Faculty Field Liaison and Lecturer. I primarily work with MSW students participating in the Title IV-E program, as well as students gaining their Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC). I also work at a local correctional institution providing therapeutic services as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and co-supervise Social Workers at Salvation Army to provide counseling in a rehabilitative setting.

I have been a member of NACSW since 2002 and am a NACSW-CA representative for Central California as well as the

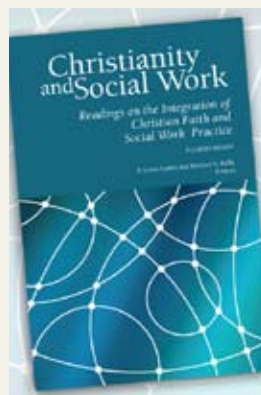
NACSW-CA Chapter Secretary. It has been a privilege and a joy to serve in these capacities, and I am honored to now also serve on the NACSW Board of Directors. NACSW has provided foundational trainings, information, and support to Christians in social work for decades. I have especially valued participating in several NACSW annual conventions and local California conferences offered by our California chapter. I have gained valuable relevant information about a variety of social work practices, but also a wealth of information and resources on how to ethically integrate my faith into my practice. I appreciate the role and stance NACSW has played in maintaining a light shining in the midst of the darkness, and being a beacon of hope. The fellowship and friendships have brought lasting joy and refreshment to my soul.

I look forward to continuing to see and be involved in the work our God is doing locally, nationally, and internationally for all people and tribes. Let us unite in prayer for God's guidance, vision and purpose, as we continue in the work we have been given individually and together.

PUBLICATION AVAILABLE FROM NACSW

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL WORK: READINGS ON THE INTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH & SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE (FOURTH EDITION)

T. Laine Scales and Michael S. Kelly (Editors). (2012). Botsford, CT: NACSW \$55.00 U.S., \$42.99 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



At over 400 pages and with 20 chapters, this revised fourth edition of *Christianity and Social Work* includes six new chapters in response to requests by readers of previous editions. We have included new chapters on issues of sexual orientation, Evidence-based Practice (EBP) as well as an enhanced section on the role of Christianity in social welfare history. It is written for social workers whose motivations to enter the profession are informed by their Christian faith, and who desire to develop faithfully Christian approaches to helping. The book is organized so that it can be used as a textbook or supplemental text in a social work class, or as a training or reference materials for practitioners. Readings address a breadth of curriculum areas such as social welfare history, human behavior and the social environment, social policy, and practice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels

Spiritual Development Technology

I think it is safe to assume that for most of you reading this column, spiritual growth and development is a large part of your daily life. Our faith and spirituality are an important part of who we are as people and practitioners. Technology probably plays an important role in your spiritual life both intentionally and unintentionally.



Nick Cross

I would be one of the first to insist that it is important to have a Bible in print form, a paper journal, and printed books for certain occasions. I can't imagine going on a silent retreat and bringing along an iPad loaded with all of its distractions! Sure, without Wi-Fi many

tablets can be less distracting but there is still something powerful for me about touching and feeling paper and ink to help ground myself.

That said, you can build technology into many of your daily spiritual habits, disciplines, and rituals. I've seen friends post pictures of their devotional space that include an iPad, laptop, and some type of paper notebook. In these spaces they play devotional music, and read or conduct research on one of their devices. My wife has occasionally used Google Image Search during a church service to look up words or phrases that have struck her as meaningful. Twitter, Facebook, etc. can be used to communicate and share ideas that are spiritually rich and meaningful. So technology can have very a meaningful impact on our spiritual growth and development - like I've said before, it all depends on how we use it!

One practical idea on how to use technology to support your spiritual growth and development or practices

would be researching ideas, thoughts, images, quotes, etc. that come to mind during your devotional time or throughout the day. Some of the information you can find online is quite amazing! I actually use my phone to take notes during sermons on Sunday morning which I find helps me to stay focused and helps with remembering it later - and my notes are searchable!

The Bible, of course, is easy to find online. There are lots of ways to find it and many, many different translations, versions, and languages available. Probably the most well-known site is YouVersion (www.bible.com), which boasts of 211 million downloads and 1,200 versions of the Bible in 895 languages! That's a lot of stuff. YouVersion is continually growing and changing, adding more features to their pretty extensive social network in which the Bible is central. A recent feature added is the ability to create an image with a verse

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Why Should We Write and Publish?

Write the vision and make it plain on tablets. - Habakkuk 2:2

The idea of publishing may seem daunting, yet it is something Christians in social work should aspire to do to advance our profession and our faith community. Here are some reasons we should write and publish.



Debra Lavender-Bratcher

1. Advance What Social Workers Do
"We are instructed to 'Go ye into the world'" - Matthew 28:19

This also applies to our profession. We should write to promote and advance our field. The field of social work has Christian roots that should be a continual reminder of why we are doing what we are doing.

"Where there is no vision the people will perish." - Proverbs 29:18

The current Bureau of Labor statistics project that social work will be one of the fastest growing professions between now and 2022. In an effort to help the field grow, publishing solid, ethical research is needed to help those who are new and continuing in the field.

"Discretion shall watch over you, understanding shall keep you." - Proverbs 2:11

The advent of social media has provided the world with so much information. However, as professionals in the field of social work, we need to be discerning about what information is truly beneficial to the people we serve. As the Apostle Paul stated: "All things are legitimate, but not all things are helpful" (1 Corinthians 10:23).

2. Support Your Academic Department, School or Agency

"Therefore now let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before you" - 2 Samuel 7:29

Wherever we are employed, we should be a blessing to your organization. Through publishing we can help others

understand how and what we do, as well as how to effectively reach others.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, said the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil to give you an expected end." - Jeremiah 29:11

God doesn't just want us to have a good "expected end" for ourselves, but he wants the people around us to also be blessed. They are blessed when they can read what we've written.

3. Advance Academic and Agency Benefits

"Delight yourself also in the Lord and He will give you the desires and petitions of your heart." - Psalms 37:4

Procrastination is the greatest enemy in writing and publishing. Some commentators suggest that "delighting" is being in commune with God for complete tranquility. Delighting in God can give us that godly confidence to see God, and to be confident that He will give me the desires of my heart.

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" - Proverbs 4:7

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Technology

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superimposed on it. I can't even begin to tell you all the features available via this service. My favorite feature is having a daily reading plan of my choosing show up in my inbox every morning.

Convenient, yes. Meaningful, not as much as it could be. There are many other sites that offer daily e-mails as well which are very convenient. Remember the Upper Room monthly devotional books? They now have a web presence and offer apps for reading their devotions.

Podcasts, videos, and blogs abound. There are probably thousands of places in each of these categories to find information and content that fits your Christian tradition. For quite a while I was listening to weekly sermons from several different churches (and denominations). I think it is helpful to have the ability to stream content that might take you a little out of your normal comfort (belief or denomination) zone. E-books obviously fall into this category as well. I like the ability to highlight and take notes in the Kindle application and the ease with

which you can find your notes later with some simple searching.

One of the nice things about technology is that things can be updated quickly, or when new content is available it can be disseminated rapidly. I think about some of the recent content that has been shared related to the Black Lives Matter movement, Flint's recent water crisis, the Syrian refugee crisis, etc. that can be written, published, and shared quickly. I have enjoyed receiving Lenten devotional e-mails that are related to recent events in the world. Of course, the rapid development and dissemination of information can also create problems when misinformation is shared or when information isn't vetted properly.

I personally like the ability to connect with God via my technology. Unfortunately, some of what I receive often becomes just one more email that I have to skim through quickly while trying to stay in control of my inbox. So you do need to be careful to make sure you are still finding ways to connect with God in meaningful ways with or without technology.

Write and Publish

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Think about when you were in school (or if you are now in school) and the excitement of learning new things. Publishing allows others to be exposed to wisdom and understanding that will advance the field of Christian social work.

"The person is like a tree planted by the streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaves do not wither – whatever they do shall prosper."
- Psalms 1:3

The process of writing and publishing requires steadfastness. Remain like the tree planted by the water and it will happen. It will happen when you commit your desires to God. As God has already said, "all things are possible."

"A little water makes a mighty ocean."
- Proverb from Liberia

Debra Lavender-Bratcher
Lubbock, Texas

<All Scriptural citations are from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.>

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Speaking Out...

NACSW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS SHARE THEIR VIEWS

<Editor's note: this email was sent in response to NACSW's support of Victoria's question about moving her workshop from Saturday to Friday at NACSW's Convention 2014, which she requested because she is a member of the Seventh Day Adventist group, a denomination that observes Saturdays as their Sabbath and primary day of worship.>

It means more than you know. It is ALWAYS a struggle for me to participate in professional conferences because of the possibility of having to present on Saturdays. You would be surprised at the rigidity that is practiced within many of our social work organizations. I am so relieved to know that there is at least one safe space for me to come and be involved as a professional and a researcher. Again, thank you very much and God bless!

Victoria
Delmar, Maryland

Awesome shout out to the development of the additional <Convention 2016> themes <"Faith and Justice," and "Forgiveness">.

Best wishes.

Annette
Indianapolis, IN

Rick, the conference was great. I was telling Raquel and some others it is like coming home. I just love the collegiality and the emphasis placed on spiritual enrichment.

Christine
Lynchburg, VA

Another great convention this year. Thanks again for all you do for us :). Just FYI, Pam and I are going to work on a presentation for the next convention

Jeff
Indianapolis, IN

Thanks, Rick!

This conference was probably one of the best! There was a sweet spirit, and a genuine sense of urgency to address matters of importance....covered with grace! AWESOME!!!

Kathy
Chattanooga, TN

I want you to know that I'm honored to be a NACSW member. You've done a wonderful job in pursuit of excellence! I hope to utilize more of the wonderful NACSW tools & resources and look forward to writing another blog entry.

Have a safe & blessed New Year!

Teresa
NYC, New York

I am curious as to the response that NACSW takes with the LGBTQ population. For students who embrace their Christian faith, how does NACSW speak to this issue while supporting students' walk of faith within the profession of social work?

Todd

Thanks for your email, Todd. NACSW is a very diverse Christian organization with its membership representing over 60 Christian denominations at last count! So in most cases (including the issue you raise here), NACSW does not take a specific policy or stance, but rather works hard to facilitate healthy, respectful discussion on issues about which the Christian community as a whole (as well as the members in our association) have not yet come to consensus.

With regard to the specific question you raise, we have members who identify as gay and believe that this does not conflict with their faith. We have other members who believe that the expression of gay sexuality is not a

faithful option for a Christian. We have members who are strong advocates for the LGBTQ community on a wide range of issues - within the profession, within their communities, and within their denominations. We have other members who are opponents of, for example, gay marriage. And, of course, we have many, many voices somewhere in between on these and other questions related to this issue.

So clearly we have a great deal of diversity in our membership on this issue (and many others) and do not yet speak with one voice. On a positive note, in recent years I believe we have done a better job of bringing together members with a variety of views on various "hot button" issues to talk and wrestle and pray together in spite of our differences, though we have a long way to go. I also think there is a shared commitment of our members to the provision of services that are compassionate, respectful and competent for all clients - regardless of persons' sexual orientation - a commitment that is based on and driven by both faith and social work values.

I hope this is a helpful response to your question. I would be interested in learning your perspective regarding the question you raise in your email.

BTW - at our convention in 2014, we had an interesting and well-received workshop entitled, "Ethical Social Work Practice with LGBT Clients." In addition, at our annual convention in Grand Rapids in November, 2015, we had a couple of workshops on this topic including: "Understanding the Tension: Christian Social Work Students and LGBT Clients," and "LGBT Christian Experiences: Narratives of Family, Church, and Caregivers." You would be most welcome to join us and be a part of the conversation on this and many other issues of interest to Christians in social work.

Rick Chamiec-Case
Executive Director

NACSW welcomes letters to the editor for the "Speaking Out" section of *Catalyst*. Please submit your comments, ideas, and feedback to rick@nacs.org.

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UPCOMING AUDIO CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS AND PODCASTS

AUDIO CONFERENCES

April 2016
 Audio Conference/Webinar
 "One Step Forward ~ Two Steps Back:
 From Poverty to Self-Sufficiency"
 Pam Crawford and Kim Rainey
 April 25, 2016
 1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

September 2016
 Audio Conference/Webinar
 "The DSM 5: Beyond Skepticism
 and into Practicality"
 David Cecil
 September 29, 2016
 1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

PODCASTS

March 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Integral Ethics in Social Work Education"
 Mari Anne Graham
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013
 in Atlanta, GA
 on October 19th, 2013

April 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Transformed by the Renewing
 of your Mind: Utilizing Rational
 Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)"
 Erma Ballenger
 Recording of
 NACSW's Audio Conference Webinar
 on November 25th, 2013

May 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Christian Roles in Social
 Movements for Social Justice"
 Jon Singletary
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013
 in Atlanta, GA
 on October 17th, 2013

June 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Forgiveness: Pathway to Healing"
 Robert Enright
 Recording of NACSW's Audio Conference
 Webinar on October 8th, 2014

July 2016's Featured Podcast
 "The Family of Adoption:
 One Family/Four Narratives"
 Helen Wilson Harris, et al.
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013 in
 Atlanta, GA on October 18th, 2013

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 audio conference and monthly podcasts,
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