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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Social Work & Christianity (SWC) is a refereed journal published quarterly in March, June, September, and December by the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) to support and encourage the growth of social workers in the ethical integration of Christian faith and professional practice. *SWC* welcomes articles, shorter contributions, book reviews, and letters which deal with issues related to the integration of faith and professional social work practice and other professional concerns which have relevance to Christianity.

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Also, to ensure the integrity of the blind peer-review process, before you submit your manuscript, please delete the name(s) of the author(s) anywhere they appear in the text, and remove the author identification from the "properties" section of your document.

At least three members of the editorial board will anonymously review manuscripts based on: a) relevance of content to major issues concerning the ethical integration of competent social work practice and Christianity; b) potential contribution to social work scholarship and practice; c) literary merit; d) clarity; and e) freedom from language that conveys devaluation or stereotypes of persons or groups. The editor in chief will make final acceptance decisions.

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- Reviews should include an overview of the book's main points, especially those pertaining to Christians in social work.
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Letters to the Editor should be no more than 500–1,000 words in length and invite conversation as it offers the opportunity for readers to observe an open and civil exchange of ideas and perspectives. Letters which are a response to articles previously published in *Social Work & Christianity* will be shared with the article author(s), who will have the opportunity to respond to the letter. Such Letters to the Editor are encouraged to ask clarifying questions in a spirit of curiosity (as opposed to a spirit of confrontation), model careful listening, and seek common ground where possible as it shares alternative points of view for readers' consideration. Letters to the Editor which include personal attacks or denigration of individuals or organizations will not be considered.

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Letter to the Editor & Authors' Response to the Letter to the Editor

THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO THE EDITOR WAS WRITTEN IN RESPONSE to the article, *Bearing God's Image to All People: A Social Worker's Response to the Sojourner* by Lori Goss-Reaves, Lena Shankar Crouso & Erin Lefdahl-Davis. This article was published in *Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 45, No. 3* (2018). Following the letter to the editor you will see a response from the authors of the original article. The journal is grateful to those who shared their thoughts and responses as part of this submission. We hope this exchange, grounded in Christian hospitality and love, sparks further dialogue on this issue and other issues raised through articles published in the journal.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR
by Michael Fleming

I appreciate the authors of this article and their intelligent assessment of the situation facing refugees and asylees in the United States. As I completed my Bachelor's degree in Social Work I had the privilege of working with refugees and unaccompanied minors in the city of Philadelphia. My wife is also an immigrant, so over the years this issue has become very close to my heart. I write this letter to the editor to provide an alternative perspective on the issues raised in the article. I begin by offering my personal take on this poem by Emma Lazarus, beginning with a quote I selected from the article (see page 14 of the original article).

> "Just as Emma Lazarus gives Lady Liberty's words to the "tired, poor and huddled masses," God urges us to acknowledge and meet the needs of our fellow humans who, through such injustices as persecution, oppression, war-torn separation, gender brutalization, and tyrannical political ideologies, find their way to our shores and borders."

In my reading of the poem, I did not get the impression that Emma Lazarus was engaging the full reality of the immigration process at Ellis Island. I observed within this poem a narrative of gratitude from the eyes of an immigrant, peering at the statue of Liberty upon arrival, and indeed, the hope for a new life in this great nation. My personal apprehension is based on the lack of factual historic content within the poem. I feel that it is also important to weigh in on the historical events at Ellis Island to gain an understanding of the challenges facing our nation at that time. Many of the same concerns facing immigrants at that point in time are still concerns today.

For me, the invitation to all the "tired and poor" that Emma Lazarus depicted in her poem was more of her own perspective and did not entirely reflect the atmosphere on Ellis Island. This port of entry became known also as the "Isle of Tears" (Moffet, 1997). Upon arrival, immigrants had to show they could support themselves and have some kind of skill or trade to be approved entry. Some families were separated, with close relatives being sent back and denied entry. 20% of immigrants were detained for further screening. For current refugees and asylees, I believe the matter becomes even more complicated. Many do not have skills of any kind and do not know our language in order to learn skills. Many come as adults and struggle much more to learn the language, so their progress is delayed much more and they must be maintained by our welfare system for the time that takes.

By welcoming immigrants from all nations, languages and religions, I do not get the impression that we were inviting all the destitute of the world as according to the historical account. Those we welcomed had to be healthy, productive, and morally sound individuals coming not only to make a better life for themselves, but to improve society as a whole. I believe this is a responsibility we have as a nation to ensure this for all immigrants entering our nation, as it is only fair to them. Cultural stress, depression, and even homelessness can come into play when an immigrant is not able to be successfully integrate into society and I believe we are faced with the question of whether this is the best that we can do for them.

I do not agree that God is urging us to help all of the oppressed around the world find their way to our shores. I believe the dimensions of such an undertaking would far overwhelm our nations' resources, as we are seeing in European nations in the current mass migration crisis. Presently, crises are increasingly occurring on most continents. What I would offer as a theological approach would be placing a greater emphasis on helping these countries in a non-militaristic approach to address governmental corruption, exclusion, and discrimination. For instance, the U.S. ought to refuse aid to governments who oppress their poor or religious minorities. Could we help by channeling more funding and resources to those oppressed peoples within their own nations and still fulfill our call to feed the poor and provide

justice to the oppressed? That is where I would place the following quote from this journal.

"God intends and expects justice. We must—and ought to—defend the cause of the powerless, marginalized, oppressed, and disenfranchised, and advocate and offer rightful agency to all peoples." ❖

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AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO THE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

By Lori Goss-Reaves, Lena Shankar Crouso, & Erin M. Lefdahl-Davis

Thank you so much for sharing your thoughtful and timely response to our article. We appreciate your personal and professional involvement with immigrants in the U.S., and applaud your additional interpretive perspective on both Emma Lazarus' poem and the often harsh reality of the immigrant experience at the borders of our country. Emma Lazarus was writing out of the overflow of her gratefulness, but I'm sure there were many more who did not have the luxury to write or reflect, as they were turned away at Ellis Island. It is so true that we must be both caring and practical as we consider the plight of those around the world who are suffering as refugees; the United States is only one of hundreds of countries that might offer refuge and support, and possibly citizenship, to those who are motivated to leave their home country for reasons of desperation, dire need, or simply the hope of a better life.

We wholeheartedly agree that there are other solutions to intervene in international crises, including your suggestion of "channeling more funding and resources to those oppressed peoples" within our own country, in an attempt to "fulfill our call to feed the poor and provide justice to the oppressed" both in the U.S. and outside of our borders.

Author, Daniel Darling, in a November 2018 article published in *The Washington Post,* directed our attention to Genesis 1:26 (NIV, 2016) as a

lens through which to view our current social situation with immigration and displacement. This verse reminds us that all people are created in God's image. Embedded in the discipline of social work are the core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, integrity, competence, and the importance of human relationships (NASW 2017). In Romans 13 we are reminded that our government officials are God's servants, whose authority has been given by God to promote order and safety. For those who have been forced to leave their home countries and seek refuge, asylum, or citizenship in another country, we advocate for a spirit of love in both our actions and in our speech. The welcoming words of Emma Lazarus mimic the compassionate heart of Christ in acknowledging the need of those who are strangers, foreigners, and aliens. We acknowledge the complexity in how we are to respond to the overwhelming need, both nationally and individually.

The practical elements in your response resonate with our hearts as well. We agree that God is not "urging us to help all of the oppressed around the world find their way to our shores." It would be both arrogant and idealistic to believe that we are somehow unique in our calling to help, and acknowledge that it will take many nations working together with all of our combined resources to attend to current need. This alerts us to the importance of the UNHRC, The International Rescue Committee, World Relief, Oxfam, and other organizations helping displaced people worldwide. We can participate in hospitality toward refugees and immigrants through our support of such vital groups and ministries.

We implore those in power to continue working with other countries internationally to support their efforts to deal with crises in ways that attend to social justice (non-militaristic approaches), and we acknowledge the importance of attending to important issues at our own borders. Ideally, we would find ways to offer hospitality to refugees and immigrants while also acknowledging the needs of all citizens of the United States.

We also want to be clear that our appeal to offer hospitality to refugees and immigrants isn't intended to single out our nation as somehow unique in this social responsibility. Our desire for change is for global, national, regional and local change; that all spaces and places designated by geographic boundaries will consider those needing to be welcomed in, and that we, in the United States, are just one such boundaried space. Historically, people have fled oppression all over the world and searched for a place to be free to live safely… this occurred in ancient civilizations, during the time of Emma Lazarus, and continues to be an issue today. Our hope is that we will wisely consider both our human-created boundaries and the greater reality that all the earth belongs to the Lord, and offer hospitality with grace and peace.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful response to our article, and for highlighting the needed attention to a practical and historical view of

immigration issues in our country, both during the time that Emma Lazarus' composed her poem, and in our own turbulent era. We appreciate your willingness to dialogue on these concerns, and hope that we can continue to work together to provide Christian hospitality to those at our borders, to our own citizens in need, and to each other as social workers, in our mutual journey toward greater compassion and love. Our diversity makes us stronger. ❖

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Reconciliation Reconsidered: Advancing the National Conversation on Race Among Christian Social Workers

Tanya Smith Brice

This paper is based upon a keynote address that was given by the author for the Alan Keith-Lucas Lecture at the 2017 North American Association of Christians in Social Work Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. The theme of this convention was Advocating for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation. The author entitled her talk, "Reconciliation Reconsidered: A conversation about race among Christian social workers." This compelling conversation challenges Christian social workers to examine the role they may be taking in reconciling the racial, social, gender, and economic injustice that exists within their communities. The author also conducts a historical survey of the works of Alan-Keith Lucas and discusses Lucas' views about the role that Christian social workers should take in reconciling racial injustice.

> "Doom to those who pronounce wicked decrees, and keep writing harmful laws to deprive the needy of their rights and to rob the poor among my people of justice; to make widows their loot; to steal from orphans!" (Isaiah 10:1-2).

Just as in the days of the prophet Isaiah, we are in a time period when there is concern that oppressive policies are legislated that have a negative impact on the most vulnerable members of our society. These policies directly impact the way in which social workers engage our client systems. Racism

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is a complex layer of concern for vulnerable members and for social work practitioners. This article seeks to examine the role of Christian social workers in addressing racial oppression in America. Furthermore, this article highlights the writings of Alan Keith-Lucas to provide a framework towards racial reconciliation.

Dr. Alan Keith-Lucas was born in England in 1910. He came to the US in 1937 after earning a degree in English from Cambridge University (Ressler, 2010). Upon his arrival to the United States, Keith-Lucas earned a Master of Science in Social Administration from Case Western Reserve University, and a Ph.D. from Duke University. He joined the faculty of the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1950 (Powell, 1996). Although he retired in 1975, he continued to contribute to social work scholarly discourse related to residential childcare during his retirement years until his death on August 5, 1995 (Ressler, 2010).

I entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Social Work as a doctoral student in 1999. During my short time there, I never heard the name, Dr. Alan Keith-Lucas. So, while we have the Chapel Hill connection, that is the only connection that I thought that we had. Then, I began reading Dr. Keith-Lucas' work. His lecture series on "Social Work, Religion and Academia" was quite powerful (Keith-Lucas, 1981b; Langley, 1981). Keith-Lucas spoke about "Two sorts of social work, two religions" (Keith-Lucas, 1981c). He delineates a religion of grace and a religion of morality. Keith-Lucas states that the "religion of grace provides the proper approach to social work because it emphasizes God's love for undeserving sinners." He goes on to suggest that because of God's love, we as social workers must reach out to help those in need. Keith-Lucas contrasts this notion with the religion of morality. He saw this form of religion as a hindrance to social work because it produces a "sense of pride, a doctrine of salvation by works, and the repression of those who disobey God's law." Keith-Lucas saw this as a capitalist-Puritan work ethic which saw financial success as a sign of election, and which saw poverty as a sign of sin. Today we refer to this as a prosperity gospel, where we openly thank God for our good jobs, our nice homes, and good health. We couch these things as evidence of blessings from God. However, we don't really think about what this means for those who don't have good jobs or nice homes or good health. Does this mean that they are not blessed by God?

In Keith-Lucas' lecture "Theology and the Helping Process" (Keith-Lucas, 1981a; Langley, 1981), he states that "the most important ingredients in a Christian approach to social work are a Christian view of man and the ability to express kindness." He saw a compatibility between social work and Christian values. Keith-Lucas states that a Christian social worker, regardless of work setting, should

> "See that love comes first, respect choice, not push one's own solution too much, emphasize responsibility, recognize that suffering is a part of growth, refrain from judgement, and avoid a negative diagnosis that the client is beyond help (Langley, 1981, 28))."

In his seminal text, "So you want to be a social worker: A Primer for the Christian tudent" (1985), Keith-Lucas provides pragmatic advice about how one practices as a professional social worker and a confessing Christian. He writes,

> "It perhaps does not need saying, but yet should always be kept in mind, that the most effective Christian witness is not talking about religion but treating people in a Christian way oneself. And perhaps one should add a word of warning to the worker who, in his or her desire to share his or her experience of God, makes a personal testimony. The most dangerous of all helpers is the one who has solved his or her own problem and has forgotten what it cost."

Let's Talk About Race

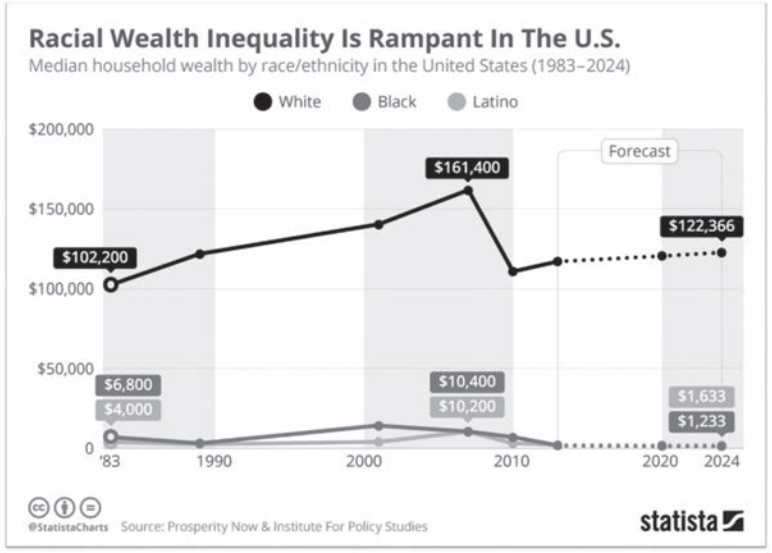
It is this context that guides my thoughts about advancing NACSW's conversation on race. We are in a time where overt racism has been released and reintroduced as a fashionable cloth. While there has always been a tenuous relationship between law enforcement and the Black community, from the use of slave patrols during the institution of chattel slavery to today's iteration of law enforcement (Durr, 2015; Hawkins & Thomas, 2013), the use of videos and social media has put a spotlight on an issue that might have been hidden from broader society. And even with this spotlight, Black men, women, and children are beaten, mishandled, shot, and murdered on film by law enforcement with no justice. It is very rare for law enforcement to be charged, much less convicted, of unjustifiably killing a Black person in the line of duty (Hirschfield, 2015; Park & Lee, 2017; Zack, 2015). However, the municipalities where these crimes are committed are more often prepared to pay millions of dollars to the victims' families for the wrongful death of their loved ones (The Marshall Project, 2017; Wing, 2015). And Christian social workers are silent.

The Economics of Race

While it is very easy to fall into the diversity trap by focusing on gender, ability, geographic location, and other forms of diversity, all of these forms of diversity are affected by race. "Race matters," to quote Dr. Cornel West

(1993). And in this country, race is tied to economics. It is significant that White households (see figure 1) in the middle income quintile own nearly eight times as much wealth as middle income Black earners and ten times as much as middle income Latino earners (McCarthy, 2017; Asante-Muhammad, Collins, Hoxie, & Nieves, 2017). Researchers state that it will take an average Latino family 84 years and the average Black family 228 years to reach the same level of wealth enjoyed by White families today. How can this be? Is it that Whites work harder than Latinos and Blacks? Is it that Whites are more blessed than Latinos and Blacks?

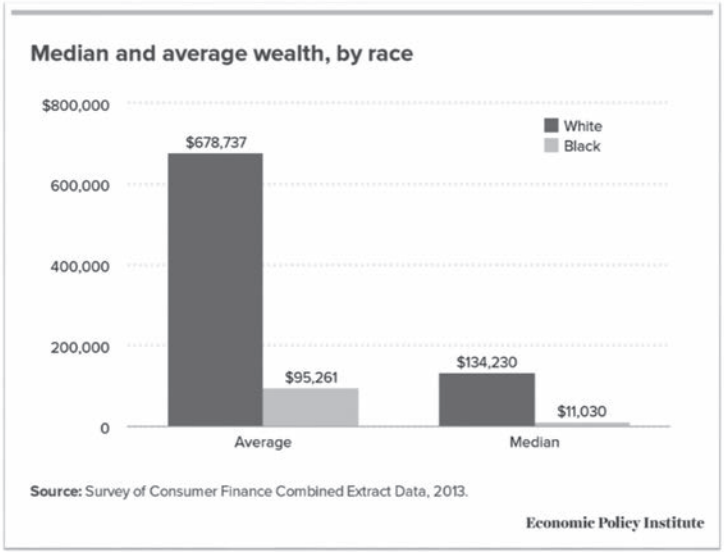
Figure 1



For the purposes of this discussion, the focus is on the Black-White dichotomy. When looking at wealth accumulation, which is less about present income but more about long-term financial security, there is even more of a gap (Jones, 2017). The average wealth of White families is seven times higher than the average Black family (see figure 2).

When looking at median wealth, White families have twelve times median wealth than Black families. More than 25% of Black families have zero or negative net worth, whereas, less than 10% of White families have zero or negative net worth. Even when looking at age, household structure, education level, income, or occupation, these racialized wealth gaps still exists (Tippett, Jones-DeWeever, Rockeymoore, Hamilton, & Darity, 2014). The typical Black family with a head of household working full-time has less wealth than the typical White family whose head of household

Figure 2



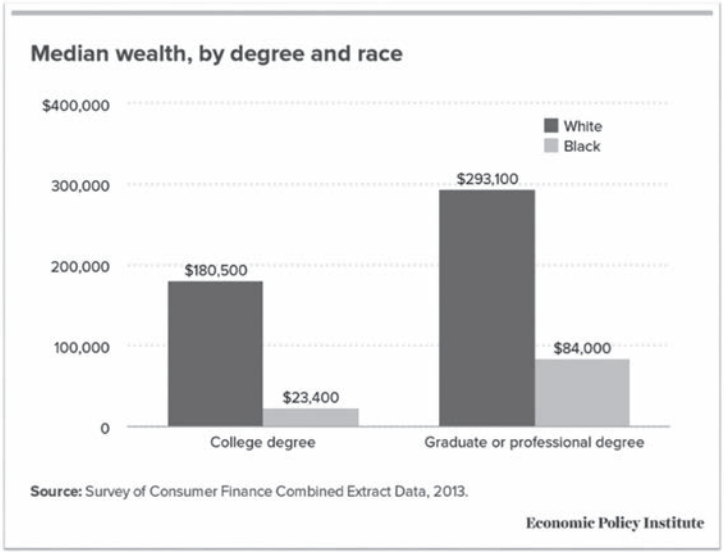
is unemployed. This holds true for families with college and graduate/professional degrees (Jones, 2017). Median wealth for Black families whose head has a college degree has only one-eighth the wealth of the median White family whose head has a college degree (see figure 3).

Even the typical Black family with a graduate or professional degree had more than $200,000 less wealth than a comparable White family. How could this be? Education is supposed to be the great equalizer. Housing equity makes up about two thirds of all wealth for the typical household. So, this gap is primarily a housing wealth gap (Assante-Muhammad et al, 2017; Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Coates, 2014; Jones, 2017; Shapiro et al, 2013; Turner, 2013).

Legislated Oppression

From the very first moment that Blacks were kidnapped and brought to this country, Blacks have not had full access to the economic system, although Blacks have been the drivers of the economic system. Laws have been put in place to limit Black access (DuBois, 1935; Novak, 1978). After the end of legalized institutionalized chattel slavery in this country, when most enslaved workers received no wages for their labor, there were laws in place to ensure that Blacks provided cheap labor. There is documented discrimination in employment and wage setting that has impacted generations of wealth. There were policies in place that limited the types of employment that Blacks could hold (Roback, 1984; Shaw,

Figure 3



2010). The lasting effects of these policies are still evident to us every day when we walk into our places of employment. Black Codes limited Black employment to laborers and domestic workers. In many states, Blacks had to gain permission from magistrates to seek employment in areas outside of these mandates, or Blacks would move to locations that would allow them to work in their desired fields. This greatly suppressed wage earnings. Even when policies were put in place that could potentially help with wage suppression, such as the minimum wage laws, there were negative consequences for Blacks. For instance, the institution of minimum wage laws resulted in increased unemployment of Blacks, as Whites were not willing to pay Blacks equitable wages (Sowell, 2007; Spero & Harris, 1931).

For those Blacks who did manage to earn a decent income, they were barred from accessing the most important financial market: the housing market. Housing policies were put in place that prevented Blacks from acquiring land, created redlining and restrictive covenants and encouraged lending discrimination (Coates, 2014; Shapiro, Meschede, & Osoro, 2013). Consequently, Blacks were limited to specific geographic locations with reduced services.

Role of Christian Social Workers

So, what does this have to do with Christian social workers? The prophet Isaiah warns us in chapter 10 verse 1 and 2:

> Doom to those who pronounce wicked decrees, and keep writing harmful laws to deprive the needy of their rights and to rob the poor among my people of justice; to make widows their loot; to steal from orphans!

Isaiah warns that the writing of unjust laws that create oppression will not go unnoticed by the Creator. Earlier in the text, the prophet Isaiah warns against ignoring injustice in the name of religion. He laments in Isaiah 1:13-17

> Quit your worship charades.
>
> I can't stand your trivial religious games:
>
> Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings—
>
> meetings, meetings, meetings—I can't stand one more!
>
> Meetings for this, meetings for that. I hate them!
>
> You've worn me out!
>
> I'm sick of your religion, religion, religion,
>
> while you go right on sinning.
>
> When you put on your next prayer-performance,
>
> I'll be looking the other way.
>
> No matter how long or loud or often you pray,
>
> I'll not be listening.
>
> And do you know why? Because you've been tearing
>
> people to pieces, and your hands are bloody.
>
> Go home and wash up.
>
> Clean up your act.
>
> Sweep your lives clean of your evildoings
>
> so I don't have to look at them any longer.
>
> Say no to wrong.
>
> Learn to do good.
>
> Work for justice.
>
> Help the down-and-out.
>
> Stand up for the homeless.
>
> Go to bat for the defenseless."

As Christian social workers, we have an obligation to address issues of injustice and oppression. In the American context, this means that we must address issues of race, specifically the Black-White dichotomy. We cannot turn our faces away and state that we will just pray about it. This is not sufficient. We must acknowledge the sin of racism and our role in supporting this sin…in the name of Jesus. In this country, we have a history of using religion to "pronounce wicked decrees" and to write "harmful laws." As long as the supported lawmaker proclaims to be a Christian, there's a blind eye to the consequences of the law.

In the name of Jesus, the worst kinds of crimes have been perpetuated against Blacks in this country. Terrorist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, proclaim to be Christian organizations (see figure 4) following the teachings of the Bible (Sanchez, 2016; Weinberg & Assoudeh, 2016).

Figure 4


KNIGHTS of the KU KLUX KLAN
and
WOMEN of the KU KLUX KLAN
Their Principles and Ideals
1. Tenets of the Christian Religion.
2. Upholding of the Constitution of the United States.
3. Sovereignty of our State Rights.
4. Separation of Church and State.
5. Religious Liberty.
6. Freedom of Speech and Press.
7. Compulsory Education in Free Public Schools.
8. Protection of Our Pure Womanhood.
9. White Supremacy.
10. Limitation of Foreign Immigration.
11. Closer Relationship Between Capital and American Labor.
12. Just Laws and Liberty.
This organization is not anti-Jew, anti-Catholic nor anti-Negro but we do restrict our membership to native born white, Protestant, Gentile, American citizens. In exercising this right we do not become "anti" in any respect. Consider the fact that the Jewish people have their B'nai B'rith, the Catholics their organizations known as the Knights of Columbus and the Daughters of America. Consider also that every organization in the United States places some limitation of one nature or another upon its membership.
ARE WE NOT ENTITLED TO THE SAME PRIVILEGE?
We stand for law enforcement by the legally constituted officers of the law. At no time do we take the law into our own hands.
If you are a native born White, Protestant, Gentile, American, Citizen, of good moral character, useful occupation, believe in the tenets of the Christian Religion, meet in God, owe allegiance first, last and only to the government of the United States of America—Your Country needs you—We need you.
TEAR HERE—MAIL COUPON TODAY
To P. O. BOX
I am a real American and in sympathy with the principles for which the Ku Klux Klan stands. I would like to have him to become a member.
Name
Home Address
Phone
City
All Correspondence Strictly Confidential.
We stand for Religious Liberty and recognize the constitutional right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, be he Jew, Roman Catholic or Protestant, regardless of any reports you may have heard to the contrary.

Directly after the emancipation of the formerly enslaved, and with the help of the Reconstruction era (1865-77), Blacks enjoyed great economic successes. This is one of the times when the wealth gap was closed. There were thriving Black towns throughout the country (DuBois, 1935; Silver & Moeser, 2015). They were in Atlanta; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Chicago; Rosewood, FL; Washington, DC; Knoxville, TN; New York City; and, East St. Louis. Each of these communities was destroyed by White terrorists who bombed, burned and massacred in response to Black economic success that often surpassed the successes of many Whites. There were numerous other prosperous Black communities throughout the South and eastern

seaboard, such as in Durham, NC and Little Rock, AR, that were destroyed by eminent domain policies that allowed the government to take their land and build interstates through the middle of them. When examining the historical accounts of these and similar events, the White church played a major role in supporting these terroristic behaviors.

So, what does this have to do with Christian social workers today? Well, in our quest to engage more diversity in NACSW, in our work settings and in our churches, there is frustration in the process. Whites often tire of "always having to talk about race"…"why is everything about race" (Bonilla-Silva, 2017; Harries, 2014; Howard, 2016). There is a notion that since we all love Jesus, why can't we see past race? Many Whites don't even see the irony of looking at a picture of a White Jesus and suggesting that we look past race! I am a bit suspicious of White Christians given that the record shows that White Christianity tends to support the oppression of my people. So, when it comes to talking about reconciliation, there has to be a sincere understanding of the harm inflicted on Blacks by White Christians. It is not about sitting in the same space breathing the same air. It is about truly being in relationship. So, when I say that I hurt, you don't tell me that I don't hurt because you don't feel pain. Once there is an acknowledgement of the inflicted harm, there must be true repentance, which is a turning away of sinful ways. This means that you can no longer continue to enjoy the spoils of privilege. This harm must be repaired before we can truly be reconciled.

Reparational Reconciliation

I heard a story about a month ago when I was at Abilene Christian University. The speaker, Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, gave a wonderful explanation of what this reparational reconciliation looks like.

There was a young boy who had a magnificent bike. One day, his neighbor stole his bike. The neighbor rode that bike up and down the street in front of the little boy. The little boy told everyone who would listen that the neighbor has stolen his bike and is riding it up and down the street, to no avail. The little boy saw no justice. Sometime later, the neighbor comes to the little boy's house and asks the little boy if they could be friends. The little boy looks past the neighbor and sees the bike out there. The little boy said, "If you give me back my bike, then we can be friends." The neighbor said, "What does the bike have to do with us being friends? You need to get over that. I am here because I want to be friends. I didn't come here to talk about a bike!" The little boy insisted that he wanted his bike back. The neighbor continued to protest the little boy talking about a bike when he is wanting to talk about being friends.

This story illustrates the importance of reconciliation. We can't talk about reconciliation until there is an acknowledgement that I don't have my bike. There has been no justice for my stolen bike.

Conclusion

When I am told by White Christian social work colleagues that the issue is not about race but about abortion, homosexuality, and gun ownership, I am a bit suspicious. Alan Keith-Lucas calls that a "religion of morality." How can you be pro-life, which is in support of life at all stages, but be against access to high quality health care, a living wage, access to high quality education, access to clean water and safe communities? How can you be pro-life and in support of a criminal justice system that disproportionately locks up Black people? How can you be pro-life and support the death penalty, that, by the way, disproportionately impacts Black people? How can you be pro-life and support unjustified wars? How can you be pro-life and support massive stockpiling of weapons and the relaxing of gun access laws? How can you be pro-life and then expect for me to explain to you why my life matters? I cannot be reconciled with anyone who does not acknowledge the harm inflicted on my people, and who seeks to continue to inflict harm through wicked legislation. As Keith-Lucas stated, Christian social workers should do less talking about their faith and more demonstrating the love of the Creator. The prophet Isaiah admonishes us in Isaiah 58:6-12,

> This is the kind of fast day I'm after:
> to break the chains of injustice,
> get rid of exploitation in the workplace,
> free the oppressed,
> cancel debts.
> What I'm interested in seeing you do is:
> sharing your food with the hungry,
> inviting the homeless poor into your homes,
> putting clothes on the shivering ill-clad,
> being available to your own families.
> Do this and the lights will turn on,
> and your lives will turn around at once.

Your righteousness will pave your way.
The God of glory will secure your passage.
Then when you pray, God will answer.
You'll call out for help and I'll say, 'Here I am.'
If you get rid of unfair practices,
quit blaming victims,
quit gossiping about other people's sins,
If you are generous with the hungry
and start giving yourselves to the down-and-out,
Your lives will begin to glow in the darkness,
your shadowed lives will be bathed in sunlight.
I will always show you where to go.
I'll give you a full life in the emptiest of places—
firm muscles, strong bones.
You'll be like a well-watered garden,
a gurgling spring that never runs dry.
You'll use the old rubble of past lives to build anew,
rebuild the foundations from out of your past.
You'll be known as those who can fix anything,
restore old ruins, rebuild and renovate,
make the community livable again.

We have chosen this profession of social work to support high quality well-being among individuals, families, communities and organizations. We want the best living for our client systems. We are girded by the word of God that provides guidance in our quest to make our world a better place to live. As Christians, we are to model the love of the Creator. To be the hands and feet of Jesus. We must be mindful of this when we speak on social issues. We can't be oppressors and then profess to be Christian and social workers. We can't hide behind our keyboards spewing forth hate and then profess to do so in the name of Jesus. In closing, let me leave you with the words of Paul (Phil 4:8,9):

> Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. ❖

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Four Narratives & A Baby: An Adoption Reunion Story

Helen W. Harris, Jennifer Hale, Beth H. Oldham & Caitlin Powell

In 1992, a 19-year-old single mother of one made the decision to place her second child, a newborn, for adoption. This qualitative exploration of adoption issues is written, in part, in first person by the authors: the birthmother, the daughter she raised, the daughter she placed, and the adoptive mother. The article explores adoption reunion, adoption literature, and a scriptural adoption narrative for themes and for recommendations. The authors address negative stereotypes around adoption, the common theme of loss in all parties, and the potential for healing in reunion through life stage changes, including marriage and the next generation. This is a unique opportunity to hear the multiple voices of adoption in one narrative.

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THE ADOPTION NARRATIVE HAS BEEN PART OF HUMAN HISTORY from early biblical times. This article provides the perspectives of birth mother, children, and adoptive mother contextualized by biblical narrative and by the historical and current adoption literature. The authors reported their own adoption stories and examined common themes and experiences with recommendations for parents considering placement, for families considering adoption, and for children everywhere who are making sense of their own stories.

Perhaps the most notable adoption story in the Old Testament is the story of Moses (Exodus 2:1-11; Numbers 26:58). Many, if not most, readers will be familiar with this story. The nation of Israel was enslaved in Egypt. Threatened by their growing numbers and strength, Pharaoh issued an edict

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that all male newborn children were to be thrown in to the river to drown. When Jochebed, an Israelite, delivered a male child, she hid him and then decided to save his life by placing him in the care of another. She put him in a basket floating in the river near the palace of Pharaoh's daughter and sent her daughter, Miriam, to hide and observe.

This biblical story is filled with difficult choices. Jochebed, the birth mother of Moses, faced the choice to let someone else raise her child. Pharaoh's daughter heard the cries of the infant, knew this was a Hebrew child, and chose to care for him despite their ethnic and religious differences. Moses' sister, Miriam, chose to offer her mother as nursemaid. Moses, the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, chose to return as an adult to his birth family.

This article provides four narratives in a current-day adoption process, giving voice to the experience of birth mother, the daughter she raised, the daughter she placed, and adoptive parent. The narratives clarify how individual experience and relationship change over time. The relationships challenge the historical United States (US) adoption stereotypes of good and bad, address the myths that surround reunion, and propose possibilities for children through adoptions that value birth families. While every adoption story has its own answers, the authors believe the narratives of Jochebed, Moses, Miriam, and Bithiah deeply resonate with our own stories.

Literature Review

The authors conducted a brief literature review in order to put the narratives in context. The question was whether these narratives are consistent or inconsistent with the research on adoption. The literature overview also examined the nature of current adoption practices, including some of the opportunities and challenges. The literature on adoption includes many of the compelling questions nested in the narratives of birth mothers and their children and adoptive parents. These issues include: the stigma and uncertainty of adoption, the loss experienced by all parties, and the concerns around reunion.

The Overview

In the United States in 2013, there were 400,500 children without permanent families; 115,000 of those were eligible for adoption (Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, 2013). Adoption remains fairly rare as fewer than two children are adopted per 100,000 persons. While an established social practice, adoption is also provocative with implications for altering multiple families and their family relationships.

Adoption has historically been secretive, reinforcing the negative stereotypes of shame and guilt (Gritter, 2000). In fact, marginalization of birth parents includes labeling them as bad, dysfunctional, and disposable (p. 2). Therefore, families believed secrecy would prevent contact and disruption (Sachdev, 1992). Horowitz (2013) stated: "I struggle with the contemporary language used to reference my experience. 'Birthmother,' 'relinquished,' 'surrendered.' I gave up my child. I gave up" (p. 12). Gritter (2000), however, found that most birthparents are realistic, prioritize their children's needs, and want stability for their children. Yngvesson (1997) found birthparents articulated their commitment to the child's happiness and integration into the adoptive family. Henney, Ayers-Lopez, McRoy, and Grotevant (2007) wrote about the sacrificial love of birthmothers that resonates through their grief experience. Howe and Feast (2000) found that while adoptees who searched for birth parents in their study experienced some ambivalence about their adoptions, they experienced a sense of completion and fulfillment as a result of the search and reunion. In a follow-up study (Triseliotis, Feast and Kyle, 2005), researchers studied 38 cases, concluding that adoptees frequently experienced the benefit of two families, with positive experiences by birth parents and adoptive parents. Open adoption is creating new opportunities and challenges around search and continued contact (Ayers-Lopez, Henney, McRoy, Hanna, & Grotevant, 2013).

Stigma and Uncertainty

Gritter (2000) described the negative stereotypes of birth parents as well as the courage of birthmothers who speak openly of their experiences. Horowitz (2013), a practicing psychologist, writes about her own experience as a birthmother: "Secrets and myths surround adoption…. meant to protect and inform, but often they serve instead to obscure and contaminate the complicated task of adjusting to what is known and unknown" (p. 11).

Miall and March (2005) reported that "relative adoption is as old as human society itself" where "adoption was, more often than not a quite deliberate transaction between two sets of parents" (p. 381). The secrecy in adoptions is beginning to be mitigated by increasing numbers of single parents and by the open adoption movement that is gaining community support. Henney et al. (2007), in a qualitative study of 169 birthmothers, found secrecy increases guilt in adoption. There is growing interest in open adoption. In these cases, there is less need for search and reunion and less stigma and secrecy (Speirs, et al., 2005). It is possible this may also address the vicarious stigma of adoption experienced by adopted children.

Scharp & Steuber (2014) found that all members of the adoption triad experience stigma…" the perception that their family is somehow inferior

to biologically related families" (p. 515). Sachdev (1992) reported that one out of three adoptees in the study were concerned that their search would be painful for their adopted parents and chose not to discuss the search with them. Gritter (2000) reported that adoptive parents worry about "birthparent regret," i.e. the birthparent wishing to withdraw the placement decision, which could jeopardize the child's identification and satisfaction with the adoptive family. Perhaps this is because adoption reunions have not had "a cultural script to guide their initial interactions" (Scharp & Steuber, 2014, p. 515) or social rules or norms to guide the interaction (p. 516).

The uncertainty about family of origin and the resulting risk for negative self-image may contribute to anxiety and depression. Brand and Brinich (1999) studied children in placement, and found that adopted children are at greater risk for mental health contacts, particularly before age 15. Adoptive parents seek mental health treatment earlier than birth families as they are concerned about family identity and about disruption, when adoptive placements do not last. Adoption disruption occurs as much as 9-15 percent of the time in younger children and as often as 25% of the time in older children (Smith, Howard, Garnier & Ryan, 2006 in Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2012, p. 22).

Reunion Concerns

Lifton (2009, 1977) wrote about reunion based both on her research and her own experience as an adoptee with the negativity of secrecy, her birth mother's failure to embrace her, and her attempt to protect her adoptive parents. She stated: "Most adopted people were not visible enough; that no one saw their sense of abandonment and loss or understood the identity struggles they were going through" (p. ix). She felt like a traitor to her adoptive parents and an intruder in her birth mother's life.

Even so, Lifton (1997) and others believe that most adoptees want to know their biological roots, though motivation and intensity of desire varies (Sachdev, 1992). Motivations include wanting information, wanting to meet, and/or wanting a sustained relationship. In a qualitative study of 21 adoptive families, Peta and Steed (2005) found that birth parents search to check on their child's well-being while adoptees search to learn their history and address identity issues. Scharp (2013) found several themes in search and reunion: desire for relationship with someone who looks like them and desire for connection. This is enhanced by a need for health and other information. Consistent with developmental theory, the interest in search during adolescence is linked to the developmental task of identity development. This is particularly important when considered with Gitters' finding that "negative stereotypes of birthparents can undermine children's self-image" (2000, p. 8).

Baxter, Scharp, Asbury, Jannusch, and Norwood (2012) found that it is important for birth mothers to tell their stories to make sense of their experiences and that these stories help their children make meaning of the experience as well. This is consistent with Becker's (1997) finding that telling their story promotes healing in all of the parties. Story telling becomes a kind of resistance to the status quo negativity around adoption that Lifton (2009, 1977) reported. Sachdev (1992) notes that the quality of relationships after reunion is different among adoptees, birth parents, and adoptive parents. "Some suggest that the completed search is not the end; it is only the beginning of a period of adjustment" (Sachdev, 1992, p. 54).

The New Relationship

Sachdev (1992) found in his study that 50% of reunions resulted in ongoing regular contact, 33% were contact without meeting, while only 17% included contact that did not continue after the reunion meeting.

How often the contact occurred varied and was influenced by the reactions of biological mother's present family, her ability to face her past and to reveal her true feelings, compatibility of temperaments of the adoptee and the biological mother and reciprocal expectations, and the ability of both parties to relate to each other affectively (p. 63).

Contact with other members of the biological family was important as well. Meeting siblings and other birth relatives is important in the reunion process. Feast, Kyle and Triseliotis (2005) reported that reunion was positive for the majority of adoptive parents and continued contact with biological family members did not negatively impact relationships in the adoptive family. "In the words of an adoptive mother: 'My fears were unfounded.' And according to the father, 'We know now that our relationship with our daughter is stronger than ever'" (p. 61). Harrigan & Braithwaite (2010) found that "a multitude of discourses central to the individual's meaning making completely enhance or enable one another" (p. 131). Whether or not reunion resulted in continued contact, the search and reunion themselves were important (Miall & March, 2005; Sachdev, 1992). Speirs, et al. (2005) include this quote from a birth mother: "Thank you for your part in ending some of the pain and guilt I have lived with for 30 years" (p. 857).

Methodology

This qualitative case study is presented in the first-person written narratives of four persons engaged in the adoption story. Presented here in their own voices are the adoption experience stories of Jennifer, birth mother; Caiti, the daughter raised by Jennifer; Beth, the adopted daughter; and Helen, the adoptive mother.

Narratives

The adoption took place through The South Texas Children's Home, a faith-based agency. Remarkably, 17 years after the adoption, the social worker who placed the baby was still available to help with the search and reunion. The mothers are a nurse and a social worker, both with work histories in hospice, both committed to care for others. The adoptee is a masters-prepared social worker in health care. Her biological sister is a college student in health care as well. The reader will hear from the birth mother (Jennifer), the daughter she raised (Caiti), the daughter she placed (Beth), and finally, the woman she chose to raise her daughter (Helen).

Pregnant and Scared

My story is not so unusual today. I was a teenage mother. My first-born, Caiti, was not yet a year old when I felt the familiar symptoms again: tender breasts, overwhelming nausea and a deep sense of protectiveness within. My reaction, though, was not the same as it had been with Caiti. I was terrified, ashamed, guilt-ridden and overcome with a desire to separate myself from the new life within me. I couldn't take care of two babies.

Sadly, my first thought was abortion. I was not under any illusion about the father's ability to support me and two babies and what passed for our relationship had dissipated and I wanted nothing to do with him. I had money – I worked a good job and was going to nursing school so I could afford a procedure and the medical mechanics did not deter me. However, I didn't count my mother and step-father's reaction. When I calmly announced my condition and plans, my mother left the room and my step-father said he would not live with a murderer. I couldn't go through with it.

I couldn't think of another thing to do. I couldn't think beyond getting out of bed every day, watching my body change, with no refuge and what seemed a bleak future. I was so angry… at myself, my step-father, my mother, and at that little life depending on me. Unfair as it was, it is honest. I didn't have a path forward.

One morning over apple juice, my mother quietly suggested adoption…. a respite to my desperate fear was now visible. Adoption, a choice I had not even considered. I chewed on the word. I took the idea and tasted it, smelled it, touched it to see what would happen. The world did not stop moving. I did something then I'd not done in years: I prayed. I took the word "adoption" and I went to my room alone. I asked God what He thought. At that moment, I experienced the most profound sense of peace I have ever known – before or since. God gave me permission to think about adoption as a concrete solution and that this baby I carried would be loved and cherished in a way He knew I was not prepared to

do. The search began. Gone was my anger, shame and fear – I had a new purpose, a mother's purpose to find a family for my baby.

I will never forget when I read the file for the family that would become my child's family. The social worker told me their adoption story and about their little son Daniel who only wanted a sister for Christmas. I knew they were right.

As my time to deliver grew near, I thought frequently about this woman who would raise and love my baby. I thought more about her than I did about the baby as I did normal pregnant woman things – nesting, patting my big belly, picking out a name. I wondered if she was picking out names and preparing a nursery or afraid this adoption would fall through? I thought how much this would help us both.

When Meagan (my name for Beth) was born, I longed to nurse her, to keep her with me all the time, to kiss her little face. But I also tried to create some emotional space and so I did the most unnatural of things – I sent her to the nursery and asked them to keep her there. I remember the nurses calling me every few hours asking if I wanted to nurse my baby. It was the cruelest of moments to say no and hear their silent judgment. This was one of the most difficult experiences of my life, but that sense of peace that had enveloped me found its way to me again, making it possible to not curl up and die of grief.

Over the years, the grief lessened and I lived with the hard knot of it like a bruise in my heart. I grieved for Caiti who didn't have the sister I had. While I was given "room" to grieve, there was a sense from others that I should be "over it" – perhaps I even felt that myself. I decided to deal with the grief by talking about the experience. I thought it would be like picking at a scab – eventually it stops hurting and a scar forms. I was wrong, of course. It never stops hurting – but talking openly about it did make me stronger in that broken place.

Then came the day I never dared to hope for. The social worker found me – on Facebook of all places. Meagan-now Beth- wanted to connect with me. Nearly an adult, her search for self could not be complete without finding out about her roots – I totally understood that. I had to be vetted by Helen, of course. I couldn't wait to talk to her! The first moment I heard her voice, all I could think was how grateful I was for her shining soul and her giant capacity to love the child of another woman's womb. I am still in awe of her.

Angel songs could not be more beautiful than the first time I heard Beth's voice. No other experience can compare. Then I got to meet them! Holding Beth in my arms again after 18 years was precious and priceless. Bringing her to be part of our family – meeting Caiti, my sister, my mother – our family was whole in a way we didn't realize could be possible.

Being a "birth mother" has profoundly changed my life. I deeply understand the power of spirit, the strength that grief can impart even as it drives you to your knees and the refining fire of love that mothers have. Mother love – no matter the adjective used to describe the mother – is a force beyond words. Once I came to understand that my decision to choose another mother for Beth let me be a better mother for Caiti, I was no longer afraid or ashamed. I was empowered to be worthy of that title "Mother" and to live up to the challenge of raising Caiti in the best circumstance I could create, knowing Beth had her own mother now to do the same for her. While I had always included Beth when responding to questions about how many children I have, the answer rings truer than ever.

Much has happened in the intervening years since we first set our stories down to weave these threads together into a hopeful vision of what adoption, reunion, and the future could look like. I have grown in my respect and love and knowledge of Beth as a person wholly her own, and in my admiration for her and Caiti as they have navigated their own relationship. I wondered if the newness would wear off…but this was not the case as I continue to love our interactions.

Inevitably, time moves on. I'm not much of a phone talker but Beth and I talked every few weeks just to keep connected and Helen and I talked occasionally. Life was busy for everyone! We were all in higher education programs! In early 2014, we started talking about Beth's pending graduation and there was no hesitation in either Helen or Beth when they spoke about the events with me as part of the process. I was the other mom. I was in. It was breathtaking to know they already included me in their thinking and planning. I was not as sure of my place in this event and did not in any way want to detract from Helen or Beth's experience. I worried over it and Helen assured me their joy would be multiplied. My mother also came and met the whole family and heard growing up stories. My husband and I and my mother were included as family and that was a priceless gift.

We were included when Seth proposed to Beth. Helen and I read together to her the Dr. Seuss book Are You My Mother? Seth reminded me that Beth was the product of both of us and we should both be involved. I was overcome. What an affirmation of how a person is much more than the sum of their parts! When Beth and Seth were married, I was included in the planning, the shopping to buy the dress, and in also being escorted in as one of the mothers of the bride. I didn't have to worry about Helen's feelings. I saw the love Beth has for her mom and the look they shared when she chose THE dress and when she walked down the aisle. My family, Beth's "also" family, were all there to participate.

And when wedding bells gave way to nursery planning and baby arrival, my husband and I were there in the family labor and delivery room with Beth's parents and Seth's parents. I am a nurse and I've given birth and

I wanted to help Beth but didn't want to hurt Helen who would be hurting over her own lack of knowledge in this one area -of all the other things she knows and has experienced, this one area was one she couldn't draw from. I wanted to be a bridge but feared I couldn't and yet wanted to be there. In a tearful but very honest conversation, Helen and I agreed that we both love Beth and love each other and while there were things we each missed, we could both be present as Beth needed us and that was more important than anything. We had different gifts to offer; that was a profoundly moving realization for me. After a long labor and a long recovery, we were finally allowed to see Beth and her new little darling, Corrie. I held the child of my child. She is beautiful and perfect and without a doubt she has her father's eyes and her mother's nose. Which is also my nose. And she has the endless love and connectivity with Helen that I cannot have – but which I do not in the least begrudge. Beth and I talk almost every week. She calls me with Corrie in the car and me on the speaker so Corrie can hear my voice and I can hear her babbling in the background. This is such a thoughtful and gracious thing to do and so in keeping with how her mother has modeled love and motherhood for her. I am very proud of the woman Beth has become and of the decision I made all those years ago.

The Older Sister

I remember looking at the few pictures we had of Beth (then Meagan in my mind) and thinking how similar we looked, deep brown eyes, same button nose, and brown curly hair. All I could seem to think about, though, is, "I wonder if she's thinking about us, too." I don't remember when I made the actual connection that she was MY sister; the little girl in the picture was my baby sister. Although I grew up with other children who were my step-siblings and felt like my siblings, there was a connection they had with each other that I longed for.

When mom sat me down to tell me that the social worker had made contact with her and that Meagan/Beth and Helen were looking to make contact, I was shocked; a wish that had become so unreal was finally coming true. I started telling everyone about her, showing them her pictures from Facebook, telling them our story, about the wonderful parents she had and the love and support they gave her. Most people couldn't understand why my mother couldn't care for another child when she already had one. They kept using the phrase "gave up" making it sound like a horrible act. I informed them of the situation my mother was in at such a young age and how she did this to better the lives of not only Beth and myself but about how she was helping a family. My mother went out to meet Beth and her family. There was a picture they sent to me. It was of the two of them side by side having coffee. I cried; this was what had been missing, my sister.

I will never forget meeting Beth that November. She was more than I imagined; she was smart, funny, incredibly caring, and most of all the sister I'd wished for. We had bizarre similarities like the way we made our coffee in the same order and at the same time. I remember looking across the breakfast table at Helen who was just staring in complete awe and smiling. I knew they had raised Beth to be the best version of herself, always willing to help others, never giving up on childhood and youth and loving herself for who she is. There is no doubt in my mind that our lives are different because these three wonderful people finally came into our lives, but I believe we were brought together again to make both of our families whole.

Several years later Beth and I have been through so many different experiences together. I watched my baby sister graduate from college, and I was a bridesmaid in her wedding as she gave herself to one man for the rest of her life. I lived so far away and I wasn't really able to be there for all the normal pre-wedding activities. My favorite pre-wedding activity was being there when she chose her dress. I got to see the fairy tale look in her eyes and the look on our mothers' faces when she tried on "the dress." It was a magical moment. She was there when I got married; she and Helen supported me during my own infertility struggles and through my divorce. I'll never forget the moment Beth called to tell me she was pregnant. I have nieces and a nephew but this was a different feeling; Beth's child would have my mother's and grandmother's DNA. I would be able to see glimpses of each of them in this little baby. Despite the distance, thanks to social media and the pictures from Beth, I am able to watch this little Corrie grow. I also get to see Beth as the combination of our mothers and she is the mother I always knew she would be.

The Child of Two Families

I do not remember a time when I did not know I was adopted. It was my bedtime story as a child: "Once upon a time, there was a young mommy who loved her baby so very much…" and so on. Even though I grew up wholly loved, I knew there was still something missing. I could not identify exactly the shape of this missing piece of my soul or articulate its name; yet its absence was tangible. Mere words seemed inadequate to make sense of how I could grieve for someone I had never met. I remember this clearly from an incident when I was about seven years old, and I ran up to my mother in tears, almost inconsolable. The only thing I could say to convey my feelings at that stage was that I missed my birthmother, this person of whom I had only a picture and two handwritten letters to identify as a real person.

Through the years, as a child and preteen, I remember how my friends would sometimes talk about their births; what their moms told them about

the day they were born, or when they were pregnant with them and the things they craved; how big or small they were; and the list goes on. I always felt left out and awkward because they had answers to all these questions while I had none. This was a part of my story that I desperately wanted to own, yet was always out of reach. I remember experiencing the social stigma of being an adopted child when an unkind classmate found out I was adopted and was convinced that I was thrown away and unloved, unwanted, somehow lesser in value. However, I always had a very positive view of my adoption and immediately set her straight. These instances were rare; mostly I experienced others calling my birthmother my "real" mom, as if being my adoptive mother made my mom any less real. I never internalized those things, but it did resonate with me that other kids had experiences and knowledge that, at that time, I didn't think I would ever have.

My parents always tried very hard to portray my adoption as something very positive. My mom always spoke of Jennifer, my birthmother, in glowing terms—how much she loved me, how she wanted the best for me, how strong she must be to have made such a hard decision. Mom also, to this day, expresses her grief that I couldn't grow up with Jennifer, yet her joy that I got to grow up with her and my father and brother. Of course, I had imagined what my life might have been like if I had grown up with Jennifer and had my big sister in my life (something I always dreamed of after growing up with an older brother). However, I also recognize that God has written my story this way for a reason, and that my past experiences make up who I am—that if I had grown up differently, I would be a different person. I would not change anything about my life, but of course I have always imagined what my life might have been like.

As I grew up through the years, I kept this positive view of my adoption close to my heart. I never felt ashamed of being adopted. If anything, I was proud of it and willing to tell my story to anyone who asked. I even felt kind of special for it. However, when I was about fourteen or fifteen, the major feeling I had was one of being completely stuck. I was in that stage of identity formation when I was supposed to figure out who I was but I felt I could not know where I am or where I am going if I didn't know where I came from. I felt this soul-deep longing for my roots. Though I had always wanted to know, it was during this time in my life that I began really exploring the possibility of reuniting with my birth mother.

In February 2010, before I graduated high school, my parents and I made the decision to officially search for Jennifer. My social worker, who had been a part of my life since before I was born, found Caiti on Facebook, which led to our finding Jennifer. We made initial phone contact which led to a face-to-face meeting over Labor Day weekend of that year. Imagine all the emotions rushing through me, a brand-new college freshman, driving up to the hotel where I would finally see her after 18

years. She wasn't just handwriting on a letter or a printed face on a photograph—she was real. I went back and forth from terrified to nervous to so excited that I was almost jumping out of my skin. Then I saw her face, and as we walked toward each other to hold each other for the first time since I was born, I finally knew what it was to be complete, to feel like a whole person, to be healed. It was surreal. We spent the weekend just getting to know each other. I kept hearing phrases like, "When I was pregnant with you," and "When you were born;" phrases that my peers growing up took for granted, but I had never heard directed at me. I could finally start to identify those things about me that were genetic, things that were resultant of my upbringing, and things that are just me. Few people have that kind of opportunity to distinguish between nature and nurture. The whole weekend was perfect. It was everything we all hoped it would be, and more. All weekend my two moms and I were constantly surprised at all we had in common. That November I met my big sister Caiti. She instantly fell into the big sister role, asking me if I was okay after we hugged and I said a tearful "Nice to meet you." Meeting my sister made one more dream come true. I discovered that week that Caiti and I make our coffee the exact same way. It was one more thing I had always seen my friends and others experience with their siblings or parents and was finally getting to experience myself.

Fast-forward several years—holidays, birthdays, and a couple of trips to see Jennifer and Caiti. I was engaged to a wonderful man and planning how to incorporate all these parts of my heart into this most special day. First, I should say that not only did Seth ask my parents for my hand before his proposal, he also asked Jennifer which was incredibly meaningful to all of us. I asked Caiti to be one of my bridesmaids in my wedding, and Jennifer was seated and honored as a mother of the bride. I almost felt that there could not possibly be this much joy to fit into one day. Of course, I was wrong—both on that day, and on another day about a year and a half later.

During the summer of 2016, I called Jennifer and Caiti to announce that they were going to be Grandma and Aunt. We all cried tears of joy and hormones. Throughout my pregnancy, I called Jennifer almost weekly, and my mom just about every other day on my way home from work. We talked about pregnancy experiences, the highs and lows, the fears and worries of new motherhood, the joys of each milestone. Again, I got to hear the phrase, "When I was pregnant with you," and this time apply it to what was going on with my own pregnancy. I will admit that I felt a little awkward talking about my pregnancy with my mom. I wanted to protect her feelings, and I didn't want my talking with her about my pregnancy to open old wounds for her. However, as we do with everything else, we discussed it with honest and open hearts, and I re-learned that a thing can be hard and joyful at the same time.

In late December, I called Jennifer to let her know to get on a plane—there might be a grandbaby on the way! It turned out, as with most first-time moms, to be a false alarm, but I got to spend a whole week with her before the baby arrived, an unexpected joy. Then, early one morning after a long and difficult labor, I finally understood that rush of mother love—that sudden, fierce protectiveness and an overwhelming joy, an intense fear and recognition of responsibility and the unknown, a quiet empowerment and a growing confidence—a baby wasn't the only thing born that moment. A new mother emerged as well. For the first time, I think I really saw a glimpse of the Father's love for His children. And my two moms were with me, in the waiting room at the hospital, and celebrating after Corrie arrived. I still get chills thinking about the three of us together experiencing that.

A couple of days later, when the three of us arrived at the home we'd left as two, I began to realize that this was the first time I was living with someone with whom I share DNA. People say all the time how much Corrie looks like me, and it still does not sound familiar to my ears. But every time I look at my daughter's sweet face, I see echoes of myself, and it's like I've known her my whole life. That is a wonder too sweet for words.

Old Empty Arms

It never occurred to me that I would not have a choice about parenting. I was healthy, strong, and invested in the lives of children. In fact, I was a social worker whose life work was with children and their parents, including those placing for adoption. When treatment for an illness resulted in infertility, I experienced an incredible sense of being damaged and "less than." I remember the day I went to a high school basketball game in our small town and heard someone in the stands whisper to her friend: "there comes old empty arms." Damaged goods. Barren. Useless. It was my fault that we were childless.

We discussed adoption. Could I parent a child that did not grow in my body and did not get to grow up in his/her own home? I ached for the mother who would be relinquishing the right to raise her child. I worried about the child who would grow in another's womb for nine months and hear her voice and the patterns of her life and then, as a vulnerable infant, lose that voice, those rhythms.

Our first adoption experience was the incredible gift of a newborn son. Five years later, our prayers were answered again when we learned Jennifer had chosen our family for her newborn daughter. Once again, I bought a crib bear that played a recording of intrauterine sounds, the "swish swish" of a mother's heartbeat. I prayed that somehow I could be enough for this child whose circumstances made it impossible for her to grow up with her mother and family of origin. I prayed for her mother, for peace, strength,

courage, and grace to put the pieces of her broken experience together. Sharing with Beth about her adoption was always about her understanding that God had given her two mothers to love her. I always believed that they would meet one day and be reunited. I wrote letters to both birth mothers each year to help bridge the years in between.

I discovered that motherhood was not about me being enough. It was about me being faithful. I found myself even grateful for my own brokenness and barrenness that made it possible for this incredible child to enter in to relationship with us. I love her birthmother and I see Jennifer in Beth's smile and laugh and determination. I wondered how we might change when Beth found and developed relationship with her birth family. I learned that Beth is as capable of loving two mothers as I am of loving two children. I have witnessed Beth's heart becoming whole in response to Jennifer's love and affirmation. I love knowing her sister and grandparents and extended family. I have seen the strength that flows into her from being accepted into, and embraced by, this family that looks like her and accepts her; these are gifts that most people take for granted.

She was now part of a family that we (Don and I) were not part of and we encouraged her to spend time with them and be part of their family celebrations. Beth also became part of another family, her husband's. Jennifer and her family were part of the wedding celebration. I grew up in a very small extended family. What joy to have more family with whom we may share special occasions. I've been asked if it was hard for me for Jennifer to be there also as mother of the bride. I can say with certainty that it would have been hard for me if she weren't there. What matters to each of us is that Beth have what she needs from each of us.

Now lest you nominate us, or me, for sainthood, let me say that there have been times when I felt jealous and left out. When Beth and Seth flew to Atlanta to spend Beth's birthday week with Jennifer and Chet and Caiti, I was frankly a little whiny. And God was parental with me, reminding me that I had a whole childhood of birthdays with her and surely I could share. The truth is, the time for having her home for birthdays and holidays is behind us as she establishes her life and family and her own traditions.

The sharing of a granddaughter is the next iteration of our journey together. Beth was able to spend the week before delivery with the woman who delivered her. The waiting room in the hospital was a full night of three sets of grandparents walking the floor and praying for the laboring parents and the soon-to-arrive center of our world. When a new baby arrives healthy, there is plenty of love and joy and fatigue and exhaustion and celebration for the whole world to rejoice together. Corrie is a perfect blend of her parents. I see Seth and Beth in her smile and when she is unhappy. I see Jennifer in her ears and her intense curiosity about everything in the world. I see her love when she grins back at me and nestles in my arms and runs

to me calling "nana." I know we are making memories deep inside each of us when I rock her and when I hold her in a warm shower to help her little congested self breathe.

There is powerful truth here. Love does not diminish. Love always multiples. Beth lives with someone who looks like her for the first time in her life. Corrie is surrounded by multiple talented and devoted grandparents. Beth has the benefit of two mothers and a mother-in-law who adore her and adore Corrie. God knits together the persons and experiences we need.

Discussion

While adoption has been a part of the story of humanity throughout history, it is an increasingly rare phenomenon that has been shrouded in secrecy (Gritter, 2000; Horowitz, 2013). The literature identified the continued marginalization of birthmothers despite the increasing phenomenon of open adoptions (Henney, et al., 2007; Speirs, et al., 2005). However, March (2015) found that "adoption separates the biological and social aspects of parenthood" (p. 107) which could result in boundary ambiguity or could result in role definition and the sharing of parenthood. These factors impact conversation around reunion while adoptees long to know about their origins, medical histories, and families (Ayers-Lopez, Henney, McRoy, Hanna, & Grotevant, 2013). Often, birthparents and birth siblings create new lives that still feel incomplete. Prior to their child's search for the birthparent, adoptive parents worry that reunion will alter the families they have formed. Yet, they want their adopted children to have whatever they need for wholeness. For all parties, the reunion experience is most always positive and eventually reassuring (Feast, Kyle & Triseliotis, 2005). The narratives identify the same issues as those identified in the literature: the themes of stigma and secrecy; the importance of openness; and the challenges and opportunities in reunion. The way forward is the willingness to shine light on the stigma and the compelling questions that remain for each member of the adoption story. These questions resonate in the literature, in the story of Moses, and in the narratives in this article.

Conclusions

The Biblical narrative of Moses' adoption provides a rich example of the challenges and the God-inspired calling of adoption. There is a foreshadowing of the nesting of Jesus in the home of an adoptive father. The call of God is evident in these Old and New Testament examples of non-traditional families. For the social worker in religiously-affiliated agencies, these examples may help normalize the adoption experience.

Further, these narratives are the anecdotal evidence of possibility in the face of cultural and societal concerns about adoption and reunion. While the adoption literature identifies the statistical rarity of adoption, the complexities of the adoption story, and a number of unfortunate reunion stories, our narratives offer a rich and powerful promise. In an age when it is more socially acceptable to have an abortion than to place a child for adoption, the literature also identifies common themes that contradict many of the negative stereotypes and myths. Adoption can be the plan that gives a child what they need from two mothers, and two families. This is most possible when we stop the shame and secrecy. Most adoptees wonder about their biological families and, in adolescence and early adulthood, consider searching. Many experience successful searches, and some reunions result in continued positive relationships with families of origin. While many adoptive parents are anxious about the searches and concerned about the impact on relationship with the adoptee, their experiences are largely positive and their fears largely unrealized (Sachdev, 1992; Sharpa, 2013; Speirs, Duder, Kirstein, Propst & Meads, 2005). Our experiences line up with these points and proclaim this truth.

The narratives suggest an approach that provides for adoptees the chance for wholeness by integrating their birth and growing-up identities. There is much we wish we had done earlier. What if we could create a family tree that includes both families? Can we influence legislation that would allow for birth certificates that provide both birth and adoptive parent information? Can we find paths that legitimize the adoption experience and bring it out of the shadows and into the celebratory light?

Observations

The following observations may help inform social workers in adoption agencies as well as those working with birth mothers, adoptees and adoptive families in various types of social work practice:

- The Christian scripture provides both Old and New Testament examples of adoption in service of God's plans for some individuals and families
- Society and social work agencies must address the stereotypes; adoption is not "less than" for anyone. In fact, it can be God's answer for some situations.
- Birth parents and adoptive parents love their children. They are each human and frail and imperfect, and they are each wise and loving and willing to do what it takes to provide what their child needs.

- Adoption is a gift in the midst of pain. This includes recognizing the plan of God for good, and for His purposes. God's plan can include two mothers in a child's life to provide what one could not provide alone.
- Open adoptions and/or reunions with birth mothers/parents can be opportunities for more family. The complexities are worth it. Reunion of birthmother and child can result in union of two families.
- Various types of adoption relationships can be explored and examined including siblings, birthfathers, and other extended family members.
- Joint family documents can be created that legitimize all parts of the adoption triad beginning with birth certificates and family trees.
- Reunion does not need to be a one-time event, but can be an ongoing development of family narrative that includes family milestones and developmental events.
- Reunions can also have an impact on future generations. Our granddaughter is blessed indeed.

It is true. The story of Moses is true, the story told in this article is true, and the principles of God's plan and goodness are true. However, the details will be different in each story. The challenges are not insignificant. They are also not insurmountable. These narratives hopefully communicated both the pain and the hope, as well as the challenge and the opportunity. We wonder about a culture that stigmatizes the decision to place for adoption more than the decision for abortion. We challenge the marginalization of birth parents/birth families and the negative stereotypes of barrenness. We assert that God's plan can and does include the possibilities of strength coming from two families in a child's life. We believe that in each child there is the story of Moses, a called child of God, gifted for a special purpose. We stand together aware that we each are part of God's plan for each other. Moses became the great liberator of his people. May adoptees continue to lead the way to freedom from shame and stigma to the promised land of family relationships. ❖

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Borderline Personality Disorder and Religiosity: Exploring the Relationship

Lisa Hosack

The negative effects of borderline personality disorder (BPD) are widely documented. And while religiosity has been found to be generally beneficial for individuals with clinical disorders, little is known about the relationship of religiosity and personality disorders, including BPD. The purpose of this quantitative, cross-sectional study was to examine the relationship between BPD and two important components of religiosity. The first was termed religious quest and was defined in the study as the level of one's internal openness to faith and spirituality. The other was defined as religious engagement and was defined in the study as the external, behavioral marks of religious faith such as prayer and attendance at religious events. A survey comprised of several validated measures was administered to undergraduate students within a large public university in the Midwest (N = 466). While religious engagement was found to be low across the sample, religious quest demonstrated a strong positive relationship with BPD. The findings indicate that many individuals with BPD endorse high levels of openness toward faith and spirituality. This inclination is noteworthy as spirituality and religion may hold potential healing for those struggling in this particular way.

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a complex personality structure that is characterized by high levels of instability in one's interpersonal relationships, self-image, and affect. Marked impulsivity is an additional symptom of BPD (De Moor, Distel, Trull, & Boomsma, 2009). Such impulsivity may be manifested in desperate efforts to avoid abandonment, self-injurious behaviors, suicidal behaviors, and poor anger management. At its core, BPD is essentially defined by two troubling factors—instability and impulsivity (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

BPD carries risks for affected individuals that span a wide and daunting variety of outcomes. In the psychological realm, BPD has been linked to

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major depression (Bockian, 2006; Sher, et al, 2017; Silk, 2000; Skodol, et al., 2005) and suicide rates near 10% (Kjellander, Bongar, & King, 1998; Paris, 2002). Among quality of life outcomes, BPD has been correlated with poor well-being and life satisfaction rates (Chen, et al., 2006; Winograd, Cohen, & Chen, 2008). Notably, Cramer, Kringlen, & Torgersen (2006) found that personality disorders were more important predictors of quality of life than sociodemographic variables, physical health, and the presence of an Axis I disorder. Among personality disorders, they additionally reported that BPD demonstrated the strongest negative impact upon quality of life.

Borderline Personality Disorder and College Students

BPD and its negative outcomes are additionally well-documented within college students. In a sample of undergraduates, Winograd, Cohen, & Chen (2008) found that BPD predicted lower academic achievement, more semesters on probation, higher levels of college or university expulsion, and the attainment of fewer adult developmental milestones. Other studies have similarly linked BPD in college students with lower academic achievement (Bagge et al., 2004; Daley, Burge, & Hammen, 2000; Trull, 1995; Trull, Useda, Conforti, & Doan, 1997; Zwieg-Frank & Paris, 2002). Chen et al. (2006) also found that young adult personality disorders predicted later life effects that included higher negative affect, problems in social support and relationships, and fewer financial and health resources in adulthood. Additionally, undergraduate samples have demonstrated levels of BPD that are consistent with BPD rates in the general population (Lenzenweger, Lane, Loranger, & Kessler, 2007; Reeves & Taylor, 2007). The negative overall effects of BPD and its prevalence within this age group support studying the problem within this population.

Comorbid Problems

Not surprisingly, considering its widespread negative effects, BPD has also been found to have high comorbidity with Axis I psychiatric disorders including anxiety and depression (Baer & Sauer, 2011; Skodol, et al., 2002; Skodol et al., 2005). Several studies have found BPD to uniquely predict negative outcomes over and above the influence of Axis I psychopathology (Bagge et al., 2004; Daley, Burge, & Hammen, 2000; Skodol et al., 2002) making it important and valid to measure these forms of Axis I psychopathology as covariates in order to determine BPD-specific effects.

BPD is a problem with risky outcomes among young adults. But there are many unanswered questions, including the nature of particular phenomena that may effectively buffer individuals against the negative effects of the disorder. We turn now to religiosity, a construct hypothesized in this study to have potential for improving the lives of individuals with BPD.

Religiosity Defined

A growing body of evidence has emerged in the last several decades supporting the positive implications of religiosity for mental health (Parga-ment, Mahoney, & Shafranske, 2013). There is a generally positive relation-ship with a broad range of mental health conditions across a broad range of populations (George, Ellison, & Larson, 2002; George, Larson, Koenig, & McCullough, 2000; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Larson, Swyers, & McCullough, 1998; McCullough, Hoyt, Larson, Koenig, & Thoresen, 2000; Portnoff, McClintock, Lau, Choi, & Miller, 2017; Seybold & Hill, 2001). Among college students specifically, religious quest and engagement have been linked to lower psychological distress and higher psychologi-cal well-being (Pargament, 2002; Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005; Salsman & Carlson, 2005; Sandage & Jankowski, 2010; Vilchinsky & Kravetz, 2005), higher subjective well-being (Salsman, Brown, Brechting, & Carlson, 2005), lower substance abuse (Koenig, 2009), lower anxiety (Plante, Yancey, Sherman, & Guertin, 2000), and more negative attitudes toward suicide (Koenig, 2009).

Religiosity has been shown to assist with coping, especially for people with the fewest resources who are facing the most significant problems. The coping offered by religion comes through resources such as spiritual support from God or a higher power, rituals that facilitate life transitions, support from a religious institution, and the ability to reframe situations through an overarching, more benevolent system of meaning (Pargament, Mahoney, & Shafranske, 2013).

While religiosity is a multidimensional construct, this study focuses on two core aspects, termed in this study as religious engagement and religious quest. Religious engagement is defined as behavioral manifestations that include activities such as attending religious services, praying, and engaging in spiritual reading. Religious quest is defined as an individual's internal process of searching for meaning and purpose in life through faith. Religious quest and religious engagement represent constructs that have been widely used in previous empirical research to capture the behavioral and internal constructs of religiosity (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011; Blazer, 2009; Laurencelle, Abell, & Schwartz, 2002).

Religiosity and Personality Disorders: An Understudied Phenomenon

Religiosity has been found to have a positive impact on individuals with various types of psychological disorders (Portnoff, McClintock, Lau, Choi, & Miller, 2017; Koenig, 2009). Further inquiry indicates that

it offsets the negative outcomes of psychological disorders through two primary mechanisms—interpersonal and psychological resources (Pargament, Mahoney, & Shafranske, 2013). Based on these previous findings, it is theorized that religiosity can be particularly beneficial to individuals with BPD as their core pathology manifests itself in these very areas—externally in interpersonal relationships and internally in psychological instability.

Personality disorders and religiosity, however, have been minimally studied. In the studies available, religiosity has typically been examined as a subscale within more comprehensive well-being measures. For example, one study of schizotypal personality traits and well-being (which included religious and spiritual well-being subscales) showed no relationship with religiosity (Abbott & Byrne, 2012) and another demonstrated a negative relationship with religiosity (Abbott, Byrne, & Do, 2012). In a study of individuals with antisocial personality disorder, religiosity was shown to play a protective role (Laird, Marks, & Matthew, 2011). In a review of the existing literature in this area, the authors state that when looking at personality disorders as a broad category, overall well-being appears to be low but religious and spiritual well-being remain curiously high (Bennett, Shepherd, & Janca, 2013).

Regarding BPD and religiosity, there is little in the research literature. One study looked at facets of spiritual well-being found in individuals who had been diagnosed with BPD among a sample of outpatient internal medicine patients. The study found that the individuals with BPD demonstrated lower religiosity. Their measure of spiritual well-being, however, focused on the individual's overall sense of peacefulness and did not measure the individual's openness to faith (Sansone, Kelley, & Forbis, 2012). In a large study of psychiatric inpatients, BPD was positively correlated with atheism (Snyder, Goodpaster, Pitts, Pokorny, & Gustin, 1985).

But many questions remain, including the openness and engagement of individuals with BPD to religiosity. If religiosity can be helpful to individuals with BPD, it is necessary to first study the general relationship between the two constructs. Therefore, this study expands upon existing knowledge by examining the following question:

> After controlling for covariates, how do religious engagement and religious quest relate to BPD?

Method

Participants and Procedure

The study's participants were 466 undergraduate students enrolled at a large public university in the Midwest. Participants were each enrolled in

an undergraduate Psychology course and self-selected to take this 129-item online survey. University IRB approval was obtained prior to data collection. Students were compensated by receiving course extra credit.

The sample was disproportionately female with 313 female respondents (67%) and 153 males (33%). The distribution of participants between ages 18-24 was slightly skewed toward younger students with a mean age of 19.9 (SD 1.29). In terms of the racial makeup of the sample, when compared to the general university population, the sample overrepresented White students and slightly underrepresented African American and Hispanic students. While this university has a significant percentage of international students (12.3%), the low prevalence of international students (n = 13, 3%) in the sample and the use of measures that have been normed on U.S. students, the decision was made to eliminate international students from the sample.

Religious affiliations within the sample are reported in Table 1. As compared with a nationally representative study of college students (Smith, 2009), the present sample was slightly less Protestant at 39.2% versus 46% and slightly more Roman Catholic at 26.4% versus 18%, but other categories were relatively consistent, including the "no religion" group at 23.6% in this sample and 27% in Smith's work. Also noteworthy was the absence of any Latter Day Saints (Mormon) respondents in this sample, a group who comprised 2.8% of Smith's (2009) sample.

Measures

BPD. This construct was measured through the Personality Assessment Inventory—Borderline (PAI-BOR) (Morey, 1991/2007). The 24-items are rated on a 4-point scale (0 = false, 1 = slightly true, 2 = mainly true, 3 = very true). The PAI (which contains 11 clinical scales, one of which measures BPD) has been normed on college students and within nonclinical and clinical populations (Morey, 1991; DeMoor, Distel, Trull, & Boomsma, 2009). The measure was also found to be valid and reliable when tested against two other measures of BPD (Gardner & Qualter, 2009). The test also identifies four BPD subscales: affective instability, identity problems, negative relationships, and self-harm/impulsivity. In this study, the PAI-BOR's internal reliability was excellent (α= .833).

Depression. The Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS) Depression Scale was used to measure this construct. The PROMIS scales are the result of a large-scale effort by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The 8-item self-report of symptoms over the previous seven days has demonstrated excellent reliability and validity on samples including both genders and adults of all ages (Pilkonis et al, 2011). Participants rate various depressive symptoms on a scale from 1 (never)

to 5 (always). Sample questions include, "In the past 7 days, I felt hopeless" and "In the past 7 days, I felt that I had nothing to look forward to." Within this sample, the PROMIS depression scale demonstrated excellent internal reliability (α = .941).

Anxiety. The Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS) Anxiety Scale was used to measure anxiety. The PROMIS anxiety scale contains eight items which are answered based on the individual's experience during the previous seven days. The anxiety scale has similarly demonstrated excellent reliability and validity on samples of both genders and adults of all ages. Similar to the PROMIS depression scale, sample questions include, "In the past 7 days, my worries overwhelmed me" and "In the past 7 days, I felt nervous." Within this sample, the PROMIS anxiety scale demonstrated excellent internal reliability (α = .915).

Religious quest (RQ) and Religious engagement (RE). These were each measured based on the College Students' Beliefs and Values Survey (CSBV) which was developed by researchers at UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute (Astin, Astin, & Lindholm, 2011). The survey was well-suited for this project as the UCLA researchers carefully sought to differentiate the multifaceted concepts of religiosity within a college student population, resulting in the development of ten separate scales (five for "religion" and five for "spirituality"). In light of the goals of this project, which were to explore the two primary constructs of religiosity, two scales were selected: religious engagement (α = .87) and religious quest (α = .83).

Religious engagement is a key construct which represents the behavioral manifestation of religious commitment and includes activities such as attending religious services, praying, and reading sacred texts (Astin et al., 2011). A sample question from the religious engagement scale is, "Since entering college, how often have you attended a religious service?" Respondents responded from 1 (not at all) to 3 (frequently). Religious quest measures "the degree to which the student is actively searching for meaning and purpose and life, becoming a more self-aware person, and finding answers to life's 'big questions'" (Astin et al., 2011, p. 14). A sample question from the religious quest scale is, "I gain spiritual strength by trusting in a Higher Power." Respondents rated their response to this question from 1 (disagree strongly) to 4 (agree strongly). The items of the quest scale are included in the Appendix. Because religiosity may differ by an individual's particular faith or denomination, this study included one demographic question from the CSBV that asked students to indicate their "current religious preference," followed by a list of religion denominations (including an option for "no religion").

Demographic form. Participants reported their sex, age, and racial background.

Results

Preliminary analysis was done and skewness and kurtosis statistics for all continuous variables of interest indicated that all variables were normally distributed. A Mahalnobis distance statistic was also calculated for each case in order to identify multivariate outliers. No cases with extreme values were found. The presence of multicollinearity in the variables was also examined with no independent variables exceeding a tolerance value of less than .10 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) value of above 10 (Pallant, 2005). Randomly missing data comprised less than 1% of the sample variables.

Means and standard deviations for BPD, RE, RQ, depression, and anxiety are reported in Table 2. The distribution of BPD is illustrated in Figure 1. BPD prevalence in this study was comparable with the levels reported within similar samples (Bagge, et al., 2004; Trull, 1995/1997). 15.4% of students scored at or above the threshold for BPD.

In order to determine whether specific demographic groups impacted scores on the variables of interest, bivariate relationships between study variables were examined. Because BPD can vary by gender, this variable was initially examined. To test mean differences between gender and the continuous variables, MANOVA was used. The multivariate test of differences between groups using the Wilks' Lambda criterion revealed no statistically significant differences in the means for the dependent variables by gender, Wilks' Lambda = .986, $F(7, 412) = .80$, $p = .589$.

Because religious quest and religious engagement can vary greatly by religious denomination (Smith, 2009), these variables were examined (Table 2). As expected, there were differences across denomination in terms of religious quest and religious engagement, though the descriptive statistics for several of the denominational categories should be interpreted with caution due to the low numbers of participants. These findings demonstrate considerable variation, particularly among the Other Christian, Other Religion, and No Religion groups. The highest mean religious quest scores were found among the No Religion ($n = 110$, $M = 58.21$), Hindu ($n = 4$, $M = 57.75$) and Other Religion ($n = 21$, $M = 55.95$) groups. The lowest mean religious quest score was found among the Other Christian group ($n = 55$, $M = 46.24$).

Intercorrelations among the primary variables are reported in Table 3. As expected, relatively strong positive correlations were noted between the PAI-BOR and the anxiety ($r = .613$, $p < .001$) and depression ($r = .696$, $p < .001$) scales. Also, the anxiety and depression scales demonstrated a strong positive correlation with each other ($r = .748$). Anxiety and religious quest were correlated ($r = .146$) and depression and religious quest were correlated ($r = .124$). The religious engagement and religious quest scales demonstrated a significantly negative correlation with each other ($r = -.414$).

The relationship between religious quest, religious engagement, and the four subscales of the PAI-BOR were examined and Pearson's correlation coefficients are reported in Table 4. Noteworthy is the nearly complete absence of a significant relationship between BPD and religious engagement. Religious quest presented a different story, however. BPD correlated significantly with religious quest ($r = .188$, $p < .000$). Each of the PAI-BOR subscales had a significant positive relationship with religious quest. Affective Instability demonstrated the strongest relationship ($r = .201$, $p < .000$), followed in descending order by Identity Problems, Negative Relationships, and Self-Harm.

Discussion

The study had the primary purpose of more closely examining the relationship between religiosity and BPD. The study's basis grew from a broad body of literature which indicates that religiosity aids individuals with mental health problems. Much of the current literature in this area, however, pertains solely to individuals with clinical disorders such as depression and anxiety. This study extended this literature by applying findings regarding religiosity to personality disorders, specifically, to individuals with BPD.

The researcher's own interest in the topic combines many years of clinical work with individuals with BPD. A front seat view of the negative outcomes, not to mention the everyday struggles, of BPD raised questions about mechanisms that may soften the effects of a personality structure that goes deep into the core of an individual's way of being. Further, seeing the important role that religion plays in many individuals' lives, as well as its potential in enhancing mental health status and functioning, led to the questions that underlie this work.

It is useful to first make a general observation about individuals with BPD. Individuals with BPD in this study clearly also struggle with depression and anxiety. This confirms other studies and highlights an important reality for individuals with BPD: Not only do they experience symptoms of BPD specifically; they also struggle with anxiety and depression.

The correlation between BPD, depression, and anxiety is an important one for practitioners. In the measure of anxiety, participants endorsed feeling overwhelmed, tense, and fearful. In the measure of depression, they endorsed feelings of worthlessness, sadness, and hopelessness. On their own, anxiety and depression are significant problems that, to varying degrees, negatively impact individual functioning and quality of life. These strong relationships indicate that practice with individuals with BPD will likely be complex as it implies working with multiple psychological problems.

Beyond complexity for practitioners, however, we must appreciate the multi-faceted psychological struggle of individuals with high levels of BPD,

one that includes, but arguably extends beyond, that of depression and/or anxiety. The serious nature of each of these problems and their frequent coexistence in individuals with BPD highlights a difficult psychological diagnosis. Significant empathy from committed practitioners will likely be needed to assist and sustain the individual during the healing process.

The research question looked at the relationship between BPD and religiosity as measured by religious quest and religious engagement. Individuals both with and without BPD reported low religious engagement. Having BPD clearly did not make an individual more inclined toward the behavioral aspects of religion. However, in light of other findings regarding the general decline of religious engagement within this population, near absence of religious engagement is increasingly characteristic of all college students (Setran & Kiesling, 2013). It seems, then, that religious engagement holds minimal benefit for individuals with BPD if it has generally been abandoned.

Of significant interest, however, was the finding that individuals with BPD had higher levels of religious quest than those without. This study additionally found that depression and anxiety related to higher levels of religious quest. The results, however, indicate that BPD adds something to religious quest over and above the effects of anxiety and depression. The particulars of this relationship require further inquiry, but several possibilities can be hypothesized here. It could be that the emotional deficits within individuals with BPD make them more open to religiosity for its potential of making meaning of their suffering through the provision of an externalizing structure. This finding is consistent with literature regarding other mental health diagnoses and the higher levels of religious quest associated with them (Laurencelle, et al., 2002). Or it also could be that individuals with higher religious quest demonstrate higher levels of BPD, meaning that individuals within both categories share similarities. The specific, causal nature of this relationship cannot be determined from the current study and would require longitudinal inquiry to fully determine.

It is not surprising that people who experience significant need are searching for things that may fill those needs. It appears that individuals with BPD look to several places for the fulfillment of their needs. They look to relationships, but in the ensuing struggles they experience there, they seem to be increasingly open to religiosity and what it may offer them.

In summary, the relationship between religious quest and BPD was a significant one, indicating that there is interest and inclination toward religiosity within this population. This is an encouraging and promising finding as religiosity could hold potential value for this population. The interest and inclination are present. Individuals with BPD do not seem to be engaging religiosity in an overtly behavioral way, but then again, neither

do most of their peers. Their internal openness to religiosity, however, suggests an open playing field for practitioners.

Future Research

While it is known that BPD and religious quest are related, the mechanisms of this relationship remain unknown. As indicated earlier, a next step may involve looking more closely at religiosity and BPD and identifying the specific role it plays. This will additionally necessitate looking at faith development and attempting to more specifically measure religious maturity as a variable of potential importance. Qualitative studies of individuals who share religious quest and BPD seem particularly important to understanding this relationship better. Also, these findings should be extended in numerous other ways including research with different populations, ages, denominations, and levels of religiosity. Specifically comparing "high religion" individuals with BPD from "low or no religion" individuals with BPD may be particularly informative.

Another area of interest specifically for religiosity researchers lies in understanding the large number of respondents who self-identified as having "no religion." The findings indicate that although many identified as having no religion, they did curiously endorse religious quest. It would be useful to better understand this relationship and this group, not to mention the reasons that most of the respondents do not endorse religious engagement. It may be equally important to know if low religious engagement represents a generational change or an enduring phenomenon.

Limitations

This study acknowledges several limitations. First, the researcher utilized a convenience sample of college students from a large, public Midwestern university which was not fully representative across gender and race. Sampling only college students limits generalizability as the sample is not representative across age groups. Further, sample participants voluntarily chose to participate and were not randomly selected.

The study's cross-sectional design did not permit an analysis over time and may therefore have missed dynamics of importance to overall understanding of the topic. Causal inferences are not possible with the study's design, forcing these findings to be viewed as solely correlational in nature.

Implications for Christians in Social Work

Related to spiritual assessment, it seems particularly important to carefully measure the internal, perhaps more latent, aspects of religiosity

(what many call "spirituality"). Focusing only on behavior markers of religion will miss a significant component of searching and faith that exists primarily within the individual. Related to this, the social work practitioner should be attentive to the potential of religious quest within individuals with BPD. This is particularly true for social work and psychological clinicians on college campuses who are advised to carefully assess the role of religion, particularly with clients who demonstrate BPD traits.

Another recommendation relates to those working, formally and informally, within religious institutions and groups. This study suggests that practitioners must not expect, or wait for, college-aged individuals to come to them. They may be waiting indefinitely. More creative means must be procured for connecting with the religious searching or longing experienced by so many. The call is also for religious practitioners to be more attentive to those with BPD as they may be particularly drawn to religiosity. Yet it is also the researcher's suspicion that individuals with BPD do not always find a welcoming or safe community or a place to honestly express their questions, doubts, or points of disagreement. This separation of religious institutions or groups and individual spirituality seems to be supported by the fact that many endorsed "no religion," yet had high levels of religious quest. It seems that formal, externalized religiosity has lost its relevance or credibility with many college students. Making an impact here will require honest dialogue, wherein religious practitioners listen without defensiveness to college students and those with BPD. Religious practitioners must also be educated and aware that individuals with BPD are highly psychologically complex and will require sensitive interactions that take their core struggles into account. Additionally, those in relationship with individuals with BPD will require validation, education, and support if they are to remain positively connected to the individual with BPD. Again, this necessitates honest and non-defensive dialogue, ideally within the context of long-term relationships. This type and level of relationship offers a direct contrast to the typically tumultuous and rejecting one individuals with BPD regularly experience.

Conclusion

Individuals with BPD suffer greatly, as do those who surround them. Therefore, exploring means of understanding this disorder and effectively treating its negative effects remains an important practice and research goal. Religiosity remains a fascinating and enormous resource that has recently been paired with mental health in empirical research. It is the researcher's hope that BPD and religiosity, albeit unlikely companions, will continue to be studied for the ways that they can join forces in forging some of the deepest rivers of human psychological pain. ❖

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Appendix

Religious Quest Questionnaire

Respondents rated their responses from 1 (disagree strongly) to 4 (agree strongly)

My spiritual/religious beliefs have helped me develop my identity.

My spiritual/religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.

My spiritual/religious beliefs are one of the most important things in my life.

My spiritual/religious beliefs give meaning and purpose to my life.

My spiritual/religious beliefs provide me with strength, support, and guidance.

My spiritual/religious beliefs help me define the goals I set for myself.

It is futile to try to discover the purpose of existence.

I gain spiritual strength by trusting in a Higher Power.

I find religion to be personally helpful.

My religious tradition has many rules about how to live life.

People who do not believe in God or a Higher Power will be punished.

I view myself as highly religious.

I have a sense of connection with God/Higher Power that transcends my personal self.

Table 1

Religious Engagement and Religious Quest by Religious Denomination (N = 466)

		RE		RQ	
Denomination	n	M	SD	M	SD
Roman Catholic	123	35.77	5.96	49.65	6.82
Other Christian	55	41.27	9.11	46.24	6.13
Church of Christ	33	38.55	8.32	48.06	6.64
Lutheran	25	35.12	4.57	49.30	7.39
Methodist	24	33.92	4.53	49.33	5.96
Baptist	21	41.60	9.55	47.52	5.38
Presbyterian	13	35.77	5.96	52.54	6.50
Jewish	13	36.30	5.02	55.07	8.24
UCC/Congregational	7	38.42	9.71	48.28	3.30
Eastern Orthodox	4	33.50	4.51	49.25	3.59
Episcopalian	4	31.50	5.07	52.25	1.70
Hindu	4	38.75	9.53	57.75	7.54
Islamic	4	37.16	8.65	51.66	3.56
Unit/Universalist	3	34.33	2.08	49.56	6.25
Buddhist	2	35.25	5.73	52.00	6.37
Other Religion	21	31.00	4.03	55.95	6.30
No Religion	110	30.30	4.03	58.21	5.72

Note. RE = religious engagement, RQ = religious quest, Unit = Unitarian, UCC = United Church of Christ

Table 2

Assessment Measures

	M	SD	Min	Max	a
PAI-BOR	24.8	11.26	4	65	.833
Affective Instability	6.19	3.63	0	18	.768
Interpersonal prob.	7.44	3.52	0	18	.704
Neg. Relationships	6.78	3.46	0	18	.708
Self-Harm	4.45	3.16	0	18	.748
RE	35.2	7.31	20	63	.920
RQ	51.63	7.59	20	66	.919
PROMIS Depression	15.85	7.35	8	40	.941
PROMIS Anxiety	5.63	6.44	8	40	.915

Note. PAI-BOR = Personality Assessment Inventory – Borderline Scale, RE = religious engagement, RQ = religious quest, PROMIS = Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System

Table 3

Intercorrelations of Variables

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. PAI-BOR Total										
2. PAI-BOR AI	.864**	---								
3. PAI-BOR IP	.854**	.665**	---							
4. PAI-BOR NR	.858**	.690**	.679**	---						
5. PAI-BOR SH	.678**	.431**	.419**	.414**	---					
6. RQ	.178**	.201**	.174**	.117**	.113*	---				
7. RE	-.027	-.060	-.070	.016	.034	-.414**	---			
8. ANX	.613**	.514**	.578**	.520**	.378**	.124**	-.001	---		
9. DEP	.696**	.605**	.687**	.592**	.369**	.146**	-.040	.748**	---	

Note. ** = $p <$ .001, PAI-BOR = Personality Assessment Inventory-Borderline scale, AI = affective instability, IP = identity problems, NR = negative relationships, SH = self harm/impulsivity, RQ = religious quest, RE = religious engagement, ANX = anxiety, DEP = depression

Table 4

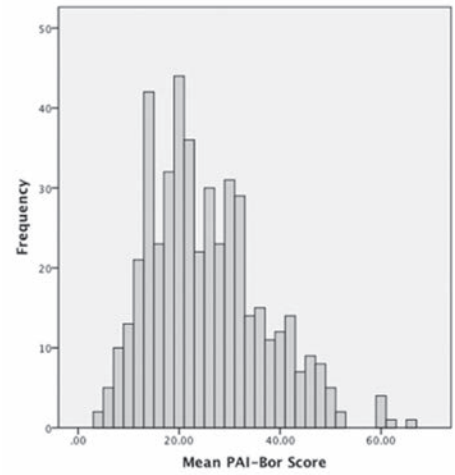
Summary of Pearson's Correlation between BPD and Religious Quest and Religious Engagement (N = 466)

	Religious Quest	Religious Engagement
1. BPD Overall	.188**	-.027
2. BPD-AI	.201**	-.060
3. BPD-IP	.147**	-.070
4. BPD-NR	.117**	.016
5. BPD-SH	.113**	.034

Note. ** = $p <$ .005. BPD = borderline personality disorder, AI = affective instability, IP = identity problems, NR = negative relationships, SH = self-harm/impulsivity

Figure 1

Mean PAI-BOR Scores



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A Pilot Study to Develop & Validate the Social Worker's Integration of their Faith — Christian (SWIF-C) Scale

Holly K. Oxhandler, Rick Chamiec-Case, & Terry A. Wolfer

Recent studies have demonstrated that social workers' intrinsic religiosity is the largest predictor of whether they integrate clients' religion/spirituality in practice. However, to date, no instrument has been developed to begin to understand the complex relationship between how a social worker's faith impacts their social work practice and vice versa, especially among social workers who self-identify as Christian. Thus, this paper describes the development of the Social Worker's Integration of their Faith – Christian (SWIF-C) scale to explore the following: 1) Does the SWIF-C have content and criterion validity? 2) Can the SWIF-C be condensed into fewer subscales to explain factors related to practitioners' integration of their own religion, spirituality, and faith (RSF) into practice? The results indicated the SWIF-C is reliable and an exploratory factor analysis resulted in four subscales, including the: 1) impact of social work on one's faith, 2) impact of faith on one's social work practice, 3) impact of faith on one's social work identity, and 4) conflict between one's faith and social work. Based on these findings, implications and recommendations for social work education and practice are discussed.

Over the past few decades, there has been considerable attention focused on religion, spiritualty, and faith (RSF) within the social work profession (Furman, Zahl, Benson, & Canda, 2007; Hodge, 2008; Oxhandler, Parrish, Torres, & Achenbaum, 2015; Scales & Kelly, 2016; Sheridan, 2012; Williams & Smolak, 2007). There are good reasons for this attention, including: a) significant spiritual and religious questions, issues, and experiences sometimes emerge during the helping process, and need to be addressed sensitively and competently as affirmed in the *National Association of Social Worker's (NASW) Standards for Cultural*

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Competence in Social Work Practice (NASW, 2001); b) NASW's (2017) *Code of Ethics* mandates that practitioners recognize clients' religion as an element of diversity and not discriminate on that basis; c) many clients want care providers to respectfully consider how their religious or spiritual beliefs relate to their treatment goals (Harris, Randolf, & Gordon, 2016; Oxhandler, Ellor, & Stanford, 2018); d) spiritual and religious interventions contribute to valued health and mental health outcomes (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012); and e) clients may lean on their RSF to cope – either positively or negatively – with life's challenges (Furman, Benson, & Canda, 2011; Pargament, 2007).

For the most part, attention to RSF in social work literature has focused on the RSF of clients (Oxhandler et al., 2015) rather than social workers' RSF, or how supportive or inclusive various graduate programs are toward the topic of RSF (e.g., Dudley & Helfgott, 1990; Hodge, 2007; Sheridan, Wilmer, & Atcheson, 1994). For example, most of the scales developed for exploring and evaluating the role and impact of spirituality in social work and related helping professions have focused primarily on clients and client interventions (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014; 2018). Within social work, these scales have included the Role of Religion and Spirituality in Practice Scale (Sheridan, Bullis, Adcock, Berlin, & Miller, 1992), the Religion and Prayer in Practice Scale (Mattison, Jayaratne, & Croxton, 2000), the Spiritually Derived Intervention Checklist (Canda & Furman, 2010), and the Religious/Spiritually Integrated Practice Assessment Scale (Oxhandler & Parrish, 2016). Given that the focus in social work literature has been on the RSF of clients, with limited attention to the RSF of social workers, it is not surprising that the currently available instruments measuring RSF within social work practice largely focus on the integration of clients' RSF (e.g., Canda & Furman, 2010; Oxhandler et al., 2015; Pargament, Feuille, & Burdzy, 2011).

Yet, while a strong focus on clients' RSF is critical for developing effective, spiritually-sensitive practice, there are also important reasons to explore the RSF of *social workers*. First, for many social workers, their RSF is a powerful asset that may inform, motivate, and provide resilience in their practice and sense of vocation (Larsen & Rinkel, 2016; Singletary, 2005). This line of thought comports well with a growing recognition in many fields and types of work that people's "religious faith should inform and impact their life at work" (Russell, 2007, p. 72).

Second, in the same way social workers recognize RSF is a core part of clients' identities (NASW, 2017), the same is true for many social workers' identities, and is not something that can simply be ignored when they practice social work. As a result, attempting to bracket their faith at work may feel forced, inauthentic, and/or lead to an unsatisfying and unproductive disconnect between their personal and professional selves

(Hughes, 2005, p. 97). The question is not so much *whether* the social worker's RSF interacts with their social work practice, but rather how *thoughtfully, competently, and ethically* they handle these interactions. Effective integration enables practitioners to be more authentic and whole as they seek to bring together two vitally important aspects of their lives. Thus, practitioners are more likely to find their work satisfying and meaningful (Alford & Naughton, 2001; Conger, 1994; Fairholm, 1996, 1998), often leading to increased productivity, motivation (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), job satisfaction and commitment (Milliman, Czaplewski, & Ferguson, 2003), as well as overall improved work performance and more ethical behavior (Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Maglitta, 1996).

Third, a recent study found that the variable most significantly related to and predictive of a national sample of clinical social workers' views and behaviors toward addressing clients' spirituality and religion in clinical practice was the social workers' intrinsic religiosity (Oxhandler et al., 2015), or a deep desire to live out one's religious/spiritual beliefs. Further, when asked an open-ended question--what helps clinical social workers integrate clients' religion and spirituality in practice? — 44% mentioned their personal religiosity, including their own religious/spiritual journey, belief system, and practices (Oxhandler & Giardina, 2017). Additionally, *Namaste Theory* (Oxhandler, 2017) highlights this important role of the practitioners' faith after examining not only what supports the integration of clients' RSF among social workers and related helping professions. As a result, it is important to more fully explore social workers' intrinsic religiosity and how this relates to their understanding and practice of social work, including their attention to clients' RSF (Oxhandler, 2017; Oxhandler et al., 2015), especially when social workers' RSF beliefs and practices largely differ from the clients they serve (Oxhandler, Polson, & Achenbaum, 2018). .

Approaches to the Integration of RSF in the Literature

Chamiec-Case (2016) outlines three broad categories for organizing various approaches to integrating Christian RSF and social work. The first category — *The Effect of Integration on the Christian Social Worker's Motivation and Character/Identity Formation* — includes integration approaches that describe how the RSF of Christians in social work affects the development and strengthening of their personal identity, character, inner strength and motivation that impact the way they understand and practice social work. Example approaches in this category include: a) the calling model of integration, in which RSF informs, confirms, or clarifies an individual's choice of and commitment to the vocation of social work as a career (Hugen, 2016), or reciprocally, in which social work contributes to a person's call to a life

of faith (Keith-Lucas, ca. 1980); and b) the virtues model of integration, in which the interaction of RSF and social work potentially contributes to the formation of the identity and character of Christians in social work, and may have a beneficial impact on their provision of social work practice (Costello, 2013), as well as on their life of faith. In sum, these approaches emphasize integration's impact on the social worker's character/identity formation.

The second category — *The Effect of Integration on the Understanding of Faith and of Social Work* — includes integration approaches that describe how RSF affects the way Christians in social work understand social work theory and practice, as well as how social work affects the way they understand their Christian faith. Example approaches in this category include several different cognitive strategies employed to bring RSF and social work together that affects the way Christians in social work understand social work (Vanderwoerd, 2012) as well as their faith (Brenden & Shank, 2012). In sum, these approaches emphasize cognitive aspects of integration.

The third category — *The Effect of Integration on the Practice of Faith and Social Work* — includes integration approaches that describe how RSF affects the way Christians in social work carry out social work practice, as well as how social work affects the way they practice or live out their Christian faith. Example approaches in this category include: a) the excellence and integrity model of integration, in which the RSF of Christians in social work motivates their efforts to deliver the highest-quality of services possible primarily because their ultimate goal in their work is to honor God and meet God's standards (Brandsen & Hugen, 2007); and b) the intrapersonal model of integration, in which the engagement of Christians in social work in one or more spiritual practices or disciplines (e.g., prayer, meditation, reflecting on religious readings) helps them focus and prepare for their work (Walker, Gorsuch, & Siang-Yang, 2004). In sum, these approaches emphasize applied or behavioral aspects of integration.

While these three categories view approaches to integrating RSF and social work as primarily positive and synergistic, it is possible that some social workers may experience conflict between their Christian RSF with their social work practice (Dessel, Bolen, & Shepardson, 2011; Ressler, 1998). Thus, it is important to recognize that integrating Christian RSF has the potential to be a complex process and any attempts to study the RSF of social workers should be sensitive to both the potential positive/synergistic effects of integrating Christian RSF and social work, as well as tensions that may exist between the two.

In order to understand, evaluate, critique, and enhance the contribution of the social workers' RSF to ethical, spiritually and religiously sensitive social work practice, it is important to develop

instruments that measure whether, how, and to what extent social workers integrate their own RSF in their practice. Given that the largest proportion of U.S. social work practitioners self-identify as Christians over any other faith tradition — ranging from 38% (Oxhandler & Ellor, 2017) to 57% (Furman et al., 2011) — this initial research effort will focus on gaining a greater understanding of the influence social workers' RSF has among those who self-identify as Christian. Thus, the Social Worker's Integration of their Faith — Christian (SWIF-C) was developed to address this gap and explore the following research questions: 1) Does the SWIF-C have content and criterion validity?; 2) Can responses to SWIF-C be condensed into fewer subscales to explain factors related to practitioners' integration of their own RSF into practice?

Scale Development

The initial development of SWIF-C consisted of 43 items, developed by the authors and measured using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Based on the second author's previous work (Chamiec-Case, 2009; 2016), the instrument was developed to capture elements related to how the integration of Christian social workers' personal faith and their social work practice effects 1) their motivation and character formation, 2) their understanding of faith and social work, 3) their practice of faith and social work, and 4) the degree to which tension emerges during such integration. To assess for potential acquiescent response bias, eight items were negatively worded and reverse scored.

The scale was initially conceptualized based on our interactions with Christian social workers, especially the second author, who has been the Executive Director of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) for more than 20 years. Additionally, the scale was based on previous literature regarding Christian social workers' integration of RSF (Brandsen & Hugen, 2007; Brenden & Shank, 2012; Costelly, 2013; Furman et al, 2007; Hodge, 2011; Hugen, 2008; Keith-Lucas, 1980; Sherwood, 2008; Wolfer, 2011), and the first author's previous research indicating that intrinsic religiosity predicts the integration of clients' RSF (Oxhandler et al., 2015). The content areas were discussed with colleagues in an initial review phase and feedback was provided on the instrument at various stages of its development. The questions were piloted and evaluated for length, flow, and to establish content validity from subject matter experts, including David Sherwood, Diana Garland, Joe Kuilema, Luis Torres, and Gaynor Yancey. Additional roundtable and email feedback was sought from 2014 NACSW convention attendees who self-identified as both a social worker and Christian. Finally, Allen Rubin's expertise with quantitative research methods and social work

practice helped us articulate the integration tension items (Rubin & Babbie, 2017). Following this review phase, the authors met to review, refine, and finalize the survey items.

Method

Sample

Baylor University's Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved this study. The study population was recruited entirely of current and recent NACSW members with an active email address, given its potential to obtain a sufficient sample size for the factor analysis and for its feasibility to email a large number of social workers that likely self-identified as Christian. In addition to the newly developed instrument being included in this online survey, 23 demographic and background items and three open-ended items were also included.

Data Collection

A modified version of Dillman, Smyth, and Christian's (2015) tailored survey methods served as a framework for recruiting participants to complete this anonymous, online survey. Current and recent NACSW members received: 1) a pre-invitation email informing them of the study (day 1); 2) an invitation to participate with a link to the Qualtrics survey (day 6); 3) a follow up (day 20); 4) another follow-up (day 34); and 5) a final follow-up email that included a link to a "non-response survey" to assess non-response bias (day 48). Each email included a description of the study, investigators' and institutional review board's contact information, a link to participate (except for the pre-invitation email), and the possibility to enter to win one of five $25 gift cards to NACSW's online store. Of the original 2,305 listed in NACSW's database of current and recent (within two years) members with email addresses, 2,115 were included in the original sampling frame. Due to bounce back emails, the final sampling frame consisted of 2,057 individuals who received access to participate in the survey. There were 486 respondents to the survey, yielding a 23.6% response rate.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, missing data, and the assumptions for an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were assessed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 23. Internal consistency reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's α. Criterion validity, or how an external, related criterion predicts the variable of interest

(e.g., scale scores), was assessed by running Spearman's ϱ correlations between subscale and overall scale scores and two items from the General Social Survey (GSS) that measure the extent to which one views him/herself as religious or spiritual (Smith, Marsden, Hout, & Kim, 2014), as well as two items to measure organized and non-organized religious activity from the Duke University Religious Index (DUREL; Koenig & Büssing, 2010). Criterion validity was also assessed running Pearson's r correlations between the new subscale and overall scale scores and the three-item DUREL intrinsic religiosity subscale. Our rationale was that if practitioners considered RS to be important in their lives, more frequently engaged in religious activities and had higher levels of intrinsic religiosity, then they would be more likely to hold favorable views toward integrating their Christian faith and social work.

To answer the second research question, an EFA was conducted to see whether, based on the responses from this sample, the SWIF-C could be condensed into fewer subscales. We examined the EFA's Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity to test the appropriateness of the factor analysis, the number of factors with an eigenvalue above 1, and set our item-loading cutoff to be .45, which is considered fair by Comrey and Lee (1992). Further, we used Howard's (2016) recommendation to retain variables that load above .40 (though we chose .45 based on Comrey and Lee, 1992), load onto other factors below .30, and demonstrate at least a .20 difference in loading on multiple factors.

Results

A total of 486 persons responded to the survey; however, 19 were not current or recent members of NACSW, 21 indicated they now lived outside of the US, 73 had less than half of the instrument complete, and one person had more than one of these disqualifiers. Therefore, the total sample for this analysis was 376, and the sample's demographics and characteristics are reported in Table 1. Most participants were female (266, 70.9%) and white (307, 81.6%), and were between 19 to 88 years old (M = 51.57, SD = 13.58). Most had master's degrees (226, 61.6%) and reported between 0 and 60 years in social work practice (M = 22.14, SD = 14.34), primarily working in a religiously-affiliated agency (194, 54.2%). Regarding their religious affiliation, the largest group of respondents indicated they were non-denominational Christian (102, 27.6%), and had been a Christian between 4 and 77 years (M = 40.25, SD = 15.37).

SPSS 23.0 was used to assess for missing data on the 376 respondents in this sample. To test whether data were missing completely at random (MCAR) or missing at random (MAR), Little's MCAR test was run. Indeed, data were not MCAR (X2 = 1395.45, df = 1,299, p = .031), though percent-

ages ranged from 0 to 2.1%, which is well within Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommended cutoff of 5%. Therefore, independent samples t-tests explored whether any differences emerged among those with and without missing data regarding age, length of time as a social worker, and extent to which the respondent self-identified as religious or spiritual. The results indicated no difference between these groups. Additionally, chi-square tests of independence explored whether differences existed between the two groups regarding gender, race/ethnicity, education, or region, and similarly found no differences. Thus, the data were considered to be MAR.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

After reverse scoring the appropriate items, an exploratory principal components factor analysis (EFA) using listwise deletion was run with all 43 items, with the appropriate items reverse-coded (see Table 2). Both KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity supported the appropriateness of the factor analysis (KMO = .85; Bartlett's X2 = 5643.64, $p < .001$). At first, there were 10 factors with an eigenvalue above 1, with 16 of the items loading on the first factor above .45, which Comrey and Lee (1992) consider a fair loading. Upon closer inspection of the items within each of the 10 factors, the 10 factors did not make theoretical sense to retain. Therefore, we tested the analysis with four fixed factors, hypothesizing four factors to emerge that reflect the four elements described above under Scale Development. However, these results suggested again the same 16 items were loading on factor 1, with three other factors containing only one or a few items with low loadings that similarly did not make theoretical sense to retain when examined. We then utilized oblique and orthogonal rotations and discovered that the use of a varimax rotation (orthogonal) resulted in four factors emerging that made theoretical sense. These four factors included: 1) Impact of Social Work on One's Faith, 2) Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Practice, 3) Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Identity, and 4) Conflict between One's Faith and Social Work. The individual items and their factor loadings are in Table 2.

To explore whether a second-order factor existed, in which these four factors would together measure an overarching construct, an exploratory factor analysis was run using the four subscales as variables. A total subscale score was calculated for each of the subscales, with the appropriate items reverse coded. KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity suggests the sample's data does not have an adequate fit for a second-order factor, so we do not assume that an overarching construct exists across the four subscales, and that these should be considered distinct (KMO = .47; Bartlett's X2 = 94.70, $p < .001$).

Internal Consistency

Finally, we tested the reliability of each factor using Cronbach's alpha, which ranged from .75 to .89 (Table 3). The entire 26-item scale's Cronbach's alpha was .83, which according to Kline (2016), is considered very good. However, given that the results do not suggest an overall construct, we are cautious in our interpretation of this.

Criterion Validity

To assess the subscales' criterion validity, we explored relationships between the subscales and practitioners' intrinsic religiosity, religious activity, and how religious/spiritual they view themselves using pairwise deletion. As shown in Table 4, relationships between these items and the Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Practice and Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Identity were all positive and significant. Regarding the Impact of Social Work on One's Faith, there were no significant relationships. The Conflict between One's Faith and Social Work score was computed as-is for examining the subscale score, such that, higher scores indicated greater conflict; two of the criterion validity items were significantly related in a positive direction (extent of being a religious person and frequency of attending church or religious meetings). Based on our assumption that higher levels of spirituality/religiosity would result in more positive views around integrating faith and social work practice, the criterion validity was supported given the relationship with these items to the first three subscale scores.

The number of years as a practicing social worker or Christian were not originally considered for criterion validity, and post-hoc Pearson correlations showed there was no relationship between these variables and any of the subscales, with the exception of Conflict Between One's Faith and Social Work. This factor had an inverse relationship with years as a social worker ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$) and years as a Christian ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

This project represents an initial effort to distinguish and measure variation in Christian social workers' integration of their RSF and their social work practice. More specifically, it explored connections between RSF and professional practice in social worker identity, thinking, and behavior, and as a potential source of conflict. The findings from this study report the reliability, criterion validity, and initial factor structure of the SWIF-C — the first assessment tool to our knowledge to measure the integration of social work practitioners' integration of their own faith

in their social work practice. There are also some noteworthy findings from this study worth discussing.

First, as a standardized measure, the instrument has the ability to assess the complexities related to integrating the practitioners' RSF in practice. Early in scale development, we anticipated the scale would include four aspects of integration: motivation and character formation; understanding of faith and social work integration; practice of integration; and tension and conflict. In contrast, the final scale included these sub-scales: 1) impact of social work on one's faith, 2) impact of faith on one's social work practice, 3) impact of faith on one's social work identity, and 4) conflict between one's faith and social work. *Impact of faith on social work identity* appears to overlap a bit with the originally hypothesized motivation and character formulation. Although we originally focused on cognitive and behavioral aspects of social workers' integrative efforts, the data did not distinguish these two categories but, instead, emphasized the direction of influence: social work on faith or faith on social work. Perhaps participants resisted separating thought and action because the two are so deeply intertwined within the internal push and pull of integrative efforts. Finally, the data did support a subscale for tension in integration.

Because the results demonstrated promising reliability and validity for this instrument, we can envision a variety of possible uses for it. For example, instructors could use it as a pre- and post-test to assess elements of students' integration of their faith and practice and change in integration over time. Likewise, social work practitioners, especially in religiously-affiliated agencies, may use it to self-assess and become mindful of their own methods for integrating RSF with their social work practice. Further, in both classrooms and field settings, the scale could be used to stimulate conversation and self-awareness among students. Administrators in these settings may also wish to use the SWIF-C with staff members for similar reasons or to assess opportunities for training.

Though our primary focus was on the development of the SWIF-C, other interesting findings also emerged. First, it may not be surprising, especially given the sampling frame, but it is nevertheless worth noting that a large portion of the sample reportedly integrate their RSF and practice as demonstrated by the high scores on each of the subscales. Although other studies have found that most social workers believe they are not prepared for handling religion and spirituality in professional practice (e.g., Oxhandler et al., 2015; Canda & Furman, 2010), for the current study's sample of social workers, RSF was an important influence on, or an element of, their thought and behavior related to their social work practice. However, it is also possible that respondents in this sample who graduated from programs in religiously-affiliated colleges and universities may have received more training for handling their RSF in practice. Even for these

participants, the survey raises questions about how social work education can best prepare social workers to integrate their RSF without imposing it on clients and colleagues.

Second, the participants' intrinsic religiosity, as measured by the three-item DUREL intrinsic religiosity subscale (Koenig & Büssing, 2010), was the biggest predictor of their impact of faith on their social work practice and social work identity scores as we explored criterion validity. This is consistent with previous research which indicates that intrinsic religiosity best predicts social workers' integration of their *clients'* RSF in practice (Oxhandler et al., 2015). Because RSF is so deeply woven into one's identity and practice, these social workers cannot eliminate or ignore it. Further, this is not only evident in social work but also in other helping professions (Oxhandler, 2017). As such, it is another element of diversity worth exploring and understanding.

Though this study has a number of strengths, it also has several limitations. The sample was drawn exclusively from NACSW, excluding social workers who identify as Christian but are not current or recent members of the association. Thus, despite the existence of denominational diversity within NACSW, with the majority of members belonging to one of 65 Christian denominations, the sample may not reflect the experience and attitudes of all social workers who identify as Christian and who seek to integrate their faith and social work practice. Further, the respondents differed somewhat from overall NACSW and NASW membership, with higher percentages in our sample identifying as white, male, and having an MSW than active social workers across the United States (George Washington University Health Workforce Institute and School of Nursing, 2017).

As a result, some perspectives may be over-represented or under-represented in these findings. For example, there may be cohort effects due to increasing age/life/professional experience, generation, or continued membership in NACSW. Likewise, there may be self-selection effects for employment in religiously-affiliated settings which may provide increased freedom, attention, and incentive for integrating one's Christian faith and social work practice. Though this percentage is likely small, there is also the risk of the contact emails going into the potential participants' junk or clutter inboxes, limiting some potential participants' ability to participate. Finally, the EFA did not demonstrate an adequate fit for an overarching, second-order factor that includes all four factors, thus, we caution future users to be mindful of this.

Building on this initial effort to develop a standardized measure of how Christians in social work integrate their RSF and social work practice, we make several recommendations for further research. First, we recommend identifying a larger, more diverse group to test the survey. With growing awareness and appreciation for particularity, scholars

could explore how differences between various Christian denominations contribute to the integration of Christian faith and social work. Likewise, it may be worth exploring the impact of organizational support (or lack thereof) regarding the integration of practitioners' RSF, similarly to supporting other elements of practitioners' diversity. This also raises questions about whether and how social workers' RSF integrative efforts in secular versus religiously-affiliated settings may change over time. Similarly, future studies could explore whether and how the types of work social workers engaged in (e.g., micro versus macro), social work roles, or the primary client population affects the integration of faith and practice. Additionally, future efforts could explore outcomes associated with the integration of RSF and social work practice, for both clients and social workers. It would be helpful to know, for example, whether and how RSF integration efforts contribute to treatment persistence and outcomes for clients or work persistence and burnout for social workers. Finally, we also recommend the use of qualitative methods to more deeply understand social workers' efforts to integrate their RSF and profession, including further examining Chamiec-Case's (2016) 17 conceptual models for integration. Though Chamiec-Case's (2016) models were used to assist in generating items, the final EFA resulted in four factors. Thus, other ways of integration may exist but require qualitative methods to identify.

Last, but certainly not least, our effort also highlights the need for scholars to develop alternative measures for use with social workers from other religious traditions (e.g., Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu). Such measures may be revised versions of the current measure or, more likely, would need to be developed from the ground up to adequately represent the language, perspectives, and approaches characteristics of the particular religious tradition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this pilot study offers the initial reliability and validity of the SWIF-C instrument to measure a social worker's integration of their own personal Christian RSF and their social work practice. Specifically, the SWIF-C appears to measure 1) the impact of social work on one's faith, 2) the impact of faith on one's social work practice, 3) the impact of one's faith on social work identity, and 4) the conflict between one's faith and social work. It is important that future studies with various samples further refine this instrument and build upon its reliability and validity. Our hope is that this scale is used in professional and educational settings to better understand social workers' RSF integration, rather than ignore its occurrence in practice. We also hope that those who utilize this instrument will disseminate their findings, as well. ❖

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Table 1

Sample Characteristics & Background Variables for Sample (N=376[a])

	M	SD
Age (n=375)	51.57	13.58
Years as Social Worker (n=358)	22.14	14.34
Years as Christian (n=365)	40.25	15.37
	n	%
Gender Identity (n=375)		
Female	266	70.9
Male	109	29.1
Ethnicity (n=376)		
Caucasian/White	307	81.6
African American	42	11.2
Hispanic	10	2.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	1.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	.5
Other	8	2.1
Region (n=376)		
Northeast	60	16.0
Midwest	123	32.7
South	143	38.0
West	50	13.3
Education (n=367)		
Bachelors	25	6.8
Masters	226	61.6
Doctorate	110	30.0
Other	6	1.6
Agency Setting (n=358)		
Religiously-affiliated	194	52.4
Secular-private	86	24.0
Secular-public	78	21.8
NACSW member (n=376)		
Current	320	85.1

Table 1 continued

	M	SD
Age (n=375)	51.57	13.58
Years as Social Worker (n=358)	22.14	14.34
Years as Christian (n=365)	40.25	15.37
	n	%
Christian Affiliation (n=370)		
Non-denominational	102	27.6
Baptist	69	18.6
Catholic	20	5.4
Presbyterian	20	5.4
Reformed	19	5.1
Methodist	18	4.9
Other[b]	122	33.0

Note. [a] Total number of respondents with at least half of the instrument complete, who lived in the US, and who were at least an NACSW member within the last two years. [b] Other Christian denominations included: Apostolic (5) Assemblies of God (6), Church of Christ (9), Evangelical (9), Lutheran (11), Mennonite (8), Mormon (1), Orthodox (1), Quaker (3), No affiliation (3), Seventh Day Adventist (11), Episcopal (13), Pentecostal (8), Nazarene (7). Forty-seven others provided detailed explanations that did not fit a category.

Table 2

Summary of Four Main Loadings for the First-Order Exploratory Factor Analysis for the Social Worker's Integration of their Faith – Christian Scale

			EFA Loadings			
	Items	h2	f1	f2	f3	f4
1	My faith played an important role in my decision to become a social worker.	.209			.437	
2	My faith supports my on-going commitment to being a social worker.	.636			.763	
3	My faith strengthens me as a social worker.	.788			.874	
4	My faith helps me cope with personal challenges as a social worker.	.694			.810	
5	Exercising Christian virtues (e.g., faith, hope, and love) strengthens me as a social worker.	.670			.804	

Table 2 continued

		EFA Loadings				
	Items	h2	f1	f2	f3	f4
6	I do not seek ways to exercise Christian virtues (e.g., faith, hope, and love) as a social worker.***	.213		.444		
7	Observing significant progress in my clients' lives leads me to experience a sense of awe and wonder.	.255		.329	.304	
8	My experience as a social worker strengthens me as a Christian.	.504	.486		.458	
9	Being a social worker supports my on-going commitment to being a Christian.	.548	.592		.381	
10	Social work helps me to cope with challenges in the practice of my faith.	.506	.636			
11	I seek ways to exercise social work values in my faith.	.515	.673			
12	My faith affects my priorities as a social worker.	.354		.484	.320	
13	My faith does not deepen my understanding of social work.***	.432		.546		
14	My faith filters the social work theories/interventions I choose to embrace.	.466		.540		.394
15	My faith forms the foundation from which I build my understanding of social work.	.521		.677		
16	My faith provides insight into social work that I would not find in my other sources	.441		.641		
17	My understanding of social work does not affect how I prioritize different aspects of my faith.***	.360	.593			
18	Social work deepens my understanding of faith.	.663	.798			
19	Social work provides valuable insight into my faith that I would not be able to find within my faith tradition alone.	.599	.751			
20	Social work filters the faith beliefs and practices I choose to embrace.	.497	.657			

Table 2 continued

		EFA Loadings				
	Items	h2	f1	f2	f3	f4
21	What I learn from my faith and my experience as a social worker are only applicable within their original context.***	.172				
22	Insights from my faith and my social work inform one another.	.457	.600			
23	My faith motivates me to deliver high quality social work services.	.370		.553		
24	Engaging in social work practice is an important way of living out my faith.	.330	.378			
25	Learning about Christians who serve others effectively does not inspire me be a better social worker.***	.233		.436		
26	Understanding my faith helps me better understand my clients' spiritual belief systems.	.294		.482		
27	Modifying established social work interventions using spiritual principles is helpful in social work practice.	.405		.570		
28	Incorporating spiritual practices (e.g., use of prayer or Scripture) in social work practice is helpful for clients who desire this.	.424		.630		
29	My experience as a social worker motivates me to live out my faith more intentionally.	.465	.563			
30	Learning about social workers who serve others effectively does not inspire me to live out my faith more intentionally.***	.330	.402	.405		
31	My Christian faith discourages me from imposing my faith upon clients.	.225	.332			-.310
32	My Christian faith encourages me to influence my clients' spiritual belief systems. ***	.390				.543
33	My faith practices are shaped by my experience as a social worker.	.550	.738			
34	Incorporating social work techniques in my own life (e.g., conducting a spiritual assessment) is helpful to my faith.	.381	.590			
35	I help faith communities and social work communities work together to better help those in need.	.238	.407			

Table 2 continued

		EFA Loadings				
	Items	h2	f1	f2	f3	f4
36	My faith conflicts with the ethical requirements of social work.***	.508				.675
37	I do not have to justify my faith with my social work colleagues.	.138				-.369
38	I reinterpret my understanding of social work in order to avoid tension with my faith.***	.480				.661
39	Social work conflicts with the expectations of my faith.***	.579				.729
40	I do not have to justify being a social worker with other Christians.	.096				
41	I reinterpret my Christian beliefs in order to avoid tensions with social work.***	.440		-.364		.476
42	Being exposed to clients' stories of tragedy and injustice leads me to question my faith.***	.236		-.371		
43	There are conflicts between my experience as a Christian and my experience as a social worker.***	.470				.663

Note. EFA = exploratory factor analysis; F1 = Factor 1 (or 2, 3, 4); h2 = extracted EFA communalities; ***Indicates item was reverse scored. Items removed from the final scale include 1, 6–9, 12, 14, 21, 24, 25, 30, 31, 35, 37, 40–42.

Table 3

Coefficient α, Mean Score, and Standard Deviation for Each Subscale
(Based on Final 26-Item Social Worker's Integration of their Faith – Christian Scale)

Subscale (Number of Items, N)	Coefficient α	Mean Score	SD
Impact of SW on Faith (10, 363)	0.87	35.77	7.36
Impact of Faith on SW Practice (7, 373)	0.75	30.36	3.32
Impact of Faith on SW Identity (4, 368)	0.89	19.02	2.00
Conflict Between Faith and SW[a] (5, 364)	0.76	17.03	4.01

Note. SW = social work; Listwise deletion was utilized for this analysis.[a] Conflict scale data is reported with reverse coding. The mean without reverse scoring all items in the Conflict factor would be 12.97 (SD=4.01).

Table 4

Relationships Between Practitioner Religiosity and Spirituality and Summated Scores on the Final EFA Model of the Social Worker's Integration of their Faith — Christian Scale

	Impact of SW on Faith (N)	Impact of Faith on SW Practice (N)	Impact of Faith on SW Identity (N)	Conflict Between Faith and SW (N)[c]
To what extent do you consider. yourself a spiritual person? [a]	.02 (p=.67) (355)	.24** (365)	.22** (360)	.05 (p=.39) (360)
To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person? [a]	-.02 (p=.77) (354)	.21** (364)	.16** (359)	.13* (359)
How often do you attend church or or other religious meetings? (ORA) [a]	-.05 (p=.40) (351)	.24** (361)	.17** (356)	.15** (356)
How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study? (NORA) [a]	-.09 (p=.10) (357)	.24** (367)	.25** (362)	.10 (p=.07) (362)
DUREL Intrinsic Religiosity [b]	.92 (p=.08) (355)	.41** (365)	.39** (361)	.02 (p=.70) (360)
Years as a social worker [b]	.09 (p=.09) (347)	-.05 (p=.38) (356)	.05 (p=.32) (351)	-.11* (352)
Years as a Christian [b]	.08 (p=.16) (354)	-.07 (p=.21) (363)	.05 (p=.38) (359)	-.13* (358)

Note. *p values are significant at the .05 level; **p values are significant at the .01 level; [a] Spearman's rho correlation; [b] Pearson's r correlation; [c] Conflict scale data are reported here without reverse coding, meaning higher scores would indicate higher levels of conflict. SW = social work

Social Worker's Integration of their Faith – Christian (SWIF-C) Scale

(Developed by Oxhandler, Chamiec-Case, & Wolfer, 2019)

The purpose of this scale is to assess your views regarding the integration of **your personal Christian faith** and **your personal social work practice.**

Definitions to guide the interpretation of scale items include:

1. *social work* is "the professional application of social work values, principles, and techniques to one or more of the following ends: helping people obtain tangible services; counseling and psychotherapy with individuals, families, and groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services; and participating in legislative processes. The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behavior; of social and economic, and cultural institutions; and of the interaction of all these factors." (NASW, n.d.) *We intend to include what you believe, value, think, and do as a social worker.*

2. *Christian faith* is "recognizing and accepting God's grace [revealed through Jesus Christ], which gives rise to a way of life—a way of believing, trusting, committing, and orienting all one's thoughts and actions" (Dykstra, 1999, p. 17-18). *We intend to include what you believe, value, think, and do as a Christian.*

Please follow the instructions. All responses are anonymous; please answer each item according to how you really view the integration of your Christian faith with social work, even if you are unsure of your answer, have no opinion, or have had little to no experience with this.

Thank you for your time and willingness to share your thoughts and opinions on this area of your life! We are truly grateful and hope you enjoy the survey!

Please indicate the response that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the statements below.

Response Options based on Level of Agreement (see scoring instructions below):
Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

Section I. The Impact of Social Work on One's Faith

1. Social work helps me to cope with challenges in the practice of my faith.
2. I seek ways to exercise social work values in my faith.
3. Social work deepens my understanding of faith.
4. Social work provides valuable insight into my faith that I would not be able to find within my faith tradition alone.
5. Social work filters the faith beliefs and practices I choose to embrace.
6. Insights from my faith and my social work inform one another.
7. My experience as a social worker motivates me to live out my faith more intentionally.
8. My faith practices are shaped by my experience as a social worker.
9. Incorporating social work techniques in my own life (e.g., conducting a spiritual assessment) is helpful to my faith.
*10. My understanding of social work does not affect how I prioritize different aspects of my faith.

Section II. The Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Practice

1. My faith forms the foundation from which I build my understanding of social work.
2. My faith provides insight into social work that I would not find in my other sources
3. My faith motivates me to deliver high quality social work services.
4. Understanding my faith helps me better understand my clients' spiritual belief systems.
5. Modifying established social work interventions using spiritual principles is helpful in social work practice.
6. Incorporating spiritual practices (e.g., use of prayer or Scripture) in social work practice is helpful for clients who desire this.
*7. My faith does not deepen my understanding of social work.

Section III. The Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Identity

1. My faith supports my on-going commitment to being a social worker.
2. My faith strengthens me as a social worker.

3. My faith helps me cope with personal challenges as a social worker.
4. Exercising Christian virtues (e.g., faith, hope, and love) strengthens me as a social worker.

Section IV. Conflict between One's Faith and Social Work

1. My Christian faith encourages me to influence my clients' spiritual belief system.
2. Social work conflicts with the expectations of my faith.
3. My faith conflicts with the ethical requirements of social work.
4. There are conflicts between my experience as a Christian and as a social worker.
5. I reinterpret my understanding of social work in order to avoid tension with my faith.

Note. Scoring: Items noted with an asterisk above must first be reverse-scored, such that responses of 1=5, 2=4, 4=2, 5=1. Then, items within each subscale may be summed to obtain a respondent's score for that subscale. The scoring range for each section is as follows: Section 1: 10-50; Section 2: 7-35; Section 3: 4-20; Section 4: 5-25; Total Scale: 26-130. Higher scores for sections 1-3 and lower scores for section 4 indicate higher levels of integration of faith and social work practice.

The authors provide permission for others to use this scale for no charge but ask that items not be changed in any way and that the authors receive credit during administration of the instrument and publication of study findings.

Please contact holly_oxhandler@baylor.edu with any questions regarding this instrument, to receive a copy of the formatted template of the SWIF-C, or to inform the team of your use of the instrument.

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Key Words: social work; Christian; scale development; religion and spirituality; faith integration

Conceptualizing Jesuit Mission, University/ Community Partnerships, and Social Work Research: The REACH Center at Saint Louis University

Stephen McMillin

his article conceptualizes the mission of the REACH (Research on Equity in Action for Child Health) Center at Saint Louis University, a Catholic, Jesuit university's new initiative focused on building university/community partnerships to promote social innovation, health, and wellbeing in the local community. Below I review the history of conceptualizing Jesuit university mission since the historic Land O'Lakes meeting of 1967, discuss why university mission is seen as important for this center, offer a conceptual framework to guide how this research center creates and maintains university/community partnerships, and discuss implications for social work research endeavors in faith-and mission-rich contexts.

HALF A CENTURY AGO, REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME OF THE LARGEST Catholic universities in the United States, including university presidents, provosts, and Catholic bishops, met in July 1967 in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin at a retreat center owned by the University of Notre Dame. Meeting two years after the end of the Second Vatican Council and hosted by Fr. Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, the president of the University of Notre Dame, this group set about exploring how Catholic colleges and universities could and would participate in the renewal of the Church unleashed by Vatican II. At this meeting, Hesburgh and Paul Reinert, SJ, president of Saint Louis University, led the efforts to achieve institutional reforms that would separately incorporate universities from

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their sponsoring religious orders, so that independent boards of trustees composed of both religious and lay members would own and control the university (O'Brien, 1998).

Land O'Lakes' pioneering "Statement on the Nature of a Contemporary Catholic University" established three pillars of how Catholic universities typically function to this day. First, Catholic universities need the same academic freedom enjoyed by nonsectarian universities. Second, they need autonomy from ecclesiastical leaders in the form of independent boards of trustees. Third, they need a focus on academic updating and innovation that allows Catholic universities to remain contemporary and competitive with their non-Catholic peers (O'Brien, 1998; Russell, 2014).

By the 1990s, the Vatican responded to these developments with Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution on Catholic universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* ("From the heart of the Church"), which focused much of its attention on the visible Catholic identity of these universities. Initially, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* was viewed with skepticism and even anxiety by many academics, who feared it was an attempt to reassert ecclesiastical control (O'Brien, 1998; Russell, 2014; Russo & Gregory, 2007). However, Russo and Gregory (2007) highlight the slight requirements of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* 4.2, merely that, "All teachers and all administrators, at the time of their appointment, are to be informed about the Catholic identity of the Institution and its implications, and about their responsibility to promote, or at least to respect, that identity" (John Paul II, 1990). Russo and Gregory (2007) conclude that the only way to really use *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* to increase ecclesiastical control would be to place new requirements and restrictions in faculty contracts, which they note as an extraordinarily unlikely scenario in most Catholic universities.

But for all the furor over *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Russell (2014) notes that in the years following the promulgation of this papal document, Jesuit institutions experienced a renaissance of interest and attention being paid to the Catholic identity and Jesuit mission of their institutions. Russell notes that as Land O'Lakes accelerated lay control and involvement of Jesuit universities, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* accelerated Jesuit lay formation and education for mission among university faculty, students, and staff. Peter Ely, SJ, described this as a new "formation for cooperation in mission" (1999, p. 182), using the metaphor that like some adult children of immigrants who regret not learning the language of their parents and end up speaking it with an accent, many lay faculty and staff at Jesuit universities now treasure the distinctiveness of their institutions and are eager for continuing education and formation in mission.

Moreover, Russell (2014) points to another development in the renaissance of Jesuit mission awareness among lay faculty: the 2013 election and subsequent popularity of Pope Francis. A Jesuit himself and

the first pope who was ordained to the priesthood after the Second Vatican Council, after his election Pope Francis was represented across numerous Catholic college campuses with a flurry of stickers bearing his photo and the message, "This pope gives me hope." Sister Therese O'Rourke, IHM, (2014) suggests that these stickers speak to the hope of millions that the election of Pope Francis points to a new era of justice and balance, that the impulse to judge others in the midst of radical inequality will be confronted by a papal campaign to refocus the Church and church institutions on a social justice mission. Russell (2014) suggests that the example of Pope Francis points to an era of mission integration for Jesuit universities, in which they retain all the freedoms of Land O'Lakes but also remain unambiguously committed to mission, where "every member of the academic community will actively embrace the mission according to his or her conscience and spiritual tradition" (p. 8).

Living Jesuit University Mission Today

The Catholic religious orders of priests, brothers, and sisters that founded most Catholic universities in the United States are important sources of mission and meaning for many universities. Most Catholic religious orders that founded and sponsor universities do so as part of their χάρισμα—*charism*—the unique, special gift from the Holy Spirit they believe they have received and are called or charged to pay forward in their work. The term charism is also used to refer to specific gifts and distinctions that emerge from an institution's original foundation that make that institution unique today (Murphy, 2017). Many of these universities maintain offices for mission identity and effectiveness that are also tied to the charism and values systems of their founding religious orders.

Feldner (2006) highlights the importance of looking at Jesuit universities to understand how universities can frame and live their unique mission, because Jesuit universities are the most widely recognized brand of Catholic higher education and Jesuits are among the most active religious orders in actively supporting and disseminating practices that deepen mission integration in university life. Jesuit spirituality and pedagogy have also widely influenced non-Catholics, including Episcopalian (Alan, 2017) and Jewish groups (Michel, 2007; Ornstein, 2017, January 30). Founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1540, the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) founded institutions of higher education throughout the world, with 30 Jesuit colleges and universities currently in the United States (Society of Jesus, 2018). The Jesuit charism emphasizes an Ignatian vision of humanism—an extension of the cultural focus of Renaissance humanism with an openness to spirituality and transcendence (Modras, 2004). In his book *Ignatian Humanism,* Modras (2004) emphasizes that Ignatian humanism shares the

Renaissance focus on the freedom and dignity of the human person while always seeking a dynamic spirituality for the twenty-first century. Through reflecting on the meaning and experience of everyday life, the Ignatian humanist is empowered to take thoughtful, faithful action.

The Jesuit charism and mission has distinctive characteristics that are familiar to many stakeholders in Jesuit institutions, although the rich vocabulary of Ignatian theology and philosophy can be confusing even to these stakeholders (Nantais, 2015). McGinn (2015) notes that a Jesuit concept such as *cura personalis* (caring for the whole person) is really something any good teacher does and hardly distinctive of the Jesuit mission for all that *cura personalis* is certainly important to this mission. In 1973, Pedro Arrupe, SJ, the general superior of the Society of Jesus, famously called for a process of reeducation in Jesuit institutions so that alumni would be men for others, using their education with an outward focus that emphasized solidarity with the least in society.

Sociologist Jeff Guhin (2017, May 17) artfully traces how this concept of men-for-others has been extended over time. Men-for-others became a gender-inclusive persons-for-others, then persons-for-and-*with*-others to "better emphasize actual solidarity" (Guhin, 2017, May 17, p. 24) with the marginalized. However, Guhin (2017, May 17) noted that many have acknowledged that privileged, middle class students in Jesuit universities were probably not having the direct experiences "with" the marginalized that the word "with" suggested. Guhin (2017, May 17) concluded that stakeholders in Jesuit universities are in some ways condemned to privileges they have not earned and cannot redistribute, yet are still called to do their best to heal the brokenness of the world. This acknowledgement of unearned privilege alongside acknowledgement of a call to service to the underprivileged animates the Jesuit charism and mission in universities today.

From this insight, conceptualizing Jesuit mission to engage in community partnerships for research on social innovation, health, and wellbeing can be framed as less about claiming one aspect or aphorism from Jesuit lore and more a question of adopting a Jesuit way of proceeding. Barry and Doherty (2014) noted that the Jesuit "way of proceeding" is, in itself, a summary and emblem of Ignatian spirituality (p. 6). This insight also aligned well with previous approaches faculty had taken toward understanding how to live the Jesuit mission in our context today, approaches that could be summarized as putting Ignatian thought into everyday action through research and practice (Birkenmaier, 2003; McMillin, 2012).

To this end, I adopted the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) (International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, 1993) as a framework to guide community engagement for research on social innovation, health, and wellbeing. The IPP parallels the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a collection of contemplative practices and

approaches that seek to deepen one's relationship with God (O'Brien, 2015). Once typically offered as a 30-day silent retreat, the Spiritual Exercises have been adapted in numerous ways to help those interested in Jesuit spirituality to become contemplatives in action and deepen their relationship with God through the activities of everyday life (Barry & Doherty, 2014). In the IPP, the instructor takes the place of the retreat master, guiding and mentoring students in ways that empower students to be reflective and seek and use knowledge independently (Korth, 2008). This adapted framework also parallels the Spiritual Exercises, but with the research center in the place of the retreat master, guiding and mentoring other university faculty to pursue social justice through excellence in scholarship on social innovation, health, and wellbeing. The remainder of this article discusses what inspired the creation and early planning of a social innovation research center in a medium-sized, Midwestern Jesuit university, how the IPP was used to consider community engagement, and implications for social work practice and research in light of this endeavor.

Background and Purpose

In August 2014, researchers and practitioners in the local community learned that a multi-million-dollar federal grant to promote health and wellbeing in the local community would not be renewed (Liss, 2014 September 6). Many were shocked, especially since stakeholders had been anticipating not only renewal, but a significant increase to the grant because the renewal application added social work researchers and evaluators to the public health research team. These researchers began considering new ways to continue innovative research on health and wellbeing in the community in the absence of this grant, deciding to create a new research center that would engage community members and practitioners and offer structure to continue and expand community engagement.

This research center offered a political/structural solution that sought to make viable social and economic resources for this community more likely in due time. It would allow researchers to build new relationships and strengthen existing relationships with local practitioners and seek funding from mission-minded benefactors that would permit effective prevention and intervention initiatives to be evaluated and extended in the community. A series of monthly community meetings confirmed the interest of current faculty, practitioners, and service recipients, who committed to future meetings to inform the initial strategies of the center.

This endeavor also triggered in me a new examination of my personal commitment to, and understanding of, this mission. My social justice claims are rooted in three areas: Judaism, Catholic Social Thought, and the lived experience of my life in a Jesuit/Ignatian institution. From Judaism,

I took foundational concepts such as תוקית ולוע, *tikkun olam,* "the repair of the world," and הקדצ, *tzedakah,* "doing justice/doing righteousness." Repairing the world meant recognizing and never shying away from its brokenness, while doing righteousness meant recognizing that broken people in a broken world are owed justice, not charity. From Catholic Social Thought, I took core principles of subsidiarity and solidarity as well as the preferential option for the poor (McMillin, 2012). A broken world needs social justice efforts from both above and below, a scale grand enough to reach all (solidarity) without snuffing out innovation at the local level (subsidiarity), while focusing on the poor and marginalized further aims and targets the social justice effort. From the Jesuit experience, and especially the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, I took method, a way of proceeding that moves through context, experience, reflection, action and evaluation in daily life and scholarship.

For faculty, the IPP provides a familiar, basic approach and framework for this new endeavor, a grounding in the locality of teaching that serves as a secure base for the new challenge of community engagement and research in this center. Social justice claims inform conceptual frameworks by highlighting gaps that theory alone might miss, and these are often areas that make us uncomfortable. Therefore, each piece of the framework includes a "sign of the times," an uncomfortable, inconvenient truth that emerged around the high-minded language of mission and that also had to be accounted for in the model. On April 16, 1969, Pope Paul VI gave an address to his general audience, noting that the term "sign of the times" is used throughout the Vatican II documents primarily as a "portent of better conditions" (Paul VI, 1969, p. 1), and it is in this sense that I use the term—a current challenge that can lead to future flourishing.

Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation: An Ignatian Model for Mission

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm is often depicted as a wheel with five cogs: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. The cogs are distinct, but this process is iterative and recurring. These cogs provide what have been termed threshold concepts, concepts that are distinct from the core concepts of a topic or discipline but can help lead to linkages between disciplines or topics and open up new ways of understanding of troublesome knowledge—knowledge that is especially unfamiliar, foreign, or unexpected (Meyer & Land, 2003). James and Gibes (2017) innovatively embrace threshold concepts using Ignatian pedagogy, noting that many diverse subjects are taught using the IPP and that learners can use the IPP cogs and concepts recursively to go deeper into discipline-specific learning. It is in this spirit that the center seeks to share troublesome but

beneficial knowledge, using the IPP to go deeper into our own community while doing specialized research in areas of social work and public health.

Context

In beginning with context, the urban context of the university was the most salient. As Saskia Sassen (2005) suggested, under globalization, cities are increasingly strategic sites for social, cultural, economic, and political transformation. Because of this, urban universities engaged in social innovation and entrepreneurial strategies can be forces for good by creating and sharing resources such as our research center. In doing urban community engagement for this center, urban politics and governance also moved to the forefront. Ideally, the research center would be guided by positive engagement principles that emphasize negotiated civic involvement (James, 2014) rather than simply assuming or demanding that our neighbors engage with us in this work. Finally, it would be important to account for both urban growth and diminishment, understanding who lost and who won under regimes of urban renewal, revitalization, and repurposing (Florida, 2017).

The sign of the times that emerged here was the realization that in many contexts, both scholarly and popular, "urban" was a code word used to reference race and minority status obliquely and in passing, rather than openly and intentionally. Moreover, while "urban" also signaled class, poverty, and inequality of income, community engagement efforts for child health would also need to address inequality of wealth and opportunity, factors that could handicap the trajectories of the children of our city even more (Putnam, 2016). Finally, grappling with urban context meant grappling with a Rust Belt city that was a third of the size it had been half a century ago—but grappling from an Ignatian stance that accompanied diminishment of number without conceding that this had to mean mere decline. Moreover, this could even mean challenging passionate but inaccurate references to concepts such as gentrification when these technical terms were deployed in error (Freeman & Braconi, 2004). Jesuit Fr. Thomas Kenny's (2010) conceptualization of Ignatian cosmopolitanism—remaining firmly rooted in one's own city or home while seeking expansive experiences that allow one to serve the marginalized—captures the orientation to the urban that seemed most likely to serve community engagement for child health the best.

Experience

In terms of Ignatian experience for the research center, this pointed to the actual work of doing research on child health in the best way possible.

This meant drawing on theory, especially Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development as well as the social-ecological model of the social determinants of health (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, & Glanz, 1988) that impacted the lives of so many children. The experience of child health research meant attending to life course development and the turning points and trajectories children were experiencing (Elder, 1998) as well as paying attention to social expectations of the timing of development and life course transitions (Neugarten, 1979).

The sign of the times that emerged here was the realization that our experiences told us our child health research should always include broader research on mothers, fathers, caring adults, and family systems. Faculty decided that the traditional designation of "maternal and child health" left out too many other stakeholders, as traditional social work subfields such as child welfare would be studied in addition to maternal and child health topics. In discussing the roles of mothers and fathers, faculty also realized that child health should also include broader research on culturally sensitive parenting practices, supports, and policies, and that parenting would be an important focus for the center. Faculty also discussed whether child *health* was not an unnecessarily restrictive term, also realizing that child health research should include broader research on child and family wellbeing, social/emotional health, and resilience. Research on social innovation, health, and wellbeing that helped families with young children remains the goal of the center even when shorthand terms are used for convenience.

Reflection

Diagrams of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm typically place reflection at the middle of the model, but reflection is especially meant to be disseminated through every step of the model. Reflection on the development of Ignatian mission for community engagement to promote innovation, health, and wellbeing facilitated some sober reflection on just how little attention was typically paid to this cause and how little power community advocates tended to have in our region. My previous advocacy research (McMillin, 2014) emphasized the three faces of power identified in political science. The first face of power (Kingdon, 1995) assumed that power was broadly disseminated in democracies and that ordinary advocacy and political participation can influence outcomes, usually incrementally. However, controlling the policy agenda and keeping undesired items off the agenda can influence outcomes by shutting down debate before it has even begun, a second face of power that reduces the power of those off the agenda (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962). Finally, Lukes (1974) suggested that the power to manipulate others and get them to avoid undesirable issues,

to self-police and not make objections to the status quo, is a third face of power that could reduce the power of advocates even more.

The sign of the times that emerged here was the realization that different experiences of power generated different community engagement tasks for child health advocacy. On a mostly positive note, when power is widely diffused, it can motivate ordinary political participation in the policy process in ways that mean ordinary child health advocacy can be successful. However, even incremental successes can be a slow crawl toward inadequate and uncertain policy gains, as examples such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) suggest (Oberlander & Lyons, 2009). Moreover, mounting belief that status quo politics are a rigged system, combined with impending economic changes in globalization and artificial intelligence that could radically transform the economy, suggest further policy change and turbulence in the near future (Stiglitz, 2017). The three social justice traditions referenced earlier (Judaism, Catholic Social Thought, and Jesuit/Ignatian heritage) all share a common belief, namely that prophetic action is needed to speak truth to power. In this sense, even when the prospects for policy practice and advocacy on child health issues are not bright, community engagement efforts on behalf of child health can be framed (and committed to) as prophetic action. Specific areas where advocacy was needed in the community were immediately identified, such as expanding Medicaid coverage for pregnant women and new mothers in the community. Thanks to financial support provided by the March of Dimes, I provided research evidence which was successfully used for advocacy in the 99th Missouri General Assembly, where House Bill 2280 extending Medicaid coverage for substance abuse treatment funded by maternity Medicaid coverage from 60 days to one year was signed into law on June 1, 2018. This success confirmed the potential of the REACH Center to be a force for good and encouraged further research projects.

Action

In terms of Ignatian action for community engagement in child health research, this pointed to the actual work of doing community engagement for child health as well as possible. This meant drawing on theory, especially organizational systems theory, such as the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames through which Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest organizational life can be understood. Because community engagement for child health involves mobilizing stakeholders for a cause, social capital and social network theories that inform how and why people get involved in their community are also crucial (Coleman, 1988; Lin, 2001). Finally, action for community engagement also meant relying on evidence-informed practice to understand the level of empirical support

for different community engagement strategies and frameworks, especially how community outreach efforts can be sustainable and replicable (O'Mara-Eves et al., 2013).

The sign of the times that emerged here was the realization that, first, the efforts of our center were likely to be first geared toward working with organizations rather than individuals, building and participating in a community of organizations as well as building personal ties (Ryan, 2015). Second, as emphasized in much of the work of community engagement scholar Pamela Attree (Attree et al. 2011), specific strategies were likely to be needed to address specific social determinants of child health through community engagement efforts. Relatively large social and economic disparities require relatively large or area-based community engagement efforts, while engaging marginalized populations likely requires a one-on-one, personal approach, while empowering interest groups likely requires coalition-building (Milton, Attree, French, Povall, Whitehead, & Popay, 2011). These intricate variations of community engagement suggested that the center would need to thoughtfully focus its efforts and not become haphazard or overextended.

Evaluation

Finally, the evaluation piece of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm was especially resonant to this work. In this paradigm, evaluation is used to see how the people involved changed for the better, where stakeholders became more conscious, more empowered stakeholders, and where unmet needs may remain. Because the child health research center was so carefully thought out and scrutinized from the beginning, there were few fears or pressures that the center was racing the clock to receive large grants to support its work, since the whole premise of following this paradigm was to integrate thoughtful and reflective approaches into typical scholarship.

However, the sign of the times that emerged here was asking and answering an overarching evaluative question: do we see social innovation that mobilizes communities and organizations around social innovation, health, and wellbeing to improve quality of care and quality of life in our community? Social innovation has emerged as a frequently missing piece in social work's attempt to better integrate science and evidence-based practice. Flynn (2017) suggests that social work has much to contribute to social innovation and that social innovation can become as constitutive and integral to social work as research-based intervention has become. This became the key evaluative takeaway sign of the times that emerged for this work—that the ultimate evaluation goal was to trial and pilot new ways of engaging the community to explore what the community could do together for child health. If our community stakeholders are innovat-

ing and piloting new actions and movements on behalf of the health and wellbeing of our region, we count ourselves as successful whatever the fate of individual trials and studies.

Concluding Thoughts and Implications for Practice

This experience in representing social work to engage the community in an interdisciplinary health research center in a Jesuit university offers two important implications for social work practice. First, this endeavor provided an opportunity for social work and public health collaboration through transdisciplinary research and renewed attention to, and reflection on, the university's Jesuit mission. Second, this endeavor provided an opportunity and incentive to operationalize the social justice mission of the university and the school of social work in concrete ways that clearly and consistently focused on the social determinants of health that affect ordinary families and children every day.

The author and other stakeholders confronted the uniqueness of their context as the only Jesuit university with a school of public health and as one of only a few schools of social work where social work was fully joined to public health, meaning the social work programs were dually accredited by both the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH). Although the majority of social workers in the U.S. work in healthcare settings, very few consider themselves, or are considered by, others to be true public health social workers (Ruth & Sisco, 2008). Social workers are predominantly licensed health professionals providing direct care alongside psychologists, counselors, nurses, and physicians, while public health professionals typically analyze health at the community and/or population levels. Braun and colleagues (2017) note similarities between social work and public health as a support for merging these academic units and developing an interdisciplinary research center, but also point to differences in how social work and public health educational programs are accredited. Social work accredits individual degree programs, while public health accredits at the structural level as programs or entire academic units (Braun et al. 2017). This meant that to gain the more prestigious public health accreditation, the entire academic unit had to be accredited, subordinating social work to public health and mandating a public health survey course as part of the social work curriculum. In their critical review of the state of the social work academy, Stoesz, Karger, and Carrillio (2010) point to the decline of fully autonomous schools of social work as a potential threat to high quality social work education and mission (pp. 198-199).

Housing social work and public health in the same academic unit has been fraught with difficulty, but interdisciplinary research centers such as

the REACH Center discussed here offer a way to elevate the prestige and profile of social work in the academy while animating shared principles of Jesuit education. As higher education in Jesuit universities is increasingly reframed as occurring at ecclesial frontiers that share a religious heritage with a wide variety of new stakeholders (Heiding, 2012; O'Hanlon, 2013), an interdisciplinary focus on community engagement for child health has helped accelerate unity and focus on an academic level in our Jesuit university as well. This effort responds to the call for social work research to build new, interdisciplinary collaborations that confront "a thorny real-world problem and two different sets of actors" who join forces to generate and test innovative solutions for it (Rice, Petering, Stringfellow, & Craddock, 2017).

Social justice is one of the six core values of the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) *Code of Ethics* (approved 1996, revised 2017), and for many social workers it serves as a powerful and humanistic organizing principle for practice (McMillin, 2012). However, social justice must go beyond a bland, "helping people" shibboleth for the social work profession. As Moore and colleagues (2017) clearly emphasize, it is not enough for social work micro-level practice to be reflective and effective at advancing the social justice mission of the profession; it is also necessary for mezzo- and macro-level practice that effectively and reflectively assign individual roles and impact individual interactions across systems. Endeavors such as the center discussed here provide a way for social work research to move both within and beyond the traditional child welfare subfield in building knowledge and awareness of the social determinants of child health and population health. This center also provided a way for faculty from a plethora of religious and spiritual backgrounds to connect their professional values with the mission and vision of a Catholic university in a way easily compatible with individual religious and spiritual beliefs, in the best tradition of the renaissance of Jesuit mission in higher education since Vatican II and Land O'Lakes (Russell, 2014).

As Hawkins and colleagues (2015) emphasize, ensuring the healthy development of all youth is a grand challenge for social work that uplifts social justice and emphasizes fundamental requirements for social justice in everyday life. The REACH Center has been a powerful way for two diverse academic fields in a Jesuit university to animate new spirit and energy in faculty across disciplines, extending a religious and spiritual mission into a pluralistic community in ways that magnify and reinforce social work values. Future community and research collaborations between social work and other disciplines, such as public health, should attend to, and analyze university faith traditions that offer exciting possibilities to extend the frontiers of collaboration for social justice and excellence in scholarship. ❖

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Keywords: Faith-based mission, Jesuit, Society of Jesus, university/community partnership, social work research, social innovation

The Myth of Equality: Uncovering the Roots of Injustice and Privilege

Ken Wytsma. (2017) Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Is privilege real or imagined? Wytsma, a White male, is the founder of The Justice Conference, lead pastor of Global Ministries at Antioch Church, and a professor at Kilms College. He makes a bold claim that the root of injustice and inequality stems from a misunderstanding of the gospel and the relationship between privilege and equality. This work is a must-read for those who have a gospel background and who want a deeper understanding on the issues of race and equality that hinder our nation today.

Wytsma's work is comprised of eleven chapters grouped into three parts, covering the story of race, equality and the kingdom of God, and the challenge of privilege. The book is written in a way that is easy to read, but does include some complex vocabulary and over 200 footnotes. The content of the book draws on the author's personal experience of privilege. His father was an immigrant who assimilated easily into American culture because he was a White male.

The first chapter discusses immigration and how it is linked to the larger idea that White culture is superior to all other cultures. This was first apparent, in chapter two, when Europeans came to America. Native Americans were marginalized, identified as other, and eventually enslaved when they refused to recognize the authority of the Christian church. Even after the creation of the U.S., policies privileging Whites over Native Americans in relation to land ownership led eventually to a lengthy period when genocide of the Natives was federal policy.

Chapter three turns to the sad history of African Americans in this country. Their lives and their labor were stolen as slaves. Even after Emancipation, their rights were stolen by Jim Crow laws. Reagan's War on Drugs continued the sad treatment through profiling, criminalization of race, and incarceration rates for African Americans that surpasses those of White individuals. The fourth chapter again focuses on White privilege in property ownership as redlining separated the races into distinct areas with White Americans taking the more favorable and valuable properties for themselves.

Part two of the book challenges the mythology of American individualism. Wystma asserts that only those who are privileged have the

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means to live the American dream. He further contends that privilege and equality cannot coexist; they do not go hand in hand. Wystma, therefore, urges that difficult conversations need to be had about race and privilege within the Western evangelical church, and as prophets, if we do not have these conversations, we are neglecting our sacred duty.

Chapters seven and eight speak directly to the evangelical Christian. There is an inherent conflict between claiming a personal relationship with God and asserting privilege. American individualism conflicts with the idea of the kingdom of God. Everyone is significant to God, regardless of their skin color, and everyone is made in the image of God. Living together and respecting the dignity and worth of every person is how we live out the gospel, and no matter how much one may think he or she knows there is always more to learn about others.

Racism is embedded within the subconsciousness of individuals and can exist within church walls. By decreasing the effects of past injustices, chapter nine suggests that we can lessen the blame for those injustices, too. We need to understand the implicit reasons for racism, and not get defensive when it is brought into a conversation. White, evangelical Christians must heed the voice of justice and start looking at all others as equals. Our lack of diversity may be rooted in history, but now we can change it and should do so.

The final chapter talks about laying down our privilege. We must listen and learn about different perspectives. We should express grief over injustice and share that with others. We must confess our privilege and lay it down to have those tough conversations that need to happen when it comes to religion, race, and injustice.

Overall the book was written from the perspective of the author who is well-qualified to write this book. I think that if I were to change one thing it would be offering more for the reader on the impact of racism on all ethnic minorities in the United States.

As an undergraduate social work student, I was touched by Wytsma's perspective on the roots of injustice. Although I do not identify as an evangelical Christian, I believe that this book is a must-read for undergraduate and graduate social work students who want to work within the walls of the Christian community because of its insight into the relationship between privilege and race and how that can affect our future as social workers. ❖

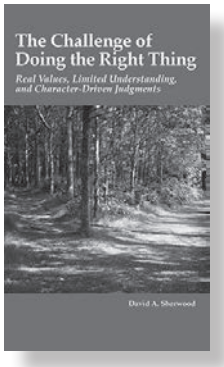
Reviewed by ***Tatum Wren,*** *BSW Student, Class of 2019, University of South Dakota. PO Box 589, Wagner, SD, 57380. Phone: (605) 491-4979. Email: Tatum.Wren@coyotes.usd.edu.*

Key Words: narratives, voice, marginalized, social work

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM NACSW

The Challenge of Doing the Right Thing: Real Values, Limited Understanding, and Character-Driven Judgments

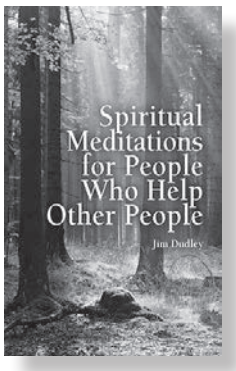
David A. Sherwood. (2018). Botsford CT: NACSW. $21.95 U.S., $17.55 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. Available as an eBook only. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



The Challenge of Doing the Right Thing: Real Values, Limited Understanding, and Character-Driven Judgments is a 450-page collection of 44 editorials and articles written by David Sherwood for *Social Work & Christianity* and for the North American Association of Christians in Social Work between 1981 and 2017 focused on integrating Christian faith, values, and ethics with competent professional social work practice. In this book. Dr. Sherwood argues that in ethical decision-making, decisions frequently involve making judgments that functionally prioritize legitimate values that are in tension with each other. He contends that the mission of NACSW and *Social Work & Christianity* has been to walk the difficult middle road—clearly committed to both Christian faith and competent social work practice, not presuming to have the final answers in either, and helping members and readers to come as close to faithfulness and competence as possible.

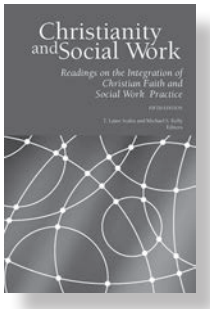
Spiritual Meditations for People Who Help Other People

James R. Dudley (2019). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $20.75 U.S., $16.60 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. Available as an eBook only. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



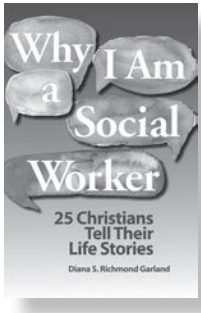
Spiritual Meditations for People Who Help Other People is written for social workers and others who devote their lives to helping other people. The 25 spiritual meditations in this book are designed to nurture and strengthen caregivers, focusing on ways that we can enhance our relationship with God. Finding God in times of stillness, experimenting with different forms of prayer, and growing our patience and gratitude are examples. The meditations also focus on our relationships with the people we help. These meditations help us view our clients and our services as sacred territory, urge us to celebrate our clients, help us love our adversaries, and encourage more openness to miracles. Spiritual Meditations contains more than 25 individual meditations.

Christianity and Social Work: Readings on the Integration of Christian Faith & Social Work Practice (Fifth Edition)
T. Laine Scales and Michael S. Kelly (Editors). (2016). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $55.00 U.S., $42.99 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



At over 400 pages and with 19 chapters, this extensively-revised fifth edition of Christianity and Social Work includes six new chapters and six significantly revised chapters in response to requests by readers of previous editions including chapters on evidence based practice (EBP), congregational Social Work, military social work, working with clients from the LGBT community, human trafficking – and much more! The fifth edition of Christianity and Social Work is written for social workers whose motivations to enter the profession are informed by their Christian faith, and who desire to develop faithfully Christian approaches to helping. It addresses a breadth of curriculum areas such as social welfare history, human behavior and the social environment, social policy, and practice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Christianity and Social Work is organized so that it can be used as a textbook or supplemental text in a social work class, or as a training or reference materials for practitioners and has an online companion volume of teaching tools entitled Instructor's Resources.

Why I Am a Social Worker: 25 Christians Tell Their Life Stories
Diana R. Garland. (2015). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $29.95 U.S., $23.95 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dolloars, use current exchange rate.



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 addresses a range of critical questions such as:

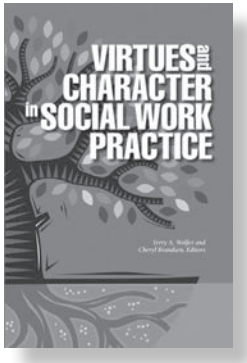
- How do social workers describe the relationship of their faith and their work?
- What is their daily work-life like, with its challenges, frustrations, joys and triumphs?
- What was their path into social work, and more particularly, the kind of social work they chose?
- What roles do their religious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

Dr. David Sherwood, recently retired Editor-in-Chief of *Social Work & Christianity,* says about *Why I Am a Social Worker* that:

> I think this book will make a very important contribution. …The diversity of settings, populations, and roles illustrated by the personal stories of the social workers interviewed will bring the possibilities of social work to life in ways that standard introductory books can never do. The stories also have strong themes of integration of faith and practice that will both challenge and encourage students and seasoned practitioners alike.

Virtue and Character in Social Work Practice

Edited by Terry A. Wolfer and Cheryl Brandsen. (2015). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $23.75 U.S., $19.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

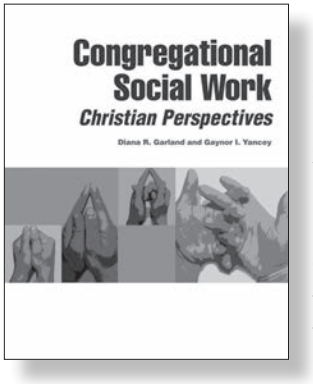


Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice offers a fresh contribution to the Christian social work literature with its emphasis on the key role of character traits and virtues in equipping Christians in social work to engage with and serve their clients and communities well.

This book is for social work practitioners who, as social change agents, spend much of their time examining social structures and advocating for policies and programs to advance justice and increase opportunity.

Congregational Social Work: Christian Perspectives

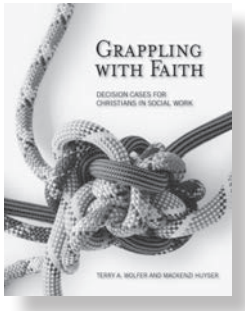
Diana Garland and Gaynor Yancey. (2014). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $39.95 U.S., $31.95 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



Congregational Social Work offers a compelling account of the many ways social workers serve the church as leaders of congregational life, of ministry to neighborhoods locally and globally, and of advocacy for social justice. Based on the most comprehensive study to date on social work with congregations, *Congregational Social Work* shares illuminating stories and experiences from social workers engaged in powerful and effective work within and in support of congregations throughout the US.

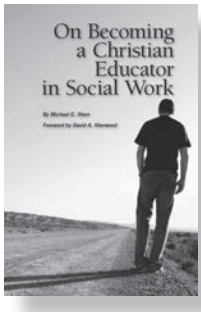
Grappling with Faith: Decision Cases for Christians in Social Work

Terry A. Wolfer and Mackenzi Huyser. (2010). $23.75 ($18.99 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



Grappling with Faith: Decision Cases for Christians in Social Work presents fifteen cases specifically designed to challenge and stretch Christian social work students and practitioners. Using the case method of teaching and learning, *Grappling with Faith* highlights the ambiguities and dilemmas found in a wide variety of areas of social work practice, provoking active decision making and helping develop readers' critical thinking skills. Each case provides a clear focal point for initiating stimulating, in-depth discussions for use in social work classroom or training settings. These discussions require that students use their knowledge of social work theory and research, their skills of analysis and problem solving, and their common sense and collective wisdom to identify and analyze problems, evaluate possible solutions, and decide what to do in these complex and difficult situations.

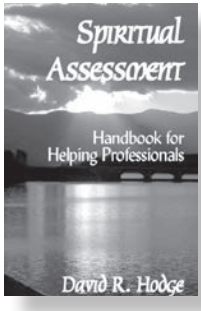
On Becoming a Christian Educator in Social Work
Michael Sherr. (2010). $21.75 ($17.50 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



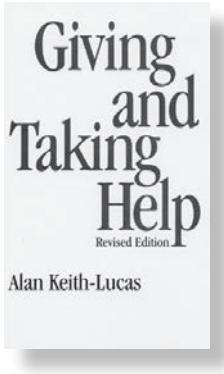
On Becoming a Christian Educator is a compelling invitation for social workers of faith in higher education to explore what it means to be a Christian in social work education. By highlighting seven core commitments of Christian social work educators, it offers strategies for social work educators to 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."

Spiritual Assessment: Helping Handbook for Helping Professionals
David Hodge. (2003). Botsford CT: NACSW. $20.00 U.S. ($16.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

A growing consensus exists among helping professionals, accrediting organizations and clients regarding the importance of spiritual assessment. David Hodge's *Spiritual Assessment: Helping Handbook for Helping Professionals*, describes five complementary spiritual assessment instruments, along with an analysis of their strengths and limitations. The aim of this book is to familiarize readers with a repertoire of spiritual assessment tools to enable practitioners to select the most appropriate assessment instrument in given client/practitioner settings. By developing an assessment "toolbox" containing a variety of spiritual assessment tools, practitioners will become better equipped to provide services that address the individual needs of each of their clients.

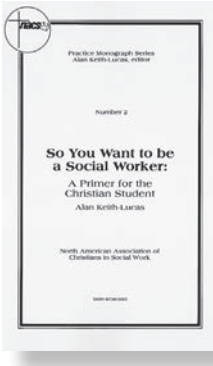


Giving and Taking Help (Revised Edition)
Alan Keith-Lucas. (1994). Botsford CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $20.75 U.S. ($16.50 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



Alan Keith-Lucas' Giving and Taking Help, first published in 1972, has become a classic in the social work literature on the helping relationship. Giving and taking help is a uniquely clear, straightforward, sensible, and wise examination of what is involved in the helping process—the giving and taking of help. It reflects on perennial issues and themes yet is grounded in highly practice-based and pragmatic realities. It respects both the potential and limitations of social science in understanding the nature of persons and the helping process. It does not shy away from confronting issues of values, ethics, and world views. It is at the same time profoundly personal yet reaching the theoretical and generalizable. It has a point of view.

So You Want to be a Social Worker: A Primer for the Christian Student
Alan Keith-Lucas. (1985). Botsford, CT: NACSW. Social Work Practice Monograph Series. $11.50 U.S. ($9.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



So You Want to Be a Social Worker has proven itself to be an invaluable resource for both students and practitioners who are concerned about the responsible integration of their Christian faith and competent, ethical professional practice. It is a thoughtful, clear, and brief distillation of practice wisdom and responsible guidelines regarding perennial questions that arise, such as the nature of our roles, our ethical and spiritual responsibilities, the fallacy of "imposition of values," the problem of sin, and the need for both courage and humility.

Hearts Strangely Warmed: Reflections on Biblical Passages Relevant to Social Work

Lawrence E. Ressler (Editor). (1994). Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $9.25 U.S. ($7.50 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

Hearts Strangely Warmed: Reflections on Biblical Passages Relevant to Social Work is a collection of devotional readings or reflective essays on 42 scriptures pertinent to social work. The passages demonstrate the ways the Bible can be a source of hope, inspiration, and conviction to social workers.

The Poor You Have With You Always: Concepts of Aid to the Poor in the Western World from Biblical Times to the Present

Alan Keith-Lucas. (1989). Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $20.75 U.S. ($16.50 for NACSW members). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

Encounters with children: Stories That Help Us Understand and Help Them

Alan Keith-Lucas. (1991). Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $11.50 U.S. ($9.00 for NACSW members). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

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