

Final Call: NACSW Convention 2016 in Cincinnati!

If you haven't already, it's time to register for NACSW's 66th consecutive annual convention! We look forward to welcoming you to Cincinnati, Ohio from November 17th – 20th, 2016. Focused on the theme, "Building Bridges: Fostering Healing & Connections in Our Communities," NACSW's Convention 2016 will feature over 125 workshops and poster sessions, three keynote speakers, three pre-convention institutes, and rich entertainment and worship throughout. Register today for this 3+ day November event in Cincinnati by going to www.nacsw.org/conv_head_text.html.

The convention hotel is the Hilton Cincinnati Netherland Plaza Hotel located at 35 West Fifth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Make your reservation by Wednesday, October 26th to qualify for



Alexis Gomez

the guest room rate of just \$125/night (this rate may be shared between up to four people). You can make your reservations directly with the hotel by calling toll free 800-445-8667. Be sure to identify yourself as being with the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW). To register online, or for more information about accommodations, travel, local eateries and activities, go to: <http://www.nacsw.org/Convention/2016Accommodations.htm>.

In addition to keynote speakers Dr. Joy Fagan, Dr. Trina Shanks, and Major Kendall Mathews, Convention 2016 features a number of opportunities to enjoy Christian entertainment, music, and worship, including:

- The opening session on Thursday

continued on page 2



Princesses Ballet

NACSW's November 28th, 2016 Audio Conference Webinar

NACSW is pleased to announce that it will be offering its next audio conference webinar entitled "Seeking the Shalom of the City: Applied Macro Social Work in an Urban Ministry Context" on Monday, November 28th from 1:00 pm - 2:15 pm Eastern Standard Time. This session will be presented by Kevin Brown, MSW, LCSW.



Kevin Brown

Founded in 1967, Trinity Christian Community has embraced a strategy of holistic urban ministry to foster community change. Using two macro social work strategies, community organization and community development, this 50 year old ministry has established

a handful of best practices with ramifications for macro-oriented social workers seeking to integrate faith and practice in a community context. This session will highlight significant aspects of the work done by the community, with a special emphasis upon 10 years of post-Katrina community building.

A native New Orleanian, Kevin Brown has a MSW from the University of Illinois at Chicago and his Ph.D. in Urban Studies from the University of New Orleans where his focus has been upon race and urban violence. In 2014 Kevin was hired by New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary,

where he is now teaching others to replicate the work of Christian community development ministries in at-risk, urban communities in North America and beyond.

From 1998 to 2014 he served as The Executive Director of Trinity Christian Community, a Christian community agency that serves New Orleans in numerous capacities. Some of his ventures have included teaching entrepreneurship to at-risk youth, running after-school activities, and organizing community-wide programs to target needy families and disadvantaged youth in New Orleans' inner city. He also served as Chaplain to the NBA's New Orleans Hornets from 2003-2010.

Prior to urban missions Kevin worked

continued on page 2

Convention

continued from page 1

evening will feature entertainment by Alexis Gomez, a semi-finalist on American Idol (Season 14).

- Friday morning will begin with devotions led by Dr. Rose Korang speaking on “Loved to Love,” and on Saturday morning, devotions will be led by student Board member Maddie Poindexter, speaking on “The Voice of Truth: Finding Your Identity in Christ through Forgiveness.”

- The Saturday evening banquet will feature a dance performance by Princesses Ballet, a group formed by one of City Gospel Mission’s youth programs that help at-risk girls from ages 2 – 18 build character and self-esteem.

- During the convention’s closing worship service on Sunday morning, Lucreta Bowman will speak to us on “Building Bridges for Men and Women in Addiction,” and Kesslyn and Friends will lead us in worship and song.

There will also be numerous



Rose Korang



Maddie Poindexter



Lucreta Bowman

opportunities for networking and student volunteering at Convention 2016 including chapter and member interest group meetings 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/VolunteerNetwork2016.htm.

NACSW’s Convention 2016 in Cincinnati will feature more than 125 outstanding workshops and poster

presentations divided among separate tracks (for example: Direct Practice - Individuals, Couples, and Families; Faith and Justice; Professional Relationships, Values and Ethics; Direct Practice - Groups and Communities, Forgiveness, etc.). A listing of full workshop and poster session abstracts and descriptions, learning objectives, presenter biographies and other relevant information is available at www.nacsw.org/conv_head_text.html.

To provide a preview of some of the quality workshops that will be offered at Convention 2016, the following represents just a sampling of some of the excellent

continued on page 6

CATALYST

Volume 59, Number 4 • October, 2016

Published quarterly by the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW)

Editor: Rick Chamiec-Case,
Executive Director

Address: P.O. Box 121, Botsford, CT 06404
Tollfree Phone: 1.888.426.4712
Website: www.nacsw.org

Catalyst is published four times a year for members of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work. The purpose of *Catalyst* is to communicate with the NACSW membership about association news, events, activities and developments. It includes statements of opinion by a variety of members and friends, which do not necessarily represent the views of NACSW.

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.

© 2016
NACSW
All Rights Reserved

Audio

continued from page 1

as a therapist with abusive families under contract to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. He worked closely with sexual predators and was part of the State Attorney’s Task Force on Mass Molestation. Subsequently he worked for the Minirth Meier New Life Clinics specializing in counseling youth and families including professional athletes. He has authored several books including: *The Quest: A Self-Discovery Workbook for Teens*; *Setting New Boundaries: Devotions for those in Recovery*; and *You Take Over God, I Can’t Handle It: Devotions for Teens in Recovery*.

Kevin has been awarded the Presidential Lifetime Service Award by George W. Bush, named United States Citizen of the Year by the US Marshals Service, received the Meritorious Public Servant of the Year by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, and has twice been given the Paul Harris Fellowship by Rotary International.

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 in the conference.

We hope you are able to join us on November 28th for this important audio conference webinar. We encourage you to register today at http://www.nacsw.org/cgi-bin/kmp_pressroom.cgi?request=listaudio!

Leaning Left or Leaning Right?

A few weeks ago, a long-standing NACSW member wrote a blog which started out as follows: *“America is currently debating about LGBTQ issues . . . as it relates to a private business’, legal rights, public bathroom policies, and a counselor’s ethical duties. As a social worker, a counselor, a private business owner, a parent, and a consumer of public services, I have some insights into these hotly contested topics.”*



Rick Chamiec-Case

In her piece, she drew upon several passages of Scripture to support her views on this challenging topic, which she presented thoughtfully and respectfully. She asked me for my opinion about her blog, and whether I thought it would be a good fit for NACSW’s blogsite, *Shared Grace*.

I would like to share with you two of the comments I made to this NACSW member, and some of our ensuing conversation:

Comment #1: Even among Christians, not all hold the same interpretation of various passages of Scripture – and so to describe one’s own reading of Scripture as a “fact” (this individual’s blog listed several “facts” based on Scripture that she proposed as guiding principles for thinking about these issues) suggests that Christians who hold different interpretations of these passages are in error. And while this might be the case (after all, all interpretations can’t be correct, especially interpretations that contradict each other), perhaps framing one’s positions as “my understanding of Scripture” would help create a safe place where Christians can share their sometimes differing interpretations of Scripture and invite respectful conversation as we seek to grow and learn from each other – though, obviously, we don’t always end up in the same place since we still see through a glass darkly,”

at least for now.

Comment #2: I would like to suggest that we publish your blog entry in NACSW’s Shared Grace simultaneously with other blog entries written by Christian social workers who have alternative perspectives and questions on this challenging issue. I suggest this because there are some Christians who believe that while the Bible says a great deal about the human condition and God’s compassionate plan for redeeming and reconciling a broken world, it says less about, for example, how to understand and evaluate the implications of scientific findings about “androgen insensitivity syndrome” (<https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/androgen-insensitivity-syndrome>) on gender identity issues. For this reason (as well as the fact that NACSW members belong to denominations that hold different positions on LGBTQ issues, and/or have different life experiences such as family members who are part of the LGBTQ community), Christians in social work have a plurality of views on these (and almost all) issues, and NACSW believes it is an important part of our mission to facilitate safe, healthy, and respectful discussion which makes space for the multiple voices found within the Christian community.

This member responded to my comments in this way:

Thanks for the detailed feedback. Points taken. Iron sharpens iron. Your second comment is rather revealing to me regarding your own theological interpretation/leanings. It sounds like Christian Left, which explains why so many of the convention keynote speakers lean to the Christian Left. This position really alienates the conservative leaning Christians who lean right on how we read the Bible and view human affairs. I’ve heard from so many who feel the NACSW group does not represent their faith understanding on these politically-charged issues. It would be nice to have both Christian Right and Christian Left represented in the speakers at each convention, would you agree? I appreciated the centrist/non-political/non-activist presentation by James Vanderwoerd one year <Jim was NACSW’s Alan Keith Lucas Lecturer

at our Convention 2014 in Annapolis, Maryland.> Some other speakers, while inspirational to some extent, are not really connecting with the Christian Right, which I might speculate represents half of Americans, even half of the clients we serve or the students we teach. I may have suggested this already, but it would be great to have small group discussions right after a speaker is done talking to allow everyone a chance to process how the message was received.

Anyway, I’d hate to see so many Christian social workers on the right (who have chosen to stay in NACSW) feel that they have to muffle their voices, but maybe that is just the nature of these things? I certainly feel safer and more at home in the NACSW than the NASW, as I feel that I can speak up more here. However, it feels like when I do so, it’s at my own risk, and often as part of an underground movement. Anyway, thanks for being respectful towards me and my viewpoints.

I continued our exchange by writing the following:

Although I agree that some of what I wrote in my email could be described as representing a Christian Left perspective, I intended it not so much as a reflection of my own theological position(s), but rather as reflective of what some of our membership believe. In my role within NACSW, my goal is to do my best to see that the many perspectives represented in our membership have a voice. I am sure there are times I am less successful in accomplishing this I would like to be.

Interestingly, I also regularly receive feedback from some of the membership that they feel NACSW leans too heavily toward the Christian right. One angry (now former) member on the phone yesterday explained that he was leaving NACSW because he couldn’t stand the way many within NACSW “use the Bible as a weapon to beat people down.” Other members (who describe themselves as theologically moderate or progressive) have expressed frustration that they feel their voices on some controversial issues have been silenced by other NACSW members. In fact, some leave the association because of this perception, while others stay but remain “closeted”

continued on page 10

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://nacs.org/CEU>.

New trainings recently added to our program (which now has 100+ trainings) include the following:

• **Pursuing Shalom: Serving Our Neighbors Locally and Globally** by Lisa Sharon Harper, MA (*Human Rights*); video-based training; 1.25 CEUs.

Grounded in Genesis 1 and manifest in Matthew 25:31-end, this session explores the biblical concept of shalom and its implications for the social worker and the Christian as we engage the world with justice and compassion. Lisa Sharon Harper



Lisa Sharon Harper



Katti Sneed

connects the biblical text with the challenges encountered by social workers on a daily basis: hunger, thirst, sickness, immigration, prison, and abject poverty. This presentation explores the implications of the call to "righteousness" on local and global engagement with those Jesus calls "the least of these."

• **Seeking the Shalom of New Orleans: 47 Years of Urban Community Building** by Kevin Brown, PhD, MSW, LCSW; video-based training; 2.0 CEUs

Jeremiah 29:7 calls God's people to "Seek the Shalom of the City." Since 1967, Trinity Christian Community has been doing this by building community in New Orleans. In 2005 this work took on a powerful new direction in the post-Katrina aftermath. Focusing on one at-risk community, the Hollygrove Neighborhood, amazing best practices emerged in a highly unlikely context. This award-winning community has seen a remarkable transformation, especially since 2005.

• **Strength Based Practice: A New Way to Think About Addiction Counseling** by Katti Sneed, PHD, MSW; 1.0 CEU

The strengths based perspective has been widely recognized and utilized with many different client populations.

However, within the chemical dependency arena traditional forms of treatment still dominate. A strengths based approach is a significant departure from traditional substance abuse counseling approaches. Yet research supports its benefits and a merger between traditional and strengths based treatment is

possible. This session will present a range of practical applications for integrating a strengths based perspective with current micro, mezzo, and macro practice approaches for individuals experiencing substance abuse issues.

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



LOOKING TO THE FALL: NACSW'S SEPTEMBER 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 100+ online CEU trainings. You can check these out at: <http://nacs.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 for members of NACSW, this 25% off is on top of the usual 20% member discount, resulting in a 45% discount altogether!

Don't hesitate to contact us at info@nacs.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

Live Your Dreams

My heart aches for the many families who have lost children and loved ones to

senseless violence perpetrated by criminals, persons with mental health issues, family members and the police. My heart and mind register concern regarding the small world



Linda Darrell

view of some gun owners, lobbyists, and the NRA when they speak as if they have the right to measure the profits of their sales and coffers against the human rights and dreams of those beleaguered by their guns – as if the 2nd amendment has a stronger right than the right to live and let live.

On the recent anniversary of the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I was moved to think about the dreams of these victims and families of those whose lives have been taken by violence and despair. The realization that rests in my spirit is that dreams die because their life blood is spilled on far too many streets, too many floors of emergency rooms, down the drains of hopelessness and despair. As I reflect on these lost lives and those dreams that have been lost, I ask

myself where the dream Dr. King spoke of has gone (www.aspenideas.org/I-Have-A-Dream). This question was called to mind by a poem authored by the renowned poet and writer, Langston Hughes, called “A Dream Deferred:”

*What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun,
or fester like a sore and then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar like syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load
or does it explode?*

The response to this dire question was answered in a sermon preached on a recent Sunday morning by my pastor Bishop Walter Scott Thomas Sr. He addressed a vital question: Where are the dream nurturers? – people who push you and stand behind you to motivate, encourage and strengthen you as you pursue the vibrant dreams which have been the foundation of our society and will continue to build individual lives? If we are lured into the malaise of the current societal situation, we might think we have more dream killers than dream nurturers, more oppressors than supporters, people who measure us by how we look, where we come from, and the color of our skin. This can cause us to ask ourselves: how far have we really come, and where are we heading?

These questions could seem all the more perplexing given the political polarization we find so prevalent in our day. However, I refuse to allow cynicism to overcome my optimism and faith – faith which is

based on just how far prayer has brought us as a people, all the while facing the challenges of multiple levels of systemic racism, classism, sexism and other isms. Prayer keeps hope alive and sustains life; prayer creates hope and helps to buoy faith.

This is not the time to give in to divisive politics and fear, or to lobbyists with deep pockets. This is the time to enter the prayer rooms of faith and lift up this country and its leaders, asking for direction and guidance such that dreams are no longer deferred, but flourish for everyone. For a simple time of refreshment, take some time to view an example of a dream realized (<http://www.creationsummit.com/video/Susan-Boyle.htm>), and watch the movie *War Room*, which demonstrates in a real way how significant and sustaining prayer is and continues to be.

Assistant Professor Linda P. Darrell, PhD has worked, guided by faith (1 John 4:21), as a licensed clinical certified social worker for over 30 years, and teaches in the School of Social Work at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD. Linda has been a member of NACSW since 2014.

<Editor's Note: this article originally appeared as a blog posting on NACSW's Shared Grace blog site on January 26, 2016.>

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:”

Donors of \$25 or more from Jan. 1, 2016 – June 30, 2016

Adedoyin, Christson
Bruce, Katrina
Case, Elsie
Case, Richard
Drouin, Hugh
Fulmer, Christine
Gress, Carol
Huyser, Mackenzi
Jekel, Jan
Lauber, Peter
Lee, Daniel
Lundberg, David

Mason, Beverly
Modesto, Kevin
Parker, Michael
Rathe, Elissa
Reid, Rob
Ressler, Lawrence
Roman, LuAnn
Sedlacek, David
Simon, John
Swindell, Marian
The Salvation Army National Corporation
Weidenaar, Peter

Current Regular, Monthly or Quarterly Donors:

Barker, Stacey
Beach, Christine
Birch, Mallory
Bowman, Timothy
Cecil, David
Costello, Denis
Finch, Donna
Furman, Leola
Grubb, Ed
Haylon, Paget
Israel, Betty
Kuilema, Joseph

Loizzo, Joseph
Milner, Marleen
Myers, Dennis
Perez, Luis
Raymond, William
Sherr, Michael
Sherwood, David
Speakes, Eleanor
Straughan, Hope
Tan, Allison
Wintering, Nancy

PRAYER CORNER

Listening to God's Word Spoken Aloud

“... You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind...” Luke 10:27

Over the last two years, I have begun to listen to God's Word spoken aloud (thank you, Bible Gateway app!). In all honesty, I began doing this more out of convenience, and not so much out of



Shaina Blair

a purposeful attempt to be more creative with my spiritual disciplines. I have a fairly long work commute, and was taken aback when I calculated how many hours I spend in the car over the course of a year. I found listening to the Word to be a means of doing something valuable with the ample time my commute provides, hopeful that God would use and redeem this time. And on the mornings when I don't get up as early as planned, I am sure to have dose of spiritual medicine during my drive in the car.

I started by listening to the Psalms all the way through and have done this several times now. While I listened to other books of the Bible as well, I observed that I seemed to be able to absorb the Psalms more fully than the historical books. In hearing the words of the Psalmist, I somehow remember the actual words, visual images and emotions evoked more clearly. I have always thought of myself as primarily a visual learner. So I was a little surprised that “hearing” the Psalms read out loud often impacted me in a deeper way than my usual habit of simply reading the Psalms. Though we do have on good authority that faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17), I suppose I needed this experience to really get this point. It struck me that the Psalms, being more rhythmic and poetic in structure, potentially tap into the right brain more easily when presented in an audible form, transforming the emotional center and increasing my affection for God.

In experiencing God in this less familiar way, I sense that I am able to love Him more wholly or at least with more of me, as though a part of my heart and mind have become more open to Him than they would have been otherwise.

I suspect there are areas for each of us in our spiritual disciplines where we have become somewhat routine in our approach to knowing God. I do believe He blesses our regular faithfulness and certainly honors the heart's desire to know Him in this way. Still, I have begun to ask, “Lord, how else might I come to know you more fully? Through what avenues of knowing/ learning Scripture, saying my prayers, and being before You might I come to experience you more deeply?” For the visual learner/ seeker, this might involve surrendering the comfort of our sight to hear with fresh ears. For someone naturally inclined to being a doer, loving God with ALL of you might involve sitting still for a while. I would think the possibilities to be endless given the infinite nature of our God.

Lord, thank you that you honor the heart that seeks to know You. You know and see the intimate parts of our hearts, souls, and minds that have yet to experience a more complete knowledge of You. Lead the way for each of us to experience You more deeply first hand - to see, hear, touch, and taste that You are good! May the richness of perceiving You more completely spur us onward in service to You and enable us to more fully love others. In Christ, Amen.

Convention

continued from page 2

workshop presentations that have been accepted for this year's conference:

Integrating Domestic Violence Interventions and Spirituality

Sonya Thomas, MSW; Nicole Nabors MSW

This presentation highlights the value of using spiritually integrated interventions with domestic violence (DV) victims. Key challenges and cultural differences related to providing spiritually integrated interventions to DV victims are explored, followed by a discussion of implications for social work practice and future research.

Workforce Development: Lessons Learned in a Faith Based Agency

Eric Saunders, MSW, LCSW

Poverty levels continue to rise. Families

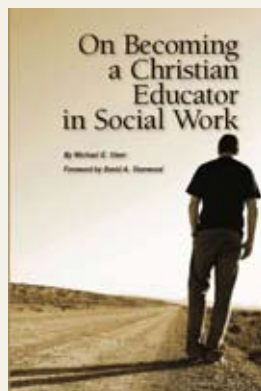
continued on page 11

PUBLICATION AVAILABLE FROM NACSW

ON BECOMING A CHRISTIAN EDUCATOR IN SOCIAL WORK

Michael Sherr (2010) \$21.75 (\$17.50 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

On Becoming a Christian Educator is a compelling invitation for social workers of faith in higher education to explore what it means to be a Christian in social work education. By highlighting seven core commitments of Christian social work educators, it offers strategies for social work educators to connect their personal faith journeys to effective teaching practices with their students. Frank B. Raymond, Dean Emeritus at the College of Social Work at the University of South Carolina suggests that “Professor Sherr's book should be on the bookshelf of every social work educator who wants to integrate the Christian faith with classroom teaching. Christian social work educators can learn much from Professor Sherr's spiritual and vocational journey as they continue their own journeys and seek to integrate faith, learning and practice in their classrooms.”



TECHNOLOGY COLUMN

Your Voice is Needed: Blog About It!

Did you know that 59 members of NACSW have written at least one blog post for the

NACSW blog, *Shared Grace* (<http://nacsw.org/blog/>)? But how many of us have our own blogs? Nine members have blogs listed on the Member page of *Shared Grace* (<http://nacsw.org/blog/member-blogs/>), but I think that there

are more out there! Please e-mail Rick (rick@nacsw.org) if you have a blog that you'd like added to the list or if you'd be interested in writing a blog post for *Shared Grace*. We would really love to hear your voice on what you think is important in the intersection of social work and Christianity.

Writing a blog post for *Shared Grace* is actually pretty easy. It is basically a short essay about something you care deeply about - your work, your faith, your passion that you do on the side. You might think that no one cares about your opinions - wrong; we all appreciate what you have to say. You might think that you aren't tech savvy enough to write a blog post - wrong; anyone with a social work degree can write a 300-500 word essay and thus can write a blog post. So what is holding you



Nick Cross

back?

One beauty of writing a blog post is that it can contain a little more flare than a standard essay. Besides your beautiful/handsome headshot, you can also add a cool little graphic (such as a table, or a picture or photo) to emphasize your point. Another nice thing about writing a blog post is that you are able to link to other posts on *Shared Grace* or other blogs or websites or videos to help bolster your position or highlight someone else's work. If done with intentionality, this can help foster a broader dialogue about your topic.

I've been a blogger off and on since 2006 so I might be a little biased, but I think that writing a blog is a great way to share your opinion, generate interesting conversation, and have an impact on broader dialogues. Here are four ways I've blogged in the past 10 years.

1) I started a running blog that highlighted running events in Indiana, including race reviews, etc. I transformed it into a more personal running (b)log when we left Indiana.

2) I had a personal blog through which I shared a lot of opinions about current events and random thoughts. This one became too much work given other things going on in my life. I had a second personal blog that was more social media driven when my daughter was born. Sadly, that blogging platform closed and it became harder to update on a regular basis.

3) I started a neighborhood focused blog that highlighted events and news for

the neighborhood that I used to live in. This basically aggregated news from a multitude of sources and put it all in one place. It gained a lot of momentum and was reproduced by another neighborhood organization.

4) I've written guest blog posts on sites like *Shared Grace*. As I noted, these are short essays or missives about a specific topic.

I share this to show you that there are lots of different things you can write about in your current day to day life.

It's true that I've not created a blog about social work . . . yet. I've tossed around several ideas but they haven't quite gotten to a point where I have introduced them into my routine. But that doesn't mean you don't have the desire or passion to start something of your own. It is super easy!

Have you already written a blog post for *Shared Grace* or another site, or do you have a lot of ideas to share? Why not start your own blog? It can be done for free in about 15 minutes. Websites like Wordpress (www.wordpress.com) and Blogger (www.blogger.com) make it super simple to setup and start your own blog. I think that hardest part about setting up your blog is coming up with a catchy or creative name! It would be great to have more people blogging about the intersection of faith and social work or about some of the ideas or passions you have about the field. Don't be afraid to take a leap and start writing. I hope to run into you soon out in the blogosphere.



Vice President
Allison Tan
Joliet, IL
Term: 2016
Non-Denominational

CALL FOR BOARD NOMINATIONS FOR 2017 - 2019

Current members of NACSW are invited to propose candidates to run for NACSW's Board of Directors for terms starting 2017. Board members are primarily responsible for setting NACSW's future goals and direction, developing policies to guide the organization's efforts to meet those goals, and ensuring that the organization has and uses effectively the resources required to accomplish its mission. Nominees will be evaluated and prioritized in accordance with current Board needs for expertise and diversity.

Board candidates must be NACSW members who are committed to the mission of NACSW. They must be willing and able to attend the six semi-annual meetings of the Board that occur in various locations over the three year term. Board members are responsible for their own travel, lodging, and meal expenses.

To propose a nominee, you can download a nomination form from NACSW's website at: www.nacsw.org/BoardNom3.htm, or contact the NACSW office for a copy.

From Food Pantry to Food Co-Op: Lessons Learned

One of the most common forms of charity is food for the hungry. How much of that work, though,

is actually contributing to food security and long-term, sustainable progress for families? The organization I work for named Home Sweet Home Ministries (HSHM) made the decision to

change the way we practice food ministry – going from a *food pantry*, where clients show up to receive a free hand-out, to a *food co-op*, where participating members work together to address their own needs.

After over two years of planning and implementation, HSHM successfully converted our pantry to a co-op about 18 months ago. We call our co-op “Bread for Life,” and through this ministry the co-op members gain access to real food and real community.

It has been a tumultuous journey from pantry to co-op, but without a doubt worth every bump and challenge along the way. I’d like to share with you one painful realization we came to and three steps that moved us forward into a new and healthier model of charity.

A Painful Realization: One of our most significant challenges was that we had to take a long, hard look at our preconceptions about helping people. Reading books like *Toxic Charity* (Lupton, 2001) and *When Helping Hurts* (Corbett and Fikkert, 2014), and taking a couple of trips to Atlanta to meet with staff at Urban Recipe (a low income food co-op) influenced our thinking significantly. Rather than simply celebrating our *outputs*, like the number of pounds of food we provided or the number of households we served, we started to look at the *outcomes*, the difference these services/resources were - or were not - making in the lives of the people we were serving.

It was only when we stepped back from the action of running our food pantry that we could see that we were providing *emergency* food assistance – which should be a one-time, short-term intervention – to the same individuals and families month



Matt Burgess

after month. We also became aware of the feelings of shame, embarrassment, and discomfort our pantry recipients were experiencing. Once we took the time to honestly look and listen, we heard statements like, “I can’t believe I have to come to a food pantry,” and we saw the downcast faces of the recipients. The free food we were offering often came at the cost of program recipients sacrificing personal dignity.

This was a painful realization.

So, what were we supposed to do about it? Let me share with you three things we did to move us toward more an effective model of food ministry. **First, we started to listen intently.** We listened for six months before taking any action. To do this, we enlisted the help of local college students and started asking our pantry customers questions. We asked about their experience with us, about their use of other food pantries in the community, and about their thoughts on the food co-op model. An overwhelming majority of the people we spoke with expressed excitement about the prospect of contributing to their own well-being and food security and were intrigued by the co-op concept.

Next, we made some incremental changes. We then began to evaluate the feasibility of converting our pantry to a co-op. Rather than make the leap all at once, we first converted our pantry from a “prepackage” model (we packed boxes of food and gave them to people regardless of their preferences) to a “choice” model (where our pantry customers could shop for the food items they liked and leave behind the items they didn’t). This involved changing the physical layout of our food storage area and adding equipment like glass-front coolers and freezers that are conducive to the shopping experience. We were blessed with the support of local businesses who provided funds to purchase a new freezer for this purpose. At the same time, we started to inform our customers about our upcoming change to becoming a low income food co-op.

Finally, we took the plunge! At last we took the plunge and changed our operations over to a food co-op. We thought we’d see a significant drop off in households when we made the switch, but we’ve seen just the opposite! In fact, even before we opened, over 100 people submitted co-op membership applications and we now serve more households as a co-op than we ever

did as a food pantry (and we have many more on a waiting list to join).

In our co-op model, rather than simply providing free access to food, we also began providing opportunities for our customers to acquire new skills and build their capacities. Each member of the co-op helps perform the essential functions of running the co-op – tasks like stocking shelves, sorting and labeling donated food, cleaning, assisting other members to shop, and even performing some administrative tasks. Our staff, volunteers, and co-op members work alongside each other and develop meaningful relationships in the context of their work.

Now, with an active co-op membership in excess of 425 households, the message is clear to us – *people want to be given the opportunity to provide for themselves & will jump at the chance to do so.* We have people who joined the co-op that had been told that they have nothing worthwhile to contribute. When we tell them we need them and want them to utilize their God-given talents and abilities, they positively light up! Our Co-op Advisory Board shares responsibility with us in charting the future direction and scope of the co-op. We take their guidance on things like membership requirements, food products to stock, classes to offer, etc.

Over the past 18 months we’ve seen the co-op members fully embrace this shared responsibility model for the provision of food assistance. When we give tours, our co-op members chime in with enthusiastic comments about their experiences. Our members tell their friends and family about the co-op and encourage them to join, too. Based on these and other affirming responses from co-op members and others in our community, we believe offering food assistance through the co-op model is truly a way that helps restore dignity and a sense of capability to people while at the same time easing their struggle to feed themselves and their families. We’ve even begun to gather data using structured surveys to measure the change in our members’ sense of hope in their lives, and anticipate that these data will support our anecdotal observations thus far.

Do you have a story to share about poverty alleviation in your community? If so, please consider joining me and other NACSW members who have launched the Poverty Alleviation member interest group.

continued on page 10

Speaking Out...

NACSW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS SHARE THEIR VIEWS

<Editor's Note: below are excerpts from a recent exchange on NACSW's blog, Shared Grace, in response to an article posted on <http://www.christianpost.com/about-a-christian-social-work-student-in-england-who-was-dismissed-from-his-social-work-program-because-he-quoted-the-bible-and-his-opposition-to-gay-marriage-on-his-fb-page>. You can find this article at: <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-student-expelled-quoting-bible-opposition-gay-marriage-facebook-loses-appeal-161402/#Yd4RS5lIdmCtDtOb.99>>

We have become used to registrars, nurses, teachers, magistrates and counsellors being disciplined in their jobs for acting according to conscience, but this is the very first time a Christian student has been stopped even before he enters his chosen vocation to help others — simply for holding traditional Christian views on marriage and sexuality.

Paul

Thanks for sharing . . . Paul. I'm glad that Christian helping professionals who maintain biblical perspectives on these issues still have a safe home here at NACSW and in America, as of now. I wrote a blog about how conservative Christians can ethically interact with clients without being deemed oppressive. . . .

Kim

Good to know! I will definitely stop following this page and always ask before I see a social worker if they are a part of the NACSW because this is just horrible. I can't believe there are individuals and schools giving anyone a master's degree that do not support the LBGt community. You guys are going to destroy lives and families and are completely wrong.

Heather

Hi Heather, there are many Christian social workers in NACSW who hold similar beliefs with you on this issue. Have you attended any of the NACSW conventions? I've attended the last three and have met Christians like me as well as Christians like you. It seems to me that the NACSW board tries really hard to stay neutral on these social issues in order to encourage a respectful, safe community for all Christian social workers to dialogue on their different perspectives. At first, I was like you and totally turned off. Then, I thought, if there's a place to make a difference, it would be with other Christian social workers...hope to meet you in person some day.

Kim

Well said, Kim. Heather, we need to continue in respectful dialog. NACSW is a place where that dialog continues with integrity. We do not all agree on every interpretation of scripture or every political position. We do agree, I think, that to judge and cut off a person because they belong to any group, NACSW or LGBTQ or whatever, is not consistent with our faith or our profession.

Helen

Thanks much, Kim, for clarifying what NACSW sees as one of its most important roles - that of providing Christians in social work with a safe place to wrestle with issues of interest and relevance to our faith and social work - even ones about which we don't yet agree! In fact, this posting and the replies thus far are potentially a good example of just this. Our hope and prayer is that we can engage in discussions like these modeling mutual respect and openness to hearing and learning from each other - no small challenge, but one which we feel God calls us and the Christian community to

take seriously until that time when we no longer see through a glass darkly (I Corinthians 13:12).

Rick Chamiec-Case,
Executive Director of NACSW

The bible's "stance" on homosexuality was written thousands of years ago, not about committed-same-sex couples but mostly in reference to temple prostitutes and rampant hedonism. I imagine a very similar discussion may have occurred prior to the abolition of slavery or the civil rights movement. I work with many LGBT individuals and the faith of some in a loving God and biblical principles is what has saved them and I'm not about to abandon that or my belief in a God who cares just as much if not much more about bigotry, us judging each other, pride, idolatry (money, materialism), domestic violence, rape, and casual sex as about people loving people of the same gender.

Gail

The question at issue is precisely about anti-Christian bigotry. Remember when the adherents of same-sex "marriage" argued for a live-and-let-live "grand bargain" - give us our claim to redefine marriage to include single-sex unions (and so, along with contraception and abortion to delink sex from marriage and both from children) and we will leave you alone to hold and practice your beliefs? How long ago that seems. Now the relentless push, backed by big business, media, courts, and government, is to drive those who remain faithful to the consistent and authoritative teachings of the church and Bible out of their jobs, businesses, careers, and schools. In the case at the top of this thread, a Christian student was expelled from his social work school and chosen profession simply for quoting, on his personal FB page that was set to be visible to FB "friends" only, a passage from the

continued on page 10

Speaking Out

continued from page 9

Bible deemed incompatible with practice in the profession that was largely founded and built by Christians.

At the time of the Apostles, Christian teaching stood in sharp contrast to the prevailing culture, custom, and mores of Ancient Rome, which accepted or tolerated a whole range of sexual practices outside marriage (what came in our times to be called the ‘sexual revolution’) along with easy divorce, abortion, and infanticide. The Church then as now was persecuted for its countercultural beliefs about love, marriage, sex, divorce, abortion, and contraception. The Church nevertheless flourished and grew as a contrast culture, precisely against all the pressures to adapt to the prevailing mores of a no less licentious age (one incidentally in which fertility also slumped for the same reasons).

I find it sad to see in our own time that even some Christians seem to adhere, not only to the prevailing mores and dominant ideology of the age in matters of sex and marriage, but to endorse the persecution of Christians who do not, so that no expression of orthodox and traditional Christian belief, in public or private, is to be tolerated. In effect they endorse the drive to cleanse social work and counseling of Christians.

Paul

Paul, perhaps the issue is intolerance, and exclusion, period. I am disturbed that a student would be forced out of a social work program because of personal/religious/spiritual beliefs. And I am committed to the position that social workers and social work students practice ethically with all persons including with those with different beliefs and values. I work with many clients whose values (and whose understanding of scripture) are different than mine. It does not keep us from mutual respect and the capacity for good work together. We can figure this out together.

Helen

Helen, yes, all social workers, like priests and pastors, work with people whose behavior (and beliefs and values insofar as those support the behavior) they regard as sinful or wrong. We are all sinners. The problem arises when Christians are forced to violate their consciences by acting in collusion or in support of such behaviors (as distinct from those who practice them). “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil” (Is. 5:20). There is longstanding practice in social work and other helping professions of accommodating such concerns - not

everyone can work effectively with all kinds of clients or situations. But the promised tolerance - live and let live, we won’t force you to act against your conscience - has disappeared in the relentless drive to exclude Christians from these professions, forcing them to choose between their faith and their profession and vocation of helping others. We are in a new world of intolerant tolerance, liberal illiberalism, or soft totalitarianism in which the truth about love, sex, marriage, parenthood, and families becomes whatever the state says it is. It takes a great deal of coercion to persuade people to accept that 2+2=5 and harsh punishment of those of who persist in believing the truth.

Paul

I am saddened that any social worker who disagrees with another would write off an entire group of people whether that be the NACSW or the LGBT community. Isn’t that the very opposite of tolerance? I hope and pray that NACSW remains a safe place for opposing political beliefs and that as Christians we can remain united by our faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Lisa

Left or Right

continued from page 3

on these issues because they don’t feel safe expressing what they believe.

Attempting to create a space for the many diverse Christian voices within NACSW is no small challenge! Encouragingly, I hear from a growing number of individuals within the membership (both those who lean left, and those who lean right) that it is an important challenge to tackle head-on because NACSW, like the Christian church at large, needs to more effectively model how to develop respectful, trusting, fruitful relationships in our highly polarized society and world.

Bottom line, I appreciate it when you let me know that you feel NACSW is leaning left – as I appreciate when I hear from others when they feel NACSW

is leaning right. I hope and pray that NACSW continues to get better and better at creating a safe place for members to express what they believe – especially about controversial issues - without feeling they are at risk, or forced to be part of an “underground movement.” NACSW, and the Christian community, clearly have a long way to go. Thanks for helping us get there!

To the readers of this column, I’d love to hear your thoughts on this matter: how can NACSW be an organization that nurtures honest, diverse and respectful conversations between Christians in social work whose views represent a wide variety of Christian voices – left and right? What can we do to provide a “safe space” for robust discussions that are crucial to our efforts to thoughtfully and ethically integrate Christian faith and social work?

From Food Pantry

continued from page 8

We can use your help in sharing ideas and inspiration with the rest of the NACSW membership. For additional information about the Poverty Alleviation member interest group, contact rick@nacs.org.

Matt Burgess, MA, LCPC

<Editor’s note: this article was adapted from material first published on www.charitydetox.com on May 22, 2015, and later as a blog entry on NACSW’s Shared Grace blog site on April 26, 2016.>

Keep current on NACSW news, events, and photos by signing up to join NACSW’s Facebook group at <http://nacs.org/facebookgroup>

David Sherwood Announces His Retirement as Editor of *Social Work & Christianity* after 33 Years

It is with heavy hearts – as well as an overwhelming sense of appreciation for his decades of faithful service – that NACSW shares the news that David Sherwood has announced he will be retiring as editor in chief of *Social Work & Christianity*.

For 33 years, since 1983, David has shepherded NACSW's journal with grace and excellence. He has left an indelible mark on *SWC* – and on NACSW – through his decades of service. For those of us who have known and worked with David on the journal, it has been an



amazing honor and privilege to pursue NACSW's mission with him through the publication of *SWC* through the decades.

The exact timing of David's retirement is still in the process of being worked out, although he has offered to be extremely flexible to assist NACSW in a smooth transition process as NACSW is currently engaged in a search process for a new editor in chief.

Of course, in addition to his long term of service as *Social Work & Christianity's* editor in chief, David has also served NACSW in a variety of other capacities, including:

- Member of NACSW since 1973
- Chapter leader of NACSW's Oklahoma Chapter, including serving as its Vice President in 1980-1981, and President in 1981-1982
- Member of NACSW's Board of Directors for 4 terms (1980-1985; and 1989-1994), including three terms as

Board President (1982-1985 and 1990)

- Recipient of the Award for Distinguished Service to NACSW in 1998
- Regular presenter at NACSW Conventions, and writer of articles for *SWC*

Please join NACSW in thanking David for his unparalleled contribution to the growth and flourishing of *SWC* these past 33 years - and of NACSW for even longer! If you wish to send David a note of appreciation, his email address is: david@sherwoodstreet.com. In addition, NACSW will be holding a David Sherwood Roast at our upcoming Convention 2016 in Cincinnati, Ohio on Friday evening, November 18th, 2016. Come listen to and share (some playful) stories about David's involvement and contribution to NACSW through the years, while we take the time to express all that he has meant to our association through the decades!

Convention

continued from page 6

grow more dependent on public assistance. Low income families continue to struggle between low wage jobs and the high cost of living. What if there were quick, affordable, and common sense strategies to rapidly move low-income families out of poverty and into self sufficiency? Come learn and share!

Adoption: History, Trends & Social Justice

Pam Crawford, LCSW

The scripture shares beautiful stories of God's understanding of adoption. The history of U.S. domestic adoption and emerging social values and stigmas of adoption will be explored. Positive language and open adoption education are vital for adoptive healing and wholeness. Women need empowerment while children need information to develop identity.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Understanding and Application

Jim Winship, MSW, PhD

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) research demonstrating the impact of early traumatic experiences in adulthood is increasingly being used in social work settings. This workshop focuses on understanding what leads to

higher risk, and introduces approaches for utilizing the ACEs survey in varied settings, including faith-based organizations.

Sharing the Story - Living and Teaching in the shadow of Ferguson

Kimberly Carter, PhD, MSW; Jill Schreiber PhD, MSW

Two faculty of a predominantly white social work program on the edge of St. Louis share how they wrestled with the impact of race on power, privilege, and oppression. Discussion and activities will focus on encouraging interracial dialogue for our students and colleagues.

How Does Christian Community Development Impact a Community?

Elizabeth Patterson Roe, PhD, MSW, LISW-S; Erin Woodson MSW

Christian Community Development efforts provide great opportunities to transform communities. After eighteen years of community development efforts, an impact assessment was conducted in collaboration with a local university. Based on this research, participants will learn strategies of community development that can positively impact communities.

So What Does It Really Mean to Be a Faith-based Organization?

Jeffrey Nitz, LCSW Bill Tarr, LCSW Rob Reid, MSW

There are many ways that faith can be incorporated into the culture and life of a "faith-based" agency. This workshop presents various faith-based agency "forms", intentional faith integration methodologies that can enhance a culture of faith, and encourages participants to identify and create the kind of faith-based organization they long to lead.

As you can see, NACSW's Convention 2016 in Cincinnati will provide a marvelous opportunity for Christians in social work to come together and share what we have in common in both our faith and practice. We are confident you will leave the conference refreshed and inspired. Go to www.nacsw.org and register today to join us for Convention 2016. We look forward to seeing you in Cincinnati in November!

NACSW welcomes letters to the editor for the "Speaking Out" section of *Catalyst*. Please submit your comments, ideas, and feedback as members of NACSW to Rick Chamiec-Case at rick@nacsw.org.



North American Association of Christians in Social Work
 P.O. Box 121, Botsford, CT 06404-0121
 www.nacsw.org • info@nacsw.org • 888-426-4712

NACSW
 Board
 of
 Directors
 2016



President
 Kesslyn Brade-Stennis
 Upper Marlboro, MD
 Term: 2018
 Seventh Day Adventist



Vice President
 Allison Tan
 Joliet, IL
 Term: 2016
 Non-Denominational



Secretary
 Kimberly Hardy
 Hartford, CT
 Term: 2016
 United Church of Christ



Treasurer
 Karen Helder
 Grand Rapids, MI
 Term: 2017
 Christian Reformed



Board Member
 Denis Costello
 Toronto, ON (Canada)
 Term: 2016
 Roman Catholic



Board Member
 Rene Drumm
 Collegedale, TN
 Term: 2016
 Seventh Day Adventist



Board Member
 Ardis Fuge
 Alexandria, VA
 Term: 2018
 Salvation Army



Board Member
 Amy-Lynne Hilderbrand
 San Luis Obispo, CA
 Term: 2017
 Non-Denominational



Board Member
 Gary Jones
 Burtonsville, MD
 Term: 2016
 Seventh Day Adventist



Board Member
 Joe Kuilema
 Grand Rapids, MI
 Term: 2016
 Christian Reformed



Board Member
 Eleanor Speakes
 Fresno, CA
 Term: 2018
 Non-Denominational



Student Representative
 Maddie Poindexter
 Grand Rapids, MI
 Term: 2016
 Non-denominational



Journal Editor
 David Sherwood
 Newburg, OR
 (Ex Officio)
 Evangelical Friends



Executive Director
 Rick Chamiec-Case
 Sandy Hook, CT
 (Ex Officio)
 Episcopal

NACSW
 Board
 of
 Directors
 2016

UPCOMING AUDIO CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS AND PODCASTS

AUDIO CONFERENCES

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

November, 2016
 Audio Conference/Webinar
 "Christian Community Social Work"
 Kevin Brown
 November 30, 2016
 1 pm – 2:15 pm (Eastern)

PODCASTS

September 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Conducting a Spiritual Assessment:
 Something Funny Happened on the Way to
 Getting to Know Someone"
 Barry Lee
 Recorded at a workshop delivered at Olivet
 Nazarene University in Illinois
 on March 6, 2015

October 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Increasing Congregational
 Competency in Missional Practices"
 Patty Villarreal
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013 in
 Atlanta, GA on October 19th, 2013

November 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Practitioner-Identified Barriers to Outreach
 with Black Churches"
 Kimberly Hardy
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013 in
 Atlanta, GA on October 18th, 2013

December 2016's Featured Podcast
 "Imago Dei and Family Therapy: A
 Communications Framework"
 Mikal and Janice Rasheed
 Recorded at NACSW's Convention 2013 in
 Atlanta, GA on October 19th, 2013

January 2016's Featured Podcast
 "When Helping Hurts: Key Ideas and Issues
 for Poverty Alleviation"
 Steve Corbett
 Recording of NACSW's Audio Conference
 Webinar on February 23rd, 2015

For more information about any NACSW
 audio conference and monthly podcasts,
 please contact the NACSW office at info@
 nacsw.org, 888-426-4712 (toll-free), or visit
 our website at www.nacsw.org.

**FREE FOR NACSW
 MEMBERS!**