

Coming Soon: NACSW Convention 2015 in Grand Rapids

If you haven't already, it's time to register for NACSW's 65th consecutive annual convention! We look forward to welcoming you to Grand Rapids, from November 12th–15th, 2015. Focused on the theme, *"Pursuing Shalom: Serving Our Neighbors Locally & Globally,"* NACSW's Convention 2015 will feature over 125 workshops and poster sessions, three keynote speakers, four pre-convention institutes, and rich entertainment and worship throughout. Register today for this 3+ day November event in Grand Rapids by going to www.nacsw.org/conv_head_text.html.

NACSW's Convention 2015 will be held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel (187 Monroe Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503). Make your reservation by October 21st to qualify for the guest room rate of just \$120/night (this rate may be shared between up to four people). You can make your reservations directly with the hotel by calling toll free (800) 253-3590 or locally (616) 776-6450. Be sure to identify yourself as being with the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW). More information about accommodations, travel, local eateries and



activities can be found at www.nacsw.org/Convention/Accommodations2015.htm.

In addition to keynote speakers Dr. Michelle Loyd-Paige, Lisa Sharon Harper, and Dr. Gary Anderson, Convention 2015 features a number of opportunities to enjoy Christian entertainment, music, and worship.

- The opening session on Thursday evening will feature entertainment by *Hearts In Step (HIS) Christian Dance Academy*, and the Saturday evening banquet will feature the voices of the *Grand Rapids African American Youth Chorus (GRAAYC)*.

- Friday morning will begin with devotions led by Dr. Laurel Shaler speaking on *"God Given Peace,"* and on Saturday morning, devotions will be led by Dr. Christon Adedoyin, speaking on



Amway Grand Plaza Hotel

"The Descending of the Holy Spirit in Bodily Form like a Dove in Luke 3:22."

- During the convention's closing worship service on Sunday morning, Rev. Dr. Cornelious (Neal) Plantinga will

[continued on page 2](#)

NACSW's November 30th, 2015 Audio Conference Webinar

NACSW is pleased to announce that it will be offering its next audio conference webinar entitled "Community Collaborations: How They Can Be Used to Help Alleviate Poverty" on Monday, November 30th from 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm Eastern Standard Time. This session will be presented by Rhonda Hudson, PhD, LCSW and Mary Anne Poe, MSW, MDiv, LAPSW, both social work faculty from Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.

This webinar will highlight the formation of, strategies employed by, and lessons learned from community collaborations designed to alleviate poverty in a southwestern TN community. Born of hearts hungry to "do



Rhonda Hudson



Mary Anne Poe

justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God," (Micah 6:8) the community collaborations described in this session serve as examples of how to address poverty at micro, mezzo and macro levels.

Rhonda Hudson is professor of social work and BSW Director in the School of Social Work at Union. She teaches in the BSW and MSW programs in Jackson and in Germantown. She is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), and currently, she serves as a board member for Area

Relief Ministries, Inc, and as Coordinator for Room in the Inn Homeless Ministry at Northside Assembly of God church. She is

[continued on page 6](#)

Convention

continued from page 1

speak to us on “*Isaiah’s Grand Shalom: The Big Vision and the Small Faithful Steps Toward Its Fulfillment*,” and Dr. Kesslyn Brade Stennis and Friends will lead us in worship and song.

There will be numerous opportunities for networking and student volunteering at Convention 2015 as well. There will be chapter and member interest group meetings (www.nacsw.org/Convention/GroupMeetings2015.htm) during the Friday and Saturday lunch breaks, as well as informal networking during the reception and coffee breaks. Students are encouraged to volunteer at the convention in exchange for a deeply discounted registration rate. More information about student volunteering can be found at: www.nacsw.org/Convention/VolunteerNetwork2015.htm.

NACSW’s Convention 2015 in Grand Rapids will feature more than 120 outstanding workshops and poster presentations divided among separate

tracks (for example: Direct Practice - Individuals, Couples, and Families; Immigration and Acculturation; Professional Relationships, Values and Ethics; Direct Practice - Groups and Communities, etc.). A listing of full workshop and poster session abstracts and descriptions, learning objectives, presenter biographies and other relevant information is available on NACSW’s website.

To provide a preview of some of the quality workshops that will be offered at Convention 2015, the following represents just a sampling of some of the excellent workshop presentations that have been accepted for this year’s conference:

Ethical Decision-Making, Common Morality, and Christian Social Workers

Scott Sanders, PhD

The need for enhanced ethical decision-making is as great as it’s ever been. Christian social workers may unintentionally be guilty of dismissing this in lieu of a worldview that stresses dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide decision-making. Such a perspective may at the least be naive and at the worst be morally arrogant. This workshop presents a framework consistent with a Christian worldview that will enhance ethical decision-making.

Ferguson, Police Relations, and Faith Community Response

Lanny Endicott, DMin, LCSW, LMFT

This workshop takes a look at Ferguson, Missouri: shooting of unarmed black teen, Michael Brown, by white police officer Darren Wilson, resulting demonstrations, the police response, and eventual rioting. Background issues, smoldering for years, contributed to the violent eruption. Workshop provides important solutions going forward, including those of the faith community.

Fundraising Based on Social Work Principles, Ethics, and Practices

Robert Day, MSW

All helping is dependent on resources. Social work, ministry, or serving people in general, requires appropriate funding. This workshop will outline fundraising principles, methods and activities based on established social work ethics and best practices.

Engaging Congregations in the Work

of Preventing and Ending Homelessness

Lauren Baker, MSW and Raechel Wronga, BA

The Congregational Partnership Program was started in 2007 for congregations to participate in the work of ending homelessness. The program educates and engages congregations in best practices of ending homelessness for families through prevention and rapid rehousing services. Congregations participate in providing rental assistance and relational support in a housing-first, strength-based approach.

Secondary Traumatic Stress and Human Service Organizations

Nola Carew, LMSW

This workshop will focus on developing trauma informed organizational cultures to better support helping professionals in providing services to traumatized individuals and families. Participants will explore stressors associated with the helper role including burnout, vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma. Comprehensive prevention, assessment, and intervention strategies will be addressed on micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

A Place for Social Work at the Human Rights Table

Lisa Hosack, PhD

Human rights work has increased as knowledge has grown about the myriad examples of violations such as trafficking, modern day slavery, and inconsistent law enforcement. Social work has much to contribute to this conversation, but we haven’t always been confident in this growing practice area. As prominent human rights organizations look to hire social workers, however, we need to better understand our key role within this significant area of practice.

As you can see, NACSW’s Convention 2015 in Grand Rapids provides a marvelous opportunity for Christians in social work to come together and share what we have in common both in our practice and our faith. We are confident you will leave the conference both refreshed and inspired. Go to www.nacsw.org and register now to join us for Convention 2015. We look forward to seeing you in Grand Rapids in November!

CATALYST

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Without your current email address, NACSW cannot as easily provide you with announcements about NACSW events in your area, the annual convention, and updates about new NACSW programs and services. If you’ve not received an email from NACSW within the past 4-6 weeks, please send us an email (info@nacsw.org).

Integrating Faith and Social Work: The “So What?” Question

Often when I speak to friends and colleagues about NACSW – especially to people outside of the faith community

– I am asked the “so what?” question: why does NACSW spend so much time and effort exploring the connection between faith and social work? Often underneath this question is

the assumption that faith is something one practices on Sunday mornings, and social work is something one practices between Monday through Friday - and never the twain shall meet. But whenever and for whatever reason this “so what” question comes up, it reminds me why bringing faith and social work has been so important to me – at least important enough to commit almost 20 years to working for NACSW! In this column, I would like to offer 5 reasons that resonate for me in response to this “so what” question.

Reason One: First of all, many Christians in social work share the conviction that the thoughtful, sensitive integration of faith and social work offers the potential of generating a rich *synergy* that can add considerable value to both our work *and* our faith. Synergy in this context refers to: “two or more things working together in order to create something that is bigger or greater than the sum of their individual efforts” (“Synergy”, 2014b). From this perspective, a key benefit of the integration of faith and social work is that it has the potential to contribute to outcomes (that is, the accomplishment of valued goals for clients and communities, as well as growth in faith and faithfulness for social workers) that are potentially greater than the sum of what can be achieved through just social work or faith on their own.

Reason Two: For many Christians in social work, their faith is a powerful asset that provides motivation, sustenance, and resilience, and strengthens their ability to cope with the many challenges and stress associated with being a social worker. Put another way, for many people of faith,



Rick Chamiec-Case

integration involves tapping the resources of their faith to be the best social workers they can be – resources that can be especially valuable when the going gets tough, as it often does in social work.

Reason Three: Many Christians in social work believe that the content of their faith provides perspective and unique insight (for example, about the human condition) that is not part of their social work training, but which can be extremely helpful when applied thoughtfully to social work practice: <Christians> believe that in the person of Jesus, in the text of the Bible, and in the historical experience of the Church God has revealed important truths that would otherwise be largely hidden from view” (Jacobson & Jacobson, 2004, p. 28)

The same can be said about social work, which provides perspective and unique insight which can be extremely helpful in supporting Christians’ efforts to understand and live out their faith (for example, when seeing up close the pain and marginalization of our clients enables us to understand faith’s compelling call to serve the “least of these” (Matthew 25) in a deeper and more powerful way).

Reason Four: There has been a growing recognition within the social work profession in recent years regarding the importance of spiritually sensitive practice, which includes a commitment to competently assessing and incorporating (when indicated) clients’ spiritual beliefs and values in our practice. In a recent study, Oxhandler et al. found that one of only two variables significantly related with social workers addressing clients’ spirituality and religion in clinical social work practice is the intrinsic religiosity of social workers themselves (H. K. Oxhandler, Parrish, Torres, & Achenbaum, In press). In Oxhandler’s study, the degree to which one’s religious or spiritual beliefs carry over into all areas of the social worker’s life (including professional practice) had the highest correlation with the integration of clients’ religion/spirituality in practice. This finding confirms social workers’ intrinsic religiosity as a critical predictor for the integration of clients’ religion/spirituality in practice, a crucial component of spiritually sensitive social work practice.

Reason Five: Finally, for many Christians in social work, faith forms a core

part of their identities, and as such is not something that can simply be “checked at the door” when they practice social work. Attempts to bracket their faith as they engage in social work often feel forced and stilted, and potentially contribute to social workers feeling inauthentic and/or leading to an unsatisfying and counter-productive disconnect between their personal and professional selves:

... if we have any hope of becoming psychologically healthy human beings, we must integrate every aspect of our lives around a core identity that stands at the center of our self-understanding. It simply will not do for one dimension of my life to run in one direction while other dimensions of my life run in radically different directions (Hughes, 2005, p. xv). . . . I must find some way to integrate these . . . core dimensions that define who I am at the most basic levels of my life” (Hughes, 2005, p. 97)

Bottom line, Christians in social work - like all persons regardless of their worldviews –cannot avoid seeking integrity, authenticity, wholeness and continuity between their overall body of core beliefs on the one hand, and their actions on the other (Wolterstorff, 1984). As such, the question is not *whether* the faith of Christians in social work interacts with their social work practice, but rather how *thoughtfully, competently, and ethically* Christians in social work handle these interactions.

So these are some of the most important reasons why integrating faith and social work has meant a lot to me through the years. What about for you? I’d love to hear some of your reasons why *you* are interested in bringing faith and social work together!

References

- Hughes, R. T. (2005). *The vocation of a Christian scholar: How Christian faith can sustain the life of the mind* (Revised Edition ed.). Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Jacobson, D., & Jacobson, R. (2004). *Scholarship and Christian faith: Enlarging the conversation*. New York: Oxford.
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continued on page 6

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>.

Remember that for the month of September, these new trainings, as well as all of NACSW's other

90+ online CEU trainings, are 25% off. To access this 25% discount, simply enter the discount code September25% when registering online for any training during September. There are no limits regarding the number of trainings for which you can receive this 25% discount - and if you are a member of NACSW, this 25% is on top of your usual 20% off NACSW member reduced rate!

New trainings recently added to our program (which now has 90+ trainings) include the following:

Irresistible Revolution: A Quest to Be Ordinary Radicals

Shaine Claiborne; video-based training; 1.0 CEU.

This presentation is an invitation to join a new movement of God's Spirit that begins inside each of us and extends into a broken world. It is an invitation to listen to stories to inspire and provoke us as we seek to live out our call as people of faith in social work. This message is meant to comfort the disturbed, and disturb the



Shaine Claiborne



comfortable. It sketches out a vision of "ordinary" Christians in social work ready to change the world with little but radical acts of love.

Conducting a Spiritual Assessment

Barry Lee, PsyD; video-based training; 2.0 CEUs.

The focus of this session is two-fold. One area of focus is to provide participants with opportunities to learn a variety of methods to obtain a spiritual assessment from their clients. The other area of focus is to gain a better understanding of the role that spirituality has played and continues to play in the lives of individuals who are in recovery from substance addiction issues.

Mindfulness in the Christian Tradition: Implications for Practice

Regina Trammel, MSW, LCSW; video-based training; 1.0 CEU.

One of the most valuable tools in working with clients is the social worker him/herself. Often social workers struggle with large caseloads and complex client situations, leading to increased stress and decreased effectiveness in social

workers' practice. Improving coping skills and mechanisms for dealing with stress may help social workers.



Regina Trammel

A Christian mindfulness framework is introduced as one possible strategy for improving the ability of Christians in social work to cope and deal with stress in their practice.

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.

NACSW's online continuing education program offers high-quality trainings in several different formats including video-based trainings, audio-based trainings, text-based trainings and virtual study groups, a more interactive approach to small group, online continuing education.

Online trainings cost between \$15-\$20 per CEU hour. Members of NACSW will 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 Program Discount Offer

To help you start off the fall season right, NACSW is pleased to announce a 25% discount during September on all of its 90+ online CEU trainings. You can check these out at: <http://nacsw.org/CEU>.

To access this 25% discount, simply enter the code "**September25%**" when registering online for any training during

September. There are no limits regarding the number of trainings for which you can apply this 25% discount - and since you are a member of NACSW, this 25% off is *on top of* your usual 20% member discount, resulting in a 45% discount altogether!

Don't hesitate to contact us at info@

nacsw.org with any questions you might have. Take advantage of this deep discount 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.

DIVERSITY COLUMN: THE INTERSECTION OF RACE AND FAITH

Open Season

We listen to the news and we frequently hear about “Black Death” — not the tragic health epidemic that took place in Europe centuries ago, but rather the accounts of Black men, women, and children who die at the hands of the police. These persistent Black deaths could be



Jacqueline Dyer

described as a kind of disease, but a more fitting and bone-chilling metaphor would be that we are experiencing a “hunting season” - now open on people of African descent. The announcements of instances of African American deaths come regularly enough that some may have become desensitized. However, others like me who fully grasp this hunting season metaphor have been moved to outrage.

When I hear about the death of Black men, women and children at the hands of police officers, regardless of the nature of the incident, I can’t help but feel like it is open season on us. Unlike any official hunting season, however, this open season has no specified “close” date. As with any hunting season, the “hunters” are protected to a large degree as they hunt down less powerful and more vulnerable prey - unless there is undeniable video evidence to contradict police reports documenting the deaths of African American people. Such was the case in the murder of Walter Scott, who was shot in the back numerous times by Officer Slager. Slager’s report was contradicted by eyewitness video. Then again, there was video in the case of Eric Garner’s death - he said, “I can’t breathe” at least 10 times. No arrests.

Freddie Gray died on April 19, 2015 in a Baltimore hospital after receiving life-threatening injuries while in police custody. He is not the first nor is he likely to be the last to die in police care, under questionable circumstances. But there is something particularly heinous about the fact that during transport in a police van,

he sustained injuries serious enough that his spinal cord was almost completely severed.

Then consider the recent death of Sandra Bland. Ms. Bland was found on July 13, 2015 hung in her cell in Waller County, Texas, 3 days after being arrested for not signaling a lane change. It is being called a suicide? Her death is now being scrutinized by the media in a pattern similar to the media attention that occurred following Michael Brown’s death in Ferguson, Missouri.

These incidents, because they are racial motivated, have similarities to other racially motivated attacks like the one at Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, SC in which nine Black church attendees were murdered. These and other racially motivated events generate a grief that wells up out of wounds that are centuries old, and have never truly healed. To make matters worse, the wounds get packed with new sand or salt when the response to these incidents includes vilifying the victims. For example, we hear from the media over and over again about the police arrest records and troubled histories of the individuals who are killed as if this knowledge justifies deadly aggression towards the unarmed, and should exonerate the badged culprits. Herein lies the rub. These recent events overshadow examples of Black undercover or off-duty officers being shot by their own non-Black colleagues. Too often there is no line of demarcation whereby the villains and the heroes are clearly identified.

My focus in this article is not solely to point out these incidents of police aggression against Black men, women, and children, but to help us understand the pain of African Americans on emotional, psychological and spiritual levels. The connection between police aggression and African American pain is starkly highlighted when African American men discuss the care they need to demonstrate when being stopped by police while driving. The special “be careful” instructions the parents pass on to their sons is a message I’ve heard repeatedly by parents of young African American boys who might get stopped by our uniformed protectors. I don’t believe the sightings of police should trigger fear in any African

Americans. However, the fear is real when experience reveals that some of those charged with protecting and serving do neither with regard to African Americans.

While my and others’ outrage about this “open season” is understandable, I also recognize that a strategic Christian response is necessary. In all these incidents mentioned in this article, the most prominent response has been a secular one, with the response from the faith community seeming to come in a distant second. It is unclear if the seemingly absent faith response is due to secular resistance to the Christian voice, which seems to be on the rise. However, I have seen that when Christians are determined to be heard, our voices cannot be silenced. As social workers, we bring a unique understanding of societal systems that enables us to develop a multi-level change approach. As Christian social workers, we bring indomitable faith in God. Our professional mandate to fight for social justice emanates from God’s character (Isaiah 9:7). Yes, we live in a sin-marred world, “But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Our goal is not just to build ad hoc coalitions to address social problems, but to build intentional partnerships designed to have strategic and lasting social impact.

In November at the NACSW convention in Grand Rapids, I will explore themes and various change efforts focused on the issues described above. I will present an organizing metaphor and discuss what appears to be a repetitive pattern in media and societal responses to racial inequality. After discussing my analysis of this pattern, I will suggest a more transformative direction for us as Christian social workers to take. I don’t have the ‘better-mouse-trap’ answer to suddenly stop these types of incidents. However, the ways such incidents are presented to us and analyzed for public consumption needs to be reframed. My hope is that we will begin to find different ways to think about how we “consume” and respond to the media coverage. This will in turn present opportunities to forge new paths toward Shalom in our neighborhoods and cities in regards to “open hunting season” incidents.

Jacqueline Dyer, PhD, MSW, LICSW

Where Our True Citizenship Lies

“...they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.”
Heb. 11:16

My husband and I just purchased a lovely house in Georgia, right outside of Atlanta. Our summer has been filled with the emotional roller coaster of a hot real estate market and the fury of preparing to move.

Many things go along with a home purchase, but the driving force for us was the knowledge that we would soon live and be in the place we’d hoped for – the place I decorated a thousand times in my mind, the place where we imagined hosting family dinners and church gatherings, the place where we pray our family will grow and thrive.

In looking toward that future place, we soon began to release our emotional attachment to our previous home. We had certain plans for projects, but now that we knew we would not be there much longer, we began to shift the focus of our time and energies. In packing up, we started re-evaluating our need for certain items, keeping only the things we decided should permanently belong in the new house.

God has blessed us with a wonderful family, church and community. We had so much encouragement and support in the six week long process that seemed (to us) to last forever. On moving day and the few days after we had many people show up to help, offer meals and enthusiastically congratulate us on our new home.

On a quiet evening (before cable and internet were up and running again), I sat still in our new living room. I wanted to fully appreciate the feeling of being home, this place I’ve looked forward to, dreamed about, hope for. I felt such contentment and gratitude. Also in that moment at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I began to imagine and have some small inkling of



Shaina Blair

I wanted to fully appreciate the feeling of being home, this place I’ve looked forward to, dreamed about, hoped for.

appreciation for what it will be like to enter into our eternal home in heaven. Similarly there is the wait, the arrival, the welcome and the rest, but on a level that is so much deeper and ultimately satisfying.

In reflecting on this earthly journey we have just traveled, this process of leaving one home for another, loosing old ties for new ones, I’ve come to a place of remembering a couple of important kingdom principles. The first is that God uses the ordinary things, people and experiences, to teach us extraordinary truths (1 Cor. 1:26-29). The second is remembering that I am a sojourner, for now (Phil. 3:20).

As a Texas native, I can identify with being from a place where one always hopes to eventually return. Until then, I (maybe a little too much) talk like a Texan and cling to those cultural aspects of my identity that were shaped by growing up there.

So then, if I am living and believing like a sojourner, like an Abraham or a Moses, or a person in exile

like John, everything about me ought to reflect the culture and language of the place where my true citizenship lies. I will let go of temporary things and cling to those things (i.e. love, joy, peace, etc.) that belong in the place where I am going. A glint of what that promised homecoming will be like is what helps me sojourn on for now.

Dear Lord, We praise you for the glorious inheritance we are promised through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our living hope! We thank you that even on this earth, we can be home in the presence of your Spirit until we make it that glorious place you’ve prepared for us. As we sojourn together in service, help us remember where our true citizenship lies. Move us to loosen ties to the temporary with renewed affection for all things eternal. Amen.

Audio Conference

continued from page 1

also a member of the CSWE Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity. Mary Anne Poe is the Associate Dean of the School of Social Work at Union University where she has taught since 1996. She is also the Director of the Center for Just and Caring Communities at Union. Mary Anne is a licensed advanced practice social worker (LAPSW), and has served on the editorial board for *Social Work and Christianity* for many years.

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 the US or Canada. 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>, or you can contact the NACSW office tollfree at 888-426-4712 to register on the phone.

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 in the conference.

We hope you are able to join us on November 30th for this important audio conference webinar – we encourage you to register today!

Executive Director

continued from page 3

integration of clients’ religion/spirituality in social work practice: A national survey. *Social Work*. Synergy. (2014b). 2014, from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/synergy>
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MEET THE BOARD

Kimberly Hardy

When I was first approached about becoming a part of NACSW's Board of Directors, it was somewhat overwhelming. I spoke with the Executive Director and the Board President doing my best to sell myself as someone who was prepared for this incredible challenge while secretly doubting that I could. I had one of those "who am I?" moments – who am I to hold such a position? What have I done that makes me worthy? I had seen the ballots for Board Members in the mail before asking me to choose between several accomplished scholars or practitioners who were doing amazing work. Now my day had arrived in a way I had never expected and I was absolutely amazed because God saw my desire to serve the organization and He magnified it.



Kimberly Hardy

My route to NACSW was a rather interesting one. In my practice life I had been a school social worker in the District of Columbia, Baltimore, and the West Side of Chicago. I was used to spending my days in Superior Court, my nights in a residential program, and my afternoons interfacing with stakeholders from school, home, and community. My clients were low-income adolescents from challenging home environments and chaotic neighborhoods with active juvenile court cases and special education plans.

While I had always been a woman of faith in my personal life, it was during my PhD program at Morgan State University that I began to blend my personal and professional calling. As the only graduate student on a team of faculty members working on a SAMHSA grant, I was given the least-desired role on the team: putting together the annotated bibliography. Having to cull the literature on risk and protective factors for suicide among African-American college students led me to ask questions I had not previously considered. Repeatedly I saw that the students' faith was a protective factor for

them, but I wondered aloud to my advisor about those moments when religion does more harm than good. That led a naïve young doctoral candidate to submit an abstract for a social work and spirituality conference with the sexiest title in the program: "More Harm than Good – Exploring the Possible Suppressive Effects of Religion on African-Americans." In my mind I had no chance of being selected; my whole premise was based on a cursory review of the literature and surely I was no scholar at that point. Another "who am I?" moment. But I was selected and my one-hour workshop – my first ever – drew an enormous crowd. I was nervous about engaging a sensitive topic in a provocative way, but I was excited to see how well it was received. People began sharing their own stories across racial groups and across faith backgrounds, and from that moment I knew that this work needed to be done.

Two years later my dissertation focused on the help-seeking behavior of African-American Christians and through that work I found myself attending the NACSW Convention in North Carolina in 2010. It was a very interesting conference filled with people who were passionate about their work and how their faith informed and was transformed by their work. While we didn't always agree in every conversation, everyone seemed very open to hearing rather than simply being heard. At that NACSW conference I met people who are still valued colleagues and dear friends to this day.

Something I did notice, however, was that there was a stark lack of racial diversity among the social workers who attended the NACSW conference. In addition, some of my colleagues outside of NACSW whose research also focused on the intersection of faith and social work seemed to have a negative opinion of the organization. However, it seemed to me that their views were based largely on what they saw externally. I knew that NACSW was more than my colleagues understood it to be and I was determined to help change their impression.

The following year I wrote a long email to NACSW's Executive Director explaining my concerns about the way the organization was perceived by some of my colleagues and how I wanted to do something to change this negative

perception so that NACSW could be a more viable organization for the small community of faith-based scholars from a wider range of ethnic, racial, and denominational backgrounds. I fully expected a polite "auto-reply" indicating that my message had been deposited into some intern's mailbox because "who was I?" to send off such a message to the Executive Director offering my sage advice on how best to change the association's direction?

But God.

A few days later I received the most astonishingly kind email from the Executive Director himself thanking me for my concern and input, offering to hear my thoughts about ways that the organization could grow in their efforts to reach out to more diverse populations, and inviting me to join him and the Board of Directors for lunch at the upcoming conference in St. Louis. I was completely taken aback by the grace and openness of his message and I relished the opportunity to meet him and his colleagues in an exchange of ideas. By the time lunch was over, my nervousness gave way to excitement as they supported my ideas and suggestions and asked me to serve in ways that would help make them come to fruition. At the time of this writing, a special issue of *Social Work and Christianity* is being published that represents over a year of very hard work on the topic of "The Black Church and Social Reform" for which I was invited to be co-guest editor. In addition, the upcoming Convention will, for the third consecutive year, feature a track entitled, "Research and Practice with Ethnically Diverse Populations," for which I have been honored to serve as one of the Track Coordinators all three years. I have three articles published in various issues of NACSW's journal, *Social Work & Christianity*, and twice my convention presentations have been videotaped and posted to NACSW's online CEUs program.

Mine has been a rapidly-forming and fascinating relationship with NACSW. I have enjoyed my work with the organization for several years now, and intend to continue growing personally and professionally with NACSW for years to come. "Who am I?" I am Dr. Kimberly Hardy ... a very proud member of the NACSW Board of Directors.

NACSW Announces

Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice (2015)

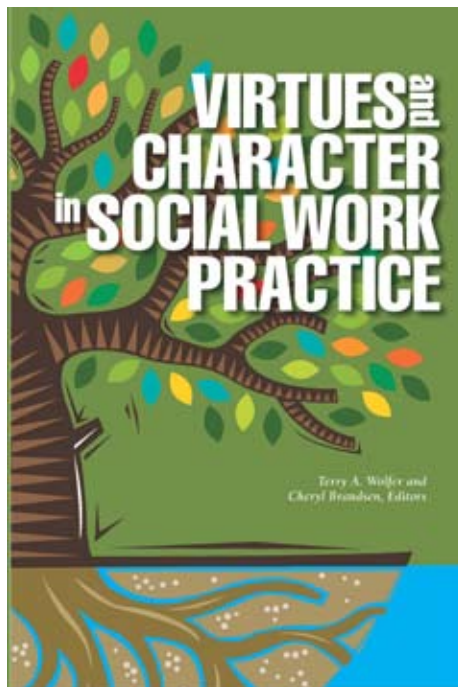
NACSW is pleased to announce the May, 2015 publication of *Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice (2015)*, edited by Terry A. Wolfer and Cheryl Brandsen. *Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice* offers a fresh contribution to the Christian social work literature with its emphasis on the key role of character traits and virtues in equipping Christians in social work to engage with and serve their clients and communities well.

Social work practitioners are social change agents who spend much of their time examining social structures and advocating for policies and programs to advance justice and increase opportunity. Social justice is central to the mission, professional development, and ethical decision making process in social work practice. However, the development of character traits and virtues for Christians in social work is equally important in furthering social justice and working with diverse populations.

A re-publication of the combined Summer and Fall, 2014 special issue of *Social Work and Christianity* (NACSW's quarterly journal), *Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice* brings to light questions about professional identity, relationships, and the ability to thrive and sustain social change through the understanding and development of a virtue framework. This framework combines philosophy, theology, and pedagogical practices to offer a holistic approach to professional development and explores the virtues of charity, faith, generosity, gratitude, and justice in social work practice.

Especially useful in the classroom or social work trainings, *Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice* addresses a range of critical questions such as:

- What character traits and virtues ought Christians in social work seek to nurture in



their lives and work?

- What sorts of dispositions, commitments, and practices should the social work profession seek to instill in social workers?
- What resources do Christian educators and trainers draw from to shape a vision for the type of social workers they hope to cultivate?
- What is the role of the church in the character and virtue formation of Christians in social work?

The purpose of this book is to explore how to form Christians in social work who *love* justice, who *care deeply* about people and their flourishing, who *settle for nothing less* than doing their work competently, and whose *core posture* toward their work is one of integrity.

Dr. David Sherwood, Editor-in-Chief of *Social Work & Christianity*, says about *Virtues and Character in Social Work* that:

Ethical practice in social work is informed by theory, knowledge, and rational analysis, but it is ultimately

action resulting from the character of the practitioner—from the habits of the heart formed by the disciplined practice of love, justice, and the other virtues over time. *Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice*, edited by Terry Wolfer and Cheryl Brandsen will be a valuable resource for Christians in social work as they seek to become persons of character who practice competently and ethically.

Sr. Ann Patrick Conrad, The Catholic University of America, adds that:

This work has the potential to provide a significant resource for on-going professional development as well as for students entering the field of social work. Its focus on the place of Virtue Ethics within the overall framework of ethical responsibility is an area of particular interest for professional practitioners. Attention is given both to the theoretical foundation as well as the practical application of this approach to ethical decision making within a faith-based context.

Terry A. Wolfer, PhD, MSW is Professor and PhD Program Coordinator at the University of South Carolina College of Social Work. He has taught there nearly 20 years. Cheryl Brandsen, PhD, MSW is the provost at Calvin College. She is a member of the sociology and social work department at Calvin College where she taught for 18 years prior to taking on administrative roles.

Virtues and Character in Social Work (ISBN # 978-0-9715318-9-5) is 153 pages long, and is now available at NACSW's on-line bookstore for \$23.75 - or only \$19.00 for NACSW members (plus shipping).

To order a copy of the *Virtues and Character in Social Work*, contact NACSW at info@nacs.org or 888.426.4712.



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/+nacs+gifts



Emerging Leaders Connecting at Convention 2015

We are pleased to announce that NACSW Convention 2015 will include opportunities and activities for our youngest members and attendees. Through an initiative called “Emerging Leaders,” NACSW is making a concerted effort to engage and meet the unique needs of our students, young professionals (less than 5 years of experience) and young scholars (under the age of 35). If you fall into one of these categories, here are some events under consideration for you at NACSW’s Convention 2015 in Grand Rapids in November!

Vocational Panel

Finding your calling in a field as broad as social work can be challenging. Come listen to a panel of experienced practitioners from across the micro – macro spectrum talk about their work and how they got into it. This is a great opportunity to network. Panelists have



Allison Tan



Maddie Poindexter



Joe Kuilema



Samantha Taylor

agreed to be involved because they want to walk alongside you as you think about the future.

Grad School?

Should you work first or go right to grad school? MSW? PhD? MDiv? Is a public university or a private Christian school right for you? A panel of faculty and admissions staff from a variety of institutions offers advice on making decisions about what comes next.

Social Mixer

Spend an evening in downtown Grand Rapids with other young social work professionals and students.

If you have questions about the Emerging Leaders group, please send an email to: emergingleaders@nacs.org.

NACSW Emerging Leaders Initiative Board Committee: Allison Tan, Maddie Poindexter, Joe Kuilema, Samantha Taylor

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Social Work & Christianity 2016 Graduate Student Paper Award

NACSW is pleased to announce its 2016 Graduate Student Paper Award, with the winning paper to be published in *Social Work & Christianity* and the author to receive an Award Honorarium of \$500.

The purpose of this Award is to encourage and recognize excellence in scholarly work by a graduate student on issues related to the integration of Christian faith and professional social work practice and other professional concerns that have relevance to Christianity.

We are issuing a call for proposals from current MSW and Ph.D. students regarding projects for which they would like to submit papers in consideration for this Award.

Proposals must be submitted by January 31, 2016. The Student Paper Award Committee of the editorial board will review proposals and authors of proposals that show significant promise of meeting the award criteria will be encouraged to submit completed manuscripts by July 31, 2016. Completed manuscripts will be anonymously reviewed by the Student Paper Award Committee and the Award decision and notification will be made by September 15, 2016. The winning paper will be published in the Spring 2017 issue of *Social Work & Christianity* and the Award formally presented at the following NACSW Annual Convention. Strong papers that do not win the award will be considered for possible publication in subsequent regular issues of the journal.

Proposals should provide a concise overview of project and its relationship to the ethical integration of Christian faith and competent professional social work practice and scholarship. They should include a clear explanation of the proposed topic or

research question, the methodology used to address the question, and the intended contribution to social work scholarship and practice. Proposals should be no longer than 400-600 words and should be submitted by email attachment to David Sherwood, Editor, *Social Work & Christianity*, david@sherwoodstreet.com.

Criteria by which submitted papers will be evaluated are:

1. Topic: Does the paper have relevance for the integration of Christian faith and professional social work practice or other professional concerns related to Christian faith?

2. Significance: Does this paper address an important issue? What is the potential contribution of this paper to the profession?

3. Innovation: Does the paper employ novel concepts, approaches or methods? Is it original

and innovative? Do findings or conclusions challenge existing paradigms or help develop new methodologies?

4. Approach: Are the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well integrated, and appropriate to the purposes of the paper? Does the author discuss the paper’s limitations?

5. Implications for social work practice and/or education: Are the implications adequately articulated? Do the findings or conclusions have broad applicability?

6. Writing: Is the writing style concise? Are concepts, methods, and findings clearly explained? Does the submitted version of the paper suggest that the student carefully reviewed the paper (e.g., no grammatical, spelling, typographical errors) and had feedback from others to improve it?



David Sherwood

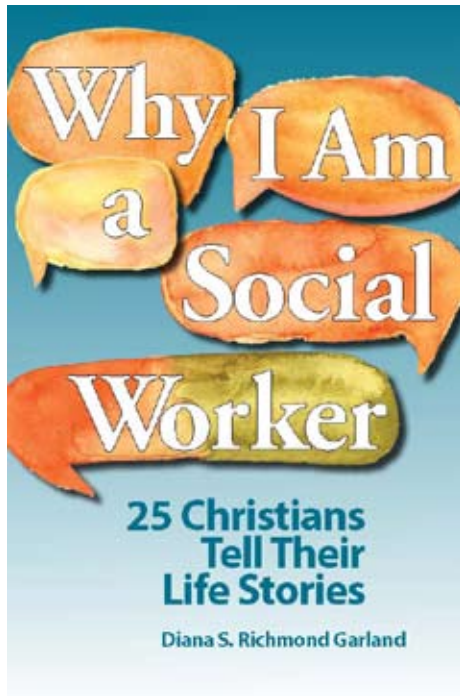
NACSW Announces

Why I Am a Social Worker: 25 Christians Tell Their Life Stories

NACSW is pleased to announce the July, 2015 publication of *Why I Am a Social Worker: 25 Christians Tell Their Life Stories* (2015) by Diana R. Garland.

Why I Am a Social Worker describes the rich diversity and nature of the profession of social work through the 25 stories of daily lives and professional journeys chosen to represent the different people, groups and human situations where social workers serve.

Many social workers of faith express that they feel “called” to help people – sometimes a specific population of people such as abused children or people who live in poverty. Often they describe this calling as a way of living out their faith. *Why I Am a Social Worker* serves as a resource for Christians in social work as they reflect on their sense of calling, and provides direction to guide them in this process. *Why I Am a Social Worker* employs a narrative, descriptive approach, allowing the relationship between faith and practice to emerge through the professional life stories of social



workers who are Christians. As such, it provides a way to explore integration on personal, emotional and practical levels.

Why I Am a Social Worker addresses a range of important questions such as:

- How do social workers describe the relationship of their faith and their work?
- What is their daily work-life like, with its challenges, frustrations, joys and triumphs?
- What was their path into social work, and more particularly, the kind of social work they chose?
- What roles do their religious beliefs and spiritual practices have in sustaining them for the work, and how has their work, in turn, shaped their religious and spiritual life?

Why I Am a Social Worker will provide you with a realistic view of the gritty realities of a profession that is at the forefront of serving those Jesus described as “the least of these” (Matthew 25).

Why I Am a Social Worker: 25 Christians Tell Their Life Stories (2015), (ISBN # 978-0-9897581-0-9) is 220 pages long,

and is now available at NACSW’s on-line bookstore for \$29.95 - or only \$23.95 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more copies (plus shipping). An e-version (pdf format) is available as well.



GENEROUS DONORS TO NACSW

NACSW wants to say “thank-you” to the many generous donors who through their financial contributions have helped further NACSW’s mission “to equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice:”

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For email addresses and additional chapter information, please see NACSW's chapter webpage at: <http://www.nacsw.org/chaplist.html> or contact the NACSW office.

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There are a number of ways to provide a financial contribution to NACSW to partner with us in our mission and ministry.

- To make a secure, one-time or monthly donation, go to https://www.nacsw.org/2008/2008_support.htm or contact us at the office at info@nacsw.org, or call tollfree at: 888-426-4712.

- Please also consider NACSW as a beneficiary when you write or update your will. To discuss a planned giving option, please contact Rick Chamiec-Case, executive director, at rick@nacsw.org, or 888.426.4712.

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The Christian Career Connection



Looking to fill an open position?

Visit NACSW's website www.nacsw.org

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visit www.nacsw.org and click on the JobNet Career Center link



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AUDIO CONFERENCES

November 2015
 Audio Conference/Webinar
 "Community Collaborations: How They Can
 Be Used to Help Alleviate Poverty"
 Mary Anne Poe and Rhonda Hudson
 November 30, 2015
 1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

February 2016
 Audio Conference/Webinar
 "Couples in Conflict: A Biblically-based
 Approach to Problem Resolution"
 Mikal and Janice Rasheed
 February 29, 2016
 1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

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)

PODCASTS

October 2015's Featured Podcast
 "Commissions to Complete the Mission"
 Kesslyn Brade Stennis
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013
 in Atlanta, GA
 on October 28th, 2013

November 2015's Featured Podcast
 "Maxims for Management: Manifesting
 Christian Principles as Supervisors,
 Managers and Administrators"
 Frank Raymond
 Recording of NACSW's Audio Conference
 Webinar on April 28th, 2014

December 2015's Featured Podcast
 "Confidentiality:
 Why, Who, Where, and How"
 Helen Harris
 Workshop Recorded
 in Waco, TX
 on September 25th, 2013

January 2016's Featured Podcast
 "And What is True Religion?"
 Elizabeth Omilami
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013
 in Atlanta, GA
 on October 19th, 2013

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 audio conference and monthly podcasts,
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