SOCIAL WORK & CHRISTIANITY

JOURNAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIANS IN SOCIAL WORK

VOLUME 41, NUMBER 1 • SPRING 2014




A vital Christian presence in social work

NACSW

NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIANS IN SOCIAL WORK

ISSN 0737-5778

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.

Views expressed by authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of *SWC* or NACSW. Membership in NACSW or publication in *SWC* in no way implies endorsement or certification of the member's or author's qualifications, ability, or proficiency to practice social work. NACSW and *SWC* do not assume responsibility in any way for readers' efforts to apply or utilize information, suggestions, or recommendations made by NACSW, its publications, conferences, or other resources.

EDITORS

EDITORIAL BOARD

SOCIAL WORK & CHRISTIANITY

JOURNAL OF THE NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIANS IN SOCIAL WORK

SPRING 2014
VOLUME 41, NUMBER 1
ISSN 0737-5778

CONTENTS

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Social Work & Christianity is published quarterly by the North American Association of Christians in Social Work, Sandy Hook, Connecticut 06482. Printed by Images Plus; Madison, Wisconsin.

ISSN 0737-5778

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NACSW, PO Box 121; Botsford, CT 06404.

Which Way Did They Go? Uncovering the Preferred Source of Help-Seeking Among African-American Christians

Kimberly Hardy

The unique social and religious contexts of the African-American community have required that the Black Church become a de facto social service agency meeting the financial, social justice, and mental health needs of its members. Traditionally, African-American Christians have turned to the church as their primary source of psychosocial support. Increased access to and understanding of non-religious mental health care, however, requires a re-evaluation of the nature of religious help-seeking among African-American Christians. This paper presents findings from two administrations of a survey study designed to assess the preferred source of help for African-American Christians experiencing serious personal or mental health-related issues. The findings suggest a possible trend toward seeking non-religious mental health professionals, but with limited use of clinical social workers.

The "Black Church" is defined as "those independent, historic, and totally black controlled denominations, which were founded after the Free African Society of 1787 and which constituted the core of black Christians" (Lincoln & Mamiya, p. 1). The denominations which make up the collective identity of the Black Church are the African Methodist Episcopal, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion, the Christian Methodist Episcopal, the National Baptist Convention, USA, Incorporated, the National Baptist Convention of America, Unincorporated, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, and the Church of God in Christ (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990). In a more contemporary context, the "Black Church"

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2014), 3–15
Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

has come to encompass the broader population of African-American Protestants, including the predominantly/completely Black congregations within traditionally white denominations (Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990).

This context helps to frame the present discussion and provide insight into the significance of exploring the religious/spiritual lives of African-Americans specifically. African-Americans have a unique religious history that transcends the search for spiritual and moral direction. For generations the Black Church has been a literal haven from relentless oppression, abject poverty and their attendant consequences. Serving as a de facto social service agency, the Black Church has provided all manner of socioeconomic support for members of the African-American community at large, regardless of their church affiliation (Billingsley, 1999; Canda, 2008; Farris, 2006; Hardy, 2012; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin & Martin, 2002; Raboteau, 2001; Taylor, Ellison, Chatters, Levin & Lincoln, 2000; Whelchel, 2011).

At the helm of this most important institution is the pastor. Pastors of Black Churches enjoy tremendous respect in the African-American community (Allen, Davey & Davey, 2009; Butler-Ajibade, Booth & Burwell, 2012; Author, 2011; Kramer, Blevins, Miller, Phillips, Davis & Burris, 2006; Stansbury, Brown-Hughes & Harley, 2009). For some, this affords nationally prominent clergy a platform from which to speak on issues of social justice and inequality. This contemporary reverence is inherited from religious predecessors such as Rev. George Lisle, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Rev. Absalom Jones and Bishop Richard Allen, who used their pulpits to advocate for change and used their churches as command centers in the fight for equality and Civil Rights (Adksion-Bradley, et al., 2005; Billingsley, 1999; Canda, 2008; Farris, 2006; Author, 2011; Lincoln & Mamiya, 1990; Martin & Martin, 2002; Raboteau, 2001; Taylor et al., 2000; Whelchel, 2011).

Rev. Al Sharpton is an example of a contemporary African-American religious leader who continues to use his role in this way. He hosts a nightly news show on MSNBC where he addresses current events in politics and society. He is also the Founder and President of the National Action Network (NAN), a civil-rights organization based in New York City. Rev. Sharpton and his counterpart, Rev. Jesse Jackson, through the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, have spearheaded countless movements across the country in the fight for social equality and justice through which they have fostered national reputations for their work. When issues of injustice, intolerance and hatred arise at a local level, both of these men have such veneration from the African-American community that they can spur action from that community at the national level.

At its core, however, the role of pastor is as a spiritual shepherd who tends to the personal needs of his or her congregants. They carry out these responsibilities through weekly worship services, Bible study, and increasingly through the provision of pastoral counseling. A 1986 study of 214

African-American and white pastors, as cited in Taylor, Chatters, and Levin (2004), revealed that over 70% of them devoted more than 10% of their time to direct counseling with congregants.

Religious help-seeking through pastoral counseling is a viable option for anyone seeking the amelioration of personal problems. Several authors have noted reasons which are not rooted in the historical allegiance to the church that explain a partiality for religious help-seeking, including economics (lower costs associated with clergy than mental health professionals), proximity (located in the community), convenience (clergy already tend to visit congregants in need as a professional responsibility), and context (pastors and congregants may have developed longstanding relationships that facilitate rapport and trust) (Hardy, 2011; Stansbury, Beecher & Clute, 2011; Taylor et al., 2000; Taylor, Chatters & Levin, 2004; Ferris, 2006).

The effectiveness of counseling provided by pastors appears to be at least comparable to that received by clients of secular mental health professionals. According to a study by Neighbors, Jackson, Bowman, and Gurin (1983), there was a greater sense of satisfaction experienced by religious help-seekers who were less likely to require additional support from mental health professionals and more likely to refer friends to the pastor for assistance with serious personal problems. Quakenbos, Privette, and Klentz (1985) discovered a similar penchant for religious help-seeking in lieu of mental health professionals in their survey of 86 lay persons in Florida. Of those surveyed, over half indicated a willingness to "seek counseling at a pastoral center if one were available" (p. 290).

Little is known about the specific issues for which African-American Christians would formally seek help in times of distress. Given the growing literature on religion and spirituality in social work, it is imperative to understand which issues would prompt African-American Christians to seek help from one type of care provider over another. This exploratory study sought answers to the question of where African-American Christians turn first for professional help.

This paper presents findings from two administrations of a survey designed to reveal the current attitudes of African-Americans regarding religious and professional help-seeking. The findings offer insight into the respondents' preference of care provider when confronted with serious personal or mental health issues. The data from this study suggest that there may be a shifting trend among some African-American Christians who are more amenable to utilizing professional care providers in addition to or in lieu of pastoral staff in the Black Church.

Methodology

Instrument

An interdisciplinary review of the scholarly literature yielded no pre-existing instrument designed to ascertain African-American Christians' preference of care provider when the decision to engage in formal help-seeking had been made. Thus, the Attitudes Toward Religious Help-Seeking Scale (ATRHSS) was developed and piloted for this study. The ATRHSS is a three-section instrument that explores African-American Christians' attitudes toward religious help-seeking. Part I of the survey listed statements related to respondents' attitudes toward religious help-seeking and provided a Likert-style set of responses ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (4). Part III of the instrument was purely demographic in nature and captured respondents' age, gender, education, religious activity, and denomination.

Part II of the survey, the Professional Preference section of the instrument, which is the focus of this paper, lists personal and mental health-related issues that could serve as the trigger to engage in formal help-seeking behavior. The instrument was initially pilot-tested electronically (first administration) and was subjected to a principal components analysis (PCA) to determine which items could be removed to reduce redundancy. The second administration reflected those changes and the number of items was reduced from twenty-two to sixteen. Data were collected in the second administration using the paper form of the surveys during the worship survey in churches. Results of the PCA for the instrument are presented in a forthcoming publication.

For each issue on Part II of the survey, respondents were asked to choose among four care providers for the formal provision of care: a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), a licensed certified professional counselor (LCPC), a psychiatrist/psychologist, and a pastoral counselor. Definitions and descriptions of each discipline were intentionally omitted to determine which issues the respondents themselves attributed to each discipline. The goal was to determine the nature of their association between the issues and the care provider. There was potential for confusion among the respondents regarding the roles of the type of care providers because of the omission, but it was believed that the results could reveal not only the issues for which respondents sought help, but from whom they believed that help was best accessed.

In an effort to reduce the possibility of bias based on a stereotyped understanding of social work roles, certain issues were purposely omitted from both administrations of the survey such as child protective services, TANF/WIC, and provision of medical assistance.

Data Collection: First Administration

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life conducted U.S. Religious Landscape survey in 2009 with a sample of 35,556 respondents. Of that number, 1,995 identified as members of Historically Black Churches representing approximately 18% of the sample. The Pew Forum's study is the largest contemporary national study on religion with a specific sub-category for Historically Black Churches (Pew Forum, 2009). This sample was used for the power analysis to determine the necessary sample size to ensure external validity with a 5% confidence interval. The sample size would have to have been 322 for external validity. At 116, the sample for the first administration was not large enough, but still provided data sufficient to warrant replication with a large sample.

The first administration of the survey collected data electronically using SurveyMonkey, a web-based software program that generates a unique hyperlink for electronic surveys. Using purposive and snowball sampling techniques, the survey's hyperlink was posted on the websites and social media pages of churches and faith-based organizations with a target audience of African-American Christians during the three-week data collection period.

Sampling Frame: First Administration

Potential respondents were instructed to complete the survey only if they met the following criteria: self-identification as African-American, self-identification as a member of a Christian church and 18+ years of age. Their denominational affiliation, religious activity in their church, income, and age were not specified among the inclusion criteria for the study. It was determined that adding these variables could limit the socioeconomic diversity of the sample and subsequent analysis.

Demographics: First Administration

As indicated previously, Part III of the survey collected demographic data on the respondents. The first administration was comprised of 116 respondents who were primarily female (68%) young adults ranging in age between 26 and 33 years (45.5%). The respondents were also highly educated with 30% earning an undergraduate degree, 44.5% earning a graduate degree, and 16.4% earning a post-graduate degree. Respondents indicated attending weekly worship services three or more times per month (35.5%) and Bible Study either once a month (37.3%) or three or more times per month (35.5%). Approximately 25% of the respondents identified as Baptist.

Data Collection: Second Administration

The second administration was a replication study funded by a Research Incentive grant and was conducted using paper-pencil surveys completed during Sunday morning worship services at eight Black Churches in a predominantly African-American suburb of Washington, D.C. The county boasts the wealthiest African-American population in the country, but also has broad income disparity which afforded the possibility for a more economically and educationally diverse sample. The sample size in the second administration was far larger (n=609) and exceeded the minimum sample needed for external validity.

An initial package of surveys and announcement cards was delivered in person to each pastor or their designee along with a locked, metal box into which the completed surveys could be deposited. The boxes were locked upon delivery and no keys were provided to church personnel to prevent handling of the surveys prior to their collection.

Announcement cards were distributed by church staff during Sunday services one week prior to the administration of the survey to make congregants aware of the church's involvement in the study and to assure them that their pastor had given his/her permission for the church's participation. Surveys were distributed the following week in unsealed envelopes with an information sheet about the survey which indicated that their return of the completed survey would constitute their informed consent. Completed surveys were sealed by the respondents in self-sealing envelopes and deposited into the locked metal boxes. The date of administration was at the discretion of the pastor; once the surveys were completed, each box of surveys was retrieved by the researcher in person.

Sampling Frame: Second Administration

Churches included in the study were selected using a systematic random sampling technique. A list of all known churches in the study area at the time of data collection was obtained electronically through the website of the county from which the churches were selected. All non-English language churches were omitted. Of the remaining churches, a systematic random sampling technique was employed whereby every 18th church was selected. Those which were led by an African-American pastor with a completely or predominantly African-American congregation (as determined by clergy self-report) were eligible for inclusion. Churches were contacted initially by telephone to determine their eligibility and willingness to participate in the study. Interested pastors were provided with a consent form for data collection to take place in their church and each church was given a $100 donation for their participation regardless of the number of surveys completed. The second administration included

eight churches and yielded 609 respondents for a total sample size of 725 respondents across both administrations.

Demographics: Second Administration

The second administration was comprised of 609 respondents who were primarily female (72%) over the age of 42 (74.4%). The majority of the respondents had earned an undergraduate degree (39%) or a graduate degree (23.6%). The overwhelming majority (87%) attended weekly worship services three or more times each month and Bible Study (60.7%) three times or more each month. Over 82% of the respondents identified as Baptist.

Findings

The findings from the first administration revealed a trend toward complementary use of religious and professional help-seeking behaviors. Table 1 lists the professional preference of respondents by issue and reveals that pastoral counselors were the preferred professional provider across the four professions for twelve of the twenty-two issues listed on the survey. Psychologist/psychiatrist was chosen for six of the twenty-two issues while LCPC was chosen over the other professions for four of the twenty-two issues. An unanticipated finding was that LCSW was not chosen as the preferred discipline for any of the issues listed on the survey.

Table 1: Professional Preference by Issue—First Administration

Issue	Licensed Social Worker (LCSW)	Psychologist/ Psychiatrist	Licensed Counselor	Pastoral Counselor
Finances	10%	6.4%	**58.2%**	25.5%
Child's negative behavior	11.4%	**33.3%**	22.8%	32.5%
Sexuality/ homosexuality	3.6%	**36.9%**	26.1%	33.3%
Emotional abuse	8.8%	34.5%	21.2%	**35.4%**
Physical abuse	11.5%	30.1%	27.4%	**31.0%**
Contemplating abortion	9.3%	17.8%	**38.3%**	34.6%
After an abortion	6.5%	28.0%	28.0%	**37.4%**

Issue	Licensed Social Worker (LCSW)	Psychologist/ Psychiatrist	Licensed Counselor	Pastoral Counselor
Contemplating marriage	1.8%	5.4%	8.9%	**83.9%**
General marital difficulties	2.7%	12.3%	24.6%	**58.8%**
Contemplating divorce	3.5%	12.5%	25.0%	**60.7%**
After a divorce	2.7%	20.7%	20.7%	**55.9%**
Grieving a loved one	3.5%	16.7%	12.3%	**67.5%**
Contemplating suicide	1.8%	**42.3%**	15.3%	40.5%
After attempting suicide	2.7%	**48.6%**	9.9%	38.7%
Symptoms of depression	3.6%	**50.9%**	25.0%	20.5%
Contemplating affair	2.8%	22.0%	29.4%	**45.9%**
After marital affair	2.8%	21.1%	21.1%	**55.0%**
Discover partner's affair	1.8%	21.8%	21.8%	**54.5%**
Contemplating alcohol & other drugs	7.1%	26.8%	**40.2%**	25.9%
Desire to stop alcohol & other drugs	4.5%	28.6%	**34.8%**	32.1%
General loneliness	4.5%	29.7%	25.2%	**40.5%**
Issues with temper/anger	3.6%	**39.3%**	28.6%	28.6%

In the second administration of the survey (Table 2), pastoral counselors were preferred for every issue listed except "symptoms of depression" for which psychologist/psychiatrist was the preference.

Table 2: Professional Preference by Issue – Second Administration

Issue	Licensed Social Worker (LCSW)	Psychologist/ Psychiatrist	Licensed Counselor	Pastoral Counselor
Finances	7.8%	2.0%	41%	**49%**
Child's negative behavior	13.5%	23.4%	12.7%	**50.3%**
Sexuality/ homosexuality	3.5%	20.1%	12.1%	**64.2%**
Emotional abuse	7.2%	11.8%	14.4%	**66.6%**
Physical abuse	10.6%	11.6%	15.9%	**61.9%**
Contemplating abortion	8.5%	5.7%	14.9%	**70.8%**
After abortion	5.3%	9.4%	13.1%	**72.1%**
Contemplating marriage	1.2%	2.3%%	2.1%	**94.4%**
General marital difficulties	2.4%	3.4%	7.5%	**86.8%**
Contemplating divorce	1.5%	3.2%	8.0%	**87.4%**
After a divorce	1.5%	4.1%	9.4%	**85.1%**
Grieving a loved one	1.2%	5.2%	2.8%	**90.8%**
Contemplating suicide	2.6%	20.8%	8.4%	**68.2%**
Symptoms of depression	6.1%	**45.3%**	13.8%	34.8%
Contemplating affair	2.9%	8.0%	11.4%	**77.7%**
After marital affair	2.0%	8.3%	9.9%	**79.8%**

An analysis of the issues associated with each profession in the first administration reveals that pastoral counselors were chosen most frequently for those issues which tend to be associated with their traditional area of professional expertise: marriage and bereavement. Seven of the twelve issues for which pastoral counselors were chosen most frequently are directly related to issues of marriage. The four issues unrelated to marriage for which pastoral counselors were preferred over the other professions were

physical abuse (31%), emotional abuse (35.4%) after having an abortion (37.4%), and general loneliness (40.5%).

LCPCs were preferred over the other professions for finances (58.2%) and contemplating the use/abuse of alcohol and other drugs (40.2%). They were chosen slightly more frequently for women contemplating an abortion (38.3%) and a desire to stop using/abusing alcohol and other drugs (34.8%).

Psychologists/psychiatrists were preferred for serious personal and mental health-related concerns such as depression (50.9%), issues with temper/anger (39.3%), contemplating suicide 42.3%), after attempting suicide (48.6%), and sexuality/homosexuality (36.9%).

Percentages cannot provide a full picture regarding true differences in professional preference among the respondents. Given that the data are categorical in nature, a chi-square (X^2) test of independence was conducted to determine if there was a statistically-significant association between the demographic variables (gender, age, and level of education) and choice of provider by issue. In several instances statistically-significant associations were found for age and gender with the data from the second administration.

The chi-square test revealed a statistically-significant association between gender and choice of care provider when the issue was sexuality/homosexuality (n=450, .180, p=.002); emotional abuse (n=467, .133, p=.041); and physical abuse (n=459, .175, p=.003). The chi-square test revealed a statistically-significant association between age and choice of care provider when the issue was grief (n=460, .230, p=.018), contemplating suicide (n=418, .227, p=.042), and symptoms of depression (n=417, .241, p=.019). A chi-square test was performed to examine the relationship between level of education and choice of care provider. The test did not reveal a statistically-significant relationship.

Discussion

This study provides valuable insight for clinical social workers into the help-seeking behavior of African-American Christians. The data suggest that within-group socioeconomic and age differences may impact one's preference of care provider during times of personal distress. In the first administration of the survey, respondents were younger with higher levels of education and their results indicated a preference for a diversity of care providers across the issues presented. Respondents in the second administration, who were older and had less education, overwhelmingly preferred the pastor for all but one issue.

A more nuanced statistical analysis of the data in the second administration using the chi-square test of independence, however, revealed that gender and age were critically important in determining which provider respondents would turn to for help with certain issues. While the percentage differences between the two administrations suggests that for younger

congregants the pastor's role is not as all-encompassing as has been the case historically, the statistical analysis suggests that generational differences alone are not sufficiently explanatory. The confluence of age, gender, and specific issue must be considered. This finding can be particularly useful for clergy and social workers alike when designing programs or interventions. Addressing specific issues with a consideration for gender and/or age can be more relevant and thus effective at reaching a targeted audience.

The overwhelming preference for pastoral counseling among the respondents in the second administration not only suggests a possible relationship between demographics and preferred care providers, but also signals the necessity for collaborations between clergy and mental health professionals. None of the churches used in the second administration of the survey were headed by clergy with a background in mental health, yet the congregants preferred the pastors' guidance on issues related to various forms of abuse, sexuality, and suicide. Knowing that pastors are increasingly being called upon by their members for direct counseling offers an opportunity for social workers to provide in-service trainings to clergy and co-facilitate counseling sessions so that the guidance the congregants seek is infused with both spiritual and clinical content.

An unanticipated, yet important finding gleaned from the data was how infrequently social workers were chosen for every issue across both administrations. Over 60% of mental health treatment in the United States is provided by clinical social workers (http://www.helpstartshere.org/facts-about-the-profession), yet on both administrations of the survey, LCSWs were only preferred by at least 10% of respondents for two of the issues listed. These findings are of concern because they suggest that the clinical nature of social work may not be recognized by the African-American faith community. To allay lingering doubt and suspicion, social workers need to reach out to congregants and pastors of Black Churches to make their roles clearer.

The willingness of African-American Christians to discuss serious personal and mental health issues with non-religious mental health providers suggests a possible trend toward the complementary use of religious and professional help-seeking or even exclusive use of professional help among younger African-Americans and those with greater levels of education. Younger congregants are growing up in an era where the Black Church, while still important, can be seen as a sanctuary in a purely spiritual sense. Their access to other institutions and professionals may have made help-seeking outside of the church as normative for them as help-seeking within the church was for their forebears.

If these data indeed represent a trend in help-seeking behavior among African-American Christians, it should be welcomed by social workers for several reasons. First, it helps to clarify the role of pastoral counselors in the lives of their congregants relevant to those issues for which pastoral

counseling is likely to be sought. Second, it reveals those issues for which African-American Christians are willing to engage in professional help-seeking and the specific relationship between the issues and demographics. This finding provides a foundation upon which clinical social workers can create innovative and targeted outreach programs to African-American faith communities with some expectation of acceptance. Finally, it provides an opportunity to engage in collaborative work with leaders within the Black Church to jointly provide care that will meet a greater portion of community needs. ❖

References

Bent-Goodley, T.B. (2009). A Black experience-based approach to gender-based violence. *Social Work, 54*(3), 262-269.

Billingsley, A. (1999). *Mighty like a river: The Black church and social reform*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Canda, E. R. (2008). Religion and spirituality. In *The encyclopedia of social work* (20th ed.), Vol. 2 (pp. 413-418). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Chatters, L. M., Levin, J. S., & Ellison, C. G. (1998). Public health and health education in faith communities. *Health Education & Behavior, 25*(6), 689-699.

Farris, K. (2006). The role of African-American pastors in mental health care. In Roberta R. Greene (Ed.), *Contemporary Issues of Care*. The Haworth Press, Inc. doi:10.1300/J137v14n01_08.

Gamble, V. N. (1997). Under the shadow of Tuskegee: African Americans and health care. *American Journal of Public Health, 87*(11), 1773-1778.

Hardy, K. (2012). Perceptions of African-American Christians' attitudes toward religious help-seeking: Results of an exploratory study. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 31*(3), 209-225.

Lincoln, C. E. & Mamiya, L. H. (1990). *The Black church in the African-American experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Martin, E. P., & Martin, J. M. (2002). *Spirituality and the Black helping tradition in social work*. Washington, DC: NASW Press.

Neighbors, H. W., Jackson, J. S., Bowman, P. J., Gurin, G. (1983). Stress, coping, and Black mental health: Preliminary findings from a national study. *Prevention in Human Services, 2*(3), 5-29.

Quakenbros, S., Privette, G., & Klentz, B. (1985). Psychotherapy: Scared or secular? *Journal of Counseling and Development, 63*, 290-293.

Raboteau, A. J. (2001). *Canaan land: A religious history of African-Americans*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Skloot, R. (2011). *The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks*. NY: Crown Publishing Group.

Sullivan, C.M. & Rumptz, M.H. (1994). Adjustment and needs of African-American women who utilized a domestic violence shelter. *Violence and Victims, 9*(3), 275-286.

Taylor, R. J., Ellison, C. G., Chatters, L. M., Levin, J. S., & Lincoln, K. D. (2000). Mental health services in faith communities: The role of clergy in Black churches. *Social Work, 45*(1), 73-87.

Taylor, R. J., Chatters, L. M., & Levin, J. (2004). *Religion in the lives of African Americans: Social, psychological, and health perspectives.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2006). *Morbidity and mortality weekly report: Abortion surveillance – United States 2006* (CDC Publication No. SS-8). Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/s/ss5808.pdf.

***Kimberly Hardy**, Ph.D., MSW, is Assistant Professor and Chair, Black Studies Focused Area of Study, University of Connecticut School of Social Work, 1798 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06117. Phone: (860) 570-9158. Email: kimberly.hardy@uconn.edu.*

Key Words: Black Church, African-Americans, help-seeking attitudes

Unraveling Students' Experiences with Religion and Spirituality in the Classroom Using a Photovoice Method: Implications for MSW Programs

Cray Mulder

This research sought to better understand how participants, eleven women who disclosed various childhood and current spiritual and religious practices and beliefs, perceived the inclusion of religion and spirituality in the Master of Social Work curriculum. Employing a Photovoice method, participants submitted photographic responses to prompt questions, followed by interview sessions. Participants welcomed additional material about organized religious communities and faith traditions, but were more cautious about the teaching of spirituality and resisted training that they viewed as prescriptive. Despite the recognized delicacy of these topics, particularly in public universities, most participants reported a desire to not directly or inadvertently cause harm to clients through a lack of knowledge. Participants also identified instructors as critical in the modeling of respectful, inclusive attitudes, in sharing their own histories, eliciting or receiving the narratives of students, or presenting lectures. An inclusive curriculum affirms the diverse traditions and practices of those we serve.

With increased scholarly attention over the past two decades, social workers more frequently recognize that spirituality and religion may hold positions of value in the lives of clients and that practitioners need to assess clients' spiritual and religious practices and supports (Furman, Benson, Canda, & Grimwood, 2005; Heyman, Buchanan, Marlowe, & Sealy, 2006). Moreover, mental health concerns

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2014), 16–44
Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

and spiritual needs may be interrelated or co-occurring. If a separation between organized religious communities and social work services exists, clients may receive interventions from both clergy and mental health professionals. Clergy members may offer support and spiritual assistance, while social workers may lack the specialized training to treat spiritual and religious needs in addition to other presenting concerns (Doka, 2011). Lack of attention to spirituality and religion in assessment and treatment planning may result in misunderstanding the presenting challenges and missed opportunities for intervention. Social work education, however, has lagged in embracing spirituality and religion in practice and in preparing students for assessment and intervention (Moss, 2011).

This research examined how eleven Master of Social Work (MSW) students and alumni viewed the roles of spirituality and religion in social work education, including assessments of their experiences and the perceived significance of these subject matters. To prompt additional contemplation and creativity, this qualitative work did not exclusively employ a traditional interview process, but rather a Photovoice method, which incorporated debriefing interview sessions. Participants responded, via a single photographic image, to prompts about religious and spiritual training within the social work curriculum. This research method promoted the inclusion of diverse voices and perspectives, without privileging any particular faith tradition or spiritual values, although most participants were active Christians currently or in the past. Photovoice allowed the research participants to both explore the subject matter in more depth and also position themselves in relation to the topics under exploration. Research using the Photovoice method ultimately incorporates multiple and potentially diverse perspectives, for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied (Hergenrather, Rhodes, Cowan, Bardhoshi, & Pula, 2009; Wang & Burris, 1997). This paper describes past research about religion and social work in social work education, the Photovoice methodology, and highlights participants' perspectives related to the roles of spirituality and religion in social work education, as well as the responsibilities of faculty and peers.

Spirituality and Religion in Social Work Education

Improved understanding of religion and spirituality demands critical distinctions of both constructs (Seinfeld, 2012). Spirituality extends beyond religion, and includes broader concepts such as meaning, purpose, hope, and relationships with others and a higher power (Canda, 1990; Doe, 2004; Hodge & Horvath, 2011; Ingersoll, 1998; Koenig & Spano, 2007; Moss, 2011; Murdock, 2005). Religious behaviors may include individual practices, as well as those practices within group contexts in affiliation with organized religion (Cohen, Thomas & Williamson, 2008; Ellison, Musicjk, & Henderson, 2008; Hodge & Horvath, 2011; Kriegelstein, 2006). Reli-

gious practices might include participation in worship services, the study of religious texts, and prayer.

While social work students likely agree that religion and spirituality are potentially significant in practice, they may feel unprepared for clients of diverse spiritual and religious traditions (Kriegelstein, 2006). When discussions about religion occur in social work education, Christianity tends to dominate (Kriegelstein, 2006). This ignores or minimizes religious and spiritual diversity, while also privileging some religious subgroups over others (Hodge, 2005). In addition, students who strongly hold fundamentalist beliefs may create difficult classroom dynamics if they adopt conservative views related to gender, heteronormative behavior, and religious acceptance, particularly if religious beliefs contradict ethical principles in social work (Todd & Coholic, 2007). Ignoring religion and spirituality within the classroom or mishandling classroom discussions may be perceived as religious discrimination. In a study of members of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work and MSW students, Ressler & Hodge (2005) observed religious discrimination as including remarks from peers in the classroom and lack of support from faculty in studying topics related to religion and spirituality.

Training within the social work classroom is intended to prepare students to serve as clinicians for diverse consumer presentations with a variety of needs and backgrounds. To enhance practitioner effectiveness, social workers must be trained to recognize religious and spiritual diversity without overgeneralizing, while also not marginalizing any minority subgroups. This requires instructor skill and modeling to facilitate discussion without judging students' individual beliefs (Bethel, 2004; Coholic, 2006; Todd & Coholic, 2007). To further assist in this process, Coholic (2006) suggests the integration of introspective and experiential activities within the classroom, as well as active discussion and processing of case scenarios. Although not usually a formal requirement for instructors, social work faculty may benefit from training about religion and spirituality themselves to better address this subject matter within the classroom (Canda, 2005).

Although social workers have frequently reported a lack of formal training in religious and spiritual cultures and practices, educators may desire more specific guidance for curricula (Buckey, 2012; Furman et al., 2005). Social work curricula, at both the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and MSW levels, demand considerable amounts of content, perhaps leaving faculty unsure of how much spirituality and religion material should be integrated into classes (Bethel, 2004; Barker & Floersch, 2010). Compressed time frames may create situations where this topic is only surveyed if considered at all (Bethel, 2004; Murdock, 2005). Cultural competency courses and units within other courses, such as human behavior in the social environment, offer natural outlets for social work students to query into diverse spiritual and religious practices. Integration of religion and spirituality in the context of cultural competency courses typically underscores potential occurrences of religious

and spiritual discrimination and social injustice, not unlike racism, sexism, heterosexism, and oppressive practices towards other minority populations (Hodge, 2005). Effective education in a curriculum likely explores a variety of religions and cultural practices to better understand religious and spiritual diversity, including implications for practice (Cascio, 1999). A strategy occasionally employed in social work education is the offering of an elective about this subject matter. In fact, several studies have identified positive outcomes and greater awareness for students that participated in an elective course focused on religion and spirituality (Buckey, 2012; Cnaan, Bodddie & Danzig, 2005; Heyman et al., 2006; Northcut, 2004; Seyfried, 2007). The use of elective courses, rather than infusion into the broader curriculum, may deprive social work students of exposure to religion and spirituality if they select other elective courses instead.

While facilitating discussions about spirituality and religion, instructors must establish safe spaces for students to share less popular or common points of views and to create forums with limited judgment by peers (Northcutt, 2004). This demands attention to the principles of dignity and respect inherent in social work practice, but that may be less attended to when discussing deeply personal subject matters. Spiritual and religious education in social work might expand beyond knowledge of diverse traditions and practice to instruction about the use of spiritual and religious assessments and practices with clients while carefully considering ethical implications (Furman, Zahl, Benson, & Canda, 2007; Rice & McAuliffe, 2009). Accentuating self-awareness and accountability will likely assist students in determining their own beliefs and in developing readiness to work with diverse clients (Northcut, 2004). Teaching students spiritual practices, such as meditation and mindfulness, might allow students to better understand spiritual techniques and be better prepared to share these strategies with clients (Seyfried, 2007).

Research Questions

This study explored a topic of burgeoning interest in the social work field of spirituality and religion. Our particular School of Social Work, in fact, has received requests from students, including one formal petition, to supplement the overall curriculum through either greater infusion of content in appropriate courses or a separate elective course related to this topic. This study included three different waves of data collection to better understand participants' experiences with spirituality and religion, including implications for social work education and practice. This particular stage of data collection explored how participants experienced spirituality and religion in the social work curriculum. The research questions for this paper, therefore, are: What are the roles of spirituality and religion in social work education? What is the role of social work faculty in teaching about spirituality and religion?

Methods

Participants

Data for this research was collected from MSW students and alumni at a Midwestern, mid-sized, state university. Primary recruitment for this study occurred through an electronic invitation to participate on a community listserv for one School of Social Work, which all BSW and MSW students are invited to join. Many alumni elect to remain on this listserv after graduation. This listserv is utilized to post information about upcoming social work events and opportunities for volunteer work and employment. Not all social work students are currently members of the listserv, however, this served as the most direct, inclusive, and cost-effective manner to reach as many prospective participants as possible. This also reduced bias in recruiting potential participants as those interested initiated contact without any hint of coercion or expectations about personal religious and spiritual values. Interested parties were advised to contact the principal investigator or a graduate assistant affiliated with the project to further discuss the study and, if the person expressed willingness, to complete a consent process.

The actual sample from this wave of data collection included eleven participants, all women. Nine women were Caucasian, while the other two were of African descent. Six of the eleven women were currently active in Christian faith traditions, four additional participants were raised in Christian traditions but no longer actively practiced that tradition, and one participant was not active in organized religion and had not been raised in a religious background. Two of the participants had graduated as MSWs within the past year and were currently employed in the field of social work; the remaining nine participants were current MSW students. Two of the women had previous academic training in religious studies, while one of these women and an additional participant had previously been employed by a church. While this sample, at face value, appears fairly involved in organized religion, at least at a superficial level, the characteristics described tend to reflect the student body at this institution fairly well, with the exception of male representatives.

Photovoice originated as a research method based on Freirian-based theory and visual arts inquiry, with an orientation towards social change (Wang & Burris, 1997). By promoting polyvocality, photovoice allows participants to share their histories and points-of-view (Chio & Fandt, 2007; Ornelas, Amell, Tran, Royster, Armstrong-Brown, & Eng, 2009). In Photovoice processes individual participants are often brought together to share their collective experiences, perspectives, and their actual photographs to advocate for community needs. This ultimately aims to facilitate dialogue among the population being studied, while also raising consciousness about issues and experiences the population being studied faces among

the greater community (Allen & Hutchinson, 2009; Flum, Siqueria, Caro, & Redway, 2010; Prins, 2010). Additionally, this approach allows greater creativity for participants than relying solely on narrative or interview data (Novek, Morris-Oswald, & Menec, 2012; Smith, Bratini, & Appio, 2012).

Photovoice commonly utilizes relatively small samples for data collection to pursue in-depth examination of participants' responses (Newbury & Hoskins, 2008). Photovoice research studies often create an abundant quantity of data, which can overwhelm both participants and researchers (Nykiforuk, Valliantos, & Nieuwendyk, 2011). Given the anticipated volume of data and the desired scope of this work, the ideal sample size for this study was three to fifteen participants. Although eighteen individuals completed the consent process, only fifteen finished the first wave of data collection. None of these were BSW students or alumni. As participants frequently reported that this research was more demanding than they originally anticipated, the larger study experienced attrition between each phase of data collection. From the first wave of data collection, to this, the second phase of data collection, four participants withdrew.

Justification of the Photovoice Method

Although the Photovoice method began in public health research, its scope has expanded considerably over the past decade. Photovoice continues to be commonly selected when working with marginalized populations and serves as a vehicle for those who may have been silenced or less visible in society to share their voices (Novak, 2010). An attractive feature of Photovoice, its inclusiveness, allows this method to be easily adapted to a wide variety of populations, including groups with diverse language and communication styles and developmental levels (Hergenrather, Rhodes, Cowan, Bardhoshi, & Pula, 2009; Martin, Garcia, & Liepert, 2010). By combining visual and narrative responses that highlight individual perspectives, this process can allow groups that may be marginalized in other circumstances, particularly related to their ability to express themselves related to the topic at hand, to possess greater power and involvement in social justice issues and discussions (Schafer & Yarwood, 2008). Photovoice does not privilege those individuals who are most verbally articulate, but rather allows each participant to express himself or herself through complementary visual and verbal processes.

One intended benefit of this research method is the opportunity for participants to increase self-awareness and engage in critical reflection (Smith et al., 2012; Taylor & Cheung, 2010). Photovoice provides opportunities for participants to engage in critical reflection about their own lives and experiences, but also to share, and potentially receive, the narratives and thought processes that have emerged during this reflection with others to increase overall awareness of the subject matter studied (Carlson, Engebretson, & Chamberlain, 2006; Duffy, 2011; Martin et al., 2010). In-depth

understanding of multiple points-of-view enhances both the research itself and the potentially adds layers to participants' own interpretations and views of the subject matter (Novak, 2010).

The Photovoice process typically begins with a detailed consent and educational process, particularly related to photography preparation and expectations. After consent and training, researchers share the prompts that participants will photograph during a relatively brief period of usually a couple of weeks (Newbury & Hoskins, 2008). The prompts may include single words, phrases, or questions; participants depict their response to the prompts through one or more photographic images. After the photography phase has elapsed, participants usually share a narrative about their images in either written form or through an interview debriefing session. These debriefing sessions may occur individually with a researcher or perhaps in a group setting.

Common ethical issues involved in Photovoice, such as releases for those photographed, privacy, and possible revelations through the images, merit scrutiny (Novak, 2010; Nutbrown, 2011; Teti, Murray, & Johnson, 2012; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). Consequently, this study implemented several practical steps to minimize these threats. For example, participants were asked to photograph anything except identifiable human beings. This eliminated the need for releases, as well as potential complexities associated with photographing children. As this study involved graduate students and alumni, significant potential barriers were also eradicated in terms of camera training and use. Studying a population with greater technological skills and experience reduced the possible fear and distrust associated with cameras (Prins, 2010). Participants were advised, during the consent process, that cameras would not be provided and that the researchers would print hard copies of emailed photographs before the debriefing sessions. Since all participants possessed a digital camera device already, these measures reduced the barriers of cost and access that often occur in Photovoice.

The use of Photovoice in this study differed slightly from common uses of this research method. Since the participants were MSW students and alumni, they likely possessed adequate verbal expression skills to rely on interview data alone. However, even some graduate students may favor visual expression and learning, rather than verbal expression (Seiler, 2011). In addition to illuminating their reactions to the concepts being studied through photographs, participants complemented their visual response with a verbal explanation to offer a more holistic exploration of the topic (Pickin, Brunsden, & Hill, 2011). Photovoice created anticipatory time for research participants in this study, whereby they considered the subject matter deliberately for a couple of weeks prior to the debriefing session. The use of photography also allowed participants to position themselves in relation to the topics of religion and spirituality, which may have revealed more profound thoughts about the subject matter (Ortega-Alcazar & Dyck, 2011).

Data Collection

This paper features data from the second phase of a research study that collected data in three distinct waves. The first phase of the larger study explored participants' experiences with and definitions of religion and spirituality, as well as how they related to personal identity. This phase of data collection assessed how participants, who were students and alumni of one MSW program, experienced spirituality and religion in the social work curriculum. This was not intended primarily as a program evaluation, but rather an investigation of how participants perceived religion and spirituality while in training for a career in social work.

Specific questions included: What have been your experiences of the integration of spirituality and religion in the social work classroom? What is your assessment of the nature of discussion about religion and spirituality in the social work program? What should be the role of spirituality and religion in social work education? How should spirituality and religion be taught? Assess the quality of the spiritual training in the program? What do spirituality and religious training contribute to social work education? During the data collection processes, religion and spirituality were usually separated, rather than grouped together, to better differentiate these constructs.

After time for contemplation of the prompts, participants were asked to provide a single photographic response in advance of the debriefing session. The debriefing processes were informed by the SHOWED method frequently employed in Photovoice research (Novak, 2010; Ornelas et al., 2009). The SHOWED questions (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1988) explore:

- What do you **S**ee here?
- What's really **H**appening here?
- How does this relate to **O**ur lives?
- **W**hy does this problem or strength exist?
- How can we become **E**mpowered by our new social understanding?
- What can we **D**o about this?

The interview debriefing process was based on reflection processes found in the SHOWED method, particularly the first four questions, since this research did not seek to problematize religion and spirituality. Debriefing interviews were conducted by either the principal investigator or one of the two research assistants associated with the study. The principal investigator did not collect any data from any of her current students to avoid potential coercion or vulnerability within a dual relationship.

Findings

Data for this project existed in several forms. First, the photographs generated and submitted by participants provided critical data. The pictures

themselves were coded several different ways, including identification of the subject of the image, the location of the photograph's subject, and a classification of the subject of the picture. The coding of the pictures offered a significant contribution in terms of understanding whether participants offered a literal visual response, a staged response that the participant created herself, or whether the participant shared a personal artifact or symbolic response to the prompt. Second, upon completion of the debriefing interviews, all of the sessions were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts allowed appropriate and accurate documentation of the verbal interview process (Flick, 1998). The transcripts also provided documents intended for content analysis. The primary data analysis of the interview data, a narrative analysis, was based on the written interview transcripts. Strauss and Corbin's (1998) procedure of theoretical coding was utilized in the data analysis process of transcript data. This first entailed open coding, which generated a set of codes relating to the transcript text. Upon completion of the open coding process, the codes were considered in relation to each other through axial coding. Responses that fit together were linked together conceptually (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The findings are presented in response to the research questions, which investigated students' classroom and curricular experiences. Although participants supplied a photographic image for each prompt, only a select few images are presented in this paper for the sake of space. Other images are described as relevant.

Role of Spirituality & Religion in Social Work Education

When considering the role of religion and spirituality in social work education and the potential need for training, participants often began with recognition of the function these served in their own lives, particularly the students who were more active in organized religion. This self-awareness served as a platform for considering the value of religion and spirituality in practice and the need for training. For example, when asked about the role of spirituality in social work education, one participant photographed an alarm clock. She described her photograph in the following way:

> I took a picture of my alarm clock…because there should be a wake up call… It's like responding; I mean the purpose of the alarm clock is to wake you up, and when it goes off you respond to that call to rise up and go do what you need to do. And so social work education and spirituality being some sort of call, a call to respond to certain things in life… Social work, it's a helping profession. When it comes to spirituality, many people are out there to help others, so it becomes like a call for them to get out there and help.

Her response to the prompt reflected her valuation of spirituality and its role in her life, as well as her motivation to be a social worker. Another participant, who was actively involved in her Christian faith community, affirmed this point of view but with more specific Christian overtones. She said, "One of my favorite phrases is 'I want to become all that God created me to be.' So, living each day to its fullest is like living each day to be all that it could be." This also implies that her relationship with God motivated her daily life and her desire to study social work.

The participants' discussion of the role of religion in social work education reflected greater consensus than spirituality, as participants seemed to have greater agreement about the scope of religion in social work training and practice. Most of the discussion about the role of religion in social work, in fact, related to different organized religions and faith communities as participants generally reported a need for education and greater awareness about organized religions in particular. Misunderstanding or not discerning the complexities associated with different traditions concerned some participants, while also recognizing the need to balance their own values and experiences. Several participants commented that while they were familiar with Christian traditions, particularly Protestant and Catholic practices, they were less acquainted with faith traditions less common in the local community. The following participant, a recent MSW graduate currently employed in aging, expressed her thoughts about the need for training and awareness prior to practice:

> It definitely should be a part of the education, and it should always be in the back of your mind because it's going to come up, so you can't just pretend it doesn't exist. However, in practice it shouldn't be your main thinking or forceful. It should just always be something that you're thinking about and how you are reacting to the clients too. It complements your practice. It doesn't dominate it, but it's not missing. You understand yourself, and you understand other people. You don't try to force your way on them.

Another participant, a student who had previously attended seminary, affirmed the idea that spiritual concerns may relate to some clients' presenting problems through her image of an illuminated lamp.

> I think if it was named and talked about, just in real minor ways, it could be a light going on. Because I think we're missing that. And I have a friend who's a social worker and she has a counseling practice, and she said so many people come to her with spiritual problems or problems that were created in their youth in the way they were raised spiritually and I don't know if that's true, but if we don't know how to address those problems it might be difficult for us.

Her previous personal, professional, and educational experiences informed her thinking and broadened her perspectives. The participants, unsurprisingly, reported greater comfort with and awareness of faith traditions based on previous exposure.

Participants frequently contextualized religious diversity as similar to cultural diversity, with norms and values associated with specific traditions. In the following narrative a recent alumnus discussed her lack of education and awareness about religious diversity. She stated:

> I wouldn't have minded more information about different religions because the last time I had education about it was like seventh grade. So it had been a while. A social worker, depending on what field of practice you end up in, you may need to know those specifics. Not that you couldn't look into it. You can Google anything nowadays, but I think it would have been nice to at least discuss it [in the MSW program]. Maybe in cultural competency class or have its own class, a religions class or something. Some students don't want to learn about that, so maybe making the separate course like an elective.

Similarly, a current MSW student, employed as a direct care worker by a mental health agency, reported an analogous need for training before interacting with clients. She described a recent client situation that she and her Christian agency were unprepared for, including how the parents were criticized for their religiously sanctioned parenting practices. She reported learning from that circumstance that "This is what they were taught, this is what they believe. And so not judging them but more just celebrating them or understanding, more like understanding." However, she felt that the mental health treatment may have been hindered by the lack of familiarity with that specific religious tradition.

Besides conceding the diversity of religious values and practices, several participants voiced a concern to avoid religious harm or judgment. Aligning with the example above, another participant, a current MSW student employed by a faith-based organization in a non-social work role, echoed her concerns with not causing harm in practice.

> Well this is religion, and I took a picture of *Prevention* magazine because I feel like the role of religion in our social work program should be to prevent people from doing harm to others who might have a different religious belief. So getting to a place where people know, have enough information that they are not causing harm. Maybe there could be a better understanding of Christianity, Judaism, with the main religions being taught. But, also explaining

> that there are different groups within each one, to not use the generalization of "All Muslims," "All Christians"… I feel like in social work that is one of the most important places to not be using those generalizations. So, that's why I chose Prevention. That it's taught in way to prevent people from causing harm.

This thread of not creating harm to clients emerged in several participants' interviews, particularly when they felt a lack of knowledge about organized religion and faith traditions.

As the interviewees discussed spirituality's role in social work education, the common themes were the need to teach openness, acceptance, understanding, and being present. However, this discussion resulted in more divergent views than towards religion. The following narrative shared one MSW student's perspective on the role of spirituality in social work education based on the picture she took of a bookmark with the phrase "Live each day to the fullest. Get the most from each hour, each day, and each age of your life." written on it. In considering her photograph, she stated:

> I think it's [spirituality] also an understanding. I don't think it's something you can teach because I think it's different per person. So, what you might teach as spirituality could be completely different from what I teach spirituality could be. So, I just think it needs to be a shared understanding of other people's beliefs, almost like a class where it's discussion based and everyone can share.

She continued describing inclusiveness in the following statement, "How that relates to spirituality being taught—I always think there needs to be tolerance and openness. Spirituality to me is not necessarily to me a set of guidelines".

Another participant expressed similar reservations about the teaching of spirituality, although she welcomed religious training in the social work classroom.

> I have a "Do Not Enter" sign. I don't feel like spirituality should be taught. I feel like spirituality is more of a personal thing whereas religion is more…it's organized. I don't feel like spirituality is one of those things that you can teach. I feel like spirituality is more personal, more like meditation practices or prayer, and I don't think you can necessarily teach…you can maybe give tools like on how to meditate, but that doesn't make you spiritual because that could just be meditating for healing purposes. So I don't think it should be taught; it should be like a self-guided thing… When I think of spirituality I don't have a picture because it is so

> vast and it's personal and how do you personalize it? I feel like meditation and prayer time or even just thinking or writing or journaling is more spiritual than religious. I feel like religious might be—there's a name for every religion. There's not a [label of] 'I'm a Christian-spiritual.' There's not a name. So I feel it's more vast, more open, more personal for that person whereas religion is more organized and there's these different categories and subcategories.

Since this participant viewed spirituality as highly personal, and likely reflecting her personal values, she resisted too much exposure of individual practices in a classroom setting. Similarly, another participant described a comparable notion of spirituality, "That's more personal to me than religion because religion's so broad. You say, 'I'm a Christian.' That's so broad, but spirituality is personal and opinion. It's your personal beliefs and what you personally believe inside or outside of that religion." Understanding how participants related spirituality to their lives and professional training revealed a lack of comprehension about the parameters of religion and spirituality. Although participants sensed that spirituality included broader ideas than religion, the boundaries and differentiation seemed less clear. Participants described religion, as well as its role in social work education, more clearly and cohesively than spirituality. The Photovoice method, by the provision of several weeks of contemplation time, allowed participants to carefully consider their responses and layer their ideas during data collection processes. These initial findings represent descriptions related to participants' interpretations of their subjective experiences. In the following section participants used more symbolic representations, rather than the more literal responses featured here.

Experiences within the Curriculum: Variations in Perspectives

Participants revealed diverse perspectives assessing the integration of religion and spirituality within the MSW curriculum, but commonality in that most felt that formal recognition of religion and spirituality in the classroom was minimal. For example, one participant discussed her picture of a snow-covered hill.

> Now my picture, it looks like just a snow hill, but we went sledding yesterday. This picture—I was trying to get a picture of a kid going down a jump, but I missed it because he flew by so fast, which is spirituality and religion in the classroom. I mean sometimes it was like 'Oh, was it there!' (dramatic looking over the shoulder) but you don't always catch it.

Photo 1

She found explicit dedication to the topic of religion and spirituality within the social work classroom to be fleeting. Another participant, a recent MSW alumnus, evaluated her experience in the social work classroom this way, "The integration of spirituality and social work or religion into social work, the MSW program specifically here, is pretty minimal… We may touch on it a bit here and there, but it's not anything in depth that I came across." A third participant also struggled to judge the nature and quality of spiritual and religious training in the social work curriculum. For her pictorial response she photographed a pair of scissors in the closed position, describing her image in the following manner:

> It's hard to assess because I have not seen any spiritual training! There isn't any. The reason I took this is I thought in terms of how spiritual training can be used… Depending on how it's taught or how it's perceived, it can either shape or destroy. So, the reason I took this scissors was is it going to be used to shape this paper into a nice long lasting thing or is just going to cut it into little pieces and destroy it and let it fall apart? So, it's really delicate…. Is it [spiritual training] going to be done in a manner which we think is the right way but then maybe turns up causing more destruction?

Photo 2

Her concern, particularly related to spiritual training, was that students not experience the education as coercive or damaging. Additionally, she felt that the omission of formal content about this subject matter creates a distinct void and leaves students unprepared to address religious and spiritual needs with clients.

While another participant corroborated a lack of formal recognition of spirituality and religion within the classroom, she interpreted this phenomenon differently. Her photograph portrayed a painting in which a group of zebras combined to form the shape of a lion. She described the art piece this way:

> This is a picture of zebras and a lion. And I think the spiritual training is there because the basic principles of spirituality are to be open to others and to hear what they say, accept them one hundred percent, let them make their own decisions. And I think those are spiritual principles that are taught. And so, the lion is the spiritual principles and he's there in the picture, but it's never named. And I know spirituality is more than that, but I feel like it's there, it's just not named. I'm thankful that I have my seminary background because I feel like the seminary background missed so much that social work is giving me, but to have them together feels integrating. So, it [spirituality] feels like

> there's something kind of nebulous here that isn't expressed, but it's peering out. [Without attending seminary first] I don't think I would have the words to name it. And being in social work has given me words to name things that weren't named in seminary. So it's worked… it's been a really good dual degree. The spirituality is here, it's just not named.

She continued by disclosing how she experienced fellow students and faculty while in the MSW program.

> My personal experience is that it's been really good. I know we don't ever talk about religion or spirituality, but from where I came when I started the program to where I am now, I feel much more whole. And I think that is because the professors and the students have been really open to me and accepting and let me explore what I need to explore. And I haven't ever felt shut down. So that's allowed me to heal and become who I am.

The perceived congruence between the social work values of acceptance and presence aligned with her spiritual needs. This is in contrast, however, to the earlier participants who voiced a preference for not discussing personal spirituality within the classroom context or who felt that spirituality was not currently taught. An additional participant, the person in this sample who did not identify as a Christian in the past or present, recounted a very different perception. She shared, "What I was thinking was more oppressive and limited. We didn't really talk about it in the classroom. So, when we did a little bit, it felt kind of like the discussion was closed." She also divulged that she never, in any course, shared her personal spiritual and religious values and experiences.

Two other participants identified a different aspect of spirituality, self-awareness, which they identified throughout the curriculum. The first participant, an alumnus, summarized her experience in the following way, "I mean it's basically throughout. There was quite a bit of self-awareness and self-discovery that went on, but it may be personally I was able to find my own spirituality within that, but I don't know if all students do." The other participant actually represented her experience with spirituality in the classroom through a self-portrait in a mirror.

Photo 3

She explained her photograph in the following way:

> I thought of it as self-reflection. Sometimes it [the MSW program] seems all about self-reflection, which gets a little tiring. But, just thinking about yourself, like maybe why you believe certain things or have certain opinions. How do you take a picture of self-reflection? How about a mirror!

She found that the increased self-awareness benefitted her as a social worker and allowed her to integrate her personal and professional selves, enhancing her preparation for clinical practice.

Nature of Class Discussions

When describing classroom discussions about religion in particular, participants typically labeled conversations as hesitant, shallow, and Christian-dominated. Several students also felt that those who did not identify as Christian were more likely to either actually be or feel silenced within the classroom. Several participants desired balanced discussions with multiple points-of-view; however this likely created a challenge when classrooms exchanges were perceived as Christian-oriented and lacking depth. Additionally, several participants noted that they looked to faculty for guidance and leadership within this context, particularly when handling personal or potentially sensitive subject matters.

As one participant pondered how she perceived religion and spirituality as being addressed within the classroom, she envisioned conflicting points-of-view and values.

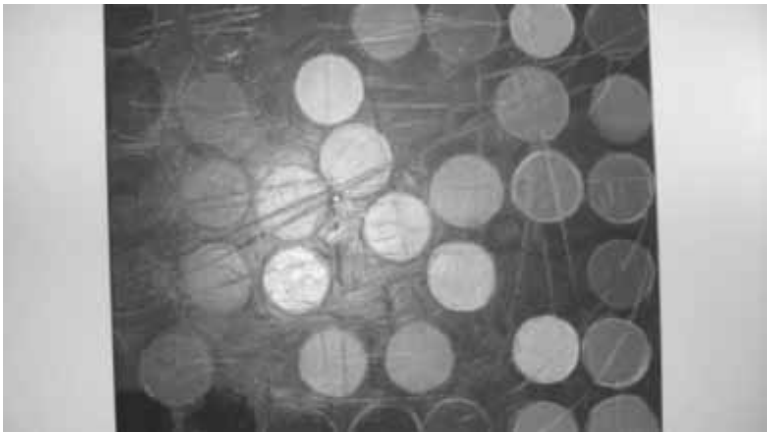
> I took a picture of a white board in a classroom, and I wrote some things on the board, and I tried to think of things that were kind of opposites. Some people just have such opposite views from each other… I wrote down some things that have come up before in class discussions and things people have said about religion. Some people think it's good and that we should pay attention to it as social workers and some people just ignore it… And, when professors bring it up, they'll say, 'I'm not trying to make you feel one way or another—just throwing it out there.' And they always say, 'Be respectful of other people's opinions.' So, I think it goes well. It just surprises me sometimes to hear people who aren't always so considerate or always so compassionate. You're going to be a social worker. You need to work on that. But I know that religion is a hot topic…it's just one of those things that I think people try to avoid if they can.

She observed the role and values of faculty members, particularly in establishing norms for classroom discussions. Also, noting potentially competing perspectives, another participant evaluated the classroom dialogue in the following manner:

> I see it as divisive in many situations. This picture I chose, in many ways the majority of students are coming from a Christian standpoint, so I kind of represented those, the majority, as those (pointing to darker circles). But then there's all these other differences, but sometimes the differences aren't heard because they are afraid of —like there are more of them (pointing to dark circles) and there's always this feel of like—well, OK, my perception is that there are more conservative Christians in this area, so if I speak as a progressive Christian that might not work with these other ones (pointing to darker circles). So maybe I'd be a dark blue or something. But then there might be somebody who is atheist or agnostic or Jewish or Buddhist or whatever their religious belief system is, and they really don't feel like they can do anything. In my cultural competency class where we talked the most about a class in spirituality and religion, and like a lot of people were like, 'that'd be great' but then we talked about how difficult that would actually be. And, on issues we actually talked about in cultural competency there

were two very vocal conservative Christians who were like totally disagreeing with any of the religious information. So, I see it as the possibility of being divisive is what my word was. And then you have professors that are coming from different places too. And, is it the social work program's responsibility to teach religion?

Photo 4



She wrestled with how to integrate this subject matter in a constructive way in the classroom, despite accepting the importance of religion and spirituality.

Discussion

This research identified participants' craving for more familiarity about organized religions, particularly related to the practices and beliefs followed in different traditions. Participants felt that knowledge would better prepare them for social work practice. The findings were more conflicting, however, related to the role of spirituality in social work education. Some participants felt that as spirituality is individualized, it is not necessary to share personal experiences and beliefs within the classroom. Some interviewees also feared that instruction might become prescriptive, whether explicitly or by implication, in classroom discussions. A competing perspective emerged though in some participants' desire for more authentic dialogue about spirituality within social work education. These individuals felt that dialogue could foster awareness and sensitivity to different practices and values, while honing listening and attending skills. Their premise was that they could then apply their increased skill set and understanding in later work with clients.

Participants tended to report limited attention to spirituality and religion within the social work classroom. Upon closer examination of the responses, however, it should be noted that several participants identified self-awareness, openness, and acceptance as prominent elements of the social work curriculum, although these were rarely explicitly deemed as components of spirituality. It seems that, perhaps, participants' ambivalence about spirituality within the social work curriculum may be impacted by a limited definition of spirituality. Rather than framing spirituality as a quest for meaning, hope, connection, and justice, participants seemed to emphasize practices that could also be deemed as religiously oriented or narrow in scope, such as meditation. It seems that self-awareness could be used as a mechanism to better understand one's spiritual beliefs and tendencies, but this link was not very well made within social work education. If course instruction more clearly framed spirituality as broader than religion, including meaning, purpose, and relationships to a higher power and others (Canda, 1990; Doe, 2004; Hodge & Horvath, 2011; Ingersoll, 1998; Koenig & Spano, 2007; Moss, 2011; Murdock, 2005), participants may more readily link self-awareness and relational skills to spirituality. This missed opportunity may have led most participants to underestimate the nature of spirituality or how to effectively integrate spirituality within the classroom.

The findings of this research resonated with past research on this topic, particularly in acknowledging that students desired to feel prepared for interaction with diverse client populations (Kriegelstein, 2006). Additionally, familiarity with prominent Christian traditions dominated the interview discussions, and according to participants, classroom dialogues as well, rather than including a broad spectrum of religions (Graff, 2007). This poses the risk of religious discrimination (Hodge, 2005). The only participant in this sample who did not identity as a Christian, in the past or present, expressed feeling silenced within the social work classroom and often juxtaposed her views against those of mainstream Christianity. This practice may be common, particularly when vocal conservative Christians are involved (Hodge, 2005; Ressler & Hodge, 2005; Todd & Coholic, 2007). This Christian dominance warrants attention within the classroom, as well as the development of facilitation skills by faculty members (Bethel, 2004; Coholic, 2006; Todd & Coholic, 2007).

Although Photovoice frequently pursues social change as participants share their work with a broader community to raise awareness and possibly generate social justice action (Hergenrather et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2010; Molloy, 2007), this work emphasized Photovoice as a mechanism to increase self-awareness (Smith et al., 2012; Taylor & Cheung, 2010).

Photovoice enhanced the quality of this study in several distinct ways. First, as spirituality in particular can feel nebulous, a visual representation sanctioned creativity and thoughtfulness in considering the subject matter

(Novek et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2012). Photovoice allowed participants time to contemplate the subject matter prior to the formal interview process. This created an opportunity to ponder possible responses before selecting a visual image to represent one's thought about the prompt. A second benefit, the visual response, enabled those participants who enjoyed photography and prefer visual expression an alternative response to interview processes only (Seiler, 2011). The photographs also facilitated a response in which participants positioned themselves in relation to the topics, whether they realized it consciously or not. Personal elements of the photographs, the location of the photographs, and the thought process explaining the image, all revealed clues about how the participants related to the subject matter.

Particularly interesting, as noted in the findings, was that participants frequently contextualized their responses with a discussion of what religion and spirituality meant to them and their own histories. This phenomenon may have emerged less directly without the inclusion of the Photovoice process as participants may have further distanced their personal experiences from their responses. This may have been especially valuable for the prompts related to spirituality, as participants in this study and past research have disclosed challenges in defining and describing spirituality in particular (Barker & Floersch, 2010). An interview process alone may not have provided the depth and dimensions that Photovoice provided, which ultimately enriched the findings of this study.

This study is not without its limitations. As noted previously, this study gathered data from eleven participants, all of whom were women. The participants did report varied amounts of exposure to religion and spirituality in childhood, dissimilar levels of current involvement in organized religion, and diverse spiritual values and practices. Consequently, this sample did not entirely represent the student body even at the selected university. However, the study sought to better understand participants' perspectives in depth, particularly through the use of a Photovoice method, rather than the creation of correlations between personal characteristics and attitudes towards the teaching of spirituality and religion. Participation in this study was also typically motivated by one or two factors: a passion for photography and visual expression, an interest in exploring this subject matter in depth, or a combination of both motives. These disparate motivations likely generated some divergence of perspectives, yet those students with strong feelings against or lacking familiarity with organized religion tended to not participate. On the other hand, only one participant represented fundamentalist values, thus reducing bias towards conservative ideologies as well.

Implications

This research holds implications for educational policy and practice, as well as ideas for future research. Participants noted interest in and the need for additional curriculum content about spirituality and religion. Particularly related to organized religion, most participants reported a greater need for educational content and commonly viewed this as related to cultural competence and human behavior. Participants reported concerns about not wanting to overgeneralize characteristics of any particular religious traditions, but rather desiring greater preparation before entry into the social work field. This was likely particularly important to this sample, as most had not yet secured paid employment within the social work field. This finding emphasizes a need to further address religion and spirituality within a social work curriculum.

The 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for social work education provide expectations for social work programs' implicit and explicit curricula and assessment of students' performance within the context of social work education (Council on Social Work Education, 2008). The current EPAS present ten core competencies and associated practice behaviors, intended to inform assessment and intervention with multiple and diverse systems and levels of practice (p. 3). Rather than discussing content area alone, the EPAS highlight behavioral indicators of the professional self for social work students. When spirituality and religion are addressed in human behavior and cultural competency courses they likely receive very limited time and attention; this survey overview may leave students feeling unprepared for addressing the nuances of spirituality and religion in practice.

An alternative gaining popularity is the offering of a specific elective, which is rarely a program requirement. The Council on Social Work Education will likely need to further consider the place of spiritual and religious training within social work curricula, particularly the quantity and quality of required content to determine what constitutes adequate preparation for competent social work practice. If the Council on Social Work Education further explicates standards for curriculum requirements, this clarity might benefit educators at public universities especially, as greater ambivalence towards this topic may be present within the student body. Although the sample size was small for this study, it exposed perspectives that differed greatly from each other. This lack of unification might easily become a rationale for avoidance of this topic within the social work curriculum, particularly if instructors are already hesitant to discuss religion or spirituality. A fair expectation, however, would be for instructors to address content beyond their own experiences and beliefs as this holds implications for understanding human behavior, discrimination, assessment, and treatment planning with the intention of grounding students with exposure to

knowledge and skills related to religion and spirituality in practice.

Several participants in this research, in fact, felt that personal spiritual beliefs should not be shared within the classroom. In contrast, others felt that this further stigmatized the subject matter and hindered their abilities to better understand unique perspectives within a moderated, learning environment. Past research, however, has indicated that learning approaches that incorporate experiential approaches, rather than solely lecture-based instruction, enhance student learning and skill development related to this topic (Coholic, 2006). Although personal disclosures and dialogue may heighten discomfort among some students, this approach may stimulate growth for developing social work students and prepare them for service delivery with diverse client populations. This also would promote students' investigation of their personal beliefs to better understand differences when working with service recipients (Northcut, 2004). This research supports direct exploration of this topic within the classroom, including the incorporation of personal dialogues within the classroom, despite noted risks.

Future research might further investigate the ambivalence discovered in this research. Since perceived discomfort among faculty and students was routinely noted by interviewees, what the avoidance and discomfort reflect and mean to social work students and within the classroom merit greater research attention. From a practical standpoint, professors and students must consider the nature and consequences of discomfort in contrast to avoidance of potentially sensitive subject matters that are likely to create more immediate uneasiness in the classroom. Further training specific to this subject matter, as well as complexities associated with teaching about religion and spirituality, may benefit professors (Canda, 2005).

As noted earlier, the dissension in attitudes towards the role and presence of spirituality in the social work classroom may indicate a lack of a grasp about what spirituality actually entails. Students resisted prescriptive teaching approaches, especially regarding their own values and behaviors, but that approach appears unlikely in a social work classroom. Participants often oriented their responses in relationship to their own personal religious and spiritual experiences; as some participants also noted, past research has underscored the notion that spirituality is embedded in lived experiences (Crisp, 2008). Better introductory instruction at the foundational level would help students distinguish spirituality and religion, as well as how to conduct spiritual assessments and provide spiritually-informed interventions (Furman et al., 2007; Rice and McAulifee, 2009; Seyfried, 2007).

Several participants conveyed a watchful approach in terms of observing faculty members and a curiosity about how faculty members approached or avoided this subject matter, including clues about their own backgrounds and values. Several participants, unsurprisingly, expressed a desire for faculty to disclose more personal background information about their own religious and spiritual journeys. Participants commonly described

professors' comments about maintaining open mindedness and the need to share from multiple perspectives, although many felt that faculty rarely stepped beyond that position of distance in facilitating class discussions. This alone may not generate learning spaces where students feel comfortable disclosing minority views, thus fostering perceived vulnerability by some. While the spiritual values and beliefs of others may be easier to ascertain or speculate about based on class discussions, a failure to attend to this directly may contribute to stereotypes and misapprehensions. Since these personal disclosures can pose risks, trust between students and faculty is required to successfully engage in personal sharing (Walmsley & Birkbeck, 2006).

Faculty members possess a critical role in this arena, both in modeling behavior and attitudes and in creating safe spaces for classroom discussion. This subject matter inherently presents some sensitivity for all involved; recognition of the potentially emotional, personal nature of this subject matter, the positions of privilege, and risk of 'othering' demand faculty attention and sensitivity in anticipation of prospective discomfort (Redmond, 2010). Additionally, students frequently look to faculty to demonstrate how to approach potentially delicate subject matters, as they may be able to replicate these approaches in practice. Research has found that students report benefits, including feelings of increased preparation and confidence, from faculty modeling of skills that they are likely to encounter in professional practice (Barretti, 2007; Selle, Salamon, Boarman, & Sauer, 2008).

This work highlighted the ambiguity about what constitutes competent practice when working with religiously and spiritually diverse populations. While research has begun examining the integration of spiritually-derived interventions, practice decisions are often based on practitioner discretion and judgment (Furman et al., 2007; Rice & McAuliffe, 2009; Sheridan & Hemert, 1999). Continued research oriented towards establishing baseline standards for competence could better inform classroom practices and training approaches. More research could also further explore what long-term practice outcomes exist based on levels of training, as well as potential limitations and gaps for those lacking additional training.

Conclusion

Past research studies have revealed that both students and practitioners often report feeling inadequately prepared to address clients' spiritual and religious needs. Participants in this research, during data collection via Photovoice, shared their perspectives through selected images and revealed aspects of their own histories and perceptions about spirituality and religion during debriefing processes. The eleven participants, who varied from each other in backgrounds and current religious and spiritual practices, delved into their experiences while training for the MSW degree at a public university. This research revealed that participants do expect religion and spirituality to be important in the lives of clients and

to emerge during assessment and intervention phases. Valuing the role that religion and spirituality may serve for clients, participants sought to avoid creating harm through a lack of knowledge and appreciation that they need more information about various religions than most currently possess. As found in past research, participants assessed class discussions as Christian-dominated or avoidant of this subject matter. While greater consensus existed about the teaching and importance of religious education, participants expressed more divergent views about spirituality, particularly as spirituality was a broader concept and more esoteric. Two of the eleven participants addressed self-awareness as related to spirituality and well-represented within the social work curriculum, yet the other nine participants did not make this connection. It seems that clearer explanation of spirituality and potential impacts to clients' lives would benefit MSW students as future social workers.

The participants also highlighted the need for faculty to demonstrate respectful attitudes, openness, and modeling, particularly in supporting students with non-Christian backgrounds or less popular views. Although the perception of hesitancy by faculty existed, students reported looking to faculty for leadership and discussion, and some interest in instructors sharing more information about their own backgrounds and beliefs. With the increased scholarly attention to this topic, future Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards will likely continue to establish educational expectations for BSW and MSW programs. Future guidance and dialogue also might further consider standards for public universities, which may be less likely to substantively include content about organized religions than private, specifically religiously-affiliated, institutions. ❖

References

Allen, D., & Hutchinson, T. (2009). Using PAR or abusing its good name? The challenges and surprises of Photovoice and film in a study of chronic illness. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 8*(2), 115-128.

Barker, S. L., & Floersch, J. E. (2010). Practitioners' understandings of spirituality: Implications for social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 46*(3), 357-370. doi:10.5175/JSWE.2010.200900033

Barretti, M. A. (2007). Teachers and field instructors as student role models: A neglected dimension in social work education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 27*(3/4), 215-239. doi: 10.1300/J067v27n03_14

Bethel, J. C. (2004). Impact of social work spirituality courses on student attitudes, values, and spiritual wellness. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work, 23*(4), 27-45. doi:10.1300/J377v23n04_03

Buckey, J. W. (2012). Empirically based spirituality education: Implications for social work research and practice. *Journal of Social Service Research, 38*(2), 260-271. doi: 10.1080/01488376.2011.647979

Canda, E. R. (2005). Integrating religion and social work in dual degree programs. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 24*(1/2), 79-91. doi:10.1300/J377v24n01_08.

Canda, E. R. (1990). An holistic approach to prayer for social work practice. *Social Thought, 16*(3), 3-13.

Carlson, E. D., Engebretson, J., & Chamberlain, R. M. (2006). Photovoice as a social process of critical consciousness. *Qualitative Health Research, 16* (6), 836-852. doi: 10.1177/1049732306287525

Cascio, T. (1999). Religion and spirituality: Diversity issues for the future. *Journal of Multicultural Social Work, 7*(3/4), 129-145.

Chaney, C. (2008). Religiosity and spirituality among members of an African American church community. A qualitative analysis. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 27*(3), 201-234.doi: 10.1080/15426430802202146

Chio, V. C. M., & Fandt, P. M. (2007). Photovoice in the diversity classroom: Engagement, voice, and the "eye/I" of the camera. *Journal of Management Education, 31* (4), 484-504. doi: 10.1177/1052562906288124

Cnaan, R. A., Boddie, S. C., & Danzig, R. A. (2005). Teaching about organized religion in social work: Lessons and challenges. *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought, 24*(1/2), 93-110. doi:10.1300/J377v24n01_09

Cohen, H. L., Thomas, C. L., Williamson, C. (2008). Religion and spirituality as defined by older adults. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 51*(3-4), 284-299. doi:10.1080/01634370802039585

Coholic, D. (2006). Spirituality in social work pedagogy: A Canadian perspective. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 26*(3/4), 197-217. doi:10.1300/J067v26n03_13

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). (2008). Educational policy and accreditation standards. Alexandria, VA: Author.

Crisp, B. R. (2008). Social work and spirituality in a secular society. *Journal of Social Work, 8*(4), 363-375. doi:10.1177/1468017308094990

Doe, S. S. (2004). Spirituality-based social work values for empowering human service organizations. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work, 23*(3), 45-65. doi:10.1300/J377v23n03_04

Doka, K. J. (2011). Religion and spirituality: Assessment and intervention. *Journal of Social Work in End-of-Life & Palliative Care, 7,* 99-109. doi:10.1080/15524256.2011.548049

Duffy, L. (2011). "Step-by-step we are stronger": Women's empowerment through Photovoice. *Journal of Community Health Nursing, 28,* 105-116. doi:10.1080/07370016.2011.564070

Ellison, C. G., Musick, M. A., & Henderson, A. K. (2008). Balm in Gilead: Racism, religious involvement, and psychologican distress among African-American adults. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 47*(2), 291-309. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5906.2008.00408.x

Flick, U. (1998). *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.

Flum, M. R., Siqueira, C. E., DeCaro, A. & Redway, S. (2010). Photovoice in the workplace: A participatory method to give voice to workers to identify health and safety hazards and promote workplace change—A study of university custodians. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine, 53* (11), 1150-1158. doi: 10.1002/ajim.20873

Furman, L. D., Zahl, M., Benson, P. W., & Canda, E. R. (2007). An international analysis of the role of religion and spirituality in social work practice. *Families in Society, 88*(2), 241-254. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.3622

Furman, L. D., Benson, P. W., Canda, E. R., & Grimwood, C. (2005). A comparative international analysis of religion and spirituality in social work: A survey of UK and U.S. social workers. *Social Work Education, 24*(8), 813-839. doi:10.1080/02615470500342132

Graff, D.L. (2007). A study of baccalaureate social work students' beliefs about the inclusion of religious and spiritual content in social work. *Journal of Social Work Education, 43*(2), 243-256. doi: 10.5175/JSWE.2007.200500526

Hergenrather, K. C., Rhodes, S. D., Cowan, C. A., Bardhoshi, G., & Pula, S. (2009). Photovoice as community-based participatory research: A qualitative review. *American Journal of Health Behavior, 33* (6), 686-698.

Heyman, J. C., Buchanan, R., Marlowe, D., & Sealy, Y. (2006). Social workers toward the role of religion and spirituality in social work practice. *Journal of Pastoral Counseling, 41*, 3-19.

Hodge, D. R. (2005). Spirituality in social work education: A development and discussion of goals that flow from the profession's ethical mandates. *Social Work Education, 24*(1), 37-55l. doi: 10.1080/0261547052000324982

Hodge, D. R., & Horvath, V. E. (2011). Spiritual needs in health care settings: A qualitative meta-analysis of clients' perspectives. *Social Work, 56*(4), 306-316.

Ingersoll, R. E. (1998). Refining dimensions of social wellness: A cross-traditional approach. *Counseling & Values, 42*(3), 156-166.

Koenig, T., & Spano, R. (2007). The cultivation of social workers' hope in personal life and professional practice. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work, 26*(3), 45-61. doi: 10.1300/J377v26n03_03

Krieglstein, M. (2006). Spirituality and social work. *Dialogue and Universalism, 2006* (5-6), 21-29.

Martin, N., Garcia, A. C., & Leipert, B. (2010). Photovoice and its potential use in nutrition and dietetic research. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research, 71* (2), 93-97. doi: 10.3148/71.2.2010.93

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Molloy, J. K. (2007). Photovoice as a tool for social justice workers. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 18*(2), 39-55. doi:10.1300/J059v18n02_04

Moss, B. (2011). The pedagogic challenge of spirituality: A 'co-creative' response. *Journal of Social Work, 12*(6), 595-613. doi: 10.1177/1468017310394239

Murdock, V. (2005). Guided by ethics: Religion and spirituality in gerontological social work practice. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 45*(1/2), 131-154. doi: 10.1300/J083v45n01_08

Newbury, J., & Hoskins, M. L. (2008). A meaningful method: Research with adolescent girls who use crystal methamphetamine. *Child Youth Care Forum, 37,* 227-240. doi: 10.1007/s10566-008-9059-1

Northcut, T. B. (2004). Pedagogy in diversity: Teaching religion & spirituality in the clinical social work classroom. *Smith College Studies in Social Work, 74*(2), 349-358. doi:10.1080/00377310409517720

Novak, D. R. (2010). Democratizing qualitative research: Photovoice and the study of human communication. *Communication of Methods and Measures, 4* (4), 291-310. doi: 10.1080/19312458.2010.527870

Novek, S., Morris-Oswald, T., & Menec, V. (2012). Using Photovoice with older adults: Some methodological strengths and issues. *Ageing and Society, 32*(3), 451-470. doi:10.1017/S0144686X11000377

Nutbrown, C. (2011). Naked by the pool? Blurring the image? Ethical issues in the portrayal of young children in arts-based educational research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 17*(1), 3-14. doi:10.1177/1077800410389437

Nykiforuk, C. I. J., Vallianatos, H., & Nieuwendyk, L. M. (2011). Photovoice as a method for revealing community perceptions of the built and social environment. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 10(2), 103-124.

Ornelas, I. J., Amell, J., Tran, A. N., Royster, M., Armstrong-Brown, J., & Eng, E. (2009). Understanding African American men's perceptions of racism, male gender socialization, and social capital through Photovoice. *Qualitative Health Research, 19* (4), 552-565. doi: 10.1177/1049732309332104

Ortega-Alcazar, I. & Dyck, I. (2011). Migrant narratives of health and well-being: Challenging 'othering' processes through Photo-elicitation interviews. *Critical Social Policy, 32*(1), 106-125. doi:10.1177/0261018311425981

Pickin, L., Brunsden, V., & Hill, R. (2011). Exploring the emotional experiences of foster carers using the photovoice technique. *Adoption & Fostering, 35* (2), 61-75.

Prins, E. (2010). Participatory photography: A tool for empowerment or surveillance? *Action Research, 8* (4), 426-443. doi: 10.1177/1476750310374502

Redmond, M. (2010). Safe space oddity: Revising critical pedagogy. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 30* (1), 1-14. doi: 10.1080/08841230903249729

Ressler, L. E., & Hodge, D. R. (2005). Religious discrimination in social work: Preliminary evidence. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work, 24*(4), 55-74. doi: 10.1300/J377v24n04_05

Rice, S., & McAuliffe, D. (2009). Ethics of the spirit: Comparing ethical views and usages of spiritually influenced interventions. *Australian Social Work, 62*(3), 403-420. doi:10.1080/03124070902964640

Schafer, N., & Yarwood, R. (2008). Involving young people as researchers: Uncovering multiple power relations among youths. *Children's Geographies, 6*(2), 121-135. doi: 10.1080/14733280801963003

Seiler, D. (2011). Age and learning style in the adult learner. *The Journal of Human Resource and Adult Learning,* 7(2), 133-138.

Seinfeld, J. (2012). Spirituality in social work practice. *Clinical Social Work Journal, 40*, 240-244. doi: 10.1007/s10615-012-0386-1

Selle, K. M., Salamon, K., Boarman, R., & Sauer, J. (2008). Providing interprofessional learning through interdisciplinary collaboration: The role of "modeling". *Journal of Interprofessional Care, 22*(1), 85-92. doi:10.1080/13561820701714755

Seyfried, S. F. (2007). Creating a diverse spiritual community: Reflections from a spirituality and social work practice class. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 16*(3-4), 159-167. doi:10.1300/J051v16n03_13

Sheridan, M. J., & Hemert, K. A. (1999). The role of religion and spirituality in social work education and practice: A survey of student views and experiences. *Journal of Social Work Education, 35*(1), 125-142.

Smith, L., Bratini, L., & Appio, L.M. (2012). "Everybody's teaching and everybody's learning": Photovoice and youth counseling. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 90*(1), 3-12. doi: 10.1111/j.1556-6676.2012.00001.x

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Taylor, P. G., & Cheung, M. (2010). Integration of personal/professional self (IPPS) through reflective/experiential learning. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 30*, 159-174. doi: 10.1080/08841231003705248

Teti, M., Murray, C., & Johnson, L. (2012). Photovoice as a community-based participatory research method among women living with HIV/ AIDS: Ethical opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics,* 7(4), 34-43. doi:10.1525/jer.2012.7.4.34

Todd, S., & Coholic, D. (2007). Christian fundamentalism and anti-oppressive social work pedagogy. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work,* 27(3/4), 5-25. doi: 10.1300/J067v27n03_02

Wallerstein, N., & Bernstein, E. (1988). Empowerment education: Friere's ideas adapted to health education. *Health Education Quarterly, 15*(4), 379-394.

Walmsley, C. & Birkbeck, J. (2006). Personal narrative writing: A method of values reflection for BSW students. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work, 26* (1/2), 111-126. doi: 10.1300/J067v26n01_07

Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education Behavior, 24* (3), 369-387. doi: 10.1177/109019819702400309

Wang, C. C., & Redwood-Jones, Y. A. (2001). Photovoice ethics: Perspectives from Flint Photovoice. *Health Education & Behavior, 28* (5), 560-572. doi: 10.1177/109019810102800504

***Cray Mulder**, Ph.D., LMSW, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Grand Valley State University, 401 W. Fulton, Grand Rapids, MI 49504. Phone: (616) 331-6550. Email: muldecra@gvsu.edu.*

Key Words: Spirituality, religion, social work education, photovoice, Christianity

A Study of the Link between Self-Esteem and Spiritual Experience of Parents Living in the 'City of Sadness' of Hong Kong

Tabitha Ng

Spirituality refers to an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being. It is also regarded as the deepest values and meanings by which people live. Spirituality is connected with health and well-being that is reflected in the quality of relationships that people have with themselves and with others. Research indicates that spirituality is associated with mental health, substance abuse prevention, marital functioning, parenting, and coping. This study examines the relationship between spiritual experience and psychological well-being of parents living in the remote district of Tin Shui Wai, stigmatized as the 'City of Sadness' in Hong Kong. The results suggest that more daily spiritual experience predicts higher level of self-esteem among parents.

Tin Shui Wai is the new town developed at the northwestern New Territories of Hong Kong. It has been known as the 'City of Sadness' after the occurrence of a multitude of family tragedies involving child abuse, domestic violence, mental illness and suicide. Tin Shui Wai is 4.3 square km with a population of 287,901 in 2011. The area is densely populated, with a high percentage of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients. A typical family in the area would be a nuclear family of three members. The median monthly income from main employment of the working population and the median monthly domestic household income in the area is just HK $10,000 (US $1,282) and HK $16,000 (US $2,051) respectively, the lowest among new towns in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2012a and 2012b). Tin Shui Wai is prone to family crises because of its remote location, limited employment opportunities, and high density of public housing estates. A large number of

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2014), 45–59
Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

new arrivals from the Mainland China in the district may also contribute to the frequent occurrence of tragedies as new arrivals need to adjust to living in Hong Kong.

The area can be divided into Tin Shui Wai North and South. Tin Shui Wai North is a newly developed community with a high concentration of new immigrants from the Mainland China (Chinese University of Hong Kong [CUHK], 2009) and it is a loosely integrated community in which residents have just superficial relations with neighbors (Hong Kong Baptist University [HKBU], 2009). The high number of vulnerable groups in the area was attributed to poor town planning, lack of private sector interest in its development and relocation of factories to the Mainland China (Law et al., 2009).

Spirituality and Self-Esteem

Spirituality refers to searching for an ultimate or immaterial reality (Cousins, 1992), an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his or her being, or the deepest values and meanings by which people live (Sheldrake, 2007). Spirituality is defined as the "person's search for a sense of meaning and morally fulfilling relationships between oneself, other people, the encompassing universe, and the ontological ground for existence" (Canda, 1990, p. 13). Spirituality is people's search for the Transcendent (Parament & Zinnbauer, 2005). Spirituality can be distinguished from religiosity. Spirituality can be defined as 'the paths people take in their efforts to find, conserve, and transform the sacred in their lives' whereas religiosity refers to a person's relationship with organized religion (Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001). Religion is defined as institutional, collective, ritualistic, directive with an emphasis on observable behavior whereas spirituality is seen as personal and often associated with internal processes (Underwood and Teresi, 2002; Hill, 2000; Koenig et al, 2001).

In this study, the concepts of spirituality and religiosity are used interchangeably. Spirituality is connected with health and well-being that is reflected in the quality of relationships that people have with themselves and with others. Some researchers (Mueller, Plevak, & Rummans, 2001; Pargament, 1997) indicate that spirituality and religion are associated with mental health, substance abuse prevention, marital functioning, parenting, and coping. Spirituality can also enhance the self-esteem of an individual (Koenig et al., 2001; Levin & Chatters, 2001; Plante & Sharma, 2001; Swinton & Kettles, 2001). Spiritual practices generally include activities such as meditation, prayer, contemplation, fasting (Lyubomirsky, 2007).

As spirituality is connected with health and well-being, then is there any relationship between one's spiritual experience and his or her self-esteem? Self-esteem has been defined by many scholars. Rosenberg (1965, 1989) defined self-esteem as a self-appraisal or self-worth whereas Byrne (1996) regarded self-esteem as the psychological and social attitudes to-

wards oneself. Hence self-esteem refers to an individual's sense of his value or worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves of, appreciates, prizes, or likes himself (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). In this study, the approach of Rosenberg is adopted and self-esteem is defined as a self-appraisal or self-worth. Self-esteem level is described as "people's general or typical feelings of global self-worth and self-liking." Self-esteem stability, on the other hand, reflects the "magnitude of short-term fluctuations that people experience in their immediate, contextually based feelings of self-worth" (Kernis, Brown, & Brody, 2000, p. 227).

Of the handful of research conducted on Tin Shui Wai, most put focus on the adequacy of social services, ways to improve the social network of residents, and development of the area as strategies to address the social problems (Hong Kong Polytechnic University [HKBU], 2009; HKPU, 2009; CUHK, 2009; Law et al., 2009). The link between spirituality and self-esteem of parents was examined because self-esteem is considered to be one of the important components of mental health (Scheier & Carver, 1992) and spirituality has shown to be beneficial to the well-being of people (Ellison, 1991; Argyle, 2001, Francis, Jones, & Wilcox, 2000). Those mothers with high self-esteem could cope better and were more optimistic compared to low self-esteem mothers (Brody et al., 1994). Studies of African American mothers have shown a positive effect of self-esteem on parenting practices (Taylor, Roberts, & Jacobson, 1997; Hess, Papas, & Black, 2002) and a negative correlation between self-esteem and depressive symptoms (Brody & Flor, 1997). Rosen, Spencer, Tolman, Williams and Jackson (2003) indicate that people of low socioeconomic status tend to have inadequate social resources, low levels of self-esteem, and high levels of psychological distress. They are often less confident and capable as parents than other individuals. Brody and Flor (1997) indicate that adequate financial resources are linked with higher self-esteem of mothers. Some scholars have hypothesized that religiosity and spirituality may serve as a buffer against the negative consequences of living in poverty (Office of Health Policy, ASPE, 2008).

This Study

In order to better assess the situation in Tin Shui Wai, this study examines a research question: Is ordinary spiritual experience associated with better psychological well-being of parents who live in Tin Shui Wai? This study has a hypothesis that higher level of daily spiritual experience can predict a higher level of self-esteem among parents. The research results would help to inform policymakers about how best to incorporate spirituality in social policy strategies targeting parents in a poor district like 'the City of Sadness' in Hong Kong. This study examines the effect of spiritual experience on the level of self-esteem of low-income parents in the 'City of Sadness' in Hong Kong.

Methods and Sampling

This study is a quantitative research study with a cross-sectional design and a survey approach that involved sending self-completion questionnaires to 129 parents who attended a 5-session parenting course in Tin Shui Wai. The survey allowed for the capture of a large field of data on potential variations in parents' perceptions about spiritual experiences and self-esteem and can lend itself to future replication.

Since this is a preliminary explanatory study about the link between self-esteem and spiritual experience of parents, a non-probability convenience sampling was employed in this study. The adoption of non-probability sampling in this study, despite its many limitations, can ensure a good response rate and provide a springboard for further research.

Participants were parents who enrolled in a parenting course organized by a local Christian organization in the remote district of Tin Shui Wai, Hong Kong. Most of them self-reported as having Christian affiliation and going to church regularly.

Procedure

A survey was conducted in late 2011 to collect opinions from 129 parents at the beginning of the parenting course. The participants completed a self-administered questionnaire using measures of Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES) and Self-Esteem Scale (SES). One hundred eighteen questionnaires (30 male and 88 female) were returned for a response rate of 91%.

Measures

Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES)

The DSES was developed by Underwood and Teresi in 2002 to measure both religiousness and spirituality (Underwood, 2006). It is an instrument designed to measure "a person's perception of the transcendent in daily life and his or her interaction with or involvement of the transcendent in life"(Underwood & Teresi, 2002, p.23). The 16-items scale includes constructs such as awe, gratitude, mercy, sense of connection with the transcendent, compassionate love, and desire for closeness to God. It also includes measures of awareness of discernment/inspiration and transcendent sense of self. This measure has been widely used in the social sciences for examining changes in religious/ spiritual experiences over time (Underwood, 2006). Internal consistency of responses in the current sample was high (α= 0.94). For questions 1 to 15, the response categories for the items were a 6-point Likert scale (i.e., Many times a day, Every day, Most days, Some days, Once in a while, and Never or almost never). The

item 16, "In general, how close do you feel to God?" was coded differently using a modified Likert scale, with 4 representing as close as possible and 1 representing not close at all. Scores are summed up and higher scores indicate higher level of spirituality.

Self-Esteem Scale (SES)

The concept of self-esteem is defined by many scholars. Among them, Rosenberg's (1965, 1989) studies of self-esteem are comprehensive. The instruments of self-esteem developed by Rosenberg have been used in many countries and were translated into many different languages, including Chinese (Schmitt & Allik, 2005). Hence, the concept of self-esteem proposed by Rosenberg is adopted in this study. Rosenberg's scale (1965, 1989) was developed to measure people's global feelings of self-worth or self-acceptance. It includes 10 items that are scored using a four-point response ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale is short, easy, and fast to administer. Extensive and acceptable reliability and validity information exists for the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). A Chinese version developed by Yeung (1998) was given to the participants. Internal consistency in the current sample was high ($\alpha = 0.86$).

Results

Demographic Background of Parents

Table 1 shows that the sample is predominantly female, middle-aged, married, of high school level, and with adolescent children. Most of the participants were mothers who would like to join local parenting courses to enhance their skills and knowledge in this aspect. Seventy-one parents (62.8%) were aged 41-50. One hundred one (87%) were married. The majority (59.3%) of the sample had high school level education. The majority of the sample consisted of middle-aged parents.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Parents

Characteristic	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	30	25.0
Female	88	75.0
Total	118	100.0

Characteristic	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Age		
Below 30	1	0.9
31-40	17	15.0
41-50	71	62.8
51-60	22	19.5
Above 60	2	1.8
Total	113	100.0
Missing	5	
Total	118	
Marital Status		
Married	101	87.0
Divorced	14	12.1
Partner Deceased	1	0.9
Total	116	100.0
Missing	2	
Total	118	
Education		
Primary or Below	15	13.1
Junior High School (S1-S3)	19	16.8
Senior High School (S4-S7/IVE)	67	59.3
College/University (Degree/Non-Degree)	10	8.9
Graduate School (Master/Doctor)		
Total	2	1.9
Missing	113	100.0
Total	5	
	118	
Age of Children		
Below 11	12	10.3
11-14	48	41.0
15-18	22	18.8
19-22	17	14.5
23 or above	18	15.4
Total	117	100.0
Missing	1	
Total	118	

Daily Spiritual Experience

For questions 1 to 15 on the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES), the response categories for the items were a 6-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Never or almost never; 2 = Once in a while; 3 = Some days; 4 = Most days; 5 = Every day; and 6 = Many times a day). The item 16, "In general, how close do you feel to God?" was coded differently. It has four responses with a modified Likert scale, with 4 representing as close a possible and 1 representing not close at all (1 = not at all; 2 = somewhat close; 3 = very close; 4 = as close as possible). Scores of individual items are summed up and higher scores indicate higher level of spirituality.

Among the 16 statements in the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (Table 2), the three most frequently reported statements were "I feel thankful for my blessings" (M = 4.81); "I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine" (M = 4.65) and "I feel God's love for me directly" (M = 4.42). The three least frequently reported statements were "I feel a selfless caring for others" (M = 3.50), "I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong" (M = 3.70) and "In general, how close do you feel to God?" (M = 3.84).

Table 2: Daily Spiritual Experience (in Statements)

Item (Min = 1; Max = 6)	Mean	SD
1. I feel God's presence.	4.30	1.19
2. I feel a connection to all of life.	4.04	1.15
3. During worship, or at other times when connecting with God, I feel joy which lifts me out of my daily concerns.	3.85	1.15
4. I feel strength in m religion or spirituality.	4.29	1.04
5. I feel comfort in my religion or spirituality.	4.32	0.91
6. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.	4.34	1.08
7. I ask for God's help in the midst of daily activities.	4.36	1.08
8. I feel guided by God in the midst of daily activities.	4.03	1.11
9. I feel God's love for me directly.	4.42	1.17
10. I feel God's love for me through others.	3.92	1.06
11. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.	4.05	1.09
12. I feel thankful for my blessings.	4.81	0.99
13. I feel a selfless caring for others.	3.50	0.94
14. I accept others even when they do things I think are wrong.	3.70	1.05
15. I desire to be closer to God or in union with the divine.	4.65	1.13
16. In general, how close do you feel to God?	3.84	1.04
The first 15 items are scored using a modified Likert scale, with 1 being the lowest score and 6 being the highest score. The 16th item has four responses with a modified Likert scale, with 1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest score. The higher the score, the higher the level of spirituality.		

When transforming the statements into constructs, Table 3 presents the results that more respondents experienced thankfulness and appreciation (M = 4.81), divine help (M = 4.36) and peace (M = 4.34) in their daily spirituality experience. On the other hand, they experienced less compassionate love (M = 3.6), and joy, and transcendent sense of self in daily life.

The sixteen-item scale was built on a set of important constructs and the validity of the items has been tested qualitatively (Underwood, 2006). The conceptual category Connection refers to questionnaire items 1 and 2; Joy, Transcendent sense of self refers to questionnaire item 3; Strength and comfort refers to questionnaire items 4 and 5; Peace refers to questionnaire item 6; Divine help refers to questionnaire item 7; Divine guidance refers to questionnaire item 8; Perceptions of divine love refers to questionnaire items 9 and 10; Awe refers to questionnaire item 11; Thankfulness, appreciation refers to questionnaire item 12; Compassionate love refers to questionnaire items 13 and 14; and Union and closeness refers to questionnaire items 15 and 16.

Table 3: Daily Spiritual Experience (in Category Analysis)

Item (Min = 1; Max = 6)	Mean	SD
Connection	4.17	1.10
Joy, transcendent sense of self	3.85	1.15
Strength and comfort	4.30	0.94
Peace	4.34	1.08
Divine help	4.36	1.08
Divine guidance	4.03	1.11
Perceptions of divine love	4.17	1.01
Awe	4.05	1.09
Thankfulness, appreciation	4.81	1.17
Compassionate love	3.60	0.79
Union and closeness	4.25	0.88
N = 118. The lowest score of each item is 1 and the highest score is 6. The higher the score, the more frequent the spiritual experience of that type.		

Self-Esteem

Table 4 sets out the 10 items of the Self-Esteem Scale which consists of two dimensions, namely self-worth and self-depreciation (Owens, 1993, 1994). Self-worth includes five positively stated items and self-depreciation includes five negatively stated items. The top two statements that the respondents rated as "strongly agree" included "I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others" (M = 3.19) and "I take a positive attitude toward myself" (M = 3.19). The top two statements that the sample not so strongly agreed with included "I wish I could have more respect for myself" (M = 2.00) and "I feel I do not have much to be proud of" (M = 2.84).

Table 4: Self-Esteem

Item (Min = 1; Max = 4)	Mean	SD
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	3.03	0.69
At times, I think I am no good at all.*	3.02	0.077
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	2.97	0.42
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	2.86	0.55
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.*	3.84	0.70
I certainly feel useless at times.*	3.81	0.83
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	3.19	0.63
I wish I could have more respect for myself.*	2.00	0.64
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	3.10	0.78
I take a positive attitude toward myself.	3.19	0.57
N = 118. The lowest score of each item is 1 and the highest score is 4. Items with an asterisk are reverse scored.		

Summary Statistics for Variables Used in the Analysis

Table 5 summarizes the results of the two variables used in the analysis. The respondents could generally get higher scores in daily spiritual experience and self-esteem. The respondents had a positive self-esteem (mean score = 29.22, SD = 4.41). The results were higher than the Hong Kong sample conducted by Schmitt and Allik (2005) that consisted of 200 participants mainly composed of college students and community residents (mean score = 27.54, SD = 3.67).

Table 5: Summary Statistics for Variables Used in the Analysis

Scale	Mean	SD
Dailey Spiritual Experience	4.14	0.77
Self Esteem	29.22	4.41
N = 118. For Daily Spiritual Experience, the lowest score of each item is 1 and the highest possible score is 6. For Self Esteem, the lowest score is ten and the highest possible score is 40. The higher the score, the higher the self-esteem.		

Relationship Between Daily Spiritual Experience and Gender, Age, Education

Table 6 presents the results of linear regression analysis for the relationship between daily spiritual experience and these demographic variables: gender, age of respondent, education, and age of the respondents' children. The results show that daily spirituality experience had a significant relationship only with gender. It reflects that daily spirituality experience has a positive relationship with gender (at .01 significance level). The effect of gender on daily spiritual experience is weak (r = .213). Gender accounts for 6.3% of the variation in daily spiritual experience.

Table 6: Regression Results for Relationship Between Daily Spiritual Experience and Gender, Age, Education

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Gender	0.338	2.186*	0.213
Age of Parents	0.005864	-0.393	0.695
Age of Children 0.001164 0.144			0.019
Education	0.006009	-0.940	-0.096
R^2 = .063; N = 118; *p<.01			

Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Daily Spiritual Experience

Table 7 shows the result of standardized regression coefficients between self-esteem and daily spiritual experience. It indicates that the two variables have a positive relationship. The more daily spirituality experience the respondents have, the higher the self-esteem they will have (at .01 significance level). The effect of daily spiritual experience on self-esteem is moderate (r = .454). Changes in daily spirituality experience account for 20.6% of the variation in self-esteem.

Table 7: Regression Result for Relationship Between Self-Esteem and Daily Spiritual Experience

	Regression Coefficient	t-statistic	Standardized Regression Coefficient
Self Esteem	2.633	5.390*	0.454
Intercept	18.275	8.894	0.695
R^2 = .206; N = 118; *p<.01			

Suggestions for Further Research

The present study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, there are several theoretically viable explanations for the observed associations. One alternative explanation is bias owing to social desirability. It is possible that some participants might have falsely responded to some questions to protect their religious identities and values.

Moreover, the data are limited to a small district of Tin Shui Wai and the sample is non-randomized, which may limit the generalization of the research results. The sample is dominated with Christian affiliation and caution is needed in interpreting results. Koenig et al. (2001, p. 468) point out that 'not all religious beliefs may have the same impact on health outcomes'. The sample is not representative of people in Tin Shui Wai, which includes people who have no religion or have religions other than Christianity.

The study found a link between parents' spiritual experience and self-esteem but not on the effects of parental self-esteem or spiritual experience on parental practices or children's development. In the future, more research in this area may be needed. Further, the data are mainly from female parents so it is not certain if the results can extend to men. A prospective study with a sample that has equal number of males and females is needed. As compared to men, women are known to exhibit higher rates of religious and spiritual involvement. Thus, the results may overestimate the influence of spiritual involvement simply because religion may be more salient in the lives of women. Furthermore, the scales are originally developed in the Western context and may fail to consider some indigenous items. Translation problems may also have had an effect on the results.

Spiritual activities may be a helpful behavioral intervention and possibly have a positive impact on psychological well-being of parents. Additional research is needed to explore how best to integrate religious or spirituality into assessment and intervention (Fallot, 2007; Bellamy et al., 2007).

Conclusion

In this article, we examined the association between parents' daily spiritual experience and self-esteem. The results suggested that higher levels of daily spiritual experience among parents could predict higher level of self-esteem. Spiritual activities can encourage more frequent daily spiritual experience (Under wood & Teresi, 2002). In a so-called "City of Sadness"—a community of remote location and with low-income families, limited employment opportunities, high density of public housing estates, and a large number of new arrivals from the Mainland China, Tin Shui Wai is prone to family crises and family tragedies involving child abuse, domestic violence, mental illness and suicide. Experiences of spirituality on the part of the local people and parents may provide them with the chance to build up positive role identities and role expectations. Positive self-perceptions gained through religious involvement may be especially valuable for parents who lack important socially valued achievements. Social programs may be developed to empower the community in Tin Shui Wai (HKBU, 2009). After the occurrence of family tragedies in Tin Shui Wai, a coalition of churches in the area worked together to consolidate resources to offer help to residents (HKPU, 2009). Besides religious-based programs, local churches can organize community-based programs to promote spirituality in the community.

As spirituality has shown to be beneficial to a person's well-being (Ellison, 1991), social workers should consider bringing spirituality into clinical practice and family treatment (e.g. Butler, Stout, & Gardner, 2002; Williamson, 2003). Holistic treatment strategies are advocated by many writers (Bellamy et al., 2007; Koenig, et al., 2001). Holistic treatment approaches, including the bio-psycho-social-spiritual model and the Body-Mind-Spirit model, could be considered by social workers for assessment and intervention (Chan, Ho, & Chow, 2002; Prest & Robinson, 2006). Looking ahead, social work professionals need to further explore various means to enhance self-esteem of parents and incorporate spirituality into intervention strategies. ❖

References

Argyle, M. (2001). Religion. In *The psychology of happiness*, 2nd ed. (pp. 164-177). New York, NY: Routledge.

Bellamy, C.D., Jarrett, N.C., Mowbray, O., MacFartane, P., Mowbray, C.T., & Holter, M.C. (2007). Relevance of spirituality for people with mental illness attending consumer-centered service. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 30*(4), 287-294.

Blascovich, J., & Tomaka, J. (1991). Measures of self-esteem. In J. Robinson, P. Shaver, & L. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (pp. 161-194). New York, NY: Academic Press.

Brody, G., & Flor, D. (1997). Maternal psychological functioning, family processes, and child adjustment in rural single-parent, African American families. *Developmental Psychology, 33,* 1000-1011.

Brody, G., Stoneman, Z., Flor, D., McCraru, C., Hastings, L., & Conyers, O. (1994). Financial resources, parent psychological functioning, parent co-caregiving, and early adolescent competence in rural two-parent African American families. *Child Development, 65*, 590-605.

Butler, M. H., Stout, J. A., & Gardner, B. C. (2002). Prayer as a conflict resolution ritual: Clinical implications of religious couples' report of relationship softening, healing perspective, and change responsibility. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 30*, 19-37.

Byrne, B. M. (1996). *Measuring self-concept across the life span: Issues and instrumentation*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Canda, E. R. (1997). Spirituality. In L. E. Richard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of social work* 19th edition supplement (pp. 299-309). Washington, DC: National Association of Social Workers.

Census and Statistics Department (2012a) *Working Population by New Town and Monthly Income from Main Employment, 2011 (H117)*. Available at: http://www.census2011.gov.hk/en/main-table/H117.html (25 July 2013).

Census and Statistics Department (2012b) *Domestic Households by New Town and Monthly Domestic Household Income, 2011 (H105)*. Available at: http://www.census2011.gov.hk/en/main-table/H105.html (25 July 2013).

Chan, C. L. W., Ho, P. S. Y., & Chow, E. (2002). A body-mind-spirit model in health: An Eastern approach. In A. C. Jackson & S.C. Segal (Eds.), *Social work health and mental health: Practice, research and programs* (pp. 261-282). New York, NY: The Haworth Press Inc.

Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)(2009). *A comparative community study of Tin Shui Wai and Sham Shui Po*. Hong Kong Central Policy Unit publication.

Cousins, E. (1992). Preface to F. Antoine & N. Jacob. In *Modern esoteric spirituality*. New York, NY: Crossroad Publishing.

Ellison, C. (1991). Religious involvement and subjective well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, *32*, 80-99.

Fallot, R. D. (2007). Spirituality and religion in recovery. Some current issues. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 30*(4), 261-270.

Francis, L., Jones, S. & Wilcox, C. (2000). Religiosity and happiness: During adolescence, young adulthood, and later life. *Journal of Psychology & Christianity*, *19,* 245-257.

Hess, C.R., Papas, M.A., & Black, M.M. (2002). Resilience among African American adolescent mothers: Predictors of positive parenting in early infancy. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 27,* 619-629.

Hill, J. (2000). A rationale for the integration of spirituality into community psychology. *Journal of Community Psychology, 28(2)*, 139-149. Doi:10.1002/(SICI)1520-6629(200003)28:2<139::AID-JCOP3>3.0.CO;2-X.

Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)(2009). *A study on the social networks of residents in Tin Shui Wai*, Hong Kong Central Policy Unit publication.

Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU)(2009). *A study on mapping the associational life in Tin Shui Wai*. Hong Kong Central Policy Unit publication.

Kernis, M. H., Brown, A. C., & Brody, G. H. (2000). Fragile self-esteem in children and its associations with perceived patterns of parent-child communication. *Journal of Personality, 68*, 225-252.

Koenig, H. G., McCullough, M. E. & Larson, D. B. (2001) *Handbook of religion and health*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Law, C. K., Wong, Y. C., Chui, E., Lee, K. M., Pong, Y. Y., Yu, R. & Lee, V. (2009) *A study on Tin Shui Wai New Town*. University of Hong Kong publication.

Levin, J. S. & Chatters, L. M. (2001). Research on religion and mental health: An overview of empirical findings and theoretical issues. In T. G. Plante and A. C. Sherman (eds.), *Faith and health psychological perspective* (pp. 33-50). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness*. London: Sphere.

Mueller, P. S., Plevak, D. J., & Rummans, T. A. (2001). Religious involvement, spirituality and medicine: Implications for clinical practice. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings, 76*, 1225 – 1235.

Office of Health Policy, ASPE (2008). *The role of religiosity in the lives of the low-income population: A comprehensive review of the evidence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

Owens, T. J. (1993). Accentuate the positive and the negative: Rethinking the use of self-esteem, self-depreciation and self-confidence. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 56*, 288-299.

Owens, T. J. (1994). Two dimensions of self-esteem. Reciprocal effects of positive and self-depreciation on adolescent problems. *American Sociological Review, 59*(3), 391-407.

Pargament, K. I. (1997). *The psychology of religion and coping: Theory, research, and practice*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Parament, K. I., & Zinnbauer, B. J. (2005). Religiousness and spirituality. In R. F. Paloutzian (Ed.), *Handbook of psychology of religion and spirituality* (pp. 21-42). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Plante, T. G. & Sharma, N. K. (2001). Religion, faith and mental health outcomes. In T. G. Plante & A. C. Sherman (eds.), *Faith and health psychological perspective* (pp. 240-261). New York, NY: The Guilford Press.

Prest, L. A., & Robinson, W. D. (2006). Systemic assessment and treatment of depression and anxiety in families: The BPSS model in practice. *Journal of Systemic Therapies, 25*(3), 4-24.

Rosen, D., Spencer, M., Tolman, R., Williams, D., & Jackson, J. (2003). Psychiatric disorders and substance dependence among unmarried low-income mothers. *Health & Social Work, 28*, 157–165.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rosenberg, M. (1989). *Society and the adolescent self-image*, Revised edition. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Scheier, M. F., & Carver, C. S. (1992). Effects of optimism on psychological and physical well-being: Theoretical overview and empirical update. *Cognitive Therapy and Research, 16,* 201-228.

Schmitt, D. P. & Allik, J. (2005). Simultaneous administration of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in 53 nations. Exploring the universal and culture-specific features of global self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 89(4)*, 523-642.

Sheldrake, P. (2007). *A brief history of spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Swinton, J. & Kettles, A. (2001). Spirituality and mental health care: Exploring the literature. In J. Swinton (ed.), *Spirituality and mental health care: Rediscovering a forgotten dimension* (pp. 64-134). London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingslay Publisher.

Taylor, R. D., Roberts, D., & Jacobson, L. (1997). Stressful life events, psychological well-being, and parenting in African American mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology, 11,* 436-446.

Underwood, L. G. (2006). Ordinary spiritual experience: Qualitative research, interpretive guidelines, and population distribution for the Daily Spirituality Experience Scale. *Archive for the Psychology of Religion/ Archiv fur Religions psychologie*, *28*(1), 181-218.

Underwood, L .G., & Teresi, J. A. (2002). The Daily Spiritual Experience Scale: Devekionebt, theoretical description, reliability, exploratory factor analysis, and preliminary construct validity using health-related data. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 24(1)*, 22-33, doi: 10.1207/S15324796ABM2401_04.

Williamson, B. (2003, February). *God's own pace: Systems theory and spirituality.* Workshop presented at the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center, Wheaton, IL.

Yeung, K. C. (1998). The dynamics of interparental conflict and adolescent's behavior problems. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.

***Tabitha* Ng**, *Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Shue Yan University. Email: ylng@hksyu.edu*

Key Words: spirituality, self-esteem, City of Sadness

Christian Distinctives in Orphan Care in China: Reflections on an Agency Visit

Cathy Neimetz

Caring for orphaned children is not exclusively a Christian undertaking. However, orphan care is a task ordained by God as evidenced throughout scripture and church history. This paper reflects on how Christian orphan care is, or should be, distinct from secular care. Theological and theoretical positions are presented initially to establish a foundation upon which orphan care is based. These theoretical concepts are then examined in light of one specific Christian orphanage in China. Responses from director and caregiver interviews are used to highlight the Christian nature of orphan care. Specifically three themes are examined: God as Provider, Family Affiliation, and Transmission of Faith.

THERE ARE AN ESTIMATED 132 MILLION ORPHANED CHILDREN WORLDWIDE (UNICEF, 2012). Traditionally, orphaned children who were not cared for by other relatives or community members were cared for in institutional settings such as orphanages and asylums (Weisner-Hanks, 2008). Today, attempts are made to place children in home-like environments with relatives or other community members. Nevertheless, a large number of orphaned children are cared for in orphanages run by either the nation's government or by humanitarian organizations (Liu & Zhu, 2009; Garcia & Fernandez, 2009). Moral obligation, compassion, philanthropy, 'motherly instinct,' and other reasons can be given for why secular organizations have cared for orphaned children. What role then does the Christian have in caring for orphans? What is unique to Christian orphan care that cannot be found in secular attempts to meet the needs of these children?

This article explores some of the ways in which faith-based care may differ from secular care as reflected by experiences in one Christian orphanage in China. In 2006 I had the opportunity with a Chinese Translator to live for two weeks at one Christian-based orphanage in a rural town in

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2014), 60–78
Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

China with an approximate population of 170,000 people. The main focus of the research project was to examine the care giving practices within the orphanage. Firsthand reports and limited research had been conducted on government-sponsored care, but little to nothing existed describing the care provided in a private or Christian-based orphanage in China (Meng & Kai, 2009).

The intent of this paper is to examine how the Christian principles exemplified in this one particular orphanage reflect a deeper theological understanding of orphan care. Orphan care is not exclusively a Christian endeavor. In China alone there are over 700,000 orphaned children (UNICEF, 2012) with slightly over 2,000 government-run Social Welfare Institutes throughout the country (Lin & Shan, 2007). Orphan care is often viewed globally as a moral obligation regardless of one's faith. What then is uniquely Christian about orphan care? How does one's Christian faith influence the care provided to children who are not biologically one's own? The premise of this paper is to examine how the Christian faith has shaped orphan care and the ways in which it specifically affects how care-givers care for the children, particularly when that Christ-centered care is being conducted in a historically non-Christian environment, The People's Republic of China.

Christian Foundations of Orphan Care

While orphan care is not exclusively a Christian concept, it does have its roots firmly planted in its ordination by God, the Christian church, and theologians, past and present. An examination of this God-ordained task is first presented as a means of establishing how the Christian faith has set the foundation upon which current day orphan care is built. After establishing the foundation upon which Christian orphan care is based, this paper will examine the unique contributions that Christian faith makes in the operationalization of caring for the physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, and spiritual development of orphan children.

Ordained by God

Scripture is replete with the admonition to care for orphaned children. Psalm 68:5 states "Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling" (NIV). In his essay on the Old Testament admonition to care for orphans and widows, Richard Patterson (1973) writes:

> It is interesting to note that a concern for the widow, the orphan, and the poor is permanently woven into the fabric of those crucial sections dealing with the covenant made between God, the sovereign, and His people, Israel, both in the covenant code of Sinai and its renewal before entering

> the land of Canaan. In Exodus 22:21-24; 23:6, the widow, the orphan, and the poor fall under the protection of God Himself. This is reiterated in Deuteronomy, where God is represented as the supreme judge who has the interest of these elements of society at heart (10:18 ff.). This is true not only with regard to the set feasts of Israel (Deut. 16:11, 14) but in the special regulations of Israel's religious and social life, as well (Deut. 14:28-29; 24:17-22). (p. 228)

The special regulations found in Deuteronomy specifically required the Israelites to set aside a portion of their produce each year for the destitute, which included the orphan. As with much of the Old Testament, the laws and special regulations set up by God serve as a reminder of His supremacy and infinite grace and provision for his people. God's admonition to care for orphans is further carried over into His new covenant with man. In James 1:27, James states, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (NIV).

Admonished by the Church

Historically, the Christian church has an extensive record of caring for the poor, sick, widowed, and orphaned (Miller, 2003). In the first century, the Christian church was encouraged to select deacons who could oversee the 'non-priestly' duties of the church such as caring for the poor. Specific instructions were offered by Paul himself as he talks of bringing material goods from Macedonia and Achaia to support the poor in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26 & 27; NIV). Both Paul and James were adamant about the church's role in caring for the widow, orphan, and the poor in the midst of a growing yet persecuted church. Early church history recounts acts of charity toward orphans, in particular from St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom and later by St. Vincent de Paul (Uhlhorn, 2010). This type of care stood in stark contrast to the Roman government's non-interest in caring for the needy within the society (Lampe, 2003).

Present day churches and Christian ministries continue to advocate for the church body to care for orphans. One such ministry, Christian Alliance for Orphans, attempts to support churches in meeting the needs of orphans worldwide. One of their seven core principles specifically mentions that all endeavors to care for orphans should prioritize the role of the local church (Christian Alliance for Orphans, 2012).

Supported by Theology

Over the centuries, Christian leaders and theologians have used the Old and New Testament scriptures to remind believers of the God-given admonition to care for the fatherless. Martin Luther, a German theologian during the late 1400s and early 1500s, extolled the virtues of expressing one's Christian faith through acts of love. Faith in Christ brings about salvation; however, true faith, according to Luther, leads the believer to acts of love and compassion towards his neighbor. Civic welfare was a part of Lutheran communities, including the plans for the city of Leisnig. In Leisnig, Luther advocated for a community fund to provide for the education, housing, and general care for poor families and orphaned children (Strohl, 2001).

August Hermann Francke, a German Pietist in the late 1600s, was greatly impacted by Luther's theology and emphasis on carrying out one's faith through acts of love. Francke was appalled that the severe economic hardships in Germany forced many children to beg and steal and so established extensive networks of schools and orphanages to care for and educate poor and orphaned children (Bunge, 2001). Despite the social stratification of the time, Francke made sure that orphaned children who displayed educational promise received not only care, but also an education typically made available only to those of high social standing. The concepts of 'piety' and 'goodness' were the driving force behind both Luther and Francke's emphasis on social justice. Luther, Francke, and other great theologians of the latter century such as John Calvin and John Wesley were not only interested in caring for the physical and educational needs of orphaned and poor children, but were deeply concerned about the spiritual development of all children.

Clearly, there is a long history of God and His people being held responsible to provide care to orphans. The biblical underpinning of orphan care provides a sacredness to the act that would not exist apart from this foundation. However, as previously stated, orphan care is not exclusively a Christian task. The question then remains, are there distinctive elements to a Godly approach to orphan care?

This question has both theoretical and practical significance that extends far beyond the scope of this paper. This paper represents an attempt to examine this issue in the significant but limited setting of one faith-based orphanage located in the People's Republic of China. It specifically focuses on the ways in which the caregivers and directors of this orphanage explain their rationale for doing this work.

This study is an especially telling example of how Christianity may affect why someone cares for orphans and even more, ***how*** one cares for the orphan, since these caregivers are caring for children in a culture that is not historically or currently a Christian-based culture.

Historically, religion has played an important role in Chinese culture. Traditional eastern religions such as Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism

were the major religions (Halsal, 1999; Lai, 2003). Today most people in China report being non-religious, but Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are still practiced in some form, with many people borrowing from all 3 religions in practicing their faith. The percentage of the population professing Christianity is difficult to calculate. Part of the difficulty in estimating Christian followers is that Christian churches are separated into two categories: Registered (Three Self Patriotic Movement and Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association) and "Underground churches." These restrictions have caused some followers of the Christian faith to establish illegal "house churches." Most of the government's arrests and reported intimidation of Christians have been focused on this group (Lai, 2003).

The church operating the orphanage in this study is part of the registered Three Self Patriotic Church. The official government policy until recently was that religious instruction of children is illegal. In the last few years, the law has changed to allow parents to provide religious instruction and permits those children to attend a government-approved church. However, no other individuals or group may provide religious instruction or invite a child to church, including orphanage caregivers. Despite this law, many provinces have turned their attention away from this law as long as the organization providing the religious instruction is not creating conflict within the province or inciting action against the government (Lambert, 2001). While restrictions on the practice of religion appear to be relaxing, the caregivers and directors were raised in the 1960s and 1970s during a time when the eradication of religion was the intended goal for China's ruling party (Fengang, 2011).

The Chinese Faith-Based Orphanage and the Study Methodology

The Orphanage

In 2005 I had the privilege of meeting an American (who I will refer to as my 'host') who had been assisting several churches in China for over ten years. One of the churches he supported monetarily and spiritually also started and provided oversight to the orphanage that I wished to visit. I made a request through the host to visit the particular orphanage in hopes of understanding the operation and care provided within the home. My host presented two possible times to visit, one being during spring holiday and the other being the two weeks before spring holiday. During spring holiday, most businesses close, allowing families to travel and vacation and the children do not attend school for two weeks. Because the framework of this study involved analyzing typical daily routines, the time period before spring holiday was chosen. Throughout the next several months, the host and I communicated regarding all the details of the trip through e-mail. The orphanage staff invited me to live at the orphanage rather than stay

at a hotel, and I accepted. I requested a particular translator for this visit, one that I had met through a visit to China the previous year. I explained that her background as a kindergarten teacher would be beneficial to the type of research I was conducting. The host was able to arrange for this woman to be my translator during the visit. The host provided me with information regarding the appropriate way of thanking the orphanage staff for their assistance, in addition to financial compensation for my room and board. The host recommended that a small gift be given to each of the staff members in addition to the translator.

The orphanage building itself is a large, two-story building with a small courtyard and front porch. It is located in a residential section that has many other larger apartment buildings surrounding it. The orphanage half has nine total rooms which included several bedrooms, kitchen, study room with desks, and living room area with a couch and chairs. There are a total of two caregivers, one director, and the director's wife who is the co-director of the orphanage. Each caregiver has her own bedroom in the same half of the duplex as the children. The Director, Co-director and their son live in the other half of the duplex that is attached yet quite separate from the caregivers and children.

Caregiver 1 is in her late thirties. She has worked for this orphanage for 7 years and is a member of the church affiliated with the orphanage. Her husband died several years ago, leaving her the single mother of one teenage boy. Caregiver 1's son currently lives with his maternal grandmother.

Caregiver 2 has worked for the orphanage for 3 years and also attends the church. The co-director of the orphanage is her sister-in-law. Her husband works for the director as the manager of a factory, established by the director/co-director to help fund the orphanage. She has two adult children. Both caregivers live full-time at the orphanage and make approximately 600 Yuan per month. Neither caregiver has any training or formal schooling past ninth grade.

The director and co-director are between the ages of 40 and 45 years old. In addition to being the orphanage director, he is the pastor of the church that founded the orphanage, overseer of 17 churches in the area, and co-owner of the factory used to help fund the operation of the orphanage. He is married to the Co-director. They have one 17-year-old son who currently resides with the family. The Co-director is also a trained pastor who shares pastoral responsibilities with her husband.

There are a total of 29 children cared for at one duplex-style house. There are nine females and twenty males, with an age range from six to seventeen years old. There were three separate bedrooms. One bedroom housed the female children, with three girls sleeping in each of three queen-sized beds. A large second bedroom housed the younger males, again with three children to a bed. The third bedroom housed the older, teenage males. All of the children attend the local public school.

Methodology

Over the course of two weeks, I observed and interviewed the two caregivers and the director and co-director about their faith and their care giving practices. Because I lived at the orphanage, I was able to observe all daily routines during that time, including meals, preparation for school, household duties, church meetings, and bedtime routines. In qualitative research terms, I was a participant observer. I not only observed these events, but also was readily invited to participate in each of these areas. In fact, I was asked if I wanted to sleep in the girls' bedroom with the girls so that I would not be cold at night. I declined the offer, as did my translator, preferring to stay in the extra room.

In addition to my field notes of these events, a video camera was set up in the main living area that provided recordings of the dining area and living room area where the majority of events took place. Interviews took place as time allowed and followed a semi-structured format.

Caregiver interviews included discussions of general child development beliefs and specific expectations for themselves and the children in the home. The caregivers were asked to describe and reflect upon their own Christian beliefs and share their expectations for promoting the spiritual development of the children in the home. Interviews with the director and co-director followed a similar theme. Each was asked to describe and reflect upon their roles within the orphanage, and how their roles relate to the children and caregivers. They were asked about their personal faith as well as their expectations for how children and caregivers practice the Christian faith. Casual conversations with the directors and caregivers also provided additional insights.

Ideally, analysis should have started while I was in the field (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, because of the brevity of my stay, most of my time was consumed with collecting as much data as possible through observations and interviews. The first stage of my data analysis was the development of "start codes" established prior to my arrival in China (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Initially, the coding system was derived from my research questions in addition to my previous experiences in two faith-based orphanages. In general, these codes reflected both routines and beliefs. Codes for observations of general and faith-based routines were delineated. Additionally, codes were created for caregivers' and directors' beliefs about general child development and the caregivers' and directors' role in promoting healthy social/emotional development. Personal Christian beliefs and ways Christian beliefs are integrated into care practices were also given codes.

Some considerations of the data took place during my visit to the orphanage. During non-active or less active times of the day, the translator and I reviewed broad observations and the important concepts discussed during interviews. The translator helped guide my understanding and in-

terpretation of such events in a culturally appropriate way. The translator has lived in the area her entire life and provided information about how "typical" the actions and/or beliefs were to the general community.

After all videotaped observations and interviews were transcribed and translated into English, I began the process of hand coding interviews, observations, and additional field notes based upon the start codes. One unit of data was defined as one single statement, action, or topic. Some paragraphs contained several sentences to explain one topic and would therefore be coded as one unit while other units contained only one single statement made by one of the caregivers. Codes were created and deleted based upon the data, leaving 111 specific codes. I read the transcripts and reviewed the tapes repeatedly to immerse myself in the data (Hseih & Shannon, 2005).

After reviewing the data several times, I felt the need to more closely match my codes to literature from Chinese parenting and child development. Many of my start codes were based upon studies of American childcare caregivers. New codes were grounded in literature on spiritual development, Chinese parenting styles, collectivist cultures, and Chinese child/adolescent development. These constructs also more closely matched the current data set. Codes were reviewed with faculty members and graduate students from the University of Pittsburgh.

The result yielded 24 codes encompassing codes for caregiver and director's behaviors and beliefs. The 24 codes were related to 4 broad categories: Dependency Paradigms, Caregiving Behavior, Spiritual Attributions, and Attention to Routines. Final codes can be found in Appendix A. I then recoded the transcripts using the new coding structure. Multiple copies were made of the transcripts and field notes. Each set was color-coded according to one particular aspect of the code. For example, in one set of transcripts, data was coded with 3 different colors to identify Independent, Dependent and Interdependent actions or beliefs. I continued in this manner for all of the major coding categories (Directive/Responsive Caregiving; Physical, Social, Educational, and Spiritual Routines; and Spiritual Attributions). Additionally, 4 sets of transcripts were color-coded to identify statements or actions by the two caregivers and two directors. The color-coded sections were compared within and among the sets of transcripts until identifiable themes emerged. These themes were related to one of the three major coding categories.

Themes Linking Christian Faith and Orphan Care

Over the two-week period, three specific themes emerged that directly linked their Christian faith with their work in the orphanage. These themes are: God as Provider, Family Affiliation, and Transmission of Faith. Specific examples of how these themes were expressed at the orphanage are provided, followed by some discussion of how such examples might inform a more generalized influence of Christianity on orphan care.

God as Provider

The first and most frequently expressed theme was that of God as ultimate provider for both the children and the workers. Caregivers and directors expressed their dependence upon God for physical provisions of health and food. This was sometimes expressed in mealtime prayers led by an adult or through conversations held with the researcher throughout the study. The directors especially conveyed their dependence upon God for financial provisions. Often there was little or no money to buy medicine and good food, so the directors looked to God to provide for them and the children.

Little analysis needed to be done to realize that one major issue of concern to the co-director was the intense financial hardship. Many of our conversations resulted in her relating stories of financial hardship. This happened so often that the translator for the study became suspicious and was slightly put-off by the co-director in the first few days. The translator assumed that the co-director was making her financial hardships known to a wealthy American in hopes that money would be provided to them. The interpreter's skepticism gradually abated as she discovered that this was not the case. The following statement by the co-director (CD) is one example of the financial struggles conveyed daily during the visit:

> CD: One time three kids got sick with high fever and spent several days in hospital. One bottle of medicine is 20 RMB… We used to need 20,000 RMB each year to raise the kids. The price of rice has increased. The kids can eat two pots of dumplings. There are always school fees. There are hospital fees. Now it takes us 200,000 RMB.

In a separate conversation, the co-director stated the importance of living out her belief in God as her sole provider:

> Once it was a funny thing; there was a monk. This Chinese New Year he came here. This monk is very rich. He brought rice and oil for the orphans and said to the children that next Chinese New Year the kids come to his temple. He said you don't have to worship me; you can come to the temple to worship the idols. I said absolutely not! We believe in Jesus and there are no children who will worship that. I want to rely on God, Almighty God.

The directors and caregivers consistently referred to God's miraculous provision during difficult times. This was not simply an idea expressed by the adults, but a concept talked about and taught to the children living in the orphanage. Secular or government-run programs rely on distribution of funds from tax dollars, private grant money, or initiatives aimed at society's

moral obligation to help care for the less fortunate. The concept of reliance on a heavenly father providing for one's needs is unique to Christian-based care. The actual funds may come from individual donors, churches, or organizations, but the directors, caregivers, and children do not describe it this way. The prayer offered at one meal is one example of how reliance on God for their needs is woven into the fabric of how children are cared for in this Christian orphanage:

> CD: Let's close our eyes and pray: Thank you, Lord; you provide all our needs. I thank you, Lord, because you have created us and saved us… Lord, I thank you for taking care of us for the past 6 years…Lord, teach our teachers and us to love one another. Remove our hindrances; fill us with your love…Lord, you know each child has his weakness in his heart. Lord, deliver us and be with us. Lord, I thank you for giving us this building and provide all our food. Please sanctify them and nourish our bodies. Help each one of us really treasure our family… Amen.

The directors and caregivers could not rely on their wealth or even the wealth of the church that provided the main support for the orphanage since both institutions had very few financial resources. Secular orphan care is funded by tax dollars, private donors, and organizations wanting to give out of their own wealth and compassion. Christian care, while provided through many of the same financial avenues, demands a certain level of faith, faith that God will provide for the needs of His children (Douris, 2009). In Psalm 37:25 David states "I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread." David is reminded of the scriptures where God promises that He will not completely forsake His own (Genesis 17:7; 28:15). Whether it is the Israelite's daily dependence upon God for their manna in the wilderness or Elijah's needs being met through a raven delivering food (provided ultimately by God), God is repeatedly reminding his children that he is Jehovah Jireh,"The Lord who Provides."

The concept of God being an ultimate provider is often more of a theoretical and theological treatise than a true reality for affluent westerners. For Christians, the rationale for orphan care should be more than philanthropy or a response to an emotional plea. A Christian's rationale rather should be found in one's desire to act upon faith that God is our provider and is abundantly able to provide all that is needed in caring for brothers and sisters in Christ (Patterson, 1973). Faith and obedience to God in this act extends far beyond any feeling of moral obligation, since secular morality often changes throughout history (Bloom, 2010).

Family Affiliation

The prayer from the co-director expresses a deep dependence on God as the ultimate provider of all that is needed. The prayer also expresses a unity and family connectedness within the group. A theme expressed throughout the study by the director and co-director was that of being a father and mother figure to the children. The orphanage was to be viewed as their home and the children were expected to treat each other as brothers and sisters. This may be similar to what might be evident in some small group-home care, but the intention of the directors here was for the family affiliation to be a permanent affiliation, not temporary. The following is one example of how the director (D) expressed his desire to meet the children's need for a family.

> D: I want them to feel like they belong to a real family. I emphasize on the relationship between the children and the teachers and the relationship between the children and us. I want the children to call me father, call my wife mother, and call teachers aunt.

The director's method to meet the children's need for family tended to rely upon him explicitly stating that he is the child's father as evidenced by the following statement made during a conversation.

> D: I brought [the girl] to our home because her parents were in jail for selling drugs. She lived in [a] dark, shabby house with no water or electricity, she would just lie on the sofa. I brought her in and said that I am your father [now].

The director did not emphasize the physical care, improved housing conditions, or educational opportunity this young girl would receive. The director chose rather to emphasize the establishment of a father-figure in this girl's life. Several other references to father were made when caregivers spoke of the director to the children. It must be noted, however, that referring to a non-relative in kinship terms is not uncommon in China. While it was a gesture of familial acceptance on the director's part, the practice may also be influenced by the Chinese cultural practice (Wu, 1990).

The co-director (CD) and the two female caregivers (C1 and C2) emphasized the use of appropriate touching such as hugging and sharing a bed as an important means of meeting a child's need for family. Specifically, each mentioned the practice of co-sleeping as a primary means of establishing a mother-child bond typically with the youngest children, ages 5 and 6, but C2 mentions co-sleeping with an older child who was 13 years-old. The older child had lived with this particular caregiver since she was 6 years-old.

> CD: They all come to my bed. Originally, we [had fewer beds, two big beds and one small bed. They all came to the big one and [I'd] take turns to hug them. I want to be their mom. One of the girls' mother passed away when she was young so she never experienced being held by her mother or anyone else.
>
> C2: One older girl went to the factory with me [to obtain rice for the meal]. I have been living with that girl in one big bed at the apartment. This girl has no parents and she treats me like her mom.
>
> C1: Because so many kids are here, I sleep with them together. They want to come to my bed. These children feel like I am their mother when they sleep in the same bed with me at night. Although there are two big and one small bed in the apartment, everyone piles into the big bed at night with me instead.

To examine the meaning of this practice, it is important to consider how co-sleeping is viewed in the Chinese culture. It is more common than not to have a preschool-age child co-sleeping with a parent. Estimates of the practice tend to range from 70% for preschoolers to 50% for young school-aged children. The estimates decrease to 7% for young teens (Huang, Wang, Zhang, & Liu, 2010). Research also indicates that co-sleeping occurs more frequently in crowded and lower-income homes (Li, Jin, Yan, Wu, Jiang, & Shen, 2008). Both of these factors describe the situation in this orphanage. The fact that many children were now sharing the living space may have contributed to the practice of co-sleeping. Considering that both caregivers were also mothers of at least one biological child, it is not surprising that each would incorporate the practice into their care at the orphanage.

Both caregivers had families of their own (Caregiver 1 had a husband who lived nearby and Caregiver 2 had a 16 year-old son who lived with his grandmother nearby). Despite having families of their own, caregivers were driven to provide a sense of family for the children.

Providing a familial connection for these children mirrors God's redemptive work in bringing believers into His 'family' when they were lost and in need. In Hebrews 12:5-8, God refers to Himself as our father and His followers as His sons. Again in Ephesians 5:1, Paul admonishes the gentile believers to "Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children." In 1 John 3:2, Christ's followers are referred to as "children of God." When gentiles, formerly not considered God's children, were baptized into Christ, they became legitimate children of God with all of the rights and privileges of being God's child. Nowhere is this concept more clearly defined than in Galatians 3:26-29; 4: 1-7, where Paul tells the church, "You are all sons of

God through faith in Christ Jesus… If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." God's desire is for us to experience a sense of family, with God as our father and other believers being our brothers and sisters. God created us with a deep need for familial ties and relationship. The directors and caregivers in this orphanage acknowledged this need for family and were intentional about making the children aware that they were now part of their 'adoptive' family.

Transmission of Faith

In view of China's restrictions on religious teaching to children (Chinese law forbids children to be taken to religion services or provided with religious instruction by anyone other than the parents), it was quite interesting to discover how the Christian faith was incorporated into a faith-based orphanage. Carefully yet confidently would be an accurate description of the adult providers' use of Christian principles within the orphanage. China's Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) and its local officials are responsible for overseeing and regulating all religious activity in China. The director had meetings with local RAB officials throughout the study. The directors expressed the need for great caution to be taken. They did not fear for their own lives as much as they feared for the continuation of their work with the church and orphanage. If officials became too concerned about the religious nature of the orphanage, they might not permit the children to live there any longer.

This may explain why there was no formal religious instruction provided for the children. Formal religious instruction to children was forbidden until 2005 (Worldwide Religious News, 2005). However, integrating Biblical principles into everyday life is much more difficult to restrict. The director and co-director were confident in their calling to introduce the children to the Christian faith. For the directors, this could be accomplished by having caregivers integrate Christian teachings into everyday life events, therefore bringing less criticism by RAB officials. Scott & Magnuson (2006) affirm that children's spiritual development is not dependent upon specific instruction or training for it to be meaningful. While the directors did not perform most of the teaching, they tried to carefully select caregivers who would exemplify these spiritual qualities. The co-director related the story of how they had to fire several caregivers because they "do not have good faith and love." Directors expected the caregivers to live out their faith for the children just as the directors lived out their faith in view of the church, community, caregivers, and children.

The caregivers were given the primary responsibility of teaching the children Biblical principles. They were not observed teaching any lessons, although the co-director and caregivers all stated that once the children and caregivers settle in to the new building, they will have a lesson once

each week. During my visit, most of the spiritual training from caregivers came as the result of either discussion with children who were misbehaving or spiritual songs being sung at mealtime. Caregivers preferred to talk with the children about their misbehavior and link scriptural principles to desired behavior. This method of discussing important moral and spiritual beliefs in context displayed caregivers' responsiveness to children' needs. According to the directors, Biblical instruction was presented in a meaningful way to children according to their level of understanding. Since most children came to the orphanage with little or no understanding of Christianity, the directors focused on concepts such as forgiveness and salvation in a basic manner, using times when children needed to forgive each other as a way of teaching these concepts. This method has also been shown to be most effective in transmitting religious values from parent to child (Flor & Knapp, 2001).

Religious guidance often took the form of lessons on loving and forgiving one another after conflict arose between children. Children and adult providers modeled prayer to the children during meal times or special celebrations. Children's understanding of Christianity seemed focused on two areas: the attitudes or behaviors pleasing to God, and the ability of God to be their source of strength and guidance. The latter paralleled adult providers' own dominant spiritual attribution of God as their helper. However, when a reference to King David from the Bible was made, one older child did not know to whom it was referring. This was in contrast to the experience of most American children's initial understanding of Christianity. Often children are first introduced to traditional Bible stories and famous characters from the Bible (Noah and the Ark, Moses and the parting of the sea, David and Goliath) but have little understanding of how Biblical values should be integrated into their own lives.

The integration of spiritual principles at the orphanage by the caregivers has led to a greater application of Christian principles despite the lack of specific Biblical knowledge. The directors expressed their desire for the caregivers to have strong faith so that caregivers could display that faith to the children in how they cared for them, displaying forgiveness, love, and self-discipline. Scott & Magnuson (2006) advocate integrated presentation of spiritual principles and further state "spirituality that is being lived by the staff and echoed in the life of the whole context can be held without comment or instruction until there is an invitation or exploration from the child" (p. 456). Although the integrated methods used in this study may be more the result of practicality, they nevertheless provide sound support for children's spiritual development.

The desire to live out the Christian faith for these children reflects the missional nature of Christian orphan care and is a second way in which faith-based care differs from secular care. Many wonderful, caring people provide care to orphaned children in secular institutions and humanitarian

organization-sponsored children's homes. However, these secular programs provide care for the physical, cognitive, social and emotional needs of the children but lack the ability to truly mentor children in their spiritual lives (Douris, 2009).

Unmerited love and forgiveness are foundational principles for the Christian faith and are difficult to understand or implement apart from a Biblical framework for doing so. It makes no earthly sense for a child to forgive a biological parent for his abandonment. However, the concept of forgiveness is personalized when a child learns of his own sin and inability to pay the penalty for that sin, (Schimmel, 2002). The idea that we are to forgive others as Christ forgave us is consistently applied within the context of daily living at this orphanage rather than through direct Biblical instruction.

The directors and caregivers model and teach the children according to God's word, much like a family might mentor their own biological children. The fact that these caregivers extend care beyond just the 'fleshly' physical or emotional needs to meet the spiritual void in these children's lives also reflects Christ's own nature. While on earth, Christ met the physical needs of those brought to him by healing the sick and lame, raising the dead, and even in feeding the multitudes that gathered to hear him speak. However, there were many times when Christ looked beyond the temporary, earthly need and spoke to the person's spiritual need. Such was the case for the paralytic man described in Mark 2: 1-12. When lowered through the roof to get to Jesus, Jesus first responds "Son, your sins are forgiven." The man had an obvious physical need, but Jesus saw the man's more eternal need for salvation and spoke to this need before healing the man.

Limitations

Comparisons and generalizations with any other institution are difficult because this project was a single case study of one faith-based orphanage in China. The uniqueness of the location and personal histories of the caregivers and children make direct comparisons to other Chinese orphanages unsuitable. Ideally, observations of several faith-based orphanages inside and outside of China would provide a more comprehensive portrayal of care at faith-based orphanages.

The fact that this was a cross-cultural study implies particular limitations. My own personal biography as both a Christian insider and an American outsider influences the manner in which the data was collected and interpreted. I have my own biases in favor of the Christian faith which may have led me to look for positive elements of Christianity in the providers. The providers' knowledge of my Christianity most assuredly impacted the type and amount of spiritual data I collected, especially in the area of

spiritual attributions. Providers would not have discussed intimate spiritual matters with a non-believer in the Christian faith. The spiritual content shared in interviews and conversations came about as the providers saw and heard about my own Christian faith, which may have impacted how they responded to my questions. However, as an American, I am limited in my understanding of the specific cultural norms within the community and the struggles providers face in attempting to be loyal to their country while remaining true to their faith. Additionally, because of the sensitive nature of the data, all of the translators and transcribers were Christians. A non-Christian individual with academic knowledge of spiritual development may have provided a check on the accuracy of coding and interpretations.

The most pronounced cultural limitation was the language barrier during data collection. My translator could restate the words in English and provide me with contextual information when needed. However, I felt limited in my ability to capture the subtle nuances of interactions. I am accustomed to looking for the subtle nuances while looking to capture the feel of caregiver language and behaviors. I was not able to do this to the same extent because of the language barrier. I felt that this specifically hindered the analysis in the area of caregiving behavior.

Implications

Professionals in child development have recognized and advocated for the infusion of spiritual development in child and youth care programs (Scott & Magnuson, 2006). Advocates document the positive support children experience when exploration of their spiritual life is encouraged. The findings from this study support previous research on faith's role in supporting caregivers (Anglin, 2002; Varon & Riley, 1999). The most significant impact of faith came through how caregivers felt supported and helped by God even when faced with difficult circumstances. This type of faith energized providers who transmitted this to the children as caregivers and children experienced hardships together. There appear to be clear benefits to caregivers and children when the spiritual components of human beings are not neglected. Rather than neglecting personal faith, social workers and caregivers can utilize the strength and support that often accompanies strong faith. This can be especially valuable when working with children who have experienced difficult life circumstances (Frieson, 2000). Anglin (2002) states that a child's painful experiences are affirmed when those experiences are connected to a greater sense of spiritual meaning. Anglin further states that when children's pain and fear are affirmed by God, they have the ability to experience forgiveness and healing.

Summary

While there have been attempts to identify biblical foundations for orphan care, such as the core values expressed by the Alliance for Orphans, few studies have explored how these values are transformed into practice. This study provides a unique example of one faith-based orphanage in China to examine how Christians take these Biblical foundations and transform them into practical Christian care.

Without a Biblical perspective and calling, orphan care is simply charity. One does not need to be called a Christian to do works of charity. However, one does need to be a Christian to mirror the image of his maker in the work that he puts his hands to. One needs to be a believer to replicate to a child in need the redeeming love experienced when one was transformed into the image of Christ. The three themes of God as Provider, Family Affiliation, and Transmission of Faith operationalize how Christian orphan care can make meaningful, eternal, and unique contributions to caring for the world's orphans even within a regime that is not particularly friendly to Christianity. Although the themes presented in this article stem from a short-term experience in one orphanage, they shed light on the possible ways in which to transmit one's faith to children within the political constraints imposed by a Communist regime. ❖

References

Anglin J. (2002). *Pain, normality and the struggle for congruence: Reinterpreting residential care for children and youth*. New York, NY: Hawthorn Press.

Bloom, P. (2010). How do morals change? *Nature, 464*, Retrieved January 6, 2012, from http://www.yale.edu/minddevlab/papers/bloom-morals.pdf.

Bunge, M. J. (2001). Education and the child in eighteenth-century German pietism. In M. J. Bunge (Ed.) *The child in Christian thought,* (pp. 247-277), Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Christian Alliance for Orphans (2012). Core Principles. Retrieved September 10, 2012, from http://www.christianallianceforорphans.org/about/core-principles/

Douris, M. & Cox, A. (2009). Interview with Mike Douris. *Family and Community Ministries*, Fall/Winter, 2009, pp. 24-27.

Flor, D. & Knapp, N. (2001). Transmission and transaction: Predicting adolescents' internalization of parental religious values. *Journal of Family Psychology, 15*, 627-645.

Fenggang, Y. (2011). Religion in China: Survival and revival under communist rule. London: Oxford University Press.

Garcia, M. & Fernandez, C. (2009).The care and shelter of children and adolescents in Brazil: Expressions of social issues. *Social Work and Society International Online Journal, 7(1),* 28-42.

Halsal, P. (1999). *Chinese cultural studies: Philosophies and religion in China*. Brooklyn, NY: City University of New York, East Asian Studies

Hsieh, H. & Shannon, S. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*, 1277-1288.

Huang, X., Wang, H., Zhang, L. & Liu, X. (2010). Co-sleeping and children's sleep in China. *Biological Rhythm Research, 3*, 169-181.

Lai, H. (2003). The religious revival in China. *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, *18*, 40-64.

Lambert, T. (2001). The present religious policy of the Chinese Communist party. *Religion, State and Society, 29,* 121-129.

Lampe, P. (2003). Christians at Rome in the first two centuries: From Paul to Valentinus. London: Continuum International Publishing.

Li, S., Jin, X., Yan, C., Wu, S., Jiang, F. & Shen, X. (2008). Bed and room sharing in Chinese school-aged children: Prevalence and association with sleep behaviors. *Sleep Medicine, 9,* 555-563.

Lin, C. & Shan, H. (2007). China's evolving social welfare system. Retrieved December 20, 2011, from China.org; http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/228715.htm.

Liu, M. & Zhu, K. (2009). Orphan care in China. *Social Work and Society International Online Journal, 7(1), 43-57.*

Meng, L. & Kai, Z. (2009). Orphan care in China. *Social Work and Society International Online Journal,* 7, 43-57.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Miller, T. S. (2003). *The orphans of Byzantium: child welfare in the Christian empire*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.

Patterson, R. D. (1973). The widow, orphan, and the poor in the old testament and the extra-biblical literature. *Biblioethica Sacra, 130*, 223-234.

Schimmel, S. (2002). The essence of forgiveness. In S. Schimmel, *Wounds not healed by time* (pp. 44-53). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Scott, D. & Magnuson, D. (2006). Integrating spiritual development into child and youth care programs and institutions. In E. Roehlkepartaian, P. King, L. Wagener & P. Benson (Eds.), *Handbook of spiritual development in children and adolescents* (pp. 445-457). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Strohl, J. (2001). The child in Luther's theology: "For what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for…the young?" In M. J. Bunge (Ed.), *The child in Christian thought,* (pp. 133-160). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

Uhlhorn, G. (2010). *Christian charity in the ancient church*. Charleston, SC: Nabu Press.

UNICEF (2004). Children on the brink 2004: A joint report of new orphan estimates and a framework for action. Retrieved December 20, 2011, from www.unicef.org/media/index.html.

UNICEF (2012). Children without parental care. Retrieved September 10, 2012, from http://www.unicef.cn/en/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=lists&catid=132

Varon, S. & Riley, A. (1999). Relationship between maternal church attendance and adolescent mental health and social functioning. *Psychiatric Services, 50,* 799-805.

Wiesner-Hanks, M. (2008). Orphans and colonialism (17th c.). In *Children and youth in history*, Item #84, retrieved January 2, 2012, from http://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/case-studies/84.

Worldwide Religious News (2005). China ok's religious instruction for minors. Retrieved December 20, 2011, from http://wwrn.org/articles/15912/?&place=china/taiwan&section=education.

Wu, Y. (1990). The usage of kinship address forms amongst among non-kin in Mandarin Chinese: The extension of family solidarity. *Australian Journal of Linguistics, 10*, 61-88.

***Cathy Neimetz**, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor, Graduate Chair/Early Childhood Program Director, Loeb School of Education, Eastern University, St. Davids, PA. Phone: (610) 225-5678. Email: cneimetz@eastern.edu.*

Key Words: faith, institutional care, orphan care, People's Republic of China

PRACTICE NOTE

Implementing Best Practices for Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning Systems: Social Work and Faith Based Organization Collaboration—A Case Study

Nicholas Placido & David Cecil

Needs assessment is a critical component of strategic planning and a powerful way for social workers to integrate their faith and practice by collaborating with faith-based organizations (FBOs). FBOs, including churches, provide critical human services and benefit from systematic needs assessment and evaluation processes (LaPiana, 2008), just like their secular counterparts. This article describes how social workers conducted a needs assessment with a local congregation utilizing proven methods (Dudley, 2014; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Witkin & Altschund, 1995) that can be generalized throughout the profession and faith-based organizations. This article includes a description of data collection, management, and analysis. Collaboration is defined as an approach that individualizes churches as FBOs, recognizing their expertise and the importance of wide buy-in from stakeholders. The eight-step process is an elaboration on the Multimethod Church-Based Assessment Process (MCAP) that includes consulting to generate specific questions (Steps 1-4), collecting information (Steps 5-7), and providing feedback (Step 8) (Dominguez & McMinn, 2003) (See Appendix A). The specific steps are 1) qualitative data analysis by church staff; 2) social worker collaboration to perform thematic analysis; 3) survey construction based on themes; 4) survey pilot; 5) data collection; 6) data management; 7) data analysis; 8) data reporting/recommendation (Dudley, 2014;

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2014), 79–94
Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

LaPiana, 2008; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Rubin & Babbie, 2005; United Way of America, 1996; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). This article describes how this plan can be replicated as well as providing examples of results from the needs assessment. A full case study of this needs assessment is in NACSW Conference Proceedings (Placido & Cecil, 2012).

> *But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.* [8] *Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.* (James 1: 6-8, NIV)

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (FBOs) THAT PROVIDE HUMAN SERVICES must fearlessly ask the important questions about what it is doing and where it is going. FBOs, including churches, are currently providing important community and human services and can avoid *double-mindedness* by performing needs assessment, a critical part of strategic planning. Social workers, with our emphasis on relationship, strengths perspective, and problem solving, are optimally positioned to assist these FBOs in performing needs assessments in the context of relational and strengths perspectives. This also provides an opportunity for social workers to integrate faith and practice. This integration channels the value-laden relational aspect of both Christian faith and social work (Northrop & Perry, 1985; Langer, 2003) into best practice approaches to needs assessment (Dudley, 2014; LaPiana, 2008; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Rubin & Babbie, 2005; United Way of America, 1996; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). When done well, needs assessments of this kind can serve to validate and deepen the FBO identity and values, as well as carefully set the stage for growth and change.

Literature Review

FBOs as Powerful Sources of Human Services

FBOs are powerful sources of human services because they mobilize volunteers and provide resources such as funding and facilities to the community. They are often trusted and engaged members of the community with established relationships. Thus, they are able to meet human service needs and become vital referral sources. The Lawndale Christian Health Center is an outreach of the Lawndale Community Church located in an underserved community of Chicago. It provides medical, mental health, and other related social work services to people with limited means and options (Serrano, 2003). Holland (2010) notes the work of The Riverside

Church in New York City whose Social Service Ministry provides assistance to those in need, a food pantry, a barber training program, clothing distribution, homeless shelter, and HIV testing and support. The Salvation Army is a highly noted FBO that provides care and support to the needy and those facing difficulties in multiple countries (Whalen, 1992).

History affirms that with careful planning, FBOs serve as powerful sources of community service that avoid stagnation and isolation. As James 2:17 (ESV) states, "Faith without works is dead." Additionally, Holt (1922) reminds us that "religious experience cannot be held in a compartment by itself… A vigorous Christianity has always projected its great ideas about God, salvation, and human duty into the ordinary relationships of human living" (p. 5). "Almost all modern social services can be traced back to roots in religious organizations" (Garland, 1992, p. 1). Examples of these efforts include:

- The Methodist Settlement Movement in the mid-1800s "staffed outreach programs to the most marginalized inhabitants of the inner cities" (Kreutziger, 2008, p. 81).
- In the early 1900s, the Baptist Training School Settlement in Louisville provided aid to the immigrant communities (Scales & Kelly, 2012).
- Phoebe Palmer, a holiness evangelist, founded the Five Points Mission in New York City in 1850 (Garland, 1992).

Needs Assessment Critical to Strategic Planning

Needs assessments are critical to planning, but must be anchored first in the organization's identity; this includes their mission and vision. Leaders should look "for ways to understand how an organization is perceived to ensure positive impressions formation and transmission" (Aust, 2004, p. 515). It is the mission that points toward needed improvements. This is a comforting concept for many facing the hard work of needs assessments and evaluations of many kinds. Change requires motivation and can often create the perception that traditionally favored methods are facing abandonment. Conditions for excellent planning emerge when a needs assessment begins with validation for current successes and strengths, as well as an emphasis on collaboration and consensus building, while also conveying a strong sense of confidence in the available tools.

The social worker finds helpful tools and understanding in areas of basic research, outcome measurement, organizational change and motivation, as well as needs assessment. Needs assessment enables human service organizations, such as FBOs, to strategically grow and change and avoid pitfalls that lead to apathy and attrition (Posavac & Carey, 1997). A high quality needs assessment includes a process (Witkins & Altshuld, 1995) that systematically reflects priorities of stakeholders (Dudley, 2014), includes

the best data collection and analysis methods possible (Rubin & Babbie, 2005), clearly specifies and quantifies services (United Way of America, 1996), and accounts for the complex nature of motivation and needs (e.g., actual vs. perceived) (Posavac & Carey, 1997). Note that several of these sources are not specifically from needs assessment literature. For example, the United Way of America's (1996) logic model is an excellent tool for an FBO to specify and quantify its identity and update plans for change.

Once organizational identity is established and affirmed, the FBO can turn its attention to more efficiently and effectively serving its congregants and community. This orientation leads to enhanced capacity to meet community needs. Hair and Walsh-Bowers (1992) describe ideal change and growth characteristics, such as shared leadership, flexibility, openness to change, and responsiveness to needs. They state that FBOs "can promote the aims of the community mental health by developing resources to meet their needs" (Hair & Walsh-Bowers, 1992, p. 289).

Social Work Collaboration with FBOs

Spressart (1992) states, "Social change in America has been spurred on by organized religion" (p. 106). While it is important to remember that the culture and mission of FBOs are unique, FBO involvement in social service is consistent with current social work practice and past social service endeavors. This mutual focus of social work and FBOs provides an ongoing opportunity to develop processes that will allow them to effectively work together. Social workers can provide assistance with organizational development, program evaluation, and administrative oversight, as well as counseling (Edwards, 2003), consultation, and social action (Watkins, 1992; Ferguson, 1992; Bailey, 1992; Spressart, 1992). Garland and Yancey (2012) maintain that FBOs have "several characteristics that taken together make congregations a unique setting for social work practice" (p. 313). This collaboration occurs in a voluntary setting, values the laity as well as the clergy, and considers the unique religious culture (Garland, 1992).

In this spirit of collaboration, the social worker individualizes to FBOs by utilizing varying methods of needs assessment. Some focus on the task environment rather than the internal workings of the agency (Northrop & Perry, 1985). Others emphasize organizational identity (OI). Aust's (2004) assessment of the United Church of God attempted to determine its "communicated values in order to gain a sense of its OI" (p. 515). Hair & Walsh-Bower (1992) utilize multiple methods such as a nominal group technique (NGT), a structured group interview, and a community forum in their congregational assessment process. The Multimethod Church-based Assessment Process (MCAP) is "a flexible idiographic system that allows each church to craft a customized assessment for its particular needs and strengths."(Dominguez & McMinn, 2003, p. 334). Its three stages are gen-

erating specific questions, collecting information, and providing feedback. The focus is a collaborative process that allows identification of important issues and customizes an assessment to those areas.

Method

The methodology for this needs assessment builds on a number of proven approaches to needs assessment and evaluation (Dudley, 2014; LaPiana, 2008; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Rubin & Babbie, 2005; United Way of America, 1996; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). This includes various phases as well as data collection and analysis approaches. The social worker adapted the MCAP Model (Dominguez & McMinn, 2003) to carefully construct a needs assessment methodology in collaboration with church staff. The eight-step process elaborates on the three-stage MCAP in the following way: consulting to generate specific questions (Steps 1-4), collecting information (Steps 5-7), and providing feedback (Step 8) (Dominguez & McMinn, 2003). The specific steps are:

1) qualitative data analysis by church staff;
2) social worker collaboration to perform thematic analysis;
3) survey construction based on themes;
4) survey pilot;
5) data collection;
6) data management;
7) data analysis; and
8) data reporting/recommendation (Dudley, 2014; LaPiana, 2008; Posavac & Carey, 1997; Rubin & Babbie, 2005; United Way of America, 1996; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995).

Note that collaboration and individualizing are stressed throughout this process. The social worker carefully explained this process to church staff, including timelines on deliverables.

Church Staff Qualitative Data Analysis

Before a specific and individualized survey was constructed, the church staff walked through a broader, more qualitative exploration of the areas they needed to explore. At this point, teams were established to meet and formulate questions to bring back to the broader group. After much discussion, a set of open-ended questions was collected to be used as a structured interview guide with church members. They were ordered from more broad to more specific. Members of the staff scheduled interviews with church members to get their impressions on the areas in the structured interview guide. Topics on the interview discussion guide included meaningful events, unmet community needs, necessary changes, things that should never

change, most influential aspects of church, and favorite activities outside of church. The social worker built on this work to do deeper qualitative exploration and thematic analysis.

Collaboration for Thematic Analysis and Survey Construction

Once interview discussion guide data was collected, the social worker collaborated with church staff to identify themes that would serve as the outline for the survey (See Appendix B). Dudley (2014) asserts that measures in needs assessments must capture perceptions and motivation, as well as allow participants to prioritize preferences. There were two steps to the thematic analysis. First, interviewers provided their impressions. Second, interview transcripts were analyzed. Each response was grouped in terms of type and frequency. The top five themes under each question served as options on the survey that members could prioritize. For instance, under the question/theme of community service, the top five themes are *collaboration with community agencies, assisting the needy, working with youth, pool resources with other churches,* and *missions*. Each question also includes *other* as an option, where the participant may write in additional preferences. Participants indicate, in order, their top three preferences on each theme. The survey uses the themes as dependent variables and *gender, age, membership status,* and *university/seminary status* as independent variables. To improve internal consistency, the survey was piloted with the church board, which led to minor, non-substantive revisions.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were strategically collected at a high attendance event using the survey. This included an announcement of the informed consent nature of the survey. Survey data were entered into a spreadsheet. There is a column for each independent variable (e.g., Gender) and six (6) columns for each dependent variable (e.g., Community Service) question. These six columns are for the six selections (including *other*) under each question. Each row represents a different participant. Once an independent variable is coded, prioritized data (1, 2, or 3) is entered for each response given. This allows the researcher to derive sums, means, and frequencies. For means, one (1) represents highest priority while three (3) represents lower priority (but still a priority). For frequency, the percentage reflects how often a particular item is in the top three selections. Following is an example of how these results are presented to the church board.

Example of Needs Assessment Results

The following is an excerpt from actual results provided to the FBO. See Placido and Cecil (2012) for full results.

Question 3 asked about perceived community needs that go overlooked. Results are displayed in Table 1. In order of average priority, congregants selected Other, Increased Involvement with Youth in the Community, Greater Involvement with Other Churches, Greater Involvement in Missions, Assisting the Needy, and Increased Involvement with Community Groups/Agencies. Write-ins under Other included: Availability of People to Meet Needs, Community Involvement, Fellowship with Community, and Community Outreach. Greater Involvement with Other Churches and Assisting the Needy were selected with high frequency. Increased Involvement with Youth in the Community and Increased Involvement with Community Groups/Agencies were selected with moderate frequency. Greater Involvement in Missions was noted with low frequency. Other was noted with very low frequency. Note that Greater Involvement with Other Churches and Assisting the Needy were both high priority and high frequency selections.

Table 1: Community Needs Preferences

	Sum	Average	Frequency
Increase involvement with community	51	2.32	22 (48%)
Assist the needy	56	2.00	28 (61%)
Increase involvement with youth	44	1.83	24 (52%)
Collaborate with other FBOs	56	1.87	30 (65%)
More involvement in missions	19	1.90	10 (22%)
Other	7	1.75	4 (9%)

Other included: availability of people to meet needs, community involvement, fellowship with community, and community outreach.

Process Observations

The implementation of the needs assessment with this FBO had a number of positive outcomes and challenges to navigate; it also raised other dynamics to be aware of in the unique setting of an FBO. This collaborative approach fostered a cooperative spirit which enhanced the involvement of the congregation. A strategic use of hospitality was utilized to enhance involvement. For example, the church sponsored a potluck on the day of the survey administration to enhance participation in the survey. The team-based procedure provided greater investment by the pastoral staff and fostered greater involvement with lay members in instrument development. Because the procedure allowed the use of data previously obtained by the

lay committee, it assisted in the development of an instrument that had better application to the church's needs.

A number of issues arose in the development process of the procedure. At times, there developed unrealistic expectations as to what the instrument could measure. This required the social worker to aid the staff and board in focusing on those aspects of the project that were measurable and important to the church. The pastoral staff and board needed assistance in better prioritizing the areas of focus to be measured and setting priorities in the application of the findings of the study. Also, they needed to be reminded that the survey was a "snapshot" of the congregation on that one particular Sunday morning.

Social work in this context has unique considerations and can be time consuming compared to similar projects in other organizations. Regular meetings with the pastors and the church board are required to keep current with assessment developments. Awareness of the roles of pastoral and lay leadership is helpful in understanding leadership structure and assessment planning. An awareness of the church's calendar was essential in determining the strategies, implementation and scheduling of the assessment. Most planning occurred in the summer months, while the project was implemented in the fall. It is important to use a model that cooperatively develops an assessment with the church. It requires culture awareness in order to plan and implement the assessment in a way that is meaningful and helpful to the church.

Discussion

An individualized needs assessment performed by a competent social worker that includes systematic best practices plays a critical role in the success of the FBO (Dudley, 2014; LaPiana, 2008; Posavac & Carey, 1997; United Way of America, 1996; Witkin & Altschuld, 1995). The application of needs assessment procedures to such settings can assist FBOs in understanding their capabilities and facilitating informed planning. McMinn, Aikens, and Lish (2003) propose that advanced competence includes holistic and integrative care that fosters an awareness of spirituality and shared values with the FBO. In this way, this needs assessment is a good example of an ethical integration of the social worker's faith and practice.

This methodology worked well for this needs assessment. Data collection and analysis assisted in capturing the perception and motivation of the participants and enabled the social worker to help FBO personnel prioritize those issues that are important to them. The social worker tailored these methodological approaches around these important characteristics by building a quantitative survey after thorough consultation and analysis of qualitative data. Percentiles and frequency statistics were ideal for this approach.

The social worker leaned heavily on theological training and self-

awareness to competently develop authentic working relationships (McMinn, Aikens & Lish, 2003; McMinn, Meeks, Canning & Pozzi, 2001). Plante (2005) proposed that training for professionals should "include training in religious diversity" (p. 78). Some maintain that to effectively serve FBOs, "the first step is determining what services are appealing to clergy" (Lish, Fitzsimmons, McMinn, & Root, 2003, p. 297). The development of effective community, shared values, and mutual respect are necessary to form useful alliances with FBOs (McMinn, Ammons, McLaughlin et. al., 2005; McMinn, Runner, Fairchild, Lefter & Suntay, 2005).

Some faith traditions may not utilize secular helping professions if they do not include explicit components of Christian faith (Plante, 2008). Collaboration with FBOs must "overcome several barriers that have been erected due to years of tension between the disciplines" (Bland, 2003, p. 299). Barriers include a lack of awareness of important church teachings and issues (Plante, 1999), limited trust of the professionals by the church (Bene, Walsh, McMinn, Dominguez, & Aikens, 2000), financial practices (Edwards, Lim, McMinn, & Dominguez, 1999), and the unidirectional nature of the relationship (McMinn, Chaddock, Edwards, Lim & Campbell, 1998).

A needs assessment can be a useful and powerful source of reflection and information for the FBO. Such an assessment can in itself initiate change through the recommendations that are given and the process that is experienced by its members. This FBO initiated a number of change processes resulting from the needs assessment they experienced.

Examples of Outcomes

This needs assessment prompted and informed a number of change processes for this FBO. Some of these changes had clear consensus and were relatively easy to implement. Others have consensus but will require some time in terms of resources and process. Still others may not be a high priority or lack consensus but are now items on agendas across FBO committees. An example of change with clear consensus and easy implementation included the findings regarding student attendees. The findings of this assessment indicated that a significant portion (40%) of attendees at Sunday services were students. The vast majority (75%) consider themselves as regular attenders rather than visitors. These findings led the church to continue to support the off-campus Wednesday night meetings in order to minster to students in a neutral site. They would also maintain the continued use of graduate students to preach and teach on a periodic basis. The FBO also initiated a new policy that would routinely place one to two students on the church board to advise the church regarding ministries to students.

An example of change with clear consensus, but that will take time and a resource to implement is a need for enhanced involvement and communication. Findings indicated a need for improved management,

enhanced member involvement, and increased communication between various ministries of the church. This data led to a streamlined model of church governance in which the board is the main administrative body for completing tasks. To further simplify, church officers, such as deacons and trustees, temporarily joined the board until member census grows to the point that it is self-sustaining.

Finally, there were areas that came up enough to be concerns, but do not reflect consensus that are being reviewed by the board for further exploration. One idea to enhance attendance, participation, and community orientation was to phase in community-oriented children's programming. It will not be implemented at this time, but illustrates areas for future consideration.

Limitations

Limitations include a small convenience sample from a single denomination, which did not lend itself to inferential statistical analysis (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). Therefore external validity (generalizability) is limited. Also, social work collaboration with congregations is not widely researched, resulting in few established norms. Internal validity is limited due to the use of a non-standardized instrument, although the survey items were carefully constructed and piloted with the pastoral staff and board (Rubin & Babbie, 2005). This study also does not account for process differences related to denominational values. Some faith traditions emphasize community service more than others. There may be a tendency to under- or over-report concerns based on the relational nature of a smaller group in a rural setting. Anonymous completion of surveys fosters honest responses, but also limits potential follow up studies.

Conclusion

This needs assessment revealed important needs that emerged due to the use of a research-based plan, accessibility, a flexible and customizable approach, careful data collection, management and analysis, and sensitivity to cultural norms. This study explored and examined both archival and original data collected from this church's congregation. It included the development of a collaborative needs assessment process. Further research is necessary in order to systematically understand the needs of FBOs as well as the use of needs assessment procedures in church and/or FBO settings. This needs assessment provided an opportunity for further research, such as the development of more formalized needs assessment procedures tailored to FBOs.

Although generalizability is a limitation, this needs assessment is a

blend of accepted Christian and social work values with best practices for needs assessment and evaluation. The FBO is a collection of faith communities with a common mission. It is important to view FBO groups, such as congregations, as unique "communities of believers" (Bland, 2003, p. 78). This requires an adaptive approach that shows sensitivity and flexibility in assisting such groups. Ongoing theological training for the social worker fosters sensitivity and respectful collaboration (CCPC: McMinn, Meek, Canning, & Pozzi, 2001). Therefore, competence, flexibility, and sensitivity in the context of authentic relationship are the key elements of a successful FBO needs assessment. ❖

References

Aust, P. J. (2004). Communicated values as indicators of organization identity: A method for organization assessment and its application in a case study. *Communication Studies*, *55*(4), 515-534.

Bailey, P. (1992). Social work in community ministries. In D. Garland (Ed.), *Church social work* (pp. 58-66). Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Benes, K. M., Walsh, J. M., McMinn, M. R., Dominquez, A. W., & Aikens, D. C. (2000). Psychology and the church: An exemplar of psychology-clergy collaboration. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *31*(5), 515-520.

Bland, E. D. (2003). Psychology-church collaboration: Finding a new level of mutual participation. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity,* 22(4), 299-303.

Dominquez, A. W., & McMinn, M. R. (2003). Collaboration through research: The multimethod church-based assessment process. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity,* 22(4), 333- 337.

Dudley, J. R. (2014). Social work evaluation: Enhancing what we do (2nd ed.). Chicago: Lyceum Books.

Edwards, L. C. (2003). Psychology and the church: Collaboration opportunities. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 22*(4), 309-313.

Edwards, L. C., Lim, B. R., McMinn, M. R., & Dominquez, A. W. (1999). Examples of collaboration between psychologists and clergy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 30*(6), 547-551.

Ferguson, J. (1992). Social work practice in the local church. In D. Garland, (Ed.), *Church social work* (pp. 36-58). Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Garland, D. (1992). Church social work: An introduction. In D. Garland (Ed.), *Church social work* (pp. 1-17). Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Garland, B., & Yancey, G. (2012). Moving mountains: Congregation as a setting for social work practice. In T. L. Scales & M. Kelly (Eds.), *Christianity and Social Work, 4th ed.* (pp. 311-336). Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Hair, H., & Walsh-Bowers, R. (1992). Promoting the development of a religious congregation through a needs and resources assessment. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *20*(4), 293-303.

Holland, C. (2010). Church social work for a homeless family: Eclectic perspectives. *Presented at NACSW Convention 2010, Raleigh-Durham, NC*.

Holt, A. (1922). *Social work in the churches*. Charleston, SC: BiblioLife.

Kreutziger, S. (2008). The Methodist settlement movement. In B. Hugens & T. L. Scales (Eds.), *Christianity and Social Work, 3rd ed.* (pp. 81-92) Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Langer, N. (2003). Sectarian organizations serving civic purposes. In T. Tirrito, & T. Cascio (Eds.), *Religious organizations in community services* (pp. 137-155). New York: Springfield Publishers.

LaPiana, D. (2008). *The nonprofit strategy revolution: real-time strategic planning in a rapid-response world.* Nashville, TN: Fieldstone Alliance.

Lish, R. A., Fitzsimmons, C. R., McMinn, M. R., & Root, A. M. (2003). Clergy interest in innovative collaboration with psychologists. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 22*(4), 294-298.

McMinn, M. R., Aikens, C. A., & Lish, R. A. (2003). Basic and advanced competence in collaborating with clergy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *34*(2), 197-202.

McMinn, M. R., Ammons, J., McLaughlin, B., Williamson, C., Griffin, J., Fitzsimmons, C. R., & Spires, B. (2005). Collaborate with whom?: Clergy responses to psychologist characteristics. In M. R. McMinn & A. W. Dominquez (Eds.), *Psychology and the Church* (pp. 9-17). Huappauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

McMinn, M. R., Chaddock, T. P., Edwards, L. C., Lim, B. R., & Campbell, C. D. (1998). Psychologists collaborating with clergy. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *29*(6), 564-570.

McMinn, M. R., Meeks, K. R., Canning, S. S., & Pozzi, C. F. (2001). Training psychologists to work with religious organizations: The center for church-psychology collaboration. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *32*(3), 324-328.

McMinn, M. R., Runner, S. J., Fairchild, J. A., Lefler, J. D., & Suntay, R. P. (2005). Factors affecting clergy-psychology referral patterns. *Journal of Psychology and Theology, 33*(4), 299-309.

Northrop, A., & Perry, J. L. (1985). A task environment approach to organization assessment. *Public Administration Review*, *45*(2), 275-281.

Placido, N., & Cecil, D. (2012). Social work and church collaboration: Assisting a church's development via needs assessment. *NACSW Convention Proceedings,* 1-37.

Plante, T. G. (2008). What do the spiritual and religious traditions offer the practicing psychologist? *Pastoral Psychology,* 56, 429-444.

Plante, T. G. (2005). Psychology consultation with the Roman Catholic Church: Integrating who we are with what we do. In M. R. McMinn & A. W. Dominquez (Eds.), *Psychology and the Church* (pp. 73-80). Huappauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.

Plante, T. G. (1999). A collaborative relationship between professional psychology and the Roman Catholic Church: A case example and suggested principles for success. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, *30*(6), 541-546.

Posavac, E. J., & Carey, R. G. (1997). Program evaluation: methods and case studies. Upper Saddle Ridge, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2005). Research methods for social work (7th ed). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Scales, T. L., & Kelly, M. (2012). "To give Christ to the neighborhood": A corrective look at the settlement movement and early Christian workers. In T. L. Scales & M. Kelly (Eds.) *Christianity and Social Work, 4th ed.* (pp.23-38) Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Serrano, N. (2003). Psychologist-pastor: A bridge for churches at a Christian com-

munity health center. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 22(4), 353-356.

Spressart, J. (1992). Social action and the church. In D. Garland (Ed.), *Church social work* (pp. 102-119). Botsford, CT: NACSW.

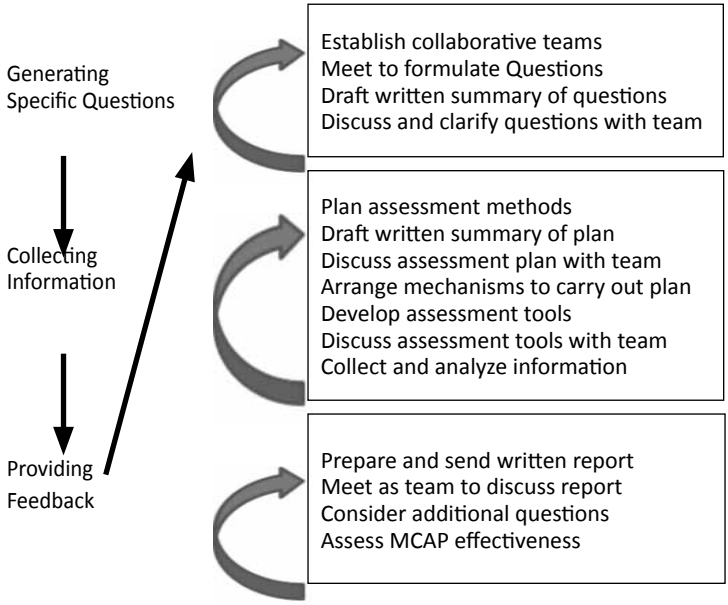
United Way of America (1996). Measuring program outcomes: a practical approach. Alexandria,VA: United Way of America.

Watkins, D. (1992). Social work consultation and the church. In D. Garland (Ed.), *Church social work* (pp.17-36) Botsford, CT: NACSW.

Whalen, W., J. (1992). Salvation Army: What's the story behind the kettles and drums? *U.S Catholic,* 57(12), 35-39.

Witkin, B. R., & Altschuld, J. W. (1995). *Planning and conducting needs assessments: a practical guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A: MCAP Model (Dominquez and McMinn, 2003)



Source: Dominguez, A. W. & McMinn, M. R. (2003). Collaboration through research: The multimethod church-based assessment process, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity,* 22(4), 333-337.

Appendix B: Congregation Survey Instrument

Community Church Congregational survey

Administered by the MSW program of Asbury University.

The findings of this survey may bear important information worthy of consideration of educational dissemination or publication. This aids our profession in more effectively serving similar populations or groups.

By completion of this survey I hereby grant the permission to use data collected for educational/publication purposes. I understand that the identity of the church and information obtained from its members will be handled in a private manner. No part of it will be used for anything other than educational/publication purposes. No individuals attending the church will be individually identified. Your involvement is purely on a **voluntary basis**. You, and/or your leadership team may choose at any time to discontinue their participation in this project.

Gender (M / F) Please **circle**! Age: Please **check**! Less than 18____ 18-21____ 22-30_____31-40___ 41-50___ 51-65___ Greater than 65____
(Please check one of the following) Member____ Regular Attendee ___ Visitor____
Are you a university/seminary student? (YES/NO) Please circle!

Please complete the questions below. **Place (1, 2, 3) a number by your top three (3) choices** according to your preference (1 – first choice, 2 – second choice, 3 – third choice). You may write in an additional preference if you wish on item F. Please place number by it to indicate your level of preference. **Only select three items.**

1. What are some of the ministries (i.e.-event, activities) at CMC that have been important to you?

___A. Food related events (Potlucks, Breakfasts)
___B. Special fellowship events (VBS, bible study, special speakers)
___C. Worship Team
___D. Woman's Ministry
___E. Pastoral Ministry (Preaching, Teaching)
___F. Other _____
(write in comment above)

2. What important needs have you seen in CMC church community that

seem to go overlooked or unaddressed?

___A. Group meetings (greater opportunity for fellowship)
___B. Effective communication between various ministries of the church
___C. Building improvements
___D. Increased youth programming
___E. Increased Children programming (VBS, Sunday School)
___F. Other _____
(write in comment above)

3. What important needs have you seen in the Wilmore community that seem to go overlooked or unaddressed?

___A. Increased involvement with community groups/agencies.
___B. Assisting the needy
___C. Increased involvement with youth in the community
___D. Greater involvement with other churches
___E. Greater involvement in missions
___F. Other_____
(write in comment above)

4. What would you change about CMC, if you were able to?

___A. Increased member involvement
___B. Increased community involvement
___C. Enhanced mentoring/growth experiences
(retreats, special speakers)
___D. Enhanced church programs (children, Sunday school, youth)
___E. Increased connection to missions
___F. Other _____
(write in comment above)

5. What are some things about CMC that should **NOT** be changed?

___A. Accepting, open, friendly place
___B. Fellowship/relational structure ("being a part of a community")
___C. Music/worship style (Casual, informal)
___D. Connection to pastor (accessible)
___E. Allowing other groups/organizations to use the church
___F. Other_____
(write in comment above)

6. What social/spiritual issues/topics do you find to be important?

___A. Youth issues (sex, drugs)
___B. Spiritual growth/formation
___C. Issues for women (communication, personal growth)
___D. Marriage
___E. Suffering
___F. Other _____
(write in comment above)

***Nicholas Placido**, Psy.D., LCSW, MSW, Associate Professor of Social Work, Asbury University, One Macklem Drive, Wilmore, KY 40390. Phone: (859) 858-3511, x2390. Email: Nick.placido@asbury.edu.*

***David Cecil**, Ph.D., MSW, Associate Professor of Social Work, Asbury University, One Macklem Drive, Wilmore, KY 40390. Phone: (859) 312-8231. Email: David.cecil@asbury.edu*

Key Words: needs assessment, church collaboration, church social work

Setting the Agenda: Meditations for the Organization's Soul.
Stoesz, E., & Stiffney, R. M. (2011). Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

In *Setting the Agenda*, Stoesz and Stiffney offer a resource for faith-based organizations to better attend to their own spirituality. This book is an important contribution to the work of boards of directors of faith-based organizations and fills a significant gap in the literature related to spirituality and nonprofit organizations. While attention to spirituality may seem to be a given for these organizations, the authors argue that this is not always so. Even faith-based organizations, they note, struggle to live out engagement with their "soul," particularly in the boardroom. Despite the fact that board members may recognize the importance of the spiritual nature of the mission of the organization, and perhaps even long for a sense of spirituality in their individual lives, challenges stand in the way of engaging spirituality in their work as board members.

The authors note five obstacles that often prevent boards from moving toward a deeper level of spirituality. These include: motivation to start a new way of doing things, a false sense of organizational well-being, individual narcissism of board members, the tyranny of time during board meetings, and unclear or unrealistic expectations about how spirituality is integrated into the work of boards (pp. 43-45). Related to these obstacles, the authors note how boards can be lulled away from dealing with the soul and mission of the organization in favor of more comfortable board oversight tasks. A quote by Parker Palmer is used to drive home this challenge: "It is easier to spend your life manipulating an institution than to deal with your own soul" (p. 32).

In Part 1 of the book the authors provide a structure for the evolution of spirituality in an organization: Discovering Spirituality, Moving Spirituality, Achieving Spirituality, and Living Spirituality. This structure provides a context for the challenges boards might face and gives suggestions for how to have conversations about organizational spirituality with board members. This framework could be used as a starting point for faith-based organizations, particularly board chairs and CEOs, to assess their leadership's engagement with the spiritual realm of the organization's mission. The framework provokes thoughtful insights into the importance of spirituality for faith-based organizations and hands-on ideas for how to bring this dimension into the boardroom. We especially liked their tool for helping board members see themselves as stewards rather than owners of an organization (p. 29). This simple but powerful reframing could have a significant impact on how the board discusses important issues and makes decisions.

What follows in Part 2 are 95 short meditations from people of faith with nonprofit experience divided into categories based on situations organizations may encounter (e.g., celebrating major accomplishments, contemplating a major decision). We would frame these meditations more as reflective case examples from particular organizations. Because of this, the book may be better suited for board chairs and CEOs to help them consider ways to start or frame conversations around spirituality with their board. That being said, some boards and board members could find these meditations particularly helpful if they respond well to hands-on examples of meaningful experiences that helped other faith-based nonprofit organizations. In addition, the prayers at the end of each section may be useful for entire boards to reflect upon or selectively use to express the struggles or achievements of the organization at particular points.

As organizations become more sophisticated and developed over time, boards and executive leadership often diversify to fill skill and network gaps. For organizations rooted in a faith perspective, these changes may lead an organization away from the spirituality of its founding leadership. Finding ways, such as suggested in this book, to engage in substantive discussions about the organization's soul and the spiritual framework with which the board and CEO lead can reinforce the mission and ground an organization in its history and values. Diverse boards may also need to recognize that members can be in different places in their spiritual walk. While individual spiritual development is not the focus of this book, with the exception of the resources offered in the further readings section, board chairs and CEOs would do well to keep this in mind as they work to change board culture with regard to spirituality.

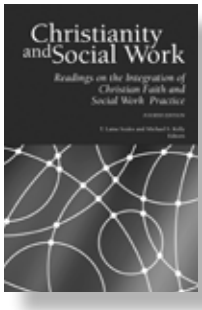
We applaud the authors for articulating the challenges and significance of engaging spirituality at a leadership level in faith-based nonprofit organizations. We hope this book will inspire other resources on leadership and spirituality for faith-based organizations, particularly in relation to board governance. Christians in social work with board experience may be well-suited to develop these additional resources. ❖

***Mackenzi Huyser**, Ph.D., MSW is Dean for Faculty Development and Academic Programs and Professor of Social Work at Trinity Christian College, Palos Heights, IL. Email: Mackenzi.Huyser@trnty.edu.*

***Laura Zumdahl**, Ph.D., MSW is Vice President of Nonprofit Services at Donors Forum in Chicago, IL. Email: lzumdahl@donorsforum.org.*

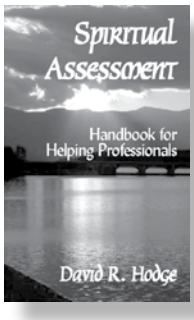
PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM NACSW

Christianity and Social Work: Readings on the Integration of Christian Faith & Social Work Practice (Fourth Edition)
T. Laine Scales and Michael S. Kelly (Editors). (2012). Botsford, CT: NACSW $52.00 U.S., $41.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

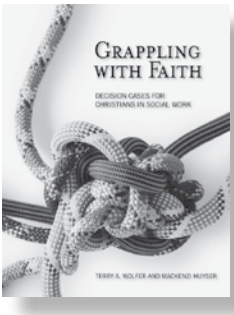
Spiritual Assessment: Helping Handbook for Helping Professionals
David Hodge. (2003). Botsford CT: NACSW $20.00 U.S. ($16.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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.

Grappling with Faith: Decision Cases for Christians in Social Work

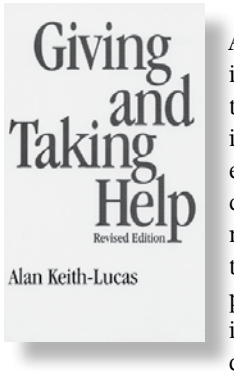
Terry A. Wolfer and Mackenzi Huyser (2010) $23.00 ($18.00 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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.

Giving and Taking Help (Revised Edition)

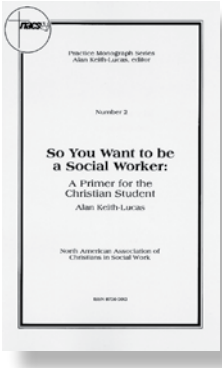
Alan Keith-Lucas. (1994). Botsford CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $20.00 U.S. ($16.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

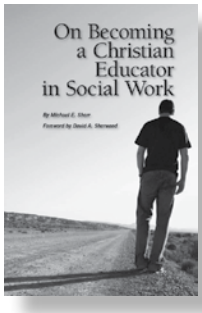
Alan Keith-Lucas. (1985). Botsford, CT: NACSW. Social Work Practice Monograph Series. $11.00 U.S. ($9.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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.

On Becoming a Christian Educator in Social Work

Michael Sherr (2010) $21.00 ($17.00 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."

Church Social Work: Helping the Whole Person in the Context of the Church

Diana R. Garland (Editor). (1992). Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $20.00 U.S. ($16.00 for NACSW members). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

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. $13.00 U.S. ($11.00 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. $20.00 U.S. ($16.00 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. $11.00 U.S. ($9.00 for NACSW members). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

To Order Publications:

To order a copy of any of the above publications, please send a check for the price plus 10% shipping and handling. (A 20% discount for members or for purchases of at least 10 copies is available.) Checks should be made payable to NACSW; P.O. Box 121, Botsford, CT 06404-0121. Email: info@nacsw.org 203.270.8780.

NACSW Online Continuing Education

Easy, "On-Demand" Access!

Online continuing education through the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW) aims to offer easy, "on-demand" access to a wide array of high quality training options sensitive to the ethical integration of faith and practice from the comfort of your computer or mobile device. All trainings included in this program provide CEUs accredited by the Association of Social Work Boards.

Multiple Formats!

NACSW's online continuing education program offers several formats of convenient, high-quality trainings depending on your preference.

- Audio-based/Podcsts
- Text-based
- Video-based
- Virtual Study Groups

(A multi-week, interactive approach to small group, online continuing education – a first of its kind in social work continuing education)

Numerous Content Areas!

Select courses within the following content areas:

- Social Work Ethics, Values, and Professional Relationships
- Direct Practice: Individuals, Couples, Families and Children
- Human Development, Diversity, and Behavior in the Environment
- Direct Practice: Groups and Communities
- Administration and Work with Organizations
- Public Administration and Policy
- Social Work Education
- Social Work Research
- Technology & Social Work
- Research and Practice with Ethnically Diverse Populations

NACSW
Online Continuing Education
Sensitive to faith

www.nacsw.org/CEU

NACSW SERVICES

- Publications with an Integrative Focus
- Chapters and Small Fellowship Groups
- Mentoring Program
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Discount on ESA's *Prism* Magazine
- Three-Day Annual Convention
- Liability Insurance
- Website Links and Resources page
- Local Workshops and Regional Conferences
- Membership Directory On-Line
- Email Discussion Groups
- Member Interest Groups
- Peer-Reviewed Journal
- Internet Job Postings
- Members' Section on the NACSW Website
- Connections with Christian Social Service Organizations
- On-Line Bibliography & NACSW News Updates
- Monthly Podcasts and Access to a Podcast Archives Free to Memebers
- Quarterly Webinars Free to Members
- Access to NACSW Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Other Social Media Accounts

For additional information visit NACSW's website at: http://www.nacsw.org or contact the NACSW office tollfree at: 888.426.4712, or email NACSW at info@nacsw.org

NACSW JOBNET
The Christian Career Connection

Looking to fill an open position?

Visit NACSW's website or call/fax at 888-426-4712

Searching for a new job?

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

November 6-9, 2014
Annapolis, Maryland

"Harbor in the Storm: Beacons of Hope during Challenging Times"

The 64th Annual Convention of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

NACSW's Convention 2014 will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Annapolis, 210 Holiday Court, Annapolis, Maryland, 21401

Visit the NACSW website and click on the convention badge for additional details

North American Association of Christians in Social Work
888-426-4712
info@nacsw.org
www.nacsw.org

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

Submit manuscripts to *SWC* electronically in the form of two documents: a separate title page that contains the title, a list of key words, and full author information, including names, affiliations, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses; and a document without author identification that contains the full text of the article, including an abstract of not more than 150 words, references, and any tables or appendices. Use the American Psychological Association Style Manual format (6th edition) for in-text references and reference lists. Submit manuscripts as email attachments to david@sherwoodstreet.com, using either Word or Pages.

At least three members of the editorial board will anonymously review manuscripts and recommend an acceptance decision based on the following criteria: relevance of content to major issues concerning the relationship of social work and Christianity, literary merit, conciseness, clarity, and freedom from language that conveys devaluation or stereotypes of persons or groups. The editor-in-chief will make final decisions.

Authors may also correspond with the editor-in-chief by phone, mail or email: David Sherwood, 2740 Crater Lane, Newberg, OR 97132. Telephone: (503) 537-0675 (H). Email: david@sherwoodstreet.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND INDEXING

Four issues per year of *SWC* are a benefit of membership in NACSW. Information on membership may be obtained by contacting NACSW at info@nacsw.org or 888.426.4712.

Subscriptions are available for $120/year for institutions located in the US, $129/year (US$) for institutions located in Canada, and $138/year (US$) for institutions in all countries outside of North America. This low subscription rate includes both hard print copies as well as on-line access to *Social Work and Christianity.* Please note that on-line access allows access to issues of SWC going back to 1974.

Back orders of most issues of *SWC* (formerly *The Paraclete*) are available for $5 per copy. For more information including a list of contents by issue or questions about advertising in *SWC,* contact NACSW. *SWC* is indexed in *Social Work Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, Guide to Social Science and Religion in Periodical Literature, PsycINFO* and *Christian Periodical Index*. *Social Work and Christianity* appears in ProQuest and EBSCO Publishing's full-text and bibliographic research databases.

Individuals and organizations that wish to advertise professional events, resources, and programs that are compatible with the mission of NACSW should contact the NACSW office (info@nacsw.org or 888.426.4712) for rates, publishing procedures, and deadlines, or visit www.nacsw.org/JobNetQuotes.html.

 Printed in the US by Images Plus Printing, Madison, WI.

North American Association of
Christians in Social Work
P.O. Box 121, Botsford, CT 06404-0121

Change Service Requested

North American Association of Christians in Social Work

NACSW's mission is to equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice.

Its goals include:

- Supporting and encouraging members in the integration of Christian faith and professional practice through fellowship, education, and service opportunities.
- Articulating an informed Christian voice on social welfare practice and policies to the social work profession.
- Providing professional understanding and help for the social ministry of the church.
- Promoting social welfare services and policies in society which bring about greater justice and meet basic human needs.