SOCIAL WORK & CHRISTIANITY

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SPECIAL ISSUE: FAITH AND RESILIENCE

Guest Editors Sandra Bauer & Caroline Campbell

CONCEPTUAL ARTICLES

Innovating Vocational Resilience: Getting a Second Start at Work through the Ignatian Examen

The Legacy Project: Students Serving Latinx Older Adults

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Christian Faith and Resilience: Implications for Social Work Practice

Integrating Social Workers' Christian Faith in Social Work: A National Survey

Addressing LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Challenges, Faith, and Resilience in the Church and Her People

POINT OF VIEW ARTICLE

Faith, Resilience and Practice: The Relationship as the Medium for Connected Teaching

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of *Religion and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding the Challenges and Proposing Solutions*

Review of *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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Submit your manuscript electronically to *SWC* as a Microsoft Word file which includes the following information: a) the full title of the article; b) an abstract of not more than 150 words; c) the full text of the article (without author identification); d) references and any tables or appendices (please use the current edition of the American Psychological Association Style Manual for in-text references and reference lists); e) keywords or phrases (4–8) to facilitate online searches.

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

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Reviews submitted for a special topic issue should be clearly marked as such.

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The purpose of the Letters to the Editor section in *Social Work & Christianity* is to provide creative space for dialogue about complicated topics for Christians in social work. Our hope is that submissions in this form allow for the healthy exchange of ideas and perspectives. The Letters to the Editor section is grounded in our Christian values of humility, mutual respect, and generosity of spirit, as well as our professional values of critical thinking and integrity.

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

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CONTENTS

SPECIAL ISSUE: FAITH AND RESILIENCE
Guest Editors: Sandra Bauer & Caroline Campbell

Introduction to the Special Issue
Sandra Bauer, PhD and Caroline Campbell, LSW
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.211 *3–4*

ARTICLES
Conceptual Articles
Innovating Vocational Resilience: Getting a Second Start at Work through the Ignatian Examen
Stephen Edward McMillin
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.199 *5-9*

The Legacy Project: Students Serving Latinx Older Adults
Jacqueline Gustafson, Jennifer Costello, Antonio Mejico
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.180 *10–27*

Research Articles
Christian Faith and Resilience: Implications for Social Work Practice
Caroline Campbell, Sandra Bauer
DOI: 10.3403/swc.v48i1.212 *28–51*

Integrating Social Workers' Christian Faith in Social Work: A National Survey
Holly K. Oxhandler, Rick Chamiec-Case, Terry Wolfer, Julianna Marraccino
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.160 *52–74*

Addressing LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Challenges, Faith, and Resilience in the Church and Her People
Helen Wilson Harris, Gaynor I. Yancey, Carolyn Cole, Vanessa Cressy, Najeeah Smith. Mallory Herridge, Meagan Ziegler, Bridges West, Lindsey Wills
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.177 *75–105*

Point of View Article
Faith, Resilience and Practice: The Relationship as the Medium for Connected Teaching
Shelita L. Jackson
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.197 *106–110*

BOOK REVIEWS
Review of *Religion and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding the Challenges and Proposing Solutions*
Sonia Medina Pranger
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.182 *111–112*

Review of *Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal*
Marleen Milner
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.142 *113–114*

PUBLICATIONS *115*

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Special Issue on Faith and Resilience

Sandra Bauer, PhD and Caroline Campbell, LSW

Understanding what can help create and nurture resilience takes on new urgency in 2021. By the time this is published, over 315,000 families will have lost a loved one from COVID-19, millions will lose their jobs, and protests against racial injustice will continue. We may fear for our own jobs, our health, and our purpose during the pandemic. In addition to everyday life with joys and struggles, there is a need to radically change our view of what connection may look like as barriers are used to keep ourselves and others safe. Yet Paul beseeches us, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, we are being renewed day by day" (New International Version, 2011, 2 Corinthians 4:16).

Social workers are constantly confronted with the pain and suffering of the people we encounter. Often, we are amazed at the resilience people show in the midst of difficulties, yet we also may struggle with those who seem to have lost hope. As Christians in social work our faith is a potential resource for the ways in which we act and consider/explore the spiritual life of the people we help. How do we intentionally foster resilience and how do the tenets of our faith further healing? While there are numerous professional articles on resilience, how does Christian faith and spirituality contribute to social work practice? What knowledge exists now and what are emerging areas of exploration?

This special issue is designed to help social workers further explore the connection between faith and resilience in social work practice. Sandy Bauer and Caroline Campbell provide a scoping review of literature on the intersection of "Christian Faith and Resilience: Implications for Social Work Practice" that examines this connection by providing a scoping review of professional articles that identifies themes such as characteristics of resilience, spiritual practices, and emerging practice principles. Helen

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2021), 3–4
DOI: 10.34043/swc.v48i1.211
Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

Harris, Gaynor Yancey, Vanessa Cressy, Najeeah Smith, Mallory Herridge, Megan Ziegler, West Bridges, and Lindsey Wills in "Addressing LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Challenges, Faith, and Resilience in the Church and Her People" explore the difficult conversations and decisions across denominations and the role of faith in developing resilience for survival and growth. Jacqueline Gustafson, Jennifer Costello and Antonio Mejico involved social work students in collecting oral histories that revealed the predominant themes of oppression and discrimination, faith and spirituality, and resiliency in "The Legacy Project: Students Serving Hispanic Older Adults."

Several authors were invited to include personal reflections that explore the meaning of resilience through the lens of Christian faith by replying to the question, "How does resilience and faith come alive in your practice and the lives of those you work with?" Shelita Jackson answers this question in her reflection, "Faith, Resilience, and Practice: The Relationship as A Site and Source for Learning." Stephen McMillin responds to the question in his reflection "Innovating Vocational Resilience: Getting a Second Start at Work through the Ignatian Examen." Oxhandler, Chamiec-Case, Wolfer and Marraccino provide outcomes from their research in the article entitled "Integrating Social Workers' Christian Faith in Social Work: A National Survey" surveyed social workers and found that high levels of faith and social work integration, as well as noting conflicts in achieving integration, also contributes to our knowledge of the role of faith in social work practice. The hope is that this special issue will be a resource as well as an encouragement in considering the resources of faith in fostering resilience.

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Innovating Vocational Resilience: Getting a Second Start at Work through the Ignatian Examen

Stephen Edward McMillin

The Ignatian Examen is a tool that can build vocational resilience for social workers. It has five components: 1) praying for light or becoming aware of the presence of God, 2) gratefully reviewing the events of the day, 3) reviewing the feelings and emotions that surface when events are brought to mind, 4) choosing one of those feelings, either positive or negative, and praying from it, and 5) looking toward the future. Although it is often used as a bedtime prayer, St. Ignatius of Loyola designed the Examen to occur twice, at noon and after supper, with an additional remembrance of the evening Examen upon rising. The noon Examen may actually be the most important practice to build vocational resilience for social workers because the noon Examen allows for calming the workday and for making course corrections and attitude adjustments as needed.

Keywords: Christian social work, Jesuit, prayer, reflective practice, social innovation, Society of Jesus

THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC CAN LEAVE SOCIAL WORKERS feeling overwhelmed, those on the front lines in health centers and those who have been furloughed, laid off, or fear looming unemployment. But even unemployed social workers remain social workers, and vocational resilience is key for all of us to survive and thrive amid the pressures of practice. Reflecting on faith and resilience in my life, I am struck by the importance of vocational resilience and spiritual optimism in social

Social Work & Christianity, Vol. 48, No. 1 (2021), 5–9
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Journal of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work

work practice. In my previous scholarship (McMillin, 2013) I found that the concept of vocation or call to professional service was highly relevant to social work, where individual social workers experience formation with many structural similarities to seminary and where social workers commonly assert a sense of call or vocation. My experience is rooted in Catholic institutions, including time in seminary and monastic formation, my undergraduate education in a Christian Brothers college, spiritual direction from Jesuit priests, and my professional experience in social services and executive leadership in Catholic long-term care communities. Rooted in my experience, I offer several innovative ideas to consider which are also supported by recent research.

Froma Walsh (2016) has elaborated that not only are spirituality and transcendence important to concepts of resilience for families, but resilience is also shaped by structure, nourished by faith communities, and in need of additional research to make sure that the spiritual dimension of resilience is adequately incorporated into social work research and practice. Moreover, Walsh (2016) highlights that existing practice paradigms emphasize top-down, therapist-led problem-solving rather than mutual accompaniment and openness to individual and family resilience markers. In this vein, Walsh (2016) suggests that in addition to spirituality and transcendence, an "optimistic bias" and "positive outlook" (p. 620) are necessary to move forward through adversity and master the art of the possible for both practitioners as well as clients.

Reflective practice exists in many forms in social work (Knott & Scragg, 2016). Reflective practice can be a boon to vocational resilience, especially when it allows for a pause when confronting an alarming or disconcerting issue. I use social work pedagogy that teaches and provides opportunities for students to engage in reflection to enhance student ability to develop resilience as practicing social workers. I teach a course on reflective supervision, a collaborative system of regular meetings which focus on letting supervisees talk about and express their emotions about challenging field encounters and reflect on how else they could engage clients, rather than correcting and admonishing supervisees or telling them what to do. The growing self-awareness and curiosity of the supervisee improve future client encounters. Reflective supervision begins with a real, engaged relationship (supervisor-supervisee), then uses the parallel process to model how supervised workers relate and interact with their own clients. Common in early childhood work, reflective supervision is an innovation in social work field education being used with good results (Shea, 2019). I have found that integrating reflection into written coursework is also worthwhile—I use a fruitful weekly assignment for students to reflect on challenging client encounters in a simple 3-question format, What? So what? Then what? What made the encounter noteworthy, what concerned

or excited the student about the encounter, and what else might the student do or try next time?

I also believe that although reflective practice and supervision is making strides in social work, many Christian social workers may desire explicitly Christian and theologically informed reflective practices that they can benefit from spiritually as well as professionally. I have found one excellent practice to be the Ignatian Examen, a technique to prayerfully reflect on the day developed by St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order that Fr. Dennis Hamm, SJ (1994) has described as rummaging for God by praying backwards through your day. The Examen has been adapted into numerous forms but usually comprises five components: 1) praying for light or becoming aware of the presence of God, 2) gratefully reviewing the events of the day, 3) reviewing the feelings and emotions that surface when events are brought to mind, 4) choosing one of those feelings, either positive or negative, and praying from it, and 5) looking toward the future. A sixth piece is often to pray the Lord's Prayer (Hamm, 1994).

The Examen has been recommended to social workers many times, and there is nothing especially innovative in repeating that recommendation. However, the relative popularity of the Examen is usually in the form of the "Daily Examen," a nighttime prayer before bed. McIntyre (1990) emphasizes that Ignatius designed the Examen to occur twice, at noon and after supper, with an additional remembrance of the evening Examen upon rising. Although breaking in the middle of the day to pray at work may feel odd in some practice settings, I suggest the noon Examen may actually be the most important practice to build vocational resilience for social workers. The noon Examen allows for calming the workday and for making course corrections and attitude adjustments as needed. The after-supper Examen is not too distant from the second half of the workday for afternoon memories and emotions to be vivid and fresh, yet also able to be calmed through prayer. The noon Examen essentially offers a second start to the workday, and the evening Examen and call to mind upon rising nourish the social worker with three spiritual "meals" in the day. The Examen helps because it allows the mind and spirit to examine what has happened, to feel the pain and anger that may be present, and then to move on with calmed faith to the rest of the mission, the remaining tasks of the day, the week, the year.

To conclude, I will offer an example where the Examen, and more broadly a disciplined practice of consistent reflection, helped my own social work student, a graduate student who was struggling and at risk for expulsion due to multiple failed courses. As the then-director of the MSW program, it was my task to counsel the student about options and what was needed to be done to remain and succeed in the program. This student clearly seemed capable of competent graduate work, but something was distracting her from full, active, and conscious participation in her studies.

She shared that she had a very clear career goal—she wanted to be promoted at the federally qualified health center, where she worked, to an insurance navigator position, signing clients up for benefits including the expanded availability of health insurance, thanks to the Affordable Care Act. She felt that she already did a great deal of insurance referrals in her present position as a caseworker, and she felt that she could be more effective and efficient than many of the current navigators at her agency. However, her current work as a caseworker was draining, and involved a great deal of driving to and with clients as well as a great deal of paperwork. In my talks with her, I asked about what she saw as strengths in her life, and she related that she had a strong faith in Jesus Christ and prayed often throughout the day, but often found herself still frustrated. I briefly described the Examen and the possibility it offered to divide the workday in half, with a period of reflection around lunchtime and then another period of reflection after drawing the workday to a close and winding down for the night. When I asked about what she saw as her strengths, she mentioned her strong faith as well as her skill in using her travel time well, listening to books on tape almost continuously while she was stuck in traffic. I then mentioned that various Examen resources were available electronically, including the Examen Podcast by Fr. James Martin, SJ (available at https://examen.libsyn.com/). This student was grateful to have a new focusing tool, and after a great deal of work, this student succeeded in passing her remaining courses, meeting the grade point average requirements for the MSW, and upon receipt of her degree was promoted to the navigator position she desired, where she would go on to serve as a practicum supervisor for later MSW students from our program.

This student was an adult learner facing unusually strong occupational and environmental pressures. While her maturity and life experience made the Examen especially well-suited for her, I truly believe that the Examen can be a tool for almost anyone. Certainly, many social workers work in evenings and overnight, but the flexibility of the Examen is such that it is adaptable to any schedule. I suggest that when the Examen is prayed is not important—if a social worker can integrate prayer in the middle of the workday and buffet work with this reflective prayer before and after, clock hours do not matter. Addressing feelings about work in this way frees one from their potentially destructive power and builds resilience through developing a prayerful, optimistic bias, three times a day. In the midst of the stress and sadness of many social services, the Examen is a constant return to serenity and a positive outlook on life and social work practice. ❖

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The Legacy Project: Students Serving Latinx Older Adults

Jacqueline Gustafson, Jennifer Costello, Antonio Mejico

California Baptist University, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, was awarded a grant through the Council of Independent Colleges that supported a community project, The Legacy Project. This project involved roughly 20 undergraduate students participating in service to the senior population in the neighboring community of Casa Blanca, in Riverside, California. Additionally, both students and seniors were immersed as participant-observers, gathering data, to include the collection of over 20 oral histories. These oral histories were of significant importance to the preservation of cultural and social history in the region, and specifically as related to the community of Casa Blanca, with roots in the Bracero Program. Data analyzed from the oral histories revealed three predominant themes: Oppression and Discrimination, Faith and Spirituality, and Resiliency. Both project strengths and challenges were identified. Most notably, both students and senior participants reported the significant benefit of their relationship built upon mutual respect and learning.

***Keywords*:** intergenerational collaboration, service-learning, faith and resiliency

IN JANUARY 2018, THE COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES (CIC) invited applications from its member institutions to participate in a project that the council developed with support from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Foundation, "Intergenerational Connections: Students Serving Older Adults." This project offered an opportunity for its member institutions to apply for a small grant to promote intergenerational connections between older adults and college students. The grant dollars from this project allowed the university to pay students engaged in the project a small stipend.

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As we considered the type of project we wanted to propose, we quickly identified partnership opportunities with our neighbors, the Casa Blanca Community. California Baptist University (CBU) College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (CBSS) had already started to engage with this community through several of its academic programs. The Master of Social Work (MSW) program had formed relationships with several agencies in the community and MSW student interns were already engaged there. Because the CBSS had intentionally laid the groundwork through relationship building, the community continued to be welcoming of our presence and involvement.

As we further considered the type of project we could implement, preserving and honoring the history and stories of the Casa Blanca Community was a main priority. As a Christian Higher Education Institution, CBU believes that each person has been created for a purpose. CBU provides a Christ-centered educational experience that integrates academics with spiritual and social development opportunities. The proposed project aligned with the strategic goal of CBU to cultivate graduates that develop into individuals whose skills, integrity, and sense of purpose are to glorify God and distinguish themselves in the workplace and in the world.

Furthermore, we considered the students and their involvement in the Casa Blanca Community and intentionally embedded a service component in the project. We felt it was crucial for our students to develop long-lasting relationships with the members of this community, accomplished in the context of service. Hence, the primary elements (see Table 1) of the project, entitled the "Legacy Project," was service and relationship building. We were selected as a grant recipient in 2018, with the project beginning in the fall of 2018.

TABLE 1

Major Elements of the Legacy Project

Students each completed 120 service hours in the Casa Blanca Community
Students were assigned to specific work groups. For example, some students worked on a resource guide, which is something that the senior residents asked for, while others worked on developing the interview guide which was utilized for the oral history interviews in the spring.
Students completed six cultural competency trainings.
Students gathered the oral histories of at least two older adults.
Students attended two showcase events and were involved in the planning and organizing of these events.
Students transcribed the oral histories of the older adults for future data analysis.
Students administered informed consent and pre- and post-measures, with faculty oversight.
Students received a total stipend in the amount of $600.00 paid in two installations of $300.00 each for their work on the Legacy Project.

Theoretical Orientation for the Legacy Project

When interacting with the older adults from the Casa Blanca Community, one of the major requests we received from the members of the community is that they be provided the opportunity to share and discuss the strengths and gifts of their community. Many residents shared frustration that their community was known for specific (negative) events, those that received significant media coverage, but not recognized or known for the totality of their history and positive impact in the community and region. For this reason, the theoretical underpinning selected for the Legacy Project was social justice theory. This framework examines the systemic and individual oppression and marginalization of individuals within society. social justice theory is grounded on the premise that all individuals are inherently worthy of dignity and equal access to privileges, resources, and social mobility, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, ability status, sexual orientation, and religious or spirituality status (Hage, 2011). It examines the relationships between the individual and societal systems, and challenges societal imbalances that result in the marginalization of groups and the hegemonic systems that perpetuate them.

There are fundamental principles that bind this definition. Concepts of inclusion, collaboration, and equal access are the value system of Social Justice Theory. Interestingly, these same values are the underpinnings of a democratic society (Sue, 2001). Crucial links have been established between social justice and the overall health and wellbeing of people. The absence of social justice often represents increased emotional and physical suffering, as well as greater vulnerability to illness and isolation (Braveman et al., 2011). In 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) published its *World report on ageing and health*. In this report, an important connection between ageing and social justice is identified as having "functional abilities to be and do what an older person has reason to value" (Healthy aging and ability section). Functional abilities include the ability to engage in meaningful relationships, to share experiences with others, to have a role, experience enjoyment, and security (Venkatapuram et al., 2017). Social Justice Theory and access to resources have further application and are tied to the collective well-being of families, communities, and society (Hage et al., 2011).

Historical Context

The Legacy Project was designed, in part, to establish meaningful intergenerational connections between university students and senior community members within Casa Blanca. Another significant element of the project and study was for students to gather the rich historical memories and experiences of the senior population. The history of Casa Blanca as a community, and the residents who are now seniors within the

neighborhood, hold significance for families whose lineage traces back to the original establishment of the neighborhood, as well as to the City of Riverside, and Southern California. For these reasons, it was important to recognize the significant historical, socio-political, and legislative movements implemented at the federal and state levels throughout the 19th century that significantly shaped the experiences of individuals living within the Casa Blanca Community. The following sections outline the history of Casa Blanca as a historic neighborhood or "barrio" (Spanish word for neighborhood) within the City of Riverside, as well as to provide context for several critical socio-political and legislative movements that significantly influenced its residents. These movements, as well as the impacts upon those individuals interviewed, were manifested in the testimony of participants during field interviews and corresponding events.

Casa Blanca

Casa Blanca is a neighborhood located within the City of Riverside, in Southern California, approximately 50 miles east of the City of Los Angeles. The City of Riverside was founded on October 11, 1883 and is currently home to approximately 330,063 inhabitants within the city's borders (City of Riverside Community and Economic Development, n.d.). The neighborhood of Casa Blanca is historically significant within the City of Riverside, as well as within the larger geographic region of Southern California, referred to as the Inland Empire, which consists of several adjacent cities across two counties. Casa Blanca was originally populated in December 1878, by Henry Benedict Lockwood, and his mother, Ms. LeGrand Lockwood. The Lockwoods moved into a white house, located on a small hill, and individuals nearby referred to the property as "white house" or "Casa Blanca" in Spanish (At Home in Riverside, n.d.). In 1889, Casa Blanca was officially established as a subdivision within the City of Riverside (At Home in Riverside, n.d.).

Currently, Casa Blanca is distributed across 1.06 square miles, with a population of 6,543 residents (Riverside City Data, n.d.). Casa Blanca's population density is 6,175 people per square mile, as compared to the City of Riverside's population density of 4,158 people per square mile (Riverside City Data, n.d.). In 2016, Casa Blanca's racial demographic was composed of over 80 percent Latinx, with Black and White residents composing approximately 10 percent combined (Riverside City Data, n.d.). The median household income for Casa Blanca residents in 2016 was $52,207, compared to the City of Riverside's median household income of $63,548 (Riverside City Data, n.d.). In regard to educational attainment, data from 2016 indicated that 53.1 percent of Casa Blanca's residents obtained less than a high school education compared to the city's average of 19.7 percent; and

5 percent of Casa Blanca residents obtained a Bachelor's degree, compared to the city's average of 13.8 percent (Riverside City Data, n.d.).

Casa Blanca is located approximately 1.8 miles from the CBU campus and is accessible by foot, automobile, or public transportation. For the purpose of this project and study, students volunteered by serving the senior community (age 65 and older) and conducted interviews primarily within two locations in the neighborhood, including The Home of Neighborly Services and the Ysmael Villegas Community Center. Partnerships with local private non-profit organizations, schools, and churches, were also established and coordinated, in an effort to recruit senior members for participation in the project. In addition to the contributions of community organizations, several individual community members directly contributed to the Legacy Project. These community members helped to establish connections with potential participants, participated themselves in interviews, provided access to historical data and artifacts from the community, and attended meetings and events related to the Legacy Project.

The Bracero Program

The Mexican Farm Labor Agreement, often referred to as the Bracero Program, significantly shaped the racial and socioeconomic landscape of Casa Blanca. The use of the term *Bracero Program*, originated from the Spanish word *brazo*, meaning arm, and *bracero* meaning manual laborer, or one that works with their arms. During the turn of the 19th century, many areas of Southern California, to include the City of Riverside and the neighborhood of Casa Blanca, were composed of orange groves and other citrus crops. Not long after the City of Riverside was founded, citrus fruit began to be shipped via trains from the West Coast to the Eastern regions of the country.

Due to the abundance of citrus crops, there was also an increased demand for manual labor to harvest, sort, pack, and prepare the crops for transportation. As the economy, driven by agriculture, continued to thrive throughout Southern California, as well as other parts of the country, the demand for labor further increased. As a result of the increased demand for labor, discussions between the United States and Mexico began - establishing a series of bilateral agreements to allow for millions of Mexican men to enter the United States on a temporary basis, under agricultural labor contracts (Center for History and New Media, n.d.).

In addition to the demand for labor, by 1942, the United States had entered World War II. Many farmers grew concerned that the amount of available laborers would decrease as a result of the growing war effort. On August 4, 1942, an executive order was implemented authorizing the United

States and Mexico to enter into an intergovernmental agreement officially referred to as the Mexican Farm Labor Agreement (Center for History and New Media, n.d.). Over the next 22 years over 4.6 million labor contracts were authorized, permitting the legal entry of Mexican citizens to travel to locations such as Casa Blanca, as well as other parts of the Southwest United States, to provide agricultural labor. The Mexican Farm Labor Agreement was the largest contract labor program in United States history, and was later terminated in 1964 (Center for History and New Media, n.d.). Participants in the study shared that their family lineage traced back to the Bracero Program, where many of their parents and grandparents immigrated to the United States to obtain work. Once in the United States, many of the laborers stayed, had families, applied for citizenship, and built lives within Casa Blanca. The participants shared a desire to preserve the history of their families and the community, and to share their experiences with younger generations in order teach and inspire younger individuals.

Predominant Themes from Oral Histories

Both students and seniors were immersed as participant-observers, gathering data, to include the collection of over 20 oral histories. These oral histories were important to the preservation of cultural and social history in the region, and specifically as related to the community of Casa Blanca, with roots in the Bracero Program. Data analyzed from the oral histories revealed three dominant themes: *Oppression and Discrimination, Faith and Spirituality, and Resiliency* (See Table 2 for frequency).

Table 2

Identified Interview Themes

Major Theme Categories		
Faith/Spirituality	Resiliency	Oppression/Discrimination
40	51	22

*The table above represents the total number of references made by interviewees [n=20] to the corresponding themes.

Oppression and Discrimination

The Bracero Program, which was initiated in 1942 and later terminated in 1964, significantly shaped the establishment of the Casa Blanca neighborhood and its inhabitants (Center for History and New Media, n.d.). As individuals continued to enter the City of Riverside, and settle in Casa Blanca, other significant sociopolitical movements were taking

place throughout the country which directly and indirectly resulted in the marginalization and oppression of the Casa Blanca community. During the interviews conducted with senior community members, individuals discussed specific events and life experiences that resulted in trauma and social challenges within their respective families and the community. In order to provide context to the testimonies of participants, it was necessary to note the sociopolitical movements which impacted the community, as well as to define the concept of multigenerational trauma.

In 1964, as the Bracero Program was ending, other significant sociopolitical movements were shaping the experiences of multiple populations within the United States, including, but not limited to, Black/African American citizens, Mexican citizens and immigrants, women, farm laborers, and children within the public-school system. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, segregation within public settings and schools was legal. While much of the Civil Rights Movement draws attention to valid examples of racial discrimination influencing Black/African American individuals in the Southern United States, the State of California also implemented systemic discriminatory practices against Mexicans as well as other racial groups (National Park Service, 2004; Roos, 2019; Samora J., Simon P. V, Latino Civil Rights Timeline, 1903 to 2006 n.d.). These discriminatory practices were present within several public systems including, but not limited to education, housing, and parks and recreation (Samora J., Simon P. V, Latino Civil Rights Timeline, 1903 to 2006 n.d.). Within the State of California, individuals of Mexican descent were not allowed within certain public settings such as restaurants or stores (Roos, 2019). Signs were posted banning "dogs and Mexicans" and "Mexican Mondays" were implemented within some public pools, which allowed for Mexicans to swim in the pools during the day on Monday, and the pool would later be drained and refilled, so Whites could again use the pool (Roos, 2019). In addition to discrimination by way of public segregation, schools within California were also segregated by race. Mexicans, Asians, and Native Americans attended "specialized" schools separate from White students (National Park Service, 2004; Roos, 2019). While there was no law in California that mandated such practices, school districts supported racial discrimination and segregation by upholding the Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) clause of "separate but equal." In this landmark case, the Supreme Court issued a decision upholding the constitutionality of segregation by race as long as facilities were considered equal in quality (Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896). California school districts argued that separate schools for Mexicans, Asians, and Native Americans were necessary, often after administering racially biased I.Q. tests, as well as stating that the cultural assimilation of these populations would occur quicker within segregated settings (National Park Service, 2004; Roos, 2019).

Throughout the late 1950's and 60's, significant social movements and legislation, such as the United Farm Workers Movement, led by Cesar Chavez, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Brown v. Board of Education (1954) ruling to desegregate schools directly impacted Casa Blanca residents. Participants in the study shared memories directly related to discriminatory practices of racially biased institutions, as well as the sudden changes that occurred in their lives, as legislation promoting the integration of marginalized racial groups, desegregation of schools, and marches for just wages, benefits, and human rights were enacted. One participant stated:

> Young people like yourselves don't know what our fathers or our grandfathers went through. So, you take it for granted that everything is, uh. very easy to achieve. And it is, but you didn't go through the hard times or the discrimination and the violence that we had to go through to get where we're at now.

While participants in the study noted the necessity of public policy and legislative reform, individuals also noted the emotional impact that occurred within their families and personal lives. A participant recounted the experience of changing schools as a result of desegregation:

> When I was in 6th grade was the first year of, uh, when they segregated the schools or desegregation and we were shipped out. I had to go to Madison elementary when they closed Casa Blanca.

Others further elucidated the ways in which they experienced this move. One participant recounted her experience as a female student:

> They didn't want us to get an education. Education for girls was 'hey you got to get married, you got to have kids, so we can teach you how to sew or how to cook' and all that. Not to educate you like you guys have been educated but just to be a slave. That's the type of system that we were at...

For some individuals, this trauma was carried forward, even to the date they were interviewed:

> Okay, uh, I remember in public school they would, uh, make you speak English – and I'm a coward, I would speak English, but you're not a coward and you wouldn't speak English, [demonstrating] and they would take your hand and hit you with a ruler [saying] "speak English, speak English," then it would start coming out. But me? I'm a coward, okay, I'd speak English [laughing]. So that's the kind of, I guess, torture that was happening here so.

Multi-Generational Trauma

Multigenerational trauma is a term used to describe the transfer of trauma from one generation to another as a result of institutional discrimination, or large-scale cultural oppression (DeAngelis, 2019). Individuals, and subsequent generations, are impacted by multigenerational trauma when society subjugates, or stratifies social groups, on the premise of race, gender, sexuality, religion, citizenship status, or other forms of cultural identity (DeAngelis, 2019). Survivors of this trauma develop adaptive behaviors to cope with societal stressors, and they may pass those behaviors down to subsequent generations (DeAngelis, 2019). For this reason, it is important to understand how the senior residents of Casa Blanca were impacted by the above- noted sociopolitical movements. During interviews with senior Casa Blanca community members, individuals expressed feelings of grief, loss, being overwhelmed, or sadness when encountering or experiencing discrimination and oppression. Such emotions can lead to feelings of racial guilt, anxiety, and distress, which result in a ripple effect within family households and even throughout the community (The National Child Trauma Stress Network, n.d.).

These feelings, also described within social justice terminology as internalized oppression, have significant ramifications for the individual and the community. Racial guilt, negative self-talk, and overall feelings of a "lack of sombodyness" as described by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., result in perpetual cycles of fear, anger, and a depleted sense of self (Cone, 2011; Tisby, 2019). For senior community members interviewed, social factors directly related to the above-noted sociopolitical movements, and institutional oppression, had a direct impact on their emotional wellbeing. One participant recalled the following:

> My husband's work they would say, they should just drop a bomb on them [Casa Blanca], hey wait a minute, my family lives here, you know, so, but it's just people that don't think, they don't live in our community.

Another community member expressed experiences of institutional racism, recalling policy:

> Yeah, I looked at the houses out there and would see the big houses that were out there because one thing you probably wouldn't even know is that these houses, the big houses out there in downtown Riverside, right in the deed it said, 'you can sell this house, but you cannot sell it to a Japanese, Mexican, or Black person.' You could not sell it to them. Of course, they did away with that but, uh, but that was the kind

> of thing. There were places that we couldn't go. Freemont Park had a big ol' swimming pool, doesn't have it anymore, right next to the Shell. You know where that Shell is? There was a big swimming pool there, high dive, the whole thing. Uh, we weren't allowed to go in that, uh, into the pool. Only on Wednesdays. Wednesdays, because on Thursdays they cleaned.

Similarly, a participant shared: "They are seen like they're, they don't have money, and they're poor and uneducated and living on welfare."

Participants noted that the impact of poverty associated with unjust wages and inhumane working conditions during the Bracero Program, severed relationship with childhood friends during the desegregation of schools, and anti-Mexican rhetoric as a result of social segregation created feelings of racial inferiority and emotional distress. For participants in the project and study, these experiences remained vivid and significant in their memories and were identified as significant moments within their childhood.

Faith and Spirituality

Spiritual or religious coping strategies are important factors to consider in understanding health and longevity. Spirituality often refers to the intangible and immaterial. It can refer to feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that are related to the soul or in the search for the sacred. Spirituality can include a sense of connection to something that is bigger than oneself and it typically involves a search for meaning in one's life. This can be a universal human experience. Though each person may define spirituality differently, this makes it very difficult to define. Religion is often viewed as more structured, institutionally based, and involving more traditional activities such as rituals and practices. Webster defined religion as "the belief in a god or in a group of gods; an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Studies have shown that greater involvement in religion/spirituality is associated with better physical health, better mental health, increased longevity, and the adoption of greater health behaviors. Additionally, much of this research has been focused on older adults (Krause & Bastida, 2011; Oman & Thoresen, 2005).

Latinx are now the largest minority group in the United States comprised of 58.9 million people or 18.3% of the population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Understanding Latinx cultural values, and the importance of religion and spirituality, has importance for social work research. While religion and spirituality are described as integral to Latinx culture, it is understood

that Latinos are not a monolithic or homogenous group, but fundamental cultural influences must be considered in the exploration of religion and spirituality among Latinas/os. These influences include a collective nature that emphasizes mutuality and relationships (Angel, 2009). Another factor is the shared history of colonization and societal oppression which shape and influence the nature and value of religion and spirituality perspectives.

Religion and spirituality are interwoven into the daily lives of many Latinas/os and are foundational for their strength to cope with daily struggles in life (Angel, 2009; Brintz et al., 2017; Sadler & Briggs, 2007). Religious attendance has been associated with psychological well-being for this population. Latinx describe their faith as an intimate relationship with God, family, and community and that these relationships play an important role in health and well-being (Gallo et al., 2009 Yoon & Lee, 2006). Faith experiences are often embedded in one's relationship with their family, which manifests in *familismo*, an enduring commitment and loyalty to immediate and extended family members.

Religious involvement and spiritual commitments have been positively associated with an array of subjective well-being indicators such as greater life satisfaction, decreased depression, optimism, decreased anxiety, and better emotional adjustment for older adults (Brintz et al., 2017). Religious involvement has also been found to act as a buffer against the negative impacts of physical and emotional problems (Campesino & Schwartz, 2006; Moburg, 2008). As coping mechanisms, religious/spiritual practices function to ease the grieving process. Participation in organized religious activities provides additional social support that acts as a buffer against stress. This increased social contact through religious activities provides increased assistance and the perception of greater support availability and adequacy (Sadler & Biggs, 2007). Religion and spirituality are among the most effective means for coping with crisis, problems of living and dying. Religious involvement also adds the additional layer of increased life satisfaction and increased resiliency for older adults.

Participants, throughout the duration of the project, consistently expressed the importance of religion and spirituality in their lives. One participant specifically spoke to the priority of a relationship with God: "My first belief, and I tell everybody even, my husband, God comes first because he's the one, he's our father and I'm gonna end up with him one day." Another went on to tie this theme into their family's values and priorities:

> I'm still, you know, a church going person, unless I'm sick or – [laughs] but, uh, yeah my husband and I, um, brought up our kids, you know, Catholic-going kids and going to Catechism and did their sacraments and baptism.

Beyond personal and even familial value, the role of faith and spirituality in contributing to the durability of the community was also expressed:

> So that's why I feel like my calling today is to bring the Good News to my homeboys and homegirls. To the people who think that they can't get out of that, but they can because I'm living testimony of what God can do. And now that people that see me who used to run around with me, when they start thinking man this is getting old, that they come to me and tell me hey what up how can I change.

Resiliency

Resilience is the ability to cope with stress caused by challenging situations and has been defined as the capacity to flourish and thrive despite normative fluctuations that take place throughout the lifespan (Bonanno, 2008; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While resiliency has often been considered from an individual perspective, this concept has been applied to larger systems to include families and communities. Within the familial context, resiliency is understood as a family's ability to positively adjust through challenging or stressful events. One of the most notable resilience factors identified in the literature is *familism*, family, as being the most salient among Latinas/os.

Familismo/Familism is a core value and belief in the centrality of family in the life of Latinas/os. It stresses family loyalty, interdependence, and cooperation (Bermudez & Mancini, 2012). Resiliency can be fostered throughout the lifespan and supported through positive healthy relationships. *Familism* is generally viewed as a protective factor (Gallo et al., 2009). Further, studies show that Hispanics' extended family networks, family cohesion, and strong support networks work as protective barriers against the adverse consequences of poverty (Landale et al., 2006). Not surprising to the authors, resiliency emerged as a central theme in the interviews. The message the participants wanted to convey consistently was one of pride in their accomplishments, both as individuals and as a community, despite their numerous challenges. One participant shared:

> Well, I really would like to have them hold onto the history of Casa Blanca. Casa Blanca is blessed that it is a community that was formed in the late 1800s and many families from that time are still here, generation, generation, and generation. Now, the children here, I would hope they would get to know the history of Casa Blanca, that's what I hope.

Illustrating both the theme of resiliency and faith and spirituality, a participant drew from a biblical narrative, drawing a parallel between Nazareth, and the negative way in which Casa Blanca is often spoken about; expressing his heart for the way in which he desired for his community to be known as a place from which "good things" came:

> The scripture always comes to my mind about Jesus when they said can anything good come out of Nazareth? And you know, that's what I want them to say. I want them to say there's a lot of good things coming out of Casa Blanca.

Discussion

Strengths of the Project

The Legacy Project produced several positive outcomes for the stakeholders of this project. CBU was able to provide a meaningful educational experience for students to engage and learn about their community in a service-learning capacity. The students left the walls of the university and stepped into a culturally diverse neighborhood where they had the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with individuals with whom they may have previously had little or no contact, but to which they are in close geographic proximity. Furthermore, the project provided students with research and learning opportunities. The students were trained in delivering and reviewing informed consent with the participants and they had the opportunity to administer pre- and post-measures. Students had opportunities to review and transcribe interview transcripts as well as participate in a research study where they were the participants (i.e., participant-observer model). This project allowed students to view research from several different lenses and explore how research helps guide and shape how we see and view the world.

The students involved in this project overwhelmingly shared that the most meaningful part of their experience in the Legacy Project was developing relationships with the older adults who live in Casa Blanca. Each student completed approximately 120 hours of service for the project. During these service hours at the Ysmael Villegas Community Center, students not only learned about the histories and stories of the older adults, but they developed long lasting friendships with the seniors. Students invited their new friends to their athletic events and on-campus for lunch. The students met their new friends for lunch at the community center and spent many hours just listening to their stories. At the end of this project, two groups of people were interconnected in a relationship and grew to consider each other as true friends and neighbors.

This project allowed the participants to highlight the history, resiliency, and contributions of the Hispanic population living in Casa Blanca. This project provided CBU with an opportunity to demonstrate a commitment to the larger community surrounding the campus with which the university is committed to engaging, supporting, and being in partnership. The oral histories gathered from the seniors were developed into a film that was showcased at two events. The first film showing occurred at CBU where over 150 students and 50 seniors were present. The second event occurred at the Ysmael Villegas Center where the Casa Blanca community, friends, and family from the greater community were invited to attend. Each senior was provided with two copies of their recorded oral history. This history is recorded and preserved for the individual and family, but also for the greater community. The Hispanic population who attended our showcase event shared that they felt a sense of pride in their Hispanic heritage and they appreciated their culture and history being shared and honored.

Identified Challenges

Several challenges surfaced throughout the course of this project. This community has previously engaged with academia and researchers from various institutions. Some members of the community reported that they were hesitant to engage with our project because they felt disregarded or mistreated by previous researchers. This created an initial barrier that we had to understand and work through with the community. Furthermore, hearing this history helped our team to understand the importance of addressing historical factors from previous studies, multi-generational trauma, and marginalization with this community. This community has an established and layered relational history, including interpersonal relationships. As we engaged the community, we quickly learned that these existing relationships had an impact on how and who we engaged, or had access to, in the community. Existing relationships within the group one is studying may create competing interests amongst participants.

This project was time intensive for the research team. Due to the modest size of the grant, the faculty were unable to reduce their normal workload to participate and lead this project. All aspects of this research were led by the faculty, though due to many competing priorities both community members and students had to take on bigger leadership roles in the project. While initially considered a challenge, this resulted in an opportunity for both the students and the community participants to take a lead in developing and guiding the focus and outcome of this project, further supporting an empowered philosophical approach to the methodology.

Conclusions

Through the support of the grant funds awarded by the CIC, The Legacy Project, focusing on intergenerational connections, served as an opportunity to bridge two communities and multiple cultures. Undergraduate students at CBU provided several hundred hours of service to senior residents in the neighboring community of Casa Blanca. Students and seniors alike expressed the positive, enduring, and mutually respectful relationships that occurred. Students expressed the myriad of ways in which their worldview and appreciation for culture and age were impacted. It was common for students to share with us their surprise to find how much they looked up to the seniors with whom they worked, also expressing how they would miss them during breaks when they were not at the center. Similarly, the senior community members spoke of how they admired the students and felt honored by their investment of time. Additionally, both students and seniors were immersed as participant-observers, gathering data on both their experience working together across cultures and generations as well as collaborating to record more than 20 oral histories. These oral histories served both to preserve cultural and community knowledge as well as give voice to a significant and valued community within the city. The themes that emerged (see Table 2) from the oral histories further elucidated the communities' experiences within the historical and cultural context. While these were important project outcomes, at the heart of the initiative was a motivation to build enduring positive relationships (both individual as well as community). Therefore, while the funded project was bound by time and resources, the relationships that endure are not. As such, one of the major considerations for future directions was sustainability.

Considerations for Sustainability

One of the primary considerations of conducting research with the Casa Blanca community was to establish a genuine relationship with our community neighbor, while developing a sustainable model for the institution and the Casa Blanca community to continue to interact. Drawing from concepts centered in foundations of cultural humility and community empowerment, faculty first engaged the community to seek their vision and plans for sustainability of the project. Community members were provided opportunities to share ideas related to potential projects, events, settings, and timelines for future collaborations.

Initially, the Legacy Project was faculty-led. Coordination, planning, implementation of the project, including feedback, were provided by faculty. As participating research faculty, and as representatives of our institution, we believe it is important to redistribute the ownership of the

project more equitably to the community and students. The Legacy Project served to establish positive perceptions of the Casa Blanca community and the institution, build relationships between community members, community stakeholders, students and faculty, and facilitate a desire for continued collaboration. Moving forward, the focus will shift to creating systems within the college and institution to continue providing equitable representation at future events, and equitable and empowered workload for students, faculty, and community partners.

Some strategies moving forward will also include faculty continuing to search for potential avenues of funding to provide stipends to students. Stipends can provide students with the means to collaborate within the Casa Blanca community, while assisting with the cost of transportation, or other materials necessary to participate fully with the project. In addition, during the 2019/20 Academic Year, faculty have connected the Legacy Project as an internship opportunity tied to a course that is required for graduation. This strategy successfully generated five students that academic year, who continued to partner with the Casa Blanca community through avenues originally established via the Legacy Project. ❖

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Christian Faith and Resilience: Implications for Social Work Practice

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This scoping review was undertaken to understand the current intersection of resilience, Christian faith, and social work practice in the professional literature. Five prominent themes emerged that included characteristics of resilience, cultural and communal resilience, spiritual practices, positive and negative spiritual/religious coping, and social work practice principles. Implications for practice and research are discussed with an emphasis on building the knowledge and literature on Christian spirituality and resilience within the social work field beyond a conceptual understanding.

***Keywords*:** Christianity, Christian spirituality, resilience, social work practice, scoping review

FOR OVER TWO DECADES, SOCIAL WORKERS HAVE DEVELOPED and used frameworks and theories about resilience, often linked with coping and trauma, that included an acknowledgement that spirituality and religion can play a role in the process of healing. Saleebey (1997) identified spirituality/faith as a potential strength, as a precursor to the emergence of a body of knowledge on resilience. Pargament (2002) researched positive and negative religious coping linked with well-being. Walsh (2003) developed a framework for practice with families that included belief systems in which resilience is relationally-based rather than individualized with key processes that may include congregational support and healing rituals. Van Hook (2016) provided resources and practice principles based on spirituality and religious life that may promote resilience, particularly in relation to recovery from trauma.

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In the social work profession, an ecological and whole person approach defines the processes of working with individuals at all levels of practice, and such an approach includes religion and spirituality. Yet within the profession of social work, there are legitimate ethical concerns about the use of the practitioner's faith (or beliefs in general) to influence or impact change in clients. Ethical principles such as self-determination and respect for cultural diversity raise concerns for social workers about blending their beliefs into practice and whether intentionally or unintentionally swaying their client's belief or value system.

Secular and faith-based practitioners alike need to identify how their spiritual values affect their practice as well as how clients' spirituality impacts their world view, coping skills, and ability to manage adversity. According to a study by Stanley et. al. (2011), 85% of individuals reported some aspect of spirituality as a strong influence in their lives. Not only do many Americans consider religion and spirituality important in their lives, but clients often express a preference for their religion and spirituality to be included in mental health treatment that provides more positive coping, strengthening of faith, and collaborative problem solving (Harris et al., 2019). Including spirituality as part of the biopsychosocial and cultural knowledge for practice has implications for both our effectiveness and our ability to engage with clients. This also includes the possibility of potential resources such as a religious community, and inner resources, in which belief systems can be sources of resiliency. The majority of the sources in the scoping review were written in the last decade and suggest that the exploration of how Christian faith contributes to resilience is an important resource for social workers.

This scoping review was undertaken to explore how the current professional literature on resilience and Christian faith contributes to the knowledge base of social work practice. Although consensus has emerged that resilience is the ability to grow and flourish in the midst of adversity, how that occurs and can be intentionally fostered is not entirely clear. Greene and Dubus (2017) identified four areas of research that have emerged in attempting to understand resilience and the implications for practice. Early research examined environmental characteristics and traits such as optimism and humor, followed by a second wave of studies on developmental processes such as problem-solving in overcoming stress. Within studies of adult survivors of traumatic events, identified characteristics and positive adaptive strategies emerged that began to be collectively termed as resilience. The third wave of research considered motivational factors and the importance of belief systems as sources of resilience not only in individuals but also within groups. More recently, resilience has also been identified as the process of flourishing that can accumulate over the lifespan, rather than as a fixed concept, (Manning 2019).

This article centers on the third wave of research with the belief system of Christianity as a core of the search process, that was broadened to include spirituality to capture related content. Spirituality is identified as a common factor in the literature on both resilience and a related concept: post-traumatic growth that consists of positive changes that are experienced by people following significant adversity and trauma (Tan, 2013). Canda and Furman (1999) defined spiritual functioning as the "client's personal quest for meaning, mutually fulfilling relationships, and for some, God" (Canda & Furman, 1999, p. 24). In a literature review of 11 studies on post-traumatic growth, findings demonstrated a correlation between religious belief and post traumatic growth, a deepened spirituality when coping through spiritual means, a resulting openness to face existential questions, and participation in a faith community typically experienced the outcome of post traumatic growth (Shaw et al., 2005).

Methodology

The framework for this scoping review was grounded in the guidelines established by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) to explore the breadth, prominent themes and direction of a body of work in a particular area. This is particularly helpful when the focus area has had limited attention in the literature. Additionally, scoping reviews can inform the relevance of a larger systematic review and identify overall directions for practice and research. The framework directs one to follow a structured process of identifying the research question, locating and choosing relevant research articles, providing a visual charting process of the characteristics of such articles, and presenting results through themes and methodologies. For this scoping review, this process was followed in order to elicit literature relevant to the intersection and connection between Christian faith and resilience.

The authors completed electronic literature searches utilizing the databases of Academic Search Premier, SocIndex, and Psych Articles. Search terms recognized in the specific databases were utilized, which varied between Christianity and Christian Spirituality and resilience and resiliency. In addition, the journals of Social Work and Christianity, the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, as well as the *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work*, were directly searched for titles that matched the criteria of this review We searched article abstracts for [(Christian Spirituality OR Christianity) AND (resilience OR resiliency)]. While we were specifically interested in social science literature, we chose not to further limit our search by including social science in the keywords.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

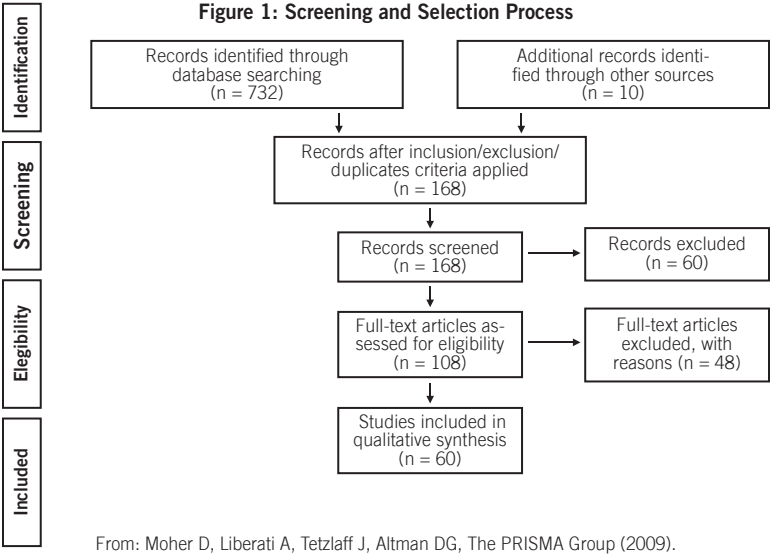
The authors included articles that were scholarly, peer-reviewed, full-text, in the English language, published between 1990-2020, and published in the United States. The articles represent contributions from multiple disciplines. Articles were excluded from this scoping review based on practices or traditions that did not include Christianity in some aspect, works in progress such as dissertations, and those from international contexts outside of the United States and its territories due to the wide continuum of cultural differences underlying Christian religious practices and the concept of resilience in an international context. No data were extracted from the articles during this time period, but instead, the following research question guided the inclusion of articles.

What is known from the existing literature about the intersection of Christian faith and resilience in the social work and professionally related literature?

If the article connected with this question in any aspect, it was included. Similar to the framework provided by Arksey and O'Malley (2005, p. 17), the focus was to give an overarching view of literature rather than direct the focus on evidence or findings from the studies. A PRISMA flow diagram is included in **Figure I** to illustrate this process of identification and selection.

PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram-Figure

Figure 1: Screening and Selection Process



From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta- Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

For more information, visit www.prisma-statement.org.

Results

From the original database search, 732 articles were identified, and with subsequent exclusion and inclusion criteria applied, a resulting total of 168 remained. Titles and abstracts were scanned and articles were discarded based on lack of broad relevance to the topic of Christian faith and resilience with 130 remaining. The authors then performed hand searches of the reference lists to identify additional sources. Later, using the familiarity of the authors with journals that focused on topics of Christian faith, reference lists from these publications were searched for evidence of peer reviewed academic literature sources. In total, both of these processes revealed a combined 15 additional articles. In the end, 60 total articles were included in this scoping review between 1990-2020. This revealed a limited number of articles over thirty years, which appeared to confirm a gap in the academic literature on models of Christian Faith and Resilience.

The author developed a chart from related findings from articles by Arksey & O'Malley (2005, p. 26-27). Arksey and O'Malley (2005) suggested a strategy for sorting and identifying key characteristics of literature that reveals important issues and themes (pp. 26-27). The chart (See excerpt from Table 1) includes data illustrating major themes, subthemes, author and date, methodology and a brief summary of findings. While this article includes page 1 of the chart as an excerpt, the full chart is available in the Appendix of the article.

Description of article key characteristics

The time period for articles included in the scoping review ranged from 1998-2020. Methodologies included three case studies, fifteen conceptual articles, six mixed methods studies, one literature review and personal narrative each, ten qualitative studies and nine quantitative articles. This may be some indication that the state of the literature is still very conceptual in nature, with tentative ideas that are in need of development in the academic literature. From the entire sixty articles selected, only fifteen were published in a social work journals, with the overwhelming majority published in *Social Work and Christianity*, and this too illustrates the gap in social work literature around this focus. The *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (not included in Academic Search Premier) and *Journal of Religion and Health* included a bulk of the rest of the articles. The size of the samples studied ranged from three families to 574 participants surveyed, and included White, African American, Mexican American, and Asian American identities, Gay and Lesbian Adults and focused on ages from children to elders who were 80+. Individuals within the studies held various intersectional identities- Sunday school students, adolescents, university

students, teachers, pastors, family caregivers, social workers, health care professionals, and immigrants. Challenges that resilience emerged from included intimate personal violence, natural disasters, depression, HIV diagnosis, military traumas, and health-related issues such as cancer and hospice along with aging process.

Discussion of Key Themes

Characteristics of Resilience

The first theme that emerged throughout the articles selected was that of resilience characteristics, defined by concepts of forgiveness, hope, gratitude, and learned optimism. One article discussed religion and spirituality's impact on empowerment and coping abilities, the treatment of others and building compassion, by integrating spiritual practice into HIV prevention work in culturally grounded ways (Foster et al., 2011). Several others found that protective effects of positive cognitive beliefs such as hope and gratitude on mental health and well-being could be offered by spirituality and religion in contexts of military involvement, hospice care, vulnerable elders, social work professionals facing difficult situations, and for individuals seeking guidance (Allen, 2017; Bade & Cook, 2008; Hendricks, 2016; Pattison & Lee, 2011; Polson et al., 2018). Similarly, a subtheme in the literature of describing what constitutes the essence of spiritual resilience was a focus of other articles. Brewer-Smyth and Koenig (2014) explored the likelihood of spiritual/religious and faith-based environmental influences on biological and behavioral aspects of resilience in situations of trauma. Others looked at resilience as a fundamental capacity, and resilience as common grace from a Christian theological standpoint (Dekker, 2011). In Manning's (2014; 2019) qualitative work, components of spiritual resilience were identified as constructed through seeing oneself as having divine support, maintaining purpose, expressing gratitude, and enduring hardships.

Cultural and Communal Resilience

Cultural and communal resilience were defined by any practice that focused on cultural connections or community relationships as a source of resilience, such as learning from mentors, recognizing resistance to oppression as resilience and reframing cultural values in order to promote healing. Thaller (2011) found with a small group of students that challenges to religious identities of students revealed acts of resilience and resistance, with the concept of self-determination mediating this conflict. Several articles examined the benefits of informal church support, and hope

through a reframed paradigm shift from negative coping but discussed the need for models of capacity-building within the church itself for mental health benefits (Goodman & Stone, 2009; Hays, 2015; Sytsma et al., 2018). McGuire (2019) explored communal resilience through the lens of natural disasters such as Hurricane Sandy and Katrina, and identified that within the African American community, this includes the ability to critique inequality and use a centering perception of God as not located in the problem but instead in the journey toward resilience and a solution. Finally, Walsh (2003) indicated that family belief patterns are a key process in family resilience and congregational support, and healing rituals play a role in this.

Six articles focused on Christian spirituality and the connection with resilience in culturally specific ways. Fostering resilience in African American children in the church, forming positive relationships with adults, and embedding cultural traits were identified as important in two articles, published twenty years apart (Edwards & Wilkerson, 2018; Haight, 1998). In adult classes within a faith-based Associates degree program at a faith-based college, with minority students, resilience was found through engaged classrooms made alive by stories of resistance, where classrooms are places of collective sharing and authenticity (Westfield, 2001). Millet et al (2018) looked at African American marriages, and found that prayer and faith reportedly influenced three domains of strength, adding to life, marital, and parenting resources. Within the Latinx community, Kelly (2007) analyzed how the strengths of Mexican immigrants' religious practices and culture (collectivism, respect for authority, loyalty) act as both protective factors in creating resilience and as risk factors for adolescents.

Spiritual Practices

Spiritual Practices was another major theme that emerged and was defined by faith practices such as prayer, scriptural contemplation, religious ritual, or intentional religious action used to connect oneself or a group with their divine relationship with their Creator.

Several articles identified concrete spiritual practices that included scriptural passages, meditation, prayer, Bible reading, Christian mindfulness, church involvement and training in learning from spiritual examples that present from one's tradition but also within the community. (Drumm et al., 2014; Harris et al., 2019; Oman et al., 2007; Trammel, 2015). In an article by Perez et al. (2011), prayers of adoration, reception, thanksgiving, and prayers for the well-being of others by patients affected by cancer were significantly associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms. Smith et al. (2017) found reconnecting to spirituality emerged as the most salient process in coping with HIV through prayer, religious readings, and attending church for twenty HIV-diagnosed young men. Harris et al. (2019), in a

qualitative study in an African American congregational community, also noted that while many of these practices such as using positive coping scripture and prayer to focus, worship services, and seeing God as a faith companion were positive, similar negatively focused strategies could create obstacles to seeking mental health support.

Positives and Negatives of Spiritual/Religious Coping

Yet another theme that emerged was that of the positive and negative aspects of using spiritual or religious faith as a tool for coping. This was defined by using one's faith in a way that enhanced a sense of well-being, growth past difficulty, or ability to bear through challenging situations by a reliance on beliefs within one's faith. Negative aspects of spiritual/religious coping were seen as use of faith beliefs in a way that contributed to further harm, denigration or symptomology of distress during difficult events. Prevalent through all the literature was an exploration of the degree to which religious and spiritual beliefs were associated with negative or positive coping and well-being. Positive spiritual coping included specific ways in which practices, images, values, and relationships within one's own spirituality could be used to overcome difficult situations, provide guidance, and mediate stress. In several articles, resilience was seen as promoted and maintained through relationships, spiritual transformation, spiritual coping, and the power of belief and commitment to spiritual values and practices (Grundmann, 2014; Knabb & Grigorian-Routon et al., 2014; Proffitt et al., 2007). In one study of family caregivers, the degree of religiousness and faith in God was found to provide them with the strength to cope with the suffering. The authors identified areas of coping categories, including the quest for faith to gain strength (Paiva et al, 2015).

Other studies revealed characteristics of negative and positive coping. Ahles et al. (2016), in a study of 320 Christian students on the influence of religious coping on stress and depression, found that there was little buffer that positive religious coping had on depression, and yet negative religious coping moderated the effect of depression and stress to reduce symptoms for those who reported high levels of religious commitment. Similarly, in a sample of 386 African American women, the importance of religion in the lives of participants was noted as significant in their coping, and at the same time, it was found that there was little coordination done between faith-based providers and secular providers of support in their care. This was viewed as a lack of cultural competence (Chan & Rhodes, 2013). It was noted in several studies across the literature review that the degree to which religious beliefs were internalized, intrinsically motivated, and based on a secure relationship with God, well-being increased in difficult situations. For individuals whose spiritual beliefs were negatively affected

by difficult events, it was found to be prevalent in individuals who reported that their beliefs were often unexamined, outwardly imposed, or comprised a tenuous relationship previously in their life (Ahles et al., 2016; Pargament, 2002; Trevino et al., 2012; Van Hook, 2014;2016) Across the articles there was a fair amount of focus on the impact of negative religious coping- that is feeling abandoned by God, worthless, or judged (Ellor & Mayo, 2018; Pargament, 2002; Van Hook, 2016). Interestingly, in one study, negative coping was found to lead to greater distress and yet longer-term gains and the authors found that perceptions such as the wrath of God or demonic attribution to the source of stress may have protective qualities against some of the challenging impacts of racism (Kim et al, 2015; Pargament, 2002). Van Hook summarizes the bi-directional nature of religious coping in traumatic situations as this: spirituality can significantly contribute to resiliency or can also intensify pain and distress with trauma (2014; 2016).

Social Work Practice Principles

Social work or helper-focused principles emerged as another theme. This was defined by intentional practices or processes used by a social worker to enhance the well-being of clients or of themselves as professionals working in the field. Meek et al. (2003) found that resilience is created by intentionality in balancing work and connecting with others, a focus of God in one's spiritual discipline, and a practiced self-awareness. Similarly, in a recent article by Newell (2020), the author conceptualized professional resilience from an ecological systems view that included spiritual domains of the psychosocial self that can include healing justice. Dombo and Gray (2013) identified micro and macro ways that social workers can renew themselves when experiencing vicarious trauma: micro-meditation practice; mezzo-group supervision; macro-time and space for spiritual practices. Client-centered strategies were also described. Several recommended that social workers should explore and provide spiritual care and support as a way of strengthening resilience (Francoeur et al, 2016; Myers et al, 2013; Stanley et al 2011; Sterner & Jackson, 2015). Ellor and Mayo (2018) found that religious beliefs were an important variable for helpers to consider when explaining the resilience of older survivors in disasters or their feeling of abandonment. Farley (2007) connected the Wolin model to reframe victims as survivors with resilient characteristics similar to examples from Christian faith. A sub theme that emerged under social work practices was that the way in which one views or frames and re-frames the image of God and humans, in turn influences how spirituality can be either positive or negative in the process of resilient coping. Bowland (2011) described positive spiritual coping strategies, including actions to find God by transcending negative "man-made" images of God. In another article, the

focus followed the client's healing journey, in which they explore constructs of God and their own spiritual struggles as survivors of family violence (Cairns-Descoteaux, 2005). Knickmeyer et al. (2003) found that seeking guidance from the Bible and religious teachings can be empowering when it emphasizes caring for self rather than keeping the victim focused on other's needs or values. Stahl (2013) summarized an overarching reminder that was prevalent throughout articles that the life of faith is far too complex and dynamic to ever be reduced to an easy checklist, and by applying the same spiritual criteria to all persons, we may be doing an injustice to the faiths of many of our clients.

Discussion and Implications for Social Workers

Throughout our analysis of the articles and themes that emerged, there are a few implications for practice that appear to resonate throughout the literature. The first is the need to assess spirituality as a resource for resilience. For many individuals, particularly when encountering crisis and distress, spirituality may be an unexplored resource, as well as oppositely, an aspect of one's belief and meaning-making processes that increases distress. To determine how spirituality helps or hinders that particular individual appears to be vital in either connecting them to the support it may provide, or exploring ways to reframe and shift their narratives in a manner that reduces the intensity of pain and suffering they may be experiencing. In many of the studies, in the population identified as having Christian beliefs, there was not a specific connection with a local religious provider or congregation of some type. Social work practice is built upon a foundation of principles of cultural competence, and as such, directs professionals to engage in relationship and coalition-building with relevant, local resources that enhance and promote the well-being of individuals. At the same time, many articles seem to imply that if faith creates a source of negative coping, such as perpetuating harmful narratives around the nature of stress, it will not serve as a resource. Given this duality, our need to assess faith as a potentially useful support through the narratives of our clients will be vital. In this same way, if faith offers a positive support in a client's life, social workers need to be familiar with, and have relationships with, potential faith communities and leaders to benefit clients. This principle appears to emerge from the literature.

Secondly, social workers can anticipate that specific questions of meaning, belief and spirituality may be inherent in different life stages and transitions and that addressing these questions and the prominence of faith might be crucial to engaging aspects of their resilience. In this scoping review, a recognition of spirituality throughout the life cycle appeared in the implications that arose. There were articles that directly

look at specific developmental processes when vital questions of one's spirituality may predominate, such as during periods of aging and specific health and mental health crises. A practice implication is that exploration of Christian spirituality in specific phases of life with clients might be a sound practice recommendation, given that these questions will naturally emerge as a consequence of these life changes. Through intentional assessment and planning for interventions that specifically bring this into the forefront, it may be a way of meeting clients within their specific symbolic and developmental moments in a holistic way across the lifespan.

This also directs us to examine how our foundation within Bachelors of social work programs and Masters of social work programs positions students to confidently assess, intervene, and evaluate their work with the spiritual dimension of life for their clients and specifically nurture resilience that may emerge from this aspect of identity. This seems to exemplify what Oxhandler and Giardina (2017) found in their study of 329 LCSWs on the potential barriers or what might assist in asking about clients' spiritual and religious lives. Overall, of 9% of the social workers stated that they had some formal social work training throughout their curriculum, supervision, or continuing education that involved the spiritual and faith aspect of individuals.

Study Limitations

A limitation of this scoping review, which focused on the nexus of Christianity and resilience within helping professions, could be the inability to identify the quality of the research, since a detailed assessment of the research is not within the focus of the scoping study technique. While all literature analyzed in this scoping review were peer-reviewed, this does not by nature ensure the quality of such literature.

A potential limitation is that authors chose to include only articles based in the United States due to the possible differences in cultural context with global Christian traditions. There may be value in exploring studies done on resiliency and Christian faith in other countries. Finally, our personal biases as Christian social workers may potentially be a limitation in that our interest in the topic was present and we come from a particular interest in the intersection of spiritual faith and resilience. To address this, we chose to adopt the rigorous methodology within the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework and to use the scoping review method in general to cast a wide net for the possible connections that existed within Christian spirituality and resilience present in the literature.

Conclusion

For Christian social workers in their practices, the review of articles may appear to imply that there is little consensus or understanding about evidence-based practice principles for the assessment, intervention, and evaluation of specific practices from a Christian tradition that can be directly applied toward challenging situations as well as what that may be more helpful or may be more harmful in the emergence of resilience. The increasing number of studies of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the past decade in this scoping review does indicate we are conceptually at a further level about basic principles for social work practice, and the evidence of the need to have a holistic approach. However, how these practices are implemented with clients is an area for development.

Social work practices that these articles mentioned included prayer, mindfulness-based stress reduction, passage meditation, looking to spiritual guides from tradition or community, reframing the image of God and the relationship to humans as well as placing God in the resilience rather than in the problem. Also, holding specific traits of resilience up to consider as a practice, and connecting with support within a congregation were all direct strategies of intervention. Capturing techniques that social workers using spiritual interventions use may be an area of further exploration, in order to evaluate and determine the nature of such informal interventions. To continue to develop both practice principles and specific faith-based interventions that have a body of evidence in promoting resilience appears important, as this topic moves from a conceptual acknowledgement of potential benefits to an agreed-upon practice to suggest for Christian-identified clients and others who acknowledge spirituality as a part of their lives. ❖

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Table 1: Themes of Christian Spirituality and Resilience					
Sub-theme	**Author**	**Year**	**Summary of article**	**Population**	**Method-ology**
Major Theme: Characteristics of Resilience					
Forgive-ness, hope, gratitude, optimism	Foster ML, Arnold E, Rebchook G, Kegeles SM, Foster, M. L., Arnold, E., Rebchook, G., & Kegeles, S. M	2011	Religion and spirituality's impact empowerment and coping abilities, treatment of others and building compassion, integrating spiritual prac-tice into HIV prevention help to culturally ground	31 AFA gay men	Qualitative
	Hendricks Thomas, K,	2016	Mental health protective effects offered by spiri-tuality and religiosity are very powerful in military fitness and resilience	Military	Concep-tual
	Pattison, N., & Lee, C.	2011	Value of spiritual hope in reconciling some of the issues surrounding hope when facing death.	Hospice	Case Study
	Polson, E. C., Gillespie, R., & Myers, D. R.	2018	Hope as a construct for assessment as spiritual experience of elders may strengthen and sustain resilience	64, 60+ Meals on Wheels recipients	Mixed Methods
	Worthington, E. L., Rueger, S.Y., Davis, E. B., & Wortham, J	2019	Stress and coping theory for understanding a Christian conceptual-ization of forgiveness, can inform interventions and impact mental health		Concep-tual
	Allen	2017	Learned optimism promotes resilience and well-being when swkrs face difficult situations, strategies include engag-ing in spiritual practices such as worship, reflec-tion, etc.		Concep-tual

Forgiveness, hope, gratitude, optimism	Kim, P. Y.	2017	Benevolent spiritual reappraisals significantly and positively correlated with stress-related growth	169 Asian Americans	Survey
	Bade, M.K. & Cook, S.W	2008	Christian participants identified seeking guidance and experiencing gratitude effective in coping process	Small groups	Conceptual
	Brewer-Smyth, K., Koenig, H.	2014	Main focus is on likelihood of spiritual/religious and faith-based environmental influences on biologic and behavioral aspects of resilience given trauma, themes of stress resilience, biological function, psychosocial, spiritual functions, violence and spirituality were discussed.	Articles	Literature Review
	Dekker, J.	2011	Resilience as a fundamental capacity, resilience as common grace—theological		Conceptual
	Manning, L	2019	Components of spiritual resilience are having divine support, maintaining purpose, and expressing gratitude, enduring hardships are informed by spiritual resilience	64 participants	Qualitative
Major Theme: Positive and Negative Aspects of Spiritual/Religious Faith in Coping					
	Ahles, J. J., Mezulis, A. H., & Hudson, M. R.	2016	No evidence for positive religious coping as a buffer against the effects of stress on depressive symptoms.	320 Christian students	Quantitative
	Chan, C. S. & Rhodes, J. E.	2013	Adversity seen as wrath of God; Positive PTG from church going women	386 women, 82% black	Quantitative

Major Theme: Positive and Negative Aspects of Spiritual/Religious Faith in Coping					
	Collison, E. A., Gramling, S. E. & Lord, B. D.	2002	Among Christians seeking spiritual support enabled coping, negative coping included pleading for intercession, demonic appraisal, and spiritual discontent measured by RCope	574, 66% Christian	Quantitative
	Kim, P. Y., Kendall, D. L. & Webb, M.	2015	Positive coping and racism not significant, negative religious coping protected against the deleterious impact of racism on mental health	107 Asian Americans	Quantitative
	Stahl, D	2017	The life of faith is far too complex and dynamic to ever be reduced to an easy checklist, and by applying the same spiritual criteria to all persons, we may be doing an injustice to the faiths of many of our patients.	—	Quantitative
	Trevino, K., Archambault, E., Schuster, J., Richardson, P. & Moye, J.	2012	Negative religious coping was associated with greater distress and growth. Positive religious coping was associated with greater growth	48 veteran cancer survivors	Mixed Methods
	Van Hook, M.	2014/ 2016	Spirituality contributes to resiliency and can intensify pain and distress w/ trauma, there are positive and negative religious coping strategies.	—	Conceptual
Major Theme: Spiritual Practices					
Spiritual Coping	Grundmann, C.	2014	Having faith and practicing religion provides non-medical coping mechanisms, contributes to well-being, looks at Biblical tradition	—	Conceptual

Spiritual Coping	Knabb, J. J., & Grigorian- Routon, A.	2014	Positive correlation between faith maturity and positive religious coping, feel God's presence in others, purpose and meaning, guides	84 participants	Mixed Methods
	Manning L.	2016	Resilience was promoted and maintained through relationships, spiritual transformation, spiritual coping, power of belief and commitment to spiritual values and practices	6 women, 80+	Qualitative
	Paiva, B., Carvalho, A., Lucchetti, G., Barroso, E. & Paiva, C.	2015	Family Caregivers considered that religiousness and faith in God provide them with the strength to cope with the suffering, four categories, including quest for faith to gain strength	30 family caregiver	Qualitative
	Pargament, K.L	2002	Well-being linked positively to religion that is internalized, intrinsically motivated, based on secure relationship with God. Negatively unexamined, imposed, tenuous relationship	—	Conceptual
	Proffitt, D., Cann, A., Calhoun, L. & Tedeschi, R.	2007	Religion based opening strategies = higher level of pt growth after difficult situations, higher level of rumination by subjects increased growth but not well-being.	30 Judeo Christian clergy	Qualitative
Prayer/ Church Involvement Attendance	Cooper, L., Trecartin, S., Seifert, M., Foster, T. & Kilcher, C.	2014	Spiritual coping resilience strategies, God as a lifeline, Bible reading and prayer, attribution of resilience resources to God	42 women	Qualitative

Prayer/ Church Involvement Attendance	Harris, J. R. A., McKinney, J. L. G. & Fripp, J.	2019	Positive coping scripture and prayer to focus, worship services, God as faith companion, negative questioning God, betrayal, spiritual growth in responding to spiritual stressors Conclusion helpers identify strengths in AFA faith tradition and obstacles to seeking mental health	7 participants	Conceptual
	Pérez, J., Rex Smith, A., Norris, R. & Canenguez	2011	Prayers of adoration, reception, thanksgiving and prayers for the well-being of others significantly associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms in cancer patients	179 white Christians	Mixed Methods
	Smith, S., Blanchard, J., Kools, S. & Butler, D.	2017	Reconnecting to spirituality emerged as the most salient process in coping with HIV through prayer, religious readings, attending church	20 HIV young men	Qualitative
Major Theme: Social Work Practice Principles					
Framing and Reframing the image of God and Person	Meek, K. R., McMinn, M. R., Brower, C. M., Burnett, T. D., McRay, B. W., Ramey, M. L., Swanson, D. W., & Villa, D. D.	2003	Resilience is created by intentionality in balancing work and connecting with others' focus on God with spiritual disciplines, self- awareness	398 pastors	Mixed Methods
	Newell, J	2020	Conceptualizes professional resilience from an ecological systems view that includes spiritual domains of the psychosocial self that can include "healing justice"		Conceptual
	Dombo & Gray	2013	Micro and macro ways that social workers can renew themselves when experiencing VT: micro-meditation practice; mezzo-group supervision; macro-time and space for spiritual practices		Conceptual

Framing and Reframing the image of God and Person	Bowland, S.	2011	Describes positive spiritual coping strategies, including their actions to find God by transcending negative "man-made" images of God	35 women	Qualitative
	Cairns-Discoteaux, B.	2005	Based on client's journey, explores construct of God, spiritual struggles as survivors of family violence	—	Conceptual
	Knickmeyer, N., Levitt, H. M., Horne, S. G. & Bayer, G.	2003	Seeking guidance from the Bible and religious teachings is empowering when they emphasize caring for self rather than keeping the victim focused on others' needs or values	7 participants	Qualitative
Client centered strategies Use of Spiritual Assessment	Ellor, J. W., & Mayo, M	2018	Religious beliefs important variable in explaining resilience of older survivors in disasters or feeling abandoned.		Conceptual
	Farley, Y. R.	2007	Applies Wolin model that reframes victim as survivor with resilient characteristics to Christian example		Conceptual
	Francoeur, R. B., Burke, N. & Wilson, A. M.	2016	Social workers should explore and provide spiritual care, unresolved existential issues may weaken client coping with chronic conditions and may diminish clarity and self-awareness		Conceptual
Client centered strategies Use of Spiritual Assessment	Myers, D.R., Lawrence, S., Jones, V.	2013	Role of social work in creating and mediating resiliency based transactions w/poor & isolated elders, w/ church		Conceptual

Client centered strategies Use of Spiritual Assessment	Oman, D., Shapiro, S. L., Thoresen, C. E., Flinders, T., Driskill, J. D. & Plante, T. G.	2007	Mindfulness (Passage Meditation/MBSR) and training in learning from spiritual examples (both from tradition and community)	44 College Undergraduates	Quantitative
	Stanley, M. A., Bush, A. L., Camp, M. E., Jameson, J. P., Phillips, L. L., Barber, C. R., Zeno, D., Lomax, J. W. & Cully, J. A.	2011	Most (77-83%) felt it was important to include religion/spirituality in therapy, more positive coping, strengthening of faith and more collaborative problem-solving	66, 55+ from former studies of CBT and anxiety and depression	Mixed Methods
	Sterner, W. R. & Jackson, C. L. R.	2015	The majority of Christians who practiced regular S/R practices reported better coping skills. Counselors need to provide support for this. Use of scales.	279	Instrument) Quantitative
	Trammel, R	2015	Mindfulness has been shown to improve self-awareness, cognitive flexibility, empathy and develop resiliency in Social workers, congruent with Christian ethical framework with importance of values	—	Conceptual
Major Theme: Culture and Community Focused					
Resistance as resilience	Thaller, J.	2011	Challenges to religious identities of students revealed acts of resilience and resistance, concept of self-determination mediated the conflict	7 students	Qualitative
Connected relationships	Hays	2017	Informal church support preferred as support, need for models of capacity building in AFA church for mental health	—	Conceptual
Belonging	Goodman Jr., H. & Stone, M. H.	2009	Christian support groups offers a paradigm shift or reframe with a renewed sense of hope and belief in life, negative coping, higher mortality risk.	83	Mixed Methods

Belonging	McGuire, B. F.	2018	Christian response to disasters—Sandy and Katrina, Communal resilience, God is found not in the problem but in the resilience, AFA God walks with us, critiques inequality	—	Concep-tual
	Sytsma, T. T., Schmelkin, L. A., Jenkins, S. M., Lovejoy, L. A., Lapid, M. I. & Piderman, K. M.	2018	Themes of spirituality and resiliency included comfort, strength, community, and inspiration, greater sense of meaning post intervention	5 80+ advanced diseases	Qualitative
	Walsh, F.	2003	Family belief patterns key process in family resilience along with congregational support and healing rituals.	—	Concep-tual
Major Theme: Culturally Specific Strategies					
Diversity of culturally specific resilience	Edwards, B. & Wilkerson, P.	2018	Fostering resilience in AFA children in the Black Church, positive relationships with adults, embedding of cultural traits	African American children in Black Church	Concep-tual
	Haight, W. L.	1998	Ethnographic research of AFA Sunday school used to develop intervention to support resilience in children	African-American Sunday School	Qualitative; Ethnographic
	Kelly, M. S.	2007	Analyzed how the strengths of Mexican immigrants' religious practices and culture (collectivism, respect for authority, loyalty) act as both protective and risk factors for adolescents	3 Mex. Am. families	Case Studies
Diversity of culturally specific resilience	Millett, M. A., Cook, L. E., Skipper, A. D., Chaney, C. D., Marks, L. D. & Dollahite, D. C.	2018	prayer and faith reportedly influenced strong African American marriages in three domains: (1) General Life Strengths, (2) Marital Strengths, and (3) Parenting Strengths.	26 families	Qualitative

Integrating Social Workers' Christian Faith in Social Work: A National Survey

Holly K. Oxhandler, Rick Chamiec-Case, Terry Wolfer, Julianna Marraccino

Over the past few decades, researchers have focused considerable attention on religion, spirituality, and faith (RSF) in social work. However, most of this research has been focused on the RSF of clients rather than on RSF of social workers. This study used the Social Worker's Integration of their Faith – Christian (SWIF-C; Oxhandler et al., 2019) to explore efforts by NACSW members (n = 486) to integrate their Christian faith and social work. Overall, participants reported high levels of faith and social work integration—with both faith and social work influencing the other—and also noted some experience of conflict in their effort to integrate their faith and social work. With a goal of developing sustained ethical and competent professional practice, the paper concludes with recommendations for helping students and supervisees integrate their own faith and social work.

***Keywords*:** social work; Christian; religion and spirituality; faith integration

OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES, THERE HAS BEEN considerable attention focused on religion, spirituality, and faith (RSF) within the social work profession (Furman et al., 2007; Hodge, 2008; Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014; Oxhandler et al., 2015; Scales & Kelly, 2016; Sheridan, 2012; Williams & Smolak, 2007). There are good reasons for this attention, including: a) many clients want care providers to respectfully consider how their RSF beliefs and practices relate to their treatment goals (Harris et al., 2016; Oxhandler, Ellor et al., 2018); b) significant spiritual and religious questions, issues, and experiences sometimes emerge during the helping process, and need to be addressed both sensitively and competently as affirmed in NASW's *Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* (NASW, 2001); and c) spiritual

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and religious interventions may contribute to valued health and mental health outcomes (Koenig et al., 2012) as well as coping with life's challenges and struggles (Furman et al., 2011).

For the most part, however, attention to RSF in social work literature has focused on clients' RSF (Oxhandler et al., 2015) rather than the RSF of social workers. For example, most of the scales developed for exploring and evaluating the role and impact of spirituality in social work have primarily focused on clients and client interventions (Oxhandler & Pargament, 2014), including the Role of Religion and Spirituality in Practice Scale (Sheridan et al.,1992), the Religion and Prayer in Practice Scale (Mattison et al., 2000), the Religious/Spiritually Integrated Practice Assessment Scale (Oxhandler & Parrish, 2016), and the Spiritually Derived Intervention Checklist (Canda & Furman, 2010).

While a strong focus on clients' RSF is critical for developing effective and spiritually-sensitive practice, there are also important reasons to explore the RSF of *social workers*. First, for many social workers, their personal RSF is a powerful asset that can provide motivation, sustenance, and resilience in their work with their clients (Wagenfled-Heintz, 2009). Second, for many social workers, RSF is intricately woven into a core part of their personal and cultural identities, and cannot simply be "checked at the door" when they engage in their work (Oxhandler, 2017). As a result, attempting to bracket RSF in their practice may feel forced, potentially inauthentic, and/or lead to an unsatisfying and unproductive disconnect between their personal and professional selves (Hughes, 2005). The question is not *whether* the RSF of social workers interacts with their understanding and practice of social work, but rather whether they handle these interactions *thoughtfully*, *competently*, *and ethically*. In fact, for most workers, effective integration of their own faith may result in finding their work satisfying and meaningful (Alford & Naughton, 2001; Conger, 1994; Fairholm, 1996, 1998). In return, this can increase their productivity, motivation (Mitroff & Denton, 1999), job satisfaction, and organizational/job commitment (Milliman et al., 2003), as well as overall improvement in work performance and ethical behavior (Garcia-Zamor, 2003; Maglitta, 1996).

Third, a recent study found that the variable most significantly related to social workers addressing clients' RSF in clinical practice – with an even greater influence on the regression model than training – is the social workers' intrinsic religiosity (Oxhandler et al., 2015), or the way in which the social worker is deeply motivated to live out their faith (Allport & Ross, 1967). Further, when asked what helps clinical social workers integrate clients' RSF in practice, 44% freely mentioned their personal religiosity, including their religious/spiritual journey, belief system, and practices (Oxhandler & Giardina, 2017). In light of these and other studies of helping professionals, Namaste Theory "introduces the concept that as

helping professionals infuse their own RS beliefs/practices into their daily lives, deepening their intrinsic religiosity and awareness of what they deem sacred, they tend to consider and integrate clients' RS beliefs/practices, and what clients consider sacred as well" (Oxhandler, 2017, p. 1). In addition, social workers' intrinsic spirituality has also been shown to increase self-efficacy and perceived feasibility as it relates to integrating clients' RSF in clinical practice (Oxhandler et al., 2015). Given the significant role social workers' RSF plays in promoting practitioners' resilience, sense of meaning in their work, and integration of clients' RSF as it relates to practice, it is important that the profession better understand how and to what extent RSF influences the practice of social workers of faith. This is especially important to consider when social workers' RSF beliefs and practices largely differ from the clients they serve. Namely, clinical social workers identify as more spiritual and less religious than US adults, engage in less frequent prayer and more meditation, and identify with different faith traditions as compared with the general US adults (Oxhandler, Polson et al., 2018).

Theoretical Approaches to the Integration of RSF and Social Work in the Literature

In the literature, as noted above, it is common to refer to the *integration of faith and social work practice*; however, for the purpose of this paper, we prefer integrating faith and social work because we believe that both faith and social work have both theoretical and practice aspects—faith theory/practice, social work theory/practice—and that these four aspects potentially inform and reinforce each other.

Most of the initial efforts to explore integrating social workers' RSF and social work together have focused primarily at the theoretical level. For example, Singletary (2005) outlines a model emphasizing a circular process in which theological reflection and committed social action inform each other in the life and work of social workers who bring faith, religion, and/or spirituality into their social work practice. This model shows how "thought and action, particularly theological reflection and social work practice, might inform each other in the life of a social worker who seeks to incorporate the role of faith, religion, and/or spirituality in her or his practice" (p. 56), resulting in more informed, improved service for social workers' clients.

In further examples, Chamiec-Case (2016) outlines three broad categories for organizing how Christians in social work integrate their RSF and social work. The first category - *The Effect of Integration on the Christian Social Worker's Motivation and Character/Identity Formation* - focuses on how the RSF of Christians in social work affects the development of their personal identity, character, inner strength, and motivation in ways that impact their understanding and practice of social work, and vice versa.

Example approaches in this category include the calling and virtues models of integration. The calling model of integration emphasizes how faith informs or clarifies the decision to choose social work as a vocation with a commitment to serve others and further social justice and human flourishing in our world (Eun-Kyoung & Barrett, 2007; Garland, 2016; Hugen, 2016; Taylor &Wolfer, 1999) or, conversely, how social work supports a person's call to their faith (Keith-Lucas, n.d.). The virtues model of integration highlights how the interaction of RSF and social work may contribute to the formation of the identity and character of Christians in social work, an interaction that can have a direct and beneficial impact on their performance of social work practice (Costello, 2013), as well as on their life of faith. For example, integration of RSF and social work may consist of engaging in a variety of Christian disciplines and practices (Milner, 2015; Ripley et al., 2009) that nurture the development of Christian virtues such as faith, hope, humility, hospitality, gratitude, selflessness, and love, which transform not just what social workers *do* but, even more fundamentally who they *are* (and *are becoming*), both as persons and as social workers (Schreiber et al., 2015; Wolfer & Brandsen, 2015).

The second category - *The Effect of Integration on the Understanding of Faith and of Social Work* - includes how RSF affects the way Christians in social work understand social work theory and practice, as well as how social work affects their understanding of their Christian faith. For example, Brenden and Shank (2012) describe a process through which the Colleges of St. Catherine/St. Thomas went about "thoughtfully and systematically integrating Catholic Social Teaching into the social work curriculum" with the result that, through this process, "the School has strengthened the social justice content of its programs" (p. 354). As another illustration, Vanderwoerd (2012) proposes several biblical principles to serve as a foundation for the development of a uniquely Christian view of social welfare, including: a) that God creates and upholds all the different societies that have and do exist; and b) that the purpose of societies and/or social structures is to facilitate God's intent for humans in creation – which is to have abundantly flourishing relationships in harmony.

The third category - *The Effect of Integration on the Practice of Faith and Social Work* - includes how RSF affects the way Christians in social work carry out social work practice, as well as how social work affects the way they live out their Christian faith. The excellence and integrity model of integration is one example, in which the RSF of Christians in social work drive their efforts to deliver the highest-quality of services possible, primarily because their ultimate goal in their work is to honor God and meet not just the profession's expectations, but God's standards as well (Brandsen & Hugen, 2007): "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters. . . . It is the Lord

Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24, New International Version). The intrapersonal model of integration is another example, in which the engagement of Christians in social work in one or more spiritual practices or disciplines helps them to focus and prepare for the work they do as social workers (Walker et al., 2004), such as a) engaging in private prayer or meditation in preparation for their work with clients; b) reflecting on passages of Scripture or other religious texts for encouragement, inspiration, or to help them cope with stress; or c) participating in other forms of individual or corporate worship.

While these three categories view integrating RSF and social work approaches as primarily positive and synergistic, some social workers experience tension or conflict between the values and priorities of the social work profession and their personal RSF (Dessel et al., 2011). Others express concerns that too strong of an emphasis on integration could prevent Christians in social work from serious consideration and application of social work knowledge and theories generated outside of the faith community, or that integrating faith and social work may minimize the central and foundational role faith should play in every aspect of life (Chamiec-Case, 2016). Thus, any attempts to study the RSF of social workers should be sensitive to both the potential positive/synergistic effects of integrating Christian RSF and social work, as well as potential tensions that may exist between the two.

Current Study

Unfortunately, there is little empirical data regarding social workers' views on integrating their personal RSF and social work. To better understand the ways in which social workers who self-identify as Christian integrate their personal faith and social work, we conducted a national survey of NACSW members, as described below. Our guiding research questions included: (1) What is the impact of social work on one's understanding and practice of faith, the impact of one's faith on one's understanding and practice of social work, the impact of one's faith on one's social work identity, and the conflicts or tensions that arise (if any) from integrating one's faith with social work?; and (2) Are there any significant relationships between NACSW member characteristics and the four subscales within the Social Workers' Integration of their Faith-Christian (SWIF-C) scale? Our effort to answer these research questions are outlined below.

Method

The Committee for the Protection of Human subjects at Baylor University approved this study. Of the 2,305 current and recent (within the last two years) members of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work (NACSW), we included 2,115 members with an email address

and US mailing address. Given that the SWIF-C was designed to survey social workers who self-identified as Christian, this sampling method was a feasible option due to the access to a large number of Christian social workers.

Data Collection

The SWIF-C was hosted on Qualtrics, along with 23 background items and three open-ended items. Dillman, Smyth, and Christian's (2015) survey methods were modified to recruit participants and disseminate the survey to NACSW members. As described in (Oxhandler et al., 2019), NACSW members were sent a pre-invitation email to notify them of the upcoming survey, a formal invitation to participate with the survey link, two follow-up emails, and a final follow-up email with a link to assess non-response bias. Each email explained the study, included contact information for the investigators and Baylor's institutional review board, and described a drawing to win one of $25 NACSW gift cards, which participants could enter into using a separate link after completing the survey. The original sampling frame included 2,115 current and recent NACSW members, but was reduced to 2,057 due to bounce back emails. A total of 486 (23.6%) responded to the survey.

Data Analysis

SPSS 23.0 was utilized to run descriptive analyses, to check assumptions, and to run regression analyses. To simplify and provide clear descriptions of the items, the five-point Likert responses were collapsed into three categories: strongly disagree/disagree, neutral, and agree/strongly agree. Respondents who did not indicate they were a current or recent member of NACSW and those who lived outside of the United States were excluded from the analyses, resulting in a sample size of 400. Data were missing at random and those with and without missing data did not differ across background items (Oxhandler et al., 2019).

To identify NACSW member characteristics associated with their responses to the four subscales, bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted. Continuous independent variables included age, years as a social worker, years as a Christian, and the DUREL intrinsic religiosity scale and were assessed using Pearson's r. Categorical independent variables were assessed using Spearman's rho, including region, race (white and nonwhite, given most NACSW members were white), gender, whether their agency was religiously affiliated (yes/no), age of clients served (younger than 30 or 30 and older, given younger Americans are less religious [Pew Research Center, 2015]), the extent to which they consider themselves religious or spiritual (not/slightly or moderate/very), DUREL organized religious activities (attending religious services never/rarely or at least a few times

per month) and non-organized religious activities (never/rarely or at least once per week).

Results

As displayed in Table 1, most respondents were white (81.6%), female (70.9%), with a master's degree (61.6%), and an average age of 51 years (SD = 13.75). These results closely parallel NASW's licensed social workers, which include 85% white, 81% female, and 57% between the ages of 45 and 64 years of age (Center for Health Workforce Studies, 2006). Our sample also reported an average of 40 years as a Christian (SD = 15.37), and 22 years as a social worker (SD = 14.34). Respondents were spread across the US, with more than one-third in the South (38.0%) and nearly one-third in the Midwest (32.7%). About half worked in religiously-affiliated settings versus secular settings. Finally, 9 out of 10 considered themselves moderately or very religious, and nearly all (96.7%) considered themselves moderately or very spiritual.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics and Background Variables for Sample (N=380*)

	M	*SD*
Age (n=375)	51.6	13.68
Years as Social Worker (n=358)	22.1	14.3
Years as Christian (n=365)	40.3	15.4
	n	*(%)*
Gender (n=375)		
Female	266	(70.9)
Male	109	(29.1)
Ethnicity (n=376)		
White	307	(81.6)
African American/Black	42	(11.2)
Hispanic	10	(2.7)
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	(1.9)
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	(0.5)
Other	8	(2.1)
	n	*(%)*

Region (n=376)		
Northeast	60	(16.0)
Midwest	123	(32.7)
South	143	(38.0)
West	50	(13.3)
Education (n=367)		
Bachelors	25	(6.8)
Masters	226	(61.6)
Doctorate	110	(30.0)
Other	6	(1.6)
Agency Setting (n=358)		
Religiously affiliated	194	(54.2)
Secular-private	86	(24.0)
Secular-public	78	(21.8)
Christian Affiliation (n=370)		
Non-denominational	102	(27.6)
Baptist	69	(18.6)
Catholic	20	(5.4)
Presbyterian	20	(5.4)
Reformed	19	(5.1)
Methodist	18	(4.9)
Other[a]	142	(35.5)
To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person? (moderately/very religious) (n=366)	330	(90.2)
To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person? (moderately/very spiritual)	355	(96.7)

Note. *Total number of respondents with at least half of the instrument complete, who lived in the US and were an NACSW member within the last 2 years. a Other Christian denominations included: Apostolic (5), Assemblies of God (6), Church of Christ (9), Episcopal (13), Evangelical (9), Lutheran (11), Mennonite (8), Mormon (1), Orthodox (1), Quaker (3), No affiliation (3), Seventh Day Adventist (11), Pentecostal (8), Nazarene (7). Forty seven others provided detailed explanations that did not fit a category.

The responses to the SWIF-C are reported in Table 2. Most respondents reported that social work impacts their faith (62% - 88%), with the exception of three items falling below 50%. Most also agreed that their faith impacts their social work practice (76% - 99%) and social work identity (97% - 99%), while less than half reported conflicts between faith and social work (8% - 41%).

Table 2. *Frequencies of Responses to SWIF-C Items*

Response	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Strongly Agree/ Agree n (%)
The Impact of Social Work on One's Faith			
1. Social work helps me to cope with challenges in the practice of my faith. (n =376)	64 (17.0)	76 (20.2)	236 (62.8)
2. I seek ways to exercise social work values in my faith. (n =376)	34 (9.0)	63 (16.8)	279 (74.2)
3. Social work deepens my understanding of faith. (n=376)	62 (16.5)	81 (21.5)	233 (62.0)
4. Social work provides valuable insight into my faith that I would not be able to find within my faith tradition alone. (n=374)	123 (32.9)	73 (19.5)	178 (47.6)
5. Social work filters the faith beliefs and practices I choose to embrace. (n=373)	194 (52.0)	70 (18.8)	109 (29.2)
6. Insights from my faith and my social work inform one another. (n=375)	16 (4.2)	34 (9.1)	325 (86.7)
7. My experience as a social worker motivates me to live out my faith more intentionally. (n=375)	13 (3.5)	31 (8.3)	331 (88.3)

The Impact of Social Work on One's Faith			
8. My faith practices are shaped by my experience as a social worker. (n=374)	118 (31.6)	70 (18.7)	186 (49.7)
9. Incorporating social work techniques in my own life (e.g., conducting a spiritual assessment) is helpful to my faith. (n=375)	31 (8.3)	86 (22.9)	258 (68.8)
10. *My understanding of social work does not affect how I prioritize different aspects of my faith. (n=370) understanding of social work does not affect how I prioritize different aspects of my faith. (n=370)	188 (50.8)	68 (18.4)	114 (30.8)
The Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Practice			
1. My faith forms the foundation from which I build my understanding of social work. (n =375)	15 (4.0)	31 (8.3)	329 (87.7)
8. My faith practices are shaped by my experience as a social worker. (n=374)	118 (31.6)	70 (18.7)	186 (49.7)
9. Incorporating social work techniques in my own life (e.g., conducting a spiritual assessment) is helpful to my faith. (n=375)	31 (8.3)	86 (22.9)	258 (68.8)
2. My faith provides insight into social work that I would not find in my other sources. (n =376)	17 (4.5)	20 (5.3)	339 (90.2)
3. My faith motivates me to deliver high quality social work services. (n=375)	2 (<0.1)	2 (<0.1)	371 (98.9)

The Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Practice			
4. Understanding my faith helps me better understand my clients' spiritual belief systems. (n=375)	12 (3.2)	22 (5.9)	341 (90.9)
5. Modifying established social work interventions using spiritual principles is helpful in social work practice. (n=375)	22 (5.9)	70 (18.7)	283 (75.5)
6. Incorporating spiritual practices (e.g., use of prayer or Scripture) in social work practice is helpful for clients who desire this. (n=374)	5 (1.4)	30 (8.0)	339 (90.6)
7.*My faith does not deepen my understanding of social work. (n=376)	343 (91.2)	13 (3.5)	20 (5.3)
The Impact of Faith on One's Social Work Identity			
1. My faith supports my on-going commitment to being a social worker. (n=374)	6 (1.6)	5 (1.3)	363 (97.1)
2. My faith strengthens me as a social worker. (n=372)	4 (1.1)	3 (0.8)	365 (98.1)
3. My faith helps me cope with personal challenges as a social worker. (n=374)	5 (1.3)	4 (1.1)	365 (97.6)
4. Exercising Christian virtues (e.g., faith, hope, and love) strengthens me as a social worker. (n=373)	4 (1.1)	1 (0.2)	368 (98.7)
Conflict Between One's Faith and Social Work			
1. *I reinterpret my Christian beliefs in order to avoid tensions with social work. (n=369)	311 (84.3)	30 (8.1)	28 (7.6)
2. *Social work conflicts with the expectations of my faith. (n=370)	242 (65.4)	59 (15.9)	69 (18.6)

Conflict Between One's Faith and Social Work			
3. *My faith conflicts with the ethical requirements of social work. (n=370)	239 (64.6)	52 (14.1)	79 (21.4)
4. *There are conflicts between my experience as a Christian and as a social worker. (n=368)	166 (45.1)	52 (14.1)	150 (40.8)
5. *I reinterpret my understanding of social work in order to avoid tension with my faith. (n=370)	246 (66.5)	70 (18.9)	54 (14.6)
NOTE: The following items were removed during the initial factor analysis (Oxhandler et al., 2019) and should not be included in subsequent surveys, but are included below for descriptive purposes.			
My faith affects my priorities as a social worker. (n=375)	13 (3.5)	32 (8.5)	330 (88.0)
My faith filters the social work theories/interventions I choose to embrace. (n=374)	41 (11.0)	48 (12.8)	285 (76.2)
Observing significant progress in my clients' lives leads me to experience a sense of awe and wonder. (n=376)	8 (2.1)	47 (12.5)	321 (85.4)
My faith played an important role in my decision to become a social worker. (n=376)	25 (6.6)	30 (8.0)	321 (85.4)
*I do not seek ways to exercise Christian virtues (e.g., faith, hope, and love) as a social worker. (n=376)	354 (94.1)	12 (3.2)	10 (2.7)
*What I learn from my faith and my experience as a social worker are only applicable within their original context. (n=374)	279 (74.6)	76 (20.3)	19 (5.1)
Engaging in social work practice is an important way of living out my faith. (n=374)	5 (1.3)	9 (2.4)	360 (96.3)

Conflict Between One's Faith and Social Work			
*Learning about social workers who serve others effectively does not inspire me to live out my faith more intentionally. (n=375)	336 (89.6)	18 (4.8)	21 (5.6)
My Christian faith discourages me from imposing my faith upon clients. (n=372)	126 (33.9)	80 (21.5)	166 (44.6)
My Christian faith encourages me to influence my clients' spiritual belief systems. (n=371)	129 (34.8)	97 (26.1)	145 (39.1)
I do not have to justify my faith with my social work colleagues. (n=368)	79 (21.5)	49 (13.3)	240 (65.2)
I do not have to justify being a social worker with other Christians. (n=369)	72 (19.5)	28 (7.6)	269 (72.9)
*Being exposed to clients' stories of tragedy and injustice leads me to question my faith. (n=370)	322 (87.0)	24 (6.5)	24 (6.5)

Note. Due to rounding, some items may not round to an even 100%; *indicates item should be reverse coded.

The second research question explored whether there are any significant relationships between NACSW member characteristics and the four subscales within the SWIF-C. Indeed, there were no significant relationships between NACSW members' subscale scores and their age, length as a social worker, race/ethnicity, age of clients served, the extent to which they consider themselves religious, or whether the setting is religiously-affiliated or secular. Additionally, there were generally no significant relationships between subscale scores and length of being a Christian (with the exception of the Conflict subscale [$r = .11$, $p < .05$]), gender (with the exception of the Impact of Faith on One's SW Identity subscale [rho = .17, $p = .001$]), and region of the country (with the exception of Impact of SW on One's Faith [rho = .14, $p < .01$]). Finally, the degree to which they consider themselves spiritual, as well as their DUREL organized and nonorganized religious activities and intrinsic religiosity scale score were significant with the Impact of Faith on SW Identity (spiritual: rho = .12, $p < .05$; organized religious activity: rho = .15, $p < .01$; non-organized religious activity: rho = .11, $p < .05$; intrinsic religiosity: r = .39, $p < .001$). These variables were also

significantly related to the Impact of Faith on SW Practice (spiritual: rho = .12, $p < .05$; organized religious activity: rho = .13, $p < .05$; non-organized religious activity: rho = .16, $p < .01$; intrinsic religiosity: r = .41, $p < .001$).

Multiple linear regressions were conducted to determine characteristics that predict respondents' scores to the four factors. Potential predictors were entered based on the significant relationships identified in the bivariate analyses. These can be found in Table 3. Responses to the Impact of SW on Faith scale were significantly and positively related to two variables – extent of being spiritual and region (coded as Northeast/Midwest, which had slightly higher average scores on this factor compared with South/West) – with both accounting for only about 3% of the model ($F[2,352] = 4.91$, $p < .01$). The Impact of Faith on SW Practice score was significantly related to their DUREL organized and non-organized religious activities, extent of being spiritual, and intrinsic religiosity; however, only intrinsic religiosity accounted for 19% of the variance ($F[4,356] = 20.68$, $p < .001$). Five variables were significantly related to the Impact of Faith on SW Identity score (extent of being spiritual, DUREL organized and non-organized religious activities, intrinsic religiosity, and gender); however, intrinsic religiosity, gender, and non-organized religious activities accounted for 20% of the variance ($F[5,350] = 17.30$, $p < .001$). Finally, the number of years as a Christian and extent of being spiritual was significantly related to the Conflict score, accounting for about 3% of the variance ($F[2,358] = 4.67$, $p < .01$).

Table 3. Relationships Between Practitioner Characteristics and SWIF-C Subscales, as well as a Summary of Multiple Regression

Impact of SW on Faith Score (N)	Impact of Faith on SW Practice Score (N)	Impact of Faith on SW Identity Score (N)	Conflict Between Faith and SW Score (N)[a]
To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person? (Moderately/Very)[a]			
.11* (355)	.12* (365)	.12* (360)	.12* (363)
How often do you attend church or or other religious meetings? (ORA; At least a few times a month)[a]			
	.13* (361)	.15** (356)	
How often do you spend time in private religious activities, such as prayer, meditation or Bible study? (NORA; At least once a week)[a]			
	.16* (367)	.11* (362)	
DUREL Intrinsic Religiosity (continuous)			
	.41*** (365)	.39*** (361)	
Years as a Christian (continuous)			
			.11* (361)

Region (North/Midwest)					
.14** (363)					
Gender (Female)					
		.17** (367)			

Significant Predictors in Model with Each Subscale				R2
B	SE	β	t-value	
Impact of SW on Faith				.027
Region (Northeast/Midwest)				
1.93	0.77	0.13	2.44*	
Extent Spiritual				
4.33	2.17	0.10	1.99*	
Impact of Faith on SW Practice				.189
Intrinsic Religiosity				
.95	0.13	0.37	7.30***	
Impact of Faith on SW Identity				
Intrinsic Religiosity				
0.52	0.08	0.33	6.42***	
Gender (Female)				
0.67	0.21	0.15	3.18**	
DUREL NORA				
1.19	0.53	0.11	2.24*	
Conflict Between Faith and SW[c]				.025
Length of being a Christian				
0.03	0.01	0.10	2.00*	
Extent Spiritual				
2.49	1.13	0.12	2.21*	

Note. Variables with significant relationships above were entered into the regression model using pairwise deletion; however, only variables with significant results in the model are reported above. [a]Spearman's rho. [b]Pearson's r. [c]Score for Conflict subscale summated using the reverse scores *p<.05 **p<.01***p<.001.

Discussion

The results of this study warrant discussion on three main takeaways regarding the high influence of social workers' faith and social work, lower degree of conflict between these two areas, predictors of such integration, and a critical attention for educators to not bypass the role of students' RSF in their emerging social work.

Faith and Social Work: Practice, Identity, and Conflicts

First, a majority report that their faith affects their understanding and practice of social work and their social work identity across all items on these two scales. Likewise, except for only a few items, a majority of our sample report that their social work affects their faith. Respondents clearly see numerous and significant connections between their chosen profession and faith, running in both directions across items related to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral domains. In reciprocal fashion, both faith and social work build commitment and motivation, provide insight and deepen understanding, facilitate exchange of skills and practices, and provide coping resources. In short, faith and social work appear to mutually enrich and deepen the lives of these Christians in social work.

While study participants acknowledge the existence of conflicts between faith and social work, for most, the conflicts do not appear pervasive or widespread. The sample was roughly split between those who report "there are conflicts between my experience as a Christian and as a social worker" (45.1% strongly disagree/disagree versus 40.8% strongly agree/agree). Fewer participants agree that they reinterpret their faith to "avoid tensions with" social work (7.6%), that social work conflicts with expectations of their faith (18.6%), or that their faith conflicts with ethical requirements of social work (21.4%). Thus, while aware of conflicts, it seems they do not experience conflict as especially problematic or pervasive.

Recommendations

Given the literature identifying faith as a source of professional motivation and persistence in the face of difficulty, it seems appropriate to explore ways for ethically supporting the unique exploration of RSF for social workers and how this fits with social work practice. This study reveals the bidirectional significance of faith and social work integration for many social work practitioners for whom RSF is important, and the potential benefit for them to explore and become more aware of connections between their faith and social work more deeply. At minimum, we recognize that students and novice practitioners may seek supervision to thoughtfully explore these issues, and in some situations, may need additional support from religious leaders and/or social workers of faith to understand their personal intersection of RSF and social work. We recognize this can be much easier in faith-based settings, but even acknowledging these possible connections in public settings without imposing a particular faith tradition and holding space for new social workers to explore this intersection can be a step in the right direction. Beyond that, students and practitioners will benefit from opportunities to learn about, deepen, and ground their faith while also receiving clear guidance to not proselytize or convert clients in

their social work capacities.

From another perspective, this research highlights the unique opportunities for social work educators, field instructors, and supervisors in faith-based settings—whether schools or agencies—and the potential contributions they can make to professional development of students and novice social workers. By proactively addressing integration of faith and social work, they potentially contribute to the development of their students as both competent and ethical Christians in social work. Such development may fortify students for the demands and stresses of professional practice by enhancing their motives for professional practice as well as expanding their coping resources.

At the same time, given the reported significance and pervasiveness of these relationships, it seems appropriate for social work educators to help students anticipate and address possible tensions and conflicts. Indeed, creating a platform for discussing integration may open opportunities to address potential conflicts perceived or experienced at the interface of faith and social work. By legitimating such conversations, educators and supervisors give permission for students to raise conflictual issues, seek consultation, and grapple openly with the conflicts in a learning setting with mentors and colleagues rather than in a practice setting with clients. This type of engagement can promote professional growth and development, and better prepare students for professional practice.

This is especially important given that these data indicate that Christians in social work find ways to integrate their faith and social work. Thus, it is not a question of whether they do so but how do they integrate their faith and social work, and do they do so competently and ethically?

Somewhat surprisingly, most demographics do not appear to affect relationships between RSF and social work. Perhaps this sample is so consistently religious and spiritual that demographics do not make much difference (i.e., a ceiling effect may obscure differences). This may reflect self-selection to the membership organization from which the sample was recruited or self-selection into the study sample itself. Yet, other identity items did not differentiate much either. For this sample, demographic variables do not correlate with differences in efforts to integrate the RSF of these social workers or their clients. It appears that most of these social workers will integrate RSF regardless of agency auspices, personal identity, or other demographics. Perhaps integration efforts are less affected by external circumstances than we expected, and especially for people for whom RSF is intrinsic. Along these lines, it is worth noting that intrinsic religiosity had the strongest relationship and accounted for much of the variance for social workers' impact of faith on social work practice and identity.

These data are especially important for social work educators, field

instructors, and supervisors because other research indicates that social workers generally perceive themselves unprepared to deal with RSF in practice and tend to seek out additional training in this area (Oxhandler et al., 2015). Furthermore, while most previous research has focused on the RSF of social work clients, this study focused on RSF of social workers themselves. Because there is so little information in the literature about RSF of social workers, we assume that few, if any, social workers have been alerted to these issues, much less educated about how to address them constructively. Furthermore, based on these data, we assume that these issues may crop up for most social workers for whom RSF is important. As a first step, social work educators, field instructors, and supervisors must reflect on their own perspectives toward and efforts to integrate faith and social work. Upon reflection, they may recognize their own need for further information or work in this area. With greater self-awareness, they will be better prepared to help students recognize and explore possible connections between faith and social work, affirm these connections for social workers for whom RSF matters, consciously identify filtering and integrating principles, identify and engage in supportive practices, and begin to navigate the tensions. Ideally, they will be able to help social work students and supervisees to develop as competent ethical practitioners. Further, those in faith-based settings may also feel additional freedom to encourage students and practitioners to more deeply reflect upon and cultivate their own personal RSF.

As we noted at the outset, faith has both a theoretical aspect (e.g., knowledge, theology, biblical interpretation) and a practice aspect (e.g., worship, spiritual disciplines, ministry, service) and these inform and reinforce each other. Likewise, social work has both a theoretical aspect (e.g., knowledge, theories at various levels, conceptual frameworks) and a practice aspect (e.g., interventions across client systems and system levels) and these also inform and reinforce each other. Given this understanding, particularly in reference to this sample, we avoid referring to integration of "faith and social work practice" because we fear this implies a limited, imbalanced type of integration (i.e., religious ideas with social work profession). In our experience and conversations, when social work practitioners who identify as Christian talk about "integrating faith and social work practice," they often mean connecting their Christian/biblical principles and values with how they carry out the work they do as social workers (i.e., finding ways to incorporate their faith in social work practice). As a result, there is little or no focus on the practice aspect of faith in the integrative effort (while people assume the combined theory and practice aspects of social work). Perhaps more importantly, the reciprocal nature of the integrative effort—faith's impact on social work and social work's impact on faith—is minimized. Although it is a subtle change, we believe the

language of "integrating faith and social work" promotes a more balanced and thorough integrative effort and would recommend its use in the future.

Limitations

Although this study has a number of strengths, there are several limitations, as described in (Oxhandler et al., 2019). For example, the sample included NACSW members; thus, Christians in social work who are not current or recent members of NACSW were excluded. Additionally, though our sample includes diverse Christian denominations, we recognize there are others not represented in this sample. Finally, we recognize that the wide extent of ways in which social workers engage in practice (e.g., clinical, policy, community, education, health, and connected with various other professions), as well as the spectrum of faith journeys may also influence their responses. Still, this is the first national survey we know of that captures the responses from a large sample of social workers who identify as Christian regarding the integration of their faith and social work. It is also worth noting that while our sample's demographics largely resemble a national sample of professional social workers, we have a slightly higher percentage identifying as male, white, and having a graduate degree (George Washington University Health Workforce Institute and School of Nursing, 2017). Additionally, compared to a national sample of LCSWs in which 35.1% identified themselves as moderately/very religious, and 81.9% as moderately/very spiritual (Oxhandler, Polson, et al., 2018), this sample identified far more as both religious and spiritual (90.2% and 96.7%, respectively). Because our study sample consists of people who joined a professional association of Christians in social work—and who strongly identify as both religious and spiritual—it is not surprising that they not only self-reported as more religious and spiritual, but also reported substantial connections between their profession and their faith.

We recommend that future studies survey Christians in social work outside of the NACSW members. We also developed the SWIF-C with the NACSW membership in mind and hope to see future adaptations of this instrument that are inclusive of other faith traditions. Recognizing there are many ways of engaging in social work (e.g., clinical, mezzo, macro practice as well as education) we also recommend that future studies explore how this integration may differ based on the type of practice and setting. Finally, noting these data indicate Christians in social work integrate their RSF, we recommend that future studies seek to better understand how they engage in such integration, continuing to align with NASW's (2017) code of ethics.

Conclusion

In summary, the RSF of social workers themselves may represent an overlooked and untapped resource, especially for Christians in social

work and those who educate and supervise them. Although integration of faith and social work may generate some tension and conflict, this study demonstrates that it offers substantial benefits as well. The responses to the four scales within the SWIF-C may help the profession recognize the ways in which social workers' faith and social work may interact with one another in their professional lives. Further, the results of the regression analyses may help the profession (including practitioners, social work education programs, field instructors, and supervisors) recognize various characteristics that influence one's social work and faith. ❖

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Addressing LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Challenges, Faith, and Resilience in the Church and Her People

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The questions of the reception of and role of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus (LGBTQ+) persons in the Christian faith and Christian church have increasingly called for churches and denominations to discern a position on membership, leadership, and participation in the sacraments. Individuals, families, congregations, and denominations are impacted by the differences in perspective, policy, and practice of affirming, including, or excluding LGBTQ+ persons. This article reports on a qualitative research study of 97 interviews in 20 congregations across three denominations exploring difficult conversations, decisions, and the impact of those decisions. The challenges and opportunities in both conversations and decisions are nested in faith perspectives. One significant finding is the role of individual and corporate faith in the resilience essential to both survival and growth.

***Keywords*:** LGBTQ+, congregations, discernment, inclusion, faith, resilience

OUR LIVES INCLUDE CHALLENGE AND ADVERSITY. God's promises include consistent love and care; they do not include protection from the difficulties that come with life in an imperfect world. Those imperfections and difficulties are true for each of us individually and for all of us corporately. In truth, the defining event of our faith, the crucifixion of Christ, is marked with division, betrayal, and death. Was there any darker day in the history of mankind than the crucifixion of

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the Son of God? Even in this defining event of our faith, we see the resilience of God's people in hope, resurrection, and new beginnings. As the Savior emerged from the empty tomb, the Christian faith and the modern church were born. We know, as people of faith, that our own hope of life eternal with our Savior is grounded in the experience of resurrection. Resilience through illness and death and other life separations was born in our faith in Jesus Christ and His resurrection. LGBTQ+ persons have experienced separation from the church; conversely. churches have experienced loss of members, finances, and leaders. While the challenges of division and separation are present in these stories, faith in resurrection and new beginnings is the source of resilience and recovery for the church. This resilience is evident in the stories of persons and congregations who have not only survived but thrived through the challenges and opportunities in discernment conversations about LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Introduction and Overview

The question of persons who identify as LGBTQ+ regarding membership, leadership, and participation in churches is not the first source of struggle and division in the narrative of Christianity. Church history is replete with differences in understanding and beliefs that led to separation and division of organizations (Shelley, 2013). Nowhere may this be more evident than in the multiple denominations in Christendom. Christianity grew out of the Jewish faith and tradition through the teachings of Jesus, a Jewish itinerant preacher and His redemptive death. From the early divisions between Greek Orthodox, Catholicism, and the Protestant Reformation, the church has continued to both embrace different understandings and theology and divide to create structures for those shared differences among believers. Throughout history there have been differences in understanding and interpreting scripture. There continue to be disagreements about how scripture is interpreted and followed. Examples include whether or not women can preach, whether the Sabbath is Saturday or Sunday, and who can partake of the Lord's Supper.

In early church history, those differences were often the creation of and in response to approaches of religious teachers and creations of ritual to accommodate them. For example, the early Christian church struggled over who would be included; one of the earliest and most significant differences occurred around the inclusion or exclusion of Gentiles. The early disciples disagreed initially; Christian scriptures suggest that Paul (*NIV*, Galatians 2:1-2) and Peter (*NIV*, Acts 10:1-48; 11:1-18) each had separate Holy Spirit revelations that Gentiles be included in the new religion, eventually called Christianity. A more current point of difference among Christians in the church is that of membership and leadership of LGBTQ+ persons

in churches and denominations.

The authors used qualitative research methods to explore differences, both in processes employed in churches and decisions and outcomes, around the questions of membership and leadership of LGBTQ+ persons. It was clear throughout the research that participants were concerned about disagreement, discord, and division. Was it possible to have these conversations and the church remain intact? How resilient were the churches and congregations in the study? Church history to date suggests the church has survived both external and internal challenges. This article identifies the role of faith in congregational and individual resilience in the face of differences over LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Literature Review

The history of the Christian church begins with differences over who could be a Christian and who could not. Was following Christ reserved for Jews or available to Gentiles (Richards, 2020; Shelley, 2013)? Beyond who could be a Christian was the question of who could be a leader in the Christian church. The disagreement about women in leadership continues today (Kirkpatrick, 2008). The Protestant Reformation was at least in part over whether or not the scripture was accessible to each person for their understanding instead of depending on the interpretation of a priest (Richards, 2020; Shelley, 2013). These disagreements and others led to multiple denominations with different policies and hierarchies making clear the scope of differences in the Christian church. The question of LGBTQ+ inclusion is only one of a number of current issues challenging the church as people of faith disagree about women in the ministry (Hamman, 2010), reproductive rights (Castle, 2011; Evans, 2009; McVeigh et al., 2017) and political positions (Cahill, 2009; McKenzie & Rouse, 2013; Whitehead, 2014). These issues are debated across and between denominations.

Long and Short History

It can be easy for persons in a faith tradition to assume that the beliefs, structures, and issues have always been the same. The interplay of church history, local culture, and denominational positions is complex enough for many books. Much of Christian church history describes the evolving denominational groups. The history of LGBTQ+ persons and the church begins for some with differing understandings of selected Old and New Testament scripture (Collins, 2018; Gaede, 1998; Polaski & Eiland, 2013; Rogers, 2009; Vines, 2014; Wilson, 2014; Wingfield, 2019); for others, the scripture and the history of sexuality and marriage in cultures across history inform current understandings (Baldock, 2014; deJong, 2020; Fishburn, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2008;

McConkey, 2018). Baldock (2014) examines the historical development of understandings of sexual behavior, orientation, identity, and specific terminology, pointing out, for example, the history and use of terms like sodomy, homosexuality, and heterosexuality in the early 1900s when any sexual activity not procreative was viewed as unnatural (p. 19). The word homosexual was not even in the dictionary until 1934 (p. 20). Every teenager on Twitter knows that language continues to evolve in cultural groups. Parallel cultural processes like the evolution of understandings about health and mental health during the 20th and 21st centuries, the impact of technology on relationships including the building of community for marginalized groups, and others are all historical contributors to current understanding. While beyond the scope of this article, these are discussions that can be part of the challenge and opportunity that churches encounter in response to the increased visibility of LGBTQ+ Christians across denominations.

Three Denominations

The scope of the research included churches from three denominations: Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. These three Protestant denominations have varied history with the question of LGBTQ+ inclusion. For all Baptists, the autonomy of the local church is central, including interpretations of scripture by the Holy Spirit and decisions regarding leadership. While several Baptist alliances include churches who are welcoming and affirming of LGBTQ+ persons (Polaski & Eiland, 2013), other Baptist groups will not continue relationship with churches that affirm LGBTQ+ persons for membership or leadership (Wingfield, 2019) while others welcome celibate LGBTQ+ members (Collins, 2018).

At the United Methodist Church Conference in February 2019, the official final vote was against same-sex marriage, while still upholding open membership. The Reconciling Ministry group, within the Methodist denomination, upholds same-sex marriage and supports Methodist churches who are open and affirming (Levy, 2014; McConkey, 2018). At this writing, the denomination is considering a split over this question. The Presbyterian denomination has struggled with these and other questions as well. The Presbyterian Church (USA) was formed in 1983 of the Presbyterian Church in the US and the United Presbyterian Church in the USA. The official stance of the Presbyterian denomination has been open and affirming since 2018 (Levy, 2014). The denomination allows ordination of openly LGBTQ+ ministers based on the congregation's decision (Presbyterian Church USA).

Faithful Positions: Traditionalist, Welcoming, Affirming, or Reconciling

There is a variety of positions and policies specific to LGBTQ+ inclusion across denominations. A traditionalist congregational approach affirms that sexual intimacy is to remain between a man and a woman within the covenant of marriage (Collins, 2018). Churches within this category are called traditional as they agree with a historical and consistent reading of Christian Scripture. Those who have agreed on a welcoming perspective desire to "welcome" all believers, regardless of sexuality, but "prohibits the church from condoning same-sex behavior as well as same-sex sexual unions" (Collins, 2018, pp. 1-2). A welcoming stance might also limit individuals from the LGBTQ+ community who are in a same-sex relationship from attaining leadership roles within the church to prevent promoting same-sex sexual behavior. An affirming stance advocates for the acceptance of "committed, monogamous, covenant-based same-sex relationships, including same-sex marriage" (Collins, 2018, p. 53). Others see affirming as advocating for persons' rights to make their own decisions and not tying church membership or leadership to one position. Reconciling congregations, a term begun by the Methodist's Reconciling Ministries Network, mobilize the affirming stance by further seeking "justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities" (Reconciling Ministries Network, n.d.).

Defining Faith and Resilience

There are many similarities and differences in the three denominations included in this study, beginning with the primary theological concept of faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who provides believers with examples of relationship with God the Father and with each other. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defined faith as "allegiance to duty or to a person; belief and trust in and loyalty to God; and something that is believed with strong conviction: a system of religious beliefs." So, faith is the intersection of who and what we believe and the confidence that the principal creator and center of those beliefs delivers as promised. An additional variable in religious faith is the relationship to God, in and through the person of Jesus, the Christ, in which beliefs and confidence are nested as primary (Yarhouse et al., 2018). When persons identify their faith as their denomination, they often are referring to agreed-upon policy and ritual, both of which can impact significantly the LGBTQ+ discussion (McConkey, 2018; Wingfield, 2019). Differences among the three denominations are often found about policy and the processes to decide on policy, particularly the role of the denominational hierarchy in policy establishment. Examples in congregations include policy decisions

around membership and the various church ordinances and sacraments. What are the criteria for membership? Who can participate in church sacraments like Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and others? The research team identified faith at the intersection of these two faith concepts, (i.e. belief and trust in, and loyalty to, God and a system of religious beliefs as seen in policy and practice at levels of governance; Merriam-Webster, n.d.) . The team defined faith as confidence in God's presence and reliability, (i.e. both what we believe and confidence that our beliefs will eventually prove out). This is lived out in relationship to our experience as God, identified in and through the person of Jesus Christ. Understandings of faith extend to belief systems and confidence in them.

Resilience. Resilience involves the "ability to persevere and adapt when things go awry" (Reivich & Shatte, 2002, p. 1). It also includes the ability to "overcome, steer through, and bounce back when adversity strikes" (p. 3). Boss (2007) defined resilience as the capacity to manage in life with questions that remain unanswered, (i.e., living with ambiguity). This includes, according to Boss (2006), the ability to live with competing ideas/concepts, which interestingly also can define the scope of faith. Boss clarifies that faith frequently makes it possible for resilience to grow in the presence of ambiguity. However, when the ambiguity includes the concept of immorality or negative difference, there can be less resilience and, in those cases, a complication of faith. In studying the grief process, Doka (2016) found that resilient grievers were equipped with "an intrinsic spirituality, good psychological health, and an optimistic mind-set" (p. 59). Additionally, resilience was aided by supportive families and emotional warmth, without a complicated grief experience. Quezada (2018) displays resilience through the immigration experience, sharing that "people living on the margins... teach us how to hope. They can teach us how to anticipate justice while maintaining our dignity in the waiting...how to fight...how to celebrate and truly live amid unspeakable suffering" (pp. 120-121). In their study on LGBTQ+ college students, Woodford et al. (2018) found that resilience related to "the quality of being able to survive and potentially thrive in the face of adversity, mitigating the negative impact of stress on health" (p. 422). The authors found that resilience can be found in a difficult, possibly overwhelming, scenario with a matched ability to respond in a way that not only allows survival, but growth and opportunity.

Resilience may also be considered as the adaptation to a new reality (Attig, 1996). For many Christians who also identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community, relearning and adapting to new ways of experiencing their faith and God is an important part of their spiritual journey. It is also a critical part of a church's development and identity formation in discernment processes in conversation about difficult topics like LGBTQ+ inclusion (Gaede, 1998). Churches can create spaces for people to feel welcome and

explore their relationship with God. Regardless of the outcome of difficult conversations and decisions, most churches in the literature desired to create a space of belonging and connection, where identities could be formed based on the "unity of the Spirit" (Kaltenback, 2015; Wilson, 2014, p. 17). Stephens (2018) wrote about affirming and reconciling congregations as communities of faith practicing "radical hospitality as a response to God's missional call to love and justice in the world" (p. 2). Stephens (2018) found that when decisions result in some members leaving a church, the economic, membership, and relational risks to congregations exploring the questions of inclusion can be daunting. The author also identified that transformation can occur in strengths developed by the congregation in the discernment process as congregations address challenges and develop tools for ministry (p. 150).

Faith and Resilience Intersection

The intersection of faith and resilience is that sweet spot where confidence in relationship with God and with others and policy and practice in congregations provides context and support for congregations dealing with differences and challenges. Exploring the question of LGBTQ+ inclusion is not a new area of practice or research. LGBTQ+ persons have written about their own experiences of dissonance between their sexuality and their congregational experiences (Chu, 2013; Lee, 2012; Vines, 2014). Chu approached the topic as a gay man and a journalist, traveling across the country and interviewing persons from a variety of perspectives including advocacy against gay Christians, conversion therapy, and welcoming and affirming persons and congregations. Lee (2012) told his own story of coming out and eventually becoming a voice for reconciliation between persons with opposing positions. Vines (2014) also shared his story of seeking the truth in the scripture and Christian doctrine and engaged in advocacy for acceptance in congregations. Pastors have written about their journeys of understanding about LGBTQ+ inclusion and how they have worked with their congregations to find biblically based, doctrinally sound answers (Collins, 2018; Gushee, 2017; Wilson, 2014). While Collins (2018) articulates the position of welcoming all persons without affirming a gay lifestyle, Wilson (2014) and Gushee (2017) describe their journey to an eventual position of full inclusion for LGBTQ+ Christians. Yarhouse et al. (2018) did research around sexuality and identity with students at Christian colleges and reported, "these sexual minority students are religious and spiritual, more so than their same-aged peers and the broader population" (p. 139). Other scholars have gathered the stories of LGBTQ+ persons and of pastors and congregations and

provided an array of experiences and perspectives to inform these discussions (Gaede, 1998; Polaski & Eiland, 2013; Robertson, 2017). The authors describe a variety of congregations and their positions, including discussions of biblical text understandings. While these conversations have been happening for several decades now, the intensity of the conversation and the painful decisions and consequences are accelerating, prompting this study. As is true for many controversial topics, "in each of the congregations they studied, personal story-telling emerged as a significant congregational practice, enabling persons to share pain, confront dissonance, and learn together in community" (Moore, 2003, p. 162). The author observed, "Pain has the potential to stir the passions of people and to motivate ministries of hospitality" (p. 132). It is that function of faith, meaning-making, and resilience in the presence of difficulty that informs the results of this study.

Methodology

This qualitative, phenomenological study explored the experiences of ministers, leaders, and congregants about the processes, decisions, and outcomes of determining LGBTQ+ inclusion. The research built on a previous qualitative study exploring the lived experience of 20 persons who identified as LGBTQ+ and identified as Christian. Many of the participants experienced distancing and rejection in their churches and a crisis of faith as a consequence of coming out (Author & Author, date). The authors also noted increasing focus in Christian denominations to the question of LGBTQ+ membership and inclusion. Levy (2010) reported increases in advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights. Numerous authors reported struggles in churches and denominations over LGBTQ+ inclusion (Gaede, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 2008; Polaski & Eiland, 2013; Rogers, 2009). When churches lost members (Collins, 2018; Wingfield, 2019) and denominations fractured (Kirkpatrick, 2008; Rogers, 2009), the importance of finding civil and effective processes was even more important. This study examined the following questions:

Research Questions

1. What are the processes used in congregations for difficult conversations and decisions specific to LGBTQ+ issues?
2. What are the motivations and experiences of church leadership and members in these conversations?
3. What were decisions and the impact of those decisions on the congregation?
4. What were best practices and resources identified by congregations who engaged in discernment?

Sample

The first phase of the research was a qualitative study of 20 congregations across the United States in three denominations representing a variety of denominational structures and theological positions: Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian. To capture the scope of the issue, the research team decided to include 5-10 congregations from each of the three denominations and complete a minimum of five interviews from each congregation. A majority of our interviews were conducted with Baptist churches, mostly from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), Alliance of Baptists, and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) traditions.

Researchers interviewed at least one minister, one leader, and one congregant from each congregation. The researchers used convenience sampling and then snowball sampling to recruit congregations. The team worked to include congregations that made a variety of decisions including the decision not to have a process or discernment conversation, the decision to remain traditional (i.e., not including LGBTQ+ persons in membership or leadership at all or unless celibate, the decision to become welcoming, and/or the decision to become affirming/reconciling).

Interviews

As research team members identified potential churches for inclusion, the research study's program manager sent an invitational email to the church, specifically to a church pastor/minister to introduce and explain the project, the research questions, a copy of the informed consent, and to invite participation. Those ministers who agreed to church participation identified a minimum of five persons for interviews including at least one of each of three categories- minister, congregational leader, and lay person congregant. The ministers provided names and email addresses of those potential participants they had identified and from whom they secured interest and permission. The researchers sent explanatory emails with informed consent and a demographic form for each participant. Demographics included age, marital status, church role, and several descriptive questions about family and perceptions of church governance. Informed consent was provided verbally at the beginning of each interview.

Each interview was identified by the team with a code that included the initial of the researcher and the number of the congregation, i.e. 1 for first, 2 for second, etc. The code then included a letter identifying the role of the participant, i.e., A=minister; B=leader, C=congregant and the number of role interview in that congregation, i.e., 1 for first, 2 for second, etc. Quotes are identified with the code of that interview; example H2B3 would indicate Author's second congregation and third interview with a congregational leader in that congregation.

The five-person research team prepared for the interviews in a training

session and by observing one virtual on-line interview conducted by one of the principal investigators (PI). Semi-structured interviews were scheduled and conducted by the research team, primarily by phone with a few video conferencing or in-person interviews based on proximity and interviewee preference. Interviews were conducted with a team-approved list of questions and flexibility of follow-up questions as needed. Interview length ranged from 21-120 minutes with an average of 53.4 minutes. All of the interviews except for one were individual interviews; one interview was conducted with a husband and wife in the same interview. A total of 97 interviews were conducted in the 20 congregations: 12 Baptist; five Methodist, and three Presbyterian. The 97 interviews were transcribed by the research team and a transcription service.

Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed by the research team using NVivo software, a qualitative analysis software; the team used standard coding, word searches, and queries to examine the content for themes that emerged. While the initial plan was to analyze the responses through the lens of a decision point, the team agreed that the categories of no process, traditional, and welcoming/affirming were too limiting and prescriptive. Each interview was analyzed by at least two members of the research team with additional random checks by the principal investigator (PI) and program manager and with inter-rater reliability analysis, which was consistently high. The team met weekly to report on analysis of findings and to discuss common themes that were emerging. Team decisions included identification of themes and labels/language for those themes. After the first half of the interviews (40+) were analyzed, the team discussed common results and developed a code book which was then amended in team meetings as needed during the remainder of the analysis.

This methodology included a number of intentional protections of research rigor including multiple team perspectives, training and semi-structured interviews by multiple interviewers, member checking for clarifying questions (Morse, 2015), analysis of each transcript by two or three team members, program manager analysis of interrater reliability, and regular team meetings for adherence to the questions and protocol as well as data analysis meetings. The research team used prolonged engagement with the congregation through an average of five interviews per congregation with rich and thick description of processes (Morse, 2015). The research team provided peer review for each other's work and multiple analyses of each transcript. Manuscripts were reviewed by an external peer reviewer for consistency with the literature and for rationale for quotes selected as representative for identified themes.

Findings

Ninety-seven interviews were completed with ministers, leaders, and congregants in 20 congregations. Of those congregations, 12 were Baptist, four were United Methodist, and four were Presbyterian-USA. The sample was a convenience sample followed by a snowball sample. Of the seven-person research team, six identified as Baptist and one as Episcopalian. The large participation response of Baptist churches was likely attributable to the researchers' personal connections with ministerial staff. During the outreach, the United Methodist Church held their international denominational conference during which they ultimately voted for the traditionalist approach, (i.e., not including LGBTQ+ persons for ministry and disavowing same sex marriages) (Hill, 2019). The uncertainty of churches/congregations in response to that decision seems to have impacted the readiness of invited UMC churches the team approached to engage in the discernment process and/or to participate in the research. Pastors of Presbyterian churches who were approached about the research were reluctant to participate, either not responding or preferring not to participate. While the denominational position gives room for congregations to find their own answers, several seemed concerned that a conversation would exacerbate divisions already evident. We found this to be a common theme among several of the churches from all three denominations with respect to their unwillingness to engage in the research.

Demographics

Of the 97 persons who were interviewed, 36 percent were ministers, 33 percent were congregational leaders, and 30 percent were congregants/members. The ministers were a combination of lead pastors and associate pastors of the congregation. Of the congregational leaders, approximately 50 percent were deacons or elders and the rest were primarily members of their church study committee or leadership team. Participants' ages ranged from 20-81. Almost 50% of the participants were 60 years old or older. The participant pool was a highly educated group of interviewees with 94 percent having a higher education degree and one-third having some seminary training. Eighty percent of participants were married. The sample included almost no ethnic diversity with 95 percent White/participants, three percent African American, one percent Native American, and no Latino representation. Sixty percent of the participants reported their denomination as Baptist; 19 percent were Methodist, 13 percent Presbyterian, and the rest identified themselves as Christian. One limitation of the study is the omissions of the terms gender, sex, or sexual orientation on the demographic form.

Themes

The analysis of 97 transcripts led the team to a number of common themes, many of which exceed the scope of this article. The importance of faith and how that is understood in the life of the church was evident in many of the interviews. The identity of the church both in the congregants and in the community was a consistent marker of strength and resilience. These conversations led participants to examine church identity as communicated in the story of the church, i.e. other markers of challenge and survival. Attig (1996) defined resilience as "relearning in the world" (p. 147), (i.e., adapting to change that occurs both in the world, in our organizations, and in ourselves). Resilience is the capacity to incorporate new knowledge and new experience and adapt to change in ways that do not violate our values, but instead produce growth as a result of challenge. Many participants reported that their identity included advocacy for social justice. Further, that commitment to social justice included advocacy for those with mental illness. Finally, participants reported the challenge of making difficult decisions that often resulted in the loss of members who did not agree. Churches made difficult decisions and irrespective of the decision, experienced both losses and gains in the areas of finance, membership, and denominational affiliation. The faith journey of the church informed church identity and advocacy and became critical for the church to survive and thrive. Their resilience was framed in growth through challenge and loss.

Church Identity

In many of our interviews from 20 congregations, participants reflected on their church history and distinctives which the team named as church identity. Participants reflected on identifiers that name and describe their congregation, both historically and at the time of their interviews, often noting that the process and decision were consistent with the historic identity of the church. In other cases, the participant observed a shift in church or congregational identity, or a concern that an affirming church would become associated with being the "gay church" in town. The concept of church identity was prominent in reflecting on both their church process and outcomes. Some comments reflected the national or regional differences of politics or ideologies. The concept of polarization that does not leave room for unity in difference was noted by some and disputed by others. In each case, while the differences and losses were grieved, there was recognition of healing as the congregation continued to move forward after the process of discernment was completed. The resilience of the churches was bound up in church identity. Both pastors and leadership participants discussed the congruence in the identity of the church, the need to have

the discussion, and the consistency of the decision with church identity. These were important factors in the ability of the congregation to not just survive but thrive in who they knew themselves to be, the essence of resilience. Once participant stated: "Because our identity is found in Christ, we welcome all people regardless of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, physical and mental ability and nationality into full participation in the life of this congregation" (C2B1M). Another said:

> I think absolutely it's the DNA of our church. It also has a lot to do with the love and trust that we have in our pastor and the respect that we have for him and the church body has for him and our leadership not having an agenda. (C2A2)

Even when members disagreed about LGBTQ+ inclusion, the issue was broader than the congregation's position or policy. Participants recognized that the roots of the conversation were deeper issues of church identity. Participants found that transparent, honest, and hard discussions revealed truths that were consistently present but hidden, or ones that members within the church might not have even known about themselves despite being present. The opportunity to examine and face one's own beliefs in this experience was one of the elements of the conversation that ultimately impacted the composition of the church. It allowed and encouraged individuals to have greater understanding of their own beliefs, which in this situation, led some to leave their church. However, even that process honored the identity of the church, where intellect and listening were common, even when it meant some members decided to leave based on what was uncovered or discovered.

> People can look at it like Republican and Democrat in that respect, but I guess the Conservatives just feel like maybe they've gotten more conservative. Maybe they've gotten more extreme. Or maybe they just know what they believe now because they were forced to look in the mirror and say, "Who am I, and what do I believe?" And if this is a congregation that doesn't believe what I believe, I don't feel comfortable here, which again is sad because we are an intelligent congregation, and we can listen to other people's views and still love one another, but some of them just couldn't take it. (G1B2)

> It kind of is the way it always has been because throughout our history as a church, we have been welcoming to individuals who have come in and wanted to worship with us. That's just part of the DNA of the church. (C2B1)

Even when the conversation was difficult and revealed differences among members, the identity of the church was reinforced and solidified. Participants recognized that it is possible to be challenged, to have hard conversations, and even to disagree and leave the church while addressing the health of the congregation.

> You know I think I like to think of us as a moderately healthy place. We certainly have wounds that are maybe not processed. We're a younger congregation – both in the amount of time we have been around and in the average age of a congregation member – and so I think in some ways that makes our institutional memory shorter but more precise than other places maybe. And so yeah… I think I would quantify us as a sort of moderately healthy place. (M1A2)

> I would say a lot of people feel freer…that they can have opinions about things and be more vocal about it…I think some people are probably a little sad a lot of their friends have left. I would say maybe a little wounded but healing? I think we're past the acute injury and moving into the long-term process of healing. (H1B1)

Part of resilience is managing challenge while clarifying identity and developing strength (Attig, 1996; Boss, 2006). The churches here describe a felt experience of finding healing, or they are on the path of discovering what a new identity for the church can be. While there is pain in the conversation and consequences from decisions, there is also an awareness that healing is occurring and being broken from the journey is a part of the process. These churches are no longer able to cover their weaknesses or struggles, nor seem eager to, but are soberly discerning what their church is now.

The story of the church. The identity of the church was often nested in the story of the church over time. The stories were shared of challenges and growth, of positions and pastors, and of the understanding of God's call and mission for the church. Most of the themes were identified in stories of the churches, the membership, and the communities served by the church.

> We are a legacy church with one foot squarely in the 1950s. We are a downtown, mainstream, mainline congregation.….I heard it articulated this way by some folks. "We don't want to be known as the gay church" which is very much a don't ask, don't tell kind of thing.…We'll be ok in 20 years, but I think that a lot of the folks that remained still have some more traditional

> views and that's not a place where they would be comfortable to go. They would welcome those people in the church, not in a public manner, but they don't want a PFLAG sign outside of the church saying, "You're welcome here." I think they'd be more than happy for those people to come… (G2B3)

> I'm just really grateful that we went through it. I'm so glad that we became reconciling – especially since we did it right before this decision by our church. But I'm really grateful for the process and that we did it because it's really helpful to know people that you know … it's really helpful to know that you're not alone because I was the only person at Pride for so long who felt like this was important enough that I'd be willing to give up my Father's Day – we have it on Father's Day here – and that I'd be willing to give up going to church because this is how important it is for me. (M4B3M)

Decision Consequences

A common theme across all of the churches in the study was that decisions made had a variety of consequences and implications. This was true of congregations which decided not to have a process about this issue, those whose process resulted in a vote for affirmation, and those whose process resulted in a vote not to affirm LGBTQ+ persons' membership, leadership, and/or participation in sacraments, including marriage. Across all 97 interviews, 20 congregations, and three denominations, the importance of the process was mitigated by the impact and consequences of the decision. Whether there was a formal decision or not, and whether the decision was to be affirming/reconciling or not, the end of the process included fallout. That fallout was most often a loss of some members accompanied by a loss of revenue, and often a loss of denominational affiliation for those congregations which became affirming/reconciling. Consequences also included gains/benefits. While participants reported that these losses were made up with membership and revenue gains and new denominational affiliations, the quotes below provide evidence that it did not change the pain and grief of lost relationships.

> It seems that the attendance has dwindled. I don't know. Some of that is due to attrition because of age. Some of it is that people realized that they were a whole lot more conservative than our congregation is now, and they didn't feel like they fit anymore, like if you don't believe what I believe, you need to find another church. And I know that some people did tell people that, which was unfortunate. (G1B2)

> Well, speaking that out loud in the congregation – even though it's who they were – saying it out loud caused a pretty big backlash and I think there was some other just kind of leadership conflict going on in the church not having anything to do with this. But the church actually lost a number of people at that time and so for a while it kind of went back underground, if you know what I mean. We were still very welcoming. In fact, I would say more people who were gay joined the church then because you know it's known as this welcoming place, but again nobody's gonna talk about it now because we've lost people and we kind of had this wound….. (G6A1)

The decision process for these churches revealed individual and corporate beliefs within the congregations. These revelations led to changes, including the loss of members, an adapting church identity, and new members joining to be included in the new environment. The losses and gains are described here with both hope and pain, revealing a deep grief as well as a promise of what this new identity will create for their church. Several quotes tell this story.

> So we moved forward, and we lost some people. We got a lot of press about it, but in the end, institutionally, it's the best thing that ever happened to us, because we had a wave of people who had been sort of sitting on neutral looking for a place where they could continue their faith journey as openly gay Christians that maybe grew up and thought they'd never ever be able to go back to a Baptist church, and who then could find a home. (G4A2)

> The end result (a vote for full inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons) was the loss of 260 or 70 members of the church, which was awfully painful, but we kept all the rest, and I think we handled the process as well as we could. I think we showed ourselves to be a church that would take on tough issues and could lead, and people have looked at us to that. We've gained more members than we have lost, now, as of a couple of months ago. So looking back, we went about it as well as we could. (H1B2)

Most of the quotes around decision consequences reinforced both the loss of members and gain of new members. Significantly, these quotes provide insight that the pain uncovered in people's experiences of exclusion

and rejection is not easily forgotten. Additionally, once those stories were heard and understood, the next question of what to do about it was also measured with pain and grief as they watched other churches struggle with the transition to become reconciling. This connection of empathy, faithful concern for others, and transition to growth are all evidence of the impact of faith on both resilience and growth. Examples of the juxtaposition of pain and growth are an important part of the faith journey of these churches. Pastors, leaders, and congregants who were interviewed all identified the pain of disagreement and loss of members while celebrating the growth in faith and the strengthening of mission of the church as seen in the quotes below.

> I don't think any of us expected how painful it would be for people to leave and for so many people and not enough people to acknowledge the reason why they left either to themselves or to others. We had the vote. Our previous pastor basically teed it up for us. And, he left. We were without a pastor. We voted on it. We had an interim who was a really horrible preacher. (G1B3S)

> It's hard. If you had asked me towards the end of the process, I thought it was a homerun. I thought the whole thing was great. I think that winners always write history, and the people who left have all kinds of different feelings. There was hurt. It's inevitable that there was hurt. I think if you could get them in a room, they would say things about me and the process that seemed unfair to them. And I can't say that's not true. I think part of it is perspectives, we made mistakes. But I also don't know how we could have done it better. Does that make sense? (M1A4)

A number of participants did not connect the pain of losses with the growth of additional members, insight, or benefits. They simply acknowledged that one result of the process and the decision was the loss of members, revenue, and relationships. "There was a report yesterday that we've had… 200 people join the church and I think that's since the decision. And that was, let's say, roughly the number of people who left." (H1B5). Perhaps that is an important component of understanding resilience that comes from faith. There are times when we do not have the answers to how pain and loss are hurting us or are benefiting us. There are seasons in the Christian experience that are about challenge and difficulty and believers do not always have answers to the why. The ability to sit with the pain seems another indication of the resilience that comes with faith.

Social Justice

For a number of participants, there was a connection between the church identity and church positions on social injustice. Participants frequently commented on the expression of their Christian faith as their response to social justice opportunities through the years including need for mental health services, homelessness, civil rights, and an assortment of other societal inequities. The place of LGBTQ+ persons in the church is, to many of the participants, similar to social issues the church has addressed. "If we don't say it out loud then we're not taking a stand for social justice and I think we need to take a stand for social justice." (C1B2)

> Right, and I'm sure somebody told you at some point, but you're right. This has been – it's in the bones. We had church members who marched with Dr. King. We've had pastors arrested for being against the Vietnam War. This is not new. We ordained women to the deaconate and gospel ministry way before anybody was all that happy about doing that. The other part of us being willing to not have to talk it to death and over-process it was, it was like, look, this is who we've been. This is not anything new – we're just finally going to have the guts to say it out loud. (G4A2)

> ...when I was called to the church, part of the way that was framed by my search committee was, "We want to get back involved in community issues. We want to be more engaged in the issues facing our community in affordable housing, in racial reconciliation." (M5A1)

Social justice and equity issues rarely stand alone. There are clear interfaces between LGBTQ+ issues and homelessness, particularly in youth. Rates of anxiety, depression, suicide, and substance abuse are higher in LGBTQ+ populations. These issues are significant in persons of faith who have experienced rejection from family and/or their congregations (Cole & Harris, 2017; Harris &Yancey, 2017). Participants in the study, including pastors, leaders, and congregants, recognized and commented on those connections as seen in the quote below

> Just the fact that it's difficult enough in our society, because they are such a minority anywhere from 2% to 5% of the population – and so they're discriminated against in a lot of places, not welcome in a number of places in our culture and society, and it's just a really sad place if it's the church who

> says to folks, "You can't be a part. You're not welcome here." I mean, that's just, in some sense, adding insult to injury. And we just wanted our church to be a place where people who need fellowship, who need support, who need a place to worship and be a part of, we can be that place for them, hopefully. (C2B2MH)

Mental health. The discernment conversation is often linked to additional social justice issues, particularly those surrounding mental health. For some interviewed, that link was poignant as they had experienced individuals in the church and connected to families in the church who had severe mental illnesses and suicide. Participants did not place blame on the church or the individual's sexuality as reasons they died, but rather expressed concern that places like the church might mitigate this issue by being welcoming and safe for those experiencing the hardships of mental illness, homelessness, and rejection. The quotes below highlight several opportunities for their churches to engage in conversations around mental health, and even become further trained in order to have those conversations with wisdom and understanding.

> One of my favorite letters that I've gotten…is from a mother whose daughters are both gay, and she is very vocal about one of their friends who did commit suicide and that if this church had not always been a beacon of safety for them, her daughters could've been in the same place….. (G1A1)

> She died a mysterious death…alone…my understanding was it was an overdose…..That was obviously tragic. I felt badly for her parents….But I feel no guilt over her death. I feel sadness over her death….I am not at all connecting sexual orientation and mental illness in all of that. But she was a victim of mental illness. (H2A1)

> We have a congregation that is emotionally mature. We can talk about things like depression….In my Sunday sermon, I talked about seeing a therapist…and that is not alarming to them…..The entire staff has been trained in mental health first aid. We have offered that to the congregation twice. We deal with mental illness and anxiety and depression, what does that look like in the church, even using some of the prophets about that, and our social work intern right now is working on some of that programming, looking at addiction, depression, and anxiety for our spring semester. (G1A1)

> And we very much talked about the impact and the statistics around depression, substance abuse, suicide, and homelessness abuse with the statistics around that and having so many kids being on the streets, many of whom are from Christian homes that kicked them out. (H1B4)

Participants recognized the connections between mental illness, homelessness, and LGBTQ+ persons, particularly youth. This became part of the congregation's outreach and ministry. "For reasons missional, we're a church that cares a great deal about homelessness and 40 percent of all homeless youth are LGBTQ and so to care about homelessness is to care about this. (C1C1)

> So, we're trying to find a place where we can stand firmly and bravely as being an inclusive church for all, including the homeless people that walk down our street – those that are experiencing homelessness – to all people that might be oppressed or marginalized in our community, and I would include the LGBTQ community in that. (G5A1)

Civil Rights. A number of participants in US congregations across the United States and across denominations mentioned both the role of the church and their own roles in the Civil Rights Movement both in the 1960s and continuing to the present day. From participating in services to advocacy, participants recognized the role of the church in equality and equity.

> I'm sure it did because I've heard people talk about the church in the days of Martin Luther King, Jr. and people coming to Washington for the march on Washington, and the church opened its doors and welcomed some of the people who were traveling from different parts of the country. And they even opened up for showers, so people could get clean and things like that. So, even back then, they were on the cutting edge of equal rights because that was a very racially tense period of history. (C3B2J)

> Our pastor at the time basically came out on the side for integration, racial reconciliation…. I was only two years old at the time. My family wasn't part of the church at that time. My maternal grandparents were. But the church basically lost half its members. (C2B1M)

> In the 60s, when the church was still really young, and the Civil Rights Movement, the church opened up to people who marched on Washington. Everybody wasn't okay with that and they had to take a vote about that. And they weren't okay with whether people would be housed there because there wasn't a shower….Not because they disagreed with the march on Washington. It's such a church thing. (C3A1)

Other issues. These are not the only issues of justice mentioned in these interviews. Participants mentioned related issues like the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s and discussed the ongoing controversy in many churches over women in leadership. Interestingly, approximately a third of the churches that participated in this research were led by women pastors. C2B1M stated: "Back when AIDS was a big thing, our church had an active AIDS ministry, before it was accepted or an accepted thing."

> They've had very prophetic pastoral leaders. Always pushing issues of justice. We've had women in the pulpit for a long time. So, I think it's, like you said, that's part of the DNA of the congregation, and it's okay, what do we need to be paying attention to next that we haven't been? Where are we being called to justice? And so, the congregation has a statement to do justice, build community, and share God's love. (C3A1)

> As far as I know, our church was the first in our state to have female deacons, ordained women and allow women into leadership positions in the church. Those guys have crossed that bridge a long time ago. So...this isn't our first rodeo, so to speak, on a controversial issue. (C2B1M)

Unexpected Findings

The most unexpected finding in the research is a discovery made in team meeting rather than in data analysis of the transcripts. The researchers spent countless hours completing 97 interviews and hearing the pain of participants who led and participated in church discernment processes and then spent hours transcribing and analyzing those interviews. One of the challenges for the team has been the anecdotal experience of secondary/vicarious shared pain and grief in the stories. Team meetings to discuss interviews while conducting them and later transcript analysis included regular sharing of the impact on researchers. As the research team heard and read the responses of participants, they reported being moved by the emotional pain of the participants, including tears and including both

sad and angry recitations. The grief in response to losses of relationships in congregations and friendships with congregants who disagreed about scripture, discernment processes, and discernment decisions was sometimes palpable. Team members reported spending time after interviews weeping and then journaling about their own responses to the pain of participants.

The team heard a sense of loss and grief in many of the participants, but did not identify any particular process or decision associated with that. The disagreement between church members, the distance that came with different understandings of scripture, and the fracturing of the church body in the wake of decisions left the team more committed than ever to finding best practices for congregational discernment that leaves relationships and congregational fellowship intact. Several team meetings were devoted to debriefing together, acknowledging the difficulty of hearing the stories of pain, and helping each other with our own processing and growth. This was clearly connected to the faith in Christ of the research team and the belief that the resilience of participants and congregations provides a way forward for them.

Another finding of significance is that there were many Baptist churches to whom we were referred who had had this hard conversation. As a team, we expected that we would have more Presbyterian and Methodist churches willing to talk with us. In 2016, the PC-USA had made their decision, denominationally, to be inclusive with their membership practices and to allow congregations to determine their sacraments (marriage ceremonies, location on the church property, who could conduct the ceremony, etc.). Many of the Presbyterian churches with whom we spoke, however, were cautious about declaring that they were an open and affirming congregation, even though they were. At the same time, the newness of the decision of the UMC global conference, which occurred in the midst of our study, resulted in many of the UMC churches' hesitance to talk with us until this issue was resolved globally. It may be that the religious affiliation of most team members had less to do with the participant composition but instead a result of the current events in denominations during the time of the study. In fact, the team found it most surprising that there were so many Baptist churches who had had a discernment conversation, given that Baptists believe in the autonomy of the local church.

Discussion

As the research team approached churches about the study and the opportunity to participate, we had imagined that churches would be in one of three situations: decided not to have a discernment conversation, had the conversation and decided not to become welcoming and/or affirming, or had the conversation and decided to become welcoming

and/or affirming (or in the Methodist church, reconciling). We discovered that there were many more possible scenarios. A number of churches had engaged in administrative discussions that resulted in the decision not to engage in a discernment process and conversation. Several participated in the study and several chose not to. Almost uniformly, the decision not to have a discernment process included concern that a process and/or decision would lead to membership loss, financial losses, and possible denominational implications for the church and for members who work in denominational agencies/entities. Some churches had a history of multiple discernment processes through the years about other issues like women in ministry, civil rights, membership requirements for baptism, and had most recently engaged in discernment about LGBTQ+ inclusion including same sex marriage. Of those churches, there was a variety of decisions from traditional to welcoming to affirming/reconciling. And of those churches, there were a variety of decisions about disclosure to the public from no overt statement to media disclosure and website statements of inclusion. The team discovered that one measure of resilience is consideration of multiple options and awareness of time continuums. When faced with complexities, churches were able to consider a variety of options over time. That intentionality and flexibility alone suggested resilience in the face of challenge. It also provided a much broader frame for considering the complexities confronting congregations.

Strengths and Limitations

The opportunity to study congregations across denominations is complex. The research team explored the literature and discussed at length the options available in sampling methodology, data gathering, and analysis.

Strengths

One of the strengths of this research is the completion of 97 interviews. This scope of interviewing was important to gain saturation within subgroups of denominations (3-Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian), interviewee roles (3-pastor, leader, congregant), and church inclusion status (3-welcoming and affirming, non-affirming, not ready to have the conversation and several variations of each.). The research team made an intentional effort to identify themes across these subcategories and then to identify quotes that were strongest and representative of multiple categories. The scope of the research is broader than the capacity of one article to address specifics from each category of respondent. This represents both strength and limitation.

Additional strengths of the research include the checks and balances provided through more than one person analyzing each transcript, team

meetings for data analysis identifying themes, defining terms, and refining the process. These checks and balances serve to help with limiting bias and to generating additional perspectives on data (Descombe, 2007). Further, Descombe (2007) also suggested that these approaches also help to mitigate interviewer effect as a variety of interviewers with different perspectives and interactional styles can impact the questions, responses, and interpretation.

Another strength was the diversity and process of the team engaged in the research. The research team, composed of faculty, staff, and graduate student research assistants, with a variety of perspectives on the issue of LGBTQ+ inclusion in church, engaged in significant discussion about the literature, the methodology, and the findings and implications. The age diversity intersected as well with experience diversity in churches and with friends and family who identify as LGBTQ+ and Christian. Several members of the research team had been part of a previous study interviewing persons who identify as Christian and LGBTQ+. That experience and those findings informed both processes and specific question lines to benefit from previous learning.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the research. The use of convenience sampling and snowball sampling resulted in a sample of churches and participants more closely mirroring the religious affiliations of the research team (i.e., primarily Baptist). Twelve of the 20 congregations were Baptist congregations and it seemed that the snowball sample method included churches and pastors referring us to other congregations that made similar decisions in their discernment processes. These Baptist congregations, however, were not all affiliated with the same national group. Despite rigorous attempts to recruit Methodist and Presbyterian churches, we were able to engage four of each denomination.

Further, during the period of recruitment and conducting the study, the United Methodist Church was engaged in a denominational process that included their conference vote to not become reconciling. That left a significant fracture in the church, and conference discussions about next steps including a possible denominational split (Redden, 2020). Methodist churches were reeling from the denominational dissonance and did not feel settled enough to engage in discussions about their individual congregations during this uncertain time. Presbyterian churches were equally reluctant, partly in response to a denominational decision leaving congregations some macro flexibility with micro concern over differences between congregants. Finally, many denominations and non-denominational Christian faith groups are not represented in the study.

One missing demographic in the data is the gender, sex, and sexual

orientation of participants. The research team failed to ask that on the demographic form. Another limitation of the research is the team's inability to recruit churches and participants that represent ethnic and racial diversity. There were some persons of color represented among participants. Most were White which may be a reflection on the predominance of Whites in leadership in predominantly White congregations. The team observed that there were more men participants than women despite including seven churches led by women pastors. Finally, while having 97 interviews was a strength for covering the various categories of churches, the volume of data in 97 transcripts presented challenges for adequately mining for themes. To address this limitation, the team of research staff and research assistants met weekly for much of the study to discuss method, emerging findings, coding similarities and differences, and implications of the findings. The PIs will have much data to continue to analyze and from which to write.

Implications

The topics of LGBTQ+ persons in the church, membership and leadership, and church sacraments like marriage, child baptism or dedication are the center of controversy and disagreement in families, churches, and denominations (Author & Author, date). As more churches consider engaging in discernment conversations about their positions with respect to these topics, there is greater need for lessons learned and resources available. This research was initiated to begin to fill that gap. The finding of the intersection of faith and resilience provides for congregations considering a discernment process the possibility of growth and change, i.e. positive outcomes to balance or mediate the apparently inevitable losses of some members and revenue and the possible loss of denominational affiliation.

Participant responses provide an important reminder that the past informs the present. The histories of these churches were cited as important to the current willingness and skills to take on this conversation. Previous social justice advocacy, community involvement, and the sense of church identity in outreach were all cited as important to the preparation of the church and members to engage in difficult conversations and to both survive and thrive in the wake of decisions that were not agreed on by all. The implication for churches considering a discernment process is to identify the strengths and experience of the church including the core values and mission of the church both historically and currently. Beginning there provides both confidence in the process and resilience in the growth that comes through challenge.

Of particular note is the reminder from numerous respondents that temporary losses were recovered, that church growth was not only possible

but achieved. There is implied as well that the pain of the discernment process is worth it. These results imply that the outcomes are worth the pain of the process. That was true of churches with very different decisions. Interestingly, that finding reinforces the importance of faith, i.e., what the research team defined as confidence in God's presence and reliability. The findings also make the connection between that faith and the growth and resilience, i.e. adaptation to change, of the church and church members. We will leave to another article specific lessons learned about process and resources. The invaluable lesson of these findings is the hope of possibilities based on the report of the experience of others.

This qualitative research study will inform a quantitative survey of a broader range of denominations and churches as well as non-denominational churches. The themes identified in this study inform the quantitative survey as the researchers look for best practices in discernment processes. The plan is to use the data from both studies to develop a model for congregational discernment that maximizes positive outcomes and minimizes loss and grief in congregations.

Summary and Conclusions

The Christian Gospel is full of apparent paradox, which some understand as contradiction and others understand as the scope of complexity in human living. While the history of the Christian church includes multiple examples of disagreement and dissonance often leading to policy shifts and then to splits and splintering, the church has been resilient through the generations. New denominations have arisen from the fracturing of the old. Individuals continue not only to respond to the gospel, but respond to the teaching to "love one's neighbor as oneself" in the face of disagreement. Despite the persistence of challenges in society including homelessness, mental illness, racism, violence, and disagreement, the church persists as a voice of love and care for a hurting world. In fact, in many cases it is the church, the body of Christ, that responds to those in pain, to the marginalized and disenfranchised and provides a place of acceptance. Faith that draws from love is the source of resilience and growth in the midst of these challenges.

This may well end up being the legacy of the church for LGBTQ+ persons. What is clear from the responses of participants in this research is that the church is increasingly open to the conversation, more and more accepting of differences in persons, and increasingly committed to living in fellowship with others who represent difference. In some congregations and denominations, this includes beginning to recognize the legitimacy of membership, leadership, and inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons. Perhaps more importantly, while the decisions about inclusion are important, the

evidence of resilience is present across decisions. This reflects the belief, i.e. the faith, that the church is strong enough to survive both these processes and the experience of disagreement.

The themes of resilience connected to faith are evident at the church level and perhaps most evident in the lives of individual participants. While faith and spirituality can be associated with challenge, it is also identified as important to resilience and meaning making (Harms, 2015). Participants identify their faith experience as central to their ability to see the bigger picture, to identify with the risen Christ, and to manage the pain of disagreement or difference. It is faith that gives meaning in the midst of struggle and it is faith that allows the growth that comes with challenge. In this case, that growth, motivated by faith, is often expressed in grace and inclusion. Chaves (2020) summarizes inclusion this way: "The Lord riding on a donkey is the God who does not discriminate; the God who treats us with the same love, respect and acceptance independent of race, religion, class, gender or immigration status" (para 19). The research suggests that the church is mirroring that same behavior even when members of the church disagree with one another. These quotes seem to sum up the intersection of the faith of the people and the resilience of the church.

> And then this other thing happened is that the first year that our church was reconciling during Pride and everybody went. This long-time member of our church who I never knew was gay and he was in his 80s, he went to Pride for the first time and it just was such a beautiful thing and he passed away right after that… Whatever we did or whatever God did through the reconciling process made him feel that he could do that and it was so beautiful you know that that was a gift that he got before he passed on. That was just if we hadn't done this, we might not have been able to experience that, you know? (M4B3M)

> So, we are not tooting our own horn, but the fact that we're still here, and we're still together, and we're still viable and functioning and a church after the process, ….so we truly feel it was God led, certainly spirit led, and conversations led in love…And, certainly why wouldn't we want to help other churches talk about it? ….. It certainly solidified our love for each other, our commitment to the Kingdom, that we recognize that this is not….it affects everybody, and it affects families, and we have faces to those families. This is for the Kingdom.C2A2

Amen. ❖

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Faith, Resilience and Practice: The Relationship as the Medium for Connected Teaching

Shelita L. Jackson

The intersection of social work and Christianity presents ample opportunity for relational teaching and learning. The author explores the relationship as the prime medium for faith integration, motivator for fostering resilience in self and others, and the source for authentic connection in social work education and practice.

***Keywords*:** faith, resilience, relationship, connected teaching

THE REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. ONCE SAID, "Intelligence plus character, that's the true goal of education" (King, 1947). As I consider my own teaching philosophy, role in the academy and personal pedagogy, this quote adequately represents my primary motivation to teach. Character building is critical and does not occur in absence of resilience factors. Teaching potentially vulnerable students to engage with vulnerable populations requires connection, shared vulnerability and skill. Schwartz (2019) posits relational presence in learning spaces as potential catalysts for impactful engagement and shared learning (p.24). In this personal reflection, I explore the integration of my faith into practice as an educator, social worker and Christian. Encounters from my practice are presented. Each encounter shows the way(s) in which I attempt to utilize the relationship to promote connection, foster resilience, and create shared learning. Connection, vulnerability, disconnection,

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movement, acceptance, sanctuary, and mattering are the relational concepts outlined in this narrative.

My teaching pedagogy is grounded in a desire for connection and mutual empowerment to engage holistically in the learning process. Faith and spirituality have the power to facilitate resilience by helping to build relationships, to provide access to social supports, to guide conduct and moral values, and to offer opportunities for personal growth (Edwards & Wilkerson, 2018).

The way I am in relationship with myself impacts the way I engage others. This is why faith is important to me. My identity is wrapped in my faith, as is my conceptualization of relationship and resilience. With the best intentions in place, I realize that what I can do is tied to an all-powerful, faithful God who is the connecting source in all relationships. Seeing the image of God in myself, students, and clients helps with authentic connection and an inherent good that can overcome the most challenging obstacles in life. Knowing and experiencing challenges in the midst of service in various capacities arms me with a relief that I am not alone and that I can recover. I have recovered from challenges. Creating space for a student with suicidal ideation on the cusp of COVID-19's demand for social distancing required creativity and intentionality to stay connected with this student who engaged mental health services in the middle of the semester. These are ways to foster resilience. This student was able to adapt and recover by successfully passing her courses; but more importantly, restoring mental health. I rely on my faith for strength to do the work to engage wholeheartedly in the learning process in a loving and authentic way.

Believing in God helps me believe in myself and the capacity of others to change and overcome hardship. Faith integration is not helping "like" a Christian, it is helping "as" a Christian. Passionate and connected teaching means we allow what we teach to awaken not only our minds, but our hearts and emotions as well (Hughes, 2001). It is in the shared vulnerability that we are able to be fully seen, heard and understood. It is only then, that perhaps we can come alongside a struggling student, colleague, or client and identify inherent strengths, tackle systemic oppressions, and help to awaken inherent resilient factors.

At the end of a semester of teaching a human diversity justice course, one of my white students bravely disclosed his prejudice toward me as a Black educator of color. He recounted specific examples of class discussions where he was resistant to engage in dialogue. He expressed a disdain on the first day of class when he walked in and saw his professor was a Black woman with braids. He prejudged me. I felt disconnection initially; but through intentional engagement, empathic exercises, empowerment, and dialogue, we were able to move to a place of authentic connection. The student felt compelled to share family values that conflict with the course teachings

of justice for all. He was incredibly brave and resilient to recognize the change needed to occur within himself first. Movement toward connection can be vulnerable and uncomfortable. I moved with this student. I saw his inherent strengths and ability to look inside of himself and decide who he wanted to be. This is not always an easy task for educators of color. It can be psychologically draining, yet it is required for the relationship. If I chose to treat this student with disdain because of my discomfort or his discomfort, there would have been no progress or growth for either of us. As I mentioned earlier, believing in God helps me believe in myself and the capacity of others to change. This is faith demonstrated and one example of connected teaching which tackles systemic oppressions and helps awaken inherent resilient factors. Even if I am unfairly targeted, the relationship remains a site and source for learning.

The way we think about people impacts the way we treat them (Keith-Lucas, 1985), what we think they can overcome, and their ability to grow or change. If we judge inappropriately, we create disconnection in relationship and miss the opportunity for learning. Disconnection can occur as a result of failed empathic responses and misunderstanding (Jordan, 2010). As I study relational-cultural theory, I ground my practice more deeply in this theory because it recognizes the significance of connection in relationships, particularly for those who have been historically marginalized in society. hooks (1994) discusses the silencing of minority students in an education system dominated by and catered to nonminority students and teachers. She writes, "If experience is already invoked in the classroom as a way of knowing, it lessens the possibility that it can be used to silence" (hooks, 1994, p.84). I try not to silence voices, those of my students and populations we study.

As a faculty member of color, I use the relationship as a means to foster resilience in all students, but particularly students of color. When a student of color shares their experiences of feeling silenced or invisible, I create sanctuary. Utilizing tenets of my Christian faith and the student's spirituality, we process their experience through a faith lens. For communities of color, faith and spirituality are historically a vital institution depended upon to provide hope and understanding. To effectively come alongside students of color as they navigate systemic oppression, feeling isolated or silence, I use their faith as an anchor to promote motivation, self-esteem (Edwards & Wilkerson, 2018) and mattering. Mattering (Schwartz et al., 2019) is a cognitive connection which recognizes the thinking and mind of others. Students, as well as their learning processes and experiences, matter. By ensuring students feel seen, heard and valued, I encourage students of color to educate others in those spaces where they have felt silenced or invisible. Incorporating relational pedagogy into social work education requires a great deal of self and cultural awareness.

Students must feel accepted, particularly those with differing worldviews, experiences, and cultural differences. The Lord's mandate in Micah 6:8 to "act justly" involves addressing oppression. Educators create connection in relationship by addressing systemic oppression and treatment of vulnerable students. I provide personal copies of textbooks for students who cannot afford them. I provide personal recommendations for students to be assessed for learning accommodations when their academic struggles have not been explored more intentionally. I pray for and with students. I provide one-on-one sessions with students experiencing value conflicts in field placements to allow space for students to confront or be confronted with their own level of privilege or contribution to further marginalization of client groups.

As an educator, I feel a responsibility to ensure the inclusion of a strengths-based, resilience-fostering educational experience for my students. If we believe students deserve fair and equitable treatment, and if we believe in our abilities to provide a meaningful educational experience, then we dedicate our practice to helping others navigate barriers. Learning and character building are parallel processes. Abigail Adams is quoted as saying, "Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence." (Goodreads, n.d.). Learning is complex. Teaching perhaps is more complex. Creating opportunities for personal and intellectual growth can come through difficulty and adversity. As I consider my practice and the ways I believe I promote resilience in others, I first try to establish connection to mobilize my efforts. I examine my relationship with my own thinking and try to model those factors which I believe are inherent in every one of us. As a believer, God is my connection in every relationship and the ultimate source for learning and teaching how to adapt and recover.

The intersection of social work and Christianity differs from the integration of Christianity in other disciplines because the relationship is the medium through which help is extended in social work practice. We align our practice in a way that is rooted in our profession's core values. Social work core values directly connect with the tenets of my faith. In conclusion, I view connected teaching as a faith integrated, growth- oriented learning experience filled with challenge, that fosters resilience for the educator and the student. ❖

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Religion and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding the Challenges and Proposing Solutions

Nancy Nason-Clark, Barbara Fisher-Townsend, Catherine Holtmann, C. & Stephen McMullin (2018). New York, NY: Oxford Press.

Religion and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding the challenges and Proposing Solutions is a vital and credible resource to gain insight into how religion negatively and positively impacts issues of intimate partner violence (IPV). Nason-Clark and colleagues present over twenty-five years of extensive research on IPV as a basis for its content, some of which include research methods focusing on interviews with criminal justice staff, religious batterers, and community coordinated responses to domestic violence. The authors have contributed scholarly work to the field of studies in domestic violence with over 70 publications and an online initiative called the RAVE (Religion and Violence e-Learning) Project seeking to bring knowledge and social action to assist families of faith impacted by violence (https://www.theraveproject.org/).

The book focuses on topics such as victims/survivors, batterers, congregational response, religious leaders' training, and innovative methods in bringing communities together to address IPV. The book's primary aim is to assist persons, agencies, and communities that support individuals impacted by IPV, whether victims, survivors, or perpetrators. The rationale presented for this approach is that persons of faith often will first seek out faith leaders when encountering IPV. Further, the book addresses critical areas vital to understanding not only faith elements but the inclusion of harnessing social networks, cultural considerations, and intersectionality frameworks in communicating the dynamics of faith and IPV. The book also delves into content regarding perpetrators and negatively held faith traditions and describes methods involving faith dynamics to address faulty thinking from an individual standpoint as well as congregant attitudes. The book explores service to abusers, without minimizing the responsibility and impact of their behaviors on family functioning and spiritual development. Studies presented within the book identify gaps that faith leaders often confront in effectively addressing IPV within the context of their congregations or communities. Additionally, Nason-Clark and colleagues provide descriptive solutions such as collaborative work and convey methods in training faith leaders to address the systematic issue of IPV.

The evident strengths of the book are the extensive research on issues of IPV, making this a credible source to academia and scholarship in the

field. Also, social work and other social science educators would benefit tremendously in exposing this content to student learning areas in marriage and family and change agent services with individuals, couples, families, organizations, and communities. Though the focus is primarily on the Christian faith tradition, it carries a moderate tone, relevant and applicable to faith, nonfaith-based, and spiritually diverse audiences. This approach in communication welcomes all perspectives of those who work towards addressing IPV and is a beneficial resource for those who work directly with survivors and abusers. It also is a reliable bridge for those in faith traditions who are looking for ways to engage with secular agencies to support IPV survivors, as well as for agencies seeking to understand how faith can be a catalyst for healing.

One small area for growth in this book is that there are no implications of child exposure to IPV. Since congregations tend to be family-oriented in their values, mission, and structure, it seems like a logical progression in the discussion of IPV. The inclusion of this content could potentially be a catalyst for education in family functioning within faith communities as an extension of marriage ministry and children's ministry programs.

I find this book to be an invaluable resource for any groups, organizations, and institutions interested in addressing intimate partner violence. In my opinion, this has some of the most up-to-date and relevant data on domestic violence. I have already begun implementing concepts from this book in my teaching of studies in domestic violence course. Most texts I have encountered are centered on research that is over twenty years old, so to have current data in this past decade is imperative for the changing contexts of social work practice. Even more scarce is literature on faith leaders and congregations, that discusses responses to their level of readiness in addressing IPV in their communities. Issues of IPV continue to be stigmatized and under-addressed in churches. This book moves beyond existing literature by proposing solutions and presenting action initiatives to address IPV. This book is a refreshing look at problems, gaps, and solutions for faith leaders and community-based organizations that have a heart for aiding families in distress, impacted by intimate partner violence and trauma. ❖

Reviewed by ***Sonia Medina Pranger, LCSW, PPSC****, Assistant Professor, Social Work Program Co-Director, Fresno Pacific University. Email: sonia.pranger@fresno.edu.*

Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal
Mark Yarhouse and James N. Sells. (2017). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press

In their second edition of Family Therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal, Yarhouse and Sells have expertly woven together descriptions of family theory, case studies, and critiques of the theories and models from a Christian perspective. The text serves as an exceptional training resource for Christian counselors as well as faith-based MSW, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Counseling Programs. The new edition includes updated research and two new chapters of relevance to Christian counselors and social workers given the ongoing changes in family structure and formation: one on cohabiting couples and families, and the other on working with a variety of practice issues presented by LGBT+ families.

The authors have organized the book into four parts. They discuss the Christian and historical foundations of family treatment in the first, and review the nine most commonly used family therapy models in the second. Each chapter in the second section provides an overview of the theoretical perspective and its contributors, application to a case, and a critique of the model from a Christian perspective. The third section addresses family therapy approaches for dealing with a number of relevant contemporary issues, while the final section addresses a vision for the future of family therapy from a Christian perspective.

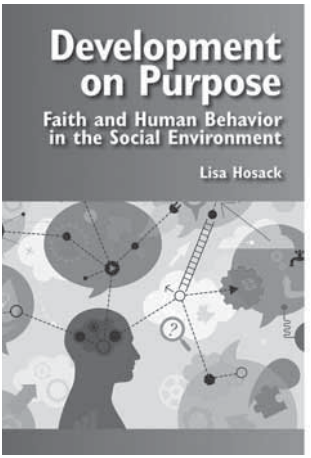
Yarhouse and Sells provide a thorough and clear description of the theoretical models and an insightful commentary on how various aspects of the theory and techniques suggested by the model do or do not fit with a Christian worldview. Each of the chapters uses case studies effectively to demonstrate how the models can be applied to actual family situations, making the text accessible to students and practitioners alike. The new chapter on working with LGBT+ families discusses the limits of current research on the LGBT+ families and individuals, and addresses the variety of scenarios that might bring a family into therapy. The book provides excellent consideration of the variety of issues therapists may encounter, and strengths-based approaches for helping families open up channels of communication and support as they deal with potential feelings of loss, grief, betrayal, shame, and confusion. While not attempting to provide a definitive biblical viewpoint, Yarhouse and Sells discuss several helpful perspectives for Christian therapists as they consider practicing with sexual minorities within a family therapy framework.

The chapter on cohabitation addresses the challenges that Christian therapists and counselors will face in light of changing family structures. The authors offer current research on the actual prevalence and outcomes of cohabiting couples, and useful strategies for approaching these families

for Christians who may feel challenged to work outside of their values.

In summary, Family therapies: A Comprehensive Christian Appraisal is an exceptional and indispensable reference for Christians in family practice and educators who wish to integrate a faith perspective in their family therapy courses. At 539 pages, one challenge is the sheer volume of the text. At times, the reading does feel somewhat repetitive and pedantic. Nevertheless, the authors' insights regarding the integration of faith with family practice, and application to specific therapeutic models and relevant issues, make it worth the read. Their ability to apply a Christian worldview and redemptive biblical perspective on the family to each of the models reveals a thorough understanding of family theory, theology, and current family issues. I believe this book can serve as an invaluable resource to Christian educators and practitioners alike. ❖

Reviewed by ***Marleen Milner, Ph.D., MSSW****, Professor, Social Work Department, Southeastern University, Email: mmilner@seu.edu.*



DEVELOPMENT ON PURPOSE: FAITH AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
(2019) BY LISA HOSACK , MSW, PH.D.
NACSW. $25.50 U.S., $22.95 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

Development on Purpose provides both students and seasoned professionals with a coherent framework for considering human behavior in the social environment from a Christian perspective. It was developed to be a companion text for HBSE and related courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Courses in human behavior andthe social environment raise important questions about the nature of persons and our multi-layered social world. The Christian faith offers compelling answers to these deep questions about human nature and our relationships with one another and the world by providing a defining purpose for human development. Steeped within the Reformed tradition, Development on Purpose describes how this grand purpose informs our understanding of the trajectory of our lived experience and sustains our work on behalf of those at risk in the world.

To support the use of this book in the classroom and training environments, NACSW has developed a collection of online teaching resources for your use, which can be found at: www.nacsw.org/teaching_resources/hosack_developmentonpurpose.

Christianity and Social Work: Readings on the Integration of Christian Faith & Social Work Practice (Sixth Edition)

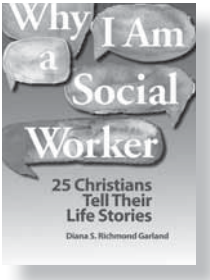
T. Laine Scales and Michael S. Kelly (Editors). (2020). Botsford, CT:

NACSW. $64.95 U.S., $51.96 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

The 6th Edition of Christianity and Social Work (CSW6), edited by T. Laine Scales and Michael Kelly, and is written for social workers whose motivations to enter the profession as well as their approaches to helping have been inspired and informed by their Christian faith.

The 19 chapters and over 400 pages of CSW6 address social welfare history, human behavior and the social environment, social policy, and social work practice from a faith perspective at micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Four decision cases and an accompanying online instructor's manual provide rich teaching tools for the use of this material in a variety of social work and related classes. Especially useful in the classroom or social work trainings, CSW6 supports several major curriculum areas outlined by the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

NACSW has also developed an extensive electronic resource tool, Instructor's Resources for Christianity and Social Work: Sixth Edition (2020) by Tammy Patton to support the use of the Christianity and Social Work in classroom and trainings environments, which can be found at: www.nacsw.org/Publications/CSW6/CSW6thInstructorsResourcesFinal.pdf.



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

Diana R. Garland. (2015). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $29.95 U.S., $23.95 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. For price in Canadian dolloars, use current exchange rate.

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

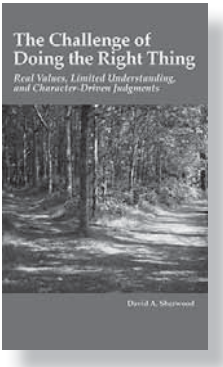
groups and human situations where social workers serve. Why I Am a Social Worker serves as a resource
for Christians in social work as they reflect on their sense of calling, and provides direction to guide them
in this process. It addresses a range of critical questions such as:

- How do social workers describe the relationship of their faith and their work?
- What was their path into social work, and more particularly, the kind of social work they chose?
- What roles do their religious beliefs and spiritual practices have in sustaining them for the work,

and how has their work, in turn, shaped their religious and spiritual life? The stories in Why I Am a Social Worker have strong themes of integration of faith and practice that will
both challenge and encourage students and seasoned practitioners alike.

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

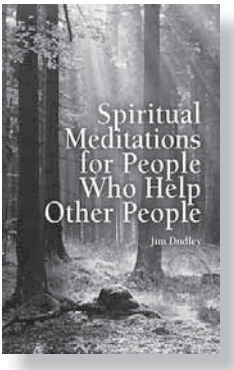
David A. Sherwood. (2018). Botsford CT: NACSW. $21.95 U.S., $17.55 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. Available as an eBook only. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

Spiritual Meditations for People Who Help Other People

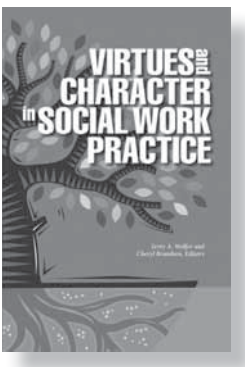
James R. Dudley (2019). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $20.75 U.S., $16.60 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies. Available as an eBook only. For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

Virtue and Character in Social Work Practice

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

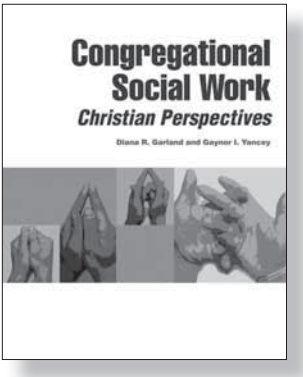


Virtues and Character in Social Work Practice offers a fresh contribution to the Christian social work literature with its emphasis on the key role of character traits and virtues in equipping Christians in social work to engage with and serve their clients and communities well.

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

Congregational Social Work: Christian Perspectives

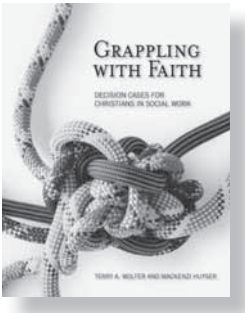
Diana Garland and Gaynor Yancey. (2014). Botsford, CT: NACSW. $39.95 U.S., $31.95 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more copies). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

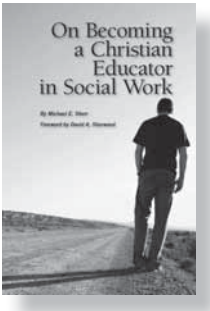
Grappling with Faith: Decision Cases for Christians in Social Work

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



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

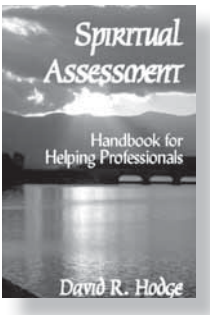
On Becoming a Christian Educator in Social Work
Michael Sherr. (2010). $21.75 ($17.50 for NACSW members or for orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

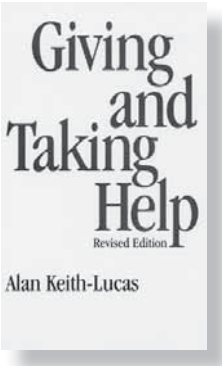
Spiritual Assessment: Helping Handbook for Helping Professionals
David Hodge. (2003). Botsford CT: NACSW. $20.00 U.S. ($16.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.

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



Giving and Taking Help (Revised Edition)

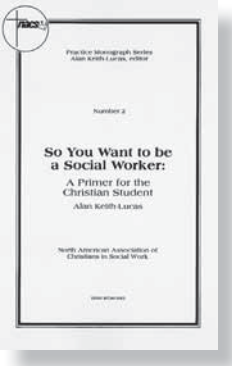
Alan Keith-Lucas. (1994). Botsford CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work. $20.75 U.S. ($16.50 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

So You Want to be a Social Worker: A Primer for the Christian Student

Alan Keith-Lucas. (1985). Botsford, CT: NACSW. Social Work Practice Monograph Series. $11.50 U.S. ($9.00 for NACSW members or orders of 10 or more). For price in Canadian dollars, use current exchange rate.



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

HEARTS STRANGELY WARMED: REFLECTIONS ON BIBLICAL PASSAGES RELEVANT TO SOCIAL WORK

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

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

THE POOR YOU HAVE WITH YOU ALWAYS: CONCEPTS OF AID TO THE POOR IN THE WESTERN WORLD FROM BIBLICAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT

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

ENCOUNTERS WITH CHILDREN: STORIES THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND AND HELP THEM

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

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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 or call 203.270.8780.

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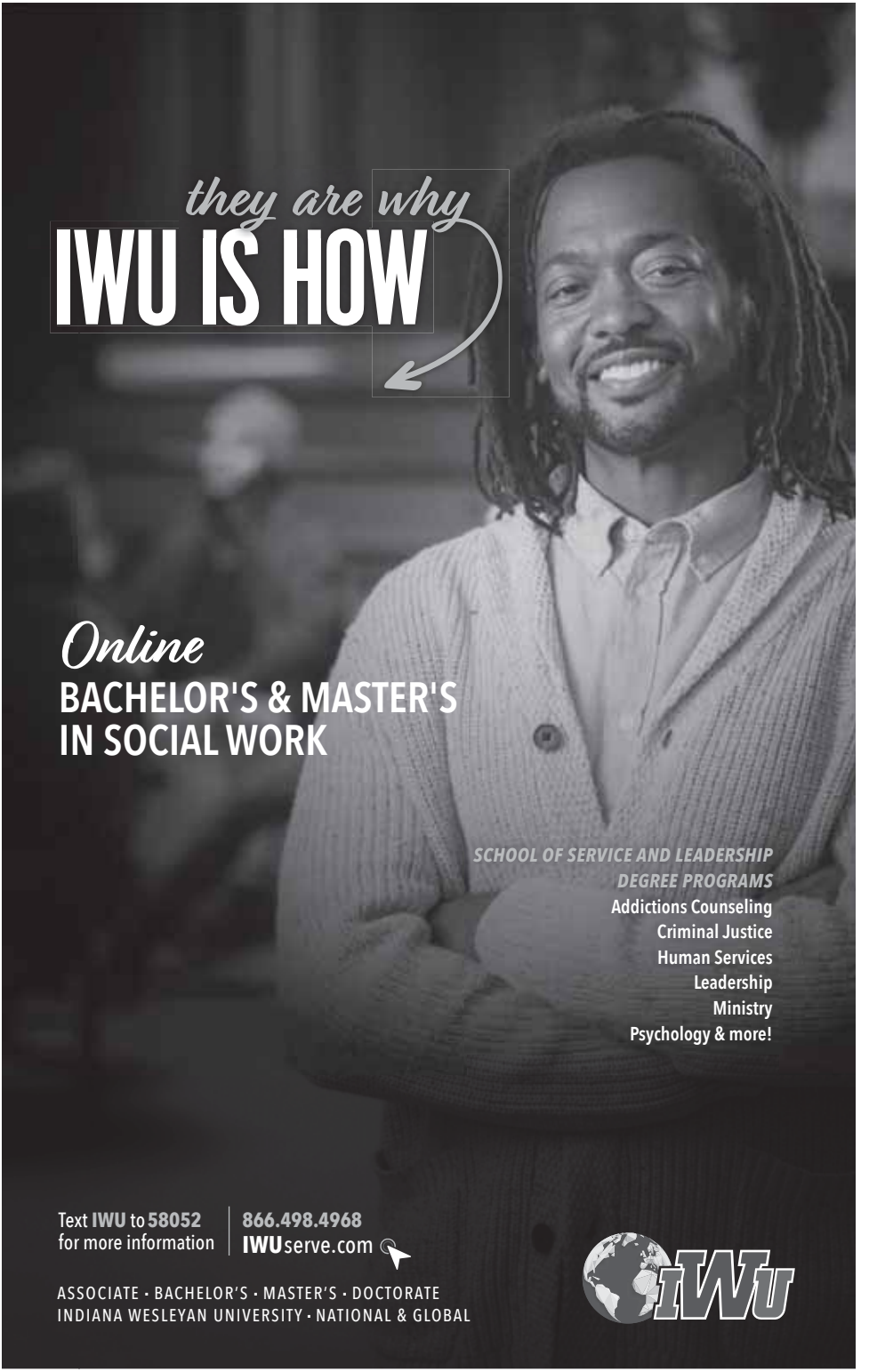
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NACSW's mission is to equip its members to integrate Christian faith and professional social work practice.

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.